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COURTS AND CAMPS IN INDIA



AT THE MATHAJI SCHOOL CALCUTTA

COURTS AND CAMPS IN INDIA

IMPRESSIONS OF VICEREGAL TOURS
1921-1924

BY
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WITH 27 ILLUSTRATIONS



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PREFACE

THE unique conditions under which these travels were made is my excuse for a repetition of much already familiar. I have, if inevitably, collapsed between the stools of diary and memoir. This is neither. As a record of four absorbing years it is incomplete ; as a gesture to the memory of all they contributed of beauty, interest, and humour it is worse. I have limited the scope of our travels and have not attempted more than their superficial reflection. Here you will find aspects of India's finery, passages from her history, impressions of the life she imposes on our countrymen. Very brief—and when I think of that world, so difficult and mystifying, so stimulating, so full of charm and so intensely confusing—I must confess, very frivolous.

Frivolity is at least a humble claim, and I have every reason for humility. I went to India sharing that indifference to it which seems the characteristic of the majority of men and women at home, and which is not surprising since nothing in our upbringing tends to disturb it. The indifference hardly survived my first glimpse of Bombay, but whereas the traveller is at liberty to explore the picturesque and ignore the country, the life we led, set as it was so near the pulse of Government, allowed of no such evasion and dealt harshly with ignorance.

To worry about one's ignorance of India is as little profitable as to worry about eternity, and even the claims of knowledge are often, and of necessity, only comparative. But indifference is another matter. We have no right to indifference, and by it we may or may not rob India, but we certainly rob ourselves.' Still an outpost of fairy-tale, for England she stands, too, in the vanguard of fact. She is more than the emporium where we buy picture post cards of the Taj, slay tigers, and sit, strong and silent, in the pages of Frontier novels.

And so let me introduce my story.

We set sail from Marseilles with Lord and Lady Reading in March of 1921, and the "we" included all the members of the Staff who did not already await their arrival in India. For my own part, I feel I must have shown a deplorable lack of spirit. To begin with, the nursery is a dangerous place, and mine had left me with one solid conviction—India was a land of snakes. From the python in the forest tree to the cobra in the bathroom, your whole life was beset by them, and if you avoided a Karait in the morning, you were surely gobbled up by a scorpion in the afternoon !

There fell, too, the shadow of infinite ceremony : a delightful picture, but an arduous vocation ; and the feeling that the onlooker might well enjoy the play far more than the super on the stage.

It was in this doubtful spirit that I started, and since the Staff were all strangers the one to the other, no eloquence of mine can do justice to those first few days,

The relentless screw ; the devastating fragments of Europe on a vanishing horizon ; the conviction that even the mildest A.D.C. must detest you ; a past (in retrospect) of unexampled bliss ; a future wholly composed of snakes and ceremony, and the certainty that you would prove equally inefficient confronted with either !

I recovered. I never met a snake—alive ; in my first week I walked on a scorpion without a shudder ; a rat was found drowned in a glass of milk, but not in mine. A.D.Cs. became at once the ministering angels and tyrants of our lives, and even ceremony cannot get the better of human nature.

The splendours of the Viceroy's reception at Bombay were followed by six months at Simla, and Simla is a poor initiation. Yet even on those complacent heights you begin to shed your illusions, you can unlearn to the limits of the knowledge you possess, you can realize to how little in this matter of knowledge you are ever likely to lay claim. For the shadowy picture with which you arrived, and which had its source in a little history (the Mutiny), in a little fact, a little fiction, and a great deal of fairy-tale, is not one whit less misleading than the imposing canvas of the passing traveller. And he, moreover, has this advantage, the three months' vision is far more definite in outline : he has something to show for his pains ; whereas after three years you realize enough of the true nature of the scene to admit that a lifetime of study might fail to grasp it.

You grow resigned, if not content. India is too

challenging for indifference, and even to the serious student the track is confusing. There is no high road to understanding, no single impression that is not tangled by half a hundred contradictions. To me, our restless life was a further complication. It was too crowded for reflection, too remote from actual conditions to be called experience, yet too near them for ignorance: alive with interest in the splendid surface of things uniquely seen, rich in suggestion if you could only wait to seize it—but you were hurried, always relentlessly hurried on to something else. In the end you were left groping in a maze of impressions, and even the vicarious experience you so eagerly consulted was hardly less confusing.

A chastening existence, and though signally worth while, signally tantalizing and indigestible. These pages are admittedly the fruit of indigestion rather than reflection, and deal only with the surface of that hurrying life, the living of which was so like running backwards on a moving staircase: you were always at the top, however desperately you tried to get to the bottom!

Y. F.

February 1926

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COURTS AND CAMPS IN INDIA

CHAPTER I

WE START

AN American journalist, with an imagination rather picturesque than accurate, once compared the Viceroy to the Great Moghul. Meaning, I take it, rather the Splendid Moghul than any particular individual. Alas for the truth! The Viceroy's hours of labour would alone make most members of that august dynasty turn pale. And what of the Legislative Assembly? What of Whitehall? Where is the Peacock Throne? Where the slaves, the courtiers, the jewels, the dancing girls, and the elephants of state? What is this thing the Press? And where the ministers, obsequious and flattering, where the sacks of pearls and diamonds, the inexhaustible treasury, the liqueur glasses cut from a single emerald, the tea-sets of gold and jade? I do not know, but absent certainly from the Viceregal Court and pantry.

Nevertheless, the truth is distinctly impressive for our unromantic day. The servants decorative, even if more disposed to argue than to tremble at your nod. And if there is often abuse there is still flattery in plenty. There are carriages and horses, be-braided and be-gilded ;

there are ceremonials which for brilliance are certainly unequalled in the Empire ; there are Princes who might well have stepped straight from the pages of mediæval splendour. Last, but not least, there is a white and gold state train, there are electric fans, and hot and cold water laid on ! If—which is incredible—the voice of envy should ever whisper with just the tiniest bit of malice, and if it were solely due to this matter of water, I would plead guilty. It is a rarity still in India, and the only one we enjoyed which ever made me the least ashamed of such unmerited good fortune !

The Staff was ruled by the Viceroy's Private Secretary, its senior member, a gentleman who emerged all too rarely from behind a rampart of files, but whom it was possible, in any confusion of mind, to consult at all hours of the day and a part of the night in his office. More directly engaged in guiding the steps of inexperience was the Military Secretary, in every sense our chief ornament and our mainstay. Next to him the Comptroller, and his, as his name may suggest, was a strenuous vocation. To him it fell to scan the accounts, to check the spoons, to sack the servants, to preside over the yearly migration to the hills, and then to preside over it back again, to keep everyone in a good temper, to give us chairs to sit on, beds to sleep in, home truths from time to time, and food to eat.

He was followed by the Surgeon, the Assistant Private Secretary, the A.D.Cs., and of these last never less than four, and sometimes six.

In November of 1921 we returned to Delhi, which we had visited briefly on our way from Bombay to the hills, eight months earlier. Of that first visit I had preserved three vivid memories. The silent-footed servants, who existed to make you jump ; the jackals ;

and, of Mutiny fame, the Ridge. For the Ridge rises immediately behind Viceregal Lodge, and it was to some shanty on the estate that John Nicholson was brought to die. Every night the jackals wailed round us like so many phantom, hungry souls. At first disturbing, but in the end I grew to like waking to that odd, harsh chorus.

Our second halt at Delhi kept us busy. A little sight-seeing, a great deal of housewifery (for we were really settling in for the first time), a journey to Meerut, and guests. Amongst these Colonel Howard Bury, straight from Everest, the Mehtar of Chitral, the chief of a distant Himalayan State, who disconcerted hospitality by speaking not one word of English, and many of the Princes who had gathered for the meeting of their Chamber.

But the time allowed to us was short. Already the beautiful, scarlet-bound programmes of the tour had been distributed, already of every detail of the journey we had been informed through the decrees of the Military Secretary; where we should embark, where eat, where sleep, where wash, where dress, where alight and when—but never why! Like the heroes of old, we were not intended to ask questions, nor to bask in the light of reason—but to obey. We did, and punctually. That is why I must not linger at Delhi, but must hurry you off to the station where the red carpet is spread and the white and gold train waits.

We were bound for Calcutta, but on the way were to spend a couple of days at Benares, the holiest of all the great Hindu cities, since it stands by the sacred waters of the Ganges. In the Hindu belief the site is the oldest upon earth, the city stands on the two points of Siva's trident, and is his as Calcutta is that of his

terrible wife Kali. Actually, it lies on the outer curve of the great crescent of the river, and for more than two centuries past has been dominated by the alien minarets of Aurangzebe's Mosque.

We crossed the Ganges early one morning, and though we knew the mud itself to be sacred, happily, for the heretic, the river is also very beautiful. To what an altogether incredible degree is all water beautiful in India. You have not the first idea of the beauty of rain till you have heard the monsoon roar on your tin roof of a dust-choked June evening. It is little wonder the Hindu worships his rivers, indeed it is inevitable, for strip the Ganges of all its pantheon of gods and demons, in the end is it not itself the life-giver, the supreme good? For nearly nine months in the year the land lies beneath a relentless sun, for three it drinks greedily; its rains or its rivers, water in some form, they are its salvation; how can it do else than worship them? I was pampered, yet even I could have cried for joy at the first sound of running water in Simla's dried-up nullahs. A failure in the rains is a failure of the gods themselves; it is to be by them condemned, and the shadow of famine is never far removed from the minds of men.

Having saluted the Great Mother, in a little while we drew up at the station and were, for the first time, introduced to all the panoply of a State Arrival. On the platform were gathered the Maharaja of Benares, the State officials, the representatives of the Government of India, and the officers from the neighbouring military cantonments. The station itself was a flutter of flags and streamers, and drawn up behind the red carpet stood the Guard of Honour. Guns thundered a royal salute, the military presented arms, and the band played the

National Anthem. In all our experience these formalities were achieved with the utmost decorum, but Lord Curzon was more fortunate, as witness the story of his arrival at a State unaccustomed to these august disturbances. The band played, it is true, but it was a mission band borrowed for the occasion, and when the Viceroy stepped on to the platform it burst triumphantly into "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty !"

To a slow march, and preceded by his A.D.Cs. and his Military Secretary, the Viceroy inspected the Guard of Honour, and was then led away to the state carriage and the prancing cavalry escort. If I remember rightly, the carriage in which the Viceroy and the Maharaja drove on this occasion was an elegant, silver landau, and Lady Reading followed in another of carved ivory. Their destination was the Maharaja's Guest House. His own palace lies at Ramnagar, and for the purposes of piety on the opposite, and wrong side, of the river. For if death should overtake you there you will distressingly reincarnate in the carcase of a donkey, whereas death in the sacred city entails a funeral pyre, committal to those all-forgiving waters, and a short cut to bliss eternal. And this is how it happened :

Siva, the third god of the Hindu Trinity ; Siva, the Destroyer and to-day the all-powerful, quarrelled with one Vyasa and banished him from Benares. To get equal with the god Vyasa built himself a city on the opposite bank of the river, but in order to make quite sure that here, too, death should bring instant release from reincarnation, he had to enlist the services of a certain goddess. The lady hesitated. Finally, in the disguise of a hag, very old and very deaf, she visited Vyasa in his city. She proved an exasperating guest.

“What,” she inquired, “was the fate of those who died within its walls?”

Louder and louder Vyasa shouted, deafer and deafer the lady grew, till at last, in a pet, her host thundered:

“Those who die here become asses!”

And they do!

I felt in need of enlightenment, and confided some of these pious reflections to my ayah, a Hindu. She sniffed!

“Benares,” she said, “Benares, Miss Sahib, very bad bazaar. Calcutta very good bazaar.”

Do not we, too, dream of Paris rather than of Rome!

To be honest I must confess to a very slight acquaintance with the city proper. The more sacred, naturally the more fanatic; the times were out of joint, and save for one expedition we were kept severely out of the precincts. That expedition did lead us to a bathing ghat in the centre of the city, from which we took ship and dropped down the river. No ordinary ship but a canopied barge with prancing white horses at the prow. Of the voyage, the Mosque, the Temples, the sacred bulls, alive and in stone, the great palaces of the Princes, and the burning ghats with their splendid flights of steps, were the principal features. And of these I expect you have read and read, have heard *ad nauseam*, of the wonder of that shifting, colourful crowd of devotees that swarm the river side, and have thought, with a shudder, of half-charred corpses floating on the water. Even in death the Hindu is undemocratic, for if you are very poor you cannot afford many faggots. In India you are often very poor, and in Benares your income may well be judged by the condition of your corpse. Money alone can secure to you the ultimate distinction of a handful of grey ash.

It is a bewildering city, but a city of an even more bewildering tradition, and of a faith, in this respect, the most confusing of the three.

There is no short cut to definition, summaries are often contradictory and only serve to maim first impressions of that rich philosophy. Brahma is the Supreme Being but, as the doctrine of a Trinity developed, Brahma grew to be worshipped as the Creator, Vishnu as the Preserver, Siva as the Destroyer ; though even this is misleading, since destruction being the necessary forerunner of new life—"That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die!"—Siva often makes a bewildering reappearance as the Creator ; as Life and Death in the same person.

Originally a worship of spiritual forces, to-day, through the length and breadth of the country, the symbol of creation, so repellent to us in its hideous realism, marks the god's rule ; and who can measure the effect of that influence on a blind, fanatic, ignorant people, swayed by priests in many cases no less ignorant, and in all respects more fanatic, than they ? Who are these to appreciate Brahmin subtleties and distinctions ? My experience, if limited, was consistent, and I never visited a place of Hindu worship without receiving the same impression of a nameless and sinister force as its background. Actual worship apart, are not their deserted shrines instinct with the same spirit—what of the carven saturnalia on the walls of Ellora ? The inevitable hour of the faith's decay brought with it influences which do not bear contemplation in the light now shining on them, and which must surely, in all essentials, prove disastrous to the great mass of the faith's disciples.

At Benares there is a greater than Siva, for only a few miles away, at Sarnath, the Buddha preached his first

sermon and for many centuries after ruled supreme on the Ganges. It is curious how utterly the land of his birth has forsaken that princely leader, for though India holds many a sacred relic of the Master and many a place of pilgrimage for those of his faith, yet his followers in India are few and far between to-day. A strange history ! Siva presiding here over the dawn of all creation, the austere teachings of the Buddha, later, for the infidel and idolater, the fire and sword of Islam, to-day to a darker Siva the victory !

Inevitably Benares had for us another and a very different aspect. Ramnagar and the Maharaja's palace lay only half an hour distant, and once over the pontoon bridge we entered his territory through an elaborate white gateway in the gallery of which native musicians were playing. A wide main street with white houses on either side led to the entrance of his seventeenth-century palace. There are, of course, later additions, but it is fairly preserved. We paid it two visits, the first by daylight, and there we saw emeralds and diamonds and lovely sword hilts of jade and enamel. We examined the old armoury, and found one horrible knife with a broad, flat blade, which opened like a pair of scissors when you gripped the hilt, disclosing a third blade inside. Very cunning, since the friends of the victim might well hunt in vain for the man with the three-bladed knife ! And another—the famous Tiger's Claw, with which the Mahratta Chief Sivaji murdered the King of Bijapur's emissary, Afzul Khan—exhibited two innocent enough rings which fitted round your first and little fingers, your hand concealing the talons of steel those two rings support. You run to greet your enemy, you fall on his neck, clasp him tight, and—RIP !

More to my mind were the state elephants and there

with the state camels, they stood in a great circle in the courtyard. The India of all one's story-books. The huge beasts were swaying gently and patiently from side to side, their great heads painted, their magnificent trappings of brocade and velvet and silk almost sweeping the ground, bearing on their backs the colossal burden of the gold and silver state howdahs. A howdah is more of a throne than a chair, and is placed above a thick mattress, which is very often covered with a carpet of cloth of gold. True gold that is : thread, or whatever it may be, fashioned from the pure metal. My heart has long since been lost to the elephant, but as to the camel he is vain and absurd, a horrid, ridiculous creature with a foul temper—but he has his uses.

There followed tea on a balcony overlooking the river with the state barges gathered at the landing-stage below. Painted and canopied barges, amongst them my old friend with the two white horses at the prow, a peacock at the prow of another. Here, too, we were for the first time introduced to the charming Indian custom of garlanding a guest. Sometimes the garlands are made of yellow marigolds, roses, or heavy smelling jessamine, but, on more formal occasions and especially among the Princes, gold ribbon takes the place of flowers. The ribbon is spun from pure gold, is plaited and adorned with elaborate tassels and medallions, and these Hars, as they are called, are often very decorative, whereas the flower garlands, pretty and full of sentiment, usually spell disaster to one's clothes !

The rest of the afternoon was absorbed by " Institutions," and on our drive home the loveliest memory of the city. The minarets of Aurangzebe's Mosque against a dying sunset, the reflecting curve of the river, the deep

blue mass of the town, and hung above a narrow, silver moon.

That same evening we travelled back to Ramnagar to attend a state banquet. The little town looked delicious, for every house was outlined in light. Not the hard glare we are accustomed to in England, but rows and rows of little terra-cotta saucers filled with oil and carrying a floating wick, so that the whole town danced as well as shone! As illuminations they are quite unrivalled. Torchbearers lined the road, the palace gateway was a blaze of coloured light, the courtyard was lit with rose-coloured flares borne aloft by servants gorgeously arrayed.

We dined in an inner court, the greater part open to the sky. From the upper and covered end you looked through curved arches on to a square pool with a fountain splashing in the centre. Round us on three sides rose the high white walls of the palace, garlanded from first floor to roof with fat garlands of yellow and orange marigolds, while over all reigned the velvet brilliance of the sky.

CHAPTER II

THE CITY OF KALI

FROM my diary :

“ You would have wept to see one group on the platform of the train as we steamed into Howrah Station this morning. For the A.D.Cs., far from seeing visions of the finest racecourse in the world, or even of the lovely damsels so soon to cheer their hours at the Saturday Club, were gazing ecstatically at the railway line, at that network of railway line which we had found for the first time in the East, but which leads to all and every city at home ! The air, for sheer nastiness, Waterloo alone could have rivalled, and as for the Hugli, is it not as wide, as crowded, and as dirty as the Thames ? ”

The longer you stay away from England the more you appreciate Calcutta, and by the end of four years' exile the shops, the theatres, and the trams are all equally thrilling. At Delhi a reel of cotton is never quite the reel of cotton of your desire, whereas Calcutta is a city of temptation and robbery ! She is enormously successful, enormously rich, enormously alive, and she has never forgotten, or forgiven, that she was once an Imperial capital and is so no longer. The very mention of her makes me feel flurried, since for a month in every year, or for as much of a month as he could spare, the

Viceroy paid her a visit, and into that month were crammed all the activities, political, social, official and philanthropic, that used once to be spread decently over five. Over and above there was Christmas, and Christmas week in Calcutta is proverbial—in some sense to India what Ascot is to London. You have racing, you have polo, you entertain daily, hourly, and if you allowed your mind to dwell on the programme of colleges, hospitals, homes, institutions, and so forth that on arrival is punctually laid before the Viceroy's wife, you would conclude one half of the population sick, the other half at school. You had, moreover, three communities to consider, the European, the Indian, and the Anglo-Indian, so it is permissible to multiply everything by three in summing up the total.

But first of Belvedere, the Viceroy's Calcutta home, and—of his three “palaces”—certainly the most interesting. Some part of the present house was once the country residence of Warren Hastings, and it was here that Sir Philip Francis was brought when wounded after his famous duel with the Governor-General. It has since been added to and altered out of all recognition, but the drawing-room was part, and probably a large part, of the original house. It is delightfully cool, rambling and inconvenient! In all conscience it looks large enough, but not for such a “family” as ours, and here, as in Delhi, the Staff lived in tents. We were protected by the Viceroy's bodyguard, magnificent in their scarlet tunics, jack-boots, and blue and gold pugris against the white walls of the house, for they were all picked men well over six feet in height, and for the most part recruited from the martial races of the Punjab—the Sikh and the Punjabi Mohammedan. For looks I don't believe they have their equal in the world.



VICTORIA MEMORIAL HALL - CALCUTTA



TOMB OF THE EMPEROR HUMAYUN - DELHI

There is a delightful garden, in December the cannas are superb ; there are giant trees, green lawns (and oh ! the blessed greenness of Bengal) and a small miasmatic lake. Which last brings us naturally to the subject of mosquitoes and one, from sundown to sunrise, never far absent from our thoughts.

The Trustees of the Victoria Memorial Hall used, for the term of the Viceroy's visit, to hang the walls of Belvedere with pictures from their collection. These were largely portraits by good nineteenth-century artists, relics of the lavish John Company days. Why, one often wonders, are these relics so few ? There are three good pictures at Simla, including one of Louis XV, and one of Marie Leczinska, captured in Indian waters off a French frigate. There is a fine portrait of Warren Hastings at Delhi, there are other pictures and portraits of merit there, at the Victoria Memorial Hall and at Government House, Calcutta, the home of the Governor of Bengal. But of furniture, plate, china, so little. Madras is richer, I believe, in this respect, but even so the sum of survival seems absurdly small, for the old Company men lived like princes one day, even if they did perish of fever the next.

To leave Belvedere you drive under an archway on the summit of which prowls an effigy of the Bengal tiger, you pass the Zoological Gardens, you cross a narrow and filthy canal and so to the Maidan, that great open space round which the polite life of Calcutta gathers. To the right the Chowringhee, the thoroughfare that bounds the Maidan on the west, at your feet the race-course, away to your left masts, funnels and the shriek of the siren proclaim the river, in the centre the Victoria Memorial Hall and away on its further side, its northernmost limit, Government House. On the Maidan once a

week, at the very least, we raced, and once in the season, when the Viceroy's Cup was run on Boxing Day, the Viceroy with full bodyguard escort drove in state up the course. It was always the prettiest sight—green, scarlet and gold, blue sky, waving pennons, prancing horses and sunshine. The Bengali crowd flocks both to gamble and admire, for all Indians are inveterate gamblers, and all love a “tamasha”. If you could weary of racing, which in Calcutta is naturally quite, quite inconceivable, the crowds in the outlying enclosures and the centre of the course would form entertainment enough. On the Maidan, too, we played polo, the finest game in the world to watch, and by how much the finest game in the world to play !

When you were very lucky, on those rare occasions when the tyrant “programme” released you, there was the river. Let the diary describe one of our expeditions.

“A delightful afternoon down the river on the Port Commissioner's launch to the Botanical Gardens. They were almost as good as Kew or Richmond. Indeed, with the journey thrown in I am not sure but quite as good. For on the river there were ships from Glasgow, Liverpool, London, and, to the exile, are these not names to conjure by ? Jute mills, flour mills, docks and warehouses line the banks, the river curves away upstream to a sunlit distance, and when you think of that first precarious hold on the marshes of Fort William nearly 250 years ago, may not the strenuous, vital purposeful city of to-day fairly rank amongst the great romances of Empire ?

“The gardens I thought beautiful with all the tropical variety and richness of Bengal, of the banyan-tree whose spread boasts a circumference of over 900 feet, you have probably heard. I mention it just to show

that I respect tradition, and the tradition of a visit to the banyan-tree is inexorable. You know, too, of course, that the family takes its name from the banya, the native moneylender, who plied his trade, to the undoing of our ancestors, beneath its shade. And there are wonderful lakes and avenues, grass that is truly green, trees that are truly shady, views that are truly sunlit, glades, turns, twists, and altogether a delicious fresh unexpectedness."

If you would rather travel upstream, you can visit Barrackpore, the Governor of Bengal's country home, or, further still, the French colony of Chandranagore, over which the tricolour still floats. But it is not so much your destination which is enchanting as the business of getting to it. The temples and bathing ghats and old bungalows that compete with the palm-trees on the river bank; all the leisurely native craft, all the leisurely river life that from time immemorial has recked little of change or alien rule—our own or another's.

There is, too, golf, and Sunday morning breakfasts at one or other of the country clubs, where, for some mysterious reason, you wash down the bacon and eggs with cherry brandy. There is Firpo's, the greatest night club in all India; there are lobsters if you are brave enough to eat them, since they come from the Hugli; there are parties of every kind and complexion.

The more serious side of activity is hardly less varied. Apart from the official and state functions there are the numberless visits to the institutions, schools and hospitals of the three communities, to homes for the aged, welfare centres, etc., etc.

I am weary as any extremist of hearing that India is a rich country. Vastly rich in possibilities no doubt,

rich in rich men and in hidden treasure, but in actual fact and in terms of the rupee, a country of savage poverty. Here, no less than in England, the city has exercised its fascination, and think of the effect of that vast, impersonal, Western organization on a people of a different civilization, too poor to compass a standard of living, and, in any case, far too ignorant to grasp so extravagant a notion. Poverty? By comparison with the slums of Calcutta, our own slum life is princely and add, moreover, to all the usual difficulties of the philanthropist, an alien people groping amidst the sacrosanct laws of orthodoxy, and fighting with the mere weapons of science against the word of the mighty gods themselves!

Perhaps of all classes and creeds in India the lot of the Anglo-Indian or domiciled community is the hardest. The term includes both the people of mixed parentage—the Eurasian—and the European who has settled in the country and there started his children in life; naturally inter-marriage between the two is common. These present a very real problem, amongst the very poor a pitiful one, and in general their plight commands but little sympathy from European and Indian alike. The attitude of one class of Europeans is well illustrated by the story of the peppery British soldier who, interposing in a fight between a Eurasian and an Indian, dressed the former down with the words: “Gawd made ’im”, pointing to the Indian, “and Gawd made me, but *we* made you!” Not the educated attitude, certainly, but it does convey that something of blind prejudice which lurks in the public mind, and hinders those who work amongst the poor in their efforts to give this product of two civilizations a chance. Poverty, too, and in a country like India, must press more hardly

on a people who have a share of Western blood and tradition.

Then we have the great, teeming, native population of Calcutta, and of the work amongst them I naturally saw more of that dedicated to the women and children. There are girls, victims of the orthodox Hindu marriage customs, mothers at fourteen, old women before they are twenty. Disease, dirt, ignorance, prejudice and crime crippling lives born into a world of torment to us inconceivable. Crippled often at birth or before it, deformity regarded as the direct and blessed visitation of Providence, and sometimes deliberately compassed so that the child may prove the better investment in his life-work as a beggar. At home in these matters there is some general feeling of responsibility, but in India, amongst Indians, none. The caste system hinders perhaps the Purdah system even more, since it is to women rather than to men that these appeals might successfully be made; but in any case neglect and cruelty, pain and suffering make no general appeal to the sympathy of the public. "You see", as a friend once wrote to me, "the gospel of service is absolutely new to them." I have often and often wondered why, in the confusion of controversy that rules the native mind in India, this need of social reform, which they are so much more able to tackle than any alien, however well meaning, since it is bound up with their creed and tradition, should enjoy so very small a place? Perhaps the rôle of the social worker is too mute and inglorious. It would certainly prove divinely difficult.

Education presents a very different picture. Everyone in Bengal is in a fever of education, which is only natural since the Bengali has never lacked for wits. I used to love the girls' schools, Indian and Anglo-

Indian, many of them run by the Missions, but most charming of all were the little Purdah schools run wholly by their own folk. Here very grave babies used to chant Sanskrit and Bengali prayers and hymns, used to play on stringed instruments, looking the while in their bright saris like a bed of very decorous tulips. Is there anything in the world quite so solemn as an Indian baby ? And is there anything in the world quite so smooth and black and shining as the heads of young Bengal ? Unlike our Indians of the Punjab, their heads are left uncovered.

Widows' schools, too, are springing up, for they are child widows, married sometimes at birth. And if the baby husband should die, even in these cases of what we should consider betrothal, the inexorable rule against re-marriage holds. Poor infants ! The fate of the little Hindu widow I have heard most prettily and affectingly described. She becomes dedicate to a memory for life and spends it in the exalted service of others, is treated as a creature divinely set apart, yet in actual fact she too often becomes the family drudge and slave, and her fate from babyhood is that and no more.

Education has its humours in Bengal, and I shall never forget one entertainment. It was opened by a gentleman who sang a Bengali love-song, though it sounded infinitely more like a protest against tummy-ache. And, since education infallibly leads to Shakespeare, the serious business of the evening began with a rendering of King Richard II seeking how he might compare this prison-house, etc., etc. He seeks, as you know, for some considerable time, but really on this occasion his appearance was so remarkable we hardly listened to his conclusions. He was attired in a battered black doublet, and a yet more battered pair of hose. The doublet was a thought *décolleté*, so deficiencies were

supplied and *les convenances* preserved by a tennis shirt of faded blue flannel, old certainly, but hardly mediæval. Above the shirt, a pale, pink, mask-like countenance, and above the countenance a pale brown wig *à la* Mary Pickford, its long and dusty locks hanging far down his back, and sausage curls over his ears. A most remarkable representation of a distraught monarch !

Talking of Mr. Shakespeare reminds me of a pleasant Bengali story. An Englishman and a Bengali were discussing literature. "No doubt", said the Bengali, "his friend was aware that there were in Bengal native poets writing poetry and, moreover, poetry in the English language, equal to the work of the divine and immortal Bard." The Englishman anxiously inquired whether his informant could quote from any such work. "But certainly", said the other, and spake :

I love Miss Purshotam !
I love her from my heart's botum !
I have loved her since last autum.
Gee ! Gee !

In spite of frequent expeditions into the charitable and educational worlds, it was easy to forget that outer and greater city of Kali by which we were surrounded, and many travellers, I imagine, hardly know of its existence. I made two independent excursions into that city, one to the temple of the goddess, one to a school for tiny, orthodox Hindu girls founded by a very remarkable Indian lady. First of the Kalighat.

To those in blissful ignorance of the fact let me break the news that we are now living in the Kala Yuga or "Black Age". It is to last for 432,000 years. The darkness and evil of the age, perhaps, accounts for the strength of the influence of Kali in Bengal to-day, and

to the heart of anyone with the most superficial acquaintance with the goddess that thought should indeed strike terror and despair. As I have said before, she is the wife of Siva, she is the deity of destruction and darkness ; she is responsible for almost every form of evil and suffering. For a portrait of the lady, I quote from Major Buck's book on the *Faiths, Fairs and Festivals of India* :

"Kali is usually shown as of black or dark blue colour, trampling on the body of Siva ; in one hand she holds a blood-stained sword and in the other a gory human head ; a third hand points downward to destruction, and the fourth is raised in allusion to a new creation. She wears a necklace of human heads."

She has other names, other and more agreeable attributes, but to-day it is only of Kali the Terrible that we are speaking. I can see many readers smiling at the ghastly and fantastic picture drawn above, yet it is in fact no picture, no painted image, but a reality under whose appalling rule a multitude of human beings struggle and suffer. In India she is only less powerful than Siva, here in Calcutta she is supreme. Her worship, for the ignorant—and these are the majority—can but be one long agony of helpless fear and propitiation. No doubt the more cultivated Hindu may find gold in the clay and be able to put the dross aside. The philosophical Brahmin may read an esoteric meaning into her cult and find it holds like a casket the jewel of a great moral truth. But the gold and pearls remain hidden from the masses, and, unquestionably, millions of her votaries are blindly swayed by superstitious terror only, and her most active instruments are in many cases a no less ignorant and more darkly superstitious priesthood.

We tried to follow the ritual of worship as closely as we might, and so our guide led us to the bathing ghat on the Hugli where the devotees first gather. A little licence and the Hugli may be considered a branch of the Ganges, and at least here is held equally sacred. The bathing rites performed, you then pass up a narrow, evil-smelling alley, which leads you direct to the temple. On each side are shops and shrines, the shrines of lesser deities preparing the way of the faithful as they approach nearer and nearer the goddess. Even here there is no peace. From first to last amongst my memories of the Kalighat an awful, an indescribable clamour stands foremost. It is unceasing, it beats brazenly round you, in the end it does, I think, to some degree rob you of your wits, and once it was terrifying, or would have been if by that time we had been capable of terror. A raucous clamour of tongues, a rising crescendo that bursts, at the feet of the goddess, into a demoniac frenzy. The alley is crowded. Priests and "holy" men thread in and out of the throng. On beds of nails six inches long the Fakirs stretch their shrivelled limbs, smeared from head to foot in ash, their crazy eyes staring through a tangled mat of hair. Others squat on the ground, a skeleton arm raised above their heads, for they hold them in this position until muscle and joint are set and immovable. On each side, so close that you can hardly avoid their touch, the long, inevitable line of beggars. Black leprosy sits there naked, unashamed and hideous; every form of mutilation, disease and deformity. It is all dark to us, dark with suggestion and fear. At last, and already quite sufficiently sick at heart, you reach the archway that leads to the temple courtyard, and on the left just within the gateway, in sudden arresting beauty, stands a stall piled high with

garlands of marigold, while away to the right is the miniature stake and place of execution. Time was when Kali was not satisfied with the blood of goats, and a whisper runs how that only a few years ago, in terror of the goddess, a man sacrificed his nine-year-old son, but to-day goats alone are offered. It was a day of sacrifice, but, whether in resentment of our presence or from one of the excellent reasons given at the time, the sacrifices did not take place until after our departure. I was not sorry.

The worshippers crouch in a pillared outer hall, to which you ascend by a flight of steps. A narrow, open passage-way separates this hall from the shrine, and it was here that we were concealed, so that we, too, might be allowed one glimpse of the idol. At definite intervals the great doors of the shrine swing back. They were closed when we reached our hiding-place, and we waited for we knew not quite what climax of horror. For a moment the clamour round us seemed to fall to a gasping cry, but only, as the doors of the shrine moved and fell open, to break out again in a crash of insensate, frenzied acclamation. A glimpse, no more, of blood-stained Kali, and we were hurried away. No more than the horror of some childish nightmare? You have her picture—I would like to think so. But certainly, as the imaginative expression of the idolatry of terror, a very masterly effort.

We were glad to escape, glad to reach the comparative peace at the back of the shrine, there to be shown a trickle of incredibly filthy water, oozing from an aperture in the wall of the building. This water has washed the feet of the idol and, the rites of worship over, the worshippers hurry to drink the thrice horrible liquid. At the back of the shrine, too, there are a few dusty

trees covered with little rags, little pathetic offerings of the very, very poor, from the woman who is barren, from the woman who wants a son, a whole picture of inarticulate distress. We braved yet another army of beggars, and then turned, chastened, away.

But I would not leave you with such a dismal memory of Calcutta. There remains our visit to the little school founded by Mathaji Maharani Tapashwini. At the age of sixty, and after a life spent in meditation and solitude, she declared herself "less unfit to try and do some work". Finally she settled in Bengal, having developed her scheme of education for Orthodox Hindu girls, in which work, as has been truly said, "her wisdom of orthodoxy accomplished more than our wisdom of progress". We visited it at the invitation of Cornelia Sorabji, whose name must be familiar to many, if only as the first Indian woman to be called to the Bar, and with whose permission I am using her own description of the school :

" . . . It (Mathaji's) was a very simple scheme. They were to be taught to be good wives and good Hindus. . . . To her came the children who but for her would have been without education, the children of orthodox Hindus, poor and rich, who would not (except in the name of religion) have heeded the call of education. They came even as early as three years of age and they stayed till marriage claimed them—sadly early, alas, since they were orthodox. . . . Very simple were her methods. A Hindu wife must first be religious. So my three-year-old baby lisped to me in Sanskrit Slokas, and all the babies—I have seen five hundred of them together—came on Friday mornings with their Puja baskets and their baby offerings to the celebration of the Siva Puja, which, under Mathaji's direction, became something

spiritual and wonderful. . . . That weekly service, in her day, was something to bring tears to the eyes, and when the babies folded their arms in meditation, catching something of the wrapt communion of Mathaji, something tore at one's heart, something of longing for these and every child God's world over. . . . Then over and above this the babies were to learn how to read and write and cook. They were of those whose lives would ever be sheltered ; their needs were but the needs of the service of those to whom they would belong."

It was to the Friday Puja or worship that we went, a service, alas, long since deprived of the inspiration of its founder. It was held in an upper room, which we reached by clambering up a steep outside staircase. Just as in the old days the babies came trotting in carrying their brass Puja baskets, small chubby Bengali babies, slim little girls all with smooth bare heads, and all dressed alike in the full petticoat and sari of their elders, though some, alas, had their heads shorn in sign of widowhood. The grace of Indian childhood is incomparable, and only equalled by its alarming dignity !

CHAPTER III

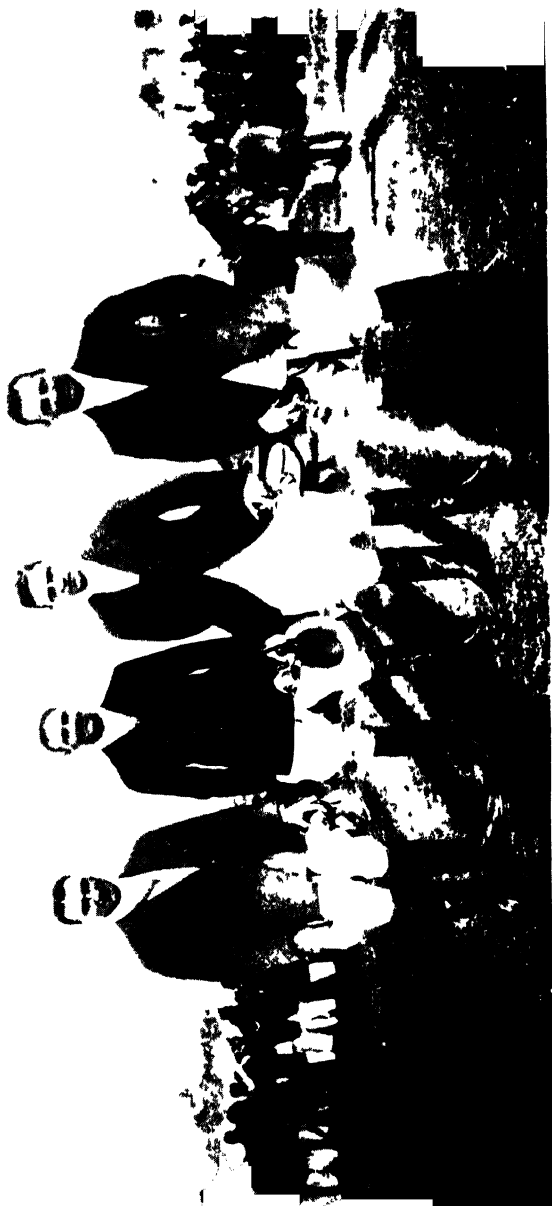
IMPERIAL DELHI

I DO not believe there is a climate in the world more perfect than that of Delhi in the cold weather. Nor, alas, a perfection so fleeting. From the first of January to the middle of February we revelled in radiant sunshine and cold, even frost at times, with now and then delicious intervals of grey skies and rain. By the middle of February the garden is at its best, and survives for another six weeks. Most of the English flowers seem to flourish—roses, sweet peas, stock, lupin and a hundred others. The hollyhock grows to a height of twelve feet and more, and flaunting alongside is the gorgeous rivalry of hibiscus, oleander, pointsettia, and bougainvillea. Of this last there was a great pergola at Viceregal Lodge, crimson linum grew close by, and behind them the sun used to set. The flood of golden light would catch up the crimson, the purple and the green and make of them a glory indescribable. To complete the picture you have the gardeners, the Punjabi coolie women in their tulip-coloured draperies squatting on the grass or dawdling in the sunshine! There is no fashion more graceful than theirs, the immemorial fashion of the peasant of Northern India. A short-sleeved, narrow bodice, usually reddish brown in colour, from hips to feet the swinging fullness of the

red skirt, wound round the head and body a long sari. Their walk is, of course, superb, and if I call their dress tulip-coloured, it is because this most nearly suggests the effect. In reality it is a wonderful variety of shades, red predominating, but no stranger to indigo and yellow, the whole dust-shaded and faded to a harmony, accidental no doubt, but wholly charming.

March is slow murder in the garden, and by the end scarcely anything survives ; it is a gaunt and sorrowing wilderness. But the first dust storm spells its real doom. It sweeps down like a tiger, rolling the yellow dust of the plain before it in a dense cloud, stinging, tearing and slaughtering. You may shut every window, seal every door, but when the storm is over your room will still have the appearance of a miniature Sahara. True it is followed by a cool spell, welcome enough, but very short lived, and bathed in that glare you begin to wonder why you ever thought of the sun as a friend. Of the real hot weather, the weather of May and June in the plains, I cannot tell you, and to be honest I am not sorry ! My own maximum experience, 109° in the shade, was quite enough local colour to gratify my ambitions in that direction.

The houses in the plains are naturally hot-weather-built houses, and in January these have their drawbacks. But we lit huge fires, and, with the sun for company, it was easy to forget marble floors and icy verandas. All the splendours of New Delhi—and the Imperial City is approaching completion—will never quite reconcile me to the thought of the temporary lodging of the Viceroys deserted. For all its official limitations, it has great charm. The long, white, single-storied house with its deep, pillared veranda, the red-carpeted central porch, the bodyguard sentries to either side, the scarlet and



gold of the servants against the white walls as they drift their unhurried way through life ! The very blue sky, the very white house, the very scarlet scarlet of the uniforms, all, at least in January, in its green setting, make an engaging picture. The house, too, has some tradition, and lies close to the Ridge, which has more. The country round is flat—a vast, tumbling, plain, broken by the wide bed of the Jumna, by patches of cultivation, by a canal, but generally desolate and thirsty enough. It can boast little more than a growth of stunted tree and shrub, but it is rich, how incredibly rich, in story, and, viewed from the Ridge at sunset, how transformed. Then the blue distances are threaded by the mists rising from the river. Delhi, the European quarter, lies richly wooded at your feet, behind you the Moghul gardens, ahead the white Government Buildings, beyond the old city of Shah Jahan, the minarets of the Jama Musjid (Cathedral Mosque), the walls of the Fort and beyond again, rising out of the sea of the plain, famous or nameless, the tombs and battlements of its story.

Here we lived for a short, an all too short, three months, from the moment when Calcutta released us until April and the hot weather drove us on. But do not imagine that our days were spent in the contemplation, however alluring, of past Empires. Our own kept us quite otherwise employed !

There were entertainments, private and official, dinner parties, garden parties, balls ; there were interviews, there were Purdah ladies, there were charities, there were fêtes and bazaars. There was a whole week dedicated to the Welfare of Infants, another to that of horsebreeding ; there were tourists, there were guests from England, from America, from every quarter of the globe, from the length and breadth of India. There

were politics and the Session of the Legislative Assembly, which again involved us in a long series of luncheon parties; there were Commissions and Committees, Governors, Princes, soldiers, civilians, doctors, missionaries, and, for a hardly less strenuous relaxation, tombs, polo and pig-sticking.

Delhi in retrospect presents a confusing panorama. But to us first and foremost those three months represented the foreign invasion, and, as a Staff, we looked forward to it with mingled anticipation and dread. The house party element was terribly exciting, for just this one moment in the whole year we were linked up again with the world. But the other—the tourist! England drifted peaceably enough round India quite content with the obvious and not the least anxious for the discomforts of enterprise. True, some of them seemed to share, with many of their American cousins, the curious illusion that the Viceroy was a reincarnation of Mr. Thomas Cook, translated to a dizzy and more influential sphere. America, on the other hand, swept down like a wolf on the fold—all-devouring! Temples, tombs, mosques, palaces, history, legend, fact, fiction, in organized groups or individually, they swallowed the indigestible continent whole. They were marvellous, entertaining, enraging. One of the organized groups toured officially as “The Resolute Travellers”, so you see they were perfectly frank, and indeed their energy and determination were admirable, if entirely without reverence. They seemed determined to “collect” the past as we might stamps, or picture post cards. Some, of course, preferred Maharajas. A few—information. One dear old couple, in a charmingly mellow spirit of adventure, were celebrating their golden wedding anniversary by a world tour. But those other, fiercer

spirits, must often have courted trouble. I remember how on one occasion I was at the Jama Masjid for the great Friday service. The authorities used, during our last two seasons at Delhi, to allow parties from Viceregal Lodge to watch from a gallery in the gateway. It was a great and unusual privilege, and one we all valued and respected. On this particular Friday a large company of exceptionally "Resolute" travellers saw our party admitted, so they in turn demanded entrance, but were told it was impossible. They unhesitatingly thrust aside the gate-keeper, marched straight into the courtyard of the Mosque, where the service had already started, and there erected tripods and cameras in full view of the congregation. There was very nearly a row, and though in the end they were bloodlessly evicted, it would have given me great satisfaction to see the spectacled representatives of Occidental courtesy get what they deserved at the hands of the indignant Muslim.

Perhaps these reflections are unnecessarily peevish, for after all in the rôle of tourist what nation is in a position to cast the first stone? We are, one and all, at times intolerable. But amongst globe-trotters pure and simple I cannot help feeling that the American finger is rather irreverently thrust into the pie of history; though I confess to have grown very full of local pride at Delhi, and I disliked seeing my pie the victim of the collecting frenzy.

One more type, and I shall have done with peevishness. The international crank. He is often a journalist, in any case is out for copy and causes, and is much too enterprising a gentleman (or lady) to look for them at home. I sat next to one such at a luncheon party at Delhi. Ireland having inconsiderately removed itself

from the sphere of discontent, he had turned his attention to India.

“ And how long are you spending here ? ” says I.

“ Three months,” says he.

“ And then you are going to write a book ? ”

“ Probably.”

“ And how much do you think you can learn of India in three months ? ”

“ Oh,” hastily, “ nothing, nothing.”

Three weeks later his views were appearing in a Nationalist paper.

For the description of another such I will quote from the diary :

“ This evening I attended a dinner party, remarkable for the introduction of two American pundits, their not unambitious mission to solve the problems of racial hatred. For an American, racial hatred, like charity, might be said to begin at home, but the mote in our brother's eye is ever the more inspiring. Anyway, here they are and, as far as I might judge, busy with the assistance of the less reputable amongst the Extremists solving problems political as well as social. Is there any country in the world that so tempts inquiry as India ? Or one more various in her answers ? And if your time and your opinions, both, must be given her in ‘ tabloid ’ form. then, I suppose, you must cling to one school of reason, or unreason, and ignore the rest. Yet, for all the liberality of his views, my neighbour had not yet learned that the terms Negro and Indian are *not* synonymous. He was a psychoanalyst, and all the other ists and isms that sit serenely pigeon-holing the human race. The very type, I felt, of the victim of another story. Once upon a time one of our international meddlers engaged a leading

Taluqdar in conversation. The Taluqdar (that is a landed proprietor on a large scale) was an old man, grave, distinguished, and a friend of the English Raj. The topic of the discourse naturally enough was the crimes of the British Administration, and one by one these were eloquently displayed.

“ ‘ Is this not so—is that not so ? ’ asked the guest. To every question the imperturbable answer :

“ ‘ Why, yes Sahib ; yes, Sahib.’

“ The interview over, one, who had been a witness, turned to the Taluqdar, exclaiming with some indignation :

“ ‘ How could you allow that man to think you agreed ? How could you let him believe such things true ? ’

“ ‘ But, Miss Sahib,’ came the gentle answer, ‘ surely you have lived long enough amongst us to know that we keep the truth for wise men and gods—for the fools a lie ! ’ ”

Later came an enchanting visitor from France, Monsieur X, the Mayor of a provincial town. He landed in India breathing slaughter and demanding “ la chasse au tigre ! ” He was distracted to find that the sport was neither pursued *à cheval*, nor, usually, in the back garden. But his ambition was realized, and a friend did arrange a shooting expedition. With breathless care the Lord of the Jungle was lured to the foot of the tree, up which Monsieur X lurked, armed to the teeth.

“ Shoot, man,” breathed his host. And then as the great beast disappeared :

“ But why in the name of heaven didn’t you shoot ? ”

“ Sir ! ” gasped the trembling sportsman. “ Shoot ! but if he should sprrrrr-ing at me ! ”

In our own household many visits were memorable and none more so than that of Lord Northcliffe in

January 1922. He had a kind of sculptural simplicity that gave him extraordinary charm, and I came to understand the personal devotion he won from men who might in the same breath condemn his policy and his actions. He won all our hearts to eternity on a certain evening when we sat down to "Happy Families" together. We were still very much in awe, and did not like to question him too searchingly as to the whereabouts of Mr. Bun the Baker. For a while he attended to the game with the utmost gravity, but then grew more and more restive, and, just as we had all miserably decided in our minds that the great man was horribly bored, turned tragically to Lord Reading exclaiming: "But why does no one ever ask *me* for anything?"

It is difficult to select names from a list so long, so varied and so distinguished. Once Dr. Grenfell—known to fame as Grenfell of Labrador—and his wife brought us a breath from another and an absorbing world. Sir Edwin Lutyens came and went not only as a guest but also as a neighbour. In 1923 the Mission of Help dawned on our horizon. It is in no disrespect to their achievements that I relate one story of their adventures, in Peshawur.

Amongst their number was a lady missionary distinguished by great personal charm and a very pretty taste in clothes. It fell to her lot to address the soldiers' wives and sisters and cousins and aunts. She did so at length, and eloquently. Next day the colonel's wife invited the opinion of a sergeant's lady on the meeting.

"Well, mum," was the answer. "It was just wonderful; it was an eddication. But then, you see, I was in the dressmaking line meself!"

But I am dawdling, and I must write one passing word on the most important visit of all.

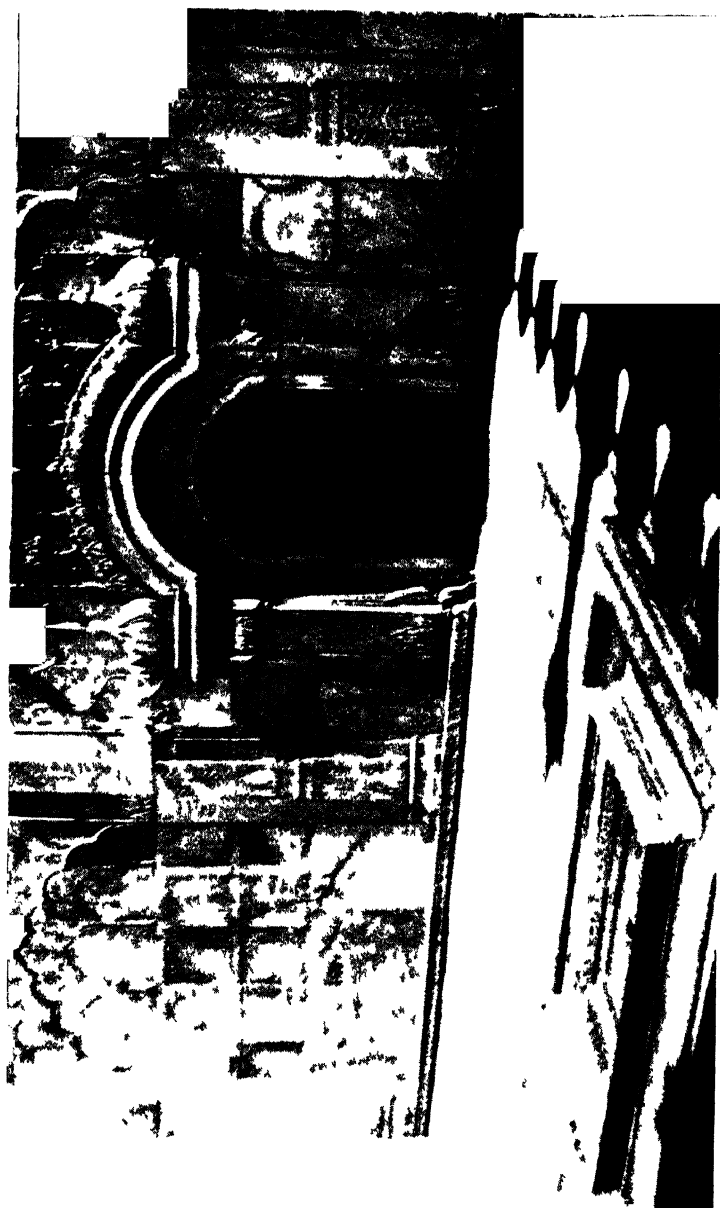
The Prince of Wales arrived in Delhi on 14th February 1922. We had spent weeks in a frenzy of preparation. Under Lady Reading's watchful eye a charming pavilion had been built for his reception, and the Staff had wrestled valiantly with the endless problems of ceremony and entertainment. I will make no reference to the climate. A fiery colonel, long resident in India, is said to have nearly annihilated a servant fresh from home for waking him every morning with : "Another lovely day, sir !" Still, the influence of a dependable and consistent sun by day and moon by night must not be forgotten.

Of the arrival my diary says :

"The Staff have glittered ever since breakfast, and full dress scarlet must be a mighty test of patriotism in this climate. H.E. motored down to the station after luncheon, and at Viceregal Lodge there was a great show. A shamiana to the right of the porch to accommodate the more exalted ladies of the community. The Guard of Honour of the Delhi Volunteers drawn up in front and the servants in a scarlet and gold line up the flight of steps and along the veranda the length of the house. A pause and then the Viceroy's procession. First the Cavalry Escort and the Horse Gunners Battery ; then the Bodyguard wheeling round and drawing up to the left of the house, and then the six-horse postillion state carriage followed by an escort of Indian cavalry. Half an hour later the arrival of the Prince heralded by cheers along the route. In the second carriage the three sons of Ruling Princes who have been appointed his A.D.Cs. for the tour : the Maharaj Kumar of Bikaner, Nawabzada Hamidullah Khan (the Begum of Bhopal's son) and Raja Sir Hari Singh. The carriage was ablaze ! "

Shah Jahan's great palace can hardly be better presented to you than as the scene of the Prince's Durbar. You penetrate the magnificent red sandstone outer wall by the Lahore Gate, and drive through a narrow arcaded bazaar to the inner entrance, the old Naubhat Khana or Royal Drum House. From thence to the open courtyard in front of the Diwan-i-Amm, the great Hall of Public Audience, and it was here the Durbar was held. It is a great pillared hall open on three sides, its beautiful red sandstone free now from its original plaster and gilding. In the centre of the back wall there is a marble balcony, the throne of the Emperor, known I believe as "The Seat of the Shadow of God". It is panelled in marble, inlaid with jade, cornelian, lapis, agate. Beneath this balcony under the central arch was the dais erected for the Viceroy and the Prince, and on either side in a long line sat the Ruling Princes, a glitter of jewels from end to end. It is difficult to do justice to the effect they produced later, in that superb setting, when all adjourned to the grounds of the Fort, and they passed up and down between the white and gold arches of the Hall of Private Audience (the Diwan-i-Khas); that hall on the walls of which is inscribed the proud boast: "If there is a paradise upon earth it is this—it is this—it is this!" Brocade and silk, jewels and velvet, historic pearls, fabulous emeralds, and a dream of colour. 'Twas a wonderful sight, but, unforgettable as the Fort was thus adorned, I personally loved it best as I best knew it—in the cool of the evening, after "closing hours" as it were, when we had it all to ourselves. There was a time when the river washed its walls, but the river has long since changed its course and must now lie distant at least a quarter of a mile.

The Prince's visit restored the gardens to all their



former glory of running water, cool white canals the length of the lawns, water splashing down from the white pavilions and through the wonderful marble bath-house of the Moghul Emperors, a sure retreat from the fiercest sun. Best of all, tucked away behind its creeper-covered red wall, Aurangzebe's Pearl Mosque. It is tiny and perfect ; white, that is if marble is ever white, which of course it isn't, beautifully and richly carved and panelled.

On one lovely evening the Fort was illuminated. A dazzling sight, but electricity is vulgar side by side with the Moghul.

Banquets and unveilings, reviews and balls filled our days and nights. With what relief we escaped to watch polo ! And shall I, I wonder, ever see such another game as that which in 1922 decided the final round of the Prince of Wales's Tournament ? To commemorate the visit, the Maharaja of Rutlam had presented the cup, and it was henceforth to take rank as one of the chief, if not the chief, open polo events of the year. On the one side the veteran Patiala team, till then practically unbeaten and a name to conjure by ; on the other Jodhpur, a young team and untried, although in work and play they had the invaluable asset of old Sir Partap Singh's iron hand and indomitable spirit. It was a wonderful game, the hardest I have ever seen, the fastest I ever hope to see, a losing game which Jodhpur, fighting finely every inch of the way, turned to victory. Sir Partap himself sat watching ; it was the only time I ever saw him. He sat like a statue. Only, as the score mounted against him 2—1, 3—1, 4—1, his hand twitched restlessly and his eyes were not quite steady. At 5 all he smiled for the first time, and at 6—5 in his favour on the stroke of time he was totally hidden by a

surging crowd, led by the Prince, every one of them cheering wildly.

I have said little of polo, yet it played a very large part even in the lives of non-combatants. Round Delhi, too, there was excellent pig-sticking and good small game shooting. So the hours of leisure were, for the men, strenuously employed. India has her compensations and, in that climate, health and efficiency depend on them. Polo, alas, is neither so easy nor so cheap for the subaltern as once it was, and naturally, in this respect, the Indian teams have the pull of our own. The war, too, brought the game into unavoidable eclipse, and I think the late Lord Rawlinson, when Commander-in-Chief, did more than any other man towards its revival. He loved it, but he also believed it invaluable as a training for mind and body. His example and enthusiasm put fresh heart into the players. "To the best polo player of his age in India" was the toast once given on his birthday, and that was modest praise, since he could hold his own with many younger men. But, as in everything else he did, it was the spirit he brought to it proved so infectious and irresistible. He was no "gentle" player, and he certainly did not in his turn expect "gentleness". "Damn you—sir!" shouted a worsted subaltern as the game swept past our pavilion. "Tell X", said the Chief after the game, "I expect he is black and blue but that I am too!"

The Prince left and of the resources of sightseeing you will have your fill in the next chapter, but the Moghul Gardens, and the Garden of Roshanara, Shah Jahan's erudite daughter, will in more august company hardly receive attention, so I would a little sing their praises here.

The polo ground lay beyond Viceregal Lodge away

from the Ridge, the Moghul Gardens beyond again. I do not know their history nor to whom they belong, I never penetrated inside their walls, but long avenues lay enticingly between and a riot of vegetation on every side. Here for an hour ruled the brief Indian spring in a glory of almond and peach blossom. Further, by the canal bank, you could watch the kingfishers swoop and wheel in a flash of lovely colour, and here, often enough, you came on the trail of the porcupine. A cantankerous gentleman it would seem, for his path was invariably marked by signs of a tussle and a little heap of blood-stained quills.

In March the Roshanara Garden was the coolest spot in all Delhi. Dusty, you would say, with a lake rather stagnant, mosquitoes not inactive and withal of a rather weary green. Yes, I know, but also of an evening palm-trees against a primrose sky, a stout gentleman in a dilapidated landau (or is it by chance a sociable ?), a ragged coolie balanced on a gaping sack of straw on the back spring. Carriage folk, indeed ! The red sandstone dais that carries Roshanara's white pavilion, in the centre the carved stone screen that protects the dust of Shah Jahan's daughter. The tomb itself is covered with maidenhair, the pavilion is open on all four sides, the pillars are beautifully carved and the charming saracenic arches frame delightfully the dusk of the garden. It is an unpretentious place built mostly of whitewashed plaster, with only a trace here and there of the old decorations in colour. All rather desolate and battered, but it has a singular charm ; perhaps because the name it bears is in itself a valedictory to the splendours of the Moghul, but largely, I think, by reason of its perfectly graceful decay. It is so peacefully unimportant, so delicious in its retirement from guide-

book romance, yet very lovely and a little, in this sense, our own discovery.

A few extracts from the diary :

“To-day Her Excellency saw Mr. Z. A nice little man and pious, but alas that cleanliness should be so far removed from godliness in this country ! Mr. Z was more attentive to the spirit of his late lamented father (to whom he wishes to raise a memorial) than to the body of his present lamentable person.”

“Captain B (an A.D.C.) exercises a fatal fascination over snakes. Having lately walked over a cobra, a Karait, that deadliest of all the deadly tribe, must needs attend him in his tent. In the tent next door Captain H was this evening enjoying a bath when his neighbour’s bearer exploded on his privacy yelling : ‘Bunduk, Sahib, Bunduk !’ (Gun, Sahib, Gun !) The warrior leapt from the soapsuds, wrapped the martial towel around him and, arming himself to the teeth, advanced against the foe. The Karait is small, but probably more deadly to the inch than any other animal to the yard. He was reposing on Captain B’s doorstep. They beat him to death with sticks and brought the mangled remains for our inspection, but I do think that the courage which leads a man to do battle with a Karait with nothing on but a bath towel deserves remark !”

The last “function” I remember at Delhi was, I think, also the most beautiful, the Investiture held in November 1924. The ball-room lent itself admirably to ceremony with its severe white walls, a wonderful background for all the colour and gold and glitter. At one end a raised dais with a scarlet and gold canopy set on a golden carpet, and behind the massive, gilded chairs of state, two retainers in scarlet and gold bearing mounted yak’s tails—an old emblem of sovereignty. Down the centre

of the room the Bodyguard, to each side the uniformed, be-ribboned guests. Green palms at each corner massed against the walls. On this occasion forty-one of the Chiefs and Ruling Princes were present, and at least one-fourth of the Maharaja of Patiala's brocaded coat was entirely concealed by diamonds. Amongst them the famous French necklace, and to this he contributed further romance by telling us that the necklace originated with the British Crown Jewels, but that James II took the precaution of slipping it into his pocket when he fled to France. His Highness had, too, a diamond-hilted sword in a pale mauve velvet diamond-studded scabbard. The Maharaja of Kapurthala wore an emerald tiara and carried a beautiful jewelled and enamel hilted sword. But, although adorned less sumptuously than some of his brother Princes, the Maharaja of Bikaner, in the pale blue robes of the Grand Cross of the Star of India over a white uniform, was easily the finest figure present.

As March drew to a close the days were hot, dust-laden and arid. The whole country was a burnt desert where lean cattle wandered in search of a living. Languidly we began to drag out boxes, trunks and packing cases, for our yearly exodus to the hills was in sight. The Government of India had its marching orders, the members of the Legislative Assembly had scattered to their homes, "Leave" loomed importantly on the horizon, women and children were turning their faces towards England. Trying days, but wonderful nights. Dinner out of doors under a velvet dark sky, the clamour of the jackals tearing the silence, long evenings on the veranda, and punctually at ten o'clock the Last Post sounding over the plain from the neighbouring camp; that ultimate, poignant farewell that is so inevitably bound up with my last memories of Delhi.

CHAPTER IV

THE SEVEN CITIES

I AM conscious that this chapter has all too little excuse, for I have nothing new to relate, and the path is the trodden path of every traveller. Yet one such has been known to arrive in Delhi and ask vaguely: "Was there anything to be seen?" To which an English resident has been known to reply: "Oh no, nothing!" I cannot risk being thought to agree, and, moreover, any account of Delhi life, however imperfect, is maimed if no mention be made of its great background. I am going to tell the story as I wrote it more than two years ago after some hours spent under the guidance of a member of the Government of India, whose wide knowledge and love of his subject converted a sightseeing afternoon into a storybook one.

In three hours and a half and in less than thirty miles we have swept the fringe of more than three thousand years of history and legend. Since we live beneath the Ridge we started at the near end, as it were, with the Mutiny. The Ridge is just exactly what its name implies and represents the expiring effort of the Aravali system, the which expires wholly about a quarter of a mile away towards the river. On a plain such as this it assumes an importance, both strategic and physical, out of all proportion to its actual size, and we motored slowly along the crest which the British troops

held from June to September '57, whilst our guide explained the way of their advance on the one hand and the manner of their victory on the other. I cannot begin to tell you all the Mutiny stories but the incident of one of our guests who, on being first shown the "historic Ridge", indifferently murmured, "Ridge, what Ridge?" has so shaken my faith that I feel I must remind you a little.

You know how the mutineers marched from Meerut and crossed the river on 11th May 1857. You know how the great majority of English men, women and children were herded into the Fort and massacred there two or three days later. A few escaped to the Flagstaff Tower on the Ridge and from there, under cover of night, slipped away to safety. In consideration of the susceptibilities of its last titular king, there were no British troops in Delhi, so for a while the mutineers went unchallenged. But in a few weeks an attacking force succeeded in storming and then holding the Ridge, and held it all through the torrid summer months until Nicholson arrived in September. Gradually they pressed forward. You all know of the breach in the Water Bastion of the City Wall and of the blowing in of the Kashmir Gate, of the occupation of the city and of Nicholson's death. We inspected the old gun emplacements and the breach, and then motored on through the fine old gate till we reached that of the Seven Resolute Englishmen. On the outbreak of the Mutiny these seven defended the magazine to the last and then, setting light to a train, perished with it.

And so we came to the heart of Shah Jahan's city, to that wide space now clear of houses (in Mutiny days it was a human rabbit warren) with on the one hand the Fort, on the other the great mosque built for the

Emperor's daughter Jahanara. The story goes that Aurangzebe remonstrated with his father for permitting the mosque to be so placed that from it, should evil befall, an enemy's guns might command the Fort. And received the proud rebuke : " The outer bastion of the Empire is at Kabul."

The beautiful Jahanara has an especial claim on English interest, for she was the indirect means of the spread of our influence to Bengal. The Princess, adored of her father, had a dancing-girl, whose full skirts once caught fire while she was in attendance on her mistress. Jahanara extinguished the flames, but was severely burnt herself in the process. Full of fear for that priceless beauty and at her request, Shah Jahan sent for an English doctor from the East India Company's factory at Surat. He came, succeeded in curing the Princess, and was asked to name his own reward. He refused the wealth a word might have given him, asking only that the Company might trade without let or hindrance in Bengal. His request was granted.

Delhi's central thoroughfare, the Chandni Chowk, dilapidated enough to-day but even yet said to be the richest street in the world, also owes its existence to Jahanara. And there the little mosque stands where, in 1739, the Persian conqueror Nadir Shah watched his troops sack Delhi, sitting silent, a drawn sword in his hand, whilst once again 100,000 men, women, and children paid the price of Empire. The famous Peacock Throne formed part of his booty. From Nadir Shah back to Shah Jahan, and from Shah Jahan on through the Delhi Gate to that vast plain of memory and legend with its myriad tombs, its crumbling cities and incomparable history.

You have all been told that Delhi has witnessed the



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passing of seven empires and are familiar with the obvious conclusion that she now awaits the passing of an eighth! The statement is misleading. Delhi has witnessed the passing of seven Mohammedan Empires but of how many before even Mohammad Ghor swept southwards, who can say.

The battered walls of Ferozabad, the fourteenth-century citadel of the third Tughlak Emperor Feroz Shah, stand nearest the road. Nothing now but a crumbling wreck and deserving of a better fate for the sake of their founder who, not content with building cities of his own, restored and preserved those of his predecessors.

Half a mile further on, at the end of the magnificent vista now closed to the west by the new Imperial Secretariat, we reached the Purana Qila (Old Fort), built in the sixteenth century by Humayun the son of Babar and the father of Akbar the Great Moghul, later taken by the Afghan Emperor Sher Shah, who added a beautiful mosque. The battlemented walls of the Purana Qila are incomparable, and, too, the gateways with their graceful cupolas and remnants of old tile work. In England we did not linger to adorn our strongholds as did these warrior-builders, and the effect here is one of peculiar grace and strength. Sher Shah's mosque stands unhurt, a building in the simple early style but rich in marble and stone inlay. Here, too, is the library where Humayun, prosaically enough, met his death by tumbling downstairs. Purana Qila boasts an added charm in that it is said to stand on the site of the legendary city of Indraprastha, and Indraprastha sweeps you back to 1000 B.C. perhaps, and perhaps further, and to the heart of the great Hindu epic, the Mahabharata. It is a wonderful legend with a lady in it as lovely as the

lady of Troy, if less adaptable in her affections : but then she started life with five husbands !

Humayun was gathered to his fathers in 1556, tumbling out of life as he had tumbled through it, and a mile on, away to the left of the road, stands the great sandstone and marble tomb the mother of Akbar built to his memory. And here, too, three hundred years after Humayun's death, the last sons of the House of Timur took refuge from the vengeance of the British troops. I think that for sheer beauty of proportion the tomb of Humayun is the most perfect I have seen. Yes, not excepting the Taj itself. Smaller tombs are scattered around and that of the Emperor's barber has the distinction of the loveliest blue dome, hardly injured and faded not a whit. Not far off is the shrine and tomb of a very famous person, the Chishti Saint Nizam-ud-Din Aulia, who, in the fourteenth century, fell out with Ghyas-ud-Din, the first Tughlak Emperor. For in the intervals of chastising the infidel Ghyas-ud-Din was occupied in building himself a city whereas, the Saint, in the intervals of his vocation, was equally busy with a tank and a shrine. These activities proved rather a strain on the local supply of labour. Caught between two fears, the wretched peasant laboured for the Emperor by day and for the Saint, with the help of oil lamps, by night. Naturally they grew somewhat sleepy and inefficient, so the Emperor in a rage confiscated the whole of the available supply of oil and left the thwarted Saint in darkness. The Saint arose and he cursed the Emperor, and he cursed the great city of Tughlakhabad, saying that at its ruler's death it should be left to the jackal and the wandering gipsy. Ghyas-ud-Din was not to be defeated, for, with fire and sword, he, too, had acquired sanctity, and he in his turn laid a curse on the

Saint's shrine, decreeing that the tank should henceforth smell of rotten eggs. And most potently have both curses been fulfilled !

Jahanara, too, is buried here, that favourite child of Shah Jahan, who, at his fall, asked no other boon than to share his prison. Grass grows over her grave, and at one end is this inscription, carved on marble and written by herself :

“ Let nothing but the green conceal my grave ! The grass is the best covering for the tombs of the poor in spirit. The humble, the transitory Jahanara, the disciple of the holy men of Chishti, the daughter of the Emperor Shah Jahan.”

The road to Tughlakhabad leads over a lovely bridge built by Jahangir, the son of Akbar, and then for miles across the tomb-strewn plain till you pass through a charming old serai, the walled enclosure built that the hardy mediæval traveller might pass the night in safety. From here you turn off sharp to the right, and ahead lie the broken but impressive walls of the sister cities of Adilabad and Tughlakhabad. There is now little left save the walls and some underground chambers quarried out of the rock. In the old days the country was artificially flooded and the cities rose above a great tank. The walls, with their bastions and ramparts, are of vast extent, and, built out on a narrow causeway, the tomb of Ghyas-ud-Din has stood unharmed for six hundred years. A fine old man and a great warrior, but he went forth to chastise the infidel once too often. His son, Mohammad Tughlak, felt he had waited altogether too long for his inheritance, so he prepared for the returning armies a great reception, and he built a triumphal arch under which their elephants of war might pass. Ghyas-ud-Din rode at the head of his army and,

as his elephant stepped under the arch, the great foot came down on a hidden spring and the building crashed in ruins over man and beast. He lies now with his parricide son beside him in a little fortified tomb. When the mustard plant is in flower it covers the plain below like a golden carpet and, bearing great bundles of the plant upon their heads, the peasant women in their purple and crimson and blue cross and re-cross it. It is one of the smaller lovely sights of Delhi to watch the sun set over the golden plain from the grey ramparts of the tomb with the mighty walls of Tughlakhabad behind you.

On this occasion we could not linger, for we had to reach the Kutb and the oldest Delhi of all before dusk. By the oldest Delhi I mean the Hindu city of Prithwi Raj, which was captured by Mohammad of Ghor in 1193. Of Prithwi Raj, that very pattern of Rajput chivalry, nothing now remains, though the line of his city's outer wall can still be traced. It is his story and the story of his beautiful wife Sangagota which makes the dust itself eloquent, and that would take too long to tell you. I can only relate the end. Once already the Afghan host had fled at Narain before the fury of the Rajput charge, but a year later, and hot with the bitterness of defeat, Mohammad of Ghor returned. A sense of doom seems to have hung over Prithwi Raj. He goes to bid farewell to Sangagota and she has no assurance of victory, but, speaking proudly, says : "To die well is to live for ever". Victory, a victory won by treachery, fell to the Afghan. Prithwi Raj disappears from the pages of history and Sangagota, decked in her bridal jewels, mounts the funeral pyre which marked the passing of a great Aryan Empire. Yet the following is of interest :

“It was afternoon on 11th May 1857, more than six hundred years since Prithwi Raj had fled from the stricken field of Narain. The companies of the 38th Infantry, set to guard the powder magazine, broke from all control. They would not kill their officers like other native regiments, but they would not wait inactive when the Great Mutiny had woke the city at early morning. As they hurried to join the comrades who were looting and burning in all directions, their cry was the battle-cry never heard in Delhi since the days of the last Chauhan Raja, ‘Prithwi Raj ki jai!’ (Victory to the Kingdom of Prithwi Raj.)”

The Kutb, the first memorial of the Muslim conqueror, stands just below the site of Prithwi Raj’s city, and is famous above all for its great Minar or Tower, built by Kutb-ad-Din Aibak, Mohammad of Ghor’s Viceroy and the first of the Slave Kings of Delhi. An amazing feat of construction no doubt though, low be it spoken, I personally always thought it hideous. But this is blasphemy! Twenty-seven Hindu temples were demolished to supply the material for Kutb-ad-Din’s mosque, and round the courtyard the pillars still stand, much defaced, of course, since Muslim orthodoxy would not permit of the representation of any form of life, human or animal, in their sacred buildings. It savoured of idolatry. But in spite of this, how much the decoration of these buildings owes to the abounding imagination and skill of the Hindu craftsman. They contributed something of their own rich vitality, and were kept in check by the austerity and splendid vision of the conqueror. It was a great partnership.

A later king, Ala-ud-Din, and one whose record might well make a Borgia turn pale, added one of the loveliest gateways I have seen in all India, and yet another is

buried in a tomb, now open to the sky, and which I saw for the first time by moonlight. The walls are of carved red sandstone and in the centre, in the direct light of the moon, lay the massive grey sarcophagus. As someone said, it would be worth dying, and dying at once, could one but be certain of such burial.

At a little distance from these stands the tomb of Adham Khan, Akbar's foster brother, the conqueror of Mandu, beloved of the Emperor, but traitor, murderer and profligate. In the end flung from a terraced wall by the Emperor's own hand, and by his command royally buried at Delhi.

At the Kutb on this especial afternoon we had tea. A very potent brew of tea at the Dak bungalow with water biscuits and a dangerous-looking pink jam! But dead cities give an edge to the appetite, and our escort beguiled the hour by telling us tales of Delhi as he first knew it twenty years ago, when you undertook a visit to the Kutb only after mature consideration and never for less than two or three days. It was almost "cow dust" hour, the well-named hour of dusk when the cattle are driven home in leisurely fashion across the dusty plain, and the setting sun turns the dust to a glory. When the big ox wagons halt by the roadside for the night whilst others, their drivers wrapt in slumber, drift patiently on till morning. Men, women, children, and cattle pour into the city gates bearing bundles of sugar cane or driving their herds before them. The camels strut contemptuously by, ridiculous always, but how much more ridiculous harnessed to the camel cart of the Punjab. The water-buffalo, ill-tempered, ugly, but so essential, lumber past. Round the wells there is a great show of activity, and the peasant sings a slow, rhythmical chant as he drives his pair of oxen up and



down, bringing the tubs of water to the surface of the well, where they are seized and emptied into the little irrigation canals. It is the hour in the whole long Indian day that makes the rest of it worth while.

In the dusk we motored home across the plain till at Raisina that vast graveyard gave place for a while to the teeming activity of New Delhi. Will the old battle-cry of "Prithwi Raj" ever echo round those walls I wonder? But this we can say at least: The alien conquerors of Delhi from Mohammad of Ghor to the White Raj have dreamt of Empire, and dreamt superbly, in these their cities. And of the future who can tell? "For it is a far cry to Delhi, and many have found it farther than they can reach."

CHAPTER V

AGRA AND THE CITY OF A DREAM

THE Mecca of the tourist, but how inescapable ! The Taj, the Khyber and Kashmir ; these three have been familiar to us from copybook days, so be-postcarded, shall we call it, one almost dreads them. Yet of their appeal, widely different though each be, actual experience can only prove the unfailing freshness.

Agra is a four-hour train journey only from Delhi, and very soon after our arrival in India the Viceroy promised to make of it a yearly pilgrimage. This it became. The week-end of the full moon was usually chosen. We escaped on a Saturday evening, saw the Taj by moonlight that night ; rose, if we were really zealous, for sunrise next day ; hastened to the Fort after breakfast, to Fatehpur Sikri after luncheon, took the tomb of Akbar in our stride on the homeward journey, and collapsed limply at the Taj at sunset. We lived at the Circuit House, a big bungalow reserved for the use of the Governor and officials of the Province when on tour and, of course, at the disposal of the Viceroy. At Agra most of the party were under canvas, and from our tents we could see the dome of the Taj, the river, the Fort and, distantly, the town. And if I claim any credit for having invariably risen at

sunrise, I must also confess that there was equally invariably one fly in the ointment of Agra—and that my bed! I have never known one so ingenuously combine the properties of a refrigerator and the surface of the Rockies!

A moonlit week-end at Agra is apt, alas, to be fashionable, and to be perfectly happy at the Taj you must also be perfectly selfish, or else gifted with the absorption of a Buddha. At sunrise it is deserted and silent except for a melancholy and unhurried gardener. He wails, most probably, simply because he has had no breakfast, but his melancholy is discreet. As discreet as the impudence of the bird folk, so secure in their dreaming garden, or as the silent-footed peasant, the woman in her full skirt and long veil staining the marble with bright stains of flame and crimson.

But the moon brings fashion, and with it the Babu, the Eurasian and the Tripper. Now the Babu, even to his boots, has adopted the stridency of the West, the Eurasian the holiday spirit of a Hampstead Heath, and the Tripper a silhouette, disturbing, indeed, when viewed against that background of enchanted stone. There remains but to endure with what bad grace of irritation one may.

It is hard to say when the Taj is loveliest. The mere fact that the grievous trinity do not afflict the rising sun is so much to that moment's advantage. But as certainly, and impatience apart, sunrise at Agra is one long miracle; from the moment when the Taj stands, a thing of shadowless grey lace against the fading night sky, till the golden light moulds the sweep of arch and dome. From the terrace you can watch the rose red walls of the Fort and the domes of the Pearl Mosque hanging like an enchanted city above the blue curve

of the river, or sit in the tomb itself, where the eternal twilight is suddenly shot with gold, and every whisper echoes like the hundred fading voices of a haunting memory.

How it gains, too, by its freedom from personality. Perhaps all artists should be peacefully murdered and forgotten. The Taj is neither a tomb nor a temple, nor even, and only, a supreme work of art. This dream in marble has transcended definition, has passed beyond the field of interpretation; you can no more bring its spirit within the grasp of sense than you can explain how that great weight of stone seems imponderable as air.

Mumtaz Mahal, Elect of the Palace and Lady of the Taj, was no fragile zenana houri, for when Shah Jahan rebelled she shared his exile, his privations and his dangers. Incidentally she bore him thirteen—or was it fourteen—children. As Oriental and Emperor both, her husband paid her memory a supreme tribute, for after her death he never sought to replace her. Later he transferred his capital to Delhi, but not before he had filled Akbar's great Fort with a treasure of palaces, gardens, mosques and pavilions. To Agra he was doomed to return, for here he spent the last seven years of his life, the prisoner of that "ascetic assassin", his son Aurangzebe. As the chapter closed he lay dying in the Jasmine Tower of the Fort, turning sightless eyes towards that sunlit distance where the Taj enshrined a beautiful and passionate memory.

Babar, Humayun, Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan, Aurangzebe; a proud succession! Sons of the house of that Timur—more familiar to us as Tamerlane—who, in 1398, swept from Samarkand to the conquest of Delhi, and who shared with Chinghiz Khan the distinc-

tion of being the most ferocious, the most dreaded, of her conquerors.

Babar, who inherited the blood of both, marched from Kabul in 1525, and met the Hindu host on the plain of Panipat, where, as he himself describes, "By the grace and mercy of Almighty God this difficult affair was made easy to me, and that mighty army, in the space of half a day, was laid in the dust."

He was destined to be the founder of that Moghul power, brought to its full glory by his grandson Akbar, but he was far more than a successful soldier; this king of the incredible adventures, the abounding vitality and the romantic pen. I quote one estimate of his character :

"Babar is the link between Central Asia and India, between predatory hordes and imperial government, between Tamerlane and Akbar. The blood of the two great scourges of Asia, Chinghiz and Timur, mixed in his veins, and to the daring and restlessness of the nomad Tartar he joined the culture and urbanity of the Persian. He brought the energy of the Mongol, the courage and capacity of the Turk, to the listless Hindu; and himself a soldier of fortune and no architect of Empire, he yet laid the first stone of the splendid fabric which his grandson Akbar achieved. . . . Soldier of fortune as he was, Babar was not the less a man of fine literary taste and fastidious critical perception. In Persian, the language of culture, the Latin of Central Asia, as it is of India, he was an accomplished poet, and in his native Turki he was a master of a pure and unaffected style alike in prose and verse."

Babar died at Agra but was buried at Kabul, and was succeeded by his son Humayun, whom popular legend made the indirect cause of his father's death.

The story goes that while Humayun lay grievously sick a holy man declared that a sacrifice, precious in the eyes of the Emperor, might propitiate the angry gods. Unhesitatingly Babar hastened to the sick-room, and bending over his son again and again offered his own life in exchange for that of the young man. His prayer was granted.

Perhaps Humayun was hardly worth so great a sacrifice, yet he, too, had qualities. He was succeeded by Akbar, Emperor and Dreamer; by Jahangir, the "talented drunkard" who basked in the light of a brilliant and beautiful woman; by Shah Jahan, the Magnificent; and by Aurangzebe, the relentless fanatic.

Amongst these, for all their greatness, the name of Akbar stands alone, and if Agra is only primarily his city, twenty miles distant across the plain lies Fatehpur (Victory Town), which is his and his alone to claim. The Emperor had lost two children in infancy, but a famous Muslim holy man, Salim Chishti, whose home was at Sikri, promised that three sons should be born and survive him. Feeling Agra to be unlucky and also wishing to do honour to the Saint, the Emperor founded his city at Sikri in 1569, soon after the birth of his eldest son Salim, better known to the world as the Emperor Jahangir. Perhaps, too, Akbar saw in the child, who, like all his sons, only lived to disappoint him cruelly, the heir to that great future it was his ambition and dream to establish. So he built the city, building into its walls the heart and mind of his vision, and no later or lesser man has since come to disturb his memory. It stands superbly, on a plateau commanding the plain, and dominated by the Great Gateway of Victory, over which was set, by the Emperor's orders, the inscription :

"Said Jesus (on Whom be peace !), the world is a

Bridge, pass over it, but build no house there. He who hopes for an hour hopes of eternity. The world is but an hour ; spend it in devotion, the rest is unseen."

Within the gateway the great courtyard of the mosque, to one side the mother-of-pearl tomb of the Chishti Saint in its beautiful marble pavilion. Beneath the palaces and gardens ; the Audience Hall ; the houses of the courtiers ; the court where, on great squares let into the stone paving, the Emperor played Backgammon, gorgeously dressed slave girls for pieces ; the palaces of his wives ; the baths ; the House of Dreams where he himself slept, or, more often, passed the long hours of the night in philosophic discussion.

There is, too, a little garden, the traditional scene of that first charming meeting between Prince Salim and the child Muhr-i-nissa, who as the woman Nurjahan was to rule his heart and mind so completely. The figure of a very sulky young Prince breaks in on the child's solitude. Rough and unnoticing he bids her take care of the two tame doves he carries, while he goes about some other business. Returning, he demands the birds but finds that one has escaped from the girl's careless hold. With a curse he turns upon her as a fool and asks :

" How has it escaped ? "

Muhr-i-nissa gives flash for flash, and, springing to her feet and opening both hands wide, answers, as the second bird flutters to freedom :

" So, my Lord ! "

And Salim never forgot the vision.

The stone, marble work and carving of Fatehpur are wonderfully preserved, though little is left of the old paintings. Artists from far and near were summoned for its adornment, and yet, in a brief twenty years, it

stood empty and deserted. The reason ? There are several romantic versions and the simple truth was perhaps lack of water. Yet his sons had failed him, his dream had faded, and dead lay Rajah Birbal, the friend who had lived and shared it most intimately. There is something of despondency not only of necessity in that desertion. And to-day Fatehpur is still the home of a brooding spirit—of something more than a memory.

And what of the builder ? King of Kings, Heaven of the Court, Shadow of God ! At thirteen he succeeded to a distracted throne, hardly a year of his life passed without a campaign either of punishment or of frank aggression. As he himself said :

“A monarch should be ever intent on conquest, otherwise his neighbours rise in arms against him. The army should be exercised in warfare lest from want of training they become self-indulgent.”

The philosophy of his day and a very natural one, and to this you must add a man of towering ambition, a great leader bred to arms, the heir to an Empire in name only, surrounded by intrigue and rebellion, and at best the alien conqueror of his people. A despot with nothing to check his power could he but once grasp it, and a man who, in things temporal and spiritual, above all things sought and dreamed of conquest. Give, too, a personality of extraordinary magnetism and charm, a tireless energy, great personal courage, a high purpose, and set him in an age in which personality was all supreme. The Great Moghul was all this and something more, for if he dreamt of conquest he dreamt too of a great Empire united under a strong hand, rich, prosperous and content. He worked tirelessly for administrative reform, he insisted on tolerance and the

free exercise of religion. In spite of a passionate temper, which from time to time betrayed him into acts of awful violence, he hated cruelty and was chivalrous even to his enemies. He tried to put down the practice of Suttee—the inexorable law that ordains a Hindu widow should perish alive on her husband's funeral pyre—and offended the Hindus. The Muslim he offended no less. The great offices of State were no longer the monopoly of the conqueror, but were shared with the Rajput Princes. The growing unorthodoxy of the Emperor, the encouragement given to the Hindu faith, his marriages with Hindu Princesses, his arrogant assumption of papal authority in spiritual matters, the mysticism which led him to the study of all heresy and the friendship of men of every shade of belief, including the Jesuit. In the end the Emperor seems to have rejected the faith of Islam, and substituted for it a faith of his own designing, with himself as its temporal and spiritual head, and in its teachings something of Islam, something of the Hindu, of the Jain, of the Parsi and of the Christian. What if this was in part ambition, was it not also a restless searching after truth, the desperate questioning of eternity by a man whose dreams had outstripped the boundaries of time.

For all its splendour and all its power a shadow of melancholy hung over that vivid intellect, and in the end Akbar, like many another, must have drunk to the dregs the cup of his own loneliness. For his tomb at Sikandara, though it is impossible to stand indifferent beside his dust, I care little, and in its beauty, hardly touched by decay and yet so desolate, Fatehpur Sikri remains his best memorial.

CHAPTER VI

THE FRONTIER

FOR the first three weeks of April and the last three of October we were homeless, for these were the days of migration, the household gods were being moved, and over the rites the Comptroller held sway, asking only to be left in peace. Such comparative peace as the absence of some ten persons, all of an inquiring and argumentative turn of mind, might shed on the at best distracted scene. His task was Herculean. All our furnishings to be collected, packed, dispatched. In April one house to be tidied away, and everything in it secured from the ravages of the white ant and from extremes of heat and rain ; another, three times the size of the first, to be unwrapped, swept, aired, scrubbed, polished, upholstered and garnished. All the careful packing at Delhi to be unpacked at Simla ; more than one hundred servants, and heaven knows what number of hangers-on, as well as all the European and Indian Staff from the Private Secretary's Office, the Military Secretary's Office and the Invitation Office, and the whole of the estate, the stables, the garden, the Viceroy's band, their wives, families and baggage, to transport from one place to the other. It may sound ironical, though it was in fact a mighty tribute, but the hero of this struggle was known and loved throughout the length and breadth of India as—Smiler !



LORD READING AT DELHI

Yet for all his cheerfulness under affliction, he was on these occasions, at least, profoundly glad to see the last of us. The departing company included, beside Their Excellencies, His Excellency's Private Secretary, Sir Geoffrey de Montmorency, whose impressive name inevitably tempted the terse abbreviation of "Alf", Colonel Worgan, the Military Secretary, our Admirable Crichton; Colonel, now Sir Thomas, Carey Evans, the Surgeon, the repository of all our woes of body and mind (he bore both with equal patience and was himself the best tonic in any pharmacopœia), and three out of six A.D.Cs. That brilliant and changing company was throughout led by Ralph Burton, not only the battle-scarred warrior of the Invitation Office, but also the artist-expert of the Staff.

The list would be incomplete without mention of Smith, our butler, and a pillar of chapel and State. To see him was to feel at once homesick and comforted, to conjure a vision of the ordered decorum of an English country house, and to wonder and wonder afresh at the genius of the British race! For truly his acceptance of conditions so alien was marvellous, and he ruled his scarlet-clad troop of assistants with a benevolent patience beyond all praise. His life must have been a series of rude shocks, and he encountered the worst during his first week in India. The Viceroy had paid a flying visit to Lahore immediately on arrival. One morning had been set apart for a visit to the Fort, but at the last minute His Excellency had insisted on driving over to Amritsar. By some oversight the authorities at the Fort were not warned of the change of plan, and when Smith made his appearance at its gates on the back of Primrose, the Government House elephant, beneath his appalled gaze the guard turned out, the

bugles rang, and he received, in its literal sense, a royal welcome !

I am wandering from the chronological path. On our first experience of the hill migration in March of 1922, we set our faces towards Peshawur. Now Peshawur and the North-West Frontier need less introduction than any other part of India, and perhaps, in all the Great Dependency, form the one area which has a real significance for the average man and woman at home. With good reason.

It is a happy hunting-ground for the romantic imagination, as very stern fact so often is, but it is also a tonic for the dismal and a supreme tribute to the genius of the British soldier. The most superficial knowledge of the Frontier is a revelation of what the defence of India means, and as a school for politicians, Indian and English alike, it is unique—and much neglected. The “Rule Britannia” spirit is exasperating, but I found the type of mind which loves to burn incense on any and every national altar but its own, hardly less so. It is the other extreme of complacency, and, I think, the more arrogant of the two. Is it shaken by the Frontier? Perhaps not, for this critic is no doubt an “intellectual” and the world is, for the present, very busy worshipping intellectuals. Yet, though there are great names and brilliant in the history of the Englishman in India, the continent has never been held, primarily, by brilliance of intellect, but by the more general influence of character. As an Indian once said to a friend of mine :

“Sahib, we do not want to be ruled by geniuses but by gentlemen.”

I here use genius in its intellectual sense, and the ill-used term “gentleman” in its widest, as the finest

expression of character. Of this truth the Frontier is the most vivid illustration. Does the Frontier soldier and civilian ever weary of making the world safe for politicians? He well may, but the onlooker in his midst arrives at the simple and gratifying conclusion that just as the country is peopled by no mean race, neither could men of a mean race hope to hold it for a moment.

With the names and characteristics of its own peoples most of us are familiar. There are numberless tribes, but at Peshawur the two chief divisions are the Pathan, the people of the plains whose ancient customs have led to their association with the lost tribes of Israel, and the Afridi of the hill tracts. Both are a virile people—the Pathan makes a fine soldier. Most tribesmen are treacherous, unruly, and cunning, but they are men, and I never met anyone, having spent his life amongst them, who did not hold them in sincere, if qualified, admiration and affection.

The story of our visit had best be told from day to day in the words of the diary :

PESHAWUR.

31st March, 1922.

Our farewell to Delhi was full of regret in spite of the climate, and our journey to Peshawur full of interest. We had luncheon at Taxila, the home of Græco-Buddhist remains, and at Attock, like Alexander the Great only in a milder spirit, crossed the Indus. The river is more than the boundary of the Frontier Province, for now India lies behind us, and Central Asia is at our gates. It is such lovely country ; the fertile valley, the river, the grim semi-circle of mountain and the distant Kashmir range white with snow.

The Chief Commissioner met His Excellency at the station, and we drove up to Government House between lines of Native Cavalry and hedges of orange blossom. The garden here is as green and as fresh as any in England, and, though the middle of the day is hot, the air is beautifully clean and cool. We are superlatively guarded. Sentries are much in evidence by day and night, particularly by night, for the weary traveller could do with a less constant reminder of the romantic perils of the Frontier. Guard is always changed just outside your door, and every sentry is afflicted with a severe cough, which he indulges the night through with more conviction than delicacy !

A great blow has fallen on us in that the city is closed to Europeans. The Pathan is supposed to consider this in the light of a punishment, since he has been uncivil of late, and repent. But to us the loss of the Peshawur Bazaar is sad indeed.

H.E., the Commander-in-Chief, the Chief Commissioner, and a large Staff went up the Khyber to-day, whilst we, virtuously and without incident, adorned Government House. There was a ball in the evening. Officers coming in from the passes arrive armed to the teeth, and the drive home is never without the possibility of incident.

1st April, 1922.

A storm last night and to-day is cloudy and smells of rain. His Excellency departed on tour, and after luncheon several of us, with an armed orderly for escort, drove out to the Fort at Shabkadr, passing through lovely country and smells ranging in catholic selection from orange blossom to very dead horse ! Shabkadr is one of the many little outposts dotted here and there along the line of the Frontier, and we had tea

with the two English officers in charge. The garrison is composed of men from the Mohmand Militia, a local tribal levy, and after tea we climbed to the top of the tower to survey the country. A mile away lay the line of barbed wire, interspersed with watch-towers, that guards the boundaries of British territory, beyond, in an immense horseshoe, the mountains of the Frontier tribes, arid and desolate. The valley, with its fat cattle and fatter crops, stretches away from their feet to a remote and altogether tempting distance. What wonder that it has been a land of promise to the conqueror and marauder throughout every page of its history.

We passed many of the tribesmen on the way home, magnificent ruffians, every man a rifle slung across his shoulder, ready to laugh or murder with equal zest. The children adorable and impudent, the women beautiful. It is a very fine type, and in young and old, even the poorest, the look of pride and breeding is so refreshing. No need to worry about "slave mentality" here.

To-night the wife of a Frontier Chief sent Her Excellency a white satin cushion, with a turquoise blue frill and a scarlet back. In the centre, firmly secured, a large and highly coloured portrait of His late Imperial Majesty King Edward VII.

2nd April, 1922.

Her Excellency's visit to the Zenana Hospital took us through the town this morning, at which we were suitably thrilled. There is a bazaar outside the walls, unpopular as a place of residence since it is too exposed to attack, and steep and crowded bazaars within. We were made to speed through and not allowed to stop, but bazaars are the most attractive feature throughout

the East, and Peshawur stands high in repute amongst its fellows. Naturally, since it is the first Indian city at this end of the Central Asia trade route.

The cry of "Gandhi-ki-Jai" (Victory to the Kingdom of Gandhi) has been heard within these walls. It must have been very much imported, for I cannot imagine a race less likely to hold a high opinion of the "sword of the spirit" as a practical weapon than the Pathan of the North-West Frontier !

From the Zenana Hospital, which commanded a wonderful view of the labyrinths of the city and its roof life, we motored back to the Church Missionary Society's Hospital, where we found Mrs. Starr. To her fame I need hardly introduce you since later she became known to all the world in connexion with the rescue of Miss Ellis from the trans-Frontier tribesmen. Yet her gallantry on that occasion pales, to my mind, beside the lifelong gallantry and devotion she has shown in her hospital work amongst the wild people of the Frontier, amongst the very men who murdered her husband under her eyes.

The hospital is divided into two parts, one for those who will submit to a change of clothes and the indignity of sheets and blankets, and one for those who will not ! Those who will not seem to flourish in spite of flies, dirt, and numbers of unclean, if picturesque, relations. Here, as in all Northern India, if you fall ill the whole family attends you to hospital and camps by your bedside. It is one of the minor problems with which the medical profession has to deal, for it is a choice between patients with retinue complete, or no patients at all. The centre of interest in this block was a lady whose husband had adopted the local form of divorce by cutting off her nose ! Another gentleman, presumably the co-respon-

dent in this Afridi triangle, had brought her to hospital to have a new one fitted. I respected him, for I gravely doubt a European so situated would have done as much !

In the genteel block lay a young man from one of the tribal levies who, after an absence of two years, went home on leave, and was shot in the back as he entered his house by the enemy who had sat and waited. There is no end to the blood feuds amongst the tribes. In the absence of any other occupation their whole lives seem passed in a competition of assassination. They will wait years for vengeance, treacherous, implacable, but full of courage.

Some carpets and rugs were brought up to Government House this evening for, since the bazaar is denied us, the greatest treasures are brought here. The carpet fever is raging and contagious, though by far the best plan is to go to the Caravan Serai at the foot of the Khyber and yourself pull the carpets of your choice off the camels' backs, or from under their feet, or from wherever else they may have fallen. H.E. has been presented with a beautiful silk rug. An inscription is woven into the border and, being translated, is revealed as a curse upon all mothers of daughters !

A new story of a Frontier ruler, who wrote to the Chief Commissioner, concluding with the information :

“ I have twelve sons ; six, by the Grace of God, legitimate ! ”

His Excellency returned, and I give below a detailed account of his tour from the pen of one of the party :

1st April—3rd April, 1922.

I must tell you something of our doings since we left Peshawur. The first part of the journey was through

very open country with good crops growing on either side of the road. Each village we passed had most of its inhabitants out to get a glimpse of His Excellency. After about ten miles we reached the border line of the Afridi country where the hills close in, and from here we were escorted throughout by an armoured car. It is perfectly safe provided you keep to the road, but if you wander afield you are apt to be shot at.

We stopped two or three times during the next twenty miles, each time at a village where the villagers, carrying rifles as we should walking-sticks, had assembled to greet H.E. The men are very fine and the women and children extraordinarily good looking. At one of the villages we saw an arms factory. A wonderful sight, for everything is made by hand. I believe it takes about two months to complete one rifle, and each is sold for about Rs. 80. Every frontier tribe purchases rifles from this and one or two other factories in the vicinity.

The villages are extremely strongly built, the walls being of stone several feet thick, and rising above the wall a watch-tower loop-holed on all sides. One village we passed through had a very ornamental tower about which an amusing story is told. A man of the village was bitten by a mad dog and immediately went to the Mullah (priest) for advice. The Mullah ordered him to be shut up in the tower, and decreed that day and night, men in relays should beat drums round him. After three weeks of this treatment the man went mad and died. When the Mullah was asked why he had died, he answered coolly : " Not from the bite ! "

There is almost always fighting going on either between two villages or else between the different families of one village. Quite a short time ago a family from one village attacked the family of another with bombs which

they had captured from our troops, killing six women and three children.

We reached Kohat about 4.45 p.m., and left next day immediately after breakfast for Fort Lockhart, some thirty-seven miles distant. At Patdarband, about 2,600 feet above sea-level, we left the cars, and mounting ponies proceeded up a very winding, rocky and steep path to the Fort, which lay six miles away and 3,000 feet above us. Hardly had we started when we heard the report of a rifle, and a bullet, travelling up the valley, struck a rock some distance ahead. H.E. and Lord Rawlinson rode on as if nothing had happened, but everyone else looked round rather anxiously. All seemed quiet, and an orderly was sent back to investigate. He returned five minutes later and reported that the armoured car which had followed us from Kohat had let off a round by mistake in unloading one of the machine guns! Rather amusing, since they were the only protection we had!

We eventually reached Fort Lockhart at 11.30 a.m., and here all the officers were presented to His Excellency, after which he was greeted by eighty or ninety tribesmen who had assembled to lay their grievances before him. On His Excellency assuring them that a certain matter should be looked into, one man, not content, asked for his promise in writing!

We were most unlucky, as the clouds, which had been hanging about since early morning, dropped, restricting the view which is, I believe, wonderful on a clear day. Rain started to fall almost immediately, so after a hasty walk round the Fort we proceeded to the Mess and had a most excellent luncheon. We left soon after, walked the first three miles, rode the remainder, eventually reaching the cars about 3.30 p.m.

On the way back we stopped at the Deputy Commissioner's house at Hangu, and here all the neighbouring Khans (Chiefs) had assembled and were presented to His Excellency. As a Staff we took particular interest in one amongst them, the father of our Indian A.D.C., Gulab Shah. He was a wonderful-looking man of over ninety years of age, and had with him two grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. He brought with him a plate full of sovereigns for His Excellency to touch. (The presenting of a gold coin to a ruler to touch as a token he accepts the proffered service is an old and far-reaching custom in India.) It was a great sight to see Gulab Shah, dressed in khaki as an A.D.C. to the Viceroy, having tea with his picturesquely attired relations.

We were off on our journey again and reached Kohat at 6.15 p.m. It was a most interesting day, only a little spoilt by the rain and the clouds. To-morrow there is to be a review of the troops of the Kohat Garrison.

Little the staff can have thought that two and a half years later Kohat was to be nearly burnt to the ground in one of those fierce internecine quarrels which blaze out among Hindus and Mohammedans. The latter are, of course, supreme in numbers and power in the Frontier Province, and the Hindu is only there on sufferance as a trader and banker, but in Kohat a numerous Hindu community had lived for nearly one hundred years in amity with the Muslims. In 1924, however, a hotheaded young Hindu brought a lampoon deriding the Muslim holy places from Rawalpindi, and distributed copies in the Kohat bazaar among his young Hindu friends. The verses were seen by a Muslim and an altercation began. The Hindus in terror fired a

few shots from the roofs of their houses, and this began a terrible fight between the two communities. Many men were killed on each side and nearly the whole of the Hindu quarter was burnt down and the shops looted. The fires in the town were seen by the trans-frontier tribesmen whose hills are but a few miles away ; and they came down in mass, prepared to loot and murder both parties impartially in the Kohat mêlée.

Our troops, which had begun to get the riot in hand, had to be diverted to guard the town and cantonment from the vast hordes of trans-frontier tribesmen. Had " the border " got in, there would have been nothing left of Kohat. Truly life on the Frontier is not devoid of excitement !

But to return to the diary :

4th April, 1925.

A garden party this afternoon to which many Khans and Chieftains were bidden. A guard was placed over the tea tents, as on the last such occasion the guests arrived betimes, fell unhesitatingly on the food, and stuffed what they had no time to eat into their pockets !

5th April, 1925.

We have spent the day in the Khyber. A day of days from the point of view of weather, clear and beautifully sunny, though quite cold at the top of the Pass. We left at eleven. Nine miles across the valley brings you to Jamrud, where troops, British and Indian, guard the entrance. The Fort of Hari Singh, the Sikh General who conquered the Khyber before we in turn conquered the Sikh, is now used as a police station ; the place is fortified, alive with pickets, and bristling with barbed wire, and here you present your permits to the sentry, for, except by permission, you can go no farther.

The Pass runs, as you know, through Afridi territory, and in the old days the Afridis' chief source of income, beside pillage, was the exaction of a toll from the caravans who used the Pass, and toll or no toll, were as often as not robbed before they got through. To-day the Government of India pay the Afridis a fixed sum, and give their protection to the caravans and nomad tribes, who have for centuries made of the Khyber the greatest trade route between India and Central Asia. Our local levies patrol the road, numberless pickets, visible and invisible, cover the hills, and blockhouses guard the way.

It is a wild country, more wild than beautiful except where the Pass narrows to a magnificent gorge at Ali Musjid, but the impression it produces conquers even the magic of its name. A railway is in course of construction, two roads, one for caravans and one for ordinary, or rather extraordinary traffic, run at different levels throughout its length, and a wire pulley is used for carrying supplies to the big military camp at Landi Kotal. At Landi Kotal, too, there is a Serai, where on Tuesdays and Fridays, when the Pass is open to caravans, these spend the night before or after the day's march. Here we were met by the Commanding Officer of the district, who took us on some three miles to a turn in the road which achieves a dramatic climax. Far below lies the Afghan border, and beyond, range upon range, the mountains of the Hindu Kush stretch away to the snowbound horizon. It is an amazing panorama. The border is only a mile or two away, guarded on each side respectively by British and Afghan pickets, and you stand on ground where only as lately as 1919 the British defeated and scattered an Afghan force. Upon this scene we gazed for a romantic twenty minutes, and then

motored back to Landi Kotal and a great feast at Brigade Headquarters Mess. Thence we were summarily dispatched, for the mere female has to be clear of the Khyber before dusk.

We had seen caravans moving up the cart road in the morning, but on the way home were exceptionally lucky and ran into the middle of a nomad tribe which had strayed on to the motor road. These tribes come down from the high places of Afghanistan in the winter, spend the cold weather in the Peshawur valley, hiring out their shaggy Bactrian camels, working in the fields and laying in a store of stuff to carry home for barter. At this time of year they start the spring migration. Cattle, sheep, goats, camels, donkeys, wend their way up the Pass, their owners trudging alongside, though perhaps the youngest baby or the oldest grandmother is allowed to ride. A picturesque crew, Afghans for the most part, and some as fair-haired and blue-eyed as an Englishman. As usual, the younger generation is the most attractive, from the fluffy little camels and donkeys to the large-eyed babies. Yet for looks commend me to the Afridi. The men are superb, the women in their scarlet trousers and long black veils hardly less so.

It was still mid afternoon when, from the heights of the Pass, we saw the mountains opening and the lavish beauty of the valley spread at our feet.

The Frontier is synonymous with hard living. What must these barren hills be like in the hot weather ? Here where there is no monsoon to mitigate its evils, where there is hardly a scrap of shade, and brazen rock and brazen sky burn together !

CHAPTER VII

INDORE AND MANDU

IN the autumn of 1922 the Viceroy made a tour in Central India, a tour that included visits to the two great Mahratta Princes, the Maharaja Holkar of Indore and the Maharaja Scindia of Gwalior, as well as a third to the only woman ruler in India, Her Highness the Begum of Bhopal. As it fell out, this last visit had to be postponed, but since we went early the following year I have here kept the visit in its original and rightful setting beside its two neighbouring States of Indore and Gwalior.

Historically and geographically the tour introduced us to a new world, and it can never be sufficiently insisted on that the country loosely described as "India" would be far easier to appreciate accurately if, from the first, we were taught to look upon it as a continent. For it is a continent in the real sense that it has a hundred different peoples, languages and histories, from extreme to extreme, every variation of climate and circumstance, every physical contrast, from tropical forest to eternal snow. Not even in religion has it a single unifying principle, and you might as well talk of Europe as a country, in the accepted sense of the word, as of India. It follows that even for the superficial needs of the traveller, history is everywhere

confusing, yet for any sense at all to be made of the travel a little is necessary.

The Mahratta power is of comparatively modern growth, dating from the day when its great founder Sivaji, born in 1627, descended from his western fastnesses to trouble the Empire of Shah Jahan.

The Mahrattas, rulers and people, come from yeoman stock, the heart of whose homeland lies in the hills, plateau and valleys round Poona. Some trace connection with the Rajput; but old writers associate Mahrattas generally with a Sudra origin, one of the four great major caste divisions of the Hindu system. First amongst these stand the Brahmins, the learned and priestly caste; second the Kshatriyas, the warrior caste, of which the Rajput is the flower; third the traders or Vaisyas; and lastly the Sudras or common people.

The Mahrattas were a sturdy race, and under the leadership of Sivaji, who insisted on a degree of discipline undreamt of in his day, the army became a formidable weapon. He began life as a robber chief, and died a power in the land, and the only one able to challenge the supremacy of the Moghul. Of his clansmen he made soldiers first, and when he died left them a nation. His methods of domination may not pass the strictest bar of later ethical standards; but he dwelt in tortuous times, and found their justification in his achievement.

Little more than thirty years after Sivaji's death the power fell from the hands of his successors, and was seized by the Peshwas or Chief Ministers, hereditary officials, who for the next century reigned supreme. And here we come to the story of Malhar Rao, the founder of the Holkar dynasty of Indore, who was born

in the village of Hol in 1694. He was the son of humble parents, but from the day when he was found asleep amongst his uncle's flocks whilst a cobra with raised hood protected him from the sun's rays, the neighbours predicted for him a great and stirring future. At the age of thirty, after some previous military experience, he entered the service of the Peshwa, and eight years later became Commander-in-Chief of his armies, and, in return for his brilliant services, had received the province of Indore and much conquered territory from his master. He left it great and prosperous, his heir died a few months after his succession, and the power passed to Malhar Rao's daughter-in-law, Ahilya Bai, a woman of remarkable intellect and sanctity. In the end, the people for whom she laboured with such wisdom and devotion came to look upon her, as they do to this day, as a devi or goddess.

Enough has, I think, been said to indicate the origin of the State which to-day covers an area of over 9,000 square miles, and for the actual description of the incidents of the visit I will again quote from the diary :

21st October, 1922.

We left Simla yesterday morning, and at midday to-day Central India was on the warm side of comfort. We had luncheon at Ujjain in Gwalior, where we changed to the Metre Gauge Special, and arrived at Indore at half-past three. The station was gay and had all the appearance of several patriotic bazaars rolled into one, and the Maharaja Holkar was there to receive His Excellency. We have arrived on the heels of the Diwali Festival or Festival of Lamps, during which every man worships the implements of his trade. And so in all the villages you see tufts of peacocks'



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feathers tied to the heads of cows and bullocks, and at Indore one of the former presented a sinister appearance stamped from horns to tail by the hand of her owner dipped in blood-red paint ! At night the festival is greeted by illuminations and the houses are all outlined in light.

Their Excellencies processed through the town with the Maharaja and the Agent to the Governor-General in Central India, the rest of us taking a short cut and arriving at the Manikbagh Palace ahead of them. The palace is the Maharaja's country house, and is very comfortable and European. Once installed, there followed, as in all native states, the ceremony of the Mizaj Pursi, when, with due solemnity, His Highness's Staff waits on His Excellency's Staff in order to inquire after the health of the Viceroy. Is he rested after the fatigues of his journey ? is he comfortable ? and is he ready to receive the formal visit of his host ? The reports being satisfactory, the Maharaja arrives, the Viceroy advancing to a fixed spot on the gold carpet to meet him, but not a step beyond ! Indeed, the number of paces, and the exact spot on the carpet to which he is to advance, is ordained by strict regulation, and in consideration of the importance of the Prince received, only the most important achieving the carpet's edge. The Viceroy and the Prince then take their seats side by side on two golden chairs. After a few minutes conversation the Maharaja asks the Viceroy's permission to present his Staff, and each member in turn advances, holding a gold mohur which His Excellence touches as a token that the tribute is accepted. The presentations over, servants in scarlet and gold enter bearing gold trays, on which repose tall vials of Itr—a very pungent scent—and a neat pile of Pan,

covered in gold leaf. Pan is a concoction of betel-nut and spices folded in an aromatic leaf, and though it is dear indeed to the Indian heart, I found it a difficult taste to acquire. The Viceroy himself presents the Itr and Pan to the Maharaja and hangs a gold Har round his neck, whilst lesser dignitaries do as much for the Staff.

An hour later the Viceroy pays a return visit to the Maharaja at his Palace, and his Staff are in their turn freely anointed with Itr—to their intense and lasting dismay! But the ceremony is one of great dignity, and of a grave and ordered courtesy wholly Eastern.

22nd October, 1922.

We all repaired to church this morning, a nice, cool church with hand punkahs (fans) worked by the heathen on the doorstep. The heathen and the hot Indian day were excellent foils to the supremely British occasion, for it would be difficult to conceive of anything more utterly and conservatively British than the execrable choir, the execrable organ, and the still more execrable glass. Execrable, but at this distance from its source of inspiration, endearing!

I went to luncheon at the Residency, the home of the Agent to the Governor-General, which has a really lovely garden full of hibiscus, pointsettia, laburnum and oleander, in flower. In ours we have bougainvillea too, and a wonderful tree with great clusters of scarlet tulip flowers.

After tea, the Maharaja arrived to conduct Her Excellency to an exhibition of local arts and to the State hospital for women. Indore is, I believe, the commercial centre of this part of the world, and is certainly far more industrial than any place I have seen outside British India. At the exhibition local art was

represented by a gentleman I took to be the court painter, since his talents were represented by portraits of the Ruling Family only. Art in Indore is hereditary, you are a painter for the all-sufficient reason that your grandfather was before you! The town is fairly modern, and, though planned on more scientific lines than most, lacks any buildings of outstanding beauty or interest, though it preserves all the charm inseparable from the dusty, gaily-clad life of India.

The hospital, too, is admirable, and acts as well as a training school for the little Hindu widow. Here too there is a "secret" house where illegitimate babies may be born, and are then left by their mothers to be brought up by the State. This rather cruel philanthropy is in fact a great advance, for twenty years ago the children would have been strangled at birth, yet you notice that the house has still to be "secret". The little boys are usually adopted, the little girls are not; but sometimes they become so highly trained, so efficient, that they actually acquire husbands on their own merits—a supreme achievement for these outcasts.

23rd October, 1922.

Oh—but it is hot! Needless to say, quite the hottest October known in Indore for a hundred years; we have got used to this peculiar malevolence of climate by now.

This evening a polo match, especially arranged by the 7th Hussars, who came over from Mhow to play an Indore team. A lovely evening, and Sir Hukumchand's pearls kept us perfectly happy and cool. Sir Hukumchand is a great local cotton magnate.

This evening, too, a big dinner-party at the Residency, followed by an evening party. The most striking figure present Father Raphael, of the Catholic Mission, in his

brown monk's habit. He is an old man, with a finely modelled face like an Albrecht Durer drawing, and was almost startling in dramatic effect as he moved through the throng of gorgeously dressed Mahratta Princes. He has been in this country for forty years, and began life as a French cavalry officer, fighting in the war of '70.

This place is full of things that crawl and things that fly and things that BITE !

24th October, 1922.

We started early for the Hindi Girls' Training School, which was to be opened by Her Excellency and named after her, and I do think that the scene when she arrived was the prettiest thing in all India. We went through a deep archway into a big shady compound where more than one hundred Purdah babies were gathered in three big groups. As they all wore their gayest saris and as each of them waved a tiny pennon of coloured paper, it looked like the loveliest garden come alive. And the babies are such pets, with their great dark eyes and their immense decorum. Her Excellency unlocked the silver padlock, threw the doors of the school-room open, and then we visited the Montessori class.

From there we journeyed through the town to a big school with a yet bigger name, wherein Hindu widows of all classes are trained and educated. The school has been going for nine years, and is very well run and efficient. Run entirely by Indians, but on European lines, very up to date, non-Purdah and democratically opening its doors to all classes.

This afternoon a garden party given at the Daly College by the Ruling Princes, other than the Maharaja, now at Indore. The college educates their sons, and is a rather beautiful building with a big central hall. There are four "houses," and at one end of the grounds

a mosque presented by the Begum of Bhopal, at the other a Hindu temple.

27th October, 1922.

The illuminations at the Lalbagh Palace were too lovely this evening. It has a huge garden which was lit from end to end with the little oil lamps of the country, and the trees were hung with Japanese lanterns. The charm of these illuminations, beside anything electric light can do, it is impossible to exaggerate, for the light they give is a lovely golden yellow, and, too, is alive.

30th October, 1922.

The Bhils, members of the local aboriginal tribe, gave a dance this evening. It was peculiarly modern ! Not only did they have a marriage dance in which the ladies of each household competed, the one in abuse of the bridegroom's family, the other in that of the bride's ; but the dancing itself might well have been the parent of the foxtrot, which I have always been told drew its inspiration from primitive sources. The signal difference between them being that the Bhil cannot dance at all unless he is drunk—and drunk he was !

31st October, 1922.

The Maharajas of Rewa and Rutlam arrived last night, and the ceremony of investing the former with his full powers as a Ruling Prince was performed at the Residency this morning. We were permitted to view the ceremony in strict Purdah ! His Excellency received the two Maharajas, and then, preceded by their three Staffs and to the tune of a slow march, they processed into the hall, where His Excellency took his seat on a throne at one end, with the Maharaja of Rewa on his right and the Maharaja of Rutlam on his

left. The Political Secretary to the Government of India then asked His Excellency's permission to open the Durbar. This given, the Maharaja of Rutlam, Regent of Rewa and uncle of its ruler, made the first speech, and was followed by His Excellency, who in due course pronounced the Maharaja invested with full powers. The Maharaja replied, the band played and a salute of seventeen guns was fired. Itr and Pan were brought in and distributed, the Durbar was closed, and the procession filed out.

We left Indore at 5.30 p.m., and the state band played the train out of the station with "Auld Lang Syne", which nearly reduced the entire party to tears.

But before drying the tears and pursuing the train, I must give some little account of a day spent in the neighbouring State of Dhar, and at the city of Mandu. Mandu is little known, at least to the tourist, for it is fifty miles from the nearest railway station at Mhow, and the whole expedition entails a considerable amount of toil. I bless its isolation, yet if, as a tourist, I was given the choice of revisiting one single spot in the whole length and breadth of India, on Mandu that choice would unhesitatingly fall, for it is, I think, unrivalled by any other in romance, in beauty and in interest. And that is high praise.

I will not make a long excursion into its history, but the great tableland of Malwa stretches across this portion of Central India, and of Malwa in olden days Dhar and Mandu were the heart. Later, like the Empires of Northern India, it came under Muslim rule, and from 1562, when Adham Khan, whose tomb we have seen at Delhi, occupied Mandu in the name of the Emperor Akbar, Malwa became a Moghul province.

We started at 6 a.m., and a very chilly 6 a.m. too,

and we watched the sun rise over the edge of the plateau not only with admiration but also with relief. It is thirty miles from Indore to Dhar across a wonderfully rich country, and though I have forgotten all the right terms in which I was at one time so carefully instructed, this much I can say with confidence—the plateau is the result of volcanic action and the soil is dark and luscious. With only thirty inches of rain per annum, it bears two crops, the rock beneath is basalt, and men and beasts flourish. We got to Dhar at eight and went straight out to a guest house on the Mandu road, where breakfast was to await us, but, arrived, our guides declared it too early for food, and swept us off to sightsee in the city. We saw two mosques and the fort, and returned, inches deep in dust and incredibly hungry.

Breakfast over, the Maharaja led us out to see the parade of his retainers in their old attire, which he had prepared for the Viceroy's visit. It was a most picturesque sight and a feast of colour; there were, of course, camels in plenty, soldiers in steel helmets and chain mail, looking rather like Saracens, horses beautifully caparisoned, kettledrums beating, and every man salaaming to the earth and crying "Maharaja Bahadur" as they passed His Highness.

But we had risen at five in order to reach Mandu before the heat of the day, and we had to hurry on, leaving one member of the party to shoot black buck and panther, another to take photographs. Here the Maharaja rescued us from our dusty, bumpy Indore motor and lent us his own limousine for the rest of the journey.

It is twenty-five miles to Mandu, so we treated the heat of the day with a contempt it ill deserved, and

from eleven until four-thirty never drew breath. I think I was quite prepared for the beauty of Mandu the city as for the romance of Mandu the legend; what I had not for a moment anticipated was the extraordinary beauty of the site itself.

You must imagine the mighty cliff of the Malwa plateau rising sheer from the plain, and on its edge the huge fortified city, with its forty miles of battlemented wall. You must remember that there were just three perfect things which Northern India (from which we hailed) more often than not denied us: trees, water, and a country that was neither as flat as the Sahara nor yet as discouragingly uneven as the Himalayas. Think, then, of our delight when we discovered Mandu to be all rise and fall of wooded hill, thick green shade and jade-green sunlight, lakes and tanks, and rich things growing richly. Amongst all these, sometimes lost in the forest, sometimes dominating it, in red sandstone and marble, the masterpieces of the Pathan architect. Gateways, palaces, tombs, baths and mosques, all the splendour, erudition and strength of a great civilization.

You should spend five weeks at Mandu, not five hours; we saw but a fragment of it, though historically the chief part. We went straight to that high pavilion, known as Rupmati's pavilion, the farthest and most famous point, perched on the edge of the scarp and commanding that stupendous view over the plain of which I expect you have heard. We were still in the motor when, at the foot of the final climb, I beheld a state elephant.

"An elephant!" I exclaimed.

"Wonderfully cool in the motor," murmured the Political Officer.

“New motor road up,” suggested the Political Secretary.

But I was adamant, and up a blue velvet ladder we climbed on to that elephant's back, and so at least we visited Rupmati becomingly in a green and gold howdah.

Rupmati was a lovely Rajput lady who sang like a goddess, and to whom Baz Bahadur, the ruler of Mandu, lost his heart. But she would have nothing to do with him unless, she said at last, he succeeded in bringing the waters of the sacred Narbada river to the summit of the hill at Mandu. This Baz Bahadur accomplished (the tank is there to this day), and so did he and his lady start to live happily ever after. Alas! Akbar coveted the city and province, and Adham Khan was sent to conquer them. Baz Bahadur fled, and Rupmati, deserted and alone in her pavilion, was warned of the approach and intentions of the conqueror. She sent him word that she would receive him; she arrayed herself in her most splendid robes and dismissed her maids. Adham Khan entering found her lying upon her bed, a veil drawn over her face, dead and cold, for she had taken poison.

We climbed laboriously up the stone stair cut in the thickness of the wall which leads to the terrace above and to the pavilion, an approach which gives no hint of what lies before you until you actually step out under the graceful arches. Then the cliff falls sheer away below, and threaded by the silver stream of the Narbada the plain stretches away at your feet. Lovely as this view is, I am not sure that the view back over Mandu and the great wooded gorge that lies between it and Dhar is not its equal.

We walked down to Baz Bahadur's palace. His story is a charming one, but the honours are with the

lady. Akbar destroyed many of the buildings, but some were restored by his son Jahangir, who, on one occasion, spent six months at Mandu shooting big game. He himself records his pride in Nur Jahan when, from a Purdah howdah, she killed four tigers in six shots. The Emperor was accompanied during this visit by Sir Thomas Roe, James I's ambassador. Even in the ruin wrought by the Moghul, Mandu was still splendid; to-day the Bhil hunts and fights in her jungles with a bow and arrow for weapon, and he and the wandering panther share the beautiful city.

We had luncheon in a lovely cool tomb, and then for a round of palaces, mosques and public buildings. At the Hindola Mahal there is a fine banqueting hall, and at the Jahaz Mahal (or Ship Palace)—it has a lake on either side—we had tea in a pavilion high up overhanging the water.

We started home in the falling dusk, and chose a different and longer route which wound down the steep side of the plateau. As we sped away across the plain the battlements of Rupmati's city stood far above us, silhouetted against a flaming sky.

CHAPTER VIII

GWALIOR AND BHOPAL

ON approaching Gwalior I approach the tragedy which has so lately robbed the State of its ruler, and it is rather a sad task to revisit the scene of so much hospitality and so much kindness. The Maharaja Scindia was a frequent guest both at Delhi and Simla, and the Viceroy paid him several visits, in two of which, the first and State visit to the capital and the longer one in the following year to his palace in the lovely jungles of Sivapuri, the whole company shared. These visits were always a rest and delight, for though a master of stately ceremony when the occasion demanded it—the Gwalior Durbar was the finest I ever saw—the Maharaja was always ready to lay state aside, and preferred to play the parts of host and sportsman, in which indeed he excelled.

One of the greatest and most powerful of the Princes of India, he was utterly unassuming, a tremendous worker, devoted to the interests of his people, an experienced soldier, a generous friend, and a most lovable personality. He had a delightful and prankish sense of humour, and his chuckle as his Staff or his guests fell headlong into the traps laid for them did one good to hear! He himself used to tell this story of one of his more democratic adventures in London.

He had boarded a bus, when on searching his pockets he found, to his horror, that he had not a penny to his name ! A working man came to the rescue and paid his fare. The Maharaja expressed his gratitude and begged the man for his name and address, but this he refused to give and waved aside any mention of repayment. Much disturbed, the Maharaja insisted, saying he would like to send his deliverer some little memento of his kindness, adding, since the man remained obdurate : “ It may interest you to know that I am the Maharaja, the Ruling Prince of Gwalior in India.” To which the workman replied : “ Be yer now ! Well, it may interest yer to know that *I* am the Emperor of all the Rooshians ! ”

He had a very large circle of friends amongst Englishmen in India to whom his doors were always hospitably open, and as “ Scindia ” he was affectionately known far and wide. Sivapuri must reappear in my chapter on the jungle, but two incidents of our visit there, unconnected with sport, shed an interesting light on two different aspects of our host’s personality.

I have already referred to his schoolboy delight in a practical joke, but though familiar enough with this, we had not bargained for the terrors the 1st of April might have in store ! The ladies were, not unexpectedly, treated to a brackish concoction featuring as early morning tea, but the men fared worse. It was very hot, and they all departed to ride and bathe before breakfast ; on returning they called loudly for lemon squash ; lovely, bubbling glasses were brought to them, but, too late, were discovered to contain that health-giving draught known as Mr. Eno’s Fruit Salt ! Our poached eggs were made of stone, our matches were duds, our cigarettes exploded, our ham sandwiches

were lined with pink flannel, our chairs were uncertain, and when we came to play bridge in the evening our pencils boasted rubber points ! The Maharaja's chuckle rested like a benediction on the distracted company, as he strolled, twinkling, from group to group, but I believe he himself was caught at long last by some irreverent trap, prepared for him in his bed by A.D.Cs. driven to retaliation !

The second incident was of a very different nature, but left a deep impression, and one very difficult to express in words. I give it you as I wrote it fresh from the experience :

Last night we visited the Chhatri raised by the Maharaja to the memory of his mother, who died some three years ago. As an orthodox Hindu her body was of course burnt, and the ashes thrown into the Ganges, but this memorial was erected on a spot for which, in her lifetime, she had a great affection, and which she often visited. She was a lady of the old school, but her strict seclusion does not seem to have limited the scope of a very masterful and penetrating spirit. The veneration and affection in which her son held her, and which he has been at pains to establish for all time, are in themselves a remarkable tribute to the oft-told tale of the power behind the Purdah. We of Western emancipation commiserate the victims of the system, and often with reason enough, but it has little power to diminish, rather by respect and tradition would seem to accentuate, the influence of rare minds. And amongst such the Maharani must without doubt be numbered.

Of the Chhatri we had heard much, and we went in as sceptical a spirit as that with which you no doubt

will listen to the story. We had heard of a pavilion where a life-size statue of the Maharani was attended night and day by a retinue of servants, was washed, dressed, jewelled, and had meals laid before it, with an electric fan to keep the image cool and a bed to rest on when tired. It smacked a trifle if not of bathos at least of a strangely perverse note; we were amazed, we were curious, we were doubtful, but we lived to appreciate its high sanity. Whether I can convey that appreciation to you is another matter, and if I fail it will be through no one's fault but my own, my excuse that the influences at work were so intangible. But it seems to me to-day that the Maharaja has amazingly made a joyous thing of death, has, with a courage and success that seems incredible to reason, swept away the bitterness of human defeat, by the simple power of human gaiety and affection. He has visualized memory, and this with no sacrifice either of dignity or regret.

The Maharani was to hold her Durbar. The Chhatri was lit and carpeted, we drove up to the white gateway, an Indian band playing in the gallery overhead, and at the entrance the Sardars waiting to receive His Excellency. We walked down the paved and terraced avenue of the garden, a channel of water flowing down the centre, fountains playing and the path lit by stone lamps. On the left a bandstand, and the Maharaja's band playing "A Waltz Dream!" We grew increasingly bewildered, for were we not visiting a tomb or the next thing to it? On the right a pavilion for refreshments, a bungalow for the Maharaja, and farther, on our left, another pavilion for recreation. Here he comes with his friends and followers, here they work and play cards, eat and drink, enjoy concerts and roam

in the garden; here parties are given, and every guest is the guest of a dead woman. Yet it is in no sense macabre but perfectly simple and sincere. The Chhatri itself is a building of carved white stone standing above a big tank, there is a charming little pavilion in the centre, and on each side a temple, the one to Krishna, the other to Mahadeo. It was all brilliantly lit.

At the entrance to the courtyard we took off our shoes and skirted two sides of the tank till we reached the marble steps of the Chhatri itself. These led to a miniature, but impressive, Durbar Hall, with brocade cushions lying ready for the guests between each pillar. At the farther end another flight of steps led to an open doorway and beyond, on a cushioned dais, in the orthodox attitude of the Hindu lady, sat the still white figure of the Maharani. I can think of no word but the French one "saissisant." Behind her stood three women-servants, gorgeously dressed, fanning her with fans of silk and gold, and that quiet figure with the white, so intelligent face, was the presiding spirit both of the gaiety of the garden and of the grave dignity of the house.

We went up to the little room from which she looked down on her guests and then back to the Durbar Hall for the ceremonial receiving of Itr and Pan, and to that figure each guest turned and bowed as he left, not so much, I think, because it was customary, as through the influence of a power stronger than himself.

But it is time to return to Gwalior and the circumstances of our first visit. As I have told you, the Ruling Family are by race Mahrattas, and the founder of the dynasty was one Ravoji Scindia, who was slipper-bearer to the Balaji Peshwa at the beginning of the

eighteenth century. Like so many of the fortresses of India, the old citadel of Gwalior is built on a magnificent rock that rises suddenly out of the plain, and was an ancient seat of Jain worship. The Jain sect was founded by the Prophet Malhavira in the sixth century B.C., and though the faith has its roots in Hinduism, its teachings are distinct both from those of the Vedas, and those of Malhavira's great contemporary, Gautama Buddha. The first and chief principle of the Jain is the doctrine of "ahimsa", the sparing of every form of life in however early a stage of evolution.

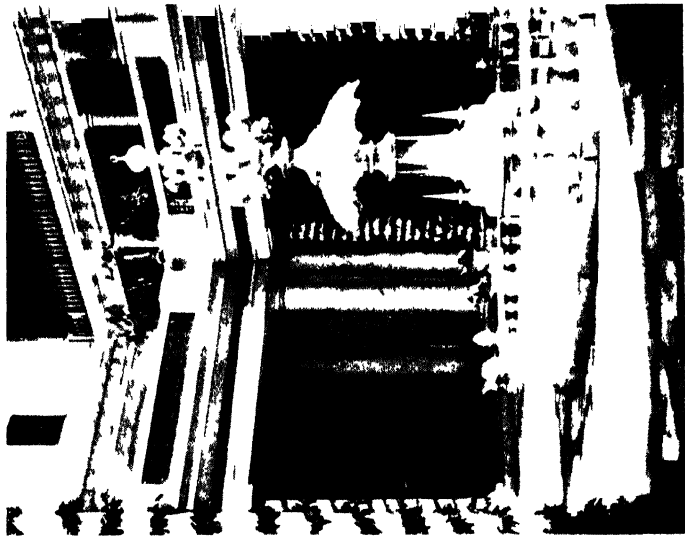
Gwalior was occupied by Altamsh, Kutb-ud-Din Aibak's successor, and the second of the slave kings of Delhi, in 1232; was lost for a while to Muslim rule after the invasion of Timur, but became definitely a Moghul province early in the reign of the Emperor Akbar, whose successors used the citadel as a state prison.

We arrived early one morning and drove straight to the Maharaja's immense white palace. It is like a pantomime palace with its vast chandeliers, its glass fountains, glass banisters, glass furniture and lustre fringes. But it is also very comfortable. The modern town is beautifully laid out, the streets are wide and shady, the architecture is Indian, for His Highness knew how to adapt the West and not adopt it, and the houses are built of the lovely pale sandstone of the country and adorned by the craftsmen who have made the stonework and carving of Gwalior so deservedly famous.

It was soon after the rains, so the country was still green, and about a mile from the palace lay the fort or, to be more elaborate, "that pearl in the necklace of the castles of Hind, the summit of which the nimble-



THE VICEROY'S STATUE HOWDAH VI FRI ALI D I
SIMLA



COURT IN THE PALACE WATIOR

footed wind from below cannot reach and on the bastion of which the rapid clouds never cast their shade." At night the great walls were outlined with little twinkling lights, and the old capital city of the State lies at its feet.

The rock on which it stands is $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles long and 1,000 feet above the level of the plain, and from the Mutiny until 1885 it was held, and very badly treated, by the British ; yet much still remains, and the actual date of its founding is lost in a mist of legend. It is full of very beautiful Jain and Hindu temples and palaces, and though I do not think that for spaciousness and nobility these can equal the Pathan and Moghul, yet behind the fine outer wall there are impressive things, and exquisite things, and an amazing wealth and ingenuity of decoration and detail. Chief amongst these the great fifteenth-century palace of Raja Mansingh, one face of which rises sheer from the rock, measuring 300 feet in length and 80 in height, the walls broken at intervals by round towers crowned by domed cupolas, and many of the old coloured tiles still in place, their blue and green and yellow as vivid as ever. Thanks to the craft of the stonecutter of to-day such restoration as has been necessary has been carried out quite beautifully.

If you are wise you will climb the steep ascent to the palace on the back of an elephant, and enter it by the Hathi Paur or Elephant Gate, its principal entrance. This one palace alone deserves exhaustive attention, and beneath it, quarried out of the heart of the rock, are dungeons sinister and grim enough to satisfy the most exacting imagination.

The other approach by the motor road takes you past the Jain sculptures, colossal figures of the pontiffs

of the faith cut out of the face of the rock in the middle of the fifteenth century, and later disfigured by order of Babar. At least he gave orders for their destruction, but they seem to have defied his efforts and escaped with mutilation.

From the farther ramparts I remember watching the moon rise over the new city, and then by its light visiting the twin Sas Bahu (mother-in-law and daughter-in-law) temples, where we ate chocolate éclairs and drank lemonade with a sublime disregard for appearances. But at Gwalior there was something so akin to the feasts in the enchanter's palace of one's youth in the unexpected way in which refreshment would suddenly appear, however remote your wanderings and just as you were feeling most hot and exhausted. I remember His Excellency telling us how at the end of a tiger beat, miles from camp, after hours spent sitting silent in a broiling sun on a hot and naked rock, he was thinking sadly of the long and thirsty journey home when, from nowhere in particular unless it were from heaven, iced tangerines descended like manna on the company !

In great things as well as small I have never met with such perfection of organization, and the greatest of all was perhaps the Durbar to which I have already distantly referred. The procedure differed little from the ceremony at Indore but was infinitely more elaborate. To begin with, the Durbar Hall at Gwalior is a very fine Italianate room, and with its orange and yellow hangings, and vast chandeliers, made a wonderful setting for the three hundred odd chiefs and nobles who gathered to be presented to the Viceroy. They were attired in their old state costumes of every shade from purple to rose-pink, each wore the scarlet Mahratta

hat, and the Sardars or chief nobles were splendid in golden embroidery and wore long steel cuffs with a deep gold fringe coming right over the hand. They sat on each side of the hall, and on a raised dais at the upper end two chairs of state were placed for the Viceroy and the Maharaja; behind these and round the walls stood the servants in an infinite variety of costume, but the majority wearing long crimson coats bound in emerald green, orange trousers and belts and scarlet hats. The Mahratta hat, which on state occasions is worn by the nobles in place of the pugri or turban, is exceedingly difficult to describe and altogether a most coquettish little affair; but the first time I saw it, worn at a meeting of the Chamber of Princes by the Maharaja Scindia, it reminded me irresistibly of the head-dress of a Dresden shepherdess! To which on reflection it does bear some resemblance, being an elaborate confusion of little bows and knots and strings with a tilt to one side and a narrow crown. It is in practice variously interpreted, but it can never be a very practical form of protection.

Please to imagine the Viceroy and His Highness to have taken their seats, the great hall aglow with colour, the throbbing of the Indian drum, and the nasal, but not unbeautiful, voice of a singing girl alone breaking the stillness. Then at a signal advancing, rank upon rank, an army of perfectly drilled retainers, dressed in dark blue velvet and gold, and bearing golden trays of jewels, of pearls, of diamonds, of emeralds; trays of silks and of cloth of gold. At the gates of the palace stand six elephants and six horses in all their state trappings, necklaces of gold mohurs round their necks, anklets of gold and jewels, and draperies of velvet, silk and gold; these, too, form part of the Durbar's offer-

ings to the Viceroy. The trays are laid at his feet, the servants retire, and with a gesture His Excellency conveys to the assembled company that he gratefully accepts the spirit of the gift—only ! With the same stately ceremonial the trays are removed, and then the Sardars and Chiefs are in turn presented ; Itr and Pan is brought in, a great golden garland is hung round the Viceroy's neck by his host, and the Durbar is over. I have certainly in no other State seen one to equal it.

The programme included visits to the State hospitals and institutions, schools and welfare centres, an inspection of the Maharaja's jewels and, for Lady Reading, visits to the two Maharanis. The ladies are, of course, Purdah, but they receive the members of His Highness' immediate circle, they give parties, play bridge, and moralize on the difficulty of making their lord and master take care of himself, like any emancipated wife ! There is a charming clubhouse for the Purdah ladies of the city, an old pavilion, looking out on one side to a formal garden with tanks and fountains, while, on the other, there are big and shady grounds where they can play badminton and tennis.

There was a review at which George and Mary, the Maharaja's small son and daughter, marched past with their regiment, and the elephants of the elephant battery raised their trunks in grave salute as they passed the base. That evening there were sports and a torchlight tattoo, on another a State banquet, when the pillars of the banqueting hall were wreathed in scarlet and gold, and the walls hung with arms, and silks, and huge silver spears. Opposite each door stood a large white marble bust, the King-Emperor at the one end, the Queen-Empress at the other, buried in

flowers and garlanded in gold. The rest of the decorations of the room again savoured engagingly of pantomime, for at the top was an electric rock garden, tiny silver fountains played on the side tables, the centre table was ingeniously lit with revolving coloured balls, and portentous flowers and trees, and down and round it from end to end ran Scindia's famous light railway ! A lovely silver train, every detail perfect, run by electricity and dragging seven trucks—brandy, port, cigars, cigarettes, sweets, nuts and chocolates ! At dessert the Maharaja presses a button, and the train starts and, if you wish to linger over your choice, you lift out the lining of the truck and the train stops automatically ! The most engaging toy and a perfect one for a State banquet, and this occasion was further enlivened by the State band who at intervals marched round the table in truly Highland fashion.

I have not said a word of tigers, though in Gwalior the jungle was the very savour of life, but that splendid playtime must have a chapter to itself and, since we leave Gwalior only to return, neither need I distress you with an account of the lamentations with which we greeted this, and indeed every subsequent departure from the State.

Bhopal found us back on the Malwa plateau, and the name of its ruler is, I suppose, familiar to most English men and women. For three generations, from mother to daughter, the destinies of the State have been in a woman's hands, and administered by them with great vigour and ability in spite of the restrictions of the Purdah.

I have made a good many references to the Purdah, and it is time perhaps that I gave it rather more detailed

attention. The system is, of course, of Muslim origin ; the Rajput ladies of olden times, and their sisters throughout India, were as free as you and I in this respect, and enjoyed an honoured position. I understand that the adoption of the system by the Hindu was due in part to Muslim example, to a natural desire to follow the fashion set by the Moghul ruler on the part of those who wished to enjoy his favour, but also to the actual fact of invasion. It became prudent, under such circumstances, to keep the women of the conquered country behind the veil, and the custom grew. It is most prevalent in Hindustan proper, that part of India north of the Vindhya range which was the first object of attack, and extends to other parts of the country in proportion as they came under Muslim influence, though it only affected the more prosperous classes, and never became a part of the faith as it is to Islam. It is weaker in the Bombay Presidency, weaker still in Madras and Southern India, general of course in the Mohammedan States of Bhopal and Hyderabad (Deccan), and in Bombay City, thanks to the preponderance of Parsis, it is hardly apparent. Roughly speaking it might be said to be the accepted rule amongst the better class Hindu throughout India, though enforced with greater severity in some parts of the country, and in varying degree by individual groups. There is the lady who must never see any man other than her husband or the members of her own and his families, who may not even be visited by a European woman. There are the ladies who receive all the men-folk of the intimate family circle, and entertain Indians and Europeans of their own sex without restraint. Though behind the Purdah they play games, read, work, travel and even shoot. A few keep the Purdah

in their own homes or states only, and of those who have the courage to cross the "black water", many, once in Europe, discard it altogether.

As to ultimate emancipation, it must come in time, for, apart from the European influence to which India is susceptible, it is impossible for the system to withstand the greater influences of education, and the demand for greater freedom they will create; but I, for one, am not sorry that the progress must be slow. The change of outlook involved is so radical: it is not the women alone whom you have to educate to take their place in the world, but also, and in especial, the men, whose whole conception of the emancipated woman, and indeed of woman herself, has got to undergo a profound modification. Many Indians will tell you that the Purdah is not used as a protection for their women from contact with the English, but from free intercourse with the men of their own race, who so little understand this freedom and so readily misjudge it; and I have known Indian ladies who mixed freely in European society refuse to attend a party which included Indians of a more orthodox way of thinking.

But that the system should undergo rapid modification seems all desirable; rapid, in particular, in the sphere of education, that sinister thin end of the wedge! For the orthodox Purdahnashin is too often wholly uneducated, and has no interest in life save the exercise of her religion, obedience to the will of her husband and the bearing of children. All three admirable enough in themselves, but too often reduced to terms of mere physical service. If her husband is rich, then is she the more unfortunate, and can find no other distraction than the tittle-tattle and intrigue of the zenana, her clothes, her jewels, her sweetmeats. And

then, too, in times of stress what suffering the system inflicts ; think of the needless agonies of childbirth to a woman cut off from all medical assistance, and at the mercy of the native midwife, the terrible Dai, whose science is a deadly mixture of ignorance and superstition. In all and every circumstance of life the woman is without protection or redress ; if she be lucky she may earn respect as the mother of sons, and in old age—that old age that comes so quickly to the women of India—as mother-in-law and ruler of the zenana she exerts considerable influence both over the men and women of her household. Pity is wasted on her, for she would not understand it, and would rather die a hundred deaths of torture than rebel against the laws that govern her existence ; but that is hardly the point. We in England hardly realize the power of the sacrosanct tradition of the Hindu, of its far-reaching influences and individual tyranny.

This is not to deny the great influence of the zenana, nor the honour in which the secluded woman is held and the rare charm of family life in India. Great women have lived behind the veil, and have rather grown in stature than been hampered by its restrictions. There are such time-honoured examples as Mumtaz Mahal, the wife of the Emperor Shah Jahan ; of Nur-mahal, the wife of his father the Emperor Jahangir, and, in recent history we may remember the lady whose memorial we visited at Sivapuri ; the mother of the present Maharaja of Mysore who, through her son's minority, so wisely and efficiently administered the State ; the late Maharani of Bharatpur, one of the most remarkable figures, I believe, in the story of contemporary Indian womanhood ; and the present ruler of Bhopal, her mother and grandmother before her.

No, my quarrel is not with the Purdah, which may be doomed as a system but the influence of which will be of value for generations to come, but with the suffering, mental and physical, with whatever resignation it be accepted, which amongst the ill-educated and backward it so inevitably inflicts.

Like any other discipline, do away with it in a hurry and disaster, as experience has already shown, will follow. But develop and expand it, make it more elastic, and in the end you will not have to mourn its disappearance. And it is developing and expanding, its tyranny has already disappeared in many families, and left in its place a growing sense of dignity and responsibility. European emancipation might do worse than imitate. You may fondly imagine the Purdah women of India beating pathetic hands against the bars of a gilded cage, but if you do you will be wandering far from the truth, and the objection to breaking the Purdah comes more often from the women themselves than from their men. Apart from the strangeness of emerging into the noise and bustle of a modern world, they know too well the reception such a step will receive at the hands of the great majority of their relations and countrymen—the loss of respect, the loss of influence involved. It requires no little courage in a country where the force of family tradition is supreme, and obedience and seclusion have for generations been the foundation of a respectable woman's faith, to sacrifice all they have to sacrifice for a principle, and one, very often, in itself not particularly attractive. They believe in it, they believe it to be necessary in the best interests of their families and their country, but they have no illusions and they know the risks—the obloquy that will be hurled at them, the honest

misunderstanding so much harder to bear—and these have my heartfelt admiration.

In Bhopal we were in the very sanctuary of the system, for all that Her Highness has herself so remarkably triumphed over its limitations. She has made the pilgrimage to Mecca, she has paid visits to England, she is intensely alive to all the developments of modern education, intensely interested in their application in her own State. Her sympathies are wide although, of course, in the matter of emancipation wholly unyielding.

On one delicious evening in the intervals of ceremony I had tea with Her Highness, and then motored to her little country farm, where we sat under the orange-trees, the ripe fruit within easy reach, watching the oxen draw water from an old Persian well, whilst she told me something of her life, and her faith, and her philosophy. There is a dignity in India we can never hope to compass, an immemorial patience we shall never understand, a natural interest in the things of the mind and spirit, common to them but rare with us, and a capacity for their expression that has often left me wondering. They are the gifts India has for the world, I think, just as ours are gifts of character and more active ability, and the partnership, if a difficult one, would seem to be genuinely essential.

The climate at Bhopal was capricious, hot and then cold, but never a great extreme of either, and the country had all the beauty we had come to associate with the Malwa plateau. The guest house in which we lived stood above a lake, with a line of blue and purple hills on the farther side.

I will not enlarge on the ceremonies of hospitality, for they varied little from those of other States, and were all attended by the Begum, though of course, on

every public occasion, she wore the Burkha. This, the all-enveloping covering of the Mohammedan woman, is gathered round the head into a close-fitting cap and has a narrow lace-covered slit across the eyes. In all, we spent but three days in the State, and there were many visits to pay to schools, hospitals, the Ladies' Club, but time was even so found for an expedition to the Topes of Sanchi. This involved an hour's train journey and a steep ascent by elephant to the height commanded by the topes ; nearly the whole ascent is paved like a deep stairway and to climb upstairs on the back of an elephant must be one of the most acutely uncomfortable occupations known to man ! The Buddhist remains, with their huge carved gateways and the circular wall which has inspired Mr. Baker at the New Delhi Secretariat, are 2,500 years old, and of very great interest and beauty, while the view from the little plateau is superb.

CHAPTER IX

THE JUNGLE

THE term is applied to all the uncultivated spaces of India, a reminder that her cities and the fields of her peasant are only snatched from the wild. Even in Delhi the jungle is at your doors, panther still roam that plain, black buck and pig flourish, and in respect of area civilization is still a pioneer.

My own notions were, of course, a mixture of tropical splendour and the scene of Mowgli's adventures. I never saw Bagheera, the black panther, except lying yellow-eyed and resentful in a cage, but of his spotted brethren there are plenty, and if Shere Khan's hide adorns the Council Rock of the Seonee Pack, his striped relations roam the length and breadth of the country. The great story was written of the Central Provinces, where you can still visit the scene where Mowgli, leaping into the river and the protecting coils of Kaa, lured the Red Dog to his destruction. You visit it warily and in silence if you do not wish to share the fate of two English soldiers who flung a stone at the overhanging crags, roused the Little People, and were stung to death though they dived for safety into the water below. On that day there was no Kaa and no Red Dog, and of all the people of the jungle it is preferable to encounter Hathi or Shere Khan himself than that irascible community.



THE AUTHOR ON A SHOOTING EXPEDITION IN THE SIMLA HILLS

The jungles of Northern India are more open again than those of the Central Provinces; Alwar, in Rajputana, where I saw my first tiger beat, is bare and rocky with a few small trees and stunted undergrowth for shade; Sivapuri, further south in Gwalior, is a beautiful country but wide and open; the Dun, in the United Provinces more wooded; and for beauty incomparable there are the jungles of Kashmir—but they are a different story. Yet wherever to be found the charm is the same and the life the cream of everything India has to offer.

With the exception of the chase, sport in England is too easy a business and exists not at all in the sense I grew to love it in India; the answer to which is not only the greater excitement and risk of big game, but the real hard work involved. Even a Viceroy has to bear the heat and burden of the jungle day, and the ordinary sportsman may sweat for hours on his feet, or ache for hours in a machan, and at the end never sight so much as the tip of a wild whisker. I don't believe he would have it otherwise even if he could, for as well sit sleepily outside an English covert, or doze in your Highland butt, as rid the jungle of its thousand to one chance. Through the long and patient hours of waiting there is a breathless expectancy, an unseen life presses closely round you, and that incomparable, hushed yet crowded, silence holds your attention like a magnet. As ever in India the extremes of the day are the salvation of the rest, and morning and evening are well worth the burning discomfort of the long noon.

To us, moreover, the jungle represented the one real release from officialdom and a plunge into the fringes of a natural world. I say the fringes since for me the

release was usually a matter of hours, but even so they were among the best I spent in India, though I never myself shot, or tried to shoot, anything more alarming than a black buck.

Small game shooting is reduced on occasion here, as elsewhere, to a slaughter, in consequence losing the whole of its interest, but you cannot so rob the jungle proper and for big game various methods are adopted. You can have a beat, sit over a kill or a drinking pool, or walk up the quarry; you can shoot on your feet, from a machan (a platform in the branches of a tree), or from the back of an elephant. Tigers are a necessary part of every Viceroy's experience, and since risk on these occasions has to be reduced to a minimum a machan, an elephant or, in some cases, a tower is chosen, though at Gwalior Lord Reading did on one occasion shoot a tiger from the ground. Important shoots demand weeks of preparation; the tiger has first to be located and then, if possible, kept in the district by the lure of an easy meal in the shape of a tame buffalo tied up in the vicinity. To prevent his wandering a fresh buffalo is provided whenever necessary, and once he starts killing it is easy to keep trace of him. He will usually lie up after a heavy meal and sleep off the effects, and with the heat of the day as your ally this is the best moment to work his undoing. There is the more patient method, and the more practical since it does not require any beaters, of sitting up over the kill itself to await the beast's return. But on every shoot "tying up" is involved and once the tiger is located you can go ahead by one or other method as pleases or is possible to you.

The big shoots are a marvel of organization, and the skill and patience shown not the least attractive thing

about them. On each occasion it is of course a matter of great moment to the host that the Viceroy should get his tiger, and in so far as it is possible the uncertainties of the jungle are defied. Yet nothing can wholly eliminate uncertainty or risk, and of excitement you have your fill from end to end.

In March of 1922 we arrived at the elaborate white palace that at Alwar adorns the humble name of shooting-lodge, but although startling in effect it has ceased to have any terrors for the jungle which reaches to its doors and permits panther to stroll in its garden. In this they are encouraged, for on the front lawn is placed a table, above it a powerful electric light, upon it an unhappy baby goat. After dinner the guests are invited to gather on the veranda, the goat is encouraged to wail (and indeed, poor little wretch, needs no such encouragement) and the panther is expected to kill. I am glad to say that on the occasion of our visit the goat drew blank and was finally removed by special request, but this, like the iron cage supplied in the jungle for the same purpose, is an aspect of Oriental "sport" few Englishmen will be found to appreciate.

The country round Seriska, as the palace was called, is barren and dusty, broken by those sudden, peculiar hills of Rajputana that lift untidy heads above the plain. The morning after our arrival news of three tigers—a mother and two full-grown cubs—was received and immediately after luncheon the entire party set forth. We were to meet the elephants four miles away and then take up our stands within view of the beat. The elephants at Alwar are famous as the staunchest and best trained in India, and to eliminate risk they are all female, since the male is often a dangerous beast at this season of the year. Their training is no light

task since every natural instinct urges them to flight before tiger, and in the elephant hierarchy the most exalted is the howdah elephant, from whose back the actual shooting is done, and this hero, so the Maharaja of Alwar told me, serves a novitiate of five or six years as a pad elephant. The pad elephant helps in the beat and if occasion arises moves right up to the tiger and drives him from cover. The Maharaja has worked on the theory that a brave mahout makes a staunch elephant, for they are as sensitive to their rider's nerve as a horse, and so it is of the mahout that he asks courage first and foremost. The system certainly produces remarkable results.

The Maharaja's Military Secretary accompanied His Excellency, and he and the Maharaja climbed each to their elephants, we to our own, and though the howdahs were exceptionally comfortable nothing can really assuage the pangs caused by the admirable creature's walk. The secret is to let yourself go and wobble, reflecting the while on the benefits derived by your liver, but it cannot be called a gentle art and is a taste but painfully acquired !

I won't describe the first beat since the second was, from the spectator's point of view, so much more complete, though, of course, the first sight of your first tiger in your first jungle is a wonderful thrill. I'd like to shoot a tiger, but for all that I don't ask for anything better than to watch the whole business from a good point of vantage with an experienced hunter or two to explain the moves. Reflect what it means in experience, judgment and skill to bring a tiger over six miles of mountainous country and make him break cover within fifty yards of a given point—and it is done.

On the first beat the tigers escaped as it were with

a warning, and while the Maharaja and His Excellency proceeded by elephant to the next stand, the rest of us motored for some distance, did a mile's stiff walking and reached the top of a low hill, covered with thick scrub and dropping steeply to a valley below. The valley was about a hundred yards wide and opposite rose a long high ridge of rock and scrub with a clearing on our right reaching from summit to base. At the foot of this clearing stood His Excellency's elephant, while the Maharaja rode up and down the valley directing the beat. A row of elephants stood in the valley to prevent the tiger breaking in our direction.

At the sound of a bugle the beat started. For a long time the beaters were invisible, we could only hear their cries and keep our eyes fixed on the hillside opposite, but every move was directed by bugle-call and like a fox the tiger was view-halloed by men posted at different points along the line. You think of that great, striped, yellow beast and you say : How easy he will be to see ; but you are wrong, for that hide of his is the most amazing camouflage.

“ What is that ? ”

You pick up a change on the hill-side only to see two sambhur moving silently with their does through the cover, but following there is a shadow within a shadow, and our first view of the tiger was to our extreme left, at the point farthest from His Excellency. We followed them with difficulty for a bit, then they disappeared. Immediately opposite to us and half-way up the hill-side was a big rock with a thick bed of cover running down to the valley and a narrow clearing at its base. One tiger only crossed this clearing and vanished behind the rock. The cries of the beaters drew nearer and at last they became visible, advancing

in a long line which curved in towards the summit. The watch coolies shouted the position of the tiger, the beaters drew steadily on and halted a few yards from the rock, the top of their line curving forward and downwards. Volleys of stones and cries of a most unearthly order led the tiger to break on the farther side, and hardly more than fifty yards from the clearing where His Excellency was posted. A volley of blank shot from the top of the line (which was, alas, a trifle previous and drove the animal back to cover), the cries and the shouts of the beaters and a sudden burst of discord from a band, made the most perfect symphony of excitement I have ever heard ! Two or three men crept nearer the stone and one slipped in behind it. The attempt to drive out the tiger was renewed again and again but all to no purpose, so the pad elephants were called in. They moved heavily up the slope, made a little detour, and, forming into line, advanced on the spot where the animal was known to lie. As the elephants moved forward there was a breathless silence broken suddenly, for a tiger's snarl rang across the valley and the foremost elephant trumpeted wildly. But he never turned or flinched, a hyæna bolted away below and the beaters shouted and shouted again.

Close to me a voice called out something in Hindustani and in a moment our hill-top was alive. A shout :

"Get your guns, he is bolting this way," and it was true in this sense for we had all forgotten the second tiger ! He did us out of our front seats, for the men lined up majestically whilst we peered frenziedly over their shoulders and under their elbows, with coolies as a rear guard. Elephants were sent into the thick scrub at the foot of the hill, grumbling as they went. I can't describe the sound, but the men who knew, said :

“ Yes, he is there all right ; don’t you hear the elephants talking ? ”

He was, for the next snarl came from close below and was the voice of someone very nearly at the end of his patience. The men shouted to the coolies to try to turn him, and a shower of stones and a clamour of tongues hurtled down the hill-side. There was a moment’s lull and then with a roar that echoed he broke cover and we saw him beautifully, galloping back across the valley, head up and tail swinging, for all the world like a great cat thoroughly out of temper. He swung round the farther slope of the hill and was lost to sight, and the beaters once again turned their attention to his brother on the opposite slope.

It was getting late and the hill-top was divided into two camps, the one declaring that if we stayed much longer we should miss the path in the dark, the other that to meet a tiger in our late friend’s highly-strung condition was an even less enviable prospect. The former carried the day, and fortunately, for by the time we reached the road it was quite dark and very difficult walking. It was lovely when we started, hot and still, with the hills gaunt against the deep blue of the sky, and the hills were round us on every side. We journeyed without adventure though personally I regarded every bush with suspicion and ended my day with a healthy admiration for both hunters and hunted alike.

At Gwalior the shooting was usually from a tower, and the Maharaja was indefatigable in attending personally to every detail, but here, alas, an elephant played a scurvy trick on the ladies of the party ! The incident was an exciting one and might quite well have turned to tragedy.

It was during the first day's shooting and the men of the party alone had gone out. The first beat was over, two elephants had been sent off after a wounded tiger and an all-merciful Providence had frustrated the efforts of the Viceroy to attract their riders' attention. He at least, but by this chance alone, was safe in his tower. With the dignity that befitted his office, and the very valuable camera he carried, a member of the Staff was making his way across a nullah with the intention of reaching the tower when his progress was disturbed by a shout of warning. He looked round to see a tusker elephant bearing down upon him in hot pursuit and showing every symptom of rage. Crash ! went the camera in one direction while the dignified gentleman fled for safety in the other. Something, the efforts of the mahout perhaps, turned the brute, anyway he gave up that pursuit and made for a group standing near some trees. Two members of the Maharaja's Staff were sent flying but were stunned by the fall and lay still, for this reason, in all probability, escaping the awful crushing that the must elephant usually deals out to his victims. He turned them over with his trunk, but they seemed lifeless and he made off into the jungle. He was killed later ; they poured twenty-four bullets into him, poor devil. His mahout never so much as attempted to leave his post and save his own skin. A very gallant performance even if, under the circumstances, the wisest course, since so placed he was at least out of reach of that lashing trunk.

But for us the incident had dire consequences, and from that day a tiger beat was proclaimed no place for a woman. We sat forlornly in the palace at Sivapuri, and every hour the tales of the hunters grew more enthralling and more breathless. Yet there were com-

pensations. The jungle was at our doors and on one occasion a member of the Staff met a tiger purring by the roadside not four miles from the house. Inspired by this adventure I sallied forth down the same road the following evening, and though His Excellency had in the interval shot the tiger, I did not go unrewarded. It is a delicious, twisty, switchback road through the heart of the forest, sometimes enclosed on each side, sometimes rising to give you such a view of immense distances as to remind you that Gwalior alone is as large as Scotland and Wales; and though we did not in actual mileage go very far, yet Sivapuri itself is remote and once away from the little bazaar and off the high road you are swept into a vast solitude.

That lovely flowering tree, so well named the "Flame of the Forest", is in its full glory in April; partridge and quail were feeding to right and left, plover, a more elegant fellow than our own but with the same sad "pee-wit", curved aside as we passed, and every few minutes sounded the harsh warning of the peacock, the alarmist of the jungle. Presently I stopped the car and informed a sceptical A.D.C. that I had seen a pig, a hyæna or else a porcupine of gigantic proportions, and that I must straightway discover which. Cautiously we descended and stalked the bush in which I insisted the monster lay concealed. I was right! We were only about fifty yards off when a large and quite unconscious hyæna emerged, and strolled unconcernedly off upon the evening's business. He is the scavenger, the four-footed vulture of the forest, and I do not know which, the bird or the beast, is the more repulsive. But at sight of him our hopes of tiger rose, for he fattens on his kill, and on almost every tiger beat you first see a hyæna. These hopes were soon shattered,

though so splendidly we had no regret, for a little way on came a crash on our right and, sure sign no tigers were about, a sambhur stag leapt across the road. For a moment he stood perfectly still, his upflung head against the sunset, and a sambhur is neither an alarmist nor a scavenger, but just one of the loveliest things in all the jungle.

These drives, the nights on the terrace when you could hardly see the sky for stars, stars so crowded that every moment or so one tumbled into space, and the evenings on the lake, were the joys of Sivapuri won arduously after the heat and burden of the day. Sometimes we used to motor home from the lake after dark, and once a pair of fierce panther eyes flashed by the roadside. We used to sit long over dinner, as who would not with such a sky for company, and for entertainment stories of the day's adventures and tales of the jungle life. On one night it was all of tigers, on another of snakes, and on this last occasion imagination fairly ran riot until the Maharaja put an end to further competition :

"Once", he said, "I had a friend who was camping in the jungle and sleeping in the open. One night he awoke and found to his horror that a cobra was lying coiled on his chest, its hood raised. Desperately he considered, then in a flash it came to him that a cobra will always make for any hole he can discover. Without a moment's hesitation he opened his mouth, the cobra thrust its head inside and he BIT IT OFF !"

Of jungles it was with the country of the Dun that we were most familiar, for at Mohand the Viceroy had his own block and was a fairly regular visitor in the spring. These jungles do not now compare with those of the States, the Central Provinces and many another,

for they are too accessible and have been overshot, but it is a beautiful country and here we were able to roam about with much more freedom. Our headquarters were at Dehra Dun in a delightful old bungalow at the foot of the Mussoorie hills, but there was a tiny forest bungalow as well for those who were able to spend a night or two at the seat of operations.

In April 1924 I wrote from Dehra :

We arrived to a grey sky and the tail-end of a storm that for twenty-four hours made us think regretfully of woollies banished with loathing to Simla, but now the mornings and evenings are perfect, the middle of the day hot, but not too oppressive. As to Dehra, it is looking superb, superb enough to make me feel that at its best it can hold its own with Kashmir. The garden is backward as yet. The jhakaranda-tree deceives the uninitiated with bare and stick-like branches. The border is young, if full of promise, and the cannas are hardly more than shoots. By way of compensation the orange-trees are only just ceasing to flower and are still extraordinarily fragrant, the hibiscus is in full flower, so is the bougainvillea, so are the roses, so is the Persian lilac, so are the hollyhocks (there is one, a deep rose-pink, quite fifteen feet high, half of it a mass of blossom), so are numberless flowering trees and shrubs which I am too ignorant to identify. One in particular, a darling, that smells rather like syringa and grows first blue and then white flowers alternately on the same stem.

Crimson and flame are the colours of the Dun—though there is one marvellous white tree with great lily-like blossoms—but even so I believe its chief beauty lies in the variety and wealth of the foliage, from the dark, rich green of the mango and the leche, through

bamboo and palm to the pale silver of the blue gum. The vivid splashes are just incidents, the real beauty is this cousinship of blue and green, from the massed yet entirely individual foreground to the middle distance of pine forest rising in its turn against the blue ring of the Mussoorie and Chakrata hills.

Farther afield the jungle has its own different and peculiar charm. The Mohand Pass, with its steep-pointed hills of grey rock, its stony nullahs and its bare, fierce heat, swept by the Flame of the Forest, the wind sending a sharp rattle through the jungle as the leaves, burnt but not yet fallen, beat against dry branches. Spring in the still vivid undergrowth, summer in the gorgeous blossom and autumn in the gold and brown of the trees.

In our own garden there were many delightful and one quite intolerable bird, and this last was known as the brain-fever bird. He chanted hourly, and with fiendish satisfaction: "You're ill, you're ill, you're ill," to which another answered sadly: "We know it, we know it, we know it." Mr. Coué wasn't in it!

My first drive into the jungle took me with many bumps across a dried river-bed, past fields of corn nearly ready for harvest, and numberless Indian mud huts. It was dusty, and a haze of heat hung over the hills, but the sudden plunge into the forest and the sudden sweet, clean smell were delicious. There were herds of lean but picturesque kine being driven home, monkeys, little groups of Indians round their fires cooking, or presumably cooking, though they appeared wrapped in contemplation, and as we came back a ring of forest fire and the most elegant new moon in the world to whom to bow and wish.

The Mohand bungalow sits on a little conical hill with a fine view of the jungle, and though my enthusiasm received very little support I do insist that flowering trees are some compensation for dried-up water-course and stony hills.

I motored out one evening at sunset with Megan Lloyd George to join two members of the Staff who were already in residence. Once in the Mohand Pass the road is steep and twisting. We had hardly been in it five minutes when the chauffeur (an Indian) shouted something over his shoulder, my companion simultaneously declaring that she had seen a panther, a tiger *and* a cheetal! Hastily we stopped and backed the car to the scene of this surprising combination. We stared and stared but, so marvellous is that speckled camouflage, that for a time we could see nothing. Then we gasped, for there, not twenty yards away and as cool as you please, sat a panther!

Neither the throbbing of the car nor our high, excited chatter disturbed him in the least. He scrambled leisurely up the bank and stood, broadside on, surveying the scene. A perfect shot! But I had only a light rifle, I was no marksman, there was no other shot in the car, and I couldn't risk wounding him. If he had come for us we could never have got away in time and a wounded panther is no gentleman! Almost in tears I told the chauffeur to drive on, for at last he had deigned to notice us and his head flattened viciously.

We spent a delicious evening lying out on the edge of the forest while the servants curdled our blood with tales of a marauding panther that had threatened them the night before. In a properly creepy spirit we retired to bed, having first barricaded every possible

entrance, and were up at 5.30 next morning and away on pad elephants to a neighbouring salt lick and drinking pool. They lay in a very characteristic bit of Dun forest with a wide river-bed all stones and sand and a mere trickle of water, on each side the thickly wooded bank, and a little round-topped hill to close the vista. In mousey quiet we sat in our machans till the sharp cough of a cheetal doe up the hillside warned us that our patience was not to go unrewarded. Soon the advance guard of the lovely spotted deer of the forest were stepping warily from the shade, followed, as they gathered confidence, by the whole herd. It was early in the year and most of the stags were still in velvet, so they went their way in a peace which I for one would not for worlds have disturbed. Very stiff and sore we clambered down to our elephants and went for a long wander through the jungle. For comfort there is no comparison between the claims of a howdah and a pad. On the latter you can lie at full length, sit astride or curl up in the centre, but the most comfortable seat of all is on the beast's neck immediately behind the mahout.

The heat of the day was passed in slumber, but at four we were off again to sit up over water for panther, and if you try sitting in a tree for three hours at a stretch without moving, you will know by the end of it just exactly what it means to ache in every bone ! Still you must be, not so much for fear of making a noise as by reason of the unseen eyes that may be watching you. We did not so much as catch the cough of a panther on the prowl, the gentleman seems to prefer the high road of fashion, but as the sun set the whole jungle woke to life, a stir ran through the forest after the heavy silence of the day, and the bird activity

alone made our vigil worth while. On one such occasion a humming so loud as to suggest a distant train broke the stillness, nothing was visible and I thought I must be dreaming until the uncomfortable idea—wild bees—flashed across my mind. But even the crackle and fall of a shrivelled leaf is ominous, and the swiftly falling dusk full of shadows.

The cry of the peacock and a glimpse of his painted beauty, the call of the jungle fowl, the bark of the deer. A soft rustle as a mongoose slips past your tree to the water. A whisper: "Look!" and a cheetal doe comes trotting by. Behind you some heavy beast goes crashing through the undergrowth—a pig perhaps, plain of person but full of heart, for even a tiger will not stop to argue with him. It is almost dark, the shikari is busy adjusting the ladder, and you climb down, very stiff but at what peace with the world! You sling your topee over your arm, grateful for the night's sudden cool, and pick your difficult way back to the forest road where the shadow that is your elephant waits.

The old instinct of the hunter is still potent enough in most of us, but that explains neither the charm nor the thrill. The world of the jungle is as much ruled by fear as is our own by fear of a meaner sort, but its cruelty never conceals its beauty and that is haunting. Beauty and cruelty ariot side by side, and beneath them the hush of jungle life, that most eloquent silence, that stillness so full of sound.

CHAPTER X

RAJPUTANA

1. BIKANER, AJMER, AND JODHPUR

IT is impossible not to grudge the Rajput to the wheels of progress, not to wonder what the future holds in store for the "Children of the Sun", the heirs in these latter, lesser days, to a tradition of chivalry so remote and heroic !

The name, Rajput, is in literal translation king's son, or member of a ruling family, and early in Brahminical history became identified with the Kshatriyas, the aristocratic and warrior caste. Their origin is historically obscure, but they form a caste rather than a single race, are sub-divided into innumerable clans, all acknowledging the supremacy of the house of Mewar who have ruled in unbroken succession for twelve hundred years, and still rule to-day from their capital city of Udaipur. Not every Rajput can claim to be of the solar race, though many who cannot assert an ancestry hardly less divine, but of the true Suryavansi, to give them their real title, the Ranas of Mewar are the elder branch and the acknowledged descendants of Rama, the deified hero of Hindustan. From a cadet of this house sprang the ruling family of Jodhpur, and in the fifteenth century Bika, a younger son of Rao Jodhaji of Jodhpur, founded the State of Bikaner.

Intermarriage has bound the states of Rajputana into a series of confusing relationships, though here again the degrees of caste are strictly observed, and the humblest Rajput is not more immeasurably removed from those who cannot claim the magic of the name than are the members of the Sun Race above every other, whatever his rank and power. Their system is feudal, and again and again in their history Rajput chivalry, unequalled the world over, is seen torn by local strife, feuds of pride, of jealousy, of revenge, and falling a victim to the foreign conqueror because they would not, or could not, combine to resist him. Those who bowed the head to necessity and the Moghul, became their masters' valued allies. Akbar, in particular, knew how to bind them to his service, understood better than another their proud spirit, and many rewarded him with loyal devotion.

"Gratitude—honour—fidelity," these have been described as the foundation of Rajput character. "Ask a Rajput," says Tod in his famous chronicle, "which is the greatest of crimes? He will reply, 'Forgetfulness of favours.'" Add to this a high and reckless courage, a jealous sense of honour, extreme pride of race, a chivalrous consideration for women—the women of the race were worthy of their lords, there could be no higher praise—a passionate love of faith and freedom, and you have some, at least, of the material that has gone to the making of their incomparable story.

Of that story I must tell you more when we reach its yet untouched heart at Udaipur. First we are bound to the desert State of Bikaner, than whose ruler there is no more splendid figure in the Rajputana of to-day, or one more suggestive of the old Rajput chivalry. Yet he has flung his doors hospitably open

to the influences of a new world, and how hospitably to its inhabitants I will leave the diary to relate.

3rd January, 1922.

Surely of all civilized journeys the journey to Bikaner is the least alluring ! The Metre Gauge train and a desert combined form an efficient foundation for any amount of discomfort. At least it was cool, on the morning of our arrival extremely cold, and the night less hideous to us, no doubt, than to the camel by whom we were nearly derailed ! With the single exception of an iceberg, I cannot believe there is anything more chilly and comfortless to the eye than mile upon mile of sand under the light of the moon. Naturally I had been brought up to believe all deserts to be hot—which goes to prove how our pastors and masters do deceive ! For this desert of Bikaner is cold, bitterly cold until the sun is high in the heavens ; then, it is true, it suggests another extreme, and the extreme in which, of course, it indulges for the greater part of the year.

The Metre Gauge train, to which visits to the States usually condemn us, is an abomination ; it is very tiny and possesses a high-stepping action destructive of all repose. Since your camp bed is stretched under the windows, by morning the greater part of the desert is deposited on the top of you, not to mention in your eyes and up your nose and down your throat, and the fact that your windows are as hermetically sealed as nature and circumstance permit makes not the least difference. By 7 a.m. your temper is hideous, your hot-water bottle a repulsive mockery, and your appearance past all praying for and certainly beyond all hope of reconstruction ! In its proper place I enjoy dis-

comfort, for in its proper place it can usually be defied, but in the half-hour before a State Arrival it is singularly demoralizing. But at Bikaner peevishness is short lived, and once excavated from such portions of the state as are not too firmly embedded in your person, you emerge on to a platform bathed in sun and colour and picturesque enough to defy the influences of ill-temper.

Everywhere flaunt the five colours of Rajputana : orange, yellow, blue, white and green ; the camel in this desert city comes into his own and guards the street, alternately with the Rajput horsemen, and the people themselves adorn the route as no bunting ever invented could hope to do. At the Maharaja's palace of Lallgarh there is the ultimate comfort of breakfast, and the palace is of red sandstone and built round an open courtyard overlooked by the trellised windows of the zenana. On the ground floor there is an open colonnade, and over the marble-paved courtyard wanders a delightful boy in scarlet with an orange pugri, his sole duty in life to scare away the sacred pigeon. To complete the picture there is a brilliant blue sky and all the beauty of the grey-pink sandstone in the sunlight.

The garden is creditably green for a desert and is kept so by the activities of the camel, who is seen wandering superciliously down the paths laden with goat skins, the greater part of the day. There are over a hundred guests, and the camp for their accommodation is laid out in a great circle.

But we were destined to halt at Lallgarh only, and at four o'clock in the afternoon we motored out to the shooting-lodge at Gajner, twenty miles across the desert, and the far-famed home of the imperial sand

grouse. I think there are few things lovelier than the desert at sunset, and our way was further enlivened by four-in-hands of camel (employed in transporting our baggage), camel guarding the road, camel driven by peasants and laden with coarse grass and firewood, and camel at rest in camp.

Gajner itself is unique, with a quality of repose as enchanted as its beauty. The palace is comparatively modern, built of sandstone, on one side to the edge of an artificial tank or lake, on the other round a wide courtyard shaded by four mango-trees, every carved arch a delicious frame for the sunlight and green of the garden beyond. Exquisitely Oriental outside but European within, it has successfully imposed a spirit all its own on much that is alien. It is this, coupled with the contrast of its desert setting, that makes one feel it so strongly the palace of enchantment in the real fairy-tale sense. It is an extraordinarily happy place because it dreams of nothing, it is itself the dreamer and the dream; so remote from life that nothing can disturb its repose, not even the boundless activities of our host's hospitality, not the life almost entirely dedicated to sport of which it is the setting, not the hundred odd tweed-clad, weather-beaten Europeans who tramp and smoke and drink cocktails on its terraces, not even the resource of Sir Edwin Lutyens in the making of puns or the far from subtle witticisms of Mr. C. B. Fry!

They did not affect it one bit, and that makes the surprisingness of Gajner. By now I feel confident it has vanished; compelled by some lighthearted and humorous magician the lake has closed over that wonderful pink palace, and all the English furniture, the garniture of our comfort and the trappings of our banquets are lying derelict on the bank!

But to return to our muttons—or, more exactly, our sand grouse.

They had two great shoots, one on the 30th, one on the 31st, and a total yield of over four thousand birds, the largest individual numbers falling to the Maharaja, his son the Maharaj Kumar, and the Jam Sahib.

It is an extraordinary sight even when watched, as I watched it, from a respectful distance, and sounds more like a brisk engagement at the front than a morning's pastime. The grouse are kept away from the other tanks in the countryside for some days before the shoot, with the result that they all sweep down on Gajner for their morning drink. Not in hundreds but in thousands, not for half an hour but for three hours on end. From every direction they come, flying at a tremendous rate in perfect military formation—scouts, vanguard, main body, reinforcements, all complete. They make very difficult shooting and in the best butts the business is incessant; the Princes usually use three guns apiece and have two loaders each. On one occasion eight hundred birds fell to the Maharaj Kumar alone, to a total of sixteen hundred cartridges—a magnificent average.

There are duck, too, on the lake, and, in the surrounding desert, wild pig, chinkara and black buck. It is the custom after tea to go and watch the wild pig being fed, to inspect the day's bag, and then to sit at ease on the terrace, wrapped around in coats and furs, watching the afterglow on the sandstone walls, on the lake, and on the long, low desert horizon.

But there are also expeditions, and one evening we all drove out to Kolayat to tea. Kolayat is a collection of delightful temples and thirty-two ghats built round

a tank, and is more especially dedicated to the use of the Maharaja and his family. It is very old and built to the honour of a saint who lived and died there in the dark ages of history, and now lies buried under a sacred peepal-tree in a little marble tomb built by the Maharaja. It is a delicious spot and was adorned by the most convincing fakirs, but my ardour was a trifle damped in this direction when one of the officials whispered the information that they were in fact secret police !

I shall not easily forget the drive home across the desert just as the sun set ; mile upon mile of silent, golden country, held in a great circle by the immense arch of the sky, all powder-blue and purple.

One night after dinner there was a fire-dance in the red sandstone courtyard. A strange religious ceremony, peculiar to a certain sect of Hindus, who work themselves into a frenzy round a fire, run about on the live cinders with naked feet, carry glowing lumps of wood in their hands, and, even more startling, between their teeth, suffering no ill-effects the while. An interesting problem for the votaries of suggestion !

We returned to Lallgarh for a review and a State banquet, and at the former the members of the Ruling Family were particularly resplendent. The Maharaja in a white, scarlet and gold uniform, a jewelled aigrette in his pugri, the Maharaj Kumar in scarlet and gold, Maharaj Bijey Singh, the younger son, in blue, maroon and silver. As the Viceroy rode on to the ground the Maharaja galloped forward and drew his sword, H.E. touched the blade and, wheeling, the Maharaja galloped back to his place for the Royal Salute. Then he led the army by and, himself past, took up his stand behind His Excellency. The band, drawn up in the



centre, played all the trooping of the colour tunes and to these the Camel Batteries, the Camel Corps, the Bodyguard, the State Lancers and the State infantry marched past. The Camel Corps passed again at a trot, the camels in perfect time looking the while supremely bored !

Between blue dusk and golden sand, the vivid uniforms and the brilliantly coloured crowd, it was a very picturesque and engaging spectacle, followed by tea of which we had some difficulty in securing a share, since the kites gathered and, swooping down at intervals removed platefuls of bread and butter and cake from under our noses.

In the evening we all repaired to the banquet at the old Fort, held in an immense sandstone hall, its walls carved from floor to ceiling. The way was illuminated and the older parts of the building are very interesting and give some idea of the manner of living amongst the old Rajput Princes. Some of the numberless, tiny, painted rooms are enchanting, and there are some beautiful old Moghul and Rajput pictures, and some very remarkable lacquer work. On the arched entrance you can see the little moulded hands of the suttee ladies who, as generation after generation passed to the funeral pyre, dipped their hands in red powder and left their impress on the stone walls of the palace, each mark to be afterwards carved into the stone as their lasting memorial. Such tiny, raised, pathetic hands !

The banquet over, away to the station with the Maharaja, the Maharaj Kumar and the Jam Sahib to see Their Excellencies off, and the State band playing "Abide with Me" with immense feeling the while !

AJMER AND JODHPUR

To the diary again the word :

AJMER.

26th January, 1923.

We have this instant arrived and are leaving again after dinner to-night, so impressions of Ajmer will be necessarily of a rather flashlight order. Ajmer lies to the south-west of Delhi and, though itself British territory, is in the centre of Rajputana and the headquarters of the Agent to the Governor-General for these States, at whose house we are staying.

The view from the front door is just like the background of an old Italian picture. The house is perched on the top of one rocky pinnacle which drops dustily to the plain, the which in the rare years of plentiful rains becomes a lake. This year is not rare, but nevertheless it is good. A bund (embankment) built by Shah Jahan runs away below at a sharp angle, and the unfailing grace of his marble pavilions was the setting for the presentation of the Rajput Chiefs this morning. There is a thickly shaded garden behind and then, massed irregularly against each other, the jagged little hills climb high against the sky. Flat-roofed yellow and white houses cling to the hill-sides, which drop sheer again on the left to the city, above which curiously rise the red cupolas of the new Jain temple, the spire of a Gothic church and the grey walls of Akbar's Fort.

Later.

There were folk to luncheon and an afternoon spent at the Mayo College and dedicated to prize-giving and a garden party. The college is the oldest and most important of those institutions designed for the education of the sons of Ruling Princes. The principal and

two of his staff are English, and gallantly they carry on the work of instilling the "public school spirit" into the hearts and minds of these little potentates, each one of whom brings with him a retinue suited to his rank as well as no mean opinion of his own small person's importance! In the front row of the audience sat the eleven years old Maharaja of Jaipur, while the pupils of the college were ranged in a circle on the platform at the back of His Excellency's chair. Delicious little boys in silk, brocade and wonderful jewels. The front row was reserved for those who had acted as mounted escort to H.E., and they clattered in later, looking refreshingly businesslike in their khaki uniforms, wearing pugris of the five colours of Rajputana.

Situated as it is, the school necessarily draws its recruits principally from the great Rajput families, yet others come from all parts of India, and amongst them was even a little Arab Sheikh from Muscat.

There were books for the erudite, silver cups for the athletic, and afterwards tea in a red sandstone pavilion in the delightful grounds of the college. Ultimately a departure amidst cheers which were certainly reminiscent of public school spirits!

We were back at the Residency in time to see the sunset turn to flame, the hills to purple, the city to a blue mist, and the whole more fantastically mediæval than ever. Shortly after dinner we left for Jodhpur, where His Excellency is to invest the Maharaja with his full ruling powers, on the expiration of his minority.

JODHPUR.

27th January, 1923.

We bumped successfully to Jodhpur by 8.30 a.m., where the Maharaja received His Excellency. The

palace is some three miles from the station, across a desert plain reminiscent of Bikaner, but our Italian hills are not quite forgotten and the Fort stands four hundred feet high on a rocky eminence outside the city. Arrived, our first thought was breakfast, and then, greatly restored, we considered our surroundings. The Maharaja has vacated this house for Their Excellencies, who occupy the first floor—in ordinary times the zenana. It is quite modern, but we found some fine old aquatint engravings of big game shooting. There is a big camp in the garden and the biggest tent I have ever seen pitched for the Durbar. An old tent, the fruit of a Rajput victory one hundred and fifty years ago.

The Maharaja's ceremonial visit to the Viceroy took place at midday, and His Excellency's return visit and the Maharaja's investiture in the Durbar tent at 12.45. Chairs for H.E. and the Maharaja were placed under a blue and gold canopy at the back of the tent, and on each side were seats for the Sardars, Thakors and leading European and Indian officials of the State. The Astrologers, without consulting whom few Princes will take any step trivial or important, had announced that the day was auspicious, but that the actual words of investiture must not be spoken until after one o'clock. The event was carefully timed !

The young Maharaja looked superb, entirely dressed in cloth of gold, with a gold pugri and magnificent diamonds and emeralds. He emerged at 1.30 a full-fledged autocrat, and the only hitch in the proceedings was caused by one of the Thakors, who, on his way to the dais, suddenly bethought him of a new pair of socks carefully disposed in his pocket for the occasion, and sat himself down to put them on !

It is sad to think we have arrived too late to find

Sir Partap, for so many years Regent, and whose influence is everywhere apparent. Though I only saw him once, and never to speak to, his name was as familiar to us in England as it was in India. He was the epitome of that old Rajput tradition of which his own race was the flower, and brought its courage, devotion and loyalty undimmed to the service of a more prosaic day. To Jodhpur, and its young rulers, he dedicated his life, renouncing his own kingdom to be twice Regent of the State. He was blunt and candid in speech, a great disciplinarian, utterly devoted to the British Crown and, above all, to the British soldier. For to Sir Partap the whole dignity of life was expressed in the soldier, and he himself was amongst the finest of that soldier-company which, at its best, has no equal in the world. Neither, in his eyes, had the great profession of arms lost any of its ancient glamour; the blood of the warriors of Chitor ran in his veins and his heart beat to the same measure.

On the outbreak of the Great War, Sir Partap, no longer a young man, hurried to France, there to fret his heart out. It was his single prayer, his single hope, that fate would grant him the one consummation he asked of life—to fall in a cavalry charge, riding at the head of the Jodhpur Lancers. There is something very moving in this picture of the old soldier—the soldier by heart, instinct and tradition—craving to snatch from the terror of war as it is waged by the nations of to-day the glory of a Rajput death.

In all the welter of that human agony we grew weary of the phrases of consolation. To-day even heroism and sacrifice are no longer the simple things and clear they were to our forebears, like so much else we have tangled them up with the whys and the wherefores,

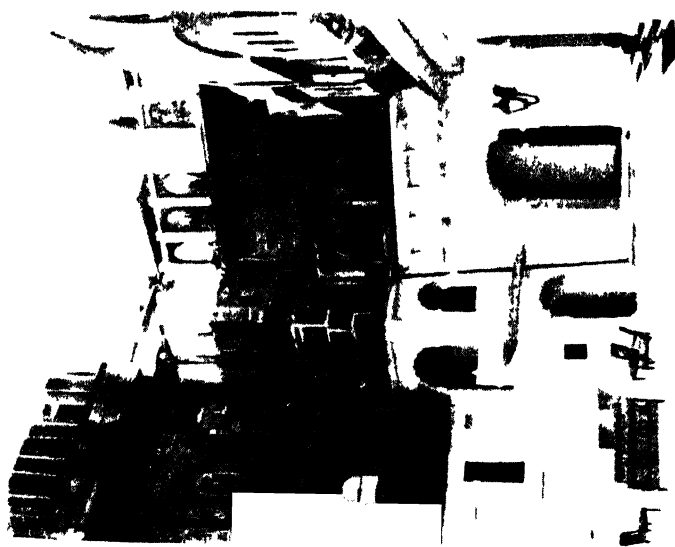
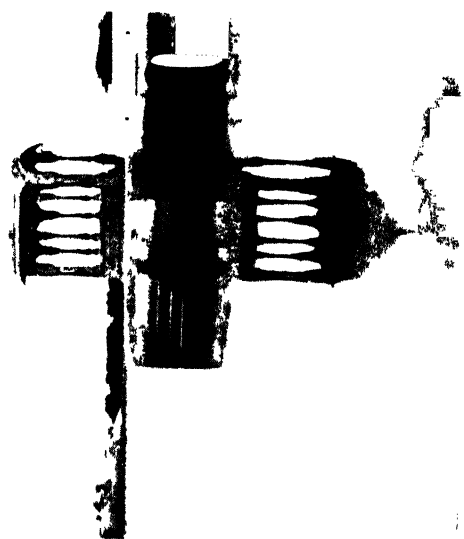
the search for a reason by which to justify something of itself divine ; besides there is nothing picturesque in modern armaments, and a rifle bullet is impersonal. Sir Partap, drawn from the ranks of an older chivalry, brought with him the single-hearted vision of his ancestors. For him the tortured fields of Flanders were eloquent as the plains of Mewar, and a soldier's death wherever won, the last and greatest gift of life. His prayer was not answered, but for all that a nobler Rajput never lived and died.

Jodhpur sent many of her sons to the war, and it is reported that the returning heroes were grimly greeted on presenting themselves to Sir Partap : " Why are you not dead ? " asks the old warrior. He himself lived to see peace restored ; before he died the young team it had been his pride to train were again leading the polo world in the name of Jodhpur ; the Maharaja's long minority was drawing to a close and Sir Partap's life work done.

Of him there is one out of a hundred stories that I feel to be particularly characteristic. A young English officer died in his house. Awful pollution to a Rajput, yet Sir Partap would not leave the body to be removed by the low caste servants, but himself carried it to the bier. Next day the Brahmins waited on him, their hands raised in horror, their tongues clamouring of caste. " Caste ! " retorted Sir Partap superbly, " Among soldiers there is no caste but that of comrade ! "

28th January, 1923.

We spent a perfectly entrancing morning at the Fort. H.E. was out chinkara-shooting early, and most of the rest of the party pig-sticking. Her Excellency started at ten ; for Jodhpur is warmer than Delhi and she



had also to visit some of the ladies of the Maharaja's family.

All our forts have hitherto been dead forts—or rather deserted—and the peculiar charm of Jodhpur lay in the fact that it was very much alive, but with a life that was centuries old. The cars were at least three hundred years before their time, and even those reminders of the present we were compelled, and without the least reluctance, to leave, once past the first gate. For the ascent is very steep, and gorgeous, richly embroidered dhoolies (a long carrying-chair slung on a pole) waited to carry us up the narrow stone-paved causeway, between a high wall on one hand and the eight storeys of the palace rising sheer from the rock on the other. From the tremendous masonry beside us to the lovely carved balconies and windows hanging far above against the narrow ribbon of blue sky, it was perfect. It is built on a pinnacle, rather than a plateau like Gwalior, and I am told that no less an authority than Sir Edwin Lutyens described it as the most remarkable structural feat in his experience.

We were carried through a second archway—the huge, iron-studded doors flung back, and on the wall the modelled impress of little hands—and then up again till we swung round at an acute angle into a courtyard, and through a third archway into the outer enclosure of the zenana. This, irregularly shaped, was bounded on two sides by a high, arcaded wall and at one end by the Maharaja's Treasury, the almost too vivid white of marble deepening to creamy-brown sandstone, and the austerity broken by the climbing balconies of the palace that closed the circle. Eunuchs in gay-coloured padded coats and high peaked hats guarded the entrance.

At the Treasury we made a thorough inspection of

the Maharaja's jewels. Pearls in handfuls, literally ! Diamonds and emeralds too, but chiefly pearls, pearls and again more pearls. His Excellency and the Maharaja joined us, and we saw the armoury before turning reluctantly away.

CHAPTER XI

RAJPUTANA

2. THE HEART OF MEWAR

IN November of 1923 I wrote from Chitor :
“ The beauty of Mewar is the beauty of no other State I have seen. If it would welcome a Viceroy it does not hang its white houses in bunting. Instead its men and women are gathered on every roof, in every doorway, at every aperture, and they put the gala of the world's cities to shame. It does not proclaim its enthusiasm, instead that silent and infinitely graceful salutation of the East, hands to the forehead and swaying figure, like a gust of wind sweeping a field vivid in purple and crimson and gold. It does not line the route, but far and near over the plain that leads to the village of Chitor and the foot of the great fortress, the Rajput horsemen sit erect, sword in hand, shield slung to the shoulder, coloured cloths for saddles and streamers of scarlet and green and orange bound round their horses' heads.

“ Of the Fort, except for the magnificent sweep of wall, the Tower of Fame, the Tower of Victory, the island palace of Padmini (with whose beauty all memories of Chitor are fragrant), and many crumbling temples, there is now little left. One wall of the palace, where three times in its history the awful sacrifice of the

women was made, still stands. Chitor is still a centre of Hindu faith as it is the cradle of Hindu chivalry. The sun is still worshipped in the temple built more than a thousand years ago, and every stone and every fragment on that scarred hill-side is eloquent. The pilgrimage, for such it is, should be made neither to beauty, not to the curious in art, but simply to the shrine of a great memory."

So let it be. Let the ghosts of its history fill this chapter rather than the insult of attempted description. No Rajput state fails to stir the imagination, but Mewar is the stronghold of a tradition so remote and undisturbed as to startle, indeed, our mushroom vanities. A tradition to which its heart still throbs and to the Rajput of to-day Mewar stands as surely the supreme guardian of his order as when Bappa Rawal established Chitor 1,200 years ago. His children have since reigned in unbroken succession, they alone of the Rajput Princes gave no bride to the Moghul, and when Amar Singh made the ultimate sacrifice, submitting for his people's sake, his embassy was received by Jahangir, to that Emperor's undying honour, rather as that of an equal than a conquered enemy.

I have told you that this is the home of the Children of the Sun, who claim not divine origin alone, but also lineal descent from the hero Rama. From this remote antiquity until Bappa Rawal established the Guhilot branch of the race at Chitor in the eighth century A.D., their vicissitudes are the subject of story and legend, fantastic and confusing, unfailingly picturesque, such legends as do inevitably gather round the cradle of the hero-race. Bappa's immediate ancestors were mountain Princes and his childhood was spent amongst the sacred herds, and was early marked by signs of more than

mortal favour. He was initiated by a renowned sage into the mysteries of Siva, declared by him "Diwan (minister) of Eklinga" (a form of the god), and received magic weapons and invulnerable armour at the hands of that "lion-born goddess" who was henceforward to rule the destinies of his house.

It is not surprising that Bappa soon wearied of his pastoral life and, since he was connected through his mother with the Mori Prince of Chitor, set off to seek his fortune in that Prince's service. A foreign invasion gave him the opportunity both to establish his fame as a leader and to draw to his standard the disaffected nobles of the country. His subsequent conduct must appear something lacking in courtesy to a Prince who had welcomed him royally and set his feet on the path of success, yet it must be allowed that Chitor's ruler had alienated his own people and had none of the heroic qualities of his young relative. Bappa returned from his successful campaign against the barbarian to carry the fortress by assault, and himself assume the crown that was to descend to fifty-nine Princes of his name.

The legend, to the last, is picturesque, for not only did Bappa reign gloriously, not only did he live to be a hundred, but he is credited with no less than ninety-eight Hindu children and, of sons alone, one hundred and thirty as the fruit of his other marriages with the daughters of conquered barbarian kings! Neither can he have clung very strictly to the narrow path of orthodoxy, for we read that the Hindu and the Barbarian fell out as to the disposal of his remains, the one insisting on the funeral pyre, the other on burial. An argument that was put an end to by the miraculous disappearance of the body and the flowering of the lotus on the bier on which the hero had lain.

In this wise did the Children of the Sun first live and reign at Chitor, and the next few centuries present a confusion of strife and splendour, and the story, still in part conjectural, of eighteen Princes, their banner "a golden sun on a crimson field". But all through these crowded years we can trace the growing fame of Chitor, trace the influence spreading that made her the rallying point of Hindu chivalry, the guardian of Rajput tradition, the great storehouse of all that was most precious in her life and art. For strife did not check the growth of more peaceful splendours, and behind the secure walls of the great fortress, palaces and temples and a life of varied richness came to their perfection. In later days, were she threatened, Princes from far and near flocked to her defence, and how deeply her civilization was valued is sufficiently shown in the famous oath: "By the sin of the Sack of Chitor", now passed into the language.

In the eyes of the Rajput world Chitor became sanctified, royalty alone might defend her, over her hung the presence of the "lion-born goddess", blood-thirsty, insatiate, but whose promise never to forsake the fortress while a Prince of the royal house could be found to sacrifice himself in her defence, was all too literally fulfilled.

The invasions of the Toork, the name by which the Muslim conqueror was known, became an increasing threat as time drew on. In the eleventh century Mahmud of Ghazni made twelve separate descents on the rich Indian plain, scattering slaughter and destruction in his path, his wild tribes gathered under the green banner of the Prophet. For all the ruin they inflicted these expeditions served to weaken rather than conquer the country, and the hordes, laden with booty,

retired back to the passes of Afghanistan. The breathing space was short, and a hundred years later Mohammad of Ghor returned to plant the standard of the Toork in the very heart of Hindustan, and to leave his Viceroy to found the first of the long line of Moham-medan rulers who were to know few rivals in power until the last King of Delhi abdicated to the vengeance of British troops.

In an earlier chapter we have seen how, at the first battle of Narain, the fury of the Rajput charge scattered the forces of the Ghor King, and I have told you in what manner he returned a year later and how Prithwi Raj, the last Hindu Emperor of Delhi, met his fate. Had the Rajput stood united in the face of invasion history might have been differently written, but great Princes sulked inactive, and jealousies and feuds were rife. Samarsi, the ruler of Chitor, had married the sister of Prithwi Raj, he, at least, joined his standard to that of his brother-in-law and on the fatal field of Narain was slain, together with his son and 18,000 of the proudest names in Mewar.

Kutb-ud-Din Aibak became Viceroy and then ruler of Delhi, and his victory was marked by scenes of indescribable slaughter, but as a tribute to the indom-itable spirit of the conquered let me here quote from Tod's own account of the struggle :

“ The noble Rajput, with a spirit of constancy and enduring courage, seized every opportunity to turn upon his oppressor. By his perseverance and valour he wore out entire dynasties of foes, alternately yielding ‘ to his fate ’, or restricting the circle of conquest. Every road in Rajasthan was moistened with torrents of blood of the spoiled and the spoiler. But all was of no avail ; fresh supplies were ever pouring in, and

dynasty succeeded dynasty, heir to the same remorseless feeling which sanctified murder, legalized spoliation, and defied destruction. In these desperate conflicts entire tribes were swept away whose names are the only memento of their former existence and celebrity."

And again :

"Rajasthan exhibits the sole example in the history of mankind of a people withstanding every outrage barbarity can inflict, or human nature sustain, from a foe whose religion commands annihilation, and bent to the earth, yet rising buoyant from the pressure and making calamity a whetstone to courage."

And of all the states of Rajasthan :

"Mewar alone, the sacred bulwark of religion, never compromised her honour for her safety, and still survives her ancient limits ; and since the brave Samarsi gave up his life, the blood of princes has flowed in copious streams for the maintenance of this honour, religion, and independence."

For another hundred years the great struggle with the Toork was carried on, relentlessly and with varying fortune, but the old battlements of Chitor reared unconquered heads above the plain, and became increasingly, amidst the general desolation, the supreme repository of Rajput faith and pride.

In 1296 the sinister figure of Ala-ud-Din ascended the throne of Delhi and, inspired less by greed of conquest than by the fame of its lovely Princess, led his hosts against Chitor. The story is one unrivalled even in the annals of Rajasthan.

Bhim Singh ruled during the minority of the heir of Mewar, and it was the renown of the beauty of his wife Padmini which was destined to bring such irreparable misfortune on its citadel. For it set fire to Ala-ud-Din's

desire, and his armies laid close siege to the Fort. But in the face of the defence all his strength and all his cunning proved fruitless. At last, wearied of the struggle, he resorted to deception, and conveyed to Bhim Singh his resolve to abandon the siege might he but once behold the face of Padmini reflected in a mirror. The Rajput granted the request and, barely attended, Ala-ud-Din entered the citadel, beheld the reflection of the Princess's beauty and turned away. Bhim Singh, not to be outdone in courtesy and faith, alone and unattended, escorted the King to the foot of the fortress rock, and it was on this greater chivalry Ala-ud-Din had counted. There the ambush waited, Bhim Singh was seized and carried captive to the Muslim camp, and the one condition of his release was proclaimed the surrender of Padmini.

We can imagine the consternation that must have ruled within the walls of Chitor, amongst Rajputs to whom the honour of their women is so sacred ; but it is Padmini herself who comes to the rescue, meeting guile with guile. A message is sent to the King. The Princess shall be instantly surrendered, but, in order that she may leave Chitor in a manner suited to her rank, she must be royally attended to the camp by the Rajput ladies of the citadel. The condition was accepted, and seven hundred closed litters issued from the gates of Chitor. Padmini was admitted to take leave of her lord, and just as Ala-ud-Din grew restless at the length of the interview, out from the closed litters stepped seven hundred of the bravest chiefs of Mewar. The litter-bearers stood revealed as Rajput soldiery. The fight was long and bitter, and though Bhim Singh and Padmini were at last borne in triumph to the Fort it was at an overwhelming price.

Let me again quote from Tod one incident of the battle, so characteristic I feel it to be of the spirit informing men and women alike. Badal, a mere boy of twelve, escaped wounded, and carried the news of her husband's death to his uncle's wife. Before joining him through the fire she asks how "her lord conducted himself".

"The stripling replies : 'He was the reaper of the harvest of battle ; I followed his steps as the humble gleaner of his sword. On the gory bed of honour he spread a carpet of the slain ; a barbarian prince his pillow, he laid him down, and sleeps surrounded by the foe '. Again she said : 'Tell me, Badal, how did my love behave ? ' 'Oh ! mother, how further describe his deeds when he left no foe to dread or admire him ? ' She smiled farewell to the boy, and adding, 'My lord will chide my delay ', sprung into the flame."

But Ala-ud-Din, though foiled, was not defeated. He gathered a fresh army about him and once again invested Chitor. The garrison was weakened by that last awful massacre ; disaster was imminent. At this crisis the guardian goddess of the fortress appears to Bhim Singh, demanding a supreme sacrifice, declaring that unless the blood royal itself is freely spent in her defence she will forsake the city. Bhim Singh has twelve sons, each gallant, each eager to offer himself on that insatiate altar. Eleven in turn are crowned king, rule for three days, and on the fourth surrender their lives to the foe. It comes to the turn of the favourite son, no less willing a victim than his brothers, but the last of his line, and his father interposes. He declares he will himself lead the final sacrifice, but that first the heir to Mewar and the future must be placed in safety. With a few followers the young man is banished

to seek security beyond the enemy lines, and with this assurance Bhim Singh is content and orders the last dispositions to be made. The women prepare for the Johar, the fiery immolation that will preserve them from dishonour at infidel hands. Led by Padmini, the defenders see their wives and daughters pass into the flame-lit, subterranean chamber, the doors are sealed behind them, the great gates of the fortress flung wide. Clad in the saffron robes of death, their helmets wreathed in the garland of the bridegroom, the flower of the world's chivalry rode to its destruction.

Ala-ud-Din entered the city to wreak his vengeance on deserted palaces and shrines, to shatter in an insensate fury the beauty of the unresponsive stone ; for to the last Rajput pride knew no other leveller but death, and the curling smoke of the Johar was the measure of the conqueror's defeat.

So ends the tale of the first sack of Chitor.

We leave it for a time in the hands of a Muslim garrison, see it recovered by Hamir, worthy grandson of Bhim Singh, who dedicates a long rule to the restoration of its ancient glory. We trace the line of his successors, find Rana Kumbha erecting the Tower of Victory to commemorate his defeat of the King of Malwa, and come to the great story of Rana Sanga. Defeated by Babur, that Prince of the House of Timur, grandfather of Akbar and an enemy worthy the reckless daring of his foes, he swears never to re-enter Chitor until he can do so victorious, but did not live to carry out his oath.

We draw near to the tale of the second sack and in 1584 find Chitor again besieged, now by Bahadur, Sultan of Gujarat. He had already defeated Rana Bikramajit in the field, their ruler is a fugitive, new

engines of war threaten the defences, and all the devotion of the garrison—the Queen Mother herself falls heading a sally—is fruitless. A mine is sprung, a great breach made in the walls. Once more the goddess demands a royal sacrifice, and the Raja of Deolia, who has hurried to the defence of the parent city, is found ready. He is crowned, the Johar is prepared, thirteen thousand women mount the pyre, and once more the defenders, saffron-clad and led by Deolia, sweep down to the plain.

Bahadur in his turn surveyed the desolation of conquest, but his triumph was short-lived. Before she died the Queen had sent the Rakhi (bracelet) to Humayun, son of Babar. The Rakhi is a symbol of Hindu chivalry, and he to whom the token is sent becomes from that moment the “bracelet brother” of the sender and bound to her service, whether she be known or unknown, irrespective of caste and creed. It is pleasant to record Humayun’s prompt acknowledgment of the obligation, alien though it was to his traditions and sent him by an enemy of his house. True he arrived too late to save the fortress, to prevent the immolation of the woman who had made this desperate appeal, but he avenged her royally, and restored Rana Bikramajit to his throne.

But the clouds were gathering fast round Chitor, and when, in 1541, Udai Singh, son of Rana Sanga, snatched his inheritance from a bastard usurper, Mewar passed into hands unequal to the trust. Udai Singh betrayed his name, proved himself no true child of the Sun, and on the approach of an Imperial army incontinently fled.

Akbar, ambitious of renown, had turned his gaze towards Chitor, and if the last chapter of its story closes in desolation, it is a matter for rejoicing that it fell, at least, to no lesser man. Betrayed by the

successor of Bappa Rawal, the guardian goddess, too, deserted the fortress, but even so the curtain fell on a record of heroism second to none. In an hour of desperate need the command of the garrison devolved on Patta of Kelwa, a boy of sixteen. Proudly his mother bade him don the saffron robe and die for Chitor. More, she set the example, and arming both herself and her son's young wife, the two women fell side by side on the battlements of the Fort. Patta proved himself their equal in devotion, and shares with Jaimall of Badnor the chief honours of the last defence. Jaimall, wounded, foresaw defeat. But to the defenders of that magic name defeat had never spelt surrender. Sternly the Johar was commanded, the fires lit, the gates set wide, and, for the last time in her history, the saffron horsemen swept from the walls of Chitor.

So closes the tale of her unmatched chivalry, and alas that the name of Akbar should be stained with the "sin of the sack of Chitor", for it was the brutal frenzy that followed on his victory that gave birth to the phrase. The city was given over to a massacre and desecration never before equalled; the Emperor, it would seem, was drunk with his triumph and exulted in her misery; humiliation was piled on humiliation, the face of that ancient glory mutilated past all restoring. A shadow on Akbar's fame there is no removing, though he lived to record his admiration for Chitor's defenders in no uncertain manner, when he raised statues to Jaimall and Patta at the gates of his palace at Delhi. And although he never received the submission of Mewar, many a Rajput gave him devoted service, and he earned from their lips a meed of praise rare indeed from conquered to conqueror.

The curtain has fallen on Chitor never again to be

raised, but great names still throng the history of Mewar, and at the close of Udai Singh's inglorious reign the throne passes to Rana Partap Singh. Partap renounced every luxury, every pomp, until such time as Mewar should be freed, Chitor avenged. With a band of devoted chiefs he carried on single handed the struggle with the Moghul. He spurned every overture, lived, a wanderer from place to place, achieving now some daring exploit, again a fugitive and at bay, yet with spirit and faith unbroken. He commanded his people to retire into the mountains and sternly saw that his orders were obeyed; not the increasing defection of the Rajput Princes could move him, and their hatred and jealousy of a greater constancy added to the number and strength of his enemies. For twenty-five years he fought on and the climax to his misfortunes was reached after the battle of Haldighat where Prince Salim, Akbar's heir, inflicted yet another crushing defeat on the faithful chiefs of Mewar and their gallant leader. Rana Partap survived to gather fresh impetus from disaster and ultimately succeeded in carrying his sword victorious over the now desolate plains of Mewar, though Chitor itself was to the end denied him. His last years were passed in comparative immunity from strife, other conquests tempted the ambitions of the Moghul and, too, they had learnt to respect the spirit of this antagonist. Rana Partap, worn out by hardship and distress of mind and body, died untimely at Udaipur, amongst the rude huts that marked the beginnings of that now stately capital.

His son Amar Singh was left undisturbed during the remainder of Akbar's reign, and spent the time allowed him in the reorganization of his mutilated inheritance. But Akbar died and his successor Jahangir, the Salim of

the victory of Haldighat, yearned to break the pride of the single defender of Rajput freedom. Again and again the Moghul armies marched against Amar. For a time it seemed as if he were destined to restore the fallen glories of his house, for again and again the Rajputs were victorious. Chitor itself was restored and for a while Amar ruled amongst those stately ruins that gave, as a contemporary chronicler bears witness, but "a shadow of its beauty while it flourished in its pride".

Jahangir took alarm, and gathering a yet more powerful army, dispatched it under the command of his son Prince Khurram, better known as the Emperor Shah Jahan. Jahangir had the resources of a vast empire at his disposal, Amar Singh but the remnants of a chivalry exhausted by a struggle as protracted and gallant as any in the world's history. Resistance was hopeless, the odds too overwhelming, but not until the choice lay solely between captivity and exile, was the proud banner of the Sun lowered. For the sake of his distracted country Raja Amar submitted, and perhaps the agony of that last humiliation was softened a little to the broken man by the thought that Khurram was himself half Rajput.

But he could not bring himself to face the Emperor's court, and, pleading his age, sent his heir Karan to make his submission. The young man was royally received, was set on Jahangir's right hand above all the Princes of Hindustan, was treated with every mark of courtesy and honour. The story does Jahangir infinite credit and though, for Rana Amar, the cup of bitterness had overflowed, at least the submission of his house was worthily honoured.

The history of Mewar is first and foremost the history of her long struggle with the Toork, it is superfluous to

pursue it farther, and enough has perhaps been said to give some dim reflection of its glory. It fell to later generations to raise the lovely city we know to-day as Udaipur, and which lies so untouched and unspoiled amongst the lakes and mountains of Mewar.

Here a child of the Sun Race still rules, and it is an amazing, indeed a moving experience to a generation impatient of tradition and clamorous of progress, this city of Udaipur, for here the heart of Rajputana stands revealed and in dignity of race and splendour of story remains without a rival.

The Maharana is himself a figure, as well as a child, of romance, and might well have stepped straight from the pages of Chitor. No longer young, he will still stick his pig and shoot his tiger, his life is one of singular austerity and restraint, and the charm and strength of his personality have won him the unstinted admiration of those about him. In largesse he is princely, and whenever he drives abroad silver anna pieces are scattered to every woman and child on the road. I need hardly add their number sometimes runs into thousands ! He has refused to let the railway enter his capital, and by keeping the terminus at some distance from the city has preserved its peace and beauty unsullied ; tempted to develop his State he retorts he is a Rajput, and not a shopkeeper seeking to enrich himself. The people exist for, and on, the court. In the districts there are no police and his nobles keep order. None may leave the State without his permission. There is something of the old heroic spirit in this stubborn resistance to change. Something at once immense and pathetic in the challenge he flings to those new forces which we of the west, though we cannot control, unlike him, dare not defy. One wonders if sometimes the shadow of

this new invasion presses very closely on that gallant old heart ? Whether the death-knell of the past sounds in his ears, a death-knell which to-day not all its chivalry nor all its heroism can avert.

Nevertheless the history of past chivalry still finds a recognition at Udaipur which is without parallel in other States. Both the privileges and duties of feudalism are strictly preserved and enforced. In the great durbars, which the Maharana holds, he is *primus*, the ruler of the State, but he is *primus inter pares* ; and the chief descendants of those great families who bled for Chitor and Mewar, sit next him in a precedence determined by the measure of their past sacrifice, and sit above his son and heir apparent.

In the fields of Mewar also you may see even to-day the peasant ploughing with the round Rajput shield strapped to his back, and his sword or his spear at his side. An echo of those days when a cry would rally the squires from their fields and homesteads to defend the sacred soil of Mewar from invasion by the Toork. The manufacture of swords is still the main industry of Udaipur city.

Of our visit let my diary give you the details :

UDAIPUR.

10th November, 1928.

The Maharana and his nobles were at the station assembled, and as Their Excellencies drove off a complete stranger climbed in to my motor and remarked conversationally : “ There goes the descendant of Prithwi Raj, the last Hindu Emperor of Delhi ! ”

I turned and stared, with a total lack of manners but with what infinite respect, at a plump figure in a green brocade coat employed in climbing into a victoria ! But the victoria does not exist that could destroy the

romance of that apparition. The grandson of Rama, the grandson of Prithwi Raj, all in one morning. It was almost too much !

We started on the three mile drive to the Residency where we are staying. On each side of the road were horses gorgeously harnessed, elephants in all their state attire, retainers in steel and inlaid armour and finally, at the Gate of the Sun, the crowding citizens of Udaipur. On the one side a sea of multi-coloured pugris, on the other the women, in brown and purple, terra-cotta and crimson, with here and there a flame of yellow, all massed against the grey-brown city wall. There was no glare, just a deep glow of colour, all the more beautiful in a country where we have grown accustomed to vivid contrast.

The morning was spent in the formal interchange of visits and the inquiries inseparable from such occasions, but we were to have tea at the island palace of Jagmandir, the scene of Shah Jahan's exile when he followed the rebellious precedent of all good Moghul sons. To Jagmandir we were to travel by water, and we embarked at a little ghat on a backwater of the lake which, with a dramatic instinct, perhaps accidental but at any rate most effective, gives no hint of what is to come. It was in itself charming, with the wall of the city rising on one hand and on three sides the wooded banks, the low hills of Mewar rising beyond. But five minutes later you sweep under a low bridge, the banks fall away and the splendour of the palace and lake is visible.

I really feel it to be an insult to try and describe them even when, as now, a golden city of sunset. As the city of magic it became later quite impossible. The Children of the Sun must indeed reign here, for a more beautiful light I have never seen than that which bathes these



palaces, makes the trees glow as if cut out of emerald, and throws shadows as blue as the deep sky on those white walls. It is an enchantment and a benediction in one, and on the vast sweep of water guarded by the hills, float the islands, each with its graceful palace, each so lovely that detail escapes you in the wonder of the whole. At Jagmandir we stayed until the light turned from gold to rose pink and the dusk fell, silent and swift.

Of that later visit when a state banquet brought us back to the palace, and again by water, what can I say ? We swept out of the dark creek, under the bridge, into a world of tremulous beauty, flame palaces floating on the waters of an enchanted sea, at once so amazing and so lovely as to drive the despairing biographer to blasphemy or silence. I prefer the latter.

There were fireworks here later, but I cannot face any more descriptive flights. Udaipur is becoming a literary torment. The groans of diarists keep us awake at night, and in three weeks' time our efforts will be a weariness of the flesh to a number of wholly innocent persons. It is distracting, and all because Udaipur will so lamentably insist on using its waters for adornment and not for irrigation, and prefers that its people should perish of no drains rather than of too much efficiency !

11th November, 1928.

We visited the magician's palace this morning. It is so like the incredible dream of one's youth. Tiny staircases, narrow and steep, in the thickness of the wall, courtyard upon courtyard blind and guarded on the water side, little low doorways, little secret rooms painted with sinister figure of beast and god, decorated barbarically with coloured glass, sometimes beautiful, always intriguing. A palace without form or plan, but

surely leading you on to some sinister purpose and conclusion. Now through a marble arch a glimpse of very far, blue water, or a white courtyard where the armed guardians lounge, splashes of vivid colour in the sunshine.

The front of the palace is as public and democratic as the interior is the reverse. Elephants, camels, horses, donkeys, cocks and hens, the sacred bull and his family, the far from sacred coolies and theirs, all appear to be sitting in inextricable confusion on the doorstep.

It was Sunday morning and we went to church. After church we received gifts from the authentic and local pope, just to keep the balance as it were. He is of quite incredible sanctity and does not leave the great temple at Nathdwara, so his manager deputized. We were each presented with a brocade coverlet once worn by the idol, and baskets of fruit and nuts.

The Mahant occasionally shows a very distinguished visitor in person over the temple ; but when he does so the progress is marked out by a series of mats. The Mahant goes in front and is always a mat ahead of the distinguished visitor. To be on the same mat as the Mahant is a distinction which no one, of whatever eminence, has ever achieved or dared to covet.

This evening we had tea in a lovely garden of the Maharana's making, where everything seemed seized with a vertigo in an effort to produce more and more fountains ! But it was very charming and full of colour. We drove home by the Fateh Sagar, a lake higher than Pichola, the lake of palaces, and all the road was guarded by Rajput horsemen. Fateh Sagar has not Pichola's enchantment of marble, but is set in incomparably finer scenery, and with this the sunset conspired and made of the drive a progress from glory unto glory.

CHAPTER XII

AN AUTUMN TOUR

LAHORE, PATIALA, LUCKNOW, ALLAHABAD

TO treat of any of these exhaustively would be but to weary you with much repetition, so, as the little tour was complete in itself, I will fill in the principal features with extracts from my diary :

LAHORE.

22nd October, 1923.

We are off ! We have reached Lahore ! With all the respect I do sincerely feel for eternal snows and the summer capital of Government, yet it is good to be in India again. I opened one eye at an early hour this morning, and beheld "AMRITSAR" looking in at my window. In itself stimulating. *Un monde ou l'on ne s'ennui pas*, just at present. (This was written at the height of the Akali troubles.) At Lahore, Sir Edward Maclagan, the Governor of the Punjab, Lady Maclagan, guards of honour, and an escort of armoured cars. After breakfast, for His Excellency, a long morning of deputations and speeches, all of which we gathered to hear. For the rest, a luncheon party, a dinner party and military sports in the afternoon.

We feel almost at home in the Punjab, for Simla is equally the summer refuge of its Government and officials, and this visit does not launch us into quite such a sea of strange faces as do most. You would think me

absurd if I tried to explain the difference this makes, but the life we lead means a bowing acquaintance to things and people, and a familiar face is a real beacon. It adds hours to our brief enjoyment—brief, for on tour a four days' halt is about the average—and takes at least ten years off our lives ! Or perhaps I should say off mine, for other folk are not so morbidly affected in this particular !

With Lahore you are probably all familiar, both as the city of " Kim " and the home of the Sikh. Here you will still find the " Wonder House " and Zam Zammah, the great gun, astride which Kim is first introduced to the gaze of his adoring world. The sacred city of the Sikh is, of course, Amritsar, but his ancestors ruled the Punjab and his martial, picturesque figure is everywhere to be seen. We had full proof of his powers as a horseman at the military sports this afternoon, and, as a soldier, he has again and again proved his worth both as our ally and in a more troublesome rôle. Physically, too, he is such a fine figure, very tall and erect, with regular features, his pugri wound over his uncut hair and securing the two upturned points of his full beard. The Punjabi Mohammedan shares with him the martial honours of the Punjab, and I shall never forget the sensation the two combined produced at a function at Calcutta, when their representatives swept past in the Viceroy's bodyguard. The talk amongst the Bengalis in the stand was all of their size, their beauty, their might. They gazed in admiration and in awe. It was perhaps fortunate for them the heroes came in peace !

23rd October, 1928.

We visited the Badshai Mosque and the fort before breakfast. Ranjit Singh's tomb was also on the pro-

gramme, but since our old and valued friends the Akalis had seized the opportunity to spend a "devotional" morning at this shrine, we left them undisturbed.

The mosque is very fine, built by Aurangzebe on the lines with which Delhi and Agra have made us familiar. The fort, founded by Akbar, is distinguished by the Naulakha, the little marble pavilion which, as its name suggests, cost that monarch nine lakhs, but has been sadly mutilated by successive tribulations to which the Sikh has contributed not a little. Yet the magnificence of Moghul wall and decoration is never failing. Here, too, is some admirable tile work, a lost art now, but how lovely and how spirited? From the ramparts we looked down on the tortured cupolas of the tomb of The Lion of the Punjab, and devoutly hoped the Akalis were spending a profitable morning!

The Judges of the High Court gave a party at the Shalimar Gardens this evening. The gardens were built by Shah Jahan on the Persian plan, and are very lovely, not less so for a touch of neglect attributable to those Iconoclasts, the Sikh and the Inchcape Committee! Ranjit Singh destroyed the marble pavilions, which have risen from their ashes in white plaster, he carried off the inlay and the marble balustrades and with these materials his descendants contributed the Golden Temple at Amritsar—much to the world's æsthetic debit. But he left the rose-grey walls, the water-courses and the causeways of narrow, Moghul brick, and even Lord Inchcape has not been able to stop the fountains, or bid the water cease to flow!

24th October, 1923.

I went to Shahdara early, the garden where Jahangir is buried and where Nur Jahan spent the nineteen years of her widowhood at the mausoleum she had raised to

his memory. Ranjit Singh used the mausoleum, too, as a quarry for the material of the Golden Temple. I begin to dislike the Sikhs !

Nur Jahan—she to whom the Lady of the Taj must bow in wit and beauty both—lies in a tomb, a little, desolate tomb, half a mile distant. But since ever I heard her name I had promised myself this pilgrimage.

This afternoon we drove through the incredibly narrow streets of the city to an old Sikh palace, now a school for small girls. I felt better about the Sikhs ! It is an enchanting place of creamy brick and painted courtyard, with crowding children between its white arches.

25th October, 1923.

We were torn, protesting, from Lahore this evening, and left the whole of the lovely gardens at Government House lit up, with, on the Mound in the centre, a great bonfire round which Khattak dancers whirled and tossed. And on all the lawns conjurors and acrobats and every possible delight !

PATIALA.

26th October, 1923.

A wonderful scene at the station and the Maharaja superb in a tiara and a breastplate of emeralds ! A guard of honour in a maroon uniform with cream coloured facings, an enormous silver state coach for the Viceroy, a blue and silver state coach for Lady Reading, Rolls-Royces for the vulgar throng ! As to the Maharaja's Staff they were gorgeous beyond description.

Their Excellencies drove off with an escort of Lancers and we pursued them down the road in cars like battle-ships. We pursued them for some two miles until, by way of a eucalyptus avenue, we arrived at the Motibagh (*Moti*, pearl, *Bagh*, garden) Palace. The Motibagh Palace would make Versailles look like a



cottage, at least at this distance I feel it would. It is just the biggest thing in houses I have ever imagined, and all built of carved pink sandstone. The bathrooms alone are like ballrooms and the baths extremely temperamental. In an arrogant moment I offered to control one, but only succeeded in producing an unrehearsed "monsoon" effect during which I narrowly escaped a watery grave. There is a swimming bath—no, two—and there are grass tennis courts and a big garden.

I spent the evening reading the English mail, and, in consequence, *Hassan*. The volume has reached me in a setting hardly unworthy, Mr. Basil Dean. I am housed, to my exceeding comfort, in the Purdah apartments, I gaze at the world through a carved sandstone screen. The Princes have shed nothing of magnificence since the days of Haroun-al-Raschid, and for the loss of some beauty Western influence is, alas, to blame. But the clothes remain, and though Patiala is a Sikh State, the Punjab is the highway to India from the north, and the Maharaja's court is attired much as was the court of but the Great Moghul. From the Moghul to Persia is a step.

27th October, 1928.

A review of the State troops this morning. Their Excellencies arrived in their state coach and, after driving down the line, took their seats under a little red and gold shamiana at the saluting base. After the march past General Chanda Singh led the cavalry charge, galloping on a beautiful black pony the Staff had long since learnt to respect on the polo fields of Delhi and Calcutta. The thunder of the charge brought back memories of the stirring days when the troops of this, and the other Fulkian States, helped our meagre forces in the assault and capture of Delhi.

The state banquet was held in the old palace, in a Durbar Hall hung with vast, crystal chandeliers. Hundreds of them, and the Viceroy was carefully disposed under the largest. It must have weighed two ton at the least. This is the tale of their origin :

Once upon a time His Highness's father sauntered, alone and unattended, into the show room of a great electrical furnishing firm at Calcutta. He was unknown to the assistants and they paid him scant attention. Piqued, the Maharaja glanced round, then asked :

“ How much for the contents of the shop ? ”

A hurried consultation, and the flustered manager suggested :

“ Nine lakhs.” (About £60,000.)

“ Very well, send them along ! ”

And they did, and that is the end of the story, unless I add that some of the cases await unpacking to this day !

But to return to the banquet. To distract us there was the Maharaja in a maroon brocade coat and pugri, and the Empress Eugénie's diamond necklace. At least the Empress's diamonds were the beginning. He wore as well an enormous diamond tiara from which hung loops of diamonds, pearls, and emeralds ; a three-row pearl collar, ten diamond stars (the stars of his Orders), and the pale blue ribbon and diamond jewel of the Star of India—and looked wonderful.

28th October, 1923.

There has been shooting of course for all the men, and the Maharaja has a big preserve at the gates of the palace. Black buck, cheetal, sambhur and nilghai, throng it, and armed or unarmed it is a pleasant occupation to motor through. For the rest the well of Oriental hospitality seems inexhaustible.

LUCKNOW.

29th October, 1928.

I have committed the indiscretion of leaving the history of to-day unwritten until to-morrow ! It matters, for we spent to-morrow's morning sightseeing, and the Lucknow of the Mutiny has wholly overborne the balance of impressions. However, I must revert and tell you that the city did its State Arrival " proud " ! There were bands, there was bunting, there were guards of honour, there were crowds. There was also a " hartal ", but then a hartal looks like a public holiday to the bureaucratic eye, the disciple of love alone can tell the difference. Apropos, the local extremist paper has been placed in an awkward predicament. How to do honour to their " home town ", and at the same time how the dickens to non-co-operate ? Admittedly a nice question ! They compromised. On the front page of the paper may be read, I am told, an enthusiastic description of the Viceroy's arrival, of the magnificence of the scene, the excellence of the arrangements. You turn to the next and behold a giant heading :

COMPLETE HARTAL IN LUCKNOW. CITY PLUNGED IN GLOOM !

Well, it seemed more actually plunged in sunshine and flags. We reached Government House before breakfast, and no function claimed attention until the Provincial Durbar in the afternoon. This was held in a great tent in the Kaiserbagh, in the centre of a large quadrangle formed by the yellow palace of the Kings of Oudh, which was guarded by elephants in state harness. During the Durbar the remnants of the ex-Royal Family of Oudh were presented to the Viceroy, pitiful figures of vanished pomp indeed. But nothing, here in the United Pro-

vinces, strikes you at first sight with greater force than the generally indifferent physique of the people. Fresh from the Punjab and the Sikh, the contrast is all the more marked. The procession of Durbaris was brought to a touching conclusion by two old, old Indian officers, who were led, blind and stumbling, to the dais to present their swords to the Viceroy. Each claimed more than sixty years of service for the British Raj and had begun their military experience in the grim defence of the Lucknow Residency, where they had been numbered amongst the famous Baillie Guard.

30th October, 1928.

I had thought Lahore was a city of gardens, but Lucknow surpasses it altogether. There are the gardens of Government House, more open than those at Lahore, though beautifully wooded, and the house itself is not so enclosed. It is old, built and added to on the site of a powder magazine belonging to the Kings of Oudh. The elephants of state put in an early appearance this morning, over seventy were ranged in a semi-circle on the lawn. They have been sent by the Chiefs from all over the province, and one giant, belonging to the Maharaja of Balrampur, was said to be the tallest in India, and measured thirteen feet at the shoulder.

The ceremony of guard mounting was cheered by the Queens and their famous drummers, the best, it is said, in the British service, and at ten-thirty the entire party set forth into the city, or rather to the city and the Residency in a direction as near as possible to the line taken by Sir Colin Campbell's relieving force in 1858. First then to the Dilkusha, the ruined hunting-box of the Kings of Oudh. After the first relief the surviving women and children were brought here from the Residency, and here, too, Havelock died in November



STATE ELEPHANT, LUCKNOW

of the same year. It is a fine ruin, and stands in most lovely grounds. Then to the La Martinière College. A great Italianate building which has weathered to real beauty and faces a charming artificial lake, water as ever a delight in this country. It was built by one General Martin, a Frenchman who amassed a fortune in the service of the Company, and founded and endowed the college for the education of European and Anglo-Indian children. Martin himself had four wives, all at once, of whom one at least was an Indian, and judging from the very fine bust in the college, it was no more than natural that his success with the ladies was so assured ! A very good-looking and a very distinguished face. By the roadside, close to the college, lies the grave of Hodson of Hodson's Horse, and during the Mutiny one of the houses in the Residency compound was defended very gallantly by the Martinière boys.

At the Residency, a model of actual Mutiny conditions, illuminates the inquirer into history. To-day it stands free in its lovely garden, and gives little idea of how closely the defenders were hemmed in on every side. The old tower rises in a jagged silhouette, and above the wreck floats, in perpetual tribute and perpetual memory, the one flag in all the earth which is never lowered. The agony and the bitterness of the hour is summed up in the square stone not a hundred yards distant, inscribed : " Here lies Henry Lawrence, who tried to do his duty."

In the horror of the Mutiny story Cawnpore must stand first, and Cawnpore I have never seen. On the whole I am glad, for in the first place I believe the terrible well has been adorned in the Gothic and nauseating manner peculiar to Mutiny memorials. But also are these pilgrimages profitable, I wonder, to a generation

pledged to absolution ? If we can keep them within the term "pilgrimage", it would be different—but can we ? Tears in the eye certainly, but what of the glint behind them ? I should feel inclined to avoid Cawnpore whilst endeavouring to fulfil the Divine, and now official, command to love my neighbour as myself. The Mutiny story is scarcely seventy years old, the generation who marched on Cawnpore, Lucknow and Delhi hardly yet in their graves, the age of reason has not quite set in. But Lucknow, if only because the Residency never fell to the mutineers, is not stained with the treacherous cruelty of Cawnpore, and, since native troops shared in the defence, those ragged walls are as much a memorial to Indian constancy and valour as to our own. Sir Henry Lawrence died at the darkest hour of the defence, ordering that heart-broken epitaph to be written across his grave. Beneath are the cellars into which women and children, sick and wounded were crowded, for cholera and small-pox increased the horror of their trial. Here the 82nd Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry won undying honour, and I must, for a moment, break away from the path of the diarist to note an incident that occurred a year after the date of our visit. I was not present, but the story was told me by an eye-witness.

In 1924, and for the first time since '58, the D.C.L.I. returned to Lucknow. To mark the event they gathered at the Residency, where all the contemporary regimental plate had already been collected. Polished silver, riddled with bullet holes, and one bullet still lying where it had first spent its force, in the centre of a great soup tureen.

Four men of the regiment stood with arms reversed at the four corners of Lawrence's grave, and round about



THE RESIDENCY FROM SIR HENRY LAWRENCE'S GRAVE, LUCKNOW

it the little audience gathered, bareheaded, while the band played " O God, our help in ages past ".

The silence that followed, a silence how poignantly haunted, was broken by the faint skirl of the pipes, drawing nearer and nearer, till " The Campbells are coming " could be plainly heard, played as the Argylls had played it more than sixty years before as they marched to the Relief of Lucknow.

To those who have never been in India, who have never experienced the potency of that memory, it is impossible to convey any true sense of the emotion pervading the little ceremony. Men and women at a distance of half a century wept unashamed, and the story itself was neither told nor listened to with dry eyes. The cynic will scoff at such evidence of sentimental suggestion, and as usual the cynic will depress no one but himself. The Residency is unique, more, far more, than the best memorial to the comradeship and devotion of two races, but a memorial as well to all that is great and enduring in the history of the Englishman in India. It has, too, a very present significance for our generation, especially for those who grow disheartened and impatient. For how feel dispirited in the presence of this supreme fortitude, not a fortitude that had hope for its background, but a fortitude in the face of despair and overwhelming odds ; or impatient before this legacy of faith between two races, sealed by a common sacrifice, which no later misunderstandings can diminish. Above all, it should be remembered that since we are the heirs of that tradition we are also the guardians of its integrity.

There is little else to record of Lucknow except a visit to the Great Imambara, one of the royal tombs of the Kings of Oudh ; baroque, tawdry, amusing and rather

beautiful. And one last and lovely evening when the city was one ripple of light from end to end, and the square of the Kaiserbagh a square of fire.

On Allahabad I will not dwell at length, for our activities were little more than a repetition of the ceremonies of all visits, parties, schools and hospitals. The city is the official capital of the United Provinces, though outshone by Lucknow in fame. To the Hindu she is very sacred, for here the Ganges and the Jumna meet. One evening I motored down to Akbar's Fort—built with true Moghul tact on the top of a Hindu temple—and the two great rivers sweeping to their meeting-place in the silence of the short twilight seemed, indeed, fit gods for human reverence.

My last memory of Government House, Allahabad, is the uncanny presence of Begum Samru, of whom a remarkable picture hangs in the hall. A woman with a strong face, more the face of a man; it is powerful and relentless. She sits on a cot, a water-pipe with a curling stem beside her. Her eyes follow one about, and one does not need to be told that she was a personage. During the last half of the eighteenth century she carved out a kingdom for herself, she lent her assistance to prop the fortunes of other warring dynasties. She was several times married, and numbered amongst her husbands a French military adventurer, whom she chose as her consort, for I can never believe she called him her master and her lord. Her first husband threatened when dying that his ghost should haunt her. So she had him buried in her sleeping-room and placed her bed over his grave. It is believed that the ghost never summed up the courage to step forth and face the imminence of the masterful personage who slept above!

CHAPTER XIII

MYSORE

FROM the North-West Frontier to the Bay of Bengal, from the Himalayas to the Narbada, the white train had covered many miles ; at night its path across the plain lit by torch-bearers, by day equally if less picturesquely guarded. We had grown familiar with the wayside life of Northern India, and cunning in shutting out sun and glare, though dust defeated our resources. In the darkened dining-saloon we spent the hot afternoons in homeric, if perspiring, contests at the bridge table ; but tea over, we could lower the windows and see the sun set over plain and jungle, catch the never-failing silhouette of mosque or temple against the wide sky and watch the unchanging, life of field and village stir gratefully in the softening light. I used to love the journeys, the time actually spent in the train, and though the mail followed us relentlessly, they meant a holiday to all, with of course the single and unfailing exception of the Viceroy and his immediate Staff. I believe the hours in the Viceroy's state saloon to have been hardly less strenuous than the hours in his study at Delhi or Simla.

But for all our journeyings—and they were exhausting rather than exhaustive—we had caught sight of a part only of our continent. Most of Central and the whole of Southern India were for us as undiscovered as the pole.

But during the wonderful and incoherent autumn of 1928 we were destined to make our single expedition into the far south of the Peninsula. The tour actually included visits to Hyderabad (Deccan), to Mysore, to the temples at Madura and Trichinopoly, and to the Madras Presidency. Of these I have chosen Mysore, not only for the State's singular interest, but also because we there witnessed an increasingly rare sight in India—the elephant Khedda.

Once in so many years the wild elephant herds in the great southern jungles are rounded up, and a certain number driven into a Khedda (enclosure), caught and tamed to the service of the community. If the wild herds were not thinned in this way they would increase out of all proportion and lay waste vast areas of coffee, tea and sugar-cane, causing irretrievable loss. As may be imagined, it is not possible to fence crops against elephants.

The strength of the beast and his tractable nature give him uses other than those of State and Shikar. In the old days he stood in the forefront of the battle, and of peaceful vocations he has even to-day not a few. But since they are the vocations of strength, they are, I fear, doomed, and will pass to a power or powers lacking his monumental charm. Moreover, he has an appetite in proportion to his size, is an expensive luxury, and increasingly a beast of ceremony alone. In this rôle he is incomparable, as you have seen ; in big game shooting, once training has silenced instinct, he shows great courage, and across country he is a marvel. By which I do not mean to suggest that you should ride him to hounds, but lie on his back and watch him drive straight through thick jungle ! You will have to beware of branches, to be patient while your mount

uproots an interfering tree, and cling on for dear life when he walks down the sheer drop into the nullah. But you go perfectly straight, your unhurried progress is full of engaging incident, and the elephant the world's most soothing companion, so massive is he, so wise, and, on occasion, so funny !

We treat him facetiously in England. Call him to mind to rhyme about his tail, and use him as a metaphor for ungainly. The Indian metaphor that gives to great beauty "the grace of the elephant" is far truer, for in his way he is both graceful and beautiful, and in his way a little pathetic, as if bewildered by the accident that has allowed one giant to survive in a teacup world.

But in Mysore we saw him as Hathi, the Lord of the Jungle, and to that story I must hurry on. But first I must remind you of the very different world into which this journey of ours was taking us. Different in race, language, and, I might even say, colour, since the Southern India native is so much darker than his brother of the north and west. At Hyderabad we made our last bow to Islam, and, except for memories of Haider Ali and his son Tippu Sultan at Seringapatam, plunged into a country dedicate to the ancient civilizations of the Hindu and India's aboriginal peoples.

With this word of warning I will let the diary take up the story :

IN THE TRAIN.

22nd November, 1923.

We dined at Datia last night, and for some miles from the station all the little temples were lit and looking their prettiest. The Maharaja and his diamonds—more strictly the diamonds and their Maharaja—were on the platform with the Political Agent, and conducted Their Excellencies to a "reception tent". Inside the tent

was Miss Maharaja, the darlindest thing of eight you have ever beheld. She looked only five, was completely self-possessed, and sat in a great gold chair half hidden in gold draperies. Alas ! her little brown feet were encased in large brown American shoes ! After dinner there were fireworks, and then the ceremony of Itr and Pan and profuse garlanding before we climbed back into the train.

BANGALORE.

27th November, 1923.

Yesterday, for the first time since we left Delhi, we went through lovely country. Up till then, except for an increase in palm-trees, cactus, heat and prickly pear, the change has been in no way either remarkable or attractive. But yesterday, after tea, we passed into the most lovely jungle, wooded hills and valleys, though, alas ! the light failed all too soon. This morning we woke to Bangalore, so often described to us as an earthly paradise. And it is lovely. Roses, bougainvillea, hibiscus, pointsettia, mimosa, canna and groves of palm all the way. Good-bye to the endless flat-roofed houses, not that these houses are pretty, but just that the mere sight of a steep-pitched roof is refreshing.

There was more ceremony than usual at the station, since the Viceroy received an address and a casket from the Municipality before he left, and as Bangalore, although a part of Mysore State, is a big military centre for our troops, there was a great gathering of soldiers. As to the Residency, it is charming, cool and restful and smothered in roses. Even my old enemy the scarlet geranium flourishes, and I am very glad to see him ! The inhabitants complain of lack of rain, but to dusty Hyderabad eyes it all looks deliciously green.

Breakfast over, we visited the Victoria Hospital—a Mysore State Hospital and quite admirable. The

Maharaja is the only Prince who has granted a genuine constitution to his people, and his rule is extraordinarily enlightened and progressive. After the hospital, we drove on to see the collection of Mysore industries, etc., which are to be sent to the British Empire Exhibition. There were beautiful silks, woollen stuffs, ivory, sandalwood, and lacquer work—all of a high order.

This afternoon there was a tea-party at the Ladies' Club. A very comparatively Purdah affair, for, though A.D.Cs. were eliminated, the tea was handed round by men-servants, and a photographer was exceedingly active throughout. Some delightful children sang a song of welcome to Lady Reading, and then danced and sang story dances from the life of Krishna. The Beloved God himself was represented by a small brown child in a velvet suit, brown woollen socks and substantial black shoes. But she had a little pale face, and played a silver pipe with a gravity most becoming. Here, too, we met Miss Banerjee, the lady who wrote the music for Pavlova's Indian ballet.

And then to the Flower Show; and though the flowers are not at their best at this time of year, the cannas were glorious; pink and orange, crimson, scarlet, apricot, yellow and flame, all massed together with their deep green leaves for a background. The fruit and the vegetables rivalled their English cousins—never have I seen their equal in India. Cabbages the size of footballs, cauliflower, asparagus, green peas, French beans, broad beans, artichokes, turnips, carrots, tomatoes, brussels sprouts—to mention but a few. And then grapes, apples, oranges, pomegranates, pineapples, figs, raspberries, guavas, bananas, coco-nuts, all grown locally and at the same moment. Decorum vanished, and we walked round after Their Excellencies, munching shamelessly!

A dinner party and a reception this evening with the garden all lit.

28th November, 1928.

We saw an admirable Infant Welfare Centre this morning. Numbers of babies in pink and white shirts greeted Her Excellency, and one absurd thing aged fourteen months presented her with a bouquet and curtsied to the ground! They are very dark, these Southern India babies, and very plain, but so attractive. In their pink and white shirts they looked for all the world like the "ten little nigger boys". They have, too, all the gaiety I attribute to nigger boys, and which is so sadly lacking in our exalted, our Aryan brother. The grown-ups share in this gaiety, for wherever Their Excellencies go the streets are packed and their reception heart-warming. The people are Dravidians of the old aboriginal stock, and I believe the vast majority of the untouchable caste. But that does not seem to worry them much, and, indeed, how infinitely better to be a gay untouchable than a sad, albeit a superior person! From the Infant Welfare Centre we drove to the Lady Curzon Hospital, in other words the Station Hospital, and since the matron is a great gardener, the place is buried in cannas and carnations. Children mobbed the car on the way back and pelted Her Excellency with marigolds. The police stood by and clapped! The police of Bangalore are of a friendly disposition and armed with nothing more formidable than a small twig with which, in the intervals of clapping, they administer gentle encouragement.

MYSORE.

29th November, 1928.

A night of hideous discomfort in the train, but a wonderful State Arrival this morning. The route was

crammed, and the planning of the city is admirable. Broad streets planted with trees, streets beautifully kept and houses well built. The women are nearly all dressed in crimson or dull blue, and though not so individually vivid as some I have seen, the general effect of the crowd is beautiful. The way to Government House, as the guest house is called, lies through gardens bounded by hedges of hibiscus and bougainvillea. Wide avenues radiate off from a central circle to which the main road from the city leads. On the right of the road stands the Maharaja's Hindu Palace, of which more hereafter. The Maharaja's bodyguard acted as an escort to Their Excellencies, and what a change to see the horses in a native state in really first-rate condition! The bodyguard itself is very smart, and on each side of the carriages ran men in scarlet carrying wooden poles with spear heads of steel all gay with peacocks' feathers and coloured ribbons. Arches had been erected all along the route, enormous arches of coloured paper, and on his way to Government House the Viceroy was presented with yet another casket, this time from the Mysore Municipality, the while a gentleman of quite awful learning read him a long poem in Sanskrit.

Later we went to the palace to witness the Viceroy's return visit to the Maharaja. It is a modern building, designed, curiously enough, by an Englishman, but of a purely Hindu character. Hindu, that is, in style and decoration—it would be too much to hope that it had escaped our influence altogether. The carpets, for instance, are rich without being in the least rare. Another curious thing about native States, they rarely, so rarely, seem to make use of their own lovely rugs and carpets. For the rest, Hindu architecture is

extraordinarily rich and in its way imposing. But it is so utterly "different" that I don't know I should ever call it beautiful. In effect there seems not an inch of repose on all its surface, it is all curves and carvings, admirable though these last so often are. Effective it certainly is, even if the effectiveness of the modern work has a rather "White City" quality. To-day retainers in scarlet and yellow carrying golden poles bearing images of the gods stood at the palace gates, and the road led through a great archway to an inner courtyard, guarded by eight huge lions of bronze set one on each side of the four flights of steps. On the first floor lovely silks hung between the open arches indicating the zenana. On the left was the Marriage Hall, a pillared apartment where important ceremonies are held, but we were led away up a staircase into the Durbar Hall above. The Durbar Hall has a central door of silver and side-doors of inlaid rosewood. It has also an appalling carpet, green with a chaste design of pink roses, which reveals at all too rare intervals an inlaid marble floor. Hindu pillars, painted jade green and gold, line the central aisle, which is roofed in stained glass. But the glass and the carpet are the only crimes. The side-aisles have beautiful ceilings of heavily carved sandalwood, and somehow the colours of the pillars and walls, for all their newness and crudity, are harmonious in effect. The designs are good, each individual colour is good, some of the detail lovely. Out of its own setting this hall would be unbearable; safely within it it has a real fitness and beauty. But the Maharaja's court is soberly clad, and I did wish we could have seen a Durbar, such as Gwalior's, for instance, in such another hall as this. Amongst so much splendour dark coats and plain pugris of white and gold are almost an anti-climax.

The ceremony of Itr and Pan was honoured here as elsewhere, with the addition of a little tight bouquet of flowers on which the Itr was spread. But on their entrance His Excellency and the Maharaja were preceded by some fine old retainers in blue and silver, carrying silver rods, their duty to announce the approach in a chanting cry and to point out to the Ruler and his guest where they might tread in safety—a very picturesque addition to the other ceremonies.

This afternoon we went to Seringapatam, and there revelled in flattering and patriotic memories! The Kauveri River, one of the sacred rivers of India, divides, making for the Fort an island, and with the aid of a guide-book, a guide, and an active imagination, we traced the decline and fall of Tippu Sultan when he challenged our supremacy in the Carnatic, and the rise of Colonel Arthur Wellesley.

Mysore is sadly short of water, but we drove to Seringapatam through green paddy fields and by a road shaded with giant peepul-trees—a richness and a greenness with which our eyes have not been blessed for many a long day. Within the Fort there is much to see, though much of it is wreckage. There is a fine old Hindu Temple, and through its giant carved gateway we were permitted to peep. There is Tippu's summer palace, an orgy of lovely, faded colour, and those delightful frescoes in which his father, Haider Ali, immortalized his victories over the British. There is a rather uninteresting mosque and a very grim dungeon. There is the single span built for Tippu by a rash young man called de Haviland—just to prove it could be done. Tippu, with his eye on the protecting Kauveri, decided that the young man was quite considerably too clever, and he came to a sudden and untimely end. There is, too,

an avenue of tamarind and a great carved car of black wood in which the idol of the temple takes his walks abroad on occasions of state.

30th November, 1923.

This evening a party at the palace, which presented a truly wonderful spectacle with all its innumerable curves and points and hollows outlined in electric light. The whole population seemed to have gathered in the courtyard, the women on the right, the men on the left, and their effect in that blaze of light was beyond all description. We sat above on a balcony, and for the first ten minutes they absorbed our attention to the almost complete exclusion of the musical ride with which the festivities opened. Then suddenly we were plunged in total darkness, but before we had time to do more than gasp, as if by magic, hundreds of torches blazed simultaneously.

The fireworks over, there was every variety of Indian music, and as a grand finale an Englishman playing an electric organ. But best of all I liked the gentleman who played lovely tunes with a stick on bowls of water.

KARAPUR CAMP.

1st December, 1923.

Some people might call this a camp, but it looks to me far more like a garden party! We live in tents certainly, but we live on champagne and *pâté de foie gras*, in a large garden, with a shamiana where the band plays. There are intervals when we descend from these heights and visit the Khedda, and there is this to be said: no amount of organization (and the organization is quite marvellous) can really defeat the jungle. And what a jungle!—a thick tangle of bamboo, forests of teak dropping down to a river, and the blue hills of Ooty rising beyond. This is a tame description, but

when I have noted teak, tamarind, banyan, peepul and bamboo I come to an end of my natural history, and people do so hate being asked questions they cannot answer ! It is a very hot jungle—oh, a hot and sticky jungle. If you would wish to preserve appearances do not, as I did, race through it in the wake of a wild elephant at four o'clock in the afternoon !

But before I tell you of that adventure I must here explain something of the strategic position, and never until to-day did I realize the enormous amount of preparation an elephant Khedda entails. For three months the little jungle people have been tracking and then driving the selected herd gently onward, to-day bringing them in triumph, and still unconscious of danger, to just this one chosen point in all their vast forests. It is amazing, and requires patience, skill and courage of a high order, and these things are good to remember when, later, the inevitable torture of the wild thing trapped rather overwhelms other sympathies.

By no means all the fortunate spectators of a Khedda see the drive, or rather the last phase of the drive, for it is a gamble. The herd may break back, a thousand and one things may happen to ruin the beat, and if they do happen then where is your Khedda ? So usually the elephants are driven into a big enclosure long before the Viceroy or other guests arrive, and they merely see them driven from this into the inner, or roping, enclosure, and so doing miss the cream of the whole spectacle. On this occasion the Maharaja had taken no risks ; we were to see the last drive, but one herd was already in the large Khedda in case of the drive's failure.

Imagine, then, the curve of a wide river, on each side sloping, thickly wooded banks. To the left, from bank to bank, a line of tame elephants (Koomkies) standing

belly deep in the water ; upstream, well away to the right, a single tusker marking the entrance to the Khedda. The Khedda itself—a long gangway ending in a small enclosure—the roping enclosure, this last some fifty feet only in diameter. There are two gates, suspended drawbridge fashion, one above the entrance to the gangway, one above the entrance to the enclosure. The whole is built of immensely strong palisades bound with rope.

Slipping away from the seats of fashion, Colonel Carey Evans and I took up a commanding position on the river bank. We were immediately invited to a more discreet place behind a camouflage of trellis, but on promise of infinite discretion and mousey quiet were permitted to refuse. There were two dangers ; a rash movement might turn the herd or, since the bank was none too steep, it might transfer a too marked attention in our direction. We were shown the gap on the bank opposite where the wild herd was expected to appear, silence was commanded, and a breathless wait began.

The sound of the approaching beat reached us first, and then a smell, apparent even to my cockney nose, the smell of wild elephant. Someone whispered : “ Look ! ” Someone else :

“ Take that damn thing off, will you ? ” and a figure went sprawling past me, a white pugri torn from its head.

“ There he is ! ”

I wriggled forward down the bank, my companion started waving his camera with celtic emotion ; we both narrowly missed diving head foremost into the river—but we saw him ! A great solitary tusker moving slowly out of the dark jungle, his huge ears waving backwards and forwards, and the sunlight gleaming on

his long white tusks. A whisper was passed from mouth to mouth: "My word, he is a beauty"; a solitary elephant, as we heard later, who had joined the herd the night before, and had been by no means made welcome. He seemed quite undisturbed, and after a minute or two's pause took luxuriously to the water, drinking and squirting himself at leisure, immediately below us. But our attention was diverted by another whispered "Look!" And there, rather higher up the river, the whole herd, forty-five to fifty strong, swept into view. Tuskers, mothers, and babies took to the water in a body and started to swim across the river straight for the mouth of the Khedda. But our solitary friend was of a more independent spirit. Disturbed by the near approach of the beat, he flung up his head and, turning, made straight for our bank.

This move threw our darker brethren into a frenzy. Forgetful of all instructions they leapt to their feet in a very babel of consternation, whilst two amongst them armed with shot-guns opened a wholly irresponsible fire in the beast's direction. In vain the Englishmen blasphemed! The elephant broke into a trot, and, with a bellow of rage, turned down stream. I admit I drew a breath of relief! But the guard of Koomkies were by now advancing and cut off the tusker's retreat. Meanwhile a number of beaters had forded the river and with flaming torches were rushing up above, below and over us. This effectively turned him, and he made away up stream in pursuit of the herd. They, meanwhile, had been seized in mid-stream with some foreboding, and, wheeling, had tried to break back. Splendid they looked bearing down on the Koomkies, the mothers supporting the babies with their trunks, the whole herd alive at last to some imminent peril. But to the

Koomkies, alas! blood is not thicker than water, and the Koomkies stood firm. Turning again, the herd swam desperately forward, saw the opening made by the huge palisades of the Khedda and swept towards the bank. It was then I began diving through the forest, the hottest ten minutes I have ever known, and I reached the entrance to the Khedda just in time to see the first gate crash down behind them.

Three or four Koomkies had followed them in, and it was not until the herd reached the limits of the roping enclosure at the further end that they realized the trap. As the pressure from the Koomkies in the rear increased the fight began. Trumpeting wildly the herd turned, and again and again tried to force their way back, or out on either side. They charged the Koomkies, they charged the straining palisades, all, at least for us, with a fortunate lack of method, for once they took to fighting together little could resist them. Neither, and this struck me as peculiarly strange, did they ever attack the mahouts. One sweep of the trunk would lay the real enemy low, the Koomkies uncontrolled would hardly resist and the palisades could not withstand them for ever. But they did not seem to realize the man's presence, though he is armed with a spear and adds not a little to their misery.

When as many as possible had been forced into the roping enclosure, and the number included our solitary tusker, the second gate crashed to and the rest of the herd were left in the gangway.

2nd December, 1923.

Daybreak news from the Khedda! Our tusker has killed one of his companions, and a baby has been born!

We were back early. The stench was almost overpowering. The ground inside the palisades had been

trampled into a quagmire, some of the great beasts had fallen and lay where they fell, under the feet of their companions, unable to move. Since the press of the elephants in the gangway was too great to permit of the Koomkies making their way to the enclosure, it was decided to start operations on the outsiders first. Roping operations are not pretty. There are, of course, wanton cruelties. There must be in the East. And often you feel the beast, in his heartbroken struggle for freedom, to be so much finer than the men who have trapped him, that more than ever such cruelties make one rage. Through all the months before the Khedda itself has been reached, it is a fair fight between instinct and reasoned skill. Within the stockade it is barbarous, inhuman, but, on the other hand, you cannot fight the things of the wild in kid gloves, and, above all, it is no "show" but an organization with a very definite purpose and use. The gallant old leaders do not always survive the shock of defeat and failure, but in six months ninety per cent. of the herd have become useful and valued members of the community. Contented, too. The tame elephant is the proof of that. The initial and savage part of the struggle is short. But during that struggle the pitiful thing to me is not so much the great bloodstained heads and the queer, pathetic cries of physical hurt (an elephant is not given to suffering in silence) but the baffled bewilderment that does not seem a physical thing at all. It is curious how vividly this huge physical creature conveys an impression of mental agony. Tears and blood mingle on his cheeks, but it is the tears you mind !

A big tusker is selected for the first victim, and through the press the Koomkies are driven and by dint of endless manœuvring fight their way to their positions,

one on either side, one in front. In this way they keep their victim's hindquarters pressed against the palisade. The very biggest tame bulls are used for this purpose, and often enough, great head to great head, the wild and the tame fight for supremacy, the mahouts goading the enemy the while with their spears. Outside the palisade the men are waiting their chance. Soon first one hind leg is caught and roped, then the other. The ropes are tightened and secured, for all that the great beast never ceases to fight and strain. Men climb up to the top of the palisade and throw a noose round his neck, and so on until every elephant selected for the purposes of captivity is incapacitated. But still they have to be removed from the Khedda, taken across the river and tied up in the jungle. The wild elephant is weary now and baffled and broken, but he fights still as three Koomkies, harnessed to one end of the rope with which he is bound, start to drag him forward. Poor beast, his progress is facilitated by a large Koomkie tusker who employs the classic methods of encouragement in the rear! And so, very slowly, they drag him forward, out of the Khedda, across the river, to his ultimate goal.

There was, mercifully, some relief to all this stress and strain. Two cows and their calves were to be released. They followed the prisoners submissively enough, with them splashed gratefully into the river, and it was not until they were half-way across that they seemed to realize their freedom. But they were still bewildered. The babies safely landed, they looked around them, ahead and back, calling vainly to their companions. At last, but still confused and uncomprehending, they moved forward, the two great shadows merged gradually with the shadows of the jungle, and long after we heard their voices upraised in repeated challenge and inquiry.

CHAPTER XIV

ELLORA AND AJANTA

SINCE the cave temples of Ellora and Ajanta are in Hyderabad State and belong more actually to Southern India, I have included them here in geographical rather than chronological order, for our visit was not paid until the autumn of 1924.

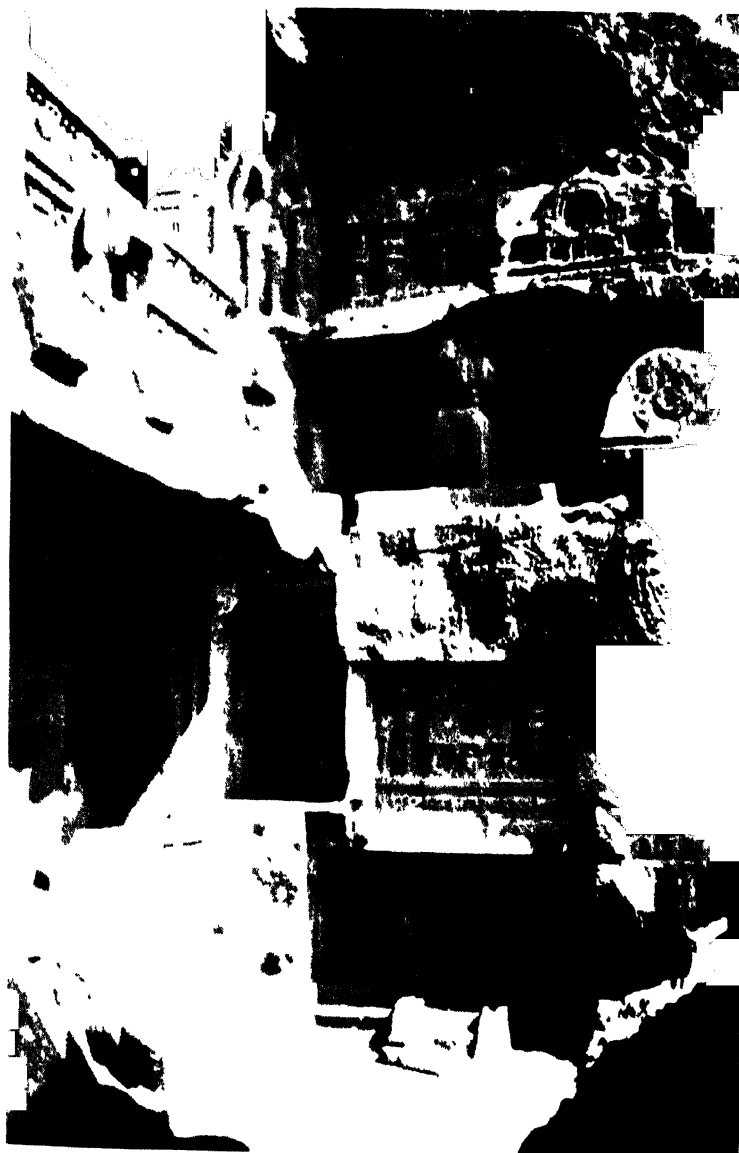
They are at once world famous and little known. To the expert and his disciples they rank as the supreme contribution of a rich and indigenous art ; they draw their inspiration from Hindu, Buddhist and Jain sources only ; they lie remote, and have suffered nothing from the destructive ferocity of Islam. But how many of India's visitors give them the indulgence of their interest ? Few, in my experience ; yet of all commentaries on the life and character of her people they are the most vivid and informing. Perhaps its strangeness makes the Hindu temple unfamiliar and difficult, for the beauty of the Moghul is a beauty that demands no radical readjustment of thought, is one sufficiently in harmony with Western traditions to be easy of appreciation. Equally the ordinary traveller is far more familiar with the religion of Islam than with Hinduism, and could hardly be blamed if he saw in the carvings at Ellora no more than an idolatrous riot. But religion and art apart, it is as documents that the temples have such a signal interest, and cannot be ignored by anyone

who pretends to take India in other than the most elementary globe-trotting spirit. For beauty pure and simple omit Ellora if you will, but the beauty of Ajanta is of a universal nature and requires no special preparation and no careful search.

I do not propose to enter into any detailed description, I could not if I would, for the time we spent at both places was, as ever, short, and in any case detail would be confusing. The initiated need no such introduction, and those less fortunate would only find it irritating. This chapter, like all its fellows, is a record of impression, and in all the changing face of India I found none more startling.

Circumstances, inevitably, had their influence. We arrived at Ellora after a long and peculiarly exhausting tour in Kathiawar and Bombay; we were utterly worn out in body and mind and not at all disposed to the heat and burden of the sight-seeing day. The programme, on this occasion, proved a beneficent tyrant, for nothing short of an age-long habit of submission would have got us up, got us dressed, got us fed, got us out on the platform and into the motors, misanthropic, but to the last punctual! If Ellora startled us into a show of activity, Ajanta transformed us. Early and late we tramped her shrines devotedly, ignoring aching bones and ending so refreshed in mind we were near turning Buddhist out of sheer elation. I did, indeed, feel as if I had momentarily been released from the Wheel of Life, and I can well understand how constant migration got on the nerves of the Brahmin!

The earliest Hindu cult, the Vedic, ruled the aboriginal races of India, and later the Aryan invader and settler. Over the mass of superstition the Brahmin exercised supreme authority and had bound the people with the



TRAHMİN KAHİSA TİMİTİ TAJORA

shackles of caste. They preached transmigration, that restless wandering of the soul from life to life, for neither in this world nor yet in any other might it find peace. Inevitably there arose a longing, a passionate prayer for deliverance, the only logical deliverance of extinction, and it was to assuage this longing, to bring Nirvana, "the city of peace", to a humanity tormented by ceaseless change, that Gautama the Buddha lived and taught.

He was the son of the King of Kapilavasta in Oudh ; he renounced, as you all know, kingdom, wife and child, and wandered forth into forest and solitude in search of a solution to the world's misery. And you know of the final scene at Gaya, where, underneath the peepul-tree, henceforth to be sacred, he fell into a trance and attained to Buddhi (perfected knowledge). He himself commemorates the experience :

Through various transmigrations
Have I passed (without discovering)
The builder I seek of the abode (of the passions).
Painful are repeated births.
Now, O house builder ! thou art found,
No house shalt thou again build for me :
Thy rafters are broken,
Thy ridge pole is shattered,
My mind is set at freedom (from outward objects),
I have attained the extinction of desire.

Few have attained such and yet preserved for others less enlightened so tender a spirit of sympathy and consolation. His faith did not at first separate itself from Hinduism, and since it rejected caste the appeal it made to the multitude was for a time powerful. Even so, Buddhism was never predominant in India, seems to have fallen early on evil days of decay and corruption, and soon after the eighth century A.D. became practically

extinct. It made way for the return of Siva, at what an incalculable loss to the country of the Master's birth it is impossible to estimate, for the walls of Ellora establish beyond question the growing decadence which came to be inseparable from the worship of the god.

At Ellora you will find temples of the three sects : Buddhist, Brahmin, and Jain. The Buddhist was the first to excavate these temples and monasteries from the face of the rock, but since the Buddhist reigns supreme at Ajanta the attention of the flying visitor to Ellora is naturally concentrated on his successors. And we were well advised in that we made no attempt to see more than five or six of the temples out of the whole series of thirty-three, and, too, in that we dedicated the first and freshest hour to the great Brahmin Kailisa Temple.

Clamour would seem to be the most abiding impression of Hindu worship, even when, as here, the clamour is soundless. Mentally the Kailisa is not one whit less exhausting than the Kalighat, and produces much the same effect of insensate confusion. It is dedicated to Siva, it is unique, it is worth any amount of toil and travel ; its chaos is, in a way, superb. You enter through an outer curtain hewn in the face of the scarp and adorned with colossal figures of Siva and Vishnu. Within is an open courtyard surrounded by a raised and pillared gallery from which other chambers open, and in the centre stands the great shrine, which, unlike any other that we saw, is cut clear from the surrounding rock. It is raised on a deep plinth, on the four sides of which is carved a mighty frieze of elephants, lions and other, stranger, beasts, fighting, tearing each other and feeding in a frenzy of action. The building towers above, a colossal elephant stands on each side of the entrance, and temple, shrine and galleries, within and without,

the whole is carved. It is an orgy of carving and often enough an orgy of terror, but it is stupendous. The material achievement would command respect enough, but to this is added an amazing technical skill and a sense of movement and wealth of imagination wholly admirable.

Of all the temples the Kailasa is the richest and the most interesting, though others boast detail as impressive and more horrible. Let me quote the following description of one group in the Das Avatara :

“ Beginning on the north side, with the Saiva sculptures, the first from the door is Bhairava or Mahadeva in his terrible form, and a more vivid picture of the terrible a very diseased imagination only could embody. The gigantic figure lounges forward, holding up his elephant hide, with a necklace of skulls depending below his loins, round him a cobra is knotted ; his open mouth showing his large teeth, while with his *trisula* he has transfixed one victim, who, writhing on its prongs, seems to supplicate pity from the pitiless ; while he holds another by the heels with one of his left hands, raising the *damru* as if to rattle it in joy while he catches the blood with which to quench his demon thirst. To add to the elements of horror, Kali, gaunt and grim, stretches her skeleton length below, with huge mouth, bushy hair, and sunken eyeballs, having a crooked knife in her right hand, and stretching out the other with a bowl, as if eager to share in the gore of the victim ; behind her head is the owl or vampire, as fit witness of the scene.”

You come away confusedly impressed. The magnitude of the task, the wealth and power of its fulfilment, and the self-revelation at once exuberant, overwhelming and terrible.

It is a relief to turn from here to Ajanta, from this

splendid perversion to the flower of an art second to none. The cave temples of Ajanta and the frescoes which adorn their walls date from the second century B.C. to the eighth century of our era, and are wholly Buddhist. With the extinction of the faith they lay forgotten for over one thousand years, until, in 1819, during the Hyderabad campaign, a company of British soldiers blundered on them. But it was not until 1843 that Sir James Fergusson moved the Royal Asiatic Society to approach the Directors of the East India Company with a plea for their preservation. To-day they are admirably cared for by the Archæological Department of Hyderabad State.

Ajanta lies at the foot of the Deccani plateau, and the caves boast a far more dramatic setting than those at Ellora. It is thirty-six miles by road from the station at Jalgaon to the Nizam's guest house, and from there a good, or rather an evil, half-hour is dedicated to much bumping and twisting, to the crossing and re-crossing of a river, till the road expires, most suitably, in the river bed. Up this, over sand and rocks and stepping stones, you proceed on foot with as much speed as the vicissitudes of the journey permit. The high cliffs of black basalt rock rise on either side of a narrow glen, the river curves sharply, and as you round the bend a great amphitheatre of rock, pierced midway between summit and river, sweeps into view.

As you look at that hewn façade the first impression is one of amazement at the physical magnitude of the achievement. The first and the least perhaps, but it, too, is full of romance when you picture to yourself that earliest company of the Lord Buddha's disciples discovering, in their search for solitude and shelter, this magnificent barrier, and serenely setting to work to



BRAHMIN KAHISA TEMPLE FLORA

remove it. Later to raise rich and beautiful temples in its very heart and to decorate its walls with frescoes which, in spite of a tragic decay, remain amongst the loveliest, most tender, and most moving expressions of human genius. We, alas, could never do as much, for we have not their superb assurance ; for us time is not swallowed up in eternity.

The second impression, and, to me, the most vivid, is that of the abiding influence of the Buddha. After two thousand years, one-half of which has been spent in oblivion, he triumphs over neglect and decay, and, immutable, still lifts the gesture of recollection above the changing clamour of the world.

There are, I believe, twenty-eight caves in all, some left incomplete, as if the workmen engaged on this titanic labour had met with difficulties insuperable. But even these are interesting insomuch as they reveal the manner in which the work was set about. For the most part the pillars forming the entrances to the caves are low, square and plain, though some on nearer approach, and in especial those of the Chaitya or Cathedral caves, prove lofty and rich in carving. The caves are connected by steps and balconies cut out of the hill-side in such a way as to permit of your walking from one end to the other without descending to the river-bed level. The earliest are no more than rough hewn chambers into which the monks cells open, but all, save the Chaityas, are built on much the same plan. A colonnade, a pierced screen, and you enter a rectangular hall surrounded by pillars ; beyond these, on all four sides, a corridor. On the further side, opposite the entrance, a recessed doorway, the height of the cave, opens into the shrine, where sits the giant figure of the Buddha.

The Chaitya caves are more lofty and constructed on much the same plan as one of our own cathedrals. They stand with nave and aisles complete. The arched roof is carved in stone imitation of wooden ribs, each rising from behind a little Naga bust, this again startlingly familiar. At the further end of the nave the dahgoba takes the place of the altar, and the dahgoba is "a low, thick cylinder supporting a hemispherical dome surmounted by a square capital". It was originally designed to contain the relics of the Buddha, but later became purely conventional. It is carved in front with a great figure of the Buddha, often richly carved at the sides and back as well. The curator attributed this and the increasing use of the human figure in all the temples to Greek influence. The influence brought by Alexander of Macedon into the Punjab, gradually penetrating southwards, and here so happily absorbed into a vital and indigenous art. An interesting theory, but with what historical justification I do not know. Yet the practice vividly reminds one of that inhibition, carried to excess, which robbed Islam of so rich a field of inspiration. I do not mean the human figure alone, but also flowers and fruit, beast and bird, all that living pantheon the artists of Ajanta so rightly worshipped.

The temples are numbered prosaically one to twenty-eight. Though we covered the whole distance from one end to the other we did not attempt to examine each one. Personally, I do not think I saw more than, at the outside, four or five. But these few were carefully selected by expert advisers and contained all that was finest in sculpture and painting. Neither did we waste any time but had breakfast, luncheon and tea spread in the shelter of the overhanging rock.

The frescoes have, a little, overwhelmed the sculptures in the tale of Ajanta's fame, nevertheless I saw many fragments equal in execution to anything at Ellora. There is a little elephant frieze over the entrance to one temple of extraordinary vigour and beauty, and much of the carving on pillars and brackets is very fine. The wealth and variety of inspiration is as great here as at the Kailisa, but informed of a very different spirit.

Even so, the frescoes remain Ajanta's chief glory, and small wonder. To their study you have to dedicate patience and devotion, for they are quite terribly, quite tragically, mutilated. Not by men or even by time, but by the insects which have eaten away the vegetable matter contained in the plaster. Happily, while they have been admirably preserved from further disaster, no attempt has been made to restore them. The State Archæological Department has, too, an admirable series of tracings which are a great help in following what at first appear to be unrelated fragments, and in these dim caverns your investigations have, moreover, to be carried on by the light of oil lamps.

The scenes depicted are scenes from the life of the Buddha in all his many incarnations, of which his life as the son of the King of Kapilavasta was but the last, and the herald of his ultimate attainment of "the extinction of all desire". They are crowded on the walls, except in the case of the individual figures there is no attempt at perspective, but the composition of each group is masterly. They vary in merit; there is little evidence of a knowledge of anatomy as we have learnt to understand and study it, but in its place we find a power of observation passionate in its accuracy and a vivid appreciation of life in every form. Those sensitive, flowing lines, this delicate certainty, which

never for a moment suggest a merely mechanical study, express, as the artist-scientists of the West could never do, the significance of this supple Indian humanity, There is no attempt at modelling except through the here wholly adequate means of line, and the rendering of the hands defies description. I do not think I have ever seen drawing to surpass it, and again how characteristic and how inevitable, for how much more the hands convey and express in this country than with us.

The colouring is still lovely, though it probably suggests little of its early splendour, but the power and truth of the emotion expressed in these scenes, which cover the whole field of human experience; how astonishing and how full of beauty!

To my mind at least the frescoes reach their highest expression in a life-size figure of the Buddha which has been called the Renunciation by reason of the princely headdress the Master still wears, his whole attitude of absorbed contemplation, while the beauty and luxury of the life he is about to leave is graphically depicted behind him. Three-quarters of the figure alone are preserved. The Buddha stands on the edge of a tank outside a walled garden. He is naked, save for a loin cloth—a wonderful piece of drapery—on which one hand rests. The other is raised, holding a lotus, over which his head is slightly bent. It is an extraordinarily moving conception and seen, as I first saw it, with the setting sun pouring its light into this remote corner of the temple, quite unforgettable. What a contrast to the group in the Das Avatara!

Many other lovely things there are, many, far too many, to describe, but all distinguished by the same abounding joy in the sentient world, irradiated by the spirit not of the ascetic but the saint. Details crowd

into my memory, details of flowers and fruit, the lovely drawing of bird and deer and wild beast, and, for decorative quality quite unrivalled, of the elephant. It seems incredible that the Indian artist should have deserted this eloquent teaching for the studios of London and Paris. Many have in the past, but to-day we can gratefully reflect that, through the influence of the Tagore brothers, something of their birthright has been restored to them. It is a heritage any race might envy, and to the historian what a wealth of contemporary record. I can imagine no serious student of these days—indeed, no serious student of any part of Indian character and history—omitting, as his best source of inspiration, the matchless pages of the Ajanta frescoes.

CHAPTER XV

THE SUMMER CAPITAL

I HAVE never disliked a place more ! Long ago, with a jaundiced eye on the landscape, I wrote :
“ Simla must be the meanest of Imperial capitals. Seen from a distance between April and June, before the rains have worked their annual miracle, it clings to a mangy hill-side, a forest of tin roofs, rickety wood and discoloured plaster. The Gothic crime of the Secretariat dominates the centre, the Victorian ardour of Viceregal Lodge its western limit. The forests of pine and deodar have been very largely destroyed, and the houses crowd as thick as the trees they have supplanted. The northern hills are bare and brown, and the ultimate snowline contributes the Himalayan touch with which we exiles dazzle the envious hearts of Pimlico ! ”

And that was the face of Simla when we first climbed up from the plain, the glory of the rhododendrons over and even the redeeming snowline hidden behind a haze of dust and heat. It had this virtue. We unpacked and could remain unpacked for six months. It had more, a tolerable climate and a house, if hideous, exceedingly comfortable.

At a discreet distance Viceregal Lodge possessed a cathedral-like silhouette, rather impressive, but on near approach it revealed all the eccentricities of a Scottish

hydropathic. It sat on a peak, the views it commanded became, in due course, superb ; it was built of grey stone, quite porous, an idiosyncrasy of which we reaped the full benefit during the monsoon. Within, I do believe, it was really far uglier than it looked. You could have found fault with it to eternity and then not have reached the limit of its crimes ; on the other hand, it was so large, so gilded, so perfectly complacent, that in the end you grew near to accepting it at its own valuation !

The private rooms were, of course, susceptible to personal influence, and those of the Viceroy and his wife in especial were, as I knew them, wholly charming. But the State rooms, adorned by the past imaginings of a paternal Government, had of necessity to stay as originally planned, impersonal and pretentious, for it was not within the power of a succession of temporary occupants to alter them. The A.D.C. room, with its gallery of faded photographs, was itself sufficient commentary. Each régime in turn indulges in the play of possession, turns down its empty glass and is as soon forgot by those indifferent walls !

Apart from the abodes of the great this characteristic is a commonplace in India, for in some degree we are all birds of passage. Bungalow A will tolerate Brown, Jones and Robinson in quick succession without noticing the change ; Bungalow B will part from Smith without a tear ; Bungalow C will stand empty with an identical detached air. Simla, in particular, is little more than a vast boarding-house, every bit as depressing, and its houses owe nothing to humanity in the building, and little in the living. A few have both character and charm. Barnes Court, the home of the Governor of the Punjab, with its lovely garden and backed by its forests of deodar, is delightful ; Mr. Baker long ago

contributed a delicious little house, now inhabited by successive members of the Viceroy's Council, delicious, but impersonal as any. I can think of no exception to this last rule except, perhaps, the Commander-in-Chief's Snowdon. Snowdon is not less a victim of change than the rest, is not particularly picturesque and certainly not beautiful, but perhaps its rambling inconsequence has helped it to take and keep the stamp of its changing households better than most. Moreover, amongst the big houses, it has a less heavy burden of official entertainment to bear on its shoulders and can remain more light at heart and less serious and opulent of countenance. Its very irrelevance suggests attention, and it has never grown dispirited like so many of its fellows. All of which may seem far-fetched, but this permanence of feeling is so rare a thing in the dislocation of English life in India, and so precious, that it has an interest. I admit that I knew but one household reigning at Snowdon, to me a record in tenancy, for Lord and Lady Rawlinson reached India only six months before us ; I admit above all the immense charm of their own influence ; but these apart, the house through all vicissitudes had remained the home of a single tradition, and perhaps that was its secret ? A Viceroy may be one of many things, a politician, a lawyer, a soldier, a country gentleman ; the Commander-in-Chief, inevitably, one amongst these alone. And the soldier stands distinct as a type whether he hail from England or India, and since he is drawn, generally speaking, from one class, belongs to one tradition.

Am I drawing a gloomy picture of Simla ? If gloomy, utterly misleading, even if I did myself belong to that bold, bad minority who found it so ! It was gay, incessantly, unrelievedly gay, and even through the



FORD LEADING SHOOTING IN THE SIMLA HILLS

dark days of the monsoon played bridge, danced and got engaged with determined optimism. It enjoyed a holiday spirit since, apart from the hard-working Government officials and the officers of Army Headquarters Staff, it was invaded by both civilians and soldiers on leave and by many women escaping from the hot weather in the plains. Admirers of the immortal Mrs. Hawksby will suppose it quite exhilaratingly improper. Alas ! it seemed to me mediocre in this as in so much else ! I never heard a scandal worth remembering, and few worth believing ; tongues were busier in malice than in wit, and its record of wickedness would to-day be found tedious by the average flapper. Which is not to deny there was scandal in plenty ; what else could you expect of a community with hardly any interest in life but the social.

For the two months or more before the rains, Annandale, a little plateau below the town, formed, with its gymkhanas and its polo, an outlet for superfluous energy. But once the clouds descended we were driven back on our own resources. A strenuous Amateur Dramatic Club did its best to relieve the general tedium, and a gallant best, the Société des Amis de la France kept the tricolour flying. Lady Rawlinson extended the hospitality of Snowdon to the musical world ; but chief amongst those who competed to banish care I must place the Knights of the Order of the Black Heart.

On four occasions during each season this chivalry extended a welcome to all the fair, and the fortunate, of Simla. To fail to secure an invitation was the most dreadful calamity known to woman, worse even than the blows inflicted by the malevolence of the A.D.C. invitations at Viceregal Lodge ! The Brotherhood was composed of all the most devastating elements of the

bachelor world—more, its rules do, I believe, forbid “open matrimony” alone! Which though designed to restore the grass widower to the fold is, in effect, delightfully ambiguous. Their costume was elegance itself. Knee-breeches enlivened the austerity of evening-dress, to which was added a scarlet cape with a velvet and sable heart on the left side. A scarlet ribbon round their necks supported the Black Heart badge of the Order, the Grand Master alone boasting a chain of office and a heart of gold. Those who had fallen from grace (and happily for my sex such a disaster was not unknown) were permitted, though reluctantly, to show a sign of past membership and their cloaks had turned white, which would seem to argue a certain lack of excitement in the paths of domestic bliss. The Knights still in grace held Chapters, were initiated, addressed each other as Brother, were enveloped in mystery. They gave the best parties in all Asia, and were the most perfect hosts!

The subject of parties brings me inevitably to our own, of which the list was no less formidable here than in Delhi. The summit of achievement was, I think, reached only last year in the great Chinese ball given by Their Excellencies to cheer the monsoon-laden minds of Simla. As a spectacle I have never seen its equal in either hemisphere, and even the monsoon abetted by dropping a grey veil over the exterior eccentricities of Lord Dufferin’s Scottish stronghold. Within the entire house was transformed, lit only by countless lanterns, with a dais of imperial yellow and two huge, red lacquered pailows or gateways. The walls were adorned with panels on which Chinese dragons raged and curled, and the costumes were limited to those of China, Japan and Burma. I must bear witness to the

spirit in which the Indian guests entered into the revels, for "dressing up" is, surely, a peculiarly British form of lunacy. They were wonderful; and the Maharaja of Patiala carried off the honours of the evening, a magnificent figure in the attire of a warlike mandarin of some remote date, in leather coat, steel embossed and a gold and steel helmet.

The whole of the decorations were "home made" by a group of talented artists under the guidance of a no less talented stage-manager and member of the Staff.

Preparations for any and every party were always incredibly complicated by the Indian servants, who, though they sometimes by force of numbers achieved miracles, are never to be hurried and, above all things, reverence the brain-saving device of habit. They are not usually drawn from a good class of Indian, and your life is one long encounter by which in the end it grows embittered. "The Englishman riles and the Aryan smiles, and he weareth the Englishman down!" They are engaging enough even if of a mentality that defeats the understanding, but for their proper appreciation you should lead a life of leisure.

A friend of mine once had a servant who was detected in theft. He proclaimed rather than confessed his guilt, and, on remonstrance, gave expression to this ethical code: "But, Miss Sahib, would you have me go next door to steal? From whom should I steal if not from my own Miss Sahib?" On another occasion the same friend refused to engage a servant who had excellent testimonials but had spent a year in prison. He was shocked by such an attitude and argued: "How unjust! Perhaps I have been wrong, perhaps not, but if I have been wrong I have paid for it. It is finished."

Their dishonesty, alas, is not always so straightforward, their laziness is incurable ; though the following letter addressed by a Khalasi (a male housemaid) to the Superintendent of the Viceregal Estates might convey a different impression. The italics are mine :

“SIR,—Being encouraged by your nobility of heart and sympathetic attitude, Most humbly and respectfully I beg to approach you with the following few lines, hoping they would meet with a favourable consideration.

“ 1. More than a year has witnessed my services to be of the most loyal and honest nature to the Viceregal Estates. In the discharge of my duties, *disinterested love of work* has always been my guiding principle. I have been leaving no stone unturned to give entire satisfaction to my superiors and have never lacked fidelity, diligence, *intelligence* and punctuality. My immediate officer has always been speaking in panegyric terms because of my ever readiness, scrupulous care, keen interest and undivided attention in the performance of my duties.

“ 2. The standard of living in Simla has risen to an enormously heavy level, and it has become extremely difficult task to cope with the bare necessities of life even. To pull on even by pursuing ‘from-hand-to-mouth policy’ for a man who is scantily paid is what forms an un-readable riddle. The heart rending agony, excruciating affliction, grinding misery and the gnawing pain that the insufficient pay causes fail to be translated into words and may better form the subject of imagination.

“ In view of these facts, I, poverty stricken and terror ridden but a loyal, faithful and *an ardent lover of work*, request you kindly to confer upon me an incre-

ment to enable me to fight successfully the difficulty I am in.

“My own predecessor has had the fortune of enjoying the privileges of getting Rs. 20 (regular pay of Khalasi), but I against whom fortune has loaded all her guns have to share the sum of Rs. 15.”

As in a more historic case this “damnable humble petitioner” was clearly “a young man who finds it very difficult to make both his ends meet !”

The eloquence is, of course, due to the Babu, and the Babu is the traditional humorist of India, since the perils of education are manifold, and to this he adds a love of high-sounding phrase. There is one story of a clerk bitterly complaining that his superior officer’s report had “praised him with faint damns !” And another who, on the death of his wife, thus excused his absence to his chief :

“DEAR SIR,—I regret I cannot come to office to-day. Not to put too fine a point upon it, the hand that rocks the cradle has kicked the bucket !”

The fate of the widower is a well-recognized peg on which to hang an application for more pay. One keen intellect, after referring to his recent bereavement, piled on the agony by writing : “and dying has left me with seven children, five young adults and two young adulteresses”.

A third, a real courtier, addresses the Viceroy of the day personally, and prays that : “his petition may be answered in the name of God Almighty, a gentleman who much resembles your Lordship”.

Examination howlers are naturally plentiful. On one occasion the candidates were asked to define post-

mortem. One replied : " A post-mortem is conducted in cases of doubtful deaths." Another : " If a man dies without relations, his corporal is carried to the hospital and cut through. Secondly, if he dies of poisoning the doctor tears his stomic!" A third declared that the First Lord of the Admiralty was Columbus, and a fourth that the Duke of Connaught came to India for a walk !

* * * * *

Purdah parties loomed large on the social horizon of Simla since, apart from Government officials whose wives were, generally speaking, emancipated, there were many Indian residents and visitors. These were often picturesque, though the difficulties of conversation were immense. Language sometimes made them insuperable, but it is surprising how many of the Purdah ladies speak English—and excellent English. Personal remarks are, mercifully, not discouraged, and the topic of dress and jewellery is an ever present help. The condition of the spinster is, of course, universally deplored, a British riddle none might read, and I heard of one young woman arriving from England and on attending her first Purdah party being asked :

" And how old are you ? "

" Eighteen," was the reply.

" What ! So old and not *married* ! "

Our own parties were never without some unrehearsed catastrophe. On one occasion, having barricaded every door, drawn every curtain, banished every servant, I hastened to the drawing-room to engage the very orthodox wife of a Muslim Chief and an equally orthodox Rani in conversation. They had both taken cover, and in the centre of the room, already ablaze with light, squatted the Viceregal electrician, leisurely repairing

a hand lamp. He had climbed in through the window ! But the most awful hour of all struck when we had taken our seats in the dining-room for a cinema, with the doors shut and the lights low. The most particular lady of all chose this moment to leap to her feet, murmur something of sunset and prayers, and without further warning to dash from the room. She landed in the middle of the band—though happily the darkness and her sari prevented any revelation of her features.

In the always difficult task of entertainment the cinema proved a trusty friend, though it nearly betrayed us to disaster in our early, unguarded days. We had been assured of the propriety of certain films to the occasion, but by a merciful inspiration a rehearsal was ordered. Eve, the apple, the serpent, the garden, and nothing else whatever, flashed on our appalled gaze, and the Mother of the Race was succeeded by Mr. Charles Chaplin at his least humorous, amidst scenes of indescribable disorder in an American hotel ! I do not know if the moral was meant to be one of cause and effect, but as a study in emancipation it was over thorough.

In spite of these vicissitudes the parties seemed to give satisfaction, for, as one guest, who lived at a considerable distance, remarked on leaving : " What a lovely party ! Like your beautiful English song, ' It is a long way to Tipperary,' but when you get there—look ! "

No less than at Delhi guests adorned the Simla scene, but few, naturally, from the outside world since India sets a flame between herself and the sea in June. But during one never-to-be-forgotten September, Dame Nellie Melba spent a fortnight in our midst, and I have never ceased to admire the spirit which led her to stop

at Bombay on her way from Australia, and compass that awful journey across our continent in the worst month of the year. Let us hope the welcome she received in part made up for it. She sang in celebration of His Excellency's birthday, to us a memorable occasion, but I was most impressed by the effect of her music on the Indians who were present. They were quite as moved as we, quite as appreciative, and their enthusiasm was a wonderful tribute from a people whose whole musical tradition is so different. As to ourselves, India's English public is so limited, so necessarily unattractive to the great artist, that such an event has a unique quality.

But Dame Nellie's contribution was more than musical, as anyone who knows her will appreciate, and if she left behind a trail of tears she left, too, the memory of a personality as full of generous sympathy as it is of genius.

I have talked much of parties and of guests and said nothing of philanthropy, though we wrestled hourly in its toils. The Countess of Dufferin's Fund, Lady Chelmsford's League for Infant Welfare (or, as an Indian correspondent described it, The Pregnant Women's Society), the Lady Reading Women of India Fund and the Lady Minto Nursing Association, claimed the attention of their committees. All, with the exception of Lady Minto's Association, dealt with different aspects of medical relief for the women and children of the country, the doctors being, of course, women. Their work is full of interest even when followed vicariously through the medium of a committee, and at Delhi the Lady Hardinge Medical College has already begun to train Indian girls as physicians and surgeons. Their scope, if they will only preserve English standards

and traditions, should one day be enormous and an incalculable power for the alleviation of suffering behind the Purdah. But they have many difficulties. The woman doctor is a fairly recent development even in Europe, in India she is years ahead of public opinion, and the position is complicated by the desirability of recruiting students from amongst the educated classes, who are jealous of their social standing and do not share our respect for the working woman.

What the Lady Hardinge College is doing for doctors the newly established Lady Reading Hospital at Simla does for nurses, and the fund bearing Lady Reading's name also provides scholarships for the completion of their training at home. In nursing, again, you find a fresh difficulty, for much of a nurse's work is—to the Indian mind—menial, and therefore derogatory, even though the training involves the care of women and children only.

The Minto Association caters for the needs of the European community, though the nurses will attend Indian households, where they are assured of proper treatment. It is hardly necessary to insist on its value and in especial in a country where the threat of sickness is so much more sinister than at home. For at home, whatever is possible to science and care is within the reach of every one, in India not only can you never have that complete assurance, but you have also a climate which, for children especially, presupposes an extra risk. It is these ever present anxieties, of which India is so full, which add so immeasurably to the already heavy burden of the European; and the English nurse, when available, brings with her not only skill but a sense of confidence inestimably precious.

As to the Indian babies, they were ever in the fore-

front of the battle. There was an Indian Welfare Centre in the heart of the Simla bazaar, and the Lady Reading Hospital, too, was dedicated to them and their mothers and sisters and aunts. The gods were favourable, for the first baby to be born there was a boy ! to be ceremoniously presented with a silver rattle by Her Excellency. The hospital attracted curious patients. On one occasion a party of coolies brought in an old woman whom they had found with a gangrenous foot in the hills. They declared she was a bear-woman, just as Mowgli was a wolf-boy, for she babbled in a dialect wholly unknown, and in appetite and manner was certainly ferocious !

There were many schools and many prize-giving ceremonies, one delightful convent where the devil appeared in the shape of a monkey before the horror-struck gaze of a newly arrived nun ; many bazaars and much activity amongst the Girl Guides and Boy Scouts.

Meanwhile the whole face of the scene has changed, and I must make some amends for that early description which, for all its truth in April, is, by the middle of July, a blasphemy.

The change is for weeks heralded by the reports and conjectures of the Press, and for the whole of June the fluctuations of the monsoon (once defined by a schoolboy as another name for a French gentleman !) banishes every other interest. Not only does it mean a respite from the awful heat of the plains, but on its success or failure hangs the well-being of the whole country. I have never known a perfect monsoon, but neither have I ever known a really bad one. Often it is plentiful, but unequally distributed ; again, it can bring flood and disaster in its wake ; sometimes it fails altogether. Irrigation, and the saving of those precious



ONE OF THE BEATERS SIMLA HILLS

gallons of water that yearly sweep away to waste, will one day change the face of India ; meanwhile the rains are still over a large area the arbiters of her prosperity, and in many parts she is wholly dependent on their caprice. A year of failure means famine, just as a year of excess means wanton destruction of life and property. And the country in this, as in so much else, is given to extremes. 1924 was a year of appalling floods, and some idea of what they mean is conveyed in the following letter from a friend who lived amongst the tea plantations of Southern India :

“ We’ve had, and are having, a perfectly ghastly time. It’s been worse in a way than being shelled and bombed and air-raided. Human enemies do cease sometime, but Nature warring against one may go on for ever. Just fancy being afraid of rain ! It began a week ago heavily. Here at the tipmost top we had over 30 inches in six days ; down below it was much worse, and as well as their own rain they had all ours running down and overflowing their rivers. Mattupatti is 1,000 feet below us. You reach it by a path zig-zagging down the ghaut and crossing and recrossing a stream running down a ravine. The whole ravine shot down on to the top of X’s bungalow, leaving bare precipices of granite. The X’s escaped to their motor-shed and waited there all night, not thinking they could possibly escape as the river rose higher and higher. In the morning they did manage to get to another bungalow, making a bridge of some of the debris over the worst part. They could not possibly have crossed the river. Further down the river still they had 48 inches in two days. The people there escaped to a bungalow higher up, in the dark and in the middle of the storm.

“ On Thursday night it seemed quite likely that we

should go slipping down the hill. *Beastly*. For oneself it does not matter, but with little children one gets fearfully wound up. Acres and acres of tea have slipped away, leaving great scars. We have had no letters for a week, and the little road is absolutely washed out for thousands of yards at a stretch.

“The Mattupatti Valley is one expanse of silt and sand with roofs appearing out of it. The factory is full of sand up to the first storey. The loss of life has been very slight so far, but we are cut off from the worst and most important places, though the coolies bring rumours that the So-and-So’s are ‘in the river’! We have only enough rice for the coolies to last three weeks, so if the monsoon does not slack off and enable us to get loads up by bridle paths, they’ll have to be sent off. We ourselves are lucky and can hang on for three months. I seem to be feeding most of our little band cut off in a triangle.”

In the Punjab matters were almost as bad, and at Delhi the higher ground was a place of refuge, where even the beasts called a truce, for cattle and panther were seen lying there in amity together. Villages and fields were swept away wholesale, and most of Bharatpur State was one great lake.

That is one extreme; of the other I am glad to say I have had no experience, but it must be infinitely the more terrible of the two; and it is the failure of the monsoon that haunts the mind, not its perils of excess.

Towards the middle of June the clouds begin to gather, but for a time melt away with tantalizing frequency. Even in the hills the atmosphere is stagnant and oppressive, the air thick with dust, which, on one occasion, reached a unique climax.

We were driving back from the little Simla theatre,

and the pomp of horses and carriages permitted only to the Viceroy, the Commander-in-Chief and the Governor of the Punjab, was a privilege I always felt to be doubtful on these narrow Khud roads, since every accident must infallibly end over a precipice. As we rounded a curve we saw a great cloud, as thick and as dark as a London fog, come rolling towards us over the hills—a solid mass of yellow sand from the fifty-mile distant plain. Sinister enough of itself, it brought with it a burning smell, which, at the moment and since we felt convinced we were about to assist at the drama of final dissolution, we recognized as brimstone! The storm struck us with a crash that would have put a clap of thunder to shame, and the wind swept up with the biting, stinging Mother Earth of India behind it. The trees bent and sprang away like whips, the horses plunged—and I was never in my life more thankful to reach home in safety.

Thunderstorms were common and spectacular, and when the monsoon broke in earnest it was often exceedingly dramatic. One July night I was woken up at 3 a.m. by the sound of the wind roaring across Asia. It was the most amazing sound, like the breaking of great seas—only level and continuous. I got up to look out; the world was a fog of eddying sand, dark red where it was caught by the glow of the standard lights on the terrace, swept along by a force which, while it bent the trees double, left them mute, so tremendous was the sound of the wind's passing.

Often, for days after such a storm, we were enveloped in stifling grey cloud, and since no house is watertight until the heat-shrunk wood has had a chance to swell, and ours, as I have already told you, was far from weatherproof, fragments from the Viceregal

ceilings were apt to descend on our heads. But the clouds and the heavy downpour were subject to wonderfully lucid intervals, and "lucid" best describes them, for they were the very sanity of loveliness. The hills were revealed very clear and blue, their valleys full to the brim of white cloud, on which, from our peak, we looked down.

A whole volume might be written with the changing face of Simla during the rains as its inspiration, and even after comparatively little rain the revolution in the landscape was miraculous. Instead of being dusty and barren, the hills were alive, the clouds curled below us in blue and purple cups. The pinewoods had emerald-green undergrowth and flame-coloured stems in the sunset. The air was clean and clear, and the mountains stretched away to the plains on the one hand and to fresh peaks of dazzling snow on the other. But the clouds were the loveliest. Sometimes sweeping greyly down and veiling the whole hillside, sometimes torn by vivid blue peaks, sometimes banking themselves on the horizon and leaving the vast rampart of the Himalayas serene in the sunlight. Always occupied with such a game of shadows as to make of contemplation a changing wonder.

As to the sunsets, their glory was indescribable, and the quality of the light must be seen to be realized. I used to watch them from my balcony. One evening the terrace below (in fact very green but at the moment almost colourless) lay like a shadow. Above the steep drop over the Khud two pines stood in motionless, silver silhouette against the green of the opposite hill. Behind the hill a bank of cloud, white but shadowed coldly in every scale of grey, against a sky of flame and jade. Far away to the left the Sutlej, a silver current

drawn across the blue sea of the plains, and in a giant semicircle the quiet of the Himalayas, lying range upon range, green and purple, almost sombre. The line was broken by a trail of cloud reflecting all the light of the sky, beyond which the coral of the snow peaks rose clear. Above the youngest and most enchanting moon, hanging in delicious vanity, so silver in so very blue a sky.

The nights were not less lovely, with the hills lying round us like great, dim pools, little wisps of white cloud, all lost and wandering trailing by, the black shapes of the trees hanging against the brilliant sky and the jewel-like lights of the town.

Yes, it was very lovely, and it lured many people out on the Hindustan-Thibet road, which has an alluring sound, though I personally never got farther than walking distance from the Viceroy's bungalow at Mashobra. Mashobra is only seven miles from Simla, but even there you are surrounded by the mountains, by untouched forest and the smell of the pines. The silence is broken by the reed pipe of the peasant, as suddenly heard as lost, and the distant throb of the tom-toms at some village festival. Here I have walked with the forest dropping away below me on one hand, black under a stormy sky, and on the other the mountains bathed in sunshine and looking exactly as if cut out of a giant opal.

Twice we dropped down from our heights to the thirsty plains below, on our way from Simla to Naini Tal, the hill station of the United Provinces. The journey down the hill on the little railway was a long penance, for the engine seemed to be climbing in through the window and the landscape describing circles. But the plains—and the almost articulate thanksgiving the whole country offers to the gods of

the monsoon ! I loved the sensational sunsets of Simla, but I loved these tremendous green distances far more, and the sunshine that was sunshine, no longer a glare, and the sky, so perverse and undramatic and English.

The journey to Kathgodam (familiarily known as Curse the Dog) and the foot of the Naini Tal hills was delicious, and the way, to us, a procession of eventful happenings.

Villages, standing crops of rice, Indian corn and sugar ; numberless Mowglis each riding the head buffalo of his herd, other buffalo wallowing in pools of water ; butterflies, one as large as a humming-bird, velvety black with white markings ; vultures, rivers, quantities of mimosa blossom ; oleander, gardenia and ixoria in flower (this last is also known as the coral flower and is like nothing so much as a broken fragment of coral), the gloriosa superba, like flame-coloured honeysuckle, thick jungle and all a dream of green, sometimes amazingly vivid under a low grey sky.

Unless my dislike of Simla is to appear wholly unreasonable, let me remind you that her lucid intervals were intervals and not the order of the day. Far more often we were drowned in torrents of rain and smothered in blankets of cloud, whilst the landscape slipped and slid in all directions. I came to realize that man cannot live on a view alone, unless, perhaps, he lives for it. And we were far removed from the life contemplative. By the end of September the monsoon, in a last outburst of fury, passed away, leaving a wonderfully cold, clean world. But hardly more than a week later the maidenhair was hanging yellow on the tree trunks and the hills had begun to put off their nice green jackets. By the middle of October it was our turn to move, and never once did I look my last on those great white peaks, with the ghost of a regret !

CHAPTER XVI

“ BOUND BY RED TAPE ABOUT THE FEET OF GOD ”

MY Simla of the lucid intervals might well be the footstool of heaven. But rare as these were, my own were rarer still, and I found its influence extraordinarily oppressive. Perhaps the very immensity of the vast panorama seemed to accentuate the limitations of our own world, incredibly, in the face of such a splendid contradiction, a prison it remained.

Physically, of course, mountains do circumscribe movement, and there was hardly a road within the limits of a reasonable constitutional that did not entail either constant repetition or else a monotony of fashion. What the mountains did for you physically, something else did for you mentally, a sense of being bound within sight of illimitable freedom, an odd, intangible quality of atmosphere difficult to convey without seeming perverse and intolerant. Perhaps the little comedies of society appeared doubly absurd on such a stage, perhaps the contrast between the setting and the play overwhelmed humour in a wave of silly irritation. Certainly humour is at any time the most essential and the most overworked quality in India, and of any sphere the trivialities of social life, the little triumphs, the little jealousies, the constant malice, strain it more than any other. But whatever the reason, the impression remained, an impression I can neither justify nor explain, only record.

If I were asked what struck me as the chief concern of English social life in India, I should answer : "To seek Precedence and ensue it !" The which is a generalization and not less unfair than most. But it is true at least of the atmosphere of society, however many the individual contradictions, and it must be very much in the air, for have I not seen it affecting the newcomer from England quite as successfully as it does the permanent exile ? Precedence is the focal point of India's social nonsense, convulses the home, and has even, it is rumoured, convulsed the Government ! It is the great god, but there are a hundred little ones, and their worship absorbs an amazing amount of energy, more especially, of course, female energy. It is wholly absurd, not a little natural and often very funny. Let us indulge it by all means, but without exaggeration ; and surely in India it is exaggerated, and has grown into an attitude of mind cheap in expression and exorbitant of attention. Does it matter ? In itself not greatly, yet it does rob society of its charm, and that to the exile is loss enough ; it excludes wider interests and has its roots in a complacency which must argue some waste of humour and intelligence.

That complacency should exist in India, particularly amongst women, is not in the least surprising. Less than ever so that its influence should be most apparent in a place like Simla, where social life is the chief interest and the shifting character of the population destroys their at best fragile ties. Does not the whole country conspire in flattery ? For one thing there is a subtle undercurrent of what I might call "The Importance of being White," a certain sense of authority vested in the race as such, and sometimes accepted without much appreciation of any but a literally skin-

deep significance. To our further undoing (and here I speak of my own sex) we are often unemployed, are denied the resources so easily found in England, and, as an antidote to the troubles to which in India we are inevitably the heirs, pay overmuch respect to the social progress. Moreover, our communities are small and the only communities; we have no such standard of comparison as is almost inevitable in England. A little wit, a little freshness, is dignified into something quite different, and all our little mediocrities enjoy a like apotheosis. A most satisfactory, indigestible diet and the difficulties of life in India make it all the more attractive.

At the root of the matter there is no doubt a real, if unconscious, distress. The one insoluble problem from the European point of view is climate, and every woman who marries a civilian or a soldier knows she is in the end condemned to a choice of separation between husband and children. From the moment she enters on the life, often very young, she is planted in a country in which, for the Englishman, there are traditions but no roots; she must make her life but never her home, and ultimately return to England three parts a stranger. Modern facilities of communication have made things easier for her, but I am not sure they have altogether contributed to her happiness. Greater accessibility tends to weaken the link that binds her, in thought, to the country; the post-war clamour for ease and security has spread from Europe into Asia, and the resulting dislocation of mind has been added to the dislocation of political change.

Yet there are compensations and often the opportunity of a far wider life than anything England would be likely to offer, wider in other directions than the social. First amongst these the country itself, and it

seems a pity to shut out the wealth of that resource behind a rampart of indifference. Some do ; perhaps they think India means politics, and politics have an acrimonious and difficult sound ; perhaps they think she means "good works," some irksome form of organized activity. I say perhaps and perhaps, because I have wondered so at their detachment, wondered how, in the absence of so much else, desperation, if nothing more, has not driven them into interest.

There are many women of a very different type, and these afford proof, if any be needed, of the reward that follows on the taking of a little trouble, the reward, I mean, in personal content and effectiveness. They have character and the charm of reality ; they are identified with India in one's mind as they have identified themselves with her in their own lives. She is to them the country of their adoption ; they may not be politicians or philanthropists, or cleverer or kinder or more amusing than a thousand others—but they are real, and as necessary to India as India is to them. If I seem to be insisting overmuch on reality, it is because this quality distinguishes them, sets them in a class apart, gives them an individuality not quite comparable to any other and the truest and best reflection of their circumstances.

So much for the personal point of view ; but there is another and a more general aspect. The burden of rule to-day is greater than ever. Change of outlook, change of circumstance, change of ideal, have produced a revolution disturbing to many and a strain on all. In such an atmosphere it is more than ever difficult to see your business clearly, but neither is our tradition one of ease, and if the old conditions were more flattering to our vanity, the new should prove at least as stimulating to patience and courage. India, more-

over, is immensely susceptible to personal influences, and to these Englishwomen have surely a contribution to make. Their rôle might again be summed up in the one word "interest," and, since we are talking of women, interest in the Indian social rather than political. It might range in proportion to the inclination and opportunities of each individual, from the little matters of courtesy to the greater matters of sympathy and understanding.

A little more than a year ago *The Passage to India* descended on the dovecotes of Simla. I have never visited the depressing station of Mr. Forster's inspiration, and in the picture drawn of the social relations between the two races, I must confess to having found it remote from my own experience. That the types portrayed exist amongst Englishmen and women is of course true, but the book suggests the general rather than the particular, and such an attitude of bored and indifferent condescension did not seem to me general. For all that, it must be admitted that there are many instances of British discourtesy to the Indian which have made of warm friends bitter enemies ; no question of studied insult, but purely self-absorption and lack of consideration. I have been told that in this respect women are the worst offenders. On the other hand, the Indian is ultra-sensitive ; we should be the first to remember that circumstances conspire to make him so, and he is also a trifle vain ! The problem is admittedly a difficult one, and though increasing social relations might prevent many hurts, they involve a number of thorny questions. Yet they are bound to come, and it would seem futile, as well as short-sighted, to cling to the old tradition of separation in the face of circumstances so changing. They are one road at least to a better understanding on both sides, and here the Indian might recognize more often than is usual that

we, in our turn, are deserving of closer study, and both European and Indian must learn to respect individual customs and individual standards and, as far as possible, to merge their own predilections in these respects to a common level when they meet.

A part at least of the bitterness of political life is but a reflection of the social chasm, and in bridging that chasm women might play an important part. The argument sometimes put forward by men that the Indian has no right to an introduction to his wife in cases where the Purdah forbids a return of the courtesy, seems untenable. For the Purdah, as has been shown, was not invented to annoy the Englishman, but is an age-long tradition born of the logic of circumstance. Inevitably, where women are concerned, the difference of attitude between the two races in this respect must have an influence, and social intercourse its limitations ; but it need not for that reason be the less cordial, the less sincere.

To those who still feel arrogant, it might be pointed out that education is not always our strong point. Many Indians are well cultivated and well read ; many might be found in such a community as Simla, both men and women, who would put our standard in this respect to shame.

There is an immense charm in the real Indian courtesy, and I myself owe many pleasant hours to Indian hospitality. In Simla there was much mutual entertainment, and, judging from reports, the advance in this matter has been very marked during the last decade. It will grow, and the Englishwoman has this to remember—to many Indians she represents all they can know of England. We, in India, may not be the flower of our kind, but by us will our kind be judged.

CHAPTER XVII

KASHMIR

IN a great tent, pitched at a stage on the journey to Lahore, the Emperor Jahangir lay dying. When those around him asked if he needed anything, he answered wistfully : “ Kashmir.”

He loved her as did all his house, except the puritan Aurangzebe ; he adorned her with those lovely gardens of which the Shalimar at least is familiar by name to all the world. He visited her repeatedly, saw in her perhaps the one fit setting for his queen, and the beautiful country and the beautiful woman are hardly divorced in thought even to-day.

Kashmir boasts an ancient tradition as a seat of religion and culture, yet since the dawn of her history her people have been the slaves first of one conqueror, then of another. To her natural wealth and beauty she added the crowning charm of a race whose lack of quality invited oppression. The Kashmiri has a cowardly heart, reduces the science of prevarication to a fine art, and is a lamentable if an engaging rogue. In the term I do not of course include the present Rajput rulers of the State or the gallant Dogras of the outlying province of Jammu, but refer only to the Kashmiri of Kashmir proper. Kashmiri is used as a term of abuse in the adjoining province of the Punjab.

Consequently he happens rather than belongs, but since he happens very picturesquely let us not complain. Moreover, I feel that, the letter of possession apart, Kashmir could never belong to any race whatever its virtue. You could not entangle her in history, she is too immemorial; I can see her as a sanctuary to the individual, never as anything so personal and ephemeral as a home. She has the detached quality of the complete and an unconsciousness all divine. We chatter round her altars, make her a dumping ground for the amateur of paint and pencil, empty our noisy world into her valleys, and little she cares. Our praises leave her undisturbed; she is indifferent as any other god to the clamour of her worshippers.

We shall never drop the irreligious pen and the brush of impertinence, never tire of making her the picture-book of our emotions; it is not unnatural since the process is so flattering. In this world and the next the West clings to the familiar, and would hardly exchange the hope of St. Peter—a key in one hand and a cocktail in the other, or even the devil and a glass of toddy—for the contemplative immolation of the East. It is as well. If we would, Kashmir might be strangely crowded. As it is, she remains inviolate, and in spite of the sore invasion always and utterly remote.

But she is, too, a land of physical well-being, of long hours in the open and a princely appetite. My feeling for her, and it was very confused—at one moment I longed to banish Cæsar, the next I feasted single-mindedly on her trout and partridge—was coloured as was everything in our travels by circumstance. The life we led had a limitless capacity for bringing us to earth with a bump, so perhaps our soarings were a

little sudden, the descent an anti-climax. Above all, the leading reign of ceremony was there to check every flight.

We paid Kashmir two visits, the first in State in October 1921, the second, more informally, in October 1924 ; and with these I shall take every liberty, selecting from each such fragments as were diverting or memorable.

Since, in the old days of conquest, conversion was admittedly the better part of valour, the Kashmiri follows the Prophet, but their ruler is a Hindu of the old-fashioned, orthodox type. Often have I been woken at 3 a.m. by the gun that called him to prayer ; there are certain preserves where it is forbidden to fish lest the soul of his great-grandmother lurk in the body of a trout, and the cow enjoys a super-sanctity, though I cannot help feeling that she, poor beast, would infinitely prefer a square meal. If you would avoid disaster, do not mention beef, leave the bovril at home (in any case it will be confiscated on the frontier), and if your car runs away with you, murder if you must, but choose brother man for your victim and not sister cow !

There is no such thing as a railway in Kashmir, and may she long be spared. We motored the two hundred miles from Rawal Pindi in the Punjab to Srinagar, her capital city, travelling by easy stages through the Jhelum Valley Pass. A wonderful, mountainous road, though nerve-wracking at times when you curve under one precipice with another at your feet, but since it is cleared for the Viceroy we were spared the real agitation of wondering what might happen round the next corner. At Uri—the last delightful camp before Srinagar—we were introduced to an earthquake, an earthquake considerable enough to be dramatic but not

destructive, and since their effect on atmosphere is comparable to that of a thunderstorm the drive through the last stage of the Pass was all enchantment. It is at any time the most beautiful, for, as the guide-book sagaciously remarks, "here the scenery grows bolder". In other words, below you the river goes rushing and tumbling past, above you to the right and left rise thousands of feet of towering hillside for the most part thickly wooded, the pine-trees climbing, dark blue and green and purple, above a flame of autumn undergrowth till they stand silhouetted spearlike against the sky. For detail there are the jewel-like depressions on the open hills, the deep green of the chinar-tree, the creamy-brown houses, the roadside encampments of cattle-drawn native carts, here and there the ruin of an ancient temple—I remember one in particular built of great blocks of sea-green stone—fresh distances of golden mist as you sweep round each revealing curve, and the indescribable splendour of hill and valley under its adoring sun.

Later the hills fall away, the river widens and grows placid, and through the opening vista you see the little, brown town of Baramulla, and on the horizon the great ring of snow peaks that on three sides circle the Vale of Kashmir.

I must here take one page from the Book of State, for the Viceroy's entry into Srinagar was made by river and was wholly unique. Srinagar is watered by the Jhelum, and its potent canals have endowed it with the title of the Venice of the North. An engaging, ramshackle Venice! Earthquakes have knocked its houses awry, and awry they remain; its dilapidation is immense, but the blessings of sanitation would rob it of half its charm. It sways and climbs and crowds

and tilts and hangs—it must be the most precarious city on earth. Seven crooked bridges cross its river, timber and the lovely narrow brick of the country have gone to its building; in colour it never deserts a scale of cream and brown, warming now and again to mulberry. How absurd it really is against its background of giant, untroubled mountain, and yet how much more beguiling—in such a setting—than the pomposities of marble and stone.

At the Barrage, the landing-stage outside the city, we found the State barge. The lower deck had something of the long sweep of a gondola, only on a much larger scale; fore and aft sat twenty-four rowers in scarlet, bearing heart-shaped paddles. In the centre was a stateroom of yellow and green and orange papier-mâché work, and on its scarlet carpeted roof we took our seats.

From the moment the barge started the semi-Western glories of flags and bunting were left behind, and we were drawn out of the backwater into the main stream, which here flows slowly between low banks and a circle of blue mountain. Instantly a flock of little boats descended. Long, slim boats, curved at stern and bow, managed with great skill by the boatman, amidships an awning varying democratically from the elegant canopy of the lady of high degree to the rush roof of the ordinary Shikari or river-boat. There arose a shrill babel of sound, born of enthusiasm but giving rise between the boatmen to much freely expressed abuse, the passengers endeavouring the while to direct, the police to restrain, and one and all urging forward, forming, at last, an almost solid escort from bank to bank on each side of the barge and for some distance in the rear.

you may, at the view, and have quite determined to accept without question the legend that associates its name with that of Solomon, King of Israel.

Once established at Srinagar, you may turn your attention at will to sport or exploration. The former is to be had in plenty within a few hours of the city, the resources of the latter are inexhaustible. In so far as the bazaars are concerned, you will receive the most pressing assistance from the native. At hotel or house-boat they will wait on you from morn to eve, robbers in sheep's clothing, each the best wood-carver, the best furrier, the best goldsmith, the best jeweller in all Asia, though it will puzzle you to find the least expensive, and the honest man of salvation will escape you entirely. Yet they are entertaining, and I have never ceased to regret that I failed to visit the gentleman who describes himself so poignantly from the river bank as "Suffering Moses of Old Persia !"

We did some little shopping on foot—and shopping is an abiding source of temptation and delight—threading the narrow back-streets of the city, seeing the sights and smelling not a few of the smells ; but more often we accompanied Lady Reading down the river on a little barge, paddled by twenty-five boatmen, with a red velvet dais and a red and gold dome-shaped canopy. And here the most ordinary activities of life are full of charm. There is no denying the Kashmiri is dirty, there is small doubt he is dishonest, but when he is sawing wood in honey-coloured nakedness on the river bank, or his lady wife steps suddenly from a crumbling, creamy, exquisite doorway in an orange sari, or the whole family stand in green and scarlet silhouette on the paternal roof, a brown roof against a blue sky, he also succeeds in being extraordinary decorative.

There are, too, the serais where the caravans from Central Asia come to rest and where you may see strange people and stranger merchandise. Turquoise matrix and silver ornaments from Ley and Thibet, rugs from Yarkhand, embroideries, jade and silk from China. Once I was entertained to a Persian breakfast by the leading papier-mâché manufacturer, and never before have I eaten so much or felt so sick ! There were, I think, twenty-four courses, all fearfully and wonderfully made, all utterly nauseating to the Western palate, and not one of which could a guest with any pretensions to courtesy refuse !

No mention of Srinagar but must include the name of Mr. Tyndale Biscoe, the missionary who for the last thirty years has dedicated his life to the education of young Kashmir, and has fought every conceivable prejudice as well as the slackness and cruelty which seem the birthright of its people. His success is a matter of history, his boys are athletic and courageous, and I was especially struck by one tiny creature who was presented to the Viceroy as having won the year's prize for the kindest action to an animal. This midget—he was really about three feet high—had pulled a bone out of a pariah dog's throat, an action which demanded a stout heart, not only a kind one, and little short of miraculous, coming from small Oriental hands to a beast, and an outcaste beast at that. And how it proclaims the power of personal influence in this country !

Quite close to Srinagar are the two most famous of Jahangir's gardens, the Shalimarbagh ("The Abode of Love") and the Nishatbagh ("The Garden of Gladness). They both stand above the Dal Lake with the mountains behind them, and I was once told, and like to believe, that they were laid out, the first by the

Emperor, the second by Nur Jahan in affectionate rivalry. The Persian Garden is above all else formal, and the designs of both have much in common—the same water-courses, terraces and fountains, the same great avenues of chinar, but in spirit they are each distinct and each equally and differently lovely. You reach them by a road running along the shores of the lake and guarded, in October, by the silver and gold of the poplars. The Shalimar is the larger and the more impressive, with its one hundred and fifty fountains playing round the central pavilion, a pavilion of black marble pillars and graceful arches, its long terraces, green turf, grey stone and brilliant flower borders, its background of old wall, of cypress, fruit-tree and poplar, the mountains rising grave and rugged above its ordered perfection, the stillness broken by the splash of the water and from the topmost terrace the long vista to the lake below. The Nishat Bagh is smaller, has less magnificence of marble and fountain, but a charm more intimate. As to the lake, who shall attempt to describe it? Its open water broken by a labyrinth of floating islands and creeks, its trees and rushes and changing colour and the splendour of the beauty it reflects!

Of the lake I must tell you one story. There came a day when we resolved to escape from ceremony, to picnic in glorious obscurity, to retreat, armed with a tea-basket, matches and firewood, to an island in its very heart! The boats were ordered, and we set off through the narrow waterways, past laden barges, under Akbar's steep and lovely bridge, till we reached our island and there discovered that all the supplies had been left behind! But this we felt to fit in well with the austerity of the occasion, and we settled down to await them, securely remote in a desert of waters.

The tea arrived—but not the tea alone. From the boat stepped with dignity a score of scarlet and gold-clad servants bearing :

1. An exceptionally vivid blue and yellow carpet.
2. An armchair of state for Her Excellency.
3. Iced cakes, cream and cigarettes.
4. A kettle (already boiling).
5. A tablecloth (and napkins).
6. A silver teapot.

It was too absurd for tears and, resignedly, we watched the carpet being spread, the chair set and the servants, in an imposing row, lining up behind it !

We drifted home in the dusk, across steel-blue water fringed with green, from which rose a grey mist of willow, above them the poplars, golden against the deep blue of the mountains, which flung their tremendous outline against a primrose sky.

Another day we paid a flying visit to Gulmarg, the summer refuge of Kashmir and the focal point of the foreign invasion ! It was, happily, deserted when we saw it, for it stands 9,000 feet above sea-level and toward the end of October may at any moment be cut off from the valley by snow. You climb the last six miles on ponies, steeply up through forests of fir and pine—smelling like heaven itself, hot in the sun, ice cold in the shade. As you rise the forest plunges away beneath you, and you look down and across the close ranks of the trees and up to the ice lakes, 14,000 feet high, that crown the hills. Gulmarg lies in a little cup surrounded by a ring of forest, but from the Resident's Hut—every one lives in huts in Gulmarg—you see right across the Vale of Kashmir to the snow-clad ranges of the Himalayas. Nanga Parbat, the fifth highest moun-



tain in the world, raises his 27,000 feet above his neighbours, and with the assistance of a pair of priceless glasses (they originated in a German dugout on Messine Ridge!) we swept the whole horizon of glacier and peak and snowfield, and for the first time, in spite of photographs and study, realized something of what the attack on Everest might mean.

We were hurried off after luncheon for fear of the cold, and walked back to the foot of the hill, taking steep short-cuts through the forest.

So much for exploration, but I have also made some distant reference to sport and must here grow more particular and tell you something of Hokra, of Dachigam and of Tral.

The first is dedicate to small game and is one of the most famous of India's duck shoots. You embark on a large, swampy lake in the little Shikari of the country—a kind of flat-bottomed canoe, and are paddled across a stretch of open water, covered with the wide leaves of the lotus, into the narrow, green waterways that lead to the several butts. These are floating tubs anchored in thick, high hedges of reed.

Once in position you wait patiently for the first shots that warn you that the beat has started. There is a clamour of birds in the distance and a line of geese, flying in V-shaped formation, pass high above your head. They are followed by duck, but also wild and high. A long pause and then a clear call from your own boatman. This time they come low and close, a splash as one falls into the water, and then the swift ripple of the canoe as they hurry to pick it up. It is a curiously exciting and a curiously attractive sport, for you are hidden in the reeds and can see little except their waving tops against a distant circle of mountain.

The birds are on you and past in a second, and you have to be both quick and sure to kill them. Later, our butt proving unproductive, we again embarked and paddled off through hidden ways, clearing now and again to open pools and then closing in till they were scarcely wider than the boat, and so tortuous and enclosed that nothing was visible but the channel in front, the reeds on each side, and the sky above. Once in clear water we pursued our way over the lake toward camp in leisurely fashion, shooting as we went, and by half-past two the whole company were sitting down to a lavish luncheon. Two hours later we were devouring our tea at Srinagar with a lack of prejudice that would have done credit to a week's fast !

But for the expedition to Dachigam we started early and returned at dusk. The shooters were already encamped in the valley in pursuit of Bara Singh—the great stag of Kashmir—and with the hope of bear. The valley is very strictly preserved, and with the exception of the forest bungalow there is not a human habitation throughout its entire length. When it was first taken over by the Maharaja whole villages were removed without further argument, and the villagers provided with land elsewhere. A high-handed proceeding, but then perfect sport and perfect beauty are not democratic ideals. As to its beauty, I have known men who have travelled widely in Kashmir give the palm to Dachigam, and the loveliest valley in Kashmir may, surely, challenge any other.

We motored the ten miles to its foot along the shores of the Dal Lake, and rode the remaining four and a half to the forest bungalow. As the valley closes in round you, and it is quite narrow, the grey peak of Mahadeo raises a gaunt head on your left, a mountain

stream tumbles along at your feet, and from the farther bank rises an autumn-tinted sweep of mountain-side, dark with pine and fir, copper and gold in the clearings. You ride through a wonder of forest growth, the tall silver and gold and green of the poplars, wide green trails of vine, the grey of willow, the scarlet and gold and flame of apricot, mulberry and walnut.

Through this forest of lovely sunlight and more lovely shadow the track leads gently upwards until, in a clearing, you reach the bungalow. It is a rough log building, bark covered with clean pine-wood walls, and was surrounded by a little encampment of tents, and alive with the busy coming and going of the Shikaris. The party had been out since five stalking Bara Singh as they moved down to the river to drink. Bear had been sighted and news of a wounded stag was anxiously expected. We spent some time raking the hill-side with glasses, and spotted two Bara Singh does high up amongst the pine-trees opposite. Then we walked on up the valley for half a mile to a huge rock above the river, under which hundreds of the big Kashmiri fish take shelter. The water was absolutely translucent, and we could see them swimming lazily in the clear depths. What a lavish country it is.

Luncheon was spread in front of the bungalow under a shamiana and was followed by a delicious, sleepy interval! But by 3.30 p.m. we could hear the stags calling across the valley, and the short bark of the does as the herds stirred, and once more the party started forth. We followed them for half a mile and then, reluctantly, took the homeward path.

In this narrow pass, under these tremendous hills, the shadows fall early though, above your head, Mahadeo and his brethren are bathed in golden light. But the

forest owes little of its brilliance to the sun, indeed the dim evening seemed to burn of itself with a steady glow even more startling in effect. The valley is lit by its own colour, and you walk through this hushed and radiant wilderness until the hills fall away again, letting in the flash of the sun.

But for drama commend me to bear, and since drama is best retailed by the man on the spot, I will leave the diary to tell you that story :

KHANABAL CAMP.

25th October, 1924.

We rose to the dawn—oh, to an exceedingly chilly dawn, the kind of dawn we have not so much as hoped for since we left England, with trails of cold mist behind the poplars and a wind like a knife. We revelled in it ! First came breakfast, but by 7.30 a.m. we were all off on the long motor-drive to the Tral Rukh or jungle. The last part over a very rough road, heading for the mountains. At the Tral Rukh forest bungalow we parted with such wraps as were wholly unsuitable, mounted our ponies and set off up the hill-side. Arrived at our destination I climbed into my machan. His Excellency was on the crest of the hill to the right, below on the left Colonel Worgan, with Megan Lloyd George, and the rest of the party out of sight above and below.

To a vivid and frozen imagination at 8 a.m., on a hill-side as yet uncomforted by the rays of the sun, with, in mind, stories of bear in this very jungle of quite unexampled ferocity and a tendency, quite unaffectionate, to hug humanity, the machans were hardly consoling. They were spacious and comfortable, but certainly not more than eight or ten feet from the ground, reached at an easy angle by a ladder there was



no removing, and placed, at least mine was, on a hill-side so steep that to any beast descending from above the distance was negligible—even tempting. But at the time we longed for the sun far more than we feared bears, and the sun was soon rising over the shoulder of the hill. We thawed and looked around us, and began to appreciate the beauty of the forest and the magnificent view down to the valley below.

A long, very distant whistle, and we knew that far away to our left as we sat facing the hill the beat had started. I was given the choice between a gun with a lethal bullet and a camera. I felt that if bears started charging down hills I should be more deadly with the latter, so the Shikari took the gun. We waited. A wait in the jungle is never dull, for anything may happen at any minute, and all the time you are watching with a concentration that never falters. In some ways the jungle of the Indian plain is more interesting—at least you see far more life—beasts and birds escaping from the beat; on the other hand, the conditions of climate and country are nothing like so ideal. For a long, long time we saw nothing and heard only the occasional startled bark of the Bara Singh doe, or the distant, very distant cries of the beaters. Then two lovely does galloped up, stopped at the critical moment to have their photographs taken, and were off again at the click of the camera. Other does we saw later, an enormous Langhar monkey plunged by. Below a fusillade, above us several shots; we could see Colonel Worgan pelting a bush with stones, but the distance was too great and we could not distinguish the game.

The beat was fast approaching and I had just said to myself: “Well, they are shooting to right and left, nothing is coming our way this morning,” when, with

a hoarse whisper: "Baloo" our Shikari jumped to his feet. We saw him, straight up the hill, perhaps a hundred yards from our machan—at least we saw two pointed black ears above the long grass. He had halted, listening to the beat behind him. Guessing at his shoulder my companion fired. A great grunt—then BUMP, BUMP, BUMP down the hill he came. Bumping and grunting and rolling over and over like an enormously fat old lady in a big fur coat. But there was no time to think of old ladies and fur coats. He was coming straight for our machan and, since the bear's classical method of speedy progress downhill is to roll, it could not be said whether or no he was badly hit. He landed fair and square at the foot of our ladder and raised his wicked old head. Meanwhile in an effort to shove in a second bullet in case of accidents the solitary protecting rifle had stuck! The Shikari gallantly let off his weapon, but missed with both barrels, at a range of five feet—but the bear was hard hit and the effort to right himself as he struck the machan mercifully upset his balance. Down the hill he went. He was still moving, though feebly, when the road checked his career, another shot and he lay still.

The beat over, we clambered down, and I remained discreetly in the background until the corpse had been duly investigated. It was very dead. Poor old Baloo! One cannot help but think of him as the kindly, dusty-hided law-giver of the jungle, at least under that name, but you feel very differently about him when you meet him on his native heath. Our "he" turned out to be a fine old female bear, very fat and very old, so old we hope she may be the lady who has lately been terrorising the villages round about. When old and peevish they don't turn man-eater like the tiger, but



they attack and maul human beings out of sheer shortness of temper.

The other guns wandered up. A couple of Bara Singh, a panther and a fox completed the morning's bag. Another bear was wounded, we think, and as a matter of fact the panther was not brought in until the evening. Mercifully he mauled no one, and in these strict preserves he is looked on as no better than vermin and to kill him is a service. Casualties were very light. One man got his leg scratched uncomfortably, but not severely ; another had a bump the size of an egg on his head, where a bear had cuffed him ; and one prostrate and agonizing form to whose rescue the medical faculty hurried, had been knocked down by a female Bara Singh ! So we were lucky, for the risks the beaters run are considerable, especially on a bear drive, since the brutes are fond of breaking back, and it is always an anxious moment at the end of a drive when you ask : " Anyone mauled ? "

Back to the bungalow by twelve, an hour for luncheon and then a long, steep ride up the farther hill for the second beat. The afternoon was more conspicuous for beauty than for sport, but Colonel Worgan got a bear. We saw (and photographed) a stag ; he was too small to dream of shooting. We saw does in plenty, a whole herd trooped obligingly out of the forest just below us.

What matter the sport ! Our ridge jutted out from the mountain-side, we were sitting high up in the branches of a pine-tree ; sheer away on each side fell the forest, and far, far below the valleys were spread.

CHAPTER XVIII

CONCLUSION

TO take my leave perched in the branches of a Kashmiri pine-tree would be an irreverent conclusion to a life of more august pleasures. Yet in looking back, with what a confusion of contrast our Indian web was shot, held in place by a thread of ceremony, worked against a background I have consistently ignored, for were not politics the stuff upon which the pattern itself was woven. They are not the affair of this record, yet their influence was ever-present and not to acknowledge it would be to confuse proportion. Politics, too, were in a sense our dictionary ; we had no choice but to approach India through their medium, and to do so is, I feel, to be handicapped from the start. They can teach you much of human nature, something of Indian human nature, but to India herself they are surely singularly unrelated. There are so many Indias, enshrined in so many books, and beyond them an essential spirit, even then not a single entity, and always elusive. Politics lead one astray ; they are a Western graft meaning nothing to that vast majority who are, presumably, the real custodians of the continent's genius. For all the attention they command, they cannot be her reflection, and as the impression of that other India asserts itself they become increasingly unreal.

For instance, and speaking for myself, the interest one inevitably felt in Mr. Gandhi was not so much the effect of a remarkable personality or even the position he enjoyed as saint and Mahatma, but a sense that in his other-worldliness and in his triumphs and failures both, he represented something more nearly allied to the fundamental spirit of Hinduism than any other political leader.

And how harshly politics deal with that spirit.

They have no very lofty reputation here or elsewhere, and it may be ignorance leads me to hope that the Indian wields the weapons of controversy less scrupulously than some. But very shortly before his failing health forced him to withdraw from any prominent part in public life, I had a conversation with that great Brahmin, Mr. Srinavasa Sastri. His was incomparably the most outstanding figure I met in India, amongst Indians, and at the time I made this note of our conversation, now but a year old :

“ Mr. Sastri came across to talk to me. Ill-health of the body physical and of the body politic have altered him profoundly, though he keeps all his charm and his almost feminine responsiveness. Gandhi, he declares, is a broken-hearted man and, politically, a dead letter. No living individual, he added, has better practised the gospel of love ; but he, too, tried the political game, and, though the saint has triumphed over the politician, politics have broken the heart of the saint. To be powerful you must sell the spirit, and perhaps, as an Englishman added later, prostitute the mind.

I feel, too, that the ordinary Indian politician is a little disposed to confuse his ideals and his vanity. He too often lacks what we call moral courage, but

we in our turn are inclined to minimize the magnitude of his task, his moral task."

So even to her own people India is not an easy mistress to serve, how much less so to us. Which of us has not experienced with Mr. Forster that "nothing in India is identifiable; the mere asking of a question causes it to disappear or to merge into something else"? Which of us has not felt with him that "there seemed no reserve of tranquillity to draw upon in India? Either none or else tranquillity swallowed up everything."

For eight hundred years before our own power was established, the continent had been under the sway of influences no less foreign than our own. We ourselves, as the author of the *Lost Dominion* has pointed out, encountered no moral obstacle, no united resistance on the part of a free and self-conscious people; rather were we welcomed, since our rule, if alien, was at least less oppressive than many. With all its faults and blunders that rule has rendered, amongst many others, one signal service; the breathing space of ordered control and progress has made possible to those storm-tossed, warring States whatever awakening can be described as genuinely national in the present political movement. What proportion this can claim in a country where interests communal and individual must necessarily enjoy so large a place, it is impossible for my little knowledge to estimate. In any case it can only exist intellectually, and what we understand by the terms nationality—patriotism, can have no wide significance in a continent of such diversity of condition. The educated classes are after all but a drop in the ocean of India's millions, and even if you include the literate the drop does not become much larger. The European is one-sixteenth of one per cent. of the entire population;

behind all these is the patient, inarticulate multitude, their patriotism limited to a very sacred sense of family village or, at most, community, and again broken up into a whole diversity of race, language, religion and culture.

From these elements the political future has to be evolved, and it is on this uncharted sea that we have launched our great experiment. Every Englishman in India is naturally absorbed in the details of the struggle, details that breed discouragement, impatience and the poison of political controversy, yet looked upon purely as an experiment in statesmanship it is surely profoundly exciting. In wondering about the future I am reminded of a story I was once told of an old country parson. He was a man of parts, and a friend once remonstrated with him for wasting his talents on a parish slow to appreciate his sincerity and his ideals. He answered : " My orders are to fight, not to win."

Of that ultimate discouragement, not the capitulation before difficulty but the sense of an effort hopelessly misjudged and unjustified, I saw no sign. The official is fortunate. Life in a lonely station may have a thousand drawbacks, but he serves his apprenticeship on a stage where an India remote from political strife may still penetrate and hold the imagination, and that seed once sown is never quite uprooted. In some attenuated form it reaches even to those strongholds of Government with which I was familiar, and it is a charm difficult to convey or even to apprehend.

First impressions have a certain interest and, curiously, my first impression of India was of something very pitiless. An accident of climate perhaps, but not altogether, for it was stronger than my short experience of that element justified. It is more as if her clients

were the reflection of her spirit, of that dangerous but potent charm which from time immemorial has bound her conquerors to her. How strongly the Moghul bore it witness. He hailed from the bracing heights of Kabul, to our minds remote, yet in fact a centre of splendour and luxury, and he chose to make his home in the plain. Hindustan, not Kabul, inspired the vision of Akbar ; it was for her people he sought and strained rather than his own. We ourselves did not aspire to conquest, rather had it thrust upon us, yet for all her exactions India, to the great majority of her English rulers, is still very dear.

With the single exception of the Rajput, with his fierce bright courage and ardent piety, the spirit of India seems to me something distinct from peoples and races, her own or another's. She is so much more a country of legend than of fact, and escapes all questioning. Even in the realm of actual necessity the centralizing force must be strong that can hope to mould her into a single entity, and outside the exploded methods of conquest one wonders whence that force is to come ?

But of the high matters of the present I have no right to speak ; these pages reflect only a few passing humours and, a little, the high matters of the past. If I may judge of others by my own self of four years ago, and by to-day's glazing eye of inattention when it is revealed you have just returned from India, these matters, though not for want of repetition, have attracted little interest. If they had, how transformed would become the general impression and indifference.

Travel is not enough ; is travel more to most of us than a sight-seeing ? And is sightseeing more to most of us than the literal beholding of things ? Circum-

stance has bound our history to the history of India—in how many schoolrooms is more than a glance thrown at the great continent's own traditions? Yet surely those traditions have an interest for us. Her civilizations are as rich and infinitely older than our own; her people a fifth of the population of the world. The Mutiny is not the central point of her story, though I fancy my own education left me with some such flattering impression. Queen Elizabeth addressed the Emperor Akbar as a sovereign of equal state and culture, a modest estimate, and his patronage helped to lay the foundations of our own power. The Rajput chivalry has not an equal in the world. These things are the commonplace of fact, but are they more to the great majority of the race who rule India's destinies than a vague and decorative fiction? If they were, we should surely speak of her with more humility, read of her problems with a more active interest, form a real opinion of our countrymen's trials and perplexities, and show towards rulers and ruled alike a more ready sympathy and understanding. It would be an opinion of real value, for how many civil servants return from leave in England with a disheartened: "Oh, no one takes any interest in India at home."

This indifferent majority take an interest speedily enough in moments of panic, when they feel the imperial clichés threatened, an interest not conspicuous for its dignity. Yet what an inexhaustible wealth of entertainment she has to offer, what a wide and changing appeal! We who sit at home have none of her hardships to endure and, though denied the stimulus of actual contact, are saved some incidental exasperation and the toll her climate takes of nerves and vitality. As to her charm, it is immanent in her story, her legends, her

faith, her philosophy, and I can hardly believe actual experience is necessary to make some aspects of these a vital thing to our minds.

That they are so to me, and must ever remain, is one of those accidents of fortune for which one can never be sufficiently grateful to the gods of chance or fate, and if I have taken my leave of her for a day, for a year or for ever, it matters little, and the imagination once touched by that potent influence can never fail to stir gratefully to the magic of her name.

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