" ' Now thou knowest, my child,' concluded Mother, 'why the pole star is called Dhruva, and why it neither rises nor sets.' "

My brother was a serious child and had never asked Mother foolish questions such as I used to plague her with, but he did remember some funny episodes which resulted from her perpetual kindness.

" She had no moral courage to say ' No ! ' to Sanyasins (holy men). No matter what the fellow's nature was, if he said that he was a holy man, she would give him food and drink.

" One day," my brother continued, " a yellow-robed rascal came to the house and sat under the shadow of the large *jam* (berry) tree. He wanted nothing, he said, save a pitcher of pure milk to offer to God. Mother hastened indoors, then brought out about a gallon of milk, pouring it into that fellow's abysmal *kamandalu* (pitcher). After obtaining the last drop, he began the long leisurely business of drinking it up himself.

" I said to Mother, ' Look, he does not give it to God. He's filling his own skin.'

" But she made no answer.

" After the beggar had finished it all he rose to go. Then Mother remarked, smiling kindly, ' Is God satisfied ? Or wilt thou have some more to drink ? '

" The fellow went out like a dog with his tail between his legs.

" A school for giving the dumb the power of speech was opened about this time near us. Dost thou remember that loafer, the dumb beggar who always had three meals and a bed whenever he came to our house ? His eyes were like a cat's, grey and inscrutable.

" Well, when the school opened, Mother sent him

thither to recover his speech and the dolt of thirty was taught how to talk at our expense.

" He returned one day after a year's absence, his tongue now wagging faster than the tail on a dog. He said he was in distress, and borrowed fifty rupees.

" He came again and lied more and received ten rupees. Not only that, he went to our different friends, saying that Mother had despatched him in secret to borrow money from them for her own use.

" At last the matter reached its climax. While Father was resting during the recess of the Court, that dumb rascal went to him and said that Mother had sent him to fetch her some money. He cross-examined the villain and found him lying, and thereupon handed the eloquent cheat over to the police.

" When Father came home and told Mother about it, she only said, ' Poor lad. He has not spoken since he was born ; he has only begged, so all he knows now is how to ask for money. How should he not use his tongue to the same end as his dumbness ? Please have him released to-morrow ; we must not be a party to his imprisonment.'

" Well, he was freed. The last I saw of him he was selling charms to pilgrims on the river bank.

" ' These charms fend off the stroke of plague,' he cried, ' they avert cholera from your door, drown the cry of care, give peace to the lovesick, children to the barren, and health and vigour of sex to the senile. Come to me, the Master Charmer—for a farthing buy a mountain of benediction ! '

" When I came home and faced Mother with these facts, she said, ' I was foolish to have sent him to that school that cures dumbness. In the next incarnation he will be born a professor there as a punishment.'

CHAPTER IX

MY BROTHER'S STORY: THE YOUTH

"BUT childhood," my brother continued, "is dew-brief. It passes as a thunderbolt falls. I must not linger over it. I will only add that I was not like thee: I cared for no holy man. The Christian school made no lasting impression upon me; God was far away and good deeds seemed to me as futile as evil. My adolescence brought me to the most horrible experience of my life. Before this it had been a tiger and a snake that had roused my horror, but now it was man and men; and the dumb rascal that I have been describing was the pivot of it all.

"It was a horrible and sordid story. His brother had been a postmaster in a remote village, and one day the English inspector of funds visited it, and on examining the accounts discovered a deficit. The poor postmaster was accused of taking certain money-orders, and was at once apprehended for stealing State property. He admitted his guilt with alacrity. No doubt he was shielding someone else.

"The truth was that his wife, a girl about twenty, had stolen the money to buy a pair of gold bracelets. At night she had taken the key from under the pillow on which he slept and had gone down to the post-office in the room below.

"Fate intervened as usual. News was brought that the inspecting officer was arriving in that village within an hour, instead of in two days' time, which hitherto had marked the rhythm and leisureliness of his travel.

"He was a new young man, full of energy and desire

to distinguish himself. So when he discovered this wretched postmaster to be guilty of theft, he congratulated himself on his own perspicacity, and would not mitigate the harshness of the situation by any kind of concession. No doubt it was fate. Had the old inspector, and not this young fellow fresh from Britain, been faced with the case of theft, he would have had no desire to attract his superior's attention in order to gain rapid promotion, and would surely have let the fellow make up the sum and then resign his position.

" When the postmaster went to prison, the dumb rascal, his brother, who had recovered his speech in the past seven years, was asked to come and protect his sister-in-law. So he made his home with her, but he spent his time talking of the marvels of Calcutta to the vain, wretched woman. Thou canst conceive how eagerly she listened to his talk. She was in disgrace in her own village : people boycotted her. Everyone—even a Pariah—felt superior to a woman whose deeds had condemned her lord to jail, and as the village grew more and more oppressive to her, she began to dream of Calcutta, not as a place, but as a paradise.

" So, at last, unable to bear her home any longer, she and her brother-in-law took train for the city, she travelling in a woman's compartment, all alone, while he was in the men's compartment, as is usual in our country.

" At a certain station, as the train was pulling out, a drunken European got into her compartment and assaulted her. When the train stopped at the next station, her piercing cries were heard, and she was found lying on the floor, bleeding and sick unto death. The brother-in-law brought her on to Calcutta, and our family helped him to nurse her into recovery.

"The European who had assaulted her was tried on grave charges; but though he was found guilty, he was sentenced only to pay a fine of a hundred rupees. A brown woman's virtue was worth only that much to the European. From childhood on, I had heard that the same laws that imposed heavy penalties on brown men, touched the European with a feather-light touch. Now it was established as a fact of my experience, which turned the course of my whole life, though I was not aware of it at the time.

"Thus ended my fourteenth birthday. I think that Mother taught thee little after thy initiation at that age, but me she did not cease to instruct. It was nearly three months after on a March night when the fragrance of jasmine dripped with the faintest stirring of the breeze. I had asked her to tell me why man-made laws operated so cruelly for some and so mildly for others.

"It was dark. I could not see her face distinctly, but I felt her long breath; she was inhaling all she could of the fragrance of jasmine.

"'Answer, Mother,' I persisted.

"'What answer did thy father make?' she enquired. 'I hear from him that thou hast spoken with him of this.'

"'Mother, his answer does not please me.'

"'But what was it?' she asked again.

"'He said,' I told her at last, 'that a dog cannot kick an elephant, but an elephant can trample on a dog. He said that life is a long vigil of endurance of pain; the best thing a dog can do is to bay to the moon, as that is the only outlet that remains for his sufferings. I do not like father's fables at all,' I said emphatically.

"'But when laws are what they are?' she questioned me.

"'Mother, can we not change them?' I asked.

"'Yes, but only provided we vow to be as strong and full of endurance as Jatayu and more artful.'

"'Jatayu!' I exclaimed. 'Why, he was an eagle, Mother!'

"'Nevertheless, thou must be like him, my son, and also like Sampat, his brother, two in one. I feel sure that thy soul can encompass both the fierce Sampat and the wise Jatayu—two in one and more.'

"Then she told me the story.

"'In the days of the gods, when only heroes walked the earth, there were also four eagles that roamed and ranged the air, the parents and two children, Jatayu and Sampat.

"'As the parents grew old, the desire of life first grew faint in the heart of the father bird, and he consented to die in the height of his flight. He hovered so near the sun that he almost flew above the god, when on a sudden, he fell as a stone falls into a deep well. His wings were close against his body, with not even a feather outspread to retard the fall. Down, down, down, he dropped and still further down till the hills were passed, then flocks of small birds, then the green-winged jungles, and he disappeared like a little black leaf in the waters of the sea.

"'The mother, beholding in horror that mysterious fall, cried shrilly to her two sons and called them to their nest in the Himalayas.

"'When they reached their home that lay in one of the snowy arms of the hills, she dried her tears and bade the children lie still. At sunset the snow-peaks burnt like torches, then all were lost to sight as the stars flung their silence upon the world.

"'One day, soon after, Sampat, the younger

brother, flew toward the sun. The mother eagle cried to the elder to follow with her. They flew at a certain distance below Sampat, so that what she said to Jatayu could not reach the ears of the young Sun-invader above them.

" ' " Jatayu," said the mother, " promise me to guard Sampat after I die—even to the end of thy days. Knowest thou what killed thy father ? He did not die a natural death. He was slain in combat by our ancient enemy."'

" ' " Who is that enemy, Mother ? " asked the startled Jatayu.

" ' " It is the jealous Sun," she answered. " He does not wish anyone to fly higher than himself. Thy father soared almost above his head, and the god at once plunged into him the fatal arrow of fire." . . . Suddenly she broke off crying. " Lo ! There is Sampat too close already to the sun. . . . Come down, Sampat. Come down ! Wretched boy ! "

" ' But he listened not ; so beating her wings with a last effort she flew above the heedless young eagle. That instant the sun hurled his fatal arrow of fire. It pierced the mother through the heart. Sampat saw her fall suddenly, her blood glittering like a stream of ruby against the face of day.

" ' Sampat flew after her, but she fell, wings folded against her body, past Jatayu who was just below her, past flocks of vultures that began to swoop down after her, past the white hills and the palm trees, down into the yellow and green line where the tawny Ganges throws herself into the arms of her sea lover.

" ' That night in their nest, hemmed in by sorrow, Jatayu extracted a promise from Sampat. He made the younger brother swear that he would never go near

the sun without giving warning of his intention. Then the wise Jatayu meditated all night to aid his parents' souls going to God. At dawn he roused the sleeping Sampat and hastened to put him through his lessons and exercise.

" ' Guarding and educating Sampat proved almost an impossible task to Jatayu, but he kept his promise to his mother and never failed to serve the little brother's every need. Sampat was a soul of fire and the very self of daring. Hardly had the anniversary of their parents' death passed when he began to plague Jatayu for permission to fly to the sun. As time went on, his requests became more and more frequent, until at last he said to his elder brother :

" ' " Thou art jealous of me. Since thou canst not fly to the sun thyself, thou wouldst fain prevent me from trying my wings."

" ' This proved too much for the patient Jatayu, and he said, " To-morrow, then, we shall scale the sun, if thou wilt promist me one thing first : that I may go with thee."

" ' The next morning, long before the day broke, the brothers jumped off the Gauri-Shankar (Everest), where their nest was, and flew upwards to the abode of Height. The hills very soon shimmered beneath them, a floor of white marble, and ere it was daylight the two eagles had scaled the cold precipices of the moon and were mounting the roofs of the high-born stars.

" ' Now the Sun rose, and seeing the eagle brothers already so high, began himself to scale the turquoise spaces, with burning haste and fierce pride. The worlds glowed in gold and ruddy light. It was ordained that once humbled by another the sun would lose his power to kill. The planet Asta Basu rolled like a small glass

ball below the eagle brothers. Others, large stars, swam below them now. Many stars fled, frightened by the fury of the sun. Yet still the eagle brothers rose. By now they passed Brihaspati (Jupiter); they leaped over the Silver Wanderer, the way of milk, and now, now . . . at last Sampat almost reached the hills of noon where the very Sun himself was used to tarry a moment for rest. Jatayu was flying below him.

" ' The angry god flew so fast that he shortened the morning into the wink of an eye. Upwards and upwards ran the sun.

" ' Ere Sampat alighted on the highest height, suddenly, Jatayu saw an arrow of fire piercing the sky. It was close upon them, and Sampat was the nearest to it. With a shriek of anger and a heart full of dismay Jatayu, remembering what his mother had done before, tumbled and turned and, swifter than the telling, spread out a wing that screened his brother from the fiery blow.

" ' Then Jatayu shook and wheeled and fell with a clanging shriek that smote the heavens till they groaned like a cracked brass gong hit by a hammer of steel.

" ' But because he was not taken unaware, as were his parents, Jatayu escaped a mortal blow. He lost the use of only one wing. By now all further danger was past, for the sun had been beaten : his hot anger mollified by Jatayu's love and sacrifice. Now he was shorn of his power to kill. So he hastened and set.

" ' The world glowed in colour as the eagle brothers swept downwards and still further down, until the Himalayas that once appeared like hives of golden bees, now seemed to poise on space as golden falcons on the wrist of Heaven. Far flocks of vultures that once

swarmed below like hungry black flies, now flew crimson-winged with amber feet and ruby beaks. Further down, further yet, the eagle brothers swooped. Even here, though low their flight, the far forests crawled beneath them as green reptiles on their bellies, close to earth.

" ' Now above Gauri-Shankar gleamed vast and vibrant with light, larger than the sky itself, the lower peaks and the forests, no longer mean reptiles, rose like Titans brandishing their spears. Lower yet, lower, till men and cattle that from their heights they had never beheld now beset them on every side.

" ' Oh, to have been cast so low ! Those who once dwelt on the crest of Himalay, now sought shelter where the foxes wander and the jackals shriek at night. But they were happy in themselves ; for they had robbed the sun of his insolence.

" ' At last, Jatayu fell upon the Ganges' bank, and plunged his burning body in her cooling stream. Soon the sun-colours faded from the world, the forests throbbed with silences, while the stars rose and flung blackness abroad.'

" I asked Mother to explain the meaning of that story. She made no answer, yet the answer came after she died. But though I did not fully understand it at the time, it made a profound impression on my soul. I learnt and memorized it, and it helped to implant rather than uproot the desire that was beginning to formulate in my mind--to right the wrongs of my own people. I would scale the heights, Jatayu and Sampat, both in one.

" It was at this time that I met a great Christian. He was an Englishman representing one of the large English University missions.

"One day when I was coming home from college by way of the Upper Circular Road, I saw Chichester, who spoke to me for the first time. He was walking up and down on the sidewalk in front of his mission building, a very tall, blue-eyed, light-haired man, with a skin which the eleven years he had spent under the Indian sun had ripened into a florid cherry colour.

"When I came upon him walking about in his black gown that afternoon, I felt a strange sensation of mingled trust and dislike; I disliked the foreigner in him, but I could not help trusting that face, innocent as a child's.

"He said to me, 'Brother, will you not have speech with me?'

"His Bengali was as good as ours—both accent and idiom perfect. This was the first time I had heard an Englishman speaking our language without torturing it. They generally hurl it at us as if the words were pebbles for bursting our ear-drums. But Chichester's excellently spoken Bengali phrases made me halt.

"'Pardon my insufficient command of Bengali, Brother,' he said, 'but I wish to have speech with you. If you have an hour to fling away, then come to my quarters; there let us think and speak of the God of Love.'

"'Here is Bengali with a tang in it,' I said to myself. Then to Chichester, 'An hour to talk on the Eternal is too short.'

"'Aye, friend. But an hour is the child of eternity. We who wait upon the parent may not neglect the offspring,' he rejoined.

"'Well said,' I exclaimed. 'How can I resist speaking with one whose tongue pours wizardry upon my hearing?'

"So he led the way and I followed. We entered the steel gates which closed behind us, wandered through a green garden of late February, just on the verge of blossoming into a riot of colours and perfume. The grey gravel creaked under our feet as we trod the meandering paths. At last we entered a Hindu building —Chichester had not built a horrible European mission; he had taste enough to make a Hindu house to hold his God.

"We went through a small, richly carved doorway and entered a vestibule where already the afternoon had deepened into the evening twilight. A door opened to our right, and Chichester stood there waiting for me to precede him into his study. Its floor was covered with a thick Persian carpet, a very delight of the eye, wrought out in blue and amber-coloured patterns. The wainscoting was of exquisitely carved sandal-wood done by the old masons of Kashi (Benares).

"There were two chairs near a desk, one of which Chichester occupied, while I reclined on a couch of silver-white pillows in our good Indian style. The two open windows gave on the young garden from which the cold, late February breeze drifted in like the breath of the forest-deeps.

"Now in this darkened room, Chichester looked more friendly than ever. His eyes—though most blue eyes are cold and treacherous like a cat's—glowed more in sympathy with our Indian sky, warm and immense.

"'Brother,' he was saying to me, 'the God of Love is at your door. Will you not unbar it to let Him in? Will you keep Him from His own?'

"I said in answer, 'But Jesus is only one of many Gods of Love.'

"'Nay, brother. He is the One, the Only One!'

" ' He is not a true God of Love, if I understand those other God-purveyors of your religion,' I rejoined.

" ' You mean the other missionaries do not give you the song of Love ? '

" ' They obscure the Lover,' I said. ' They smear his face with the tar of judgment. I know your Testaments,' I hastened to assure him. ' I know the Dancer of Joy ; even on the Cross he spoke no bitter word. His lips were the very lips of Love, his tongue that of Song, and his voice of True Authority. But I see not how He who so loved could so judge. Jesus taught love, but you, the scatterers of his teachings, preach only the Last Judgment. You say to us who are heathen that if we believe not in your God, on the Day of Judgment we shall be made to suffer. I do not understand such a God. Ultimate Love brooks not the sword-stroke of Final Judgment.'

" ' Well spoken, O Heart of wisdom ! ' answered Chichester. ' Brother, I preach no judgment, save that judgment with which a man judges himself. The supreme judge is not God, but the scales in a man's own heart.'

" ' That is strange talk,' I said.

" ' It is not strange,' retorted Chichester. ' I wish you to take this New Testament home and read it half an hour a day. When you will have finished it all, come and see me, if your spirit sends you hither.'

" Thus we parted. But though I read the book over again in the manner prescribed by Chichester, yet I retained my old conclusion : Jesus preached love as Buddha did. Then someone else preached the Last Judgment, and to make his preaching acceptable, put the words of judgment into the mouth of Jesus. Jesus was Love : judgment was Judas Iscariot.

"I began this reading of the New Testament in strange company—our mother's. Every evening for half an hour I read it to her. She was an artful soul. No one could ever find out from her how much of the New Testament she really knew. Had she ever heard it before? I think so. Yet she always managed to convey to me that she was as eager to learn the story as if it were totally new to her.

"When I had at last finished the account of the Crucifixion in the Fourth Gospel, she sobbed slowly and deeply over the fate of Jesus. After a long pause, when she had dried the tears from her eyes with the end of her sari, she said, 'Our creed is right; God has paved other roads for other races to walk on till they reach Him. This Man was an Avatar—an incarnation of God, as Buddha and Krishna.'

"'What if I became a Christian, Mother?' I said.

"Without any hesitation, she replied gently, 'Jesus is a servant as is Krishna; it does not matter which servant shows thee into his Master's Presence.'

"'Mother,' I asked, with a fervour and anxiety, 'wouldst thou also become a Christian, and enter the house of Christ?'

"She looked at me quizzically for a moment, then replied, 'No. I live His teachings, which are the same as our Teacher's.'

"I told Chichester of our mother's impression of Christianity, and he was eager to see her. But Mother would not hear of it. She said:

"'A woman's place is on the floor of her kitchen or in the chapel of her home. If this young foreigner's mother is in India, bring her to see me. I can gauge his soul by looking into her eyes once. Much seeing and examining is a modern pestilence. I am too old and seasoned to catch this plague'

"My last meeting with Chichester was in October, 1914, when he was leaving India. He was going home, to die of consumption, which he had developed in Calcutta. As he stood on the deck of the ship that day, white as paper, and stooped, he coughed now and then with a horrible hollow sound.

"The Ganges was as clear as a bird's eye; it was long after the rains, so the low tide brought no mud from the up-country. The dusty autumn air was full of melancholy and foreboding. The coolies, bare to the loins, panted up to the cabins, doubled under the weight of the trunks that they were carrying. On a serene corner of the deck, far away from everyone, we embraced and said good-bye.

"My soul spoke to Chichester. 'I believe the Sword of Indignation will cut the rope of slavery from India's hands and feet. I want you to know that before you go.'

"He smiled, then made a sign of silence. After a deep, questioning look at me, he said, 'I have felt it in you all along. I am a Briton; I understand the love of freedom. Farewell.'

"'Farewell!' I returned. 'You understand, but your brothers do not. I love you so that to conceal my intention from you would be a sin.'

"'Farewell,' he said again. 'Let me pray for you to my God, may I?'

"Tears came to my eyes as I consented.

"The bell rang; visitors were going ashore. I turned abruptly away, to hide from my brother the pang I felt at losing him.

"Chichester believed that a man can have salvation by grace. In our religion Karma is greater than Divine Grace; it is the sum total of good or bad infections that a man's soul suffers through living. Blessed is he who lives above good and evil!

"I took this matter to Mother for discussion.

"'Do we believe sufficiently in salvation by grace in our religion?' I asked her.

"Her answer was to ask of me if I would go on a pilgrimage to Tarakeswar with her the next new moon. 'I can explain the matter to thee there,' she said.

"So when the rim of the moon became silvery in the sky, we went to Tarakeswar.

"On our arrival, the priest-guides fell, like vultures, upon us. We gave our names and the name of our ancestor who founded our family eleven hundred years ago, and this had an electric effect and drove most of them away. For in every place of pilgrimage there are these clans of Pandas, as they are called, who for generations have kept a genealogy of the families that they pilot through the sacred places. The moment you arrive, you give your full name and the names of some of your ancestors, and also the name of the founder of your family of guide-priests, and the present descendant of your Panda steps out of the crowd of vultures and takes charge of you. He will fleece you like any other guide, but with this difference: he will take good care of you in the traditional way. He must live up to the merit of his ancestors, and he will take you through the holy of holies and explain a symbolism whose inward significance escapes all foreigners, which is better than Thomas Cook's guidance. It is extraordinary that our system is both so ancient and so efficient.

"We followed our ancestral Panda through all kinds of lanes and gullies where beggars sprawled on both sides asking for alms. It was amusing to hear them cease lamenting their poor lot the moment they got something from us, when they sat up and chatted

with each other like members of a big club. It amused me very much.

"We reached the Panda's house at about eleven in the morning. His widowed mother and his wife received us with great cordiality.

"After we had washed and bathed ourselves, we sat down to our midday meal. We were served with the very best. Afterwards, my mother and I retired to our room. During the siesta my mother warned me not to accept everything that the guides gave us as relics.

"'Every relic thou takest,' she said, 'will be put on the bill; thy father will not like that at all. They make money by selling authentic antiques that their carpenter makes by the bushel every day.'

"'So a place of pilgrimage is one false thing after another!' I exclaimed in disgust.

"'Oh, no,' Mother remarked; 'religion is a business, like thy father's law practice. In everything the innocent must pay for the wicked, whether it is the King's law, or the priest's God-business. I myself prefer those who cheat me in the name of God; they are at least reminding me that He exists.'

"About four in the afternoon, we went to visit the holy of holies. At first we had to go through outer temples—vast white corridors of concrete, high, vaulted, supported by thick columns. Here all kinds of people were lying on the brown floor, perfectly motionless. They lay like flies, with upturned faces, and between them, snaked a narrow brown path toward the inner shrine which looked miles away. When we reached it at the end of that face-strewn path, we found ourselves before a small, empty room, railed in with gold, whose four corners had four lamps full of melted butter and

wicks of cotton. The wick was thick as my thumb. Each one of those lamps burnt with steady flame.

" Inside the golden enclosure lay a pile of flowers. There was nothing else. I raised my head and looked up at the ceiling—it was full of sculpture: stone lotuses of white and grey, wrought for thirty feet around and above me. I felt as if a river of lotuses was lifted up in the air and held over our heads, by the artifice of a God.

" We spent a month in this place of pilgrimage. In that time I learned what divine grace meant.

" All those hundreds of faces like an endless eruption lying in that corridor—what were they? Who were they? Men and women who had sinned, who had committed crimes or suffered from some fierce disease. Day and night they fasted for the remission of sin or the cure of bodily ills. I saw the same faces every day. They lay there inert, silent, speechless, eyes closed tight, with no sign of life in them save their breathing. This looked like the business of God in grim earnest! People walked by, dust of the street blown by the wind fell upon them; sometimes by mistake we pilgrims stepped on them, yet they lay there oblivious of all things save one—the need of God's grace.

" One felt lifted by a thousand wings of joy when suddenly, out of that honeycomb of faces, rose one with shining eyes—redeemed and made whole. He would arise, take a bath in the lake, offer whatever he wanted to the beggars and then go home, aglow with a revelation entirely his own. Such men and women wore a nimbus to my eyes.

" I talked to some of them. Those who had their deeper troubles stilled, never answered. But those who were healed from sickness would tell one all about

it. One of them said, 'I suffered from ulcer of the stomach. Nothing could cure me. Doctors wanted to cut me up, but I was no sheep to be butchered, and I came here the last full moon and lay down to be either healed or killed by fasting and prayer. Oh, the ache of hunger that battled with the pang of disease, until the ache vaulted above the pang. The disease racked me with the old, old agony, but the hunger at least added a novelty to it. I felt better. A new pain diverts one.

"'Then the new pain grew to be old and familiar, and in order to forget it, I prayed intensely to God. The more I prayed, the more I forgot my woe. And if I slackened in my praying, the scorpion of hunger stung me more fiercely. So I shut myself up within my prayer. To God there is no time: pray, pray, pray —till you sink into the liquid darkness of it. In a black hole beset with cobras, silent and watchful with lidless eyes, you lie. Suddenly, like a meteor, falls a light. I saw that light widen, grow larger until it spread into a silver stream, where on the bank of it grew bananas yellow as the full moon at its dawning. Then light, more light beat upon me till, unable to bear the horrible abundance of it, I opened my outer eyes and beheld the world again.

"'It was midday when I was cured. But I lay there on that floor too joyous to move. Now I have bought and eaten bananas; yes, those bananas of my revelation are the fruits that I must eat as a testimony to my healing. But it is not only the stomach that is healed: even the belly of my soul is cured also of any ache or ailment.'

CHAPTER X

MY BROTHER'S STORY: THE SWORD

"IN 1909, after thy departure for Japan and America," went on my brother, "came my years of medical studies. I will omit an account of them as they were entirely uneventful. I travelled very little, and studied a great deal, for I believed that the knowledge of medicine would be the best means I could acquire of serving my people.

"Soon after thy leave-taking, Mother fell ill, and a time came later when she refused to be cured. One day she said quietly, 'I must go. My summons has come.' I never left her bedside during the last three days; at the end she said, 'I could not stay keeping thee engrossed in me and in my welfare. I take no bondage, nor give any. Thou hast thy goal. I leave thee thy freedom.'

"We took the imprint of her foot for each of her children. Thou didst receive thine in America?" he asked.

"I have it with me," I said. It is the custom in India to make a print of the foot of the dead—a sacred relic for the children.

"How did she know," resumed my brother, "that the freedom of my country had become the sole dream and occupation of my mind since 1904, when the girl of whom I told thee had been assaulted? That was five years before Gandhi came back to India from South Africa, where he had tried out his philosophy: 'Soul-force alone can overcome sword-force.' But

I knew no more of Gandhi then than of the land of Magic.

"After Mother's death, I began to study the political movements more and more closely, and I travelled throughout all India, studying the people. I found that every peasant believed the English must go. And why? Because they said the English had abandoned righteousness. It was an amazing revelation.

"What a country! All the thousands of peasants' huts that I visited were not huts but shrines of God. Each home had its worship and even-song. Each man believed beyond argument that his soul was immortal. And one and all held that the new Avatar of the Kingdom of Righteousness was impending.

"'Why not suffer injustice and oppression a little longer? God will be here soon,' was the universal rejoinder to my complaints and enquiries. God was the beginning, the middle, and the end of all their talk.

"It was then that I realized that the knowledge of medicine was not enough—the science of the body was nothing without the Science of the Spirit, and I must purify myself, body and mind, before trying to purify politics or influence my countrymen. It was then that I first began to practise the ancient ritual of holiness—prolonged periods of fast and meditation, which during all the hazardous years to follow I never relaxed. Unless one is holy, one cannot move India. I had learned that at least from my travels. I fasted three days and meditated seventy-two hours every month without food, drink, and sleep."

I interrupted to ask him how he had learned to meditate.

"Was I not initiated? Did I not inherit meditation with every drop of my blood? Even the leaves and

the blades of grass of this, our homeland, are born with meditation in every fibre of them.

" However, difficulties did present themselves. At first, it was difficult to distinguish experiences that were hallucinations from those that were real. But that was overcome in time, for the unreal mystic experience gives power and the temptation to use it, while the real is above any sense of power. Hallucinations are rooted somewhat in a degree of fact ; for instance, one can see and talk to the dead. That is a sort of fact ; it deceives many people. On the contrary, true experiences are never kindred to such facts for death is an hallucination, and talking to the dead is hallucination added to indulgence in the sense of power ; it is not selfless."

" Then," I ventured, " the real is above self, above power, and above all that we call life and death ? "

" The real," my brother explained, " is as it were the sum total and yet more, of all experience. Life and death, rebirth, and more, are contained in it. Power is in it too. But all the *expressions* of power have been finished. You are you and not you as well. Even God is God and not God as well. This experience is real. I might say that it is so real that even a statement of it is Maya.

" What is Maya ? " said my brother, in answer to my question. " It is only the statement of absolute experience, as sound is only the ever vanishing statement, or Maya, of Silence. The real is a ceaseless experience ; Maya is to cease that experience in order to talk of it.

" When this period of meditation was over, I plunged into converting armies and large sections of

the constabulary into rebels. I had no desire to enlist a few intellectual men. I wanted the masses.

"The finer religion is, the better it can hold India. So I had to meditate more and more deeply. At last, about the end of 1913, I had my experience of God. It lasted two months." . . . I would have liked to interrupt again here to beg for the essence of that revelation, but my brother silenced me with a gesture. "I must finish the story," he said; as he went on with it, his voice changed. He was no longer a dreamer searching in the soft shadows of his spirit for memories of our mother and his youth. Now I saw before me the man who for six years had led militant revolution.

"Before 1914 we succeeded in disturbing the equilibrium of the Government, but after the War broke out everybody in India offered to help the Government. There were thousands of volunteers to the Army. But Reginald Craddock said, 'We cannot accept. We will take 90,000 mercenaries of pre-war status, but if we take volunteers, they will later on claim equality with the British, and the colour line on which our Government in India is based will be destroyed.' Lord Hardinge and many other officials were very sympathetically inclined to our offer, but Craddock succeeded in winning them over to his view, so putting another coating of disgrace upon our conquered race. We offered all; they took nothing, and that statement of our humiliation decided us to precipitate the revolution. Then extraordinary powers were given to the police, who called us anarchists in order to prejudice us for ever in the eyes of the world, and published broadcast that we wanted to bring the Germans to India, than which there is no more degrading lie. Had they searched the hearts of hundreds of rebels, they

would have found there only one sentence carved like letters in a stone: 'No more foreigners. No change of masters; we will be the masters in our own country.'

"Dost thou remember Jyotin, our cousin—he who once killed a leopard with a dagger, putting his left elbow in the leopard's mouth and with his right hand thrusting the knife through the brute's eye deep into its brain? He was a very great man and our first leader. He could think of God ten days at a stretch, but he was doomed when the Government found out that he was our head. The police surrounded him in a jungle and killed him and his men in a pitched battle.

"Then in 1915 the leadership of the flock fell to my lot. Now Mother's story of the eagle brothers came true. I had to play the elder eagle to the best of my ability.

"I shall not tell all the long story. I shall not tell of the grim and heart-breaking sufferings we endured for months at a time, but the tale of a few encounters I had with the Secret Service may give thee a hint—very little, probably—of how difficult and dangerous our life was for five years."

"How didst thou endure such things?" I asked in amazement, looking at my brother's fine and sensitive face.

"I am always quiet," he replied smiling. "I merely sit still like a mast upon a ship." It was true. I had never seen him excited or heard it said of him by others that he had lost his calm.

"The police at that time knew nothing about me. But somehow they got wind of my leadership. Since they had never seen me, and there was no photograph of me extant, when they came to arrest me I was able to escape, and in rather a curious way. At that time

my uncle and I were living opposite each other in Calcutta. His house was on the south side of the street and mine on the north. The police came to the latter to search for me and I met them at the door, saying, 'I think the man you want stepped across the way. I will go and call him.'

"Then I went over, entered the other house, and went out the back door into a neighbour's, and so again into another house till I was out of reach and in a lane that led to the main road to the police station. I was wise enough to know that all the streets would be filled with plain-clothes men except that one. It was never well guarded. I went on and on.

"That evening I sent out news to all the workers. By midnight we held a conference at our head-quarters, in which it was decided it would be safer to remain in Calcutta than to attempt an escape at a moment when every exit from the city would be guarded. I gave instructions that all who had a price on their heads must hide in town, but that those who were not suspected should go about their usual business, keeping a keen eye on what might happen.

"At this time we could not trust written despatches, even in cipher; we had to find men with good memories, to whom we taught long despatches thoroughly before we sent them on to different centres that awaited instructions. But the Government had wind of this, and the police resorted to torturing abominably those whom they captured. They practised it in great secret, and all we knew was that a man with a despatch in his memory would disappear; nothing more.

"One evening, about five days after the disappearance of one of these messengers, I sat down to meditate. It was the second day of my monthly fast, which I

always observed with regularity. But on this occasion, my spirit would not move. I tried again and again in vain. Suddenly before my mind rose the face of the despatch bearer. His eyes protruded like two black marbles, his face was bloated like a wine cask, his tongue was hanging out of his mouth, not only bloodless but blue, and there was a hole in the middle of it. The rest of the man hung in mid-air; his hands tied behind him and his legs drawn in almost doubled up in pain.

"I came out of this horrible experience and ordered a meeting. It took all night to reach my Cabinet. When we were assembled my Minister of Foreign Affairs recounted a dream that he too had had that night. It agreed with what my meditation had revealed to me.

"After deliberations, we decided to give up Calcutta as a base and go into hiding in the suburbs for a while. That decision was hastened by the police, for the following night our place was raided, and we had a narrow escape across the roofs of neighbouring houses in the dark.

"This was the moment when Germany began to show her hand in Asia. We had been fomenting and creating a rebellious spirit in India since 1897—forty years after the Mutiny—then suddenly came the Germans in 1914 to exploit it for their own benefit. They knew nothing about us; we did not wish external help; we were convinced that India, if she were to rise, must do so by her own inner resources.

"Canst thou imagine," asked my brother not without bitterness, "that an Oriental would be fool enough to trust William the Kaiser? Ever since the brutal days of the Boxer Rebellion every Asiatic was

taught that the Germans were enemies of Asia. The Hohenzollerns time and again preached to the world that the white man was ordained by God to rule the brown, the yellow, and the black. All his days William the Kaiser, warned mankind against the Yellow peril and the Asiatic menace, but now that he was sinking in a quicksand, he looked to us to fish him out of it.

" I refused to have anything to do with such unprincipled people. They believe in the white man's supremacy, but in the time of trouble they ask aid even of Negroes. We, inside the boundaries of India, knew that all was ready ; we needed no outside help. It seemed in a week or ten days that the whole country would rise as the Ganges rises in flood-tide. We were expecting rifles and machine-guns on a ship from the Pacific Ocean, all of which had been bought for us by an Indian. It was a question of days when it would leave a little island in the Pacific and reach an uncharted Indian port unknown to the British.

" Just then, a fellow from America, a Hindu whom the Germans had bribed, was caught in Hong Kong. He was sent by them to find out who were the Indian rebels, and to offer them help. This fellow at the slightest show of torture, told the British all his purpose.

" Of course, our men in Hong Kong at once took to cover and sent a wire to the papers in India with these words: ' Indian leader captured ; German help nipped in the bud.' It was the only way they could flash the message to us, since all the cables were under British control. After seeing these words (which the censor was glad to let in for the publicity value in them), a child could predict that the British Navy would lock all the Pacific sea-gates to India.

"The following fortnight, whenever I sat down to commune with God, I saw only one thing: a slate-coloured ship, with a black smoke-stack breasting waves mountain high. I could infer the rest. Oh, those Germans!

"At once I sent forth commands to strike no blow at the strategic places previously decided upon. Without at least eight thousand rifles and three hundred machine-guns, the first match could not even be lighted, much less an empire set ablaze, even though the majority of the people were ready."

"What became of that ship?" I asked him.

"All I know is that she lies now in the bottom of the ocean; and with it our hope," he answered.

"But to return to my story. We had decided, as I have said, to move our head-quarters from Calcutta, and we had chosen for our base a house across the river, one of the many pleasure gardens that rich men keep there; but before long our new hiding place was also discovered, and this time our escape was as narrow as walking on the edge of a razor. There were eight of us, two women and six men, my principal advisers. We had made friends with the neighbourhood and everything looked secure, friendly and safe. As in every household there must be a priest, one of us dressed as the Brahmin.

"Two of our six men kept watch on the roof day and night, taking turns at sentry duty for eight hours in twenty-four.

"One morning about half-past four, I was roused from sleep by the priest. He said to me, 'I have just now returned from the river—there are enemies about.'

"I at once gave orders to rouse the house very quietly. I said, 'All must be ready for flight inside of ten minutes.'

"I did not have to go to the roof to take a look. Through the window of my room I saw a white shape standing under a mango tree in the neighbouring garden; then under another tree, I beheld a black turban, which proved a policeman's red one seen in the very faint light of dawn.

"The priest returned, saying that all were ready save the men on the roof, but I heard them coming down softly as a rope drawn over a bare rock. They had just then caught a glimpse of another turban under another tree in a neighbour's garden. I sent them downstairs to reconnoitre. In the meantime, I watched from my window. As the daylight grew bright, from under the mango tree emerged Dunscombe, the head of the C.I.D., as the Secret Service is called in India (Criminal Investigation Department).

"He drew his revolver, then went forth to enter the neighbour's villa. Good! He had mistaken it for ours, which would give us a few minutes' start. I told the two women to escape first. They were dressed as beggars on a pilgrimage, in their bundles they had all our valuable papers. I posted the priest at the window and went to the cupboard to get out my own disguise of a bazaar servant.

"We decided to disperse in different directions, the priest and I going last, and together.

"The entire countryside was full of plain-clothes men. They were watching for us at every turn of the road. The priest and I went to the bathing Ghauts. On the way we quarrelled loudly, literally hiding ourselves under our own noise. I cried, 'Your reverence knows that I am a man of my word: I'd no more think of selling you half a pound less than the exact weight than I'd kill a sacred cow! Rather have the

bolt of Heaven smite my only son than bargain with your reverence!'

"The priest replied, 'I shall go across with thee to thy shop and inspect with my own eyes. The potatoes are for the feast of the eighth moon. Hundreds will come to my temple that day; among them the high and the holy, too. Hasten, thou slave of desire. Hasten, O costermonger of many wiles.'

"Thus we passed six men of the secret service—stationed within fifteen yards of one another. When we reached the river bank we found two more at the Ghaut.

"The priest shouted at me, 'I have a great mind not to go with thee. I shall cancel the order on the spot. To think that a man who reads sacred books and serves the community has to quarrel and bargain with a low-born trader. This is an iniquitous age! There is no respect and love of Brahmins any more. I shall put a curse upon thee!'

"'No, no, my Lord!' I kept it up, falling on my knees. 'I swear that there is no more profit in it for me than one-half of one per cent. That is all. I am selling these vegetables cheap to you in order to acquire merit. O holy one, O incarnation of Truth—do not curse me! I beg of you; with the grass between my teeth, like a buffalo, I beg of you.'

"The priest shouted, 'Ho, boatman, take us across to the other Ghaut—what sayest thou, boatman, four copper pieces per head? Curses on curses; is that the way to cheat thy priest?'

"The boatman cried, 'Don't curse, my Lord. I am too poor to bear a curse. Get on, your holiness—pay what you like, but for the Love of God, don't curse me.'

"The priest grumbled and grunted with satisfaction, talking of his Gods, of cows, and of holiness as he got on the boat. I followed his example, still shouting, 'Behold a poor trader, behold the age of poverty we live in! The world is full of sin; no one gets a meal any more that can stretch his belly to satisfaction. Your reverence—have mercy on me.'

"'Hush, fool!' shouted the priest. To the boatman, he commanded, 'Hasten, O sire of snails! The sun is hot. Hasten, idle limbs and lazy heart!'

"Once in the middle of the river, we spoke to each other with our fingers about what we ought to do, and with our voices we discussed the nature and price of potatoes and beans.

"On arriving on the other shore, we found that there was only one plain-clothes man stationed at the Ghaut. We paid the boatman after a long-drawn-out quarrel, then started a new wrangle between ourselves. The plain-clothes man scrutinized us and listened to our quarrel carefully, but convinced by our clamour that we were of no consequence, he lighted a cigarette and called to the boatman to take him across. We kept up our quarrelling and bargaining until they had rowed quite a distance, then we went on our way, but very slowly and still cursing each other as vociferously as ever.

"After diving and ducking into a good many lanes, we reached our destination, about two miles from the landing place on the river bank. Here we changed our dress into that of gentlemen of leisure. In two months I had grown a beard and now that I looked like a royal roué, I felt safe, for the police knew certainly that all the men and women in our ranks were austere puritans and sworn celibates. It was a

wonderful disguise, for to their mind a voluptuary would be the last person to believe in nationalism, and they were right in this assumption.

"Again we went back to the river, a mile further south and recrossed it. We took a taxi, and as befitted our appearance, drove very slowly about, taking the air.

"Suddenly, we saw from the opposite direction, going toward Calcutta, a car, driven at moderate speed. In it we recognized Dunscombe, the head of the C.I.D., and four policemen. As they passed us, Dunscombe shot a glance at our faces, apparently convinced that we were what we appeared to be. All this happened in a flash.

"But we drove on leisurely. Hardly had we gone a couple of miles, when one plain-clothes man stopped the taxi and tried to seat himself next to the chauffeur, saying:

"'I am on urgent business. A friend of mine is dying; won't you drive me to Serampur as fast as possible?'

"I ordered him to get off. 'I would not drive even myself there, were it my own father who was dying now.'

"'But, my dear sir, my most intimate friend—this is the only taxi that I have seen so far,' he expostulated.

"I said with a leer, 'I am going to loiter here until the bird of pleasure flits out of her cage. Be gone. Don't be a kill-joy.'

"The henchman of the law was convinced that we were a pair of wasters. So he let us pass. After we had gone quite a distance, I bade the driver turn around and go to Calcutta very fast. We pulled down

the shades of the car so that the secret service man would imagine that we had a woman with us.

"Once in the crowded streets of Calcutta we were safe. It was about five o'clock in the afternoon; the rush of traffic swallowed us out of all recognition.

"After sundown we reached our destination—a house just behind the police station of Nimtala. The old saw, that the darkness is thickest under the candlestick, is quite true.

"My Cabinet rejoined us there. They had brought with them a man from Russia, one of our own, who informed me that the Russians were going to have a revolution, and that the Ameer of Afghanistan had been assassinated some time ago, though the censor had not allowed the news to pass.

"We therefore discussed the possibility of obtaining help from the Afghans, wrangling over the point nearly two hours. But all the while I stood at the window to keep watch.

"Suddenly, I saw a man across the street looking for a house number. He kept at it for what seemed an infinite time; then he turned swiftly and glanced at our house and turned back to look for the number.

"I hastened to the wooden council couch—not a council table—where they were still wrangling, and I said, 'If India is to have freedom, the arms and ammunition must come from without. I shall go to Afghanistan myself and bring them across the frontier. In the meantime, do you disperse. I shall resume communication with you when the time comes.' I pointed to the window. 'A man yonder is watching us. This house will be raided to-night. Ready! Each go his own way.' I ended. It was enough.

"I left all the lights burning in different rooms

—exactly as they were. Once downstairs, we went out one by one. I was the last to leave.

"Hardly had I gone into the street when shots were fired. So I shot at and put out the only electric lamp in our lane. In the dark, footsteps were heard in many directions. Then a bullet whistled by—someone fell. I pressed close to the wall and kept moving toward the mouth of the lane. In the meantime bullets flew at me from all directions, and one lodged in the calf of my leg.

"I half-limped and half-ran through winding alley-ways until at last I found myself in a well-lighted street. My leg was bleeding profusely. I entered the nearest house, and went straight up the dimly lighted stairs, bursting suddenly into a room where a woman was eating her solitary supper.

"She rose to her feet and looked at me. Lo! to my utter amazement I saw my cousin Kusum.

"No wonder thou art amazed." My brother laughed at my expression, which must have been a study, for our cousin's husband was a member of the service, a terrible C.I.D.!

"Kusum exclaimed, 'What dost thou here? Thou with a price upon thy head?'

"'I stumbled here unknowing,' I said. 'I am wounded, perhaps going to die,' and I sank exhausted to the floor.

"When I opened my eyes again, I found myself in bed; and Kusum's husband in the uniform of a higher police officer looking at me.

"We gazed at each other an infinite time. At last the pain in my leg drove me to speak.

"'I am worth a few thousands, dead or alive. Get the doctor to put an end to me.'

"'Thou art safe,' he said simply. 'The doctor has been here. Thou wilt live.'

"'Live to be hanged!' I exclaimed.

"'Nay, cousin,' he replied, 'it was to my home —not my office—that thou didst come. As my guest thou art safe. All guests are sacred.'

"That fellow was an old-fashioned Hindu as we are—and to him a guest was holy and above law. He proceeded to hand me his revolver, bidding me keep it and use it upon himself and his family, if I feared betrayal.

"He and his wife nursed me nearly three weeks. A policeman's house is the safest hiding place in the world.

"As soon as I recovered, he told me that the avenues of escape were closed to me, enumerating them all, but I noticed that there was one road he did not mention. He was a thorough Hindu, so that was the road I took out of Calcutta. For mile after mile it was unguarded!

"At this time I was disguised as a Bairagi, a mendicant holy man with two yards of cloth, a Kamandalu and a trident—six rupees in all!

"I walked and walked, day in and day out, speaking only pure Hindusthani." (My brother could speak many Indian dialects.) "No one could suspect me of being a Bengali.

"At Baidnath I took the fire-chariot. When we reached the Moghulsarai railway station where we had to change trains, my heart almost leaped out of my breast when I recognized a plain-clothes man disguised as a ticket collector. Everyone had to show him a ticket and thus everyone who went in or out of a train was observed by him. Taking one chance in a thousand, and trying my best to look like a holy idiot,

I went forward and asked him, 'Am I right to own this ticket, O Sahib? Is it a male or a female ticket? Have I transgressed?'

"The fellow was so disgusted at my stupidity that he said, 'O thou imbecile, thicker than an elephant, dost thou not know that tickets have no sex? Go hence!'

"I wailed to him, 'Fountain of Knowledge, how am I to know this thing? Both men and women travel; I have not thy book-learning, and I said to myself there are male and female tickets, as there are male and female babies.'

"'Can such fools as thou art teach religion? God!—what a creed!' With that he shoved me into a crowd of pilgrims. By his exclamation I knew him for a Moslem.

"By the time our train reached Benares I felt beyond danger of detection.

"In the course of several months, news reached me that America had entered the War some time ago, and also that the Russian Revolution had become an accomplished fact.

"Though the events I have described happened in succession, yet the time in between them was long. Exactly three months passed between my being shot in the leg and my reaching the holy city.

"It was then that I met the Blessed One—whom we have just visited—the first holy man who ever spoke to my soul. One day I was sitting at the step of a shrine beyond the Thirty-six Melodies—thou rememberest the place? I do not know how long I had remained in meditation that afternoon at the little brown temple, when a voice within me said, 'Look over thy shoulder and find the Face that is thy quest.'

"I did as I was bidden from within and—behold! —the Blessed One was standing behind me with closed eyes, his face like a mirror in which shone the Face.

"He, too, was communing with God. After a while he opened his eyes, still shining with the white light of his meditation. We gazed at one another for a space. Then he said, 'Thou are past all phantoms that pursue. The trial is over. Come to thy home!'

"I obeyed his command. We went to the Rajah's garden where the Rajah keeps his peacocks. The Holy One signed me to sit down under a tree with him. He took my hand and began to meditate. I followed him.

"Yes, it was clear. No more phantoms pursued me. No more the battle of good and evil. He and I flew like the eagle-brothers beyond and above the sun, far, far away. Then . . . then, the heart in me broke and doubt was torn to shreds. Through the tearing of the veil of doubt, I saw and heard; sight was heard, hearing was seen. . . . Silence and Light. And in that circle of identity the dance of the worlds—Om, Om! Om is the flavour, the aroma that I breathed. It is the odour of 'That.'

"When we rose to go to the Holy One's monastery, it was already starry night; eight hours had passed since I had sat down with him under the tree in the Rajah's garden. I knew then certainly that the end had come, and that India's freedom was not to be reached now and by me, but I had many a long journey ahead of me, many an arduous and anxious day before the affairs of my party could be settled, and safety secured to my followers. The battle was not won except in my own spirit.

"It is a long, long story. But for thee I may abbreviate.

CHAPTER XI

MY BROTHER'S STORY: THE ESCAPE

"FROM Benares, I went disguised as a trader through all of northern India, for a price was still upon my head. I passed Lucknow with its rococo beauty, Allahabad, Mathura, Agra, Delhi. I saw the works of art in every place, lingering everywhere as long as I wished.

"In Agra at night I beheld the Taj Mahal; it was stone turned into a dream. It was the face of man's Love abiding for an instant between the rise and the fall of a sword. O Sha Jajan, what a dream —a sorrow become perfect, and a sigh become fixed!

"From Delhi, I went south toward Jhansi. From Jhansi, I went to Rampur. Even now, despite Manchester goods and their ghastly cheapness, some chudders are still made in the State of Rampur. And it is a delight to see the shawls appraised. If a chudder is coarse in texture the artistic buyer says, 'Ah, my weaver friend, thou didst not sing the day thou wovest this one . . . look, how coarse it feels.'

"The day a chudder weaver sings at his toil he makes a perfect shawl. The day his song does not quicken in his throat, his product is coarse.

"Again I wandered west and north. But I must tell thee how I saw the cutting of Jahore. What is Jahore in English? It does not matter what it is in English. It is a precious stone. It takes men hours and very often days to cut it till, as they say, 'it betrays the dew in it that gathers and throws out the sun as a flower exudes fragrance.'

"I once asked a jeweller: 'Why not cut quickly, as they cut by machine in far-off lands?'

"He answered, 'The far-off lands cut stones for the market, we cut them for a few Rajahs, who can afford to wait. If it takes a thorny plant months to give a rose, why hasten a hard stone to yield its fragrance of light in a day? It is good to give suck to a stone with one's strength till it glows like one's own blood.'

"What wonderful threads of gold they make, also! They put a piece of gold through a cast with a variety of holes, pulling it through each in turn and finally when it grows longer and longer, and passes the last least hole, they sing, cozening it. . . .

'Thin as a woman's hair
And glowing as a fawn clad with the setting sun.'

"In India they used to make tapestries out of the finest threads of gold as if they were silk. In Lhassa the Dalai Lama has one such tapestry—a rendering of the Wheel of Life. All the figures, including thirteen Buddhas, are as well wrought out as if they had been painted with colours. Think of it—a tapestry about fourteen feet long and six feet broad done with threads of gold soft as silk, hard and perfect as a fresco painting on the rocks of an Ajanta cave!

"But now that art is dead. They can make now only some clever chains, garlands of gold flowers, brooches, and bangles out of those threads of gold—which are the acme of the goldsmith's art in India to-day. With the coming of the Mohammedans, tapestry of gold died in the thirteenth century. They forbade the representation of human figures in any form of art, and with the death of the Hindu empire golden tapestry-making died too. Then the Moghuls of the eighteenth century did their best to revive it through patronage, but, alas, they too passed. Now

we import glass bangles from the factories of Europe, and tapestries, mostly second-rate, from France and Italy. Not the very best of them can touch the littlest toe of one of those Buddhas in that golden web of Thibet.

"Sometimes one or two foreign tourists order some cunningly wrought ornaments from our goldsmiths, but unfortunately, what they give with their patronage they take away with the horrible designs which they bring with them and insist on having copied.

"Are not the ivory carvings of Delhi repellent, simply because of the foreign designs that our carvers' souls reject and their hunger-driven hands execute? It is not enough for the Nataraj, God of art; he not only desires the feeling of our hands but the singing joy of our souls.

"Alas, this same thing has happened to our rug-makers. Between Ludhiana, Lahore, Amritsar, and Kasmir, all the rug-makers are working on designs submitted to them by agents of Western shops. It is a shock of surprise to behold the effect of such commercialism on the craftsmen. Some of these fellows have signed contracts to give all their products to an agent of one shop. One look at this smart travelling agent's designs is enough.

"Every old design had its song. 'The design will not blossom right if it receive not the song that is its due.'

"Listen to an old rug-weaver who is too old to weave, but who can sing the songs of his craft. 'Grandfather,' I asked him, 'hast thou taught these songs to the younger weavers?'

"'When my fingers were nimble, I wove rugs that had to be watered each with his own song,' he

answered. 'Now when stiff fingers ache for the touch of work, I sing in order to ease their pain. Why should I teach the young my songs? They weave not my kind of rugs. Why pound a song to death on a stony design?'

"The higher arts and also the lower ones of craftsmanship are not to be saved by the mere giving of food. Not food, but freedom from food is the wing on which art soars to God!

"In another rug-makers' village I found fourteen families at work. They were poorer, but full of life, and singing old songs. I enquired why they sang so well, and as I had expected, the village headman, an old man of eighty, answered me, 'We make the old rugs for the Rajah of Thalum. Our rugs make us sing.'

"The old fellow looked like an aged elephant, with bald, domed head, long nose, shrivelled chin, and ears large as a child's palms. He had not a tooth in his head, but his eyes were burning charcoals and his whole body six feet tall, straight as a brass-shod club.

"He said, 'Songs died in most villages when Dulip Singh, the last King of the Punjab, was banished to England. No one has bought rugs since, as the royal house bought them with sharp scrutiny of the eye and large bounty from the heart. There are a few villages that still sing because there are a few Rajahs yet left who sit on rugs and not in chairs like an ape on a tree . . . legs hanging down. Sovahn Allah, to sit with legs sticking out (instead of doubled under as they should be), how discourteous to guests and friends!'

"The old fellow's eyes blazed as he concluded his harangue: 'The belly of a man burns with emptiness so that he takes any work in order to stuff it and

thus he uproots song and laughter from his soul to do any order that is forthcoming. That is the calamity that has fallen upon us weaver-folk. The *tajjab*—the wonder of it—is that men can live without singing at their work. If thou hadst said to me sixty years agone that such a thing would come to pass, I would have broken thy head with the buffeting of my scorn, but it is too true now. I can prophesy that in another score of years the songs of weavers that have lived four score will be lost as if they had never been. Allah Karim . . . come to my house, sir, I shall enjoy giving thee food and drink as well as a feast to the eye with a rug that has served as a model in our family when my grandfather's father was appointed rug-maker royal to the Moghul of Delhi.'

"As I moved more and more about where the seventeenth-century India yet lives, I came upon forms of art that I had never seen before. Thank Vishnu for the English Secret Service!

"From the rug-makers' country, I moved south where the people perforate and carve large blocks of marble (sometimes twenty feet square) into screens of exquisite designs. It was a revelation to me that all that marble-work that one sees in the Taj can still be done again in India. The inlaying of semi-precious stones of a vast range of colours into marble goes on now as before, but no Rajah has courage enough to try another Taj Mahal.

"I learned many songs from these workers of the south. They sing beautifully as they toil.

"The secret service drove me northward and I came across Bidri-workers for the first time in my life.

"I tell thee," my brother emphasized, "India is a Universe. Picture to thyself these workers!

The Moghuls endowed them beyond all poverty. Until the fourteenth century they worked without money, but after the coming of the Moghul they worked above it."

Since the reader may not know what Bidri is, I will explain that it is the Indian name for Damascene work. Though inlaying in metal with metal came to India from Damascus, the Indian master-craftsmen achieved an art of inlaying which the Damascene cannot touch. The Indian Bidri-masters use copper, steel, and bronze to marvellous advantage, and it is the employment of these commoner metals, not brass, silver, and gold, that created the Bidri art. They inlay the cheapest metals on one another, or mix them and then inlay so skilfully that, compared with them, most Damascene work looks too ornate.

"This art," my brother went on, "is dying, because since the days of the Moghuls there are few people who care for it. There is no state endowment either, to protect the workers.

"I once asked a Bidri-worker why he was poor.

"He replied, 'Why do wild beasts now walk where once the grand Moghuls loitered in sumptuous ease?'

"'Hast thou any songs?'

"'The molten or hard metal would not enter and sit in the harder one if we did not sing to it,' he replied. 'The song that brings the beloved to our side is the same song that quickens a metal to grow into flowing wonders of design. The day our Bidri-masters cease from singing, that day they will lose their art.'

"It was once in dodging the ubiquitous secret service that I entered the house of a Kaowal for

the first time in my life. This was in Meerut. I was a vendor of chudders and linen, and I asked to stay the night.

"The Kaowal said, 'I can sing, but I have no money.'

"I said to him, 'Then sing and ravish me of my parsimony.'

"He sang many songs: of Kabir, Mira, Tansen, and many singers and mystics whose names I had never heard. He had a tawny face like a tiger's. He told me the tale of the Kaowals; how their families had been endowed by the Moghuls, so that, untrammelled by poverty, they could purify and preserve the music of India.

"Tales of woe and tales of beauty he told me those two nights and two days I stopped at his house. I gave him six Rampur chudders as a present, but I would have given him sixty-six had it been in my power, for each one of his songs. When I said farewell and embraced the poverty-stricken tiger-man, proud and pure-hearted, he gave me a letter to all the Kaowals of India from Benares to Rawalpindi.

"At last I reached Peshawar. It was March. The cold was severe. During the day the sky opened like a blue lotus, so intense, yet so soft. Caravans came and went. News was brought that the German offensive, the last of the War, was going to wipe away the Allies.

"In the meantime, I had heard from Afghanistan that the new Government could not spare any arms or ammunition. The same news came from Bokhara and Tashkend. It was more and more evident that India was not to be free, then, at any rate.

"One day in Peshawar, all the Kaowals of the

Punjab and Cashmere met for a song contest in the house of a rich merchant.

"They sang the Tiger beauty melody, as the sun went down; then as the night progressed, they sang other songs—each one increasing the ecstasy of the audience. I was in a trance, but nothing is so brief in life as beauty. Suddenly, someone whispered to me under the crescendo of the singing: 'Thou art watched. There is no time to lose. Soon the lights will be extinguished. Make good thine escape! There is a horse without.'

"In a moment the lights went out and in the darkness shots were heard. Swiftly and silently I made my way out and found the horse awaiting me. I leaped on his back, and in a few moments like a god on the wings of speed, I passed village after village, trusting to the instinct of that marvellously trained animal.

"At last I reached a post, one of our own—a villa belonging to a Rajah whose sympathies were anti-British, where six other horsemen met me. They were representatives of six regiments who had been ready to mutiny at any time. They brought the fatal news that a traitor amongst their men had confessed and given away all our plans. The authorities, having learned my whereabouts, had sought to arrest me at the music contest, and not only my hiding place but our programme of country-wide revolution, had been revealed. This was the death-blow to our present hope; the end had indeed come, as I had foreseen in Benares, and that night, within the glistening marble walls of the Rajah's villa, I drew up the plans for disbandment. Those who were with me were to drive post-haste in different directions to tell all our

followers to show no slightest stir of rebellion anywhere. 'The gate of destiny is closed before us!' was the word.

"The six ringleaders who had met me were determined at all costs to save their regiments, and so decided to give themselves up to the authorities there, and declare all the rest of the army loyal.

"That night I too had to ride fast and far, for before the first flush of the morrow, all of northern India must be informed to play the part of obedience.

"The Rajah's villa was near the military road that connects Peshawar with the rest of the forts and garrisons in upper India. I rode southwards, telling the direction by the stars. I went on and on, and in a short time the day broke and I entered a long stretch of fields where the first spring grain waved darkly in the greyness of early dawn.

"After fifteen more minutes of hard riding, I arrived at my destination, the house of a friend. I approached the entrance and tapped the proper number of times. Those strange tappings of the revolutionary open doors to him like magic, and I slipped in, telling the servant to bring me to his master.

"He said, 'Dost thou not recognize me, Brother?'

"'What, disguised as a servant in thine own house, friend!' I exclaimed.

"'We are all disguised and ready to go forth to die,' he uttered with intense feeling.

"Then he led me to a secret chamber and there I told him all that had happened the previous night in the Rajah's villa. 'It is evident to me,' I concluded, 'that the Government wishes to encourage an abortive uprising in order to have a pretext for crushing us. If we rise now, whatever feeling of freedom there is in

the land will be nipped in the bud. The Mutiny in 1857 was suppressed so remorselessly that no seed of freedom could sprout in India in fifty years.

"'Now make ready for our escape. Before the sun sets to-day we shall be pursued!'

"In an hour we had all left that house—it was easy to do so, for the inmates had been ready for the oncoming revolution. Our plan was carried out successfully. The three women, two children, and two trusted old servants went to the station four miles away where they boarded a train, proceeding to Mathura by a long, tortuous railway journey, while we went on horseback, I posing as a Punjabi doctor and my friend as my servant.

"At last we reached Amritsar—a quiet, loyal Sikh town. There was no more revolution there than in Utopia. Most of the Sikhs were fighting in Flanders and Mesopotamia for the King-Emperor.

"At Amritsar we boarded a train for Mathura. We took a month for the entire journey.

"In Mathura, I set up as a medical practitioner. My friend's family posed as my family, while he himself, now quite securely disguised, held the position of my major-domo. We all lived in the same house. From that time on, we had no trouble.

"The coming of the Americans to France decided all the revolutionists in India to give up the struggle. By December, 1918, we had quieted the entire country by informing every unit of revolution in unequivocal terms that any outbreak would ruin the country's prospect of freedom for a hundred years to come.

"Then suddenly, in the spring of 1919, General Dyer set fire to India by killing unarmed and loyal Punjab folk. The Amritsar Massacre did what nothing

else could have done; it buried Britain's moral and political prestige—a hard-earned thing too—beyond resurrection.

"With the Amritsar massacres, the leadership of India passed out of the hands of groups like ours. For now, the feeling of unrest gripped the masses irrevocably, and Gandhi became the symbol of India. No other man, no other party counted for anything.

"General Dyer did more to kindle a permanent discontent than any man before him. Why? Only the gods can explain. In the history of nations, such strange deeds mark the beginnings of epochs, yet the men who perpetrate them never know what they are doing. Shree Rama Chandra built the bridge on the Indian Ocean with the help of monkeys and squirrels, and Christ entered Jerusalem on an ass. General Dyer was the mouse whose act became as monstrous and significant as the stampeding of all the elephants in a jungle.

"In the meantime, India had given birth to the saint—Gandhi, who could purify all sins by his presence. From now on, India creeps no more; she flies, and Gandhi is her wings.

"General Dyer did not sin because of circumstances; he sinned in his heart by hating and fearing. All the world knows hate and fear cannot be eliminated by pious deeds. They can be destroyed at the root only—in the soul—by fasting, prayer, and meditation. You may sin against your brother by an act, but you cannot be forgiven by another act, no matter how noble. The law of the soul is such that no matter how external your acts of sin, your purification for them must be through the purgation of your soul; there is no alternative."

CHAPTER XII

MY BROTHER'S STORY: THE SHEATH

"By the way," went on my brother, with sudden amusement flashing in his quiet eyes, "I forgot to mention an adventure, which was rather exciting, that befell me during that long journey to Mathura. The right-hand man of Dunscombe, an Indian expert of the secret service, and I, travelled on the same train between Nagpur to Jubbalpore. He seemed convinced that I was a holy man, since I wore the disguise of one, but I recognized at once his bullet-shaped, bald head.

"He asked me to look at his palm. With my left hand under my tunic resting on the butt of my revolver, I took his proffered hand in my right. I told him that his life was a great secret, that he was born to be a King, that he was brave enough to face any danger, that he had six children and a fine wife.

"After the palmistry was over, he opened his bag and took out a magnifying glass: all this time his eyes were fixed upon me while I made believe that I was lost in the intense Inane. 'Surely he must have his suspicions now,' I thought. But my soul from within said, 'He cannot harm thee. Thou art safe.'

"Then he handed me a paper to read. I held it in my two hands and he thrust the magnifying glass between it and my eyes. I had both of my hands out. He could have easily seized my wrists, but he did not.

I saw that he was looking at my thumbs and fingers through the glass. I let him examine me, and I thought he was satisfied by his scrutiny that I was not the nationalist refugee from justice whom he sought, but a true holy man, for he began to tell me the story of his life at length and without reserve, asking me if his ambition would be fulfilled.

"I answered, 'The sign of Jupiter grew dim two years ago, no chance now.'

"At that, he slapped his knee and swore at some invisible opponent.

"Then I asked him, 'What is thy religion? Dost thou meditate on God daily?'

"He answered, his sharp eyes half-closed, his bullet-like head inclined a little to the right, 'My religion is to watch for him who sleeps.'

"I said nothing in answer, musing upon our strange race, for a Hindu must have a religious outlook even when he is policing the country. Mahadeo, what a people! It is not true we have religion; the truth is, religion *has us!*

"But along with these thoughts, my mind still probed into the motives and manner of this Eastern Sherlock Holmes. Did I guess the truth?

"'If he knows who I am,' I thought, 'why does he not arrest me?' Why? Why? Suddenly, the answer came. 'He does not dare, for, by Shiva's bull, he is unarmed! Now all is clear!'

"But I must act, and at once. He and I were the sole occupants of the compartment. It was a dangerous moment, for I was, as thou knowest, still a fugitive with a price upon my head.

"Just then my chance came. With all his astuteness, he evidently did not know that I had recognized

him, for he turned his back to me for an instant to look for something in his suit-case.

"'This is my chance,' the voice told me from within. I aimed a blow on the right spot and knocked him unconscious.

"Now followed the long process of gagging and tying him with the length of his own turban. Then I carried him—a terrific load, for he was a big man—into the lavatory and settled him comfortably. I opened his bundles; but found nothing important and I put them by his side.

"I always carried under my arm, wrapped in a costly silk shawl, a small bundle of bedding which contained a pair of disguises. The richness of the silk supplied me with the excuse of never trusting the package to a porter, or out of my own hands. I had just succeeded in accomplishing my transformation when the train entered the Jubbalpore station.

"I did not get off at once, and as luck would have it, a horde of third-class passengers, pilgrims mostly, passed my car. Then I opened the door and let myself drop into their onrushing tide that swept toward another train across the platform at the other end. I let the pilgrims press me into a crowded second-class carriage. From my place of vantage, I saw two constables search my former train compartment by compartment, for their leader and, probably, for me. They could not make out what had happened to us. Suddenly, that train whistled—then slowly, ever slowly, began to pull out of Jubbalpore. Now, feeling that their prize was escaping them, they hastily opened a door of a carriage and jumped in, exactly three compartments away from the one where I had been.

"That was my last encounter with the secret service. I never saw any of them again.

"About September, 1921, I received information through one of our men in French India that the English Government wished to negotiate for terms of a general amnesty with my people who had been in hiding until now. On receiving the news I set out in secret to Ahmedabad in order to visit Gandhi. His influence over India had become so great and so widespread that I must judge for myself, face to face, as to the source of his power before taking a step that would commit me, if not to his policy, at least to a non-resistance that would materially assist it.

"The settlement where he lives surrounded by his followers and co-workers is made up of small adobe houses, in one of which I found him—a little ugly man seated at a spinning-wheel. I made my identity known, and he asked me what I wanted of him. In answer I told him all that had happened during the past six years.

"'Thou dost not hate the foreigner?' he questioned.

"'No, Mahatmaji.'

"And Gandhi answered, 'Then thy course is easy.'"

My brother paused. "Dost thou remember," he asked me abruptly, "what those men who went out to see Jesus said on their return? Their words were, 'Never man spake like this man.' Such is Gandhi," said my brother slowly—"Never man spake like him. . . .

"'Mahatmaji!' I answered, 'I come to tell you that our party will not put an obstacle even as large as a blade of grass athwart your path. The descendants of Gods and sages understand: 'Soul-force against sword-force.'

"Since then," said my brother, "I have known Gandhi very intimately. There is no doubt that he is a man of passionate purity, so pure that any fault casts a shadow on his consciousness as the breath of the beholder blurs the surface of the mirror before him. He knows long before the rest of the world where he has hurt his Truth, and sets about to purify himself through fasting and prayer, and his self-chastisement is swifter than any devised for him by others, though he is delicate as a reed flute and slow as an elephant.

"I did not return by the same road I took to Gandhi. I wished to study the country and learn how the people felt about their saintly leader, so I came back by a long and tortuous route, telling my friends everywhere that truce must reign throughout the country.

"It took me six weeks to cover the distance. The tour convinced me that the common people were not stirring in their sleep, but were truly awake. I never knew before such widespread alertness in the man in the street. And it has grown apace since.

"On reaching Mathura again, I drew out the terms of a treaty with the Government and sent them to the intermediary whom I have mentioned, in French India. The negotiations went on for a long time. About the first of November, the treaty was ratified, and we began to come out of hiding.

"The terms were these:

"First, that we should be called henceforth Nationalists and not anarchists or terrorists.

"Second, that the Government should drop all its charges against us as we gave up all activities against it.

"Third, that any one of our party might hold office in the State or in private companies without being disqualified by past record.

"The next problem was how to send my followers home. All the money I had earned and all the money I could collect, I spent equipping each one decently for the return journey.

"During the War, I had believed in violent revolution and worked for it. But the Germans spoilt it all. We did not want a change of master. If we desired the British to go it was because we could not endure that any foreigner should rule us. But we failed to bring about that end, and with Mahatma Gandhi a new tide of activity had set in. A strong and new consciousness has now begun to operate through the multitudes. All we can do is to stand aside and give this new consciousness a chance to work itself out."

"Yet dost thou believe in non-co-operation?" I asked.

"If the masses, who are the majority of the sons of India, believe it," he retorted, "who are we to criticize them? We the old militants must step aside and let them work out what they feel to be their own programme. There is plenty to do. We too are busy. Without actually taking leadership in non-co-operation we can serve our country in many ways."

"In any other land," I thought, "one political party would not give up its work because a saint is leading another party. I can't imagine the Democrats retiring because a new Lincoln came to lead the Republicans."

"We are working now to preserve India's culture," went on my brother. "We believe that the peasants

who number eighty per cent. of the total population of India are the real Indians. All our folk-songs, folk-music, folk-dances, and religious poetry have been preserved and kept intact by the peasantry. They alone are unsullied by foreign influence. Now if we can save them from malaria and other diseases, as well as preserve them from cut-throat creditors, we shall have done our duty. So we are building co-operative farms and co-operative rural credit societies. Already our co-operative farms are being installed by neighbouring farmers. We aim to stamp out malaria completely. It is a terribly exhausting disease, and if it is not destroyed, all of rural India will die of it soon. That in turn will deprive us of the most important part of our culture, which will be a great loss to humanity at large."

"Well," I remarked, "for active revolutionists you have chosen a pretty mild rôle."

"We are not out to play the romantic revolutionary," he answered. "We want to save India."

"How did malaria come into India?" I interposed.

"When a peasant hears that a railway is to be put through his country he laments, 'Ah, with the fire-chariot comes the sickness.' And the peasant is right. The necessary construction of the railway breaks up the intricate network of small canals and ditches which for centuries kept the country drained and freed from mosquitoes. And when this primitive drainage is ruined and none put in its place, the water stagnates, mosquitoes are born, and malaria results. In half a century we have been reduced to a dying race by malaria; it is imperative that we should save the masses from death or from living on in a half-dead condition. In order to do this we must have money;

we cannot accept the reforms instituted by Montague and Chelmsford because they do not give us control over the national purse, and necessity demands that we have it. Our very existence depends on it."

"If you control the national purse, it is tantamount to driving Great Britain out of India," I protested.

"Yes, but I was going to add," said he, "that Great Britain's Indian investments should be guaranteed and safeguarded. The possession of India gives Britain such a prestige throughout the world that the British cannot afford to lose her, and thereby sink to the status of France or Holland. It is natural that Britain should do everything in her power to keep India, but no doubt India's best interests are in conflict with those of England, and probably the only way out of the difficulty is a compromise such as home rule with full dominion status. Under home rule, as enjoyed by Canada and Australia, India will become the mistress of her own home, and at the same time Britain's Indian investments will be thoroughly protected.

"To Britain, India is a question of imperial prestige and safety of investment. British rule tries to be benevolent, but what the country needs is self-rule; not that India may be more benevolent, but that she may make her own mistakes, and learn by them. If expert Englishmen go on ruling India, they will learn a great deal at our cost, and the people of this land will remain error-proof and inexperienced as ever. But if we rule ourselves, we shall all make the mistakes that the British do and learn by them. India is not longing to destroy law and order; but she is eager to grow by using and making her own law and

order. The Chinese used to bind their women's feet in early childhood, only to hurt the whole nation for ages to come. The same fate is overtaking us.

" Now, of course, the masses are thoroughly aroused. They are demanding their rights and equality. Before they pass beyond equality to a demand for superiority they should be placated by the bestowal of dominion status. That will be the way of wise statesmanship. The psychological moment for home rule is passing now ; in half a dozen years from now, no Indian will be satisfied with it as a solution of the problem. Is there no statesman in Britain who can seize the present moment ?

" Thou hast seen the factories on the banks of the Ganges ? There were none fifty years ago ; there were only a few twenty-five years ago ; but look at them now. This is all the rich men make of the beauty of our sacred river. We in India are not rebelling against Great Britain, but against the gluttony of the whole Western civilization. Think of our Mother Ganges put to such a use—this holy river that rang with the teachings of Buddha, and on whose shores Asoka built his temples ; for thousands of years our ancestors have bathed in her, and when they died their ashes were thrown into her swift currents to be carried down to the sea—then contemplate the present ! No wonder our masses believe that the Western civilization is an evil thing. India's soul is in danger."

" If that is thy meaning," I replied, " the soul of the entire East is in danger. China and Persia are threatened in the same way."

" True," he responded. " The materialist is bent on destroying beauty and holiness. Is not that the

reason that Gandhi is looked upon not only as an Indian prophet, but as the 'trumpet of a new prophecy' for all Asia ? "

One of the last questions that I asked my brother was whether he believed Bolshevism could succeed in India.

" No, no," he exclaimed with horror. "Bolshevism is a philosophy of acquisitiveness. India has to teach the world Renunciation. One cannot find God on the road to Mammon."

" Since thou hast travelled over so great a part of India for years, tell me," I asked, " what is thy conclusion about the unrest to-day ? What is the essence of the people's life and outlook ? "

" I will answer thy last question first. There is no doubt that the people of India are restless. Yet in spite of all the impending change, every peasant or artisan whom I have met and studied believes that life is a spiritual and not a material force. They all believe beyond any argument, that this life is a bridge to immortality.

" As for the exact temperature of the Indian unrest to-day, that is hard to tell. The feverish feelings of the country are too volatile ; the mercury goes up and down too often and too rapidly nowadays. Even an expert like myself, if he wishes to record the pulse of the country from time to time, must tour two-thirds of it at least twice a year. It is no more the same static eternal India that thou didst leave behind thee thirteen years ago."

My brother's story was finished, and the day was breaking in the eastern sky. The odours of the city changed from the mere odour of dust into that of smoke. The sun rose copper-coloured and hot. Factory

whistles blew all along the river bank. Voices echoed in the streets, and the bells of our temple rang, announcing morning meditation. We went down from the roof to perform our ablutions in the sacred river.

On our way, I asked my brother, "What is thy explanation of the supernatural experiences that thou hast had during all thy life?"

"Why call them supernatural—that is a Western phrase," he answered. "To us, the natural is but a projection of the supernatural, and the supernatural but the continuation of the natural. All experiences are both. I think that they are not contradictory terms. Even eating and sleeping are supernatural experiences. In our country, not only Gods and men, but even animals are supernatural, for they all have souls."

CHAPTER XIII

THE HOUSE OF THE RICH

THAT some of my old friends had grown rich in India while I was in America was no fault of mine. So far as I knew, the War had so upset the economic life of India that some new groups had to become wealthy, and I admit I was a bit elated to find among them one or two friends of my own!

Nilu had begun life as a college professor, but now, at the age of thirty-six, he owned three factories and had seventeen hundred souls in his employ. I could not believe my eyes when I beheld the lad of five feet six, now grown somewhat rotund, jumping from his Rolls-Royce car! I simply could not entertain the vision as a reality, but there he was—coming to me with hands stretched out to take mine in his. How could he be my boyhood's friend and grow rich? Impossible!

He was stout, and pale-brown in complexion, with a round, beneficent-looking face. The short, sharp nose was pugnacious, no doubt, but not the rest of him! Girlish eyes, large and deep and dark, an even brow, high, smooth, care-free forehead, and moderately marked chin—there was not a feature to indicate anything but the college professor. His mouth was small, its bow-shaped lips were like those of a child of six or seven. How could such a helpless fellow manage to be clever enough to be rich? To my mind, the acquisition of wealth presupposes a Mephistophelian ability, reinforced by a Napoleonic will-to-power; yet lo, here was a rich man who was Napoleonic in nothing but in stature!

I asked Nilu to be seated on the floor of our temple

porch. He had come all the way from Calcutta to the edge of the town where we dwelt. Before us were a few trees, a green pasture, and the Ganges where people were bathing.

I spoke to him in English; for I couldn't imagine any other of our languages suited to the Rolls-Royce car.

"It is very kind of you to come to see me, particularly now that you are so busy."

He fanned his face with his silken chudder. He was dressed in exquisite silk robes of ivory yellow from which his brown head rose like the fragment of a statue on an ivory pedestal. After having fanned himself for a while, he spoke as if reminiscencing.

"I wish I had my old courage to be poor, and had stuck to teaching history, but I cannot afford to be poor, and so I have no time to live. Look here, I want you to see something of our rich people. I shall put that car of mine at your disposal."

"But, my dear fellow, I do not need your car," I answered earnestly.

"Childish as ever," Nilu admonished me. "If you do not own a car you are no gentleman. That is one of the rules of our set."

"But I am a Brahmin; that I consider is passport to any place." I spoke loftily.

"Oh, no, my boy. That was all right before the War, but between the War and Gandhi the Brahmin's prestige has been knocked into a cocked hat. The rich, particularly the newly rich, are the model of our life. You must have the trappings of a rich man. Don't demur, old fellow, I shan't hear of it. In an hour, another car will come to fetch me. It is, let me see, four in the afternoon; I shall expect you to dine with us at seven. Use the car as your own as long as

you are here, it will facilitate your entrée into many exclusive places.

"By the bye, have you any telephone in this temple?"

That made me furious. "Telephone in the house of God!" I exclaimed.

"Of course not! How stupid of me," he said to himself, taking not the slightest notice of my indignation. "Well, I shall have to telegraph you from time to time. I want to show you what our Indian hospitality is. Let me just take charge of you; I want you to see what has happened here while you have been thirteen years in America. Golly! What a waste of time! I myself wasted three years in Harvard, but knew better than to stay. Yet I must say that America taught me how to get where I am."

Here my friend looked at his watch. It wanted some twenty minutes to five. He said, "I married out of caste, as you know. My wife is coming to meet you."

"What! A Hindu girl going about alone in a motor-car?" I questioned in amazement.

"What do you want her on—an elephant?" Nilu hit back. "You have kept your mediævalism alive in spite of America. Why shouldn't my wife go about in her husband's car?"

"Look here!" I began a long harangue. "I am very much obliged to you for your car. I am glad that you will show me the life of the new rich, but let us talk Bengali. Why are you so restless? India is eternal. Why look at your watch? Why should you count the minutes in Eternity? There is the Ganges; she flows on now that the bathers are very few with the same inevitable ease as when the bathers were many in the morning.

" The English tongue that we have spoken registers only the froth and scum of our being. Now give thy heart's inmost talk. Let the wing of forgetfulness bear away the burden of work. Thou knowest that I long for the light of thy soul in the gaze of thine eyes, brother. It is an age since we dreamt on the green fields and by the rushing waters. I care not if thou art riding the stallion of wealth or walking on the unsandalled feet of poverty; only tell me thine inmost story, thy heart's longing, and thy spirit's dream. I meet thee across the river of boyhood on the shore of middle age! Tell me if thy head rests on the pillow of serenity and thy limbs repose on the couch of friendliness and love."

" Shiva Vishnu! Dost thou know I spend all my days speaking English?" he burst forth. " I deal with English firms; they send men who are ignorant of any tongue save their own, and I speak better than they. The hours of the day I waste talking alien speech! My soul has no time. My heart knows no serenity. My head rests—if rest that be—on the pillow of care. Gunga, mother of waters, I never see; I bathe in my private bath; I work in my private office. I am alone—lonely as I used to be in solitary confinement when the British put me in prison on my return from America at the inception of the War."

" Did they charge thee with treason? Wert thou tried?" I asked.

" Nay, brother," he answered. " In the time of that insane slaughter, the State turned the key on anyone it suspected in any place it saw fit. I, among others, was never tried, and I was released after four years, when it suited the convenience of the State."

" How many were you?"

"We were fifteen in one beauty parlour (exact translation of Shrighar). At first they put us in solitary cells in order to make us confess what we might know. There I meditated on God, but somehow that did not help to soften the hearts of our jailers, so we all began a hunger-strike. I fasted sixty days. Rama, Rama, that broke the resistance of our jailers! Those protectors of peace did not wish to have us die, so when the third score of days passed and I would not break my fast, they gave us what we wanted and let us have our way in the King's Hotel, as we called the jail. From now on we had books, papers, good food —and no more solitary confinement, and my soul could dream untrammelled by telephones and unsought by visitors."

"It is strange that India's Harvard and Oxford graduates have given more of themselves to their country than Indians from other Western Universities," I remarked.

Nilu answered, "True, very true. Harvard University at present has contributed more men that follow Gandhi's teachings than any other American University where Hindus have studied. Harvard has the greatest prestige in India; for it has supplied us with the largest number of jailbirds!" he concluded in English.

Just then my friend's wife arrived in her car. She wore a beautiful sari of violet fringed with gold. I noticed that she had slippers but no stockings—her bronze-coloured ankles needed no covering. . . .

It thrilled me when she knelt down and took the dust from my feet. Ah, still to be honoured as a Brahmin—what a privilege! I was on the verge of tears. I blessed her: "Be thou thy husband's jewel of pride. Bear him royal sons."

Then all three of us took off our slippers and climbed the cool cemented stairway to the shrine proper two flights above. There we bowed to Krishna, then sat on the porch in silence for a time, until my sister came from our adjoining house to greet Nilu's wife. She offered us sweetmeats from the remnants of the noon offering to the god.

Nilu's wife touched the sacramental morsel to her forehead first, as a salutation to it, then put it in her curving mouth.

It was a pity they could not linger, but the Rolls-Royce stayed behind for my use. Again that violet-draped woman bowed to my sister and to me, took the dust from our feet, and went.

" Is there anything more beautiful than the good old courtesies ? " I said to her husband, who saluted us after, following her example. I blessed them both. As they climbed into their car, Nilu said in English, " You know this salutation is a beautiful business for you Brahmins ; but we, who are not Brahmins, feel as if our backs would break ! "

At seven o'clock, armoured in a starched shirt and a dress suit, I arrived in *my* Rolls-Royce at the door of a palace. It was built like the temple of Tanjore which looks a little as though it belonged to the best period of the French Renaissance. Electric lights were blazing away inside the building. As I entered, about half a dozen hands took my hat from me. " Mahadeo," I said to myself, " this is enough to kill a dozen multi-millionaires." I crossed the lower court of pure brown stone, and reached the sumptuous staircase at the other end. On the veranda of the second floor I found at least fifty men in evening dress and as many women in gorgeous saris, all the

wealth of Ormuz and of Ind glittering from their necks, arms, and heads. What jewellery! Of course, they had bought art—they could not make it. They were all speaking English. "Is there no way of telling them," I said to myself, "that it is not our language?" Just then I looked up and, reflected in a great mirror, I saw myself in my evening dress, and realized that in that garb one must not speak an Oriental tongue. The long wings of Bengali would be broken like a butterfly's by the short, tight hardness of that costume. "So English it must be, Rama, Rama!" said I.

Nilu and his wife came forward from the other end of the room, and took me in charge. This time we shook hands in Western style: how abominable in India, between Indians! Yet, there was my dress suit——!

Very few of the guests had been to America; the majority were from Oxford and Cambridge, as their English accent betrayed. The Americans were effusive and demonstrative, saying to each other, "Gee, I am tickled to death to meet you again. It gets me why so few Indians go to American colleges." The English University graduates expressed themselves in a matter-of-fact manner, "Is that you? Nice you could be here to-night. Oh, I see, you have been stopping at Naini, visiting S——. Topping place, Naini."

A few too poud to go out of their own country for an education had been to Indian colleges—brilliant men, speaking Bengali, in spite of their Western dress to-night.

"The Gods are kind. What bliss to find thee here. Support me with thy strength, lest I faint at thy feet, borne down by pleasure!"

Then the answer: "The river current of life is

cruel if we pause not to greet a friend. To moor one's boat awhile and to behold a beloved face is the only respite from the inexorable tide, and to behold thee again is to receive reassurance from a god."

In a short time we drifted into the large dining-room. It was enormous. The tables were set in Western style, but the food was purely Indian. About thirty waiters dressed in immaculate white and turbaned in red waited on us. The ceiling of the room was high, as must be in all houses in the tropics, but the walls were painted and panelled in a Western mode; imagine a series of Watteau's "Cythereas" reproduced on English paper by a mediocre English designer! Against these horrors plastered on a hot wall moved the faces of the bearded brown waiters.

"How *could* they?" you ask. But do not forget that these people can do anything, for they belong to that universal and all-powerful class of new rich who, substitute factories for a copse by a stream, whether they be in Europe, America, or Asia. Throughout the world, their thoughts follow the same direction. They are infallibly alike.

All of us were seated at many small tables. At mine were Nilu, his wife, a Doctor (an M.D. from the Chicago University), an Indian Novelist, flat-faced as a Chinese Mandarin, who sat at table as a stork on its tall legs by a river, and our hostess's twin sister, a Poetess—a rich widow, I learned, who wrote for the pleasure of writing, and who had been to America, but had received her education in India. Like our hostess, she had a delicate aquiline nose, oval face, a mouth like the Botticelli Madonna of the Magnificat, deep black eyes, and hair combed smooth and tied in a knot at the back of the head; but she had a harder glitter.

Both wore ornaments in their hair ; our hostess's was a red rose, the scarlet thing large as the fist of a boy of fifteen gleaming out of her jet black coils.

The Doctor was a Kashmiri, with all the dignity and appearance of Augustus. Since he knew very little Bengali, we spoke Hindi or English.

We ate twenty-six courses, of which nineteen were vegetable preparations, three sweets, one meat, and the rest fish. There was some champagne ; but very few drank it. It seemed to be the only Western product that was not taken over wholesale.

Our conversation was more revealing than our appearance. We discussed authorship, and the Poetess said in Hindi : " The elephant's walk is stately, because it has to carry itself. Literature means the ability to carry one's weight in the lanes of expression. If you have a weight, you will carry yourself well. If you have not——"

" That pleases a scientist," the Doctor broke in in English. " I am not so sure that you are wanted—you literary souls. India needs doctors and factories—two things the Occident has acquired already. Poetry exists no more in literature but in science. Whitman--"

" Doctor," said our hostess, the rose and the pearl in her hair trembling a little, " you may cure my baby of illness, but when he goes to sleep I have to sing to him. Is not that literature ? "

But the Novelist flared up. " Literature is both an art and a science, as science is also an art. All Western literature is worthless, but in Dostoievsky art is keener than science. What did you doctors know of Prince Muiskin or Dmitri, until Dostoievsky gave sight to your blind science and pointed out their existence to you ? "

Here I interrupted to speak to my host who was leaning back and looking about. He was not eating much ; he had lost his digestion in the rush of making a fortune in two and a half years. "Look here," I said, "you used to care for books, but now you care only to uproot beautiful forests and build forests of chimneys."

He pondered a bit, then said slowly "The factory is bound to come to Asia, as it came to Europe : I know my history, and I conclude that we should exploit the opportunity. I who taught History for £20 a month and pretty nearly killed myself at it, can now clear ten times more in half the time. If a fool like me can do it, think of men who really have the commercial genius and how m ch more they can achieve!"

"But is it worth achieving ' asked the Poetess, whose diamond bracelets clinked against the glass as she sipped some water from it.

"Worth achieving!" Nilu exlaimed. "If we don't achieve it we shall be wiped off the map. Our nationalism may be inspired by Gandhi's soul ; sooner or later it is men like myself who will give it the nourishment and sinews that will win the day. So let us pit our capitalism against Europe's, and we are bound to win, as Japan has done."

"Better dirty our own house ourselves than let the foreign hog in to do it," said the Doctor brutally.

The Poetess, with an exquisite gesture of her hand, brushed away an almost visible horror from before her eyes.

After dinner was finished, and we had adjourned to the ballroom, I saw on the veranda, for the first time in my life, among the couples that were sitting

out Bengali women smoking. But Western women smoke; since it does no harm to them, why should I object to their Eastern sisters doing the same?

I was relieved that neither the Poetess nor her sister danced, and would consent to withdraw into a corner far away from the sound of jazz and talk.

I asked Nilu's wife, "What do you make of all these rapid changes that are altering India?"

Smiling, she replied, "My son is what I give to India. I do not trouble about the rest." She raised her exquisite small hands to her forehead. "If what we touch we cannot make noble, how can we improve what is out of reach? I praise God for simplifying my task for me. Will you excuse me if I go upstairs now and see how he is sleeping?"

Then she left us, her bracelets sparkling as she drew about her her cerise robe and veil.

"Is she not beautiful?" I said. "The Indian woman's dress flutters like the wings of a kingfisher."

The Poetess replied, "She is beautiful because her heart is full. She has passed through terrible suffering."

"What do you mean?"

She answered quietly, "Her husband was away from her in America three years, and when he landed in India he was immediately imprisoned and held for nearly four long years in perpetual danger of being put to death. She had to bear it all alone, helpless."

"That, also, is his power," I murmured. "He too gives me a sense of it which comes only from suffering."

"How happy they are now!" she went on, absent-mindedly. "He starved, meditated, and starved again in jail: all that has become coined into the gold of strength. No matter what he touches