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BELOW THE SURFACE

By Major-General Fendall Currie

BARRISTER AT-LAW LATE COMMISSIONER IN OUDH
AUTHOR OF "INDIAN LAW EXAMINATION
MANUAL," "MANAGEMENT OF
ESTATES" ETC

"Errors, like straws, upon the surface flow;
He who would search for pearls, must dive below

DRYDEN

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Chapter I

A DAY'S WORK

"In India a man is judged by his worst output, and another man takes all the credit of his best as a rule."—*Kipling's Plain Tales*

FORTY years' experience in India, daily intercourse with the people, and an intimate acquaintance with the Courts of India necessarily brings one in contact with scenes and phases of Indian life, the record of which may not be altogether devoid of interest to those who have not been in the East. The people's thoughts are as far apart from ours "as is the sunset from the morning dawn." As a writer, looking on the comic side, has said: "Even in small things we are antipodes! Whatever an Englishman will do standing, a native will do sitting. The former beckons by moving his finger upwards, the latter by pawing the air downwards. We chirrup to a

horse to make it go, a native chirrups to it to make it stop. When an Englishman has been using an umbrella, he rests it against the wall, handle upwards; but a native puts it handle downwards. If we wish to put a thing down, we do so on the nearest table; a native, if undisturbed, puts a thing down on the ground. We write from left to right, the Hindoo from right to left; the leaves of our books turn to the left, theirs to the right. In civilized places the shepherd drives his sheep before him; in India he makes one of the flock, or goes in front. Even the birds are contrary to Western nature: the robins of England wear red on their breasts, in India they wear red under their tails." An able critic, approaching the subject from another side, expresses the same idea as follows: "The great working power for union in the West is religion; religion in India perpetuates division. We are taught by our faith to look on all men as brethren; the Hindu religion denies the brotherhood of men. In most Western religious systems the priest is one of the people, set apart as the servant or agent of a Higher Power to do His work among men on earth; in India the Brahman is a *separate creation*, and is looked on as a God

on earth. In the West, woman is the equal of man; in the East, woman is a chattel without a soul, she is a degraded being, and the Hindu religion encourages this degradation. In England we consider that society is for men; the natives consider the reverse, that men are for society. Thus, society is not as in England made up of a number of separate individual men and women, but is rather the unit, of which the men and women who compose it are fragments. In England most things are done by private enterprise, and the Government carries out the will of the people; in India this is reversed, everything is left to the State, and the people carry out what it wills." Still, this people, so difficult to understand, are well worthy of study and the best we can give of ourselves in their service, always remembering that they "think from right to left."

How did India strike so acute an observer as Mark Twain? "There is only one India," he says. "Its marvels are its own, the patents cannot be infringed, imitations are not possible. There is the plague: India invented it; India is the cradle of that mighty birth. The Car of Juggernath was India's invention. So was Suttee. Famine is its speciality. India has

two million gods, and worships them all. In religions, all other countries are paupers; India is the only millionaire. With her everything is on a grand scale. Even her poverty, no other country can show anything to compare with it. It takes eighty nations speaking eighty languages to people her, and they number three hundred millions. On the top of all this, she is the mother and home of that wonder of wonders, *Caste*, and that mystery of mysteries, the Satanic Brotherhood of Thugs."

The life of an Indian official in an Indian District is somewhat varied, for an official so situated, of the time of which I write, was not only a Collector of Revenue, and Judge of Rent cases, but had also to dispose of Civil, Criminal, Probate and Divorce cases, and was, at the same time, the head of the Police and Jail Administration, as well as of the Excise and Customs of his District, and had to administer not only the principles of common law, equity, and Indian statutory law, but Hindu and Mahomedan law as well, and, in not a few instances, the unwritten customary law of his province. It is to be feared that the home public hardly appreciate the diffi-

culties to be grappled with in the application of Western methods to vast areas, peopled by highly conservative races, of different creeds, in different stages of development. And the misfortune of it! men who have visited India for three months in the cold weather pose as authorities on all Indian subjects, and write books, clever no doubt, but sketchy, superficial, and inaccurate; considering the short time in which this knowledge is acquired, and the generalizations in which they indulge, it is hardly surprising that their mistakes are numerous. To the Indian official, work furnishing so many varied problems for solution, and the diversity of subjects to be dealt with, lend an ever-present interest to the daily routine. Perhaps what I am trying to show, can be best illustrated by briefly detailing the work one is called upon to perform in the course of an ordinary day, in an average specimen District. Take then, by way of introduction to the reminiscences I wish to recall, and the individual cases I propose to reproduce, the diary of a single "day's work."

"Called at 5 a.m. Rode out five miles to inquire into a village boundary dispute. On the way home visited the jail to carry out the

sentence on three dacoits sentenced to be hanged; attended a meeting of the Municipal Committee, got back about 8.30, and found the morning post had just arrived. The contents of this morning's bag were as follows:—

"One letter from the Secretary to Government calling for a collection of mosquitoes and other flies that bite men or animals, with a view to determine the possible connection of malaria with mosquitoes. Four letters from the Accountant-General wanting explanation regarding certain minor discrepancies in the Treasury accounts, and asking for a report on the number of sweepers over thirty years' service, and what was 11-15ths of their average salary for the past three years. Three letters from the Board of Revenue stating the view of the Members in Charge on several important points in Revenue Assessment, and Court of Wards management, and asking for opinions on same. Six covers from the Commissioner of the Division returning bills sent for countersignature, decisions in certain rent appeals, and reports called for on Income Tax and Excise returns. Four reports from the District Superintendent of Police asking for orders on certain cow-killing riots, attempts at bribing the police in a murder case.

also regarding an arson case in which the landholder's agent was implicated. Two letters from the Inspector-General of Police asking for a return of serviceable and non-serviceable belts, and the proportion of Punjab Pathans in the Police Force of the district. Three letters from the Executive Engineer regarding sites for Government buildings. Estimates for certain bridges, and a report on a breach in a dam near the river bank. Two dockets from the Civil Surgeon asking for funds for enlargement of the dissecting-room at the Dispensary, and pointing out that the roof of the dead-house in the Hospital Enclosure required repairs. Two letters from the Inspector-General of Schools regarding lists of candidates for the next Middle Class Examination. Three letters from the Manager Court of Wards regarding the debts of one estate, the release of another, and taking charge of a third. Two letters from the Inspector-General of Jails, the first dealing with steps to be taken to provide intermural labour in the 'lock-up,' and the other asking for a classified list of all prisoners, and statistics as to the amount of vegetable and animal food given to each adult labouring prisoner. One letter from the Government bacteriologist

directing the cleansing of village wells by pouring a certain quantity of Condy's Fluid into them. One letter from the Secretary of the Committee International Exhibition asking for reports on minerals, manufactures, arts, and trades of the district, together with as many specimens as were procurable."

If you will only take the trouble to procure the contents of a single day's post for any District in India, you will find that this is no fanciful made-up list here detailed.

It took about two and a half hours to open, skim the contents of these half-hundred letters, and pass on each a written order to the proper clerk, with initials and dates. Then there was just time for a hasty bath and meal, so as to reach office by 11.30. The first matter to be tackled was the hearing of petitions, some fifty in all, thirty on the Criminal side, and twenty Revenue and miscellaneous. Next came the police reports, and making over of cases to subordinate magistrates for trial. Then there were magisterial reports of various kinds for orders, reports from the police on cases sent to them for inquiry, said reports hotly contested by voluble pleaders. Petitions regarding lost or confiscated property, cattle pounds,

ferries, and seizure of illicit salt by the Customs Department.

About 2.30 p.m. I managed to get on with original case work, finished trying a murder case and commenced the trial of a riot case. When you consider the facility with which false evidence can be procured, and the unscrupulousness with which false charges are trumped up, the task of administering justice on such evidence, given in a foreign tongue, is no easy one.

At 5 o'clock took up, heard, and disposed of three appeals from subordinate native magistrates—here, too, one is surrounded with difficulties, for I have personally known a subordinate magistrate, who took bribes from both sides, decide in favour of the party who paid the highest, and to appease the other side wrote a judgment which could not hold water on appeal—and kept the money paid by both!

Later on, half an hour was spent in signing or initialling all the orders, letters, reports, and statements which had been passed, written, drafted, and prepared during the day, and it was past 6 p.m. before home was reached. But the day's work was by no means finished, for, on arrival at home, one found three or four

office boxes full of letters faired out for signature, and files of correspondence put up with letters, which have to be disposed of before bedtime, so that they may be ready for office early next morning. Even in India the day does not consist of more than twenty-four hours, so to get through his work the official can afford, on an average, three minutes to every ordinary subject brought before him, and ten minutes to decide any important or difficult question, excluding, of course, his case work. The above is some of the business of an ordinary working day. I have, during such a day's work, received a letter about 1 p.m. from one of the residents of the station, saying his child had died that morning, his wife was prostrate with grief, and he himself in bed with high fever, asking me to come over at once, arrange to have a coffin made up by the local carpenter, and bury the child the same evening. On my return home from this mournful mission, I found a letter awaiting me from another resident, saying his infant son was dangerously ill, and I must come over at once and baptise the child. Frequently I have had letters that the writer's ayah had absconded, would I have her arrested and sent back to her

mistress On one occasion a lady said her native wet-nurse had gone off suddenly, and her baby was starving. She did not ask me to capture and send back this absconding wet-nurse, but wanted me to send her a she-donkey, as she understood that ass's milk was the nearest approach to the child's natural food! More than once I have been requisitioned as marriage registrar, to occupy my brief leisure between hearing cases, rushing to committees, explaining "something the Commissioner didn't know," or "the Government didn't understand," in tying the nuptial bond. Occasionally the district officer has to start famine relief, or draw out and carry through a waterworks scheme, or assess a licence tax, or organize a town council, or inaugurate a new municipality; and sometimes he has to remonstrate against Government red tape. Take the following instance: I remember once a public sale of casters from the Cavalry and Artillery at Lucknow. At one of these sales, one of the unfortunate horses was knocked down for four annas (about fourpence), just the value of a maund of grass, when such an article is paid for. The purchaser was a butcher. The butcher cut up the old trooper that had

honestly served Government for over ten years, and sold his flesh to Kanjurs at a pice a seer. The only consolation that the Government could derive out of this affair was that a poor diseased animal, that in his day had done good work, fulfilled even in his death the "great idea" of feeding almost gratis a lazy, wandering, begging class of gypsies. I had up these hippophagous gypsies, and they said "they were ignorant there had been a sale of casters, ignorant that Government sold their old animals to butchers for four annas, ignorant that the horse had been eaten, ignorant that it was horseflesh they had bought." So I reported the matter to the military authorities, suggesting that there should be some rules made for the destruction of diseased, old, useless troopers, but was politely informed that red tape regulations as to the public sale of casters must be carried out.

Surely I was not wrong in saying that a district officer's duties in the balmy East, owing to their infinite variety, can seldom, if ever, become monotonous. They are performed in exile from home and home surroundings; in the majority of instances, far removed from

public opinion, maybe in solitude; at certain seasons, in a climate akin to a Turkish bath, and always surrounded by bribed, blackmail-extorting underlings that one cannot trust. At times the district officer is made to feel the truth of Kipling's cynical estimate, that "in India a man is judged by his worst output, and another man (probably a secretary picnicing at the hills, under the deodars) takes all the credit of his best as a rule." Still, notwithstanding that a low rate of exchange, a growing family in England to provide for, fevers, cobras, and cholera more or less engage his leisure moments, he does his work honestly —get the credit for it who may—he never fails his superiors, which is fortunate for his superiors; for we know on good authority "that native help has strict limitations." If asked to make a collection of malaria propagating mosquitoes for the Museum at Paugulpore, for the benefit of ages yet unborn, and to report on the localities from whence these mosquitoes were obtained, or to write a note on the native methods of adulterating cow-dung-fuel cakes, he does his level best to satisfy this thirst for information. All the high officials, from a Secretary of State to a

Lieutenant-Governor, say, "the district officer is the backbone of the Administration," and straightway, instead of giving him the chance to learn all about his district, and gain by personal intercourse the confidence of the people, they keep him tied to his desk writing voluminous reports which nobody ever reads, and compiling returns and statistics three-fourths of which are of the most hopeless inutility. Reports! Returns!! Statistics!!! for the weeding out of which, as a matter of routine, extra establishments have to be annually employed. If only some "Bara Lat Sahib" would smash up secretariat cliques; do away with the frequent transfers of heads of districts; banish to the limbo of oblivion *unnecessary* report writing, and give the district officer time and opportunity to maintain a close touch with native sentiment and thought, he would greatly strengthen "the backbone of the Administration," at the same time reduce the D.P.W. Budget for Record Rooms, and be able to dispense with half the printing establishment.

Personal influence is what the Government of India stand in need of to-day. This is a subject alone on which a chapter

might be written. It is asserted in some quarters that the men of the present day have not the same sympathy with the natives that the former generations had. This kind of comparison, like "the poor" we always have with us—this is not peculiar to India or the Civil Service. Everywhere either the past is lauded and the present belittled or *vice versâ*. It all depends on the critic's temperament or digestion. This question of "sympathy" between the rulers and the ruled in India appears to have been a peg in the past as well as in the present for exaggerated self-complacent sermons. I am fairly acquainted with Sleeman's writings, have read Bishop Heber's Journal, and looked up Malcolm's Instructions for information and guidance, and the conclusion forced on me is that the present generation, living under a fiercer light of public opinion, is undoubtedly leading a purer life on the whole, and that courtesy towards natives, so far from having deteriorated, has distinctly improved. The district officer of to-day knows a deal more about his district than the district officer of the older time could possibly know, naturally, because the former has far greater means of knowing. Forty years ago it was impossible

to know more than what the native subordinates cared to divulge; now facility of communication has increased, thereby increasing one's means of information. A spirit of independence is springing up amongst the natives that had no existence a generation or two ago. If there be any apparent want of sympathy, the fault lies, not with the men, but the system. I knew and served with the older generation, and have passed a quarter of a century or more associated with the latter. Times have changed, the conditions of life half a century ago and now are widely different. In former times England was far away, the hills difficult of approach; now England and the hills are within easy reach. Centralization has overwhelmed the individual; hence loss of personal influence. Departments have increased, as also the tale of daily work. The district officer of to-day is the bond-slave of many masters. The bacteriologist wants him to go about pouring Condy's Fluid down village wells; he is a wholesale brewer, and has to look after the ganging of liquors, marking of casks, and corking of bottles; he has to dry nurse district boards and municipal committees, to collect calves for lymph, and hunt up natives to be

vaccinated, and to undertake the reformation of criminal tribes. Often as not, oftener than not, he has to run a district in all its departments without any European assistant, and sometimes he has to make a periodical land settlement at the same time into the bargain; he is the compiler of statistics, the solver of difficult acrostics, the writer of voluminous reports, and is never left long enough in one stay to get to know the people or to gain their confidence. The days of patriarchal life are extinct as the dodo; the free, unfettered life of the old district officer is a dream of the past.

Owing to the introduction of the telegraph, railways, and the spread of education, the old so-called personal government cannot exist in these days; but to say that the present-day official has less sympathy towards the people under his charge than his predecessor had is to say that which is not true. Speaking from lengthened experience, I can assert that I have known the district officer of to-day, not only under exceptional circumstances, not only in times of emergency, not only in the time of famine, or the day of pestilence, or the hour of disease, but in his daily humdrum life of exile

in out-districts, far removed from public opinion, for conscience' sake and for the sake of the people under his charge, doing heroisms, fidelities, and self-sacrifices far greater than many that find a place in the Government Gazettes. The charge not unfrequently means want of partiality. Give him a fair field and no favour, loose him from his desk-strings, let him remain long enough in his district to learn all about it and gain the confidence of the people, ease him of his report writing, statement compiling, statistic collecting, worry him less and trust him more, the Administration will benefit and the people be more contented.

For years work has been accumulating to such an extent as to preclude the district officer from freely going about the district studying the people under his charge, hearing and learning their wants; he has had instead to go through the drudgery of writing reports, collecting statistics, mastering laws passed one day to be changed the next. Look the matter square in the face, which is the better way: to study the people, gain their confidence, help and advise them, remedy a wrong here, supply a want there, or to sit tied to a desk writing

over and over again, in a dozen different ways, the same thing subordinates have already said in half a dozen different ways, elaborating statistics and drawing out misleading averages? A man who is cursed with what Ali Baba terms "the true paralytic ink flux, a kind of wordy discharge or brain hemorrhage," is a nuisance in the Secretariat; in the district he is a calamity, and yet the Government had been fostering the microbe. Fortunately Lord Curzon has put his foot down on this, as well as the official oligarchy, which had become supreme in every department of public life, and has thereby gained the confidence of district officers and the respect of the natives of the country.

Chapter II

AN INDIAN VILLAGE

"The hot, dry gust of summer's passion
Is gone, as thirst from the drenchen ground;
Long suits of toil are the pleas in fashion,
And peasants' cares to their ploughs are bound."

Pekin.

AN ordinary village is more or less a collection of mud huts, on the walls of which are stuck patches of cow-dung to dry, and near these huts are high, triangular-shaped mounds of dry cow-dung, which are indented on for fuel. On the outskirts of the village is a grove of mango trees; the approach road is a worn, dusty cattle track, which in the rains is more or less a muddy slough. Sometimes this track is fringed with strong upstanding elephant grass, with fine, soft, feathery grey plumes. This grass is used by the villagers for the purpose of thatching. The houses are built of mud, tile or thatch-roofed, an easy prey to fires, accidental and incendiary. The pits from

which this mud has been excavated are used as refuse bins during the hot weather, and are full of slimy green water during the rains. The lands immediately adjoining the village are the best manured, and carry the heaviest crops. The conservancy arrangements are rudimentary, more so even than the Mosaic "dry earth" system, and are carried out by the village sweeper, assisted by pariah dogs, pigs, jackals, and vultures. Sanitary arrangements *nil*. The Indian villager knows nothing about "prevention being better than cure," and when illness seizes him is a fatalist. If the plague appears, and he is advised to modify some of his habits, he says, "What matters it? what can I do? God sent the plague, and God will take it away; though perhaps some civilian will get the credit —and a C.I.E." The reference to the C.I.E. is pardonable; the native knows this order was originally intended for him. No villager has ever been made a C.I.E., and since a knighthood has been added to this Order, Europeans have plumped for it.

In the centre of the village you come across a "one-and-a-half" storied house, built of sun-burnt bricks, with a flat roof more or less cracked, with young pipul trees growing out of

it. This house has a thatch "lean to" verandah on wooden supports, surrounded by a mud-walled courtyard, called the *choupal*. On one side of this verandah reposes an old cane-bottomed palki, covered with dust, the headman's "carriage and four." The other side of the verandah is laid down with straw, where the menservants sleep and keep their pots and pans. Their cooking is done in *chulas*, or small mud fireplaces, erected against the inner wall of this enclosure. This, the most pretentious structure in the village, is the headman's house. The headman of the village, whose serfs the rest of the community are, paying him rent for their fields and dues on their trades or appointments, is the fountain of justice. For his decision are brought to him private quarrels, libels, slanders, caste questions, petty larcenies, and so on. No costly court fees, no laws' delays, no intricate technicalities, no waste of time, no leaving home occupations for a distant Court. Better if there was more "justice within the gate," if its borders could be enlarged. Unfortunately, the tendency in the past has been to curtail rather than expand this patriarchal system. The best way to set about giving freedom to

the masses would be by restoring the old village system—giving each village its own headman as an officer responsible to the State. The inquiry into the above-mentioned cases is held by the headman, aided by a *punchayet*, or jurors, who know all about the people they are dealing with, and whose interest it is to put an end to feud and friction. Their proceedings are public, no hole-and-corner business. The "Court" is held at the village well, or in the shade of the adjoining grove. All who so desire can attend and have their say; there are no rules of evidence—common sense, equity, and good conscience are their guides. I speak generally—of course there are exceptions—I would back the decision of such a Court, on such cases as are brought before it, to be oftener right than the decision in similar cases in our regular Courts, surrounded as these are by law touts, whose fees are paid by the pleader, not the litigant; by bribed *amlah*, who take service more for the pickings they can get than the pay attached to the post; by crowds of hungry middlemen, unscrupulous, rapacious underlings, uneducated, greedy vakils and muktears, whose aim is to throw dust into the eyes of the Court and, for their own ends,

foment litigation as much as possible. Moreover, the "court within the gate" knows nothing about statistics, and does not, like some of our native magistrates, scamp work so as to obtain low "average durations." Surely it should be our object, as far as possible, to give the villagers cheap and speedy justice Our present machinery of "procedure" is too cumbrous, too costly, too intricate, the freaks and vagaries of the Courts in legal interpretations too perplexing. There is too much law, too little justice. Our legal technicalities ruin thousands, where the common sense and the local knowledge of the punchayet would save nine-tenths of these victims, and tend more to inculcate local self-government than all the municipal committees of Joe Hukms, Apki Ikbals, and Rai Munzoors in the whole of India. An Indian village contains all the elements of self-existence, forms a perfect little commune, is a living entity. The small cluster of mud huts is the inhabited part, all around which is the cultivated or culturable land, or "arable mark"; besides this, there is the waste land or "common mark" for grazing. This last has so decreased that now in many villages there is very little waste land, and practically no grazing.

Now as to the inhabitants. There is the *nao*, or barber, who shaves village heads and armpits, pairs finger-nails and cuts toe-nails, and is the repository of all the village gossip. There is the *lohar*, or blacksmith, with his primitive implements, who makes ploughshares, the *hanswa*, or sickle, with which the crop is cut and suspected female relations' noses cut off; the *khurpa*, with which the grass is scraped, and which is sometimes used with murderous intent against an enemy; and the *ghandasa*, or chopper, intended for cutting chaff and stalks for cattle fodder, but at times utilised for cutting a neighbour's throat. There is the *dhobi*, or washerman, who carries, on diminutive, knocked-kneed ponies or donkeys, the rags and tatters of the village, to be dipped in slimy pools, to be scrubbed with country soap, and beaten on ragged stones—termed washing. There is the *putwari*, or village accountant, his insignia of authority a brass inkstand, in an oblong wooden box containing a knife and some reed pens. He keeps the village accounts, forges receipts, procures false evidence in rent cases, and, when at the District Courts, sells his services as a witness in any case where a practised liar is required. There is

the *chowkydar*, or village watchman—pasi by caste, thief by birth, hence selected to catch thieves and protect the villagers' property. His badge of office, a brass-bound *lathi*, or club, a leather belt, and a chronic irritation of the larynx from sunset to sunrise. His leisure moments, when not perambulating the village making horrible noises, are occupied in assisting neighbouring chowkydars to carry out previously planned burglaries. The chowkydar has a plurality of offices; he is the local birth and death registrar, or "assistant fabricator" of mortuary statistics. There is the *burhai*, or carpenter, who makes plough handles from the babul trees, knocks up a country cart, deals in cart wheels, makes doors for the mud huts, and is "surveyor-in-chief" for the headman's "palace." There are the *cowherds*, who look after the grazing of the village cattle, and sometimes do "a lifting" of their neighbours' cattle on their own account, and, if caught, are taught carpet weaving in the jail. The *kumhar*, or potter, who makes large earthen vessels for storing grain, and smaller ones for household use. He works by mould, by wheel, or by hand, and his profits are small. The *bhurji*, or grain parcher. The *halwai*,

or confectioner, the "Fuller" of the village, only he uses leaves instead of pretty boxes bound with delicate-coloured ribbons, and his *pansipari*, a kind of "Betel Cream Delight," is quite a speciality. The *mochi*, who mends the shoes and makes up skins for oil, sugar, and treacle. The *sunar*, outwardly a silversmith, but really a receiver of stolen goods; his mechanical appliances consist of a few anvils, pincers, scissors, hammer, and a blowpipe. There are (the majority) *the peasant cultivators*, about eighty per cent., who toil through rainless months of scorching wind and glare, through weeks of tropical rains and cold winter days; below these, the landless day labourer, whose occupation is precarious, and when he gets work his remuneration is a handful of grain; and the lowest of all in the social scale, the *koris*, weavers, and *chamars*, the village drudges, who skin the dead cattle and do dirty odd jobs; who, when they want to better themselves, enter the Service as grass cutters in cavalry regiments, and leave their bones on some distant frontier.

The result of an inquiry I once made for Mr. Caird and the Famine Commission totalled out as follows: "Average area of holdings, about

seven acres; seventy per cent. of the cultivators had plough cattle; thirty per cent. had no plough cattle, and either depended on spade labour or, when they could afford it, borrowed the cattle of their neighbours." So you see the system of agriculture is one of *petite culture*. In the middle of the village, under a pipul, tamarind, or banyan tree, stands the village well; round it a broad platform of well-cemented bricks. Here the daily bath is taken by the men, who, naked all save a loin cloth, pour brass pots of water over their bodies, clean their teeth, using for a tooth brush a small twig chewed at one end to loosen the fibres. Here, morning and evening, the old women and young maidens fill their water-pots and retail the village scandal. Once, sometimes twice, a week, the village has a market day; then you see vegetables, grain, cloth, shoes, drugs, condiments, spices, sticks of sugar-cane, trinkets, beads, sealing-wax, bracelets, pewter anklets, skins of oil, sugar, and treacle, sweetmeats, huqqas, and curious little looking-glasses, laid out on grass or fibre mats in the adjoining mango grove. At this weekly fair the villager obtains vegetables, clothes, spices, and other necessaries, for the village

only boasts some two or three so-called, primitive shops, which supply parched grain, oil and tobacco. The villagers' wants are of the very simplest description; as a rule, they derive from their cultivation most of the necessaries of life. Millets and pulses form their chief food supply, with an occasional meal of rice as a luxury. Loud gesticulations, brisk bargainings, and smells various, fill the air at this weekly bazaar. Sometimes in the cold weather you will see a couple of villainous-looking Afghans with cats, hairy dogs, boxes of grapes, apples, walnuts, dried figs, cloth, and warm pushtoo garments, hovering about, trying to do business, and dunning old customers for past goods supplied—Jew-driving, hard bargains do these Afghans make. By the grace of the "Kaiser-i-Hind," the Gracious Queen Empress, and the orders of the head of the district, most villages are blessed with a school—a mud hovel with a thatched roof, where the urchins sit on the floor swaying their little bodies backwards and forwards, monotonously intoning matter out of ill-printed books. The only furniture in the room is a bottomless cane stool, the seat of the master, and a large blackboard, with a piece of chalk attached to it by

a string. Exceedingly precocious are these infants. The parent looks upon the education of his children from a different view to that taken by the Secretary of State; the former has to face unpleasant facts of which the latter is apparently ignorant. To the villager, education is a synonym for starvation. Why? Because, with him, the earnings of his children *are necessary* for the support of the family, and by sending them to school he incurs a loss of thirty per cent. of his income; not, mind you, thirty per cent. of what could otherwise be saved, but thirty per cent. of what is necessary to preserve the family from hunger.

The villager is fond of his children. Maybe he is more careful and kind to his male offspring than his girls; but he loves to have his progeny about him. In the early cold-weather morning, you will see him sitting, his face to the rising sun, his back against the outer mud wall of his hut, the embers of a small fire in front of him, and his infant in his arms. In the day-time, as he ploughs his fields or reaps his crops, you can hear his children's voices hard by in the adjacent mango tope. "It fell on a day that the child went out to his father to the reapers. And he said unto his father,

'My head, my head!' And he said to a lad, 'Carry him to his mother.' And when he had taken him and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then died." In her despair, the distracted mother turns to the ignorant village priest; but what can he do? He has not the power of a humble Tishbite to restore the child to life; and so the little one, wrapped in a white sheet, is carried on a charpoy to the river side, and presently the smoke of the pyre rises to heaven. And at night, on the anniversary of that day, you will see, hanging from a branch of a tree in that grove, an inverted broken *ghurra*, or earthen pot, with a lighted oil wick burning in it—a symbol to those ignorant peasants that the little light has not gone out for ever, but is shining somewhere, a kind of "All Souls' festival":

> "They stretch lame hands of faith, and grope
> And gather dust and chaff, and call
> To what they feel is Lord of all."

Ah! the pathos of it all—toil, death, hope!

In the immediate vicinity of the village is a small temple, sacred to one or other of the deities who "hover and swarm" over the East. Alongside is a more or less fragile bamboo pole with a small red flag attached to the top

of it, and within the temple an idol, or visible sign of the Divinity. Doubtless the uneducated Hindu looks to his idol to influence his fate in some mysterious way, but to call him a heathen, bowing to stock and stone, is absurd. The idol to him is merely a visible sign or symbol, a vehicle to carry his thoughts upwards, a means to assist such aspirations as his soul possesses, much the same as his enlightened Western critics look on their outward and visible signs. If, as regards him, his idol be held to be an outward and visible sign of the want of inward and spiritual grace, then how about the loss of time and temper as to the swinging of a censer, or the lighting of a candle, as regards his would-be critics?

Mr. Benett, in his *Oudh Gazetteer*, remarks: "The dogmatic religion of the people is very simple. They believe there is one Supreme Being, who has many distinct aspects and manifestations. They further believe that in his most benignant aspects he has submitted to several incarnations. In its origin, the religion is an anthropomorphised pantheism; the unity of Nature is recognised in the real unity of God, and all the various and seemingly hostile powers of good and evil of which the natural

world is made up are typified in the different persons of the Divinity—a solution of the problem of life which leaves no place for a devil."

Their religion, to an outsider, is entirely ceremonial rather than ethical. Superstitious? Yes; they are an extremely superstitious people. Only the other day, a woman suffering from leprosy was voluntarily buried alive at Rurki by her husband, her son, and some of the neighbours, in the belief that the sacrifice would stay the transmission of the disease by inheritance to the children. If blight attacks their crops, or a storm destroys their mango blossom, or their cattle get disease, or small-pox and cholera play havoc, it is a spell that has done it, their God is angry, and they deposit flour, or pour libations of water, or place handfuls of rice on the temple threshold; they daub the walls with vermilion, they hang garlands of marigold and jasmine over the lintels of the temple door. In fact, the village temple looks as if there were a perpetual "harvest thanksgiving festival" going on.

Ancient superstitions die hard. Have we no superstitions still here in the West? There was the case of a woman who was confined to

her bed for years because there were hidden in the neighbourhood of her home certain tightly corked bottles containing pins and filthy water. And she only obtained relief when they were found and broken! Again, not so long ago, a farmer believing some animals of his to have been "ill-wished," bled them over a pile of straw, which was then burned, in the hope that the hidden enemy would appear amid the smoke and flame! Why, only the other day, in this year, 1900, there was a case in Somersetshire of two children having been killed by their parents, because they had been "overlooked" by a gypsy, since which time the family had had nothing but trouble and ill-luck. Do not judge the natives too harshly, look a little nearer home, remember that old pagan beliefs are not quite dead even here in England, and that occasions come to light now and again when we have to admit that even the most highly educated of men find themselves acting under the influence of impulses they cannot at all understand.

Superstitious! East, west, north, or south, where is the land that has not at some time teemed with superstitions, wars, and woes? Heathen! Were Manu, the author of the

Hindu Scriptures, and the holy Buddha, whose moral teachings breathe the loftiest aspirations conceived by man, heathens? Their teachings have been prostituted and defiled by uneducated, narrow-minded, bigoted, superstitious, self-seeking priests; but the same misfortune has befallen the teachings of all inspired writers in every age and country. Has there been a creed or religion among men of which this cannot be said?

No, my friendly critic, try and exercise a little more charity, and remember that "the wind bloweth where it listeth, you cannot tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth."

In this land of creeds and races manifold, trackless forests, broad swift rivers, boundless plains, narrow fields, and mud-built villages, where, "under a brazen sky, fierce winds blow, the pest strikes sudden, and hunger slays"—in the spring, and autumn, and winter, bare-headed and barefooted, the villager drives his fragile plough behind small, lean cattle, the survival of the fittest on nothing to eat, diligently scraping the sandy, clayey soil, struggling with Nature for a bare existence. Often starving amongst ripening fields of wheat, barley, peas, grain, tobacco, poppy, and sugar-

cane in the spring; somewhat better off amongst the rice fields and the maize in the autumn; and shivering over a cow-dung fire in the cold-weather mornings and evenings, his leisure moments occupied with litigation, cholera, fever, and ague. These, and his chronic indebtedness, due more to our revenue system than to all the landlords and money-lenders put together, are his drawbacks; but he has certain compensating pleasures. "In the mysterious temple of dawn he is a priest," and, sitting out at night watching his ripening crops, "he communes with the starry crew—the moon, the night wind, and the dew," while many who regard him as a heathen are indulging in midnight orgies, and commencing the next morning with "a head," or "mouth," or "tongue like a nutmeg-grater." He revels in his bathing fairs; here you see him to most advantage—patient, good-humoured, simply amused. (I have, at the Allahabad fair on the Jumna, the Benares fair on the Ganges, the Ajodhia fair on the Gogra, watched hundreds of thousands, half a million, of men, women, and children at a time, holiday-making. I have been in and out amongst them from morn to eve, and never came

across a single drunken soul.) He delights in the music and song of his marriage feasts, and a pull at his own peculiar "cow-dung tobacco mixture" out of a huqqa or a chillum is to him a never-failing enjoyment. He has his faults, but he has his virtues too. He is good-natured, charitable, gentle, docile, patient, uncomplaining, loyal, submissive to authority, industrious, frugal in his habits, and—yes, however ridiculous it may sound to some—I assert that honesty is a characteristic of the native of Oudh and Northern India generally; he carries a stout heart before the enemy, and in the battle-field is faithful unto death. In Africa, China, Burmah, on the snowy heights of Afghanistan, on the sands of the Soudan desert, on the banks of the Nile, on the distant Gilgit and Chitral mountains, have not he and his brethren given their lives for England? Remember the Bailey Guard, and remember Saragheri! It is the villager, the peasant farmer, who replenishes the Treasury and provides recruits for the army. He is *Arkan-i-daulat*, or "the pillar of the empire."

"Wouldst thou scan
The structure's base, discern the origin
Of all the pomp and pageantry that
Win the envy of the world? Behold the man!"

He is second-cousin to "the plinth of the Administration," the gorait. If the Indian Government wants "to know anything," it asks the Lieutenant-Governor, who asks the Commissioner, who asks the district officer, who asks the tehsildar, who asks the putwari, who asks the chowkydar, who sends his assistant, the gorait, to find out. On this foundation, *the gorait*, is the Administration based, and by the "pillar of the State," the villager, is the Indian Empire maintained. Practically we are handing over this material, as a lever, to Bengali babus, the editors of a seditious Press, the members of the Cow Protection League, and a few handsful of windbags like the Congress—mostly exotics of our creation—with which to upset the Empire, as opportunity offers. You will probably say, "*This is rather far-fetched.*" Is it? Does not the recent history of the Indian Mutiny show us how amongst an ignorant people unreasoning panic may spread like wildfire? Only let us get into a "tight place" of grave political complications, on the top of plague, famine, and general agricultural depression, and what line will "these representatives" take? They will merely apply a match to the gunpowder maga-

zine that we have so considerately made over to them. In subsequent chapters on "The Lokil Sluff Microbe," "The Gaorakshani Sabha," and "A Rustic's Point of View," I have given the reasons for my faith. Do you want a parallel? In 1854 we *forced* independence on the Orange Free State. It was not asked for; it was not welcome—and the result? Our liberality flouted, our influence secretly undermined, our downfall schemed for, our fathers, sons, and brothers slaughtered, treason rampant, expenditure in life and money to regain our supremacy enormous. Representative local self-government is being forced on India, on over three hundred million human beings. It was not asked for, and those acquainted with the country and the people know only too well how unwelcome this so-called privilege is—and the result? Time will show. But the writing is on the wall, and it needs no prophet to interpret it to men labouring amongst the masses in the out-districts, and those who come into daily contact with the people. "I speak as unto wise men; judge ye what I say." Only recently a great demonstration was held at Lucknow by the leading Mahomedans, "to protest against the Congress

movement, repudiating the assertion that the Congress represented the views of the people, and pointing out the necessity for counteracting by every legitimate and constitutional means the evil results of the discontent and unrest created by a propaganda which, whatever its expressions of lip loyalty, was subversive of the best interests of British rule in India; regretting that large sums of money were wasted in fruitless agitroversy (*sic*)—good word that *agitroversy*, not to be found in the *Times Century Dictionary*—adumbrating political changes for which the country is not prepared, when the energy now wasted could be more profitably employed in advancing the true regeneration of India by being directed *to the internal reform of the social fabric and the material and moral improvement* of the communities composing the population of the Indian Empire." Who says Representative Local Self-Government? The Mahomedans apparently look on this idea "with profound and sad conviction, as engendering discontent and glossing over social evils, as impeding the true moral progress of the country, and creating a daily widening gulf between the different sections of the people." The Mahomedans, who have had the experience

of some five centuries as rulers in India, fully understand that if the rulers of the land loosen their hold, the rulers of castes merely tighten their own grip; hence their decided views on the Congress Movement and the so-called "Representative Local Self-Government" fad. And who will deny that their views are reasonable and sound?

Chapter III

AN INDIAN CITY

"The old order changeth, yielding place to new."
Tennyson.

A FEW centuries back, a gentleman of the name of Lachman was given a piece of ground on the banks of the river Gumti to squat on. He built himself a hut, collected his brotherhood around him, and called his estate "Lachmanpur." Ere long the Shekhs bundled him out, and built a fort where Lachmanpur had stood, and named it Kila Likna. In this part of the world things were "humming" during the early part of the seventeenth century, adventurers jostling one another. For a century and a quarter the Mahomedans were trying their hands at doing a Government job on their own account. On the whole, the attempt was not successful, and had we not appeared on the scene the probabilities are the Hindus would have jostled *them* out. The Mahomedan

dynasty was started by "the infamous son of a more infamous pedlar," one Sahdat Khan. Lachman's plot must have been a goodish thing, for Sahdat Khan, too, went for that, took over the Shekhs' fort, Kila Likna, and changed the name to Machi Bhawan, taking for his crest "a fish"—highly appropriate. Considering he left a little pile of nine millions sterling when he was cut up, his crest was a fair symbol of his ways! Ten "beauties" followed him as "monarchs of all they surveyed," all rather, some much worse than the infamous pedlar's son. They made no roads, left rivers to be bridged by private liberality, gave no assistance to commerce, fostered no trade, inaugurated no plan of popular education. They were always on the war-path, and game for any loot that came in their way, did a bit of treachery when opportunity and self-interest dictated it, always tyrannized over their unfortunate subjects, and altogether seem to have had a high old time while it lasted. Still, one or two of them made a bid for a supply of houris in the other world by leaving charitable endowments attached to their mausoleums in this. The Hosseinabad endowment runs to close on forty lacs of rupees, and the Shah

Najaff endowment brings in interest of about 16,000 rupees a year. If the houris aren't forthcoming up there, the halt, the maimed, and the blind clamour for their endowment rupees down here.

About the beginning of the eighteenth century, one Saadat Ali Khan, a timid potentate, asked for protection against his own subjects, so Lord Wellesley kindly allowed him a British Resident and British troops to protect him, and thus we got our fingers directly into the Oudh pie. With now and again a curtain lecture from the reigning Governor-General, which was never heeded, matters went on from bad to worse, until Wajid Ali Shah's time. A very much married monarch he, even according to Oriental notions—he beat Solomon's record by about threescore concubines—he might have made the number up to 365, or one for each day of the year. Why stop short at only 360? He squandered his revenues on palaces and gardens for his regiment of wives, and naturally, with such a handful to attend to, he hadn't much time for public business. He was about the most despicable of the bunch that had ruled over this dynasty; he was sunk in effeminacy, and surrounded himself with a

"motley crowd of singers, fiddlers, sorcerers, cock-fighters, negroes, eunuchs, and buffoons." 1856 brought his doom. Oudh was annexed, and Wajid Ali Shah and his harem given a villa on the banks of the Hooghly, on the outskirts of Calcutta. Poor Lord Dalhousie got far more "toko" for obtaining peace, justice, and freedom for some six million down-trodden peasants than ever Gladstone got for sacrificing British interests and a people's liberty at Majuba Hill. Now, for nearly half a century, thanks to Dalhousie, Oudh has been marked red.

It is over forty years since I first saw Lucknow. I had marched over from Cawnpore with some two hundred horses for the Bays, who were then quartered at Dilkusha in the Lucknow Cantonments. It was a fairly exciting march over in those days, as the road was infested with dacoits and marauders of all kinds, and it took us all our time to look after the horses at night and keep an eye on the treasure chest containing the rupees necessary for daily purchases of grain and the syces and grass-cutters' pay. Since then, for thirty-five years, I have had more or less to do with Lucknow—rather more than less. The period between

annexation in 1856 and my first visit in 1859 is recent history. Kaye, Malleson, Gubbins, and others have recorded the doings of one of the greatest of defences in the annals of history; the late Poet Laureate sang of it, and have we not Lady Inglis' interesting and vivid diary of the events of those dark days? The genius of Henry Lawrence, Havelock's brief career of desperate triumph, Outram's self-forgetful gallantry, Aitken's defence of the Bailey Guard Gate, Colin Campbell's generalship. How Kavanagh carried plans and despatches from the Residency to the Alumbagh. The Scotch lassie's intuitive "Dinna ye ken the pipers?" and then the pibroch of the gallant Highlanders breaking on the ears of the relieved garrison. The unparalleled behaviour of those sepoys who stood by us. Are these not household words? This Lucknow is the Indian city of which I would give a brief sketch.

The city lies on the west bank of the river Gumti; at the present time it covers some forty square miles, with a population of about 300,000 of Hindus of all castes, and Sunni and Shiah Mahomedans. Lucknow is the largest city in India outside the Presidency

towns. It is one of the most beautiful and picturesque cities in the world. A luxuriously wooded city, with handsome bridges spanning the river's pretty reaches. A city of fine buildings, broad streets, well-laid-out gardens, shady parks, and large marts. It is still in a transition state, for there are those now living in it who carry with them the memories of the past régime; at the same time, it is feeling the pressure of its impact with Western civilization. A densely populated city, in which meet the extremes of struggling poverty, wasted wealth, and a new order of things; and, as such, ought to be the focus of interest to the student of social and economic problems. It certainly is a place of interest to the cold-weather "globe trotter" and Cook's tourist. It sports a Lieutenant-Governor for some months of every year, and allows the Provincial Legislative Council to meet in its ancient halls—a Council under the obligation to make laws when none are needed, because it must do something to justify its existence. The native members of the Council fully recognise they live in a talking age, and apparently their claim for appointment to their debating club is due to judicial impartiality of mind, enabling them to attain

one, are to the Briton. Skilled flyers are backed with the same interest that we and the Americans back the *Shamrock* and the *Columbia*. They are great on theatrical displays, and the plays are chiefly directed to ridiculing the governing classes—the result of British toleration—such displays would have had short shrift under Saadat Ali Khan & Co. The kings of Oudh lavished their money on local buildings. Ashuf-u-dowlah is responsible for the Bibiakothi, beyond the present cantonments, built for a shooting-box; he also erected the great Imambara as a mausoleum for himself. The central room is the largest in the world. This building, of imperial dimensions, is exclusively of solid masonry, and contains no woodwork of any kind, and cost a million sterling. Ashuf-u-dowlah also built the approach gateway, known as the Romee Darwaza, copied from an archway in Constantinople. Saadat Ali Khan ran up most of the buildings of interest in Lucknow. He built the Dilkhoosha Palace, or "Heart's Delight," for the ladies of his choice. The Hyat Buksh, now the Government House. It was here Hodson breathed his last. The Moti Mahal, or "Pearl Seraglio," for more ladies. Noorbuksh Kothee, which in

after-days was used as a beacon by Havelock, to guide him to the Kaiser Bagh. He also built two handsome tombs, at the entrance to the Kaiser Bagh, for himself and his favourite queen, Moorshed Zadi. The Kuddum Rasool, or a sacred Mahomedan shrine, standing on the summit of a high mound, was built by Ghazi-u-din-Hyder. It is said to contain a stone bearing the footmark of Mahomed. During Sir Colin Campbell's advance this position was strongly held by the rebels. Close by are the Kurshed Munzil and Shah Naazaf, also of Ghazi-u-din-Hyder's time. Near this spot Campbell, Outram, and Havelock met, and it was on the tower of this building that "Bobs Bahadur" ran up the regimental colours of the 2nd Punjab Infantry, just to let Outram in the Residency know how far the relieving force had got. The latter building is the mausoleum of the monarch who built it. Nasuru-deen-Hyder built the "Tara Kothi," or Observatory, now the Bank of Bengal, and the Chhatter Munzil, on the banks of the Gumti, now a club house. Mahomed Ali Shah built the Husainabad Immambara, and he and his mother lie there side by side. The whole block of these buildings is sumptuously furnished, and the tomb is