

THE YOUNG TRAVELLER IN INDIA
AND PAKISTAN

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THE YOUNG TRAVELLER IN

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IN PREPARATION

Austria
Malaya and the China Sea



*Fifty miles away stretched the eternal snows of the great mountain, Kangchenjunga,
golden in the middav sun*

THE YOUNG TRAVELLER IN INDIA AND PAKISTAN

by GEOFFREY TREASE



PHOENIX HOUSE LONDON

OTHER BOOKS BY GEOFFREY TREASE

The Young Traveller in England and Wales

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Black Banner Players

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The Story of Sir Walter Raleigh

Tales Out of School

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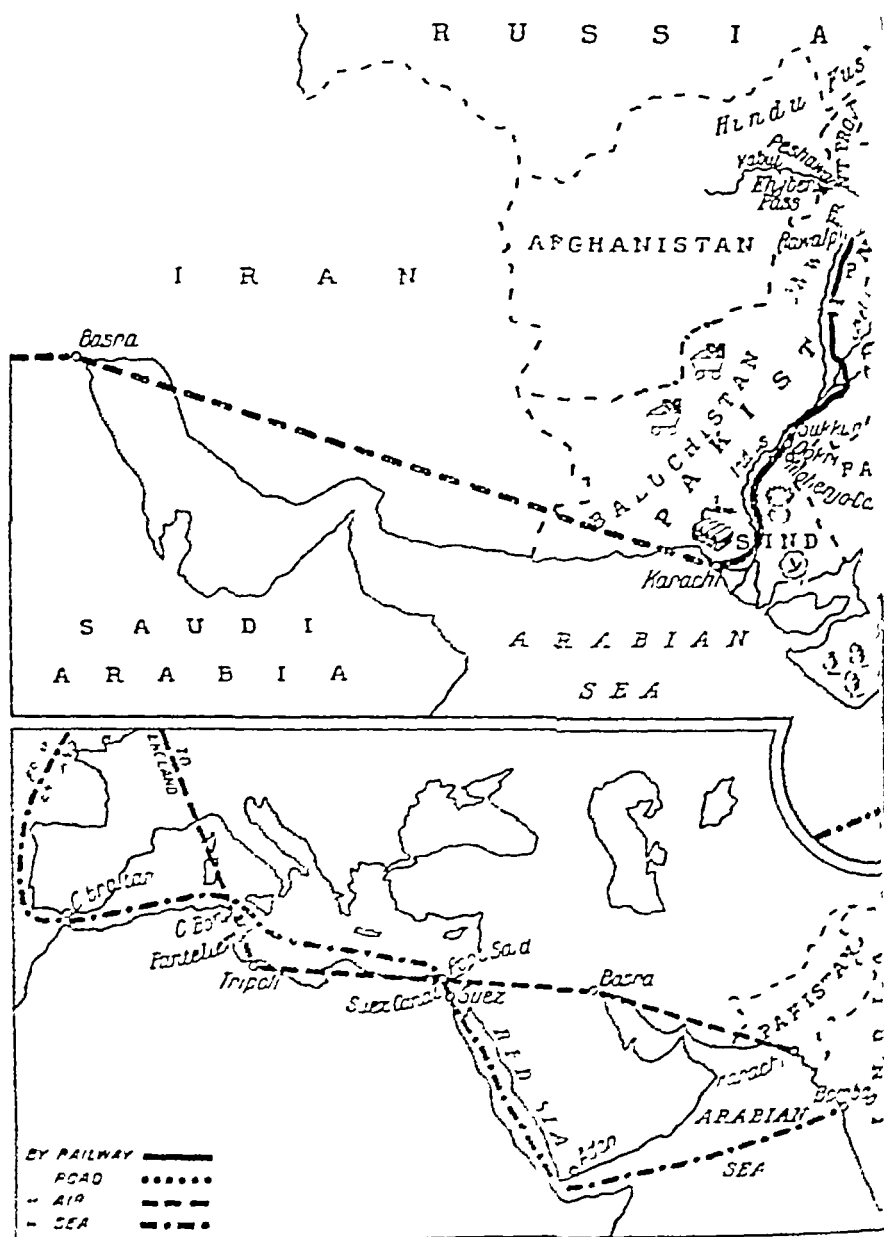
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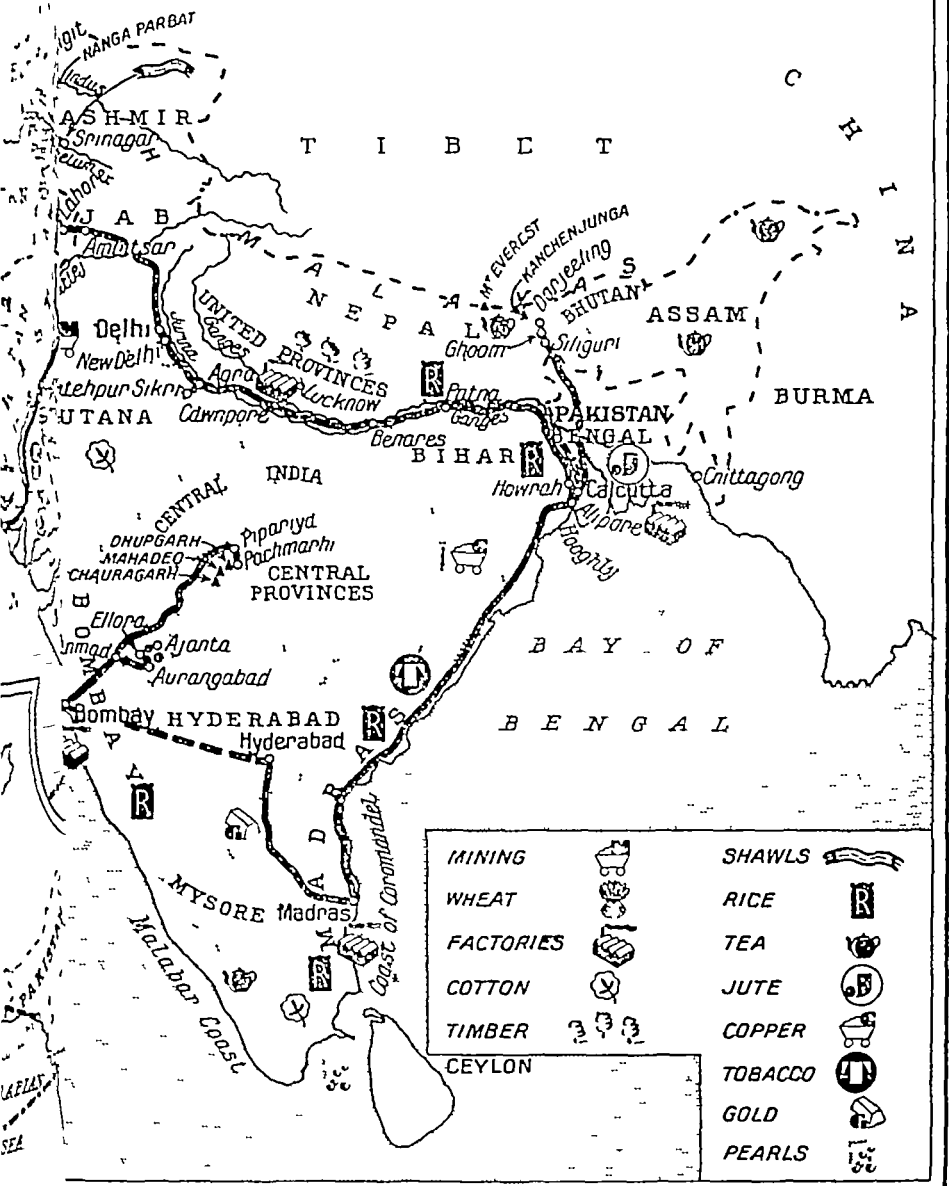
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Robert and Carol landed at Bombay. Their journey across India and through Pa'istan, with excursions out to Pipariya and to Darjeeling, can be traced

S I N K I A N G



by following the dotted and thick black lines The map in the bottom left-hand corner shows how they travelled to India by sea and came home by air

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The author wishes to express his gratitude to Colonel H N Newey, M B E , former Commandant of the Army School of Education (India), who, though in no way responsible for any opinions or mistakes in the story, was kind enough to read the manuscript and offer many useful suggestions

In revising the book for this new edition the author has taken the opportunity to bring it up to date

G T.

THE EXPEDITION IS PLANNED

'Was that the post?'

Mr Woodstock poked his face, frothy with shaving-soap, round the bathroom door

Robert called upstairs, 'No, Dad, only the paper!' and, as the bathroom door shut rather violently, turned to his sister 'I do hope Dad gets his blessed letter to-day—he's like a cat on hot bricks, waiting for it'

'Can't blame him', said Carol, turning into the living-room with a toast-rack in one hand and an awkward bunch of silver and knives in the other 'It's no joke', she went on over her shoulder, as she laid the table 'When you're in a chancey thing like films——'

At that moment there was a second rattle of the letter-box. They sprang into the hall together. There was only one letter lying on the mat

'But I think it's the one!' Carol muttered 'Look, that's the name of the film company on the envelope!'

'It's what's inside that matters', her brother reminded her grimly.

'Oh, but they can't have turned him down!'

'Sh! Dad's coming' Mr Woodstock came downstairs as though the house were on fire His long, lean face was eager and anxious at the same time His arm shot out for the letter Then, to the disappointment of the family, he bore it off upstairs, his dressing-gown flapping violently behind him.

Brother and sister exchanged glances 'Doesn't want us to see him open it', said Carol

Robert nodded Mrs Canning came sailing out of the kitchen, tray braced against her ample stomach They followed her into the living-room without another word There were some things—in fact, most things—they did not discuss in front of Mrs Canning

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They knew they ought to be grateful to her, and to the others before her who had looked after them since their mother died, but if there was one thought which came to Carol every birthday it was this: another year nearer the time when I can take over, and we needn't have anybody living with us!

The suspense was terrible that morning, because they could tell nothing from Mr Woodstock's face when he came to the table. He looked pleased one minute and gloomy the next, and they dared not ask questions.

They were relieved when he suddenly said 'Of course, it's Saturday, isn't it? No school. Have you kids fixed anything with your friends?'

'No, Dad.'

'Then we'll have a day out. You won't need to bother about lunch, Mrs Canning.'

'Just as you like, Mr Woodstock.' Mrs Canning always sounded equally offended whether they went out or stopped in. Twenty minutes later they were out of the house, and the questions could begin.

'Any news, Dad? Is it good?'

He smiled. 'I don't know whether it's good or bad. I've had an offer.'

'To direct, Dad?' Carol's blue eyes shone. 'Oh, how marvellous!'

'What sort of picture?' Robert asked. 'Documentary, of course?' That had always been his father's line.

'Yes. But a really long one. And it's for children. So it'll have to be extra good—there mustn't be any chance of their getting bored.'

'You can do it', his daughter assured him. 'I say, oughtn't you to have written and accepted, before we came out?'

'The thing is', said Mr Woodstock in a troubled tone as he strode along between them, 'I don't know if I *can* accept.'

'*Not accept?*' they exclaimed together in horror.

'It would mean going to India for several months.'

'India?' echoed Carol in dismay. 'But you spent ages there during the war!'

'That fact was quite helpful, I expect.'

Robert was suspiciously silent. Carol gulped. 'You ought to take it, Dad—it's the chance you need—and——' she trailed off rather weakly.

'What about you two?' interrupted her father keenly. 'Not much fun for you. We no sooner get together again than I have to run off and leave you to that—to Mrs Canning.'

'We'll manage', said Robert gruffly. 'What's a few more months?'

'No!' said Mr Woodstock, so violently that several passers-by turned to stare. 'We're sticking together from now on. Something else will turn up.'

A sudden idea struck Robert. 'Couldn't we go *with* you?' he suggested desperately.

'Oh, yes, Dad, that would be wonderful!'

There was a hopeful moment while their father hesitated. Then he shook his head sadly. 'Sorry, kids, couldn't be done. It would cost the earth. I'd have to pay all your expenses myself—it would eat up all I earned——'

'Why shouldn't the company pay?' said Carol doggedly.

'Have a heart!' begged her brother. 'If every film director dragged his family round with him——'

'This is different!'

'How?' asked Mr Woodstock with a smile.

Carol hadn't known, when she spoke. She had said it automatically, just because whatever you want for yourself always *is* different—or seems so. Then suddenly light dawned. 'I'll tell you. This is different, because we can help with the film.'

'Help, my dear?'

'This is a film for young people, isn't it? It's got to show the things in India which will interest *them*, hasn't it?'

'Yes, but——'

'I get it!' broke in Robert excitedly. 'How can a grown-up director be sure he's shooting the right things? He might waste thousands of feet of film—not to mention the time and the expense of everything—and at the finish the audience might go to sleep or bust up the cinema!'

'That's a thought,' Mr Woodstock laughed. 'It's enough to scare off any director.'

'It needn't scare you', said Carol. 'We'll come with you, we'll tell you what to shoot——'

'Both of you?' Her father shook his head 'I could put up the idea to the company I might persuade them to let me take one young person, but that would have to be Robert. I don't see how I could possibly ask for *two*'

'I do', said Robert, loyal to his sister who was herself for the moment speechless 'You want girls to like this picture as well Dad, you need her even more than you need me! You were a boy yourself once—but you weren't ever a girl, were you?'

'Not so far as I can remember.' Mr Woodstock chuckled There was a new light in his eye 'I'll go and see the film company first thing on Monday. And I'll tell them, it's all or none!'

That week-end was one of unbearable suspense, but by Monday evening the worst was over

Mr Woodstock had handled the film-people with serpent-like cunning He had said nothing at first about his family but, by two or three skilfully-dropped remarks, he had planted certain thoughts in the two hard business heads which faced him At the end of ten minutes one of these gentlemen was assuring the other that the whole film would be a flop unless they made sure of getting the juvenile angle right by sending out a boy with the director—and he was quite convinced that it was his own brilliant idea His associate then retorted with an even greater inspiration—do the job properly, take a girl along too 'But where do we get the kids?' The two hard-headed business men had stared at each other for a moment That had been Mr Woodstock's chance 'If you insist on this idea', he had said generously after a while, 'I will take my own By a fortunate coincidence I have both a boy and a girl'

It was all fixed up very quickly after that Mr Woodstock and the children were to make a preliminary tour of the country, and mark down likely subjects at leisure Then he could take round his camera-unit and, with the dependable sunlight of India, do the actual shooting in a matter of weeks The technicians would not need to go out until he was ready for them

Only Mrs Canning snorted, 'What about the children's education?' The heads of Robert's school and Carol's proved extremely

sensible. They thought it was a pity the trip could not be made during the long summer holidays, but of course they realized that those were just the months of the monsoon, when it would be pouring with rain over most of India. Once that was settled, and Mr Woodstock promised faithfully that the children would be back before Christmas, they both agreed that the educational value of the journey was quite equal to a term of ordinary school.

Passages were booked for September, and August was a hectic series of preparations and arrangements. There was kit to be bought: here Mr Woodstock's war experience saved them from many mistakes. Robert was disappointed that he was not to wear a sun-helmet. His father laughed the idea to scorn. Sun-helmets were hopelessly old-fashioned—the Army had proved, during the war, that they were quite unnecessary. From September to December was a fairly cool season in most parts, and so long as they had some sort of headgear for the middle of the day, they could usually go bare-headed. But they would need a bed-roll each, because people in India always travelled with their own bedding, and thin drill clothes for the hot places, and some of their ordinary clothes—even overcoats—for the cold evenings in the hills.

'We'll *never* carry everything!' his daughter wailed as the baggage began to pile up in every bedroom.

'Don't worry. You won't be expected to', he assured her.

Some of the preparations were not quite so pleasant. They had to be vaccinated again, though they had been done only two years before, and they also had to be inoculated against typhoid. When Mr Woodstock had said a few grim words about the dangers of disease in India, they gave up grumbling and asked if there were not some more precautions they could take.

'Couldn't we be inoculated against malaria?' Robert suggested.

'No. You catch malaria from the bite of a mosquito which has already bitten someone suffering from malaria. All you can do is to avoid getting bitten—that's why I've bought you mosquito-nets to sleep under.'

'And what about cholera and dysentery?'

'There *are* anti-cholera injections—we'll have to have them if we go into a danger area, but not till then, because the effect soon wears off. As for dysentery, never drink water that hasn't been

boiled, avoid raw fruit except things like oranges and bananas with a thick peel on them, and don't start buying a lot of filthy fly-blown sweets and cakes ' Mr Woodstock looked at his son's anxious face and laughed 'Are you sure you wouldn't rather drop out of this perilous adventure ?'

'Not on your life!' said Robert indignantly.

They got off at last They sailed in a P & O. liner, Robert and his father sharing a cabin, while Carol found herself paired with an amusing young lady who turned out (to Carol's surprise) to be a doctor

The first part of the voyage was interesting They saw Gibraltar with its long, ugly slopes of concrete, built to catch water for the garrison For a day they had the coast of North Africa in view They passed Cape Bon where the Nazis had been driven out of Tunisia into the sea, and the island of Pantellaria which had been a Fascist stronghold during the Mediterranean campaign Then they saw no more land for about a day, until they came on deck before breakfast to find themselves creeping into Port Said with a statue of the French engineer De Lesseps pointing to the entrance of his canal

Soon Port Said, with its huge advertisements of Scotch whisky and its stalwart policemen in white uniforms and red flowerpot caps, was left behind 'Now we're really getting into the East', Mr Woodstock told them as the liner nosed slowly down the narrow water-way between the deserts

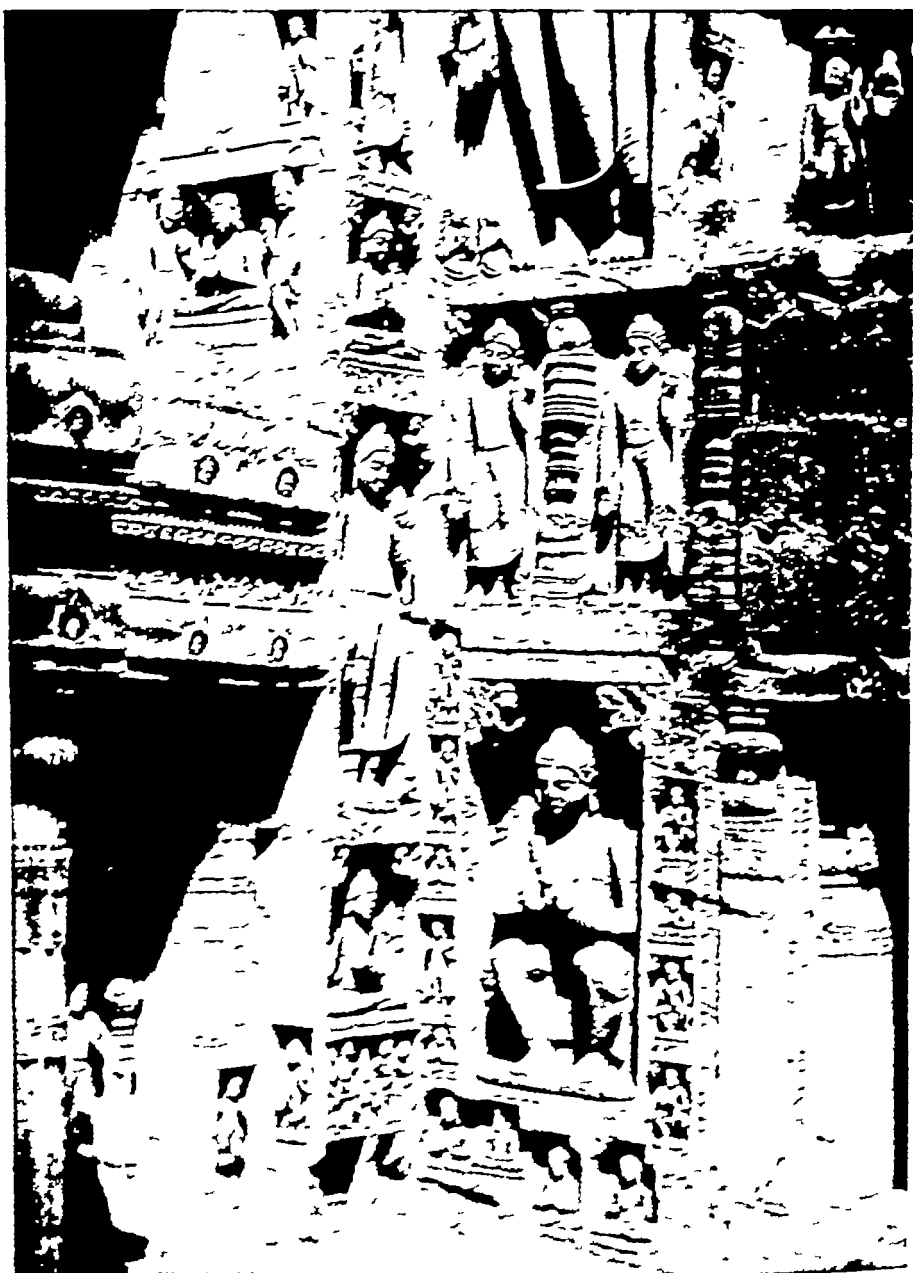
The next morning found them at Port Suez on the Red Sea—which was, in fact, very blue, a turquoise even lovelier than the Mediterranean blue Suez was a greyish town, with two great oil-tanks making scarlet blobs against it, and half a dozen factory chimneys trailing black smoke across a background of mauve and tawny hills

They saw very little land after that, except for a few rocky islets with lighthouses on them The heat of the Red Sea was terrible The canvas awnings spread over the decks gave shade, but nowhere was cool At night they lay in their berths and sweated, but could not sleep They were thankful when, after three days, they passed Aden and came out into the open waters of the Arabian Sea



By courtesy of the High Commissioner for India

From the wooded heights of Malabar Hill, Robert and Carol saw the curved sweep of Marine Drive, with its modern blocks of flats, and all Bombay behind



*A Ellora they stared fascinated at the wall-sculptures of temples which had no
 been built as seen from the solid rock. Workmen had to led for a hundred
 years to make this Pailasa or 'Heaven on earth'.*

THE GATEWAY OF INDIA

'WAKE up, Robert—we're going in!'

It was Carol's voice in the dimness of the cabin. Robert sat up with a start, realized that she meant they were entering Bombay, and swung himself from the upper bunk, almost treading on his father's face as he did so. Mr Woodstock awoke, which was not surprising, but rolled over again with a growl. He had seen Bombay before. His children, however, insisted that he should pull on some clothes and join them on deck. 'You must study our reactions!' Carol reminded him severely.

Dawn was just breaking, a cloudy, rain-threatening dawn. A lighthouse, perched on a tiny rock amid the grey water, still flashed gold at intervals. There was a long white line of surf, like snow. Palm-tufted hills rose and dipped along the skyline. Rusty-looking tramp steamers were moored here and there, and Indian boats with three-cornered sails were gliding about in the morning breeze. Brown, scraggy birds—the scavengers of the East, Mr Woodstock called them—circled the liner and swooped down to investigate the rubbish that was being thrown over the side. About a mile away was the waterfront of the city.

'There's a mosque!' Robert exclaimed, pointing to a great domed building. His father laughed.

'I'm afraid that's only the Taj Mahal Hotel. Now that thing just to the right of it, looking a bit like Marble Arch, is the Gateway of India. When India was still governed from Britain the Viceroy always landed there and passed under that archway. *We* land less romantically at Ballard Pier.'

Another half-hour saw the ship moored and the gangway down. Reluctantly Robert and Carol left the rails to finish packing and to eat their last breakfast on board. Though they could see little of the city behind the dock buildings, the quay below was sufficient entertainment, crowded as it was with ragged, struggling coolies, fussy clerks with long white garments, and papers in their hands,

sea opened in front of them, and they swung into what was like a South Coast promenade. Blocks of ultra-modern flats rose to six and seven storeys with walls of what Carol thought of as 'bathroom colours'—pale green, pink, cream, and yellow. Sleek cars stood beside the pavement and on the open side, near the sea, nurse-maids were pushing babies and servants were exercising well-groomed dogs.

'This is Marine Drive', Mr Woodstock turned round to tell them 'Only the millionaires live here.'

'Nonsense!' said Mr Gupta, and, with a flick of the wheel, swung them into the entrance drive of a pale green block with a front garden of palms and scarlet cannas. 'Actually, we *are* rather proud of Marine Drive—it was waste land reclaimed from the sea just before the war.'

Further explanations were interrupted by the arrival of Ram Gupta, a boy of about sixteen, in a spotless white tennis shirt and grey flannels. He had liquid dark eyes and delicate features—altogether too beautiful (thought Carol) for a boy.

'Welcome to India!' he greeted them in perfect English. 'This is simply super!'

Mr Gupta was an M.A. of Oxford and had travelled in America. Mrs Gupta was a graduate of Bombay University and, though she wore a long graceful *sari* of pale silk, she was quite westernized in her outlook, and sat down to lunch like an English hostess.

'You would find it very difficult if you stayed with orthodox Hindus', she explained with a smile. 'They would feel it impossible to eat with you—or, if they did, they would have to go through all sorts of tiresome purification ceremonies afterwards.'

'Caste!' said Mr Gupta. 'The bane of India. You can imagine, Mr Woodstock, how it complicates our work at the studios.' Seeing that Robert and Carol were a little puzzled, he launched on an explanation for their benefit.

In ancient India, he told them, the Hindus had been divided into four main classes, the Brahmins (or priests), the Kashatrias (or soldiers), the Vaish (or peasants), and the Shudras (or servants). These in turn were sub-divided into dozens of others. You were born into your caste and you could not change it. Your choice of

job was limited by your caste, and so was your choice of a wife. You were hedged about by 'dos' and 'don'ts' of all kinds, and if you broke the rules of caste you had to pay heavy fees to the Brahmin priests for purification.

'But caste is not an essential part of the true Hindu religion', broke in Mrs Gupta, 'and many enlightened men like Mr Gandhi have struggled against its worst features.'

'What's an outcaste?' Carol asked.

'They are the people below the lowest caste—Pariahs, Untouchables; they used to be officially "the Depressed Classes", but now Untouchability is not recognized by the law. They are a fifth or sixth of the whole population, yet they are considered unclean by old-fashioned Hindus. But for the Government, they'd be kept out of the temples——'

'Their children were often kept out of the schools', chimed in Ram. 'They had to squat on the veranda and listen through the window.'

'Are they very—"unclean"?' asked Carol, puzzled.

'They are not dirty, if that is what you mean', said Mr Gupta. 'Or at least no dirtier than anyone else. European families often employ Untouchables as nurse-maids—and some of my most glamorous film stars are Untouchables.'

'Not many higher-caste girls can be persuaded to show their faces in public—least of all on a huge cinema screen', said Mrs Gupta with a laugh. 'Some of my family think *I* am not at all respectable because I don't keep *purdah*.'

'Whatever is *purdah*?' Robert demanded.

Mrs Gupta laughed again. 'You must not try to master all the social and religious problems of India on your first day. Take some more curry—I hope you do not find it too hot?'

Afterwards, when their father asked them, 'What struck you most during your first days in India?' it was quite an effort to sort out their impressions.

There were little things like the red splashes and stains all over the pavements, which looked like blood but proved to be the juice of the betel-nut which most of the population seemed always to be chewing and spitting out. And going to bed inside a mos-

quito-net, and always searching with a torch to make sure one of the insects had not slipped inside ('Shake your shoes for scorpions when you get into the country', said their father. 'But a mosquito inside the net is much more likely—and if it gives you malaria, you'll wish it hadn't')

There were big things like the Prince of Wales Museum and the Hanging Gardens on the top of Malabar Hill, the fashionable residential area for judges, officials, and business men, and the vast maze of Crawford Market and Bazaar. There were funny things, like the persistence of the little boot-blacks at every street corner who wanted to shine their shoes, and sometimes tried to scare pennies out of them by holding up a fragment of polish on a finger-nail, and threatening to daub Robert's shorts with it unless he employed them. And there were grim things, like the Parsee Towers of Silence.

Ram told them about the Towers. He had appointed himself their guide, for Mr Woodstock was away most of the time at Mr Gupta's film studios. The day they went up Malabar Hill he pointed out a squat, circular stone tower, perhaps twelve feet high and twenty-five feet in diameter. In its plainness it suggested a gasometer. A row of skinny, evil-looking vultures was ranged along the top.

'That is where the Parsees leave their dead'

'Er—leave them?' said Carol with a shudder.

'Yes. It is against their religion to bury or to burn their dead. There is no roof to the tower, but inside there are three stone floors, one above the other, each sloping inwards to a circular well. The bodies are laid there—men on the top storey, women on the middle, and children on the lowest of all.'

'And then I suppose the vultures . . .?' began Robert, feeling rather sick.

'Yes', said Ram cheerfully. 'And when they have finished—which is quite soon—the attendants come with gloves and tongs, and throw the bare bones down into the well.'

'Ugh!' said Carol. 'Have you ever seen it?'

'Of course not. The Parsees themselves do not go inside, except the attendants—they believe that anyone else seeing the inside of the Tower will die himself.'

'Parsees must be horrible people!'

'Not at all', Ram assured her. 'They are most highly cultured people, kindly and charitable. There are many living in Marine Drive—some even in our own block.'

Robert was curious enough to find out more about the Parsees. They had come originally from Persia and had their own religion, based on the teachings of the prophet Zoroaster, who probably lived about 1000 B.C. There were scarcely more than a hundred thousand of them in all India, but as more than half of these lived in Bombay city, and were outstanding in business and banking circles, they were much more important in Indian life than would have been expected from their small numbers.

'What beats me', said Robert, 'is how to fit the two things together—the luxury flats on Marine Drive and the Towers of Silence under Malabar Hill!'

'That', said Mr Gupta, 'is just one of a hundred similar contrasts which I think will puzzle you as long as you stay in India. Science side by side with superstition, wealth with poverty, ancient with ultra-modern.'

'Yes. I can imagine some jolly good contrasting shots in Dad's film.'

Robert did not envy his father the task of portraying that great city in a few hundred feet of celluloid. What should one show—what leave out? The fine straight shopping streets, with their throng of buses, taxis, and open horse-drawn *gharries* . . . the narrow, evil-smelling by-ways, down which they were forbidden to wander alone . . . the holy man who once startled them, running down a main road amid the traffic, wearing nothing but a dab of paint and a powdering of dust and filth . . . the smart naval ratings with their brown polished faces and their crisp white shorts . . . the strict Muslim lady who walked out in a voluminous white garment covering her from crown to ankle, with only a slit cut for her eyes—looking, as Robert said, 'as though a bell tent had collapsed on top of her' . . . and the lovely girl students swishing across the road to the University, with the filmiest of *saris* draped over one arm and a textbook on chemistry tucked under the other . . .

It was all so big, all so varied. The population of the city, said Mr Gupta, was now well over two and a half million. If you picked only on what was picturesque you forgot what was important—for instance, Bombay's greatness as a port and a centre for cotton and other textile mills. And one must be fair: if the luxury flats were shown, so too must be the slums in which tens of thousands of mill workers existed rather than lived. And again—one must be fair—some idea must be given of the efforts being made by the Bombay Government since the five-year housing plan it had launched in 1947.

Robert's head began to swim as he realized just what was involved when a man set out to tell 'the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth' about any subject under the sun.

It was a relief when Ram said, 'Would you like to go to the pictures to-night? There is one of my father's films showing at the Metro—I will explain the story enough for you to follow.'

The film was a long one. Indians, Ram said, liked long films and they liked historical or mythological subjects. They did not worship speed as Hollywood did. If the heroine had a good song to sing they were quite prepared to hear twenty or thirty verses of it before getting on with the drama. Mr Gupta's film was rather crude in colour—it was not technicolor, but a kind of tinting which reminded them of cheap birthday cards at home. One sequence of trick photography brought a round of applause from the whole audience.

The story was complicated, and Ram's explanations made it even harder to follow. They could only make out that it concerned a romantic pair of lovers at some ancient period of Indian history. They never kissed—'that would never be tolerated in one of our pictures', Ram assured them in a shocked whisper—and at the finish they committed suicide. 'And that', retorted Carol, 'would never be tolerated in one of *ours*!'

'Did you enjoy the film?' Ram asked as they walked home.

'Very much', said Robert politely. 'Some of those crowd scenes were terrific.'

'My father has been much influenced by the Russian director, Pudovkin.'

'I loved the way it worked in so much beautiful scenery', Carol

said sincerely. 'And the music—it was queer, of course, and they seemed to sing down their noses a lot, but it wasn't just a noise I always thought Indian music was so different, that I didn't expect to like it at all'

'I think you *would* find pure Indian music rather hard', Ram answered, 'but our modern film music is a sort of mixture of East and West. They *can* meet, you know—in spite of Mr Kipling's poem!'

Robert took no part in the discussion. He still thought Indian music a monotonous, unholy row, but he was too polite to say so, and he realized that most Indians might feel the same about the music of the West.

Chapter 3

UP-COUNTRY!

THE next morning Moti Lal arrived and presented himself before Mr Woodstock. He was a smiling, smooth-chinned young man with a white cap on his gleaming black hair and a khaki bush-shirt flapping outside his blue cotton trousers. He carried a small bundle.

‘Salaam, sahib!’

‘Salaam, Moti! It’s good to see you again. You’ll have three of us to look after this time. Can you manage us all?’

Moti flashed his teeth delightedly. He had been Mr Woodstock’s ‘bearer’ or personal servant in the Army, and he had then extracted a promise that, if ever Mr Woodstock set foot in India again, he would let him know. Robert and Carol had heard so much about Moti that they smiled back, feeling him to be an old friend.

Moti explained that he had received the sahib’s telegram and would have come at once, but there had been a wedding in his family, and it had been impossible to get away earlier.

‘That’s all right, Moti. We’re planning to leave here to-morrow. How are your own children?’

‘I have three boys now, sahib, and all are well, thank God.’

Carol stared. It was hard to imagine young Moti as a married man with three children, but she was learning that it was difficult for a western eye to judge the age of an Indian, and she knew that boys and girls alike married young.

Moti salaamed and went off with his bundle. ‘Family life is much more important in India than it is with us’, her father explained. ‘Indians feel a very close link even with distant relatives, second cousins and so forth. If there’s any sort of family event, funeral or marriage or what you will, the whole clan turn up and stay for days on end. And the man who is head of the family has all sorts of responsibilities.’

‘Moti looks nice.’

THE YOUNG TRAVELLER IN INDIA AND PAKISTAN

'He is You can trust him completely. He'll be with us from now on. You don't have to worry about your bags when we move—he takes care of everything, puts out our clean clothes when he thinks we need them, sends the dirty ones to the wash——'

'Couldn't we take him home with us? Then we could get rid of——'

'All *right!*' Her father checked her with a warning but sympathetic smile. 'Alas, it can't be done. So make the most of him now. Remember, he'll do *almost* anything for us—but don't ask him to sweep up anything from the floor.'

'Why ever not?'

'Caste!' broke in Robert keenly. 'Sweeping's done by Untouchables.'

Mr Woodstock nodded. 'And he won't carry things about—that's a job for a coolie. But don't worry, he'll always find the coolie.'

'Where will he sleep to-night, Dad?'

'Oh, he'll find a corner somewhere with Mr Gupta's servants. That's one of the mysteries of Indian life—where does your servant go when he passes out of sight? You pay him an allowance when you're travelling, and he always seems to fit in somewhere, and turn up when you need him.'

'If we're going on to-morrow', said Carol, 'I suppose I'll have to think about packing.' She made a face at the thought.

'Moti will pack for us all', Mr Woodstock quickly reassured her, 'but you'd better stand over him the first time, to make sure he folds things the proper way. He's not so used to feminine garments, but if you show him once he won't forget.'

'She's gone all pink', said Robert unkindly.

In Bombay they had seen India at her most up-to-date. It was time now to see something really ancient—something to remind them (as Mr Gupta said with a twinkle behind his glasses) that India had a great civilization before Julius Cæsar had heard of Britain. 'You must go to Ellora and Ajanta', he insisted. 'Ram has never seen Ellora, so we'll come with you and set you on your road. It's only a few hours from Bombay, and it's the direction in which you're heading afterwards.'

They went by train, not only because they were too many for the car but also because of the dust, which took much of the pleasure out of long road journeys. Robert had always been interested in railways and was eager to see what they were like in India.

The great terminus was seething with passengers, most of them travelling with all their worldly possessions in huge bundles. Some fought for places in the third-class coaches, some were methodically washing themselves under a dangling water-pipe, and others again were lying fast asleep on the platform, heedless of the noise around them. There were separate refreshment rooms and drinking-taps for Hindus and Muslims.

'You mustn't think that all the Muslims are in Pakistan', said Mr Gupta earnestly. 'There are many millions in the new Republic of India and we hope they will stay. Most of us in the Republic did not want to split the country at all, because we believe in one nation for all Indians, whatever their religion.'

'They'll understand these political questions better when we've travelled further', said Mr Woodstock. 'We shall have to touch on them in the film, and it won't be easy to make things simple for young people in Europe and America.'

Mr Gupta had reserved a compartment. It was very roomy, for the railway gauge here, as on most Indian lines, was broader than in other countries—5 ft 6 ins to be exact, as Robert at once took the trouble to find out. There was no corridor, but each compartment had its own wash-place. For meals on long journeys the passengers either walked along to the dining-car when the train stopped at a station, or had meals brought along on a tray by their bearers. At night the seats became sleeping-berths.

'What elaborate windows!' Carol exclaimed. Each window had not only glass but a separate lattice-shutter and one of wire gauze. Her father explained that the gauze by itself would keep out mosquitoes at night but let in fresh air, while if it were very dusty it would be necessary to pull up the glass portion. The barred wooden shutter was for privacy and a protection against thieves. Each of the doors had a bolt on the inside.

'And sometimes it is very necessary', said Mr Gupta grimly.

A whistle blew. The train began to move. 'What about Moti?' cried Carol in sudden alarm.

'He won't be far away', Mr Woodstock assured her. 'He has his own third-class ticket. He'll pop up when he's needed, you'll see.'

They didn't realize the full extent of Bombay until they were leaving it. The train rattled on through suburbs that seemed endless. The Bombay they had really known had been the small central portion, built on the little island which had been the dowry of the Portuguese princess marrying Charles II. The English king had sold it to his East India Company and, in the course of centuries, the city had developed until it overflowed far on to the mainland, and practically all trace of its having been an island disappeared.

At last the suburbs were left behind and they saw for the first time the ordinary countryside—small fields, sprouting with vivid green after the rains, villages clustered under a group of palms or a twisted banyan tree; peasants driving herds of hump-backed cattle or ugly grey water-buffaloes, women in bright *saris*, mustard-yellow and scarlet and petunia, treading narrow paths with shining brass pots balanced gracefully on their heads, and silver bangles twinkling on their ankles as they walked.

Stops were few, and then mostly at small places. 'Aren't there any other big towns—before Calcutta?' Robert asked.

'Oh, yes', Mrs Gupta answered, 'but most people live in villages. This is typical.'

'You must imagine this kind of view stretching away for miles and miles on both sides of the railway', added her husband. 'Hundreds and hundreds of little villages like the ones we have passed—but far more isolated, because they aren't near a railway and most likely have no properly made road either.'

'Don't they have *anything* to do with the outside world?'

'Oh, yes. In every village there is probably someone who has been in the Army, or made a pilgrimage, or tried working in the city. He comes home and tells his stories, but he doesn't change the life of the village very much.'

'That is one of our great problems in India', said Mrs Gupta, 'to change village life—and change it for the better. They need doctors and nurses and schools and drainage—'

'Knowledge in a dozen ways', Mr Gupta summed it up 'Now they are citizens of an independent country, and we want them to become intelligent voters. There is so much to be done.'

When the train did stop for five or ten minutes it was amazing where people came from. Though only a few mud huts might be visible amid the trees, hundreds of men, women and children swarmed along the carriages, most of them apparently without any idea of travelling. Thin nasal voices rose and fell in an incessant babble.

'*Char wal-laah !*' ('Tea-man', Ram translated for the benefit of his friends, pointing out a skinny individual who was doing a brisk trade with the third-class passengers, pouring pale tea into rough earthenware cups which were broken and thrown away after use.)

'*Gur'm pam, gur'm pam !*' chanted a doleful fellow with hot water for those travellers who had brought their own tea-pots.

'*Dudh ! Dudh !*' squeaked a small boy, agile as a monkey, swinging a milk can and hopping up and down from one carriage window to the next.

Others were selling fruit, fancy cakes, and messy little concoctions folded up in leaves. Knowing that oranges were safe to eat Robert beckoned one of the sellers and pointed. The man handed up half a dozen oranges, accepted the rupee-note which Robert held out to him, and was rapidly moving away when Ram thrust his head through the window and exploded like a bomb. If the fruit-seller was surprised—and he looked both surprised and hurt as he turned and came back—Robert was so astounded at Ram's furious flow of language that he almost jumped out of his skin.

With a shrug and a rather sickly smile the fruit-seller counted out an odd collection of copper and nickel coins, some with holes in the middle and some without. Ram checked them, sternly rejected one as bad, and passed them to Robert.

'Your change.'

'Thanks, Ram. I can't get the hang of your money yet—I just give them a rupee and hope for the best.'

'You will find that very expensive', said Mr Gupta. 'It's quite easy to master our currency, and people will only despise you if you give them too much.'

Robert was not going to be despised by anyone. As the train pulled out he left his orange untouched and listened with every sign of mental concentration.

'I can remember that an anna is a penny', he said.

'That is useful as a rough comparison. But you ought to remember that it is worth slightly more. There are sixteen annas to one rupee, but the rupee is worth about one shilling and sixpence in English money, not one and fourpence as you would expect if the anna were worth exactly a penny.'

'It is much harder for Americans', Mrs Gupta pointed out, 'because they are used to a simple decimal system, whereas the British and the Indian systems are equally complicated. The American has to remember that an anna is worth just over a cent, and a dollar gives him nearly five rupees.'

'It's the tiny coins that get *me* down', Carol joined in. 'The pies or pice or whatever you call them.'

'Think of them as farthings', her father suggested. 'You get four to the anna.'

'Four pice, one anna', she chanted in time to the rhythm of the train. 'Sixteen annas, one rupee. I've got that.'

'It would be easy enough', Robert grumbled, 'if all the coins of one value looked the same. But see here——' He sorted a handful of small change in his palm and fished out two coins, one large, one very small. 'Both of these are worth four annas, aren't they?'

'Yes', said Ram. 'The little one is silver, and the big one is nickel. You'll soon learn to know both of them. After all, you get even the rupee two ways—either a note or a big silver coin—and you don't mix *them* up.'

'You'll *have* to learn, Robert', Carol warned him with a laugh. 'You can't go on changing notes for ever—your pockets are so full of small change that they're dragging your shorts down!'

Robert assured her, with a scowl and a hitch to his shorts, that he had everything straight now, thanks very much. Mr Gupta said there was just one final point to clear up the subject—Robert wouldn't be bothered by it personally, but he might be puzzled by what he read in the papers. Large sums of money were reckoned not in millions but in *lakhs* and *crores* of rupees. A *lakh*

There was no difficulty about finding the beggars to relieve him of his sight. They came from every station—the blind and the lame and the emaciated, mother with babies in arms, people with hideous deformities and screaming open sores, and mischievous children who leapt on the footboard, crying with shrill voices.

'No pappa, no mamma!'

'They probably are not orphans at all', Mr Gupta explained. 'Beggars learned that phrase during the war, when the trains were full of British and American troops.'

'They found it a very good line', said Ram.

At that moment a withered old woman looking about eighty came limping up to their compartment and thrust out a bony arm. 'No pappa, no mamma!' she quivered toothlessly.

Robert and Carol could not help themselves. They burst out laughing, then felt ashamed, seeing her age and poverty, and tried to ease their consciences by filling her palm with all the small money they had left. 'Though', said Robert as she limped away, mumbling her gratitude, 'she can't really complain at being an orphan—if her pappa and mamma were still alive, they'd be a hundred if they were a day!'

'Don't be too sure', said Mrs Gupta. 'Poor people in India look old very quickly. They do not live so long as you do, remember.'

'Don't they?'

'They do not', Mrs Gupta answered with a good deal of feeling in her tone. 'Do you know how long the average Englishman or American lives?'

'No.' Robert had never thought about it. He thought now of the old ladies and gentlemen he knew at home. Of course—he bit his lip, remembering his own mother—there were some who died young. That would bring down the average.

'I think it is sixty-two years in both countries', said Mrs Gupta.

'Frenchmen live to fifty-seven, Norwegians to sixty-three, and New Zealanders are healthiest of all—they average sixty-seven. But the Indian average is only twenty-seven!'

'Goodness!' said Carol 'Why ever is that?'

Mrs Gupta shrugged her shoulders 'You will see as you travel about. You must already have seen quite a little. The flies, the dirt, the drinking-water, and above all the poverty.'

'There's a terrible number of beggars', Carol agreed soberly

'No one knows quite how many. Years ago a census gave the figure as close on six million.'

'Six million!'

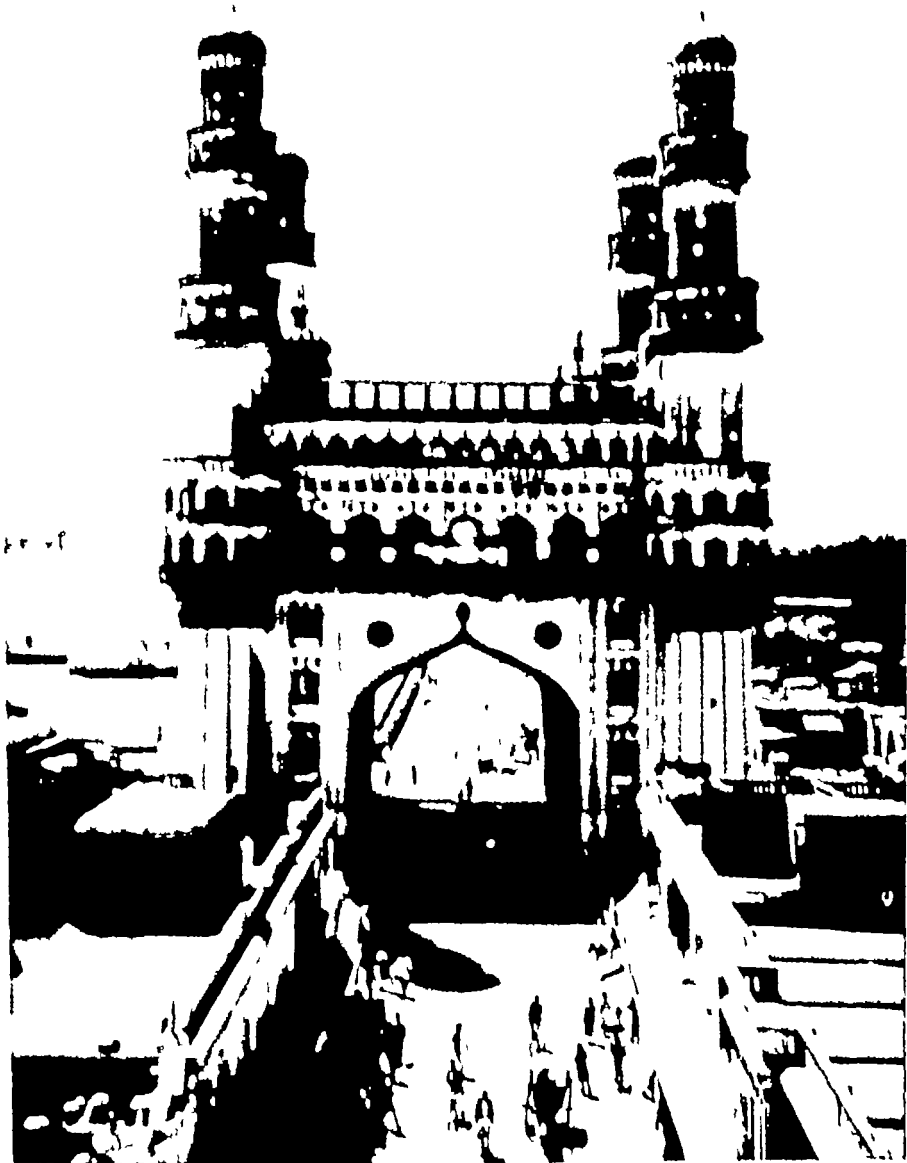
'That included what is now Pakistan, but they did not count all the fakirs and holy men, though many of them are beggars and nothing more.'

'That is what makes the beggar problem here so hard to solve', said Mr Gupta 'Both the Hindu and the Muslim religions teach that it is good to give charity——'

'Oh, but so does the Christian', Robert objected

'True' Mr Gupta acknowledged the correction 'But I did not see many beggars when I went to England, though I believe there are more in Southern Europe. All the same, your attitude is quite different. To beg is something shameful—it's a last resort—and you prefer to give your charity to hospitals and orphanages, not to chance people in the street. Here with us the beggar feels that he is doing us even more good than we are doing him. By taking our money, he is helping us along the road to Heaven!'

The train was slowing down 'This is Manmad, where we change', he said. 'It is not far to Aurangabad, and from there we shall hire a car to take us on to Ajanta.'



One of the buildings they remembered most in the fine city of Hyderabad was the archway of the Char Minar, or the Four Minarets, four centuries old, spanning one of the main streets.



Photos by courtesy of the High Commissioner for India



ABOVE: Home life was often very public for the poor, with their small houses wide open to the street. BELOW: Rice, staple food of the majority. This villager was carrying a sheaf home to be threshed by his wife with a heavy stick, or trodden by his buffalo, if he possessed one

PAINTED CAVES AND STONE ELEPHANTS

'Here we are', said Mr Gupta leaping out of his own taxi and opening the door of the other which Mr Woodstock had shared with Rina and Robert. 'This is Ajanta. This is ancient India—very different from Bombay.'

They had stopped in an open space on the bank of the Vagha River, which at this point swirled round a sharp bend, roaring in full strength, after the monsoon season. Steep precipices rose to dense green woods above. Here and there a waterfall came plunging down in a shimmering curve, strong and thin as a scimitar. A broad ledge like path ran looping along the face of the cliff, a third or a half of the way up. On to this path, at frequent intervals like buildings along a street, opened large caves with pillared entrances.

'What a beautiful place' said Carol.

Mr Gupta looked pleased. 'We have thought so for a long time—over two thousand years, in fact. It is curious that there has never been a village here. There has been a fair every year for centuries, and pilgrims came here long before the birth of Christ. They must have camped here on this very spot, where we now have this car park—it is the only suitable place in the gorge.'

They walked up to the caves, taking their time because the sun was beating down fiercely. Step by step they rose above the noise of the flooded river, until it was only a murmur beneath them, which they could cut out by stepping into the shadowy porticoes of the caves.

'How old are they?' asked Robert.

'The oldest date from about 200 B.C.'

'That's Buddha, isn't it?' inquired Carol, pointing to a carved figure which looked very familiar.

'But surely Buddhism isn't an Indian religion?' said her brother. 'I thought it belonged to China and Tibet and——'

'There are very few Buddhists in India', Mr Gupta agreed, 'but

it was once a great religion here Buddha was an Indian prince, you know'

'Was he? I never knew that'

'Later on, when you go to Benares, you will see the place where he began his teaching'

'I don't even know when he lived', Carol admitted

'In the sixth century B C—rather before the Battle of Marathon and the great age of Greek civilization.'

'You know all about Europe's history', Carol complained, 'and we don't know a thing about yours'

'A pity, my dear, but you will be able to make up for some lost time to-day.'

'Well, one thing I'd like to know what was India like when people first started carving out these caves?'

Mr Gupta gave his high little laugh 'A tall order! I must keep my answer short, or Robert will push me over into the river Well, Indian civilization, as you know, is very ancient The first true Indians—of what we call the Aryan race—came down into the country from the north about 2,000 B C Various kingdoms arose and flourished Gautama Buddha, as I said, was himself a prince Then, two or three centuries after he lived, there was a powerful king named Asoka He ruled over all that is now India and Pakistan and over Afghanistan as well It was he who became converted to the teaching of Buddha and—for the time being anyway—made it the chief religion in India'

'What were they before?' asked Carol 'Hindus?'

'Yes The Hindu religion is very old Our earliest scriptures, the Vedas, date back to 2,000 B C or even earlier, though we have other sacred books, the Puranas and the Mahabharata, which were written between the sixth and fourth centuries B C'

'Rather like our Old and New Testaments.'

Robert had been calculating 'Then the earliest of these caves must have been lived in soon after Asoka's time?'

'Yes They were monasteries in the golden age of Indian Buddhism' Mr Gupta led the way into the next cave. 'This was one of them, a *vihara*, or living-cave'

As their eyes grew accustomed to the dimmer light they could make out the individual cells which the yellow-robed monks must

have occupied so many centuries before. Each had its stone shelf for a bed—Buddha had taught his followers to be independent of physical comforts—and its niche where a lamp had stood

They went on into another cave, which Mr Gupta called a *chaitya* or place of assembly. It was elaborately decorated with sculptured figures, many of them plastered over and bright with painted colours

‘Beautiful?’ asked Ram

‘M’m . . .’ Carol answered. She thought them gay but rather weird, not only because they were so different in shapes and subjects from the art she was used to, but because the whole idea of putting paint on the top of sculpture seemed extraordinary. She was surprised when her father pointed out that the ancient Greeks had done exactly the same thing, and that the white marble statues she admired in museums at home had once been covered with reds and blues and golds

‘These paintings’, said Mr Gupta, ‘are some of the wonders of Indian art—and especially of Buddhist art. Its whole history and development can be traced through the caves from 200 B.C. to A.D. 600.’

Eight hundred years! Standing again by one of the stone beds, resting her elbow on the cold rock shelf where once a lamp had flickered, night after night, for so many centuries, Carol tried to realize what it meant. Eight centuries back from to-day would carry one beyond Magna Carta, beyond Robin Hood and Richard Cœur de Lion—yet in Indian history it was just a single period, a gap she could not fill with a single fact from her own knowledge. For eight hundred years the monks had slept and prayed in this shadowy cave, while the Romans came to Britain and built up a whole civilization and went away again . . . and—what was Mr Gupta saying?—from monasteries such as this the Buddhist monks went forth with their message to Burma and China and Tibet, so that when their religion perished in the land of its origin, it survived all over the Far East, down to to-day

‘—and so, by the time the last of the Ajanta caves were being painted—’ Mr Gupta’s brisk voice came to her through the gloom—‘the age of Asoka was only a memory. There had been more invasions from the north, kingdoms had risen and fallen,

there had been one great dynasty of kings you should be able to remember' (he laughed) 'if only because their name was Gupta! Buddhism declined in India, the power of the Brahmins, our Hindu priestly caste, became greater——'

'And then what happened to Ajanta?' Robert asked.

'Ajanta lost much of its importance. People began to go to a new centre not far away, and that is where we are going now—to Ellora.'

For the second time a steep mountainside rose in front of them, with waterfalls plunging down into the green valley in which they stood. Massive pillars and entrance halls had been hewn out of the basalt rock. Broad stairways stretched before them. Carved figures—gods and goddesses, lions and dwarfs, and other creatures—stared at them unwinking in the sunshine, which splashed deep shadows everywhere and made each figure stand out in even sharper relief. Raising their eyes they saw that the rock had been hollowed out in places into lofty upper chambers, with balconies and incredible cloisters, roofed by the millions of tons of mountain overhead.

This was Ellora. A Government attendant came forward, saluted Mr Gupta, and then after a few words with him fell back.

'We have the place to ourselves', said Mr Gupta, beckoning the others forward. 'Not so many visitors come here. They don't like the long dusty drive from Aurangabad.'

'It's well worth it', Carol murmured. She could not help dropping her voice as they walked through the passage under the entrance tower. It was like going into some fantastic cathedral. But only when they emerged into the daylight of the courtyard beyond did the full wonder of the place burst upon them.

Robert gripped her arm. 'Look! That elephant!'

It rose before them on its pedestal, life-sized yet dwarfed by its tremendous surroundings. It was sculptured from the same basalt as the mountain and the buildings.

'What a pity his trunk is broken', she said. 'He looks such a quiet, gentle old thing.'

Mrs Gupta laughed. 'Quiet, yes. He hasn't moved for more than a thousand years.'

'How old is this place?' Robert asked 'Who built it?'

'This part dates from about A D 760', said Mr Gupta. 'It wasn't "built" at all, strictly speaking. It was sculptured. They simply hewed out the rest of the mountain, and left what you see.'

'Not *all* of this?' He looked at the pagoda-like temple in the middle of the courtyard, soaring nearly a hundred feet into the dazzling sky, and his dark eyebrows went up comically. 'I can see how they've shaped the entrances to the caves, but this temple here is standing out in the open by itself. We've walked all round it—here we are back at the elephant. This *must* have been built.'

'Can you see any mortar? Can you see any joints in the stone?'

'No.' Robert frowned. 'It seems to be all in one piece.'

'It is. This is the Kailasa, one of the true wonders of the world. We might have paced the measurements—actually it is 280 feet long and 160 feet wide. And it is a true monolith, a single mass of stone!'

The others gasped. They looked up again at the massive temple in the middle of the courtyard. All around its base was a frieze of elephants, standing shoulder to shoulder, and seeming to carry the temple on their backs. Many of them had broken trunks. They had been damaged by Muslim invaders at a later period. 'Like Cromwell's Roundheads', Mr Gupta explained, 'they objected to images of any kind.'

'I still can't understand how this temple got here', said Robert. 'I suppose it was an isolated crag, standing apart from the main mountainside.'

'No.' Mr Gupta pointed to the edge of the precipice which rose, smooth as the face of a quarry, a hundred and fifty feet above their heads. 'Once it was all solid mountain above us. The ground-plan of this temple was marked out on the grass, and then the workmen cut down through the rock to where we are standing now. They left this oblong mass in the centre, to form the temple. Then they got to work and hollowed that out as well, cutting those steps and balconies, carving these elephants, and——'

Robert whistled. 'Gee! The stuff they had to shift!'

'About three million cubic feet.' Mr Gupta led the way into the shadowy interior of the Kailasa. His voice echoed strangely as they passed into a central hall which must have measured fifty

feet each way. Tall and sometimes terrifying figures confronted them on every wall. Carol shivered as they groped their way into a small dark chamber which was the holy of holies, the inner shrine of the great god Siva himself

'Kailasa', said Mr Gupta, 'is really the name of the mountain-heaven where Siva is supposed to live, high among the clouds in the Himalayas——'

'Like Jupiter on Olympus ?' Carol suggested.

'Yes, exactly Well, our King Krishna I had conquered all this region and wanted to celebrate his victory, so he decided to build a replica of Kailasa here, a sort of heaven on earth I don't suppose he ever lived to see it finished—it probably took about a hundred years '

Carol was suddenly reminded of a poem she had read at school As they stepped out into the sunshine again she was murmuring to herself

*'In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.'*

To her amazement young Ram took up the quotation. 'Coleridge might have been dreaming of this very valley', he said quickly.

*'But O, that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover !
A savage place ! As holy and enchanted——'*

'How on earth did you know *that* ?' she cried amazed

Ram stared 'But we learn English literature! Every educated person loves English literature—whatever they think of the British!' There was such a burst of laughter from the others that he looked quite upset

Mr Woodstock came to his rescue 'I'm just wondering', he mused, rubbing his long chin, 'how we can possibly give an idea of this place in the film '

'Oh, we must!' Carol insisted. 'It's terrific'

'May I suggest', said Mr Gupta, 'that you might begin by placing a camera up there on the cliff edge, and shooting down into the depths of the courtyard?'

'Ye-es Yes, that would give the right impression of the way everything has been dug out from above.'

'It's a pity it's too dark inside the Kailasa', Carol began without thinking, but Mr Gupta quickly pointed out that, with the Bombay film studios so near, it would be quite possible to bring out lighting equipment and take interiors, if her father wished.

They all felt sorry that so wonderful a place would have to be covered in half-a-dozen brief shots, or less. There was far more at Ellora than they themselves could see in a single visit. As at Ajanta, there was a whole series of caves strung along the scarp of the mountain—Buddhist to the south, then the Hindu group of the Kailasa in the middle, and the Jain caves lying apart to the north.

The Jains, Mr Gupta explained, were an ancient sect rather like Buddhists. They did not believe in God, or a Day of Judgment, or a life after death. They held all living creatures so sacred that they wore a muslin strip over their mouths, to avoid swallowing the tiniest insect from the air they breathed. It might be one of their own ancestors—a relation, even—reincarnated.

'There are still a few Jains—like the Parsees, they include some of the well-to-do merchants. You may see one of their temples when you go to Calcutta.'

They felt quite sorry when it was time to get into the taxis and leave Ellora. For, when they got back to the railway at Aurangabad and saw Moti squatting faithfully by their baggage, they knew that the moment of parting had arrived. The Guptas must return to Bombay, while the Woodstocks continued on their journey, eastwards into the heart of India.

MILES FROM ANYWHERE

'I SAY,' cried Robert, 'this place seems like the back of beyond! Miles from anywhere!'

Mr Woodstock smiled. 'That's why we're going there. What we've got to remember all the time is this—nearly everybody in India lives "miles from anywhere", as you call it. Modern cities like Bombay aren't typical. *No* town is typical. Only one Indian in twenty-five lives in a town—and nine out of ten actually work on the land in some way.'

They were drinking tea on the shady veranda of the dakhungalow at Pipariya, the small station where they had just got out of the Calcutta Mail.

'As we *have* to wait an hour before the bus goes, this is a good spot to pass the time.' Carol stretched herself back in the long cane chair, dangling her sun glasses. 'In fact I can't see where else we could have waited—except on the platform.'

There certainly did not seem to be many counter-attractions. The most interesting features of the view were a large and forbidding notice reminding them that they had now entered a bad malarial district, and a no less forbidding water-buffalo which surveyed them across the garden fence, as though it would very much have liked to get at them.

'And *this* is on the main line between Calcutta and Bombay', Robert commented.

'I think there's some sort of a town on the other side of the line', said his father.

'Well, what sort of dump can Pachmarhi be—if it's over thirty miles from a railway of any kind?'

'That's what we'll have to find out. That looks like the bus—I think we'd better be moving over.'

The bus was a dilapidated single-decker affair with a charcoal-burning contraption at the rear. Moti was much upset because they would not take a taxi, but they wanted the experience. There

was no gangway, so that each row of seats had its own door. The Woodstocks saw their bags hoisted on to the roof and made fast, and then took their places in the front seats, immediately behind the cheerful and perpetually chewing driver. The rest of the bus was already filled with a chattering and chewing crowd, among whom sat Moti with conscious dignity. After a few anxious moments with the engine they started off.

At first the road ran straight and dead level between rows of trees. 'If these were poplars', said Mr Woodstock, 'it would pass for France.'

'Only you wouldn't see all these bullock-carts', Carol pointed out. The main traffic consisted of dozens of two-wheeled carts, each with a pair of pale-coloured bullocks yoked to it. They came singly and in convoys, some laden with hay, others with timber, but in most cases the driver was dozing and the bullocks were lurching all over the road. The bus-driver's method was to honk loudly, accelerate, and hope for the best. It seemed to work all right. The bus went through, although the carts often went swerving wildly into the wayside fields.

After a midway stop at a small village, the scenery changed completely. The road began to climb steeply, zig-zagging through thick woodlands which might have been those at home though Mr Woodstock said they were 'jungle'.

'I thought jungle would be dark and all tangled, so you could hardly push through', said Robert.

'With tigers and things', added Carol.

'You get jungle like that in Bengal', said their father, 'but actually "jungle"—we get the word from Hindustani—means any sort of forest.'

The driver turned round, grinning and showing red-stained teeth, and said something they did not catch. 'He says there *is* a tiger—a man-eater—bothering the district just now. But mostly there are only panthers round here.'

'Only!' echoed Carol, and was glad for once that they were in the bus and not hiking.

'C P is about the best game district in India, you know.'

'What's C.P., Dad?'

'Central Provinces. Now renamed Madhya Pradesh.'

'Look !' broke in Robert excitedly.

'What ?' cried Carol.

'Look, you egg! Monkeys!'

A dozen or more grey monkeys were surveying them from the next bend in the road. As the bus groaned up towards them, they rose in a body and went scampering up the mountain like greyhounds, till they were lost among the trees.

'They can certainly move', said Robert

'I love their curly tails Like question-marks!'

They saw no more animals, though the driver told them that he often saw panthers as he drove up and down—but always at night, when his headlights caught them unexpectedly at a corner

'Fancy driving up and down this road in the dark!' said Carol with a shudder. 'Just look there!'

The woods—in fact the whole world—had suddenly fallen away on the left of the road, and only a line of big stones, daubed with whitewash, stood between them and space Mr Woodstock said something to the driver, the bus pulled up, and they got out—Carol rather gingerly, and keeping tight hold of the hand her father had given her

It was, as Robert said, 'some precipice'. It fell sheer for hundreds of feet Far, far below, greyish water swirled over cruel rocks The opposite side of the gorge was just as sheer. It might have been cut by a cake-knife

'You'll see plenty more precipices', their father assured them, shepherding them back into the bus 'I'm told the plateau we're going to is surrounded by them on all sides—this road is the only way up for a car.'

'A sort of island in the air', said Carol

'Well, a peninsula anyhow.'

The plateau did not look at all like an island in the air—at least from the small hotel where they stayed. It was almost flat, grassy and tree-dotted, tame as a park. Pleasant-looking bungalows were sprinkled about the landscape and there was even a golf-course

'Many European families used to live here', the hotel manager explained to them. 'It is very healthy—we are three thousand feet

above sea level. It is never too hot, in fact, in winter we burn log fires and there is sometimes frost—just a little. In the summer, the Government of C P used to move up here for several months’

‘Quite a place, in fact’, Mr Woodstock chuckled when they were alone again. ‘No electricity except in Government House and the cinema, which make their own—no telephone except at the post-office, no water taps, and no sanitation.’

‘And this was the summer capital of a Province?’ said Robert.

‘Yes. But to be fair we must remember it’s one of the poorest and most backward of the provinces. But if this was the summer capital you can imagine what the really remote villages must be like.’

There was time for a walk before dusk, so they set off to explore the bazaar, which consisted of three parallel streets, a tiny square, and a few connecting lanes, covering a slope which rose from a stream. There were several shops of Western style—one bore the name, in English, of ‘The Fancy Millinery’, but there was certainly nothing in it which attracted Carol. Most of the shops, however, were open to the road, and in many of them the proprietor dozed among his stock, or even on a rope bed or *charpoy* set up for the purpose. There seemed to be a great number of *dhurzis*, or tailors, some pedalling with bare feet at Singer machines. There were several watch repairers, a cobbler, a Kashmiri silk merchant, and a photographer. Half the shops contained little more than a few undersized coconuts and bananas, and baskets full of various grains and meals.

Traffic was confined to an occasional cyclist, a home-going stream of scraggy cows and goats, and an excited bunch of small boys who came lurching out of a side lane on stilts.

‘That would make a good shot for the film!’ Robert exclaimed.

‘It’s an idea’, Mr Woodstock agreed with a smile. ‘We’ll have to note all the games Indian children play, and work in what we can.’

‘I’ve seen hopscotch’, said Carol.

‘And they play snobs’, added Robert. ‘You know, Dad—knuckle-bones.’

‘And look—the boys down there by the stream are kicking a football! We’ll get quite a list before we finish.’

By this time the sky was turning half the colours of the rainbow—the roofs of the bazaar stood out black against a glorious back-cloth of pink and gold, turquoise and orange and, as they turned back towards the hotel, they saw fantastically-shaped crags rising along the western horizon

‘I think that’s Dhupgarh’, said Mr Woodstock, pointing out one magnificent purple mountain. ‘If so, it’s the highest peak in Central India.’

‘What’s that weird one to the left, Dad ? It’s so square it doesn’t look natural ’

‘That must be Chauragarh. It must give a good view over the country Kipling describes in the *Jungle Books*. And the peak between is Mahadeo, where the god of that name lives—it’s one of the holiest mountains in the country ’

‘I wish we could climb one’, said Carol wistfully

‘There’s no reason why we shouldn’t, later on ’

Nor was there. The climate proved ideal for walking, though they found it convenient to hire bicycles in the bazaar to cover the first few level miles with which most trips began. One day they climbed Dhupgarh, which was 4,429 feet, a little higher than Ben Nevis but a much easier walk, since they started from a point scarcely a thousand feet below. A more strenuous trip was the ascent of Chauragarh, which involved climbing down and then up again over a very rough trail, finishing with hundreds of stone steps. It was a long day-trip. Moti went with them, and they took a coolie to carry the picnic basket

‘These steps were made for the pilgrims’, panted Mr Woodstock, mopping his brow. ‘There’s no other way up the mountain ’

‘I can see there isn’t’, said Carol. ‘It’s sheer precipice all round.’

‘What beats me’, Robert called back over his shoulder, ‘is why pilgrims *want* to come up here. I thought Mahadeo was the really holy mountain, where the god lived ?’

‘Yes. But it’s so very holy, they won’t set foot on it. They come next-door, so to speak ’

‘Well, here we are on the top, thank goodness!’ Robert disappeared from view. As the others clambered wearily up the last of the steps, the boy’s face re-appeared. ‘I *say*! Come and look here!’

‘What is it now?’

‘Great toasting-forks—millions of them!’

‘*Toasting-forks?*’ Carol looked at her father with a scared expression. ‘Do you think Robert’s got a touch of the sun?’ She was both relieved and amazed to find, as she topped the final step, that her brother was—in a sense—quite right.

The flat top of the mountain was littered with iron tridents ranging from small ones which might conveniently have held a muffin before the fire to great six-footers which Neptune would have been proud to wield. There might not be millions, but there were certainly many thousands. It looked as though they had been accumulating for ages. For the first five minutes the discovery quite blinded the climbers to the view of wooded gorges and crags that was laid at their feet on all sides.

‘Gosh!’ said Robert, selecting a handy little weapon about two feet long. ‘I’m having one of these.’

‘You’re certainly not’, said Mr Woodstock.

‘Just for a souvenir, Dad! They wouldn’t miss just one toasting-fork—not a titchy one like this.’

‘See here, once for all!’ Mr Woodstock sounded unusually stern. ‘These tridents are religious offerings. Anything connected with religion is dynamite in this country. If we were seen carrying one of these tridents back to the hotel . . . well, I don’t know for sure what would happen, but it might be very, very unpleasant for us.’

‘Sorry, Dad. I see. Of course, we shouldn’t like it if a Hindu walked into one of our cathedrals and helped himself to a souvenir off the altar.’

‘No Hindu would do such a thing. I’m afraid their manners in religious matters are rather better than ours.’

‘I wonder’, broke in Carol, ‘*why* the pilgrims bring tridents and leave them here?’

‘I fancy, my dear, that’s one of the things we ought to find out.’

A DRAGON—AND A PANTHER

It was not long before they solved the mystery of the tridents

That evening there arrived in the hotel a shrunken little Scotsman, with piercing blue eyes, frosty-grey hair, and a brown wrinkled face like an old russet apple.

'MacIntyre's the name', he told them after dinner. 'Shipping's my line. Calcutta I've been comin' up here every year for longer than I care to remember' His mouth crinkled into a smile 'I like this country When the rest o' the British have quit India, ye'll still see Tam MacIntyre comin' up here for his bit o' holiday.'

When they told him of their day's doings he laughed, his round grey head on one side like a bird's 'Toastin'-forks, eh? And ye've not heerd tell o' the local dragon?'

They sat down on the veranda, with iced lemonades or whisky-and-sodas according to age, and the old Scot told them, between puffs at his pipe, the legend of the Mahadeo Hills

Long ago the people of the plateau had been troubled by a huge dragon. Like other dragons of legend this monster had been particularly fond of eating beautiful young virgins—indeed, it had come to the point when it refused all substitutes This was naturally most distressing to the parents of the girls and to the young men who would otherwise have married them

'And what about the girls themselves?' Carol interjected indignantly.

Mr MacIntyre paused, glass in hand, solemn as a bishop 'It was no' quite the future they'd looked for, either', he admitted, as if the point had not occurred to him previously.

'What happened?'

'Well, people realized it couldna' go on like that for ever—there'd be no girls left—so they prayed extra hard to their god That's Mahadeo, who lives on the mountain yonder He's more often known under his other name o' Siva, the Destroyer.'

'We saw statues of him at Ellora', put in Robert. 'The Kailasa there is supposed to be a copy of his heavenly palace.'

'Ah, weel, they prayed to Mahadeo, and at last he heard them. "I'll soon put a stop to this", says he, and he ups with his trident—none of your wee toastin'-forks but a terrible great one. Then he looks down at the dragon, cringin' there like a scared pup, and "What shall we do wi' *you*?" he says. Then he strikes the earth with his trident, and the earth opens, and Mahadeo pops in the dragon, as calm as if he were postin' a letter in a pillar-box. And to show their gratitude the people go every year to the next-door mountain and leave little tridents, as they do to this day.' He whipped round and met their laughter with a grave expression. 'Ye don't believe me? Ye think I'm pullin' your legs?'

At this first encounter they did not quite know how to take him. 'Oh, no', protested Robert, 'but it's only a legend, isn't it? You don't seriously expect us—'

'Not another word!' Mr MacIntyre put down his empty glass with a determined air. 'I'll show ye to-morrow mornin'—ye'll see for ye'selves.'

They set out on bicycles straight after breakfast. A level ride of about three miles brought them to a turn in the road where they could see, through the trees in front, that the edge of the plateau fell away into pale distances.

'We'll push our machines across the grass', said Mr MacIntyre grimly. 'Many years ago there was a young Englishman ridin' his cycle hame fra a late party. He forgot the bend in the road and he came straight on.'

'Hadrn't he a lamp?' asked Robert. 'Surely he'd have seen those white railings in front?'

'The railin's were no' there. They were put up afterwards—straight afterwards', said the old Scotsman significantly.

'I'm not surprised', Carol exclaimed, as they reached the railings. For a few moments all the colour went out of her face.

They had seen some dizzy precipices since their arrival in the hills but never had they come so suddenly to the very lip of such a chasm. Even Robert held very tightly to the rail as he craned over.

'This is where Mahadeo tapped the earth with his trident', said Mr MacIntyre dryly.

They were standing at the head of the chasm. It stretched away from them into the distance, long, deep, and narrow, its two sides formed of sheer cliffs tufted with vegetation, and its floor hidden beneath a tangle of wild mango and other trees. From where they stood it was a sheer drop of about three hundred feet.

'Science calls it an interestin' geological fault', went on the old Scotsman in the same dry tone, 'but I havna' tried explainin' that to the folk hereabouts. They prefer the dragon story.'

They were sorry they could not see more of Mr MacIntyre, but he went off most evenings and spent half the night waiting for panthers which most inconsiderately failed to turn up. This meant that he slept through the morning and rose only in time to join the Woodstocks over a pot of tea.

One useful hint he gave them. Central Provinces contained many of the aboriginal tribes who had lived in the country before the Aryans came four thousand years ago. He held them enthralled with stories of these primitive people who still kept many of their ancient ways of life in out-of-the-way corners of India. He told them of the Englishman, Verrier Elwin, who had made his home with them, even taking a wife from among them.

'He's written books about them, I'm thinkin'. What was that one called now? I have it—*Leaves from the Jungle*, that was it.'

'Does he live near here?' asked Mr Woodstock quickly.

Mr MacIntyre shook his head. 'No. The other side o' C.P. Gonds he lives wi'. They're Korkus hereabouts.'

'You mean there *are* some aboriginals here?'

'Och aye! There's a whole village o' 'em oot at Rori Ghat—just a walk, ye ken, fra the motor road to Dhupgarh. But ye'd best no go visitin' wi'oot ye get the Government permit.' His eyes twinkled. 'Government likes to protect 'em fra the wicked ways o' the ootside world. Vulgar sightseers are no' encouraged.'

'I like that!' said Carol indignantly.

They got permission without much difficulty. They had to go to the Tahsil, a large bungalow-like building at the main cross-roads, which was the centre of local government for the plateau. An armed policeman in blue and white came smartly to the salute as they crossed the veranda.

The Naib Tahsildar welcomed them in perfect English and with equally perfect courtesy. After their business was settled he showed them the little court room where cases were tried and the Treasury which acted as bank to the locality

'I am a little bit of everything', he explained with a laugh 'I am town clerk, magistrate, chief constable, food controller when necessary—rather like Pooh Bah, the Lord High Everything in your opera the *Mikado*!'

'You must have to know a lot', Carol ventured.

'Oh, qualifications are necessary, of course I hold the degree of M A and I am also a barrister-at-law But what one needs even more is common sense and patience. And a sense of humour!'

It was clear that the Naib Tahsildar possessed that, at least. On their way home Mr Woodstock remarked.

'To think he has to do all that—and *be* all that—for a miserable two hundred rupees a month!' Then, before either of them could make the calculation in their heads, he added 'That's rather less than my sergeant major had for pocket-money when I was out here in the war! And he had his uniform and rations and quarters provided, and his family in England were getting their allowances into the bargain!'

'Under four pounds a week', said Robert

'Yet he's a millionaire compared with the policeman on the veranda He'll get about forty rupees a month, all told, I should think—just about one-fifth as much'

'They must live much more cheaply than we do', Carol suggested

Her father snorted 'That's how we've always liked to comfort ourselves in the past I won't say it's all hooey, but it's only true to a certain extent They don't live *that* much more cheaply, especially since the war put prices up No, the underpaid official is just another of the problems in India. That's why there's so much bribery and corruption By all accounts this chap we've just seen is one of the very straight ones—but you can imagine the temptation when all sorts of black marketeers and other scallywags are pushing bribes across your desk every day!'

It was not difficult to pick up the trail to Rom Ghat It branched off from the motor road and, after running straight and level for

a few hundred yards across the grass, plunged purposefully into a steep glen. It was a clean, sandy track, twisting and turning through a world of green, rugged shagginess and soft blue shadows.

There was no sign of life except for a few white butterflies and an occasional bird. Once they stopped at the sight of a crested woodpecker, with a gay red plume like a dragoon's. But mostly the jungle was lifeless, as they had learnt by now to expect. They no longer had sneaking fears that a panther might be waiting round the next corner; they knew that the panthers, and the graceful Sambur deer, and most of the other game, slept during the day and came out at night. The only wild animals they ever seemed to see were the baboons, and the only danger to guard against was a possible snake which might be trodden on amid dead leaves or undergrowth.

'Carry a stick', Mr MacIntyre advised them. 'Snakes hear better than they see. They catch the vibration o' the stick tappin' the ground, an' they're glad enough to go wrigglin' awa'. An' if they don't, weel, the stick comes in handy just the same.'

So the Woodstocks trudged on, their sticks tapping on the frequent boulders, though if there had been a snake lying across the path they would have seen it ten paces before they reached it.

There was rather a switchback tendency about the path, but the general direction was downhill. Lower and lower they dropped beneath the level of the plateau. For a mile or two they were hemmed in by steep hillsides and could see very little—just the tall mango-trees, the densely-clustered bamboos, and once a grey stream splashing down over grey rocks through a twilight wood. Then, after clattering down a dry, rocky defile, they suddenly came out upon an open crest and gained a wider view.

The wooded ranges rolled away ahead of them like the waves of the sea, green at first, then blue and soft as wood smoke. At their feet, scarcely a mile away, lay a bright green clearing of small cultivated fields, with a straggle of huts in the middle.

It was quite an exciting moment. Standing on that crest and looking down, Robert felt like an old-time explorer bursting upon one of those lost worlds so popular in adventure stories. But Rori Ghat was anything but Eldorado, as they quickly found.

The inhabitants streamed out to meet them as they drew near. The Korkus were swarthy, undersized people, dressed in soiled rags that had once been white. They spoke a dialect of Hindi which Moti could not understand, so that the more involved questions and answers had to pass through Moti and the coolie who was carrying the picnic basket, Moti translating from English to Hindustani, and the coolie turning that into the local speech.

The headman of the village answered all their questions with great dignity. He was the only man who could read and write, and he was paid ten rupees a year for his services to the Government. His house was slightly better than the others, which consisted of sagging thatched roofs with bamboo screens for walls. His doorway was ornamented with crude carvings.

'Are they Hindus?' Carol asked.

Moti shrugged his shoulders rather contemptuously. 'They *call* themselves so, mem-sahib.' It was obvious that Moti with his pale skin and delicate features did not consider that he had much in common with these unkempt aborigines.

They walked slowly through the village. There were about a hundred and fifty people, said the headman—twenty-five families. Yes, they were very poor. In the cold weather they had to keep their fires going all night and huddle round them, because the children had no clothes and could not sleep.

'I can believe that', Robert muttered to his sister, indicating the naked, pot-bellied toddlers who were peering round the doorway of almost every hut. The mothers did not seem to be on view. However inquisitive they might have been feeling, they stayed in the background, pounding and grinding meal in the shadows.

Rope beds, or *charpoy*s, were brought out and placed in the shade of a gnarled and ancient banyan-tree.

'This seems to be where we have lunch', said Mr Woodstock. As they sat down, somewhat gingerly, on the flimsy bedsteads, the whole of the male population squatted down in a semi-circle to watch.

'I feel like something out of the zoo', Carol whispered as she unpacked the basket. A fire was soon going and they emptied their water-bottles into the kettle. They were taking no chances with water from the village.

Over lunch they found out more about the life of the Korkus. They owned about a hundred cattle and buffaloes between them, and they grew crops in their small fields. When the crops were good, they had a surplus to sell in the town then they had money to buy kerosene oil, cloth, and other necessities. When the crops failed they went out and worked for the Government on the roads. They did a little hunting, but they had no guns now. They picked up whatever food they could in the jungle—they made a kind of flour, for instance, by pounding the kernels of the wild mangoes.

Unfortunately all these questions gave the headman and his neighbours the mistaken idea that the Woodstocks were important Government officials of some kind. There was some excuse for the error. Who but Government officials would visit Rori Ghat? And who but Government officials would ask so many questions? They had probably heard long ago in the bazaar that the sahibs were leaving and returning to their own country, but what was that rumour worth when they could see Mr Woodstock eating egg sandwiches in the shadow of their own banyan-tree?

Nothing that he could say would rid the Korkus of the notion that the sahibs were highly important persons and that any complaint laid before them would be instantly put right. Thick and fast came their petitions, tumbling from Moti's lips in his slightly singsong English.

'And, sahib, he say, will Government make a new road——'

'And this man, sahib, he say Government doctor should come here once in every month, but it is five months now since——'

'And, sahib, they say a panther has killed one of their cows, and they have no gun now, so will Government——'

'Here, wait a moment!' Mr Woodstock stemmed the flow. 'MacIntyre Sahib might be able to help with the panther. Let's have all the details.'

How they persuaded their father they never quite knew. It was really Mr MacIntyre who carried the day, snorting through his gingery nostrils that there was no danger whatever in the world, but that if they fidgeted or chattered they would find him, Tam MacIntyre, far more ferocious than any spotted quadruped. Even when the time came, and they found themselves crouching on the

tiny platform wedged half-way up a tree, they could hardly believe that it was real, and not a dream.

To the old Scotsman it was just a pleasant routine. If the panther came back to its kill, he told them—and if, of course, he bagged it—it would be his thirty-ninth. 'But they don't always give ye a chance', he warned the children, 'so ye'll no' be blamin' me if ye have the lang walk back from Rori Ghat for naethin'.'

He had his own favourite platform which a coolie carried on every shooting trip. It was just an old *charpoy*, adapted a little, with extra cords to lash it securely in position, ten or twelve feet above the ground. Another similar bedstead was borrowed from the villagers for Mr Woodstock and the children. It was rigged up in another tree, for Mr MacIntyre refused to be flustered by having them too near.

The half-eaten carcass of the cow, by this time stinking to high heaven, lay on the ground near the foot of his tree, twenty yards or more from the others but, as Carol remarked with a sniff, quite near enough.

They climbed into position just as dusk was falling. There was not much room for three of them, but the criss-cross rope mattress, sagging under their weight, was surprisingly comfortable, though Robert complained that if he sat on it all night he would carry the pattern for the rest of his life.

'I suppose a panther couldn't jump as high as this?' Carol inquired nervously.

'Nay—but they're canny climbers', Mr MacIntyre assured her from his own perch.

'He's only pulling your leg', Mr Woodstock whispered in her ear. 'If we get bitten by anything it'll be mosquitoes. Roll down your shirt-sleeves, Robert, and both of you put some of this cream on your hands and faces.'

'We'll stop the gossip now, if ye don't mind, laddie', said Mr MacIntyre. After that, nobody spoke.

It would not be true to say that there was silence. The jungle noises seemed to swell like a radio background as they sat there motionless. Insects buzzed, leaves rustled. Further off there were frogs croaking in chorus, the sound rising and falling monotonously for all the world like the heavy breathing of a drunken sleeper.

It was cold now, and dark. The moon would not rise till late. The stars were icy-silver. Robert tried to find the Plough, failed, and looked for the Southern Cross. The sky was so different from the one he knew, but he made out Orion's Belt.

Was that old panther ever coming? It had seemed such fun—so exciting—when they had persuaded Mr MacIntyre to bring them. Now he was not so sure. The night would be long, and equally long would be that trudge home to breakfast. He wished the Korkus lived on a motor road or ran a hotel.

Carol's fingers closed so suddenly on his wrist that he nearly let out a cry of surprise. He was about to tell her not to be a jumpy little fool when he remembered what the Scotsman had said: there mustn't be a squeak from any of them.

Just like Carol to mistake some harmless rustle of the wind for a panther, and start getting all——

His thought never finished in words. A white, pencil-thin beam of light spurted slantwise across the blackness. There was a flash and a bang that went echoing away among the rocky gorges. The *charpoy* rocked like a boat in rough water. Carol screamed, her father swore, and Robert left them suddenly amid a loud snapping of branches.

From somewhere unpleasantly near them came a mighty growling and snarling. Then silence.

'Keep still, all o' ye!' Mr McIntyre called. 'I want to mak' sure I've finished the brute.'

He switched on his torch—not the one he carried on the barrel of his rifle, but a larger one which cast a more diffused light. Close beside the dead cow lay a fresh body, paws crooked and hanging limp in death.

'Who's that doon there?' barked the Scotsman. 'What in the name o' thunder d'ye think ye're doin'?'

'It's me, Mr MacIntyre.' Robert spoke very meekly from somewhere on the fringe of the circle of light. 'I—I fell off the bed——'

Carol was so relieved she let out a most unsympathetic laugh. 'You mustn't say that when you tell this story at home', she said, when Mr MacIntyre had given them all permission to descend. 'People will think you dreamt the whole thing.'

'Not if ye show 'em the evidence, lassie', said Mr MacIntyre, his

genial old self now that he was satisfied all was well. He flashed his torch over the panther so that they could admire the beautiful leopard-like markings of the skin 'Have ye a room o' ye own, Carol, when ye're at hame ?'

'Why—yes——'

'And would ye fancy this fellow as a wee rug at ye bedside, if I got his skin cured for ye in Calcutta ?'

She hardly knew what to say 'Oh, but really—I——'

'It's yours, lassie After all', said Mr MacIntyre modestly, groping for his pipe, 'tis no' the first I've shot—that'd be different '

THE RICHEST MAN IN THE WORLD

HYDERABAD was the next place Mr Woodstock wanted to visit.

'Hyderabad?' said Robert 'I used to have some Hyderabad stamps in my collection Now why should Hyderabad have stamps of its own? Bombay doesn't'

'Hyderabad was a separate state'. His father unfolded a map of India which showed Hyderabad as a large yellow blotch The whole country was a patchwork of blues and reds and other colours 'Of course, this map was printed before 1947', he explained

'You can see that', Carol agreed, 'because it doesn't show Pakistan'

'But it does show the States—or some of them. Many were much too small to show. There were five hundred and sixty-two altogether! Some of them had only a few thousand people and you could have walked across their territory after dinner, but they each had their own little princeling all the same'

'But why on earth——?' Robert demanded.

'That's old history now, and it doesn't much matter, because the States are going You see, they were never conquered When the East India Company was gradually spreading its power over India, many of these rajahs saw the red light. So they made treaties with the British and became allies on condition that they were left free to manage their own business inside their boundaries'

'And were they?'

'Pretty well Many people say, far too much The British gave them advice but they seldom interfered, unless the State got into a terrible mess Curiously enough, the chief complaint of the Indian people—both inside the States and out—was that the British didn't interfere enough'

'Why ever was that?'

'Well, I think *some* of the princes (not all) behaved abominably

—they kept their peoples back and thought only of their own comfort. They'd keep up a sort of Arabian Nights magnificence, or they'd go off and enjoy themselves in London and Paris, while their subjects might as well have been living in the Middle Ages'

'Fine sort of rulers', said Carol

'Oh, they weren't *all* like that.'

'And did you say there weren't any of these States now?' Robert inquired

'That's a problem that isn't finally cleared up yet'

'India's all problems if you ask me'

His father smiled 'I wish all India's problems had gone as far to solution as this has' When Britain gave up her power to the two new governments, the question was what should happen to the States? Britain couldn't give them to India or to Pakistan, because they weren't hers to give to anybody They were old allies, each with its own treaty with the King-Emperor'

'I should think they ought to do as they like', said Carol. 'Couldn't they just stay as they were—independent?'

'Not very well Not in the modern world They were far too small and weak And if they were to choose between India and Pakistan *who* was to choose? Usually the people of the state had no votes and the prince governed just as he pleased'

Robert pored over the map again. 'The commonsense thing would be for each state to join the country which lies all round it. It'd be silly if some bit of country about the size of a tennis-court said it wanted to join Pakistan when it's lying bang in the middle of India And vice versa.'

Mr Woodstock nodded 'You'll be gratified to know they've taken your advice, even before you gave it Generally speaking, the States have joined the new country to which they belong by geography The problem of Hyderabad wasn't so simple, but she was finally joined to the Indian Union in 1949'

'What was the difficulty?' asked Carol

'We must look for the reasons when we get there'

One reason was soon obvious, the size of Hyderabad State

To avoid a tiresome cross-country train journey they had returned to Bombay by the Calcutta express and then, after a night

at the Guptas', they had taken the Tata air liner which called at Hyderabad City en route for Madras. They had not been in the air long when a fellow passenger, a young Muslim in western clothes, pointed down at the hills unrolling beneath them and told them that they were already over State territory.

'It doesn't look any different', said Carol foolishly, staring down

'Why should it?' said her father. 'It's all part of the same great Deccan Plateau—we were on the northern edge of it in Central Provinces. And you've already been in Hyderabad State without realizing it—when we went to Ellora and Ajanta.'

'It must be a big State', said Robert.

'As big as England and Scotland together', said the friendly Muslim, 'though there are not so many people. Seventeen or eighteen million, I think. Even so, that is more than in many European nations.'

'Almost big enough to stand alone.'

'Quite big enough', retorted the Muslim. 'All that we needed was an outlet to the sea—just a narrow corridor. It would hurt nobody—'

'Why did you want to remain separate?' Mr Woodstock inquired cautiously.

The Indian's eyes flashed. He began to speak very rapidly and excitedly, so that they could catch only part of what he was saying. But they gathered that Hyderabad had been most progressive. Its people were better educated than those of the new republics, they had efficient government, fine health services, and so on and so forth. . . They did not see the point of being swallowed up by India, and having their high standards dragged down to the average level.

He was still holding forth when the 'plane circled and came gracefully down on the airfield outside the capital. This was an overnight stop, so that all the passengers got out and drove off to hotels, except those who, like the Muslim, lived in the city. A dark-skinned Madras naval officer who had also been in the 'plane tackled the Woodstocks at the first opportunity.

'You know of course why your friend was so anxious his State should remain independent?'

'No', Mr Woodstock answered, still cautious, though he had a shrewd idea

'He is a Muslim', snorted the officer 'If it were a question of Hyderabad's joining Pakistan he would argue quite the other way! But Hyderabad could only join India. It is surrounded on all sides by India—no wonder he would have liked an outlet to the sea! The majority of the population are Hindus.' He lowered his voice and glanced round the hotel lounge. 'If it were not that Hyderabad has a Muslim prince and some faithful followers like your friend of this afternoon, Hyderabad would have thrown in its lot with us in the first place, and not caused so much trouble.'

Robert and Carol found these political arguments both tiresome and confusing. They were more interested when the officer went on to tell them about the man in whose capital they had just arrived.

His Exalted Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad, they learned, was the richest man in the world. He owned a tenth of all the land in his territories, while another three-eighths belonged to his nobles. 'Progress?' hooted the Madrasí, forgetting to keep his voice down. 'What is this but feudalism?' He went on to tell them of the Nizam's fabulous treasures—how his jewels alone had been valued at £375,000,000. 'Once', he said, 'the Nizam decided to have his pearls graded according to size. They brought them out, sack after sack——'

'Sacks?' echoed Carol unbelievably.

'Sack after sack', insisted the officer. 'They spread them on the flat roof—they went on spreading them till the roof of every building in the palace was covered as if with a carpet of pearls. It took them two or three days. And when they had finished they had to put them all back. The Nizam realized that the grading would be too long a job.'

His tone was one of withering scorn. Carol knew she was expected to disapprove. She dared not speak the thought in her mind—how she would have liked to see the pearls spread over the flat roofs of the palace in a display that would have staggered even Aladdin. She was glad that Robert tactfully changed the subject by asking the officer about the Indian Navy. She liked the Madrasí better when he was less indignant and talking about the beloved sloop in which he served.

There was no doubt about it, Hyderabad was a fine city and they enjoyed exploring it the next day. The main streets were wide, clean, and modern. Smart policemen directed traffic which ranged from lumbering bullock-carts to swift, sleek cars. New buildings glistened whitely in the sun, but frequent trees helped to break the glare. Nor was it too hot, for they were now well into October, and as Hyderabad stood high on the plateau the air had quite a bracing quality.

In the morning they saw the Osmania University, founded in 1918, the first Indian university to teach entirely in Urdu.

'That's the Muslim and Army name for Hindustani', Mr Woodstock explained. 'It's the nearest thing to a common language in India—but even so there are millions and millions of people who don't understand it, especially in the South. Hindus write it in one alphabet from left to right, using a lot of Sanskrit words, and Muslims use another alphabet from right to left, and bring in more words from Persian and Arabic, so that complicates matters still more.'

'I know,' burst in Robert quickly, 'it's "one of the problems of India"!'

'Well, it is', his father agreed with a laugh.

'What language did the other universities use then?' asked Carol, a little puzzled.

'Oh, English. But here at Osmania, apparently, they have Urdu for everything—and you can imagine what that means, because they teach pretty well everything that's taught in a western university, engineering, medicine, the whole bag of tricks. Just think of the text-books they need! They have a State Bureau of Translations to look after that side.'

They saw other impressive public buildings, the High Court with its many domes and turrets, set back amid spacious green lawns and feathery fountains, the State Library, the Falaknuma Palace, which they were told was reckoned among the outstanding examples of modern architecture in India, and the graceful minaret-crowned arch of the Char Minar spanning the street, and dating from 1549.

What struck them most of all was the Mecca Masjid Mosque, which, an old man informed them as they stood admiring it, would

THE RICHEST MAN IN THE WORLD

hold ten thousand of the faithful at prayer. But there was something else which Carol, at least, felt she would remember

'Whose palace is that?' she had asked, pointing to a fairy-like structure with glistening white domes. And they had found out that it was no palace at all but the Sadar Shifa Khana Hospital. It seemed that not all the money in Hyderabad was spent on pearls

After lunch the children voted for a visit to the Zoo. They were walking along there when a peculiar thing happened. All of a sudden a police-whistle shrilled in the distance. Then the constable on point-duty nearby pulled out his own whistle and blew. The signal was taken up right along the street.

All traffic stopped. The cars slid in to the kerb with a squeal of brakes. The bullock drivers snatched at the tails of their animals, twisting them until the oxen swerved hurriedly to the side. Cyclists dismounted. Even the passers-by stood still on the pavement.

'Whatever's happening?' cried Carol. When the police-whistles had first shrilled out she had looked hastily round with a nervous hope of seeing either a runaway elephant or a smash-and-grab raid. But every one else looked so quiet and calm she began to wonder if it was a religious custom, and whether she ought to go down on her knees and pray.

A man with a bicycle noticed their puzzled looks and called softly from where he was standing. 'His Exalted Highness will drive by in a moment!'

'His Exalted Highness!' It seemed too good to be true that to-day, on their very first afternoon in Hyderabad, they were going to see this prince of the million pearls. What would he be like? Would he ride on a black Arab charger or an elephant with gilded tusks? Or, as his capital was so modern, would he content himself with the sleekiest of high-powered cars, and outriders on motor cycles?

The long street lay empty in the afternoon sun. Then the rather undignified chugging of an old Ford broke the hush and a shabby vehicle swept into view. 'I say', Robert chuckled, 'he'll get it in the neck, whoever he is. Why doesn't the policeman halt him? Well—what do you know?'

Instead of halting the car the policeman had saluted smartly. The Ford went by. The children glanced to see who had dared to break the silence before the Nizam's approach. They saw an old gentleman, with a moustache, spectacles, and a shabby fez, sitting in the back, and clasping a walking-stick.

Their surprise was doubled when all the motorists started up their cars again and the whole street came to life as though a spell had been broken.

Mr Woodstock laughed at their faces. 'That would appear to have been His Exalted Highness.'

Carol felt flat and cheated. She had expected a fairy prince and she had seen an old gentleman in spectacles. There had been no elephants and no Arab steeds, not the flash of a single scimitar.

But the truth, as they quickly found out, was quite fascinating in itself. The richest man in the world cared nothing for all his jewels. He hated parades and had never used the State elephants since his coronation over forty years before. He had shut up his palace long ago, and now lived simply in the suburbs in an ordinary house which stood in a shady compound with several others which were used by his staff and officials.

Every morning he was up at dawn, working hard at State papers before the clerks came on duty. Then he would confer with his ministers as he sat on his veranda. His mind was as sharp as a needle. He knew everything that was going on, whether it was a question of high politics or a love-affair at court.

Each afternoon he drove out in that same old Ford (though he had a better car for ceremonial occasions) and always he took the same drive—to the tomb of his dead mother and the palace which had been shut up ever since she died. He had loved his mother so much that her death had almost driven him out of his mind.

Carol began to like the Nizam more and more, and to forgive him for not being handsome and picturesque. She wanted to know how he spent the rest of his day.

Everyone seemed to agree that he was the hardest-working man in the government service. But it was admitted that even he relaxed occasionally. His hobby was writing poetry, and it was quite good poetry. He also conducted a regular newspaper column, and was at endless pains to educate his subjects. Once he had devoted

a whole article to explaining the English word 'honeymoon'. Carol decided that perhaps he was not so unromantic after all

Robert said he felt that if any State deserved to keep its independence Hyderabad was the one. In spite of those sacks of pearls the Nizam sounded a thoroughly unselfish, progressive ruler.

'But he won't live for ever', their father reminded them. 'Would future Nizams have been as good?'

THE COAST OF COROMANDEL

‘WHAT a lovely name!’ Carol had exclaimed when first seeing it on the map. ‘The coast of Coromandel—it ought to be the title of a song. It’s much more musical than the west coast, Malabar.’

Thanks to the air liner which they had caught on the morning after their day in Hyderabad, they were now by the sea again, but this time on the eastern side of India, looking out across long white lines of surf to the open Bay of Bengal. The flight had not taken long. They had then driven straight to the Connemara, a rather grand hotel built in massive modern style, and after lunch, a wash, and a quick change, they had strolled out eager to see Madras.

It was hard at first to realize that it was a much smaller city than Bombay, roughly half its size in population. With nearly one and a half million people, Madras was not very much larger than the city of Hyderabad and its surrounding area. But whereas most of the interesting part of Bombay had been squeezed into the original island, Madras was laid out more spaciouly. A wide road and promenade called the Marina ran along the sea front, with trees and grass and flower-beds separating it from the sandy beach, rather like one of the more sheltered seaside resorts at home. Madras, however, looked far from sheltered. The coast was straight and open, with no suggestion of a bay.

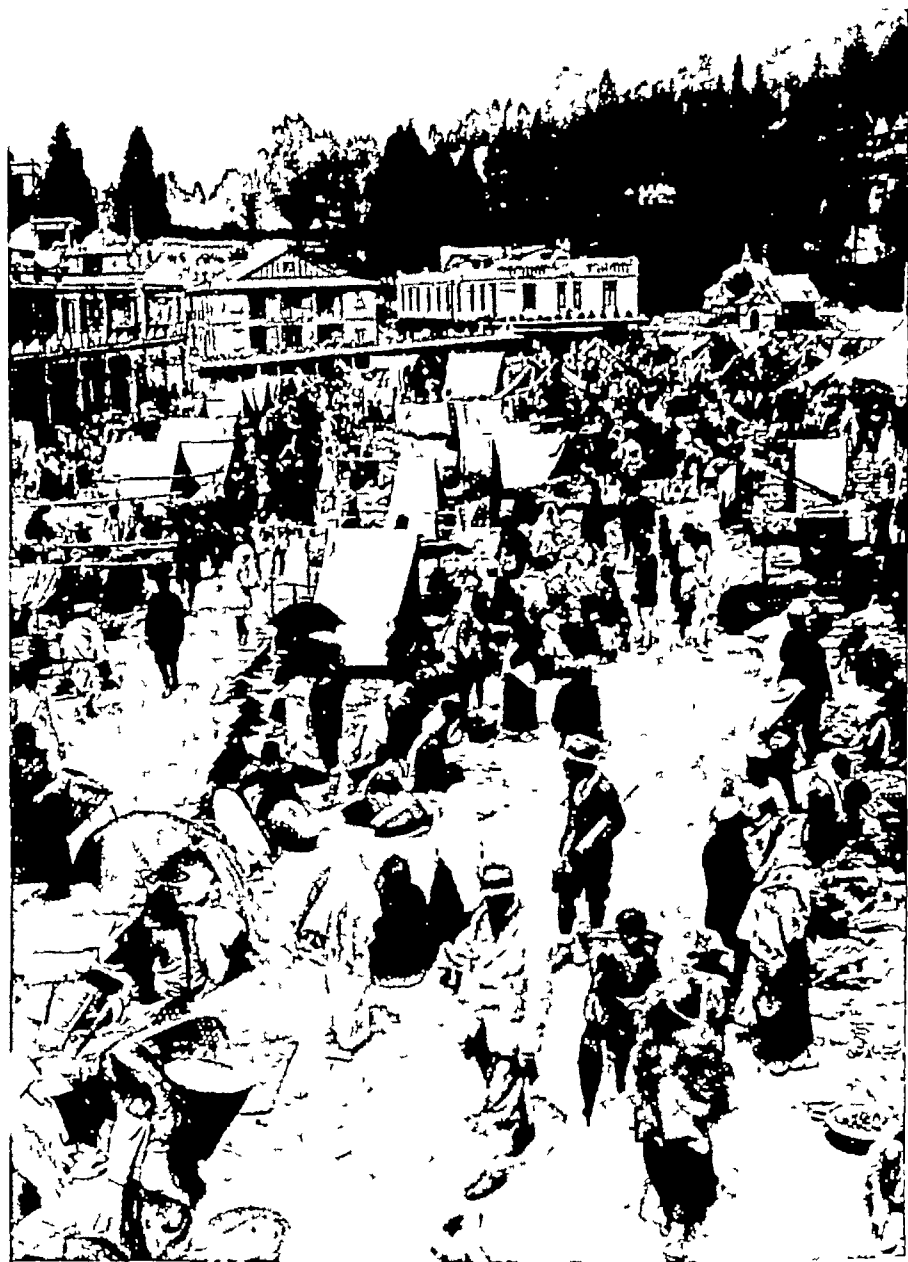
‘In the old days before there were any harbour facilities’, Mr Woodstock explained, ‘ships had to lie right out there in the roads, beyond where you see the surf breaking. People had to come ashore in native boats—catamarans, they call them. Look, *that’s* a catamaran.’

He pointed to a small craft which some dusky fishermen were paddling shorewards with considerable skill. As it came closer they saw that it was more like a raft than a boat, being little more than three logs fastened together.



By courtesy of the High Commissioner for India

ABOVE A tea-garden in the Bengal foothills, with the Himalayan snows forty or fifty miles away BELOW The Woodstocks saw many people bathing in the Hooghly river, part of the holy Ganges, near the great Willingdon Bridge at Calcutta



Darjeeling bazaar was full of colour and life, with Tibetans and other wild-looking hillmen exchanging their varied wares—curved swords and carved woodwork, embroidered shawls and hammered metal, golden oranges, and unromantic vegetables

'It looks fun!' said Robert.

'In a bathing-suit maybe,' his sister agreed, 'but I wouldn't like to arrive in Madras that way, with all my luggage'

'They get cyclones on this coast', said their father 'Then any ships lying out in the roads have to weigh anchor and put out to sea, or they'd be driven ashore'

'It seems a funny place to have a big port'

'Yes, but the East India Company couldn't pick and choose when they first arrived. They had to slip into any odd corner where the Indians would let them—if the Portuguese or the French hadn't slipped in before them'

Memories of history lessons came drifting back to Robert. 'Of course,' he murmured, 'Clive, and—and all that'

'Yes, Madras was where Clive started. I expect we shall learn plenty of history before we leave'

The Marina seemed to stretch ahead for ever. They found it would be quite impossible to walk from one end of the city to the other, because Madras had spread itself for about eight miles along the coast

'A town for taxis', Carol suggested hopefully.

'Up to a point, yes,' her father agreed warily, with an eye to his expense account, 'though of course we can expect the historic part of the city to be concentrated pretty well round Fort St George. But I think we had plenty of sightseeing yesterday, and we've earned a break. Let's find a swimming-pool——'

'Oh, good!'

'And then tea, and perhaps to-night a cinema'

'I suppose there isn't a theatre?' she inquired wistfully. In spite of Mr Woodstock's profession, her own great enthusiasm would always be the stage

'I'm afraid not. India hasn't yet developed a theatre like ours. She was starting to when the cinema came in, and put things back. There *are* plays, of course, but they're at fairs and festivals, in the open air'

'Let's find that swimming-pool', Robert pleaded urgently. 'My shirt's sticking to my back.'

The next morning they drove to the far end of the Marina and

visited the Roman Catholic cathedral at San Thomé which, they learned, had been founded by the Portuguese, only six years after Vasco da Gama had rounded the Cape and made the first landing in India. He found a Christian community already there, certainly a thousand years old and claiming to have been founded by St Thomas the Apostle even earlier. The guide opened a trap-door in the floor of one little chapel and showed the children a grave which, he said, was believed to be that of the Apostle himself.

'Rather thrilling', said Carol softly, looking down. 'I hope it's true.'

As they were leaving they met an elderly priest wearing a sun-helmet and ankle-length habit, in which (thought the children) he must be almost stifled. He was Portuguese, but spoke a little English, and he told them with gentle pride that there were more Indian Christians in the Madras Presidency than in the rest of India put together.

'There were seven millions altogether', he said, adding with a smile, 'I cannot tell you how many of those are now in Pakistan, but not so many, of course, since there are over three millions in the Madras Presidency alone.'

'What's the Madras Presidency?' Carol asked her father. He explained that it meant the province of which Madras was the capital city. One spoke also of the Bombay Presidency, but the other main divisions of the country were called Provinces.

As they drove to Fort St George Mr Woodstock remarked 'Funny, you know—one doesn't think of there being so many Indian Christians. Yet they must rank third among the religions—well ahead of the Sikhs, and far ahead of the Parsees and Jains and Buddhists.'

'But they're not all Roman Catholics?' asked Carol.

'Oh, no. The Church of England has been very active and so have the other churches. One of the greatest of all missionaries was William Carey, the Baptist. Now all these other Indian Christians—that is, all but the Roman Catholics—have just united to form one big Church of India.'

Inside Fort St George they felt they were standing on particularly historic ground. The Fort was founded by the East India

Company in 1640, twenty-five years before the first British settlement at Bombay, and fifty years before Calcutta was founded

'Then it was the very first spot where the English landed' queried Carol

Her father frowned at his guide-book, holding it in the shade of a wall for more convenient reading 'Apparently not It says here that the Mogul—that was the Indian emperor of those days, you know—granted them a concession at Surat, on the west coast, and they set up their first factory in 1613'

'Factory?' Robert echoed 'What did they make?'

'Nothing—except money' said Mr Woodstock with a laugh 'A "factory" in those days was a warehouse They traded English cloth and suchlike for spices and silk and muslins That's all the Company was concerned with in the early days They weren't interested in conquering India or converting the people to Christianity'

'They just wanted to make money?'

'It might sound better if we said, "their motives were purely commercial",' his father suggested, 'but it comes to the same thing They kept to that line for well over a hundred years. And the change in policy really came at this very spot, when a young clerk came out from England—they called them "writers".——'

'Clive' said Robert quickly He had always taken a special interest in Clive, first because he had the same Christian name and afterwards because the man's adventurous life appealed to his imagination

Now, as his father read out one or two facts and dates from the guide-book, Robert began to remember what he had learnt before In his mind's eye he pictured the Fort as it had been in 1743, when the sulky, unruly son of a country lawyer had been shipped out to Madras to a clerking job he hated He imagined the heat and discomfort of an age when there were no electric fans and no refrigerators, when Europeans sweated in the formal clothes of the eighteenth century, and when fever was taken as a matter of course by people who had yet to discover the secret of the malarial mosquito. Robert looked out to sea, across the ragged lines of surf, to the Ellerman's liner steaming southwards to Ceylon with an effort of the imagination he wiped the modern vessel from the

'Why don't you speak to her?' Robert suggested

'Oh, I don't know', Carol was tempted. She had not really spoken to a girl of her own age since landing in India. Though there were men and boys everywhere, the women often remained in the background.

'Go on', Robert encouraged her. 'I dare you.'

'We'll drop back', said his father, laying a hand on his arm. 'Many Indian girls, especially those outside the big cities, are terribly shy. Though this girl looks rather westernized with her high heels, and being out by herself, still, you never know.'

Robert and his father became engrossed in the study of a Latin inscription which neither of them could translate. After a few moments there was a discreet tap-tap of small feet walking on tiptoe, and Carol came back smiling, followed by the girl.

'This is my father, and my brother Robert', she said. 'And this is Veera—I'm terribly sorry', she added, turning with an apologetic look, 'I just *can't* get hold of your surname.'

'Never mind', said Veera. She spoke English in a soft cultured voice, and when she did so revealed teeth which (as Robert remarked afterwards) would have captured the world market in toothpaste for any advertiser able to enlist her help.

'Veera goes to school near here', Carol continued. 'It sounds very much like our schools at home in some ways.'

Veera looked pleased. 'We are very proud of our schools in Madras Presidency', she said. 'As you know, many Indian girls get no education at all, but in Madras we have more going to school than in any other part of the country.'

'Your English is marvellous', Robert complimented her shyly. 'I wish I could talk to you *half* as fluently in Hindustani.'

Veera smiled. 'If you did, I should hardly understand you.'

'But—surely—I mean—'

'Hindustani isn't the language in Madras—or in South India at all really.'

Robert stared, then looked rather relieved. 'That accounts for it then. Of course they all know English at the hotel, but I spoke to a man in a shop this morning—in Hindustani—and we didn't seem to get on very well. I thought it was my bad Hindustani. What *do* people talk here?'

'Tamil and Telugu mostly. And some speak Malayalam, over on the Malabar coast.'

'How complicated!'

'That is why so many know English, even those who have no real education. And why we are not so pleased when the Government wants to replace it with Hindustani as the official language.'

They moved out of the old church into the sunshine of the Fort. Veera said her father was somewhere outside—he was an engineer and did not share her interest in ancient monuments. As she spoke, a tall man came walking towards them and was at once introduced.

Mr Venkataramni was a hydro-electrical engineer and very much in love with his work. His English was tinged with an American intonation, for he had studied in the United States and had returned home fired with the idea of creating even bigger and better dams than those he had seen in the Tennessee Valley. Soon he was telling them of what had already been done in Madras and lamenting because they were not planning to visit the great Mettur Dam.

'But see here, Mr Woodstock! This is much more important to your film than a lot of bygone historical relics. Water and electricity—they're the two most important things for the future of India. Water to irrigate our farms, electricity to run our factories and make us a great industrial country——'

'Well . . .' Mr Woodstock wavered. He knew that a really big dam, with torrents of white water hurtling down the spillway, would photograph effectively, especially if he followed it with quick shots of humming looms and swaying grain.

'Listen!' commanded Veera's father excitedly. 'In water-power India is the third richest country in the world. Canada has forty-three million horse-power, the United States thirty-five million. India and Pakistan between them have twenty-seven. But do we use it? No, sir. Whereas the Americans use a third of all that power in their rivers whereas the Germans use half of theirs and the Swiss three-quarters we in this country have developed only one-fiftieth. One-fiftieth, sir! I look around me I see smelly oil lamps where there could be electric light. I see rags and poverty where there could be cheaply manufactured comfort. I see my countrymen toiling and sweating at all kinds of heavy work that a

machine could do better, risking their lives in mines to dig coal for which we could largely substitute electric power if we harnessed our rivers—can you wonder, sir, if I think that India needs engineers as urgently as she needs teachers and doctors ?

‘Not at all, Mr—er—Mr——’ said Mr Woodstock ‘I see what you mean. And you think I could take the Mettur Dam as a fair sample?’ Already, in his own mind, he was converted to the idea. It would make a good sequence first, some shots of parched fields and toiling labourers, fading into a long panorama shot of a vast reservoir, changing in turn to a mighty dam, the rush of waters and the turbines, leading on to glimpses of up-to-date factories and electric trains

Mr Venkataramni hesitated. ‘I must be fair’, he said slowly ‘We are naturally very proud of our work in Madras. Ours is one of the five great electrical grid systems. But you will have so much to include in your film, you will have time for only the best example of each. At present our great power-station on the Cauvery River is only the second largest in India. Bombay has the biggest. And if you want to show irrigation, you should film the huge Lloyd Dam at Sukkur on the Indus—that, of course, is in Pakistan.’

‘Yes, I’ve a note of that. Well, I’ll see how things work out. Very likely when I’m back in Madras with the camera unit I’ll take a look at the Cauvery River all the same. We might work it in. No sense in giving children abroad the idea that India has only one of everything.’

Mr Venkataramni looked delighted. He quickly gave Mr Woodstock the names of the officials who would be useful to approach if he decided to do any filming. Carol, meantime, was asking Veera what she was going to do when she grew up.

‘How nice to be asked that, for a change!’ exclaimed the Indian girl gratefully.

‘Why “for a change”?’

‘Oh, people here are not yet used to the idea of girls having careers. They think of nothing but marriage.’

‘Well, you’ll want to get married as well, won’t you? I know I shall.’

‘Why, yes, but not too soon. Of course it is easier for our family, being Christians, we are not expected to get married in such a

hurry. But many of my friends are Hindus, and they seem to be engaged as mere children, and married as soon as the law allows them'

'How silly! I mean, most girls want to get married, but they want to be free first and have some fun, don't they?'

Veera nodded. 'But here in India not many people worry about fun and freedom for girls—in fact most of them are shocked at the idea. Parents like to get their daughters safely and respectably married, and the husbands like brides who are pretty and young and easy to manage.'

Robert was thinking to himself that Veera herself was both pretty and young, but he could not imagine that she would ever be easy to manage.

'In the old days', went on the Madras girl, 'children were married even younger—a bride of nine years old was not at all uncommon. Of course, it was all arranged by the parents. No one consulted her.'

'How awful! It shouldn't be allowed!' cried Carol indignantly.

'It isn't now—officially. The Government passed a law some years ago, called the Sarda Act, and a girl can't be married till she is fourteen. But the law is often broken, because so many of our people care more for their old customs than they do for the new regulations.'

'What happens?'

'It's too late to do much. The bridegroom can be fined, but it is usually well-to-do people who do this kind of thing, and they pay up with a smile—they just reckon the fine as part of the wedding expenses. And very often the police don't hear of the case. Probably both families concerned and all the guests approve of the affair, and they combine together to hush it up.'

Carol was anxious to know what career Veera intended to take up. Veera confessed that she wanted to be a journalist. But first she hoped to go to the University. It was one of the three oldest in the country, having been founded at the same time as Bombay and Calcutta in the year 1858.

Veera had some amusing stories to tell of school and college life in India. Students worried terribly about passing their examinations because it was almost a matter of life and death to them. It

was not unknown for candidates to bribe cleverer people to sit for the examination under their name, and sometimes, when a large number of boys and girls failed in the School Certificate, they would go on strike and hold demonstrations to make the examiners revise the marks

‘But you mustn’t laugh at us’, said Veera loyally. ‘We are very proud of the standards we reach, and when our students go out into the world they can hold their own with anybody’ Madras had produced great men like Sir C V Raman, who had received the Nobel Prize for physics, Sir Radha Krishnan the philosopher, and S. Ramanujan the mathematician, and many others, only less famous.

They were sorry to part from Veera and her father as they came out of Fort St George. Robert turned his head and took a long look backward at the place which was so filled with memories of Clive. ‘In 1756’, said the guide-book, ‘the Madras settlement was stirred by the news of the Black Hole of Calcutta, and Clive set out for the scene of the tragedy . . .’

Calcutta, Robert realized, was the next objective in their own journey.

Chapter 9

ADVENTURE IN CALCUTTA

MR MACINTYRE'S blue eyes twinkled when he greeted them at the Howrah terminus 'Welcome to Calcutta!' he said as they grasped hands After travelling on, day after day, continually making new friends and parting from them, it was very pleasant to meet a familiar face again When they had parted at Pachmarhi the old Scotsman had insisted that they should stay with him when they came on to Calcutta.

It was wonderful, too, to have Moti always appearing at the right moment to take charge of the luggage Carol had long since come to the conclusion that the gennu in the *Arabian Nights* were slow and inefficient compared with Moti Lal With him there was no need to rub rings or lamps He was there before they had time to think In this case he had already secured coolies, who stood waiting with the Woodstocks' luggage delicately balanced on their heads Moti salaamed, asked the address of Mr MacIntyre's flat, and promptly vanished with his party The Woodstocks were able to walk off chattering to their friend, empty-handed and without any tiresome fumbling with coats and suitcases, as there would have been at home

Mr MacIntyre's car was waiting outside They drove out of the station and at once began to cross a seemingly endless bridge 'This is the Howrah Bridge', he told them over his shoulder 'It's one of the sights o' Calcutta' Robert thought it was one of the ugly sights, in that case, though it was hard to judge a bridge when you were driving over it. But afterwards, when he had a chance to study it from the riverside, he saw no reason to alter his opinion. It might be a great engineering work, spanning so wide a river, but no one who had seen photographs of modern bridges like Sydney Harbour could see any beauty here There was no flow in its lines

'Is this the Ganges we're crossing?' he inquired

'Aye, a part o' it—only we ca' it the Hooghly It's a mile wide here'

It was not surprising that it took them several minutes to cross, for there was a good deal of traffic, some very slow-moving. On the far bank Mr MacIntyre pulled up so that they could have a view of the water. Near the bank it was crowded with hundreds of bathers, some slapping and wringing out their loin-cloths, others wading and swimming out till they were mere black dots in the grey water. Far out in midstream great liners were slowly moving up and down, and every kind of other craft—tugs and tramp-steamers, launches and barges and local boats of various patterns—was scattered over the wide expanse between the two shores. Looking at them, and at the wharves and warehouses and factory chimneys along those banks, the children had no difficulty in believing Mr MacIntyre's claim that Calcutta, with its population of over two and a half million, was one of the biggest ports in the world.

'Och, there's a fine lot o' stuff shipped oot o' here', he said proudly 'What wi' the rice an' the tea—coal, too, an' jute——'

'What is jute exactly?' asked Carol

'It's a fibre, my dear—comes fra' a plant in Bengal. It's woven into a' manner o' things—sackin' an' stage wigs, mats an' carpets for those who canna get panther skins——'

'Oh, my lovely panther skin! Is it back yet?'

'Nay, it's no back yet fra the firm that cures 'em for me. But dinna fash yesel', I'll ha' it sent in due time.'

'I can see a sequence', Robert told his father as they drove on again 'We're going to a tea plantation, aren't we?'

'Yes. Next stop after Calcutta.'

'Well, then, after showing that, and some of the other things Mr MacIntyre mentioned, why not link them in a quick series of shots—people picking tea, those coolies on the wharf there, loading the tea-chests—and then cut into a view of the river with all the ships going up and down?'

'It's an idea', his father admitted cautiously, pleased at the way Robert was growing to think in terms of the cinema.

They drove along a straight, rather dull thoroughfare parallel with the river. It was strange to see, in this vast city of cranes and factory chimneys and clanging trams, the mild-eyed hump-backed cows lurching across the pavements and thrusting their fawn

muzzles into the baskets of fruit and vegetables set out for sale. There were goats, too, with their kids, and clumsy water-buffaloes, all mixed up with the traffic. Though by now the children knew something of the Hindu attitude to animals, and especially to the sacred cow, they had never yet been in a place where the beasts were allowed to do quite so much as they liked.

'Fort William', grunted Mr MacIntyre, as a long rampart stretched along the left side of the road.

'Is that where the Black Hole was?' Robert said eagerly.

'If there *was* a Black Hole, laddie. Some modern historians dispute it, and maybe it's best forgotten noo.'

'It's about the only thing I ever learned about Indian history', Carol complained. 'That and the Mutiny.'

'I ken it weel, my dear. That's been one o' the troubles between the British an' the Indians. We want to mak' a fresh start an' be friends fra noo on.'

Robert said nothing. As they drove on, the Fort on their left and the Hooghly on their right, he imagined the place as it must have been in Clive's day, with men in red coats and powdered hair, with roaring cannon and howling besiegers. Mr MacIntyre spoilt his dream by saying that Fort William had been newly built by Clive on the site of the earlier one which had surrendered to Suraj-ud-Dowlah, the nineteen-year-old Nabob of Bengal, and that it had never fired a shot against an enemy from that day until 1942 when the Japanese flew over Calcutta.

'Ye'll no see a deal o' historic buildin's in the city', he warned them. 'Calcutta's a business town. A man named Job Charnock started it—it was only jungly swamp wi' two or three villages on it before him.'

'Like the little island that became Bombay?' asked Carol.

'Och aye. Company towns, both o' em. Madras too. For the real Indian cities ye mun go to Agra an' Old Delhi. That's where ye'll see the forts an' palaces. Calcutta has its wee bits o' history, but they're no' always so obvious.' They turned away from the river and ran between broad stretches of grass park. 'See yon road, for instance?' he went on. 'Lower Circular Road, we ca' it noo, an' ye'd say it was naught but a modern one. Yet it's really the old Mahratta Ditch—like a moat, ye ken, that was dug against the

wild Mahratta horsemen in days past. It's been filled in, o' course '

They swung to the right over a bridge, catching a brief glimpse of a narrow stream between steep banks, which he said was Tolly's Nala, and passed the entrance gates of the Zoo 'This is Alipore,' he told them with a dry chuckle, 'where a' the best people ha' lived fra Warren Hastings to Tam MacIntyre '

Alipore was a pleasant suburb, with large houses standing in walled gardens. After half a mile he tooted his horn and swung the car carefully into an entrance drive. A waiting servant rushed out of the porch.

Mr MacIntyre occupied the whole of the first floor as his flat. When Carol reached her room she found a clean frock laid out, bath-water running, and Moti draping the mosquito-net over her bed.

It was a spacious flat, lofty, with open doorways leading from one room to another, and a long shady balcony looking down upon the garden. It was far too big for him, Mr MacIntyre admitted, but it was less than a year since his wife had died and he had not yet faced the problems of a move. 'When I was young, mind, I'd ha' shared wi' two or three o' the ither young fellows—what we ca' a "chummery" out East—but I'm too old noo, an' set i' my ways.' It was neither so modern nor so magnificent as the Guptas' home in Bombay, but after so many nights in hotels and railway compartments it was just the free and easy kind of place which suited them. Mr MacIntyre's bearer was a solemn little man from the next province of Bihar. He wore a black skull-cap and reminded Carol of one of the Seven Dwarfs. Mr MacIntyre also employed a cook and a cook's boy, a sweeper, and two *malis*, or gardeners.

'It sounds an awfu' lot', he said, 'but ye canna manage wi' less, for no mon will doo anither's work. An' there's no lack o' labour—it's the only thing that's plentiful i' Calcutta.'

They did not go out again that evening, being tired by the long journey from Madras. Carol explored the bookcase, which was well stocked with modern books, many of them published in India by big British and American firms established in the

country. Robert rummaged among the gramophone records and was similarly surprised to find a number of up-to-date His Master's Voice recordings, which, Mr MacIntyre explained, were manufactured at Dum-Dum, not far from Calcutta. So, what with music and book-browsing, and Mr MacIntyre's stories of nearly forty years in India, and the delicious long drinks with floating cubes of ice which the soft-footed bearer kept placing at their elbows, the evening passed very pleasantly indeed.

In the morning Mr Woodstock had business to do in connection with the tour. Mr MacIntyre said he must put in a morning at his office, so Robert suggested that he and Carol should look round the city by themselves. Their father hesitated, glancing across the table at their host.

'I suppose there'd be no harm in their going to the Zoo—it's not far from here——'

'Oh, we're sick of Zoos for a bit, Dad. There seems to be a Zoo in every Indian city.'

'Ye find 'em tame after a' ye panther shoots?' Mr MacIntyre suggested dryly, smiling with his eyes but not his lips.

'Well, I'm not going to let you wander at large in a place like Calcutta', said their father firmly.

'Oh, have a heart, Dad! We're not kids.'

'You don't know your way about,' Mr Woodstock's long jaw looked very determined. He had memories of Calcutta in times of riot, when the scum which exists in every large population had risen to the top and taken control of the streets. He had seen trouble flare up in a moment. He remembered looted shops, burning post offices, and bodies lying across the pavement.

'We've a street-map', said Carol, supporting Robert.

'They'd be a' right if they kept to the main streets', the old Scotsman pleaded for them. 'I could drop 'em i' Chowringhee as I drive to the office—that's the main shoppin' street, Carol. Ye could stroll along there, takin' ye time, an' meet ye father an' me for tiffin at the Great Eastern Hotel. It's marked on yon street-plan.'

'I don't mind their doing that', agreed Mr Woodstock, glancing at his watch and leaping up from the table. 'But it's to be clearly understood that there's no turning aside to explore back-alleys.'

As this was just what Robert had been hoping to do, he looked rather sulky. 'I think you're treating us like a pair of babies', he grumbled.

'I can't stop to argue. Will you promise only to walk straight up Chowringhee and on to the hotel?'

'I don't see why—'

'All right', said his father curtly from the doorway. 'If that doesn't suit you, you'll have to stay here till half-past twelve. Then ask Mr MacIntyre's bearer to call you a taxi, and drive straight to the Great Eastern. Understand?' Robert grunted something disrespectful and Mr Woodstock, being already late for his appointment, rushed out of the flat.

'We might as well stay here and play the gramophone', Robert growled to his sister. 'Who wants to trawl up a main street with ordinary shops like the ones at home?'

Carol murmured sympathetically. She felt that they had both behaved like models of obedience throughout the tour so far, and the strain of so much virtue was beginning to tell. The romantic side of her wanted to go wandering through the picturesque back-streets and bazars, and, as a girl, she itched to go bargain-hunting at out-of-the-way stalls and shops. Their journey had already taken them across India, and, though much still lay ahead, they could not forget that very soon now they would be turning their faces homeward. Carol was conscious that so far she had not bought a thing, either for her school friends or for herself.

Mr MacIntyre departed. The flat, shadowy with its blinds drawn against the sun, grew silent except for the persistent flick of the electric fans hung from the ceiling and the monotonous nasal song of someone in the kitchen. By ten o'clock they were bored to distraction.

'I'm not standing this', said Robert jumping out of his chair suddenly. 'I'm not a child and I'm not going to be treated like one. I'm going out. Coming?'

Carol hesitated. 'Dad said——'

'I don't care what Dad said! I didn't promise anything, and neither did you. What can possibly happen to us? I've a street-map—and we can always take a taxi. He's told us to take one from here to the hotel, anyhow. What's the difference if we have a walk first?'

'All right. Just wait while I change my shoes'

Robert waited impatiently. He could never understand why, whatever a girl decided to do, she never seemed to be wearing the right shoes. However, Carol was as eager to get out as he was, and barely ten minutes passed before the door banged behind them

They started by walking, for no taxis were visible in the quiet roads of Alipore and, when they crossed a tram route, the trams seemed to be bulging with twice as many passengers as they were built to carry—the last few people to have boarded them were just dangling from the back platform like a bunch of human bananas. In any case the trams did not seem to be heading for the centre of the city

Outside the Zoo gates there were several rickshaws standing empty, tilted forward on their shafts, with their owners squatting and chewing in the shade

'Let's have a ride in one of them' begged Carol. They had seen no rickshaws in Bombay but they had heard that they were still used in Calcutta, and she thought it would be a novel experience.

'All right', said Robert dubiously. 'I wonder if they'll take two of us together?'

'We can't weigh more than a fat man', Carol pointed out. The rickshaw-man made no objection, so they squeezed into the seat, he picked up the shafts, and they started off for Chowringhee

At first it was great fun. The man trotted, the wheels spun, and they bowled along in fine style. 'I feel like a Grand Duchess', Carol declared

'I don't. I feel like an absolute beast!'

'Why? What's up?'

'Look at that chap—the sweat's running down his back in rivers'

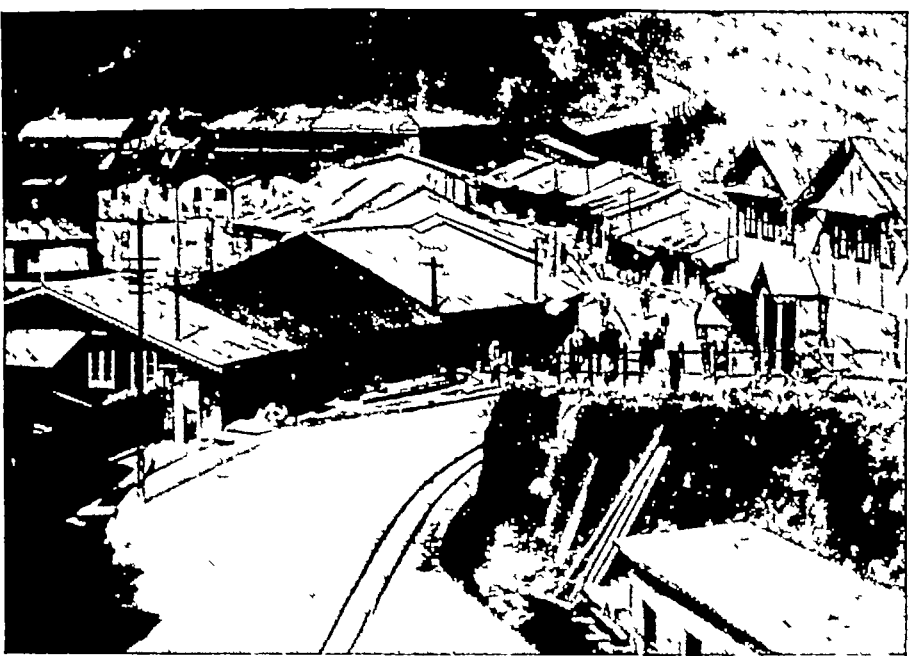
'Oh, dear, yes! I hadn't thought . . . is it far to Chowringhee?'

'Nearer three miles than two.'

'What a terribly long way! Fancy his agreeing to take us'

'I expect he needs the money', said Robert grimly.

They drove on, enjoying the journey no more than the man between the shafts. After a time he dropped to a walk, and they felt rather silly being slowly towed along. Then he started to run again,



By courtesy of the High Commissioner for India

ABOVE At the highest point of the Darjeeling railway the travellers suddenly found their train running through the main shopping street of Ghoom, 8,000 ft up
BELOW As the train climbed above the clouds they had wonderful views of the tea-gardens, with their buildings perilously perched on ledges and terraces



The most respected residents of Benares seemed to be the sacred cows sunning themselves on the terraces above the Ganges

and they felt mean. When they reached a busy cross-roads the man had to pull up suddenly, straining back against the thrust of the shafts. While he waited for the policeman's signal to go on, they saw him wipe his streaming face and heard the breath whistling from his hollow sides.

'I can't stand this any longer', Robert burst out, starting to rise from the seat. But at that moment the policeman dropped his arm and beckoned. The rickshaw lurched forward and the boy fell back into his sister's lap. As soon as they were safely across the road junction, Robert told the man to stop. They got out and paid him the full fare to Chowringhee, adding a generous tip.

'Never again', vowed Robert, still pink in the face. 'It shouldn't be allowed—treating human beings like horses.'

Carol agreed, and still more heartily when they learned afterwards that the working life of a rickshaw-man was only a few years. The human body could not stand up to such exertions for much longer.

They found themselves now looking across the green expanse of the racecourse and the Maidan, a vast open space criss-crossed with motor roads and reminding them faintly of Hyde Park. They recognized Fort William and what they took to be the dome of Government House, but as it was shops they wanted they kept straight ahead for Chowringhee, passing St Paul's Cathedral on the way.

Chowringhee was the Piccadilly of Calcutta, a long straight thoroughfare, one side open to the grassy Maidan and the other lined with big stores, restaurants, hotels, and clubs. It stretched for over three miles in front of them.

They walked some distance, studying the shop windows, and turned into a Chinese café for lemonade and cakes. Robert glanced at his watch.

'We've over an hour before we need be at the hotel.'

'But we haven't bought anything yet! Things seem rather dear, don't they?'

'Can't expect otherwise in the main street. Sure to be top prices in all these shops', Robert declared. 'What we want to do is to poke round some of these back-streets. And bargain, you know. They expect it.'

They paid their bill and went out. The very next side-turning presented a fascinating glimpse of little open shops, stuffed with everything from antique swords to shimmering lengths of silk. Without further hesitation they left the main street and plunged into the slowly-moving throng of the bazaar.

Carol had set her heart on a *sari*. They looked at a lot but all the ones she liked cost more money than they had with them.

'After all, there's about fifteen feet of silk in each of them', Robert pointed out. 'Seems to me you'd be wasting your money—you can't go about at home with a *sari* draped round you like an Indian girl. Even for a fancy-dress party it wouldn't be awfully practical.'

'But they're so *lovely*!' said Carol illogically, and went on crooning over the thin silk as she passed it between finger and thumb and the smiling shopman draped it over his upflung arm. There were flame-coloured *saris*, and honey-golden ones, and blue ones spangled with tiny silver stars. She wanted a dozen of them. 'They'd make up into evening frocks', she told Robert, trying to be sensible about it, 'though it would be a terrible shame to cut them.'

They drifted on from shop to shop, from street to street, in quest of a *sari* which they could afford. They had an argument when Robert wanted to buy a dagger in a highly-ornamented sheath.

'It's gimcrack—you can see it's not genuine', she warned him.

'What do you mean, not genuine? It's a lovely bit of work. He only wants twenty rupees for it——'

'If you spend twenty rupees on that thing, you'll have nothing left to lend me if I see a *sari*——'

'Well, I don't see why I shouldn't spend my own money.'

'I don't see why you should waste it on a horrible looking knife that was probably made in Birmingham! Suppose I see a cheaper *sari*—we'll never be able to find the shop again in this rabbit-warren, and I'll have walked all these miles for nothing——'

'Pipe down. Anyhow, I'm going to get it for a lot less than twenty', he assured her confidently, and began to haggle with the shopkeeper. After five minutes of animated gesture and broken

Hindustani he walked off in triumph, dagger in hand, the shop-keeper apparently reduced to fearful ruin

'You see, Carol? I beat him down all right. Got it for sixteen!' Robert almost crowed

'And I bet the real price was about five', said Carol crossly 'He handled you beautifully'

Robert ignored the retort 'If you *should* see anything at a reasonable price, we've still got——'

'I'm sick of looking thanks. Isn't it time we made for the hotel?'

'Yes, it is, rather.' He pulled out his street-plan. 'Now, let's see, we turned to the right, then we went half-left, didn't we—where you saw that orange garment'—so we should be——'

'There's a taxi', she interrupted 'Let's be on the safe side. We don't want to get lost. And I'm sagged out. I'd have put on my other shoes if I'd known you were going to drag me all round here.'

A man was already holding open the taxi-door. They got in, telling him to drive to the Great Eastern Hotel. 'And don't stick that murderous weapon into me', said Carol settling herself into her seat. Robert obediently moved the dagger and put it on the other side of him. The door slammed, and with a great honking the taxi edged forward along the crowded street.

'Two taxi-men', said Carol, coming out of her brief sulks 'Why is that?' The man who had opened the door for them was not the driver, but had climbed into the front seat beside him.

'Nearly all the Calcutta taxis seem to have two. Mr MacIntyre says it's because there's been so much crime—so many cases of taxi-drivers being attacked and robbed by their passengers.'

'Well, they needn't be scared of *us*, anyhow!'

They were out of the network of narrow streets, and were driving along a main road. It was not Chowringhee, for there were buildings on both sides, and the whole outlook was shabbier.

Robert consulted his watch 'Should just do it. We're due there in five minutes. But it can't possibly be far.' He studied his map as well as he could in the vibrating taxi. His dark eyebrows went up in perplexity.

'What's up?'

'Can't quite make out which way we're going We should be——' He broke off, leant forward, and shouted to the driver: 'Great Eastern Hotel, I said!'

The other man turned with a flashing smile. '*Teek hai, sahib!*' (All right.) The driver did not move his head, but drove on at what seemed almost a dangerous speed, swerving in and out between trams and bullock-carts.

Robert flushed. 'I don't believe it is all right', he growled to Carol 'Either they're taking us a long way round, to charge a higher fare—or——' He did not finish his remark. There was no sense in scaring Carol Perhaps, after all, they would turn a corner in a moment and see the hotel in front of them

But, glancing down at the map again as it joggled on his lap, he could not imagine what route they were taking They should have reached the hotel five minutes ago They weren't even driving round in a circle, they were rushing straight ahead at top speed, as though making for the suburbs or the open country beyond

Suddenly the blood ebbed from his face, leaving it white and tense There could be no more doubt They were not being taken to the Great Eastern Hotel at all, they were being kidnapped He leant forward again

'Stop!' he ordered as importantly as he could

Neither of the men looked round. The car swept on as fast as ever. They would be badly hurt if they tried to jump out, but there was always a chance the driver might have to slow down at a crossing 'Be ready to hop out', he told Carol in a fierce undertone He put out his hand to the door The handle was missing on the inside, but the window was open, and it was easy enough to reach the outside handle He tried it stealthily, meaning to ease it open an inch or two, but it would not budge

'Try your side, Carol!'

'Right . . . Oh, dear! It's locked'

Things looked ugly. There might not be time to get through the window Above all, Robert did not want to escape and find too late that Carol was still a prisoner in the taxi

'We must make them stop and let us out!' she wailed. 'I know, Robert—the dagger!'

It was a happy thought There was no glass partition separating

them from the men in front. A sharp point pricking between the shoulder-blades might persuade the driver to pull up. Robert seized the dagger from the seat beside him, or rather he seized the decorated scabbard, for, with a cry of dismay, he realized that it was empty.

The man beside the driver turned and grinned again. This time something else flashed besides his teeth.

Chapter 10

TOWARDS THE SNOWS

'STOP!' screamed Carol. She, too, was now fully alive to the situation. They were certainly being kidnapped, whether to be robbed and murdered, or to be held to ransom, she had no idea.

The taxi rushed on. The man with the dagger waved it threateningly. She thrust her head out of the window and yelled lustily. The passers-by stared, and then went on their way. No one seemed disposed to do anything.

'Listen!' Robert whispered urgently. 'I'm going for the chap with the knife. When you're quite sure I've got his wrist and he can't stab at us—not before, mind—can you grab at the driver? He can't do much without stopping the car. If you can even make him swerve into the side, it'll do.'

'I'll try.'

It was a desperate venture. Even with the advantage of being behind, Robert knew that he was in for an ugly tussle. It was probably as well that he was never put to the test. At that moment another taxi, travelling even more recklessly, overhauled them and swerved in front. With a curse their own driver slowed down, and, as the car stopped broadside across the road, jammed on his brakes in the nick of time.

'Come on!' Robert grunted. In a flash he was through the window and was pulling his startled sister after him. Their two kidnappers had slipped from the front seats with equal speed, but instead of turning upon their captives they streaked off down the street. Robert saw police uniforms. A voice said.

'Mem-sahib and sahib all right?'

It was Moti.

They looked at him, speechless with relief and delight. Robert managed to stammer. 'Moti—how on earth did *you* get here?'

Moti smiled. 'I follow all morning. Calcutta is big city—many *goondas*' (criminal types). 'Woodstock Sahib very wise, say, young

sahibs keep out of bazaar. When your taxi go wrong way, I ask police to follow with me '

By this time the two kidnappers were handcuffed Robert gave particulars to a police-officer, but he was assured that the men were wanted on so many other charges that there would probably be no need for the Woodstocks to appear in court As Moti's honest taxi-man was still waiting, they asked him to take them on to the Great Eastern, where they were very late for lunch and had some extremely awkward questions to answer

Harmony was restored by the time they reached coffee and ices Mr MacIntyre said he was taking the rest of the day off to show them the city He was, in the language of Calcutta, the *burra sahib* or 'Number One' of his shipping firm and, though he still worked long hours at his desk, could come and go as he liked

The business quarter was all round the hotel, and he began by showing them his offices in Clive Street. Nearby was a large square, its centre occupied by a lake or 'tank' of the same shape, the Lall Digge He pointed out a long row of Government offices, still called Writers' Buildings because, when they had first been put up towards the end of the eighteenth century, they had been used by the writers or clerks of the East India Company Overlooking the water from the western side was the domed mass of the General Post Office

Walking on a few yards they came to St John's Church, set back amid green lawns and trees It was a graceful building with classical columns and balustraded roof, recalling the period of George the Third, when it was first erected In those days, said Mr MacIntyre, it was the seat of a bishop whose diocese stretched as far away as to Australia This had been the European burial-ground long before the church was built, and under that neat turf lay thousands of those who, from the days of Job Charnock onwards, had helped to make Calcutta one of the greatest ports in the world

A little further on was Government House, a magnificent mansion set back behind wrought-iron gates This had been the home of the British Viceroy until the capital of India was moved, in 1912, from Calcutta to Delhi After that, it had been the home of the Provincial Governor of Bengal

Mr MacIntyre jerked his head towards the great frontage with its soaring Greek columns and sweep of entrance steps. 'What chance had a man living in yon place to know the common folk o' India?' he asked quietly.

They walked back to where his car was parked. Robert, having completely recovered from the alarms of the morning, wanted to see the Burning Ghats where the Hindus burned the bodies of their dead beside the river. When Carol protested that this was a horrible idea, he said he would be satisfied with a visit to Kalighat, the Hindu temple where goats were publicly sacrificed every few minutes.

'Do they really cut off their heads at a single blow?' he asked.

'Och aye, but ye ken it's no a pretty sight. Ye can go an' watch if ye wish—we must go to Kalighat, but I dinna think Carol will enjoy that part o' the proceedin's.'

The visit to Kalighat was interesting rather than pleasant. The temple of Kali, Goddess of Destruction, stood on the banks of Tolly's Nala, which counted as part of the holy Ganges stream. The enclosure was thronged with pilgrims, beggars, holy men, and loungers of every type. The holy men had not improved their appearance by covering their almost naked bodies with ashes and dried cow-dung. Carol wrinkled her nose with disgust and looked the other way.

People came here, said Mr MacIntyre, to pray for all kinds of favours. Women came to pray for babies. Others went into the smaller shrines to pray to a small red idol which gave protection against smallpox or to the figure of a five-headed cobra which granted safety from snake-bite. Most of the pilgrims were poor, and Mr MacIntyre said that many good Hindus did not approve of this Kali worship, but the Woodstocks noticed that there was quite a sprinkling of well-dressed, educated people. 'Och aye', he agreed, 'I ken more than one business mon who prays here before he risks a big deal! An' look, lassie, yon's a University student, goin' to ask Kali's help in his examination!'

'Where do they sacrifice the goats?' Robert asked.

Mr MacIntyre jerked his head towards a man who was staggering round the corner of the building with a kid bleating and struggling in his arms.

'Oh, Robert, you're not——' Carol began, but he was gone 'He's asked for it', said the old Scotsman

A minute later Robert came flying back with pallid cheeks and set lips. He passed them without a word, making for the way out. When he rejoined them after another five minutes the colour was slowly coming back into his cheeks. 'Let's get out of here', he mumbled.

Carol was only too willing. 'Why on earth did you go flying past like that?' she asked. 'I expected to see a priest chasing you with a knife in his hand.'

'Don't talk about priests and knives', he pleaded. 'I only wanted to get outside the temple precincts. I thought it might be sacrilege or something if I was sick inside.'

They went to one of the big clubs for a much-needed cup of tea. It was an imposing place, full of smart and imposing people—or that was how they seemed to Robert and Carol. Mr MacIntyre said he had always used this club because it was open to Europeans and Indians alike, and it had helped him to make many good friends among the Indian business men, lawyers, and others who gathered there. He explained that a great deal of ill-feeling had been caused during the days of British rule because so many Europeans kept severely to themselves in places like the Saturday Club where no Indian, however distinguished, was allowed to enter.

'Mind ye, the fault was no' all on the one side', he added. 'It's no' easy, ye ken, to mix freely. Ye orthodox Hindu canna tak a meal wi' ye—ye're unclean. Neither Hindu na' Muslim is supposed to drink alcohol—I'll no' say there isna one amang 'em that taks a wee drap noo an' then, but it's again' their religion, an' the new government's bringin' in Prohibition. They canna dance, an' mostly they dinna bring their ladies oot to meet us. It's a' verra difficult, but no excuse for shuttin' doors in their faces when they're willin' to come in.'

'I wish I understood the Hindu religion', said Robert with a frown. 'Oh, I know all about caste. I know how the sacred books go back thousands of years, and the cow is holy, and they worship all kinds of gods and goddesses like Siva and Kali. What I can't

understand is how *educated* people—as Mr Gandhi was—belong to the same religion as those people I saw this afternoon at the temple’

‘It isn’t the same religion—except in name’, Mr Woodstock said ‘After all, there are Christians *and* Christians, aren’t there? There are bishops with scientific training at one end of the scale, and ignorant superstitious peasants at the other. We call them all Christians, though the peasant may have done little more than change his idol for a crucifix or a statue of the Virgin’

‘True enough’, chuckled the old Scotsman ‘I’ve seen an old Juggernaut car in Southern India that the Jesuits use to carry round the Virgin’s image on saints’ days’

It all seemed hopelessly complicated. Mr Woodstock said it would be quite impossible to explain Hinduism in the film. At the same time, something had to be said, because religion decided so many of the problems of everyday life in India.

‘It may not matter to the rest of the world whether the Hindus believe in Heaven or not—they don’t, actually, they believe that they are reborn again and again on this earth. But it *does* matter that they won’t kill cows. It means that they have far more than their land can feed, and as a result almost all the cattle are half starved and diseased’

‘They’ve a third o’ the world’s cattle’, chimed in Mr MacIntyre vigorously ‘Ye ken, o’ course, they’ll no’ eat beef, but ye’d think maybe at least they’d have a deal o’ milk. Do they get a third o’ the world’s milk then? Och no, an eighth maybe! They’ve seven times as many cattle as the Germans, an’ they get about the same amount o’ milk. It’s no wonder there’s a’ways hunger in India, an’ famine round the corner!’

They spent two more days in Calcutta. They did some shopping, though their father advised them to keep some of their money till they had been to Delhi and Kashmir and other places on their route. Robert had a tour round the docks with Mr MacIntyre, while Carol and her father went to the Jain Temple. Robert said he was ‘off’ temples, though he need not have worried, since the Jains are the people who would not harm even an ant. Their temple was an elaborate spiky affair which looked as though

it had been cut out of fretwood. It reminded Carol of pictures she had seen of temples in Burma and even further East. Set in its garden, with flower-beds and little statues lining the paths, and tall palms here and there, the Jain Temple struck her as one of the prettiest spots in all that vast, rather alarming city.

That evening Mr MacIntyre drove them to the other railway terminus, Sealdah, and saw them off on the Darjeeling Mail. They were getting quite used to Indian trains by now. Robert and Carol liked the idea of starting off at night, settling into their bunks, and waking to find themselves well on their way. This time it was particularly exciting to-morrow, for the first time, they would see 'the snows', as they always seemed to be referred to in India—the Himalayas, the highest mountains in the world.

Carol woke early. The train was still rumbling steadily northward. She could reach the window without leaving her berth, so she struggled up on one elbow and lowered the shutter. Dawn was just breaking. The whole eastern sky was fiery red, silhouetting the plumes of the coco-nut palms and the broad blunt fronds of the banana trees. The Mahanady River lay long and bright, flashing back the crimson of the sky.

I wonder, she thought, if we're getting near the mountains yet?

She twisted round and pressed her cheek against the glass. She could make out a vague looming mass of grey towards which the train was rushing. Those must be the foothills, anyhow. Father had said they would reach the foothills by breakfast time, because they had to change into the narrow-gauge train at Siliguri.

Suddenly, with a blaze of light, the red disc of the sun itself slipped up through the tree tops. She blinked. Turning her eyes from the glare, she sought the restful grey of the hills. Then she gasped aloud.

Could it be? No, it was so high—it could only be a belt of clouds swimming right up there, its whiteness turning to pink in the sunrise. She stared again. She pressed her face hard against the cool glass, twisted almost on to her back, and peered, as it seemed to her, nearly straight upwards. It *couldn't* be the mountains, not up there. . . It *must* be clouds, yet what solid, definite clouds they looked, with sharp points and edges rising and

falling . . . Feverishly she dived for the guide-book under her pillow and unfolded the long panoramic photograph of the Darjeeling 'snows'. Then she let out a wild cry which wakened the others—as it was meant to do.

'It *is*! It *is*! Look up there—it's Kangchenjunga, the third highest mountain in the world!'

Chapter 11

ABOVE THE CLOUDS

AT half-past six they drew into Siliguri. They were ready washed and dressed, though a little sleepy-eyed, and, as far as Mr Woodstock was concerned, rather blue about the chin 'We've half an hour for breakfast', he said, bustling them into Shorabji's refreshment room, where bacon and eggs and toast and marmalade appeared like magic on the crisp white table-cloth

They could have saved time by taking a taxi or bus for the last fifty miles, but Robert had insisted on going by the narrow-gauge railway. They all laughed when they saw the train. There were only three coaches and the locomotive was like a toy. The gauge was only two feet.

For the first mile or two they wound their way through dense jungle, often with sheer walls of almost solid vegetation hemming them in on either side. Gradually the toy engine began to pant and grumble, and its top speed of ten or twelve miles an hour slackened to something less impetuous. There was a noticeable gradient. The palm-trees fell behind. They began to get a view 'Look!' cried Carol 'Like hundreds of giant steps'

The mountainsides were wrinkled with innumerable narrow terraces, running on and on, round sharp spurs and into deep clefts 'Tea-plantations', said her father.

The whole landscape was green with tea, growing in the form of small-leaved bushes along the earthen terraces. The slopes were as steep as a high-pitched roof, but the terracing made them more like endless staircases. Here and there a white-walled, red-topped bungalow or shed stuck out dizzily on its ledge, and there were other splashes of colour in the trees and bushes bordering the track. Carol especially loved the mauve masses of bougainvillæa and the long scarlet petals of the poinsettia, like spear-heads.

Then, without any warning, they found themselves in the middle of a village street, with shops so close on both sides that they could stare inside and bargain with the shopkeeper without leaving

their seats Smart railway company bearers in white uniforms appeared with trays of tea and biscuits

'Kurseong, sahib! We stop ten minutes.'

From this point onwards they had the motor road beside them most of the way, sometimes on the right and sometimes on the left. The train kept rattling across at an angle and, as there were no bridges, level crossing gates, or fences at any point, the road traffic had to take care of itself. One car kept trying to shoot ahead, but every time it really looked like doing so the engine gave a mischievous whistle and whipped across the road in front of it, forcing it to slow down.

The local children seemed to take a great interest in the train 'Don't they look cheerful!' exclaimed Carol. 'They smile all the time! There's a Chinese look about them.'

The boys were fond of dashing along the top of the low stone wall bordering the road, trying to race the train. It was lucky that they had good heads for height, for there was a drop on the other side of anything up to a hundred feet. In fact, thought Carol, if you started bumping down these mountain sides, I don't know when you'd stop

'They do all the things kids at home do', said Robert 'Look at those paper darts, and paper propellers on sticks—'

'And there's one with a catapult—'

'And what a place for kites!' said their father almost enviously, watching a boy wind in his kite from where it floated serenely in the void, thousands of feet above the valley.

They all burst out laughing as two tiny urchins came bowling round the corner on a trolley made of a board with cotton-reels spinning at each corner. 'I wonder if they go all the way to Siliguri and come back by train', said Robert 'Think of it! Fifty miles and downhill all the way!'

The favourite game of all was jumping on and off the footboard of the coaches, and making funny faces at the people inside The speed of the train made this a reasonably safe form of amusement

Meanwhile the incline was getting steeper and steeper. Sometimes the line made a complete loop, and they were able to look down from a bridge and see, thirty feet below them, the winding track over which they had travelled a few minutes before Several

times they came to a complete stop. It looked quite impossible for any train to go a yard further. But the engine-driver still had a trick up his sleeve. He hooted and then shunted back a few yards, rattling over a set of points.

'We're going back!' Carol exclaimed in dismay.

'No, we're not', said Robert, leaning out excitedly. 'We're on another line now. There's our old one, down there.'

'We've stopped again.'

'Only for a moment. Here we go, forwards this time.'

The train chuntered on importantly over a second set of points. Robert saw that it had carried out a Z-shaped movement—the engineer's solution for a problem which could not have been overcome by loops or tunnels.

Higher and higher they climbed. At a small station named Ghoom they crossed the highest point of the line, eight thousand feet above sea-level. Darjeeling lay four miles further north, and a thousand feet below them.

As they began to rattle down the other side of the ridge a cool wind blew through the open windows, fresher than anything they had felt since landing at Bombay. 'Look!' said Carol. 'Kangchenjunga again!'

Fifty miles away, floating on a froth of cloud, stretched the eternal snows of the great mountain, golden in the mid-day sun.

They loved Darjeeling from the moment they saw its houses thickly clustered on a spur of hill. As soon as the train pulled into the tiny terminus their bags were seized by husky, flat-faced girl porters with long black greasy plaits. The girls, grinning broadly, took several heavy boxes on their backs, secured them by a leather strap running round their foreheads, and were then ready to march gaily up flights of steps and narrow lanes like house-roofs.

Darjeeling was all on a steep slant. The houses looked like toy blocks, wedged in and balanced wherever possible. As the travellers panted up the hill behind the porters, they were often glad to pause and look down—Mr Woodstock warned them that it would take them a little while to get used to the thin air at such an altitude. They picked out, far below, a large open market-place, glowing—even at that distance—with huge piles of oranges like

coloured lamps It was as though the whole town was lit up with the golden fruit, for every few yards along the road there seemed to be a child squatting with a basket of them to sell

It was a colourful place altogether. Lovely Nepali girls passed up and down in vivid shawls and skirts, their beauty marred (only in western eyes) by the ornaments piercing their nostrils Wild-looking, hairy Tibetans and other hill-tribesmen mingled with fashionably dressed people from Calcutta Standing on the very borders of India proper, Darjeeling was wedged between the independent states of Nepal and Bhutan, while in front lay the forbidden land of Tibet Looking at the smart shop-windows they passed (many of the leading Calcutta stores had branches here), Carol found it hard to believe that she was now on the very edge of civilization

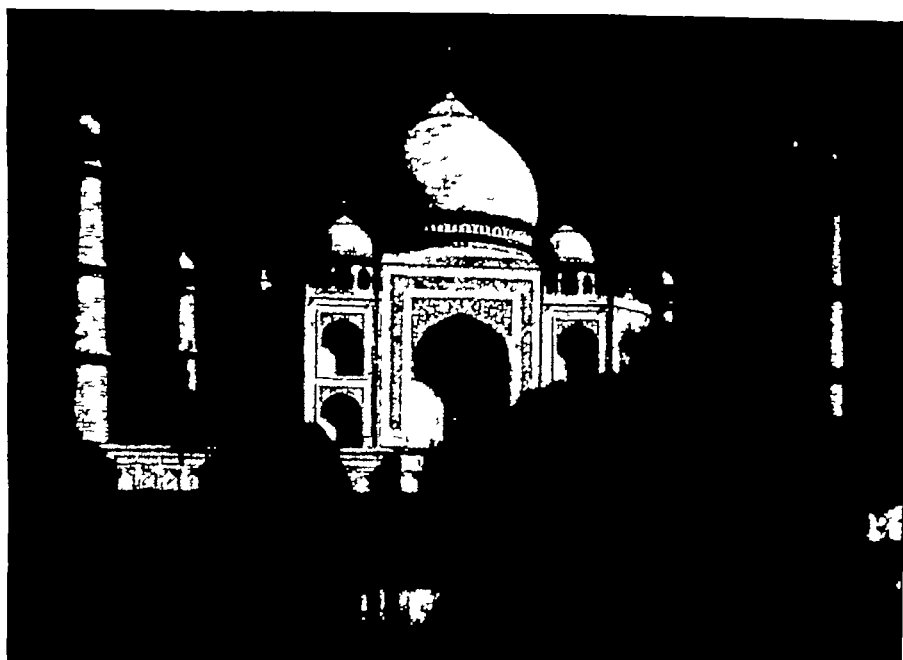
There were a few cars and taxis groaning up and down those cruel gradients, but they were not surprised that they never saw a bicycle all the time they were there There were some rickshaws but, unlike those in Calcutta, they were trundled with painful slowness by three or four men each. In the open space near the hotel, a cross roads called the Chowrasta, there were dozens of shaggy ponies for hire Carol nudged her brother. She knew which form of transport she was going to use

Darjeeling proved one of the high-spots of the tour in all senses of the term. They were never to forget those mornings when Moti would wake them with tea and biscuits, and draw aside the curtains to reveal Kangchenjunga, pink in the light of dawn Carol could have lain there all morning, knees hunched up, tea steaming in the cup, just contemplating that frozen wave, twenty thousand feet higher than her bedroom Dear Kangchenjunga, she'd muse, you're always there—though sometimes you take some finding! The truth was that for the first day or two her angle of sight, like her lungs, had to adjust itself She would look across the valleys, see a great cloud-bank, and imagine that the mountain was hidden behind it Only when she raised her head and looked upwards as, in the ordinary way, she would do to stare at a bird or a 'plane, would she realize that the Himalayas were after all in full view, high above clouds that were merely wrapped round their lower slopes at a paltry ten thousand feet or so Kangchenjunga was



By courtesy of the High Commissioner for India

The riverside at Benares was crowded with pilgrims from every part of India, who had come to bathe in and drink the holy Ganges water



Photos by courtesy of the High Commissioner for India



ABOVE The Taj Mahal as Robert and Carol saw it—by moonlight BELOW A street in Old Delhi, where they felt they had left the twentieth century behind

always there—pink, or gold, or white, according to the time of day and, at night, a wonderful pale ice-blue under the moon

She just liked looking—she had no desire to climb ; unlike Robert, who found a book called *The Kangchenjunga Adventure* by F S Smythe in a local shop, and pored over the tale of an attempt earlier than the successful one of 1955

One morning they all three rose before dawn and hired ponies to take them to Tiger Hill, a point from which Mount Everest could sometimes be seen The highest mountain in the world was rather a disappointment after Kangchenjunga it showed only as a tiny white triangle, peeping over the intervening ridge It was, after all, a hundred miles away. The sunrise was more impressive, and the ride itself was fun Mr Woodstock was no horseman, and looked extremely unhappy with his long legs dangling earthwards, but the melancholy spectacle only increased his children's enjoyment

On another day they rode down to a tea-plantation far below the town, where a young under-manager, Mr Matthews, showed them round

'The picking is just about over', he told them 'Pruning is the job now.'

Left to itself, he explained, the tea-plant would grow as tall as a tree—in Assam it grew to thirty feet To keep the leaves young and tender, however, it was severely pruned and kept to a height of two or three feet After about twelve years it would be cut back almost level with the ground, and then it would sprout forth afresh 'We've some healthy bushes here that are thirty years old', he said

After picking, the leaves went through all kinds of processes—the coolie carried his basket to the factory where the contents were weighed and spread out on wire netting to wither. 'Withering takes about twenty hours', said Mr Matthews 'We know when they're done by holding them to our ears—if we can still hear a crackling sound, they need a little longer Then they have to be rolled by machinery, fermented at a temperature of eighty degrees Fahrenheit, dried by hot air, and then sifted through wire mesh. You've heard of Flowery Orange Pekoe ?'

'Oh, yes!'

"Well, that's the first grade of Darjeeling tea—and of course we say that Darjeeling tea is the best in the world. You must take a little as a souvenir." Mr Matthews called to a clerk as they returned to the office, and a neat little box of plywood was brought in and handed to Carol.

"How sweet! It's like a miniature tea-chest. And how heavy! Surely there must be more than two pounds in here?"

"Oh, no, Miss Woodstock, that's due to the lead lining. To make it thoroughly air-tight, you know. I'm sorry", Mr Matthews continued, "that you didn't come a week or two sooner and see the picking. The factory's more or less at a standstill now, and there won't be any more tea coming in till April."

"Then you've only this grunting to do?" asked Robert.

"Well, rather more than that. The terraces take a lot of weeding, there are plant diseases to watch for, there's manuring, there's the nursery where we grow the young shrubs from seed—oh, there's a lot more to your cup of tea than just boiling the kettle!"

"I can see there is", said Carol. "I shall think of these hillsides and the factory when we have tea at home."

The days passed. Sometimes they were lazy, strolling in the botanical gardens or the park, drinking coffee and eating wonderful pastries at Piva's Swiss restaurant, where a trio played light music. On other days they made longer trips by car or pony.

Once they drove up to the borders of Nepal, the independent kingdom of the Gurkhas, and were surprised to find no frontier guards and no sign whatever that they were passing into a foreign country—just a cluster of huts, called Simra Basti, and the road running through a gap in the stone wall, without even a gate to close it. They had already seen plenty of Gurkhas in Darjeeling—grinning stocky fellows, with close-cropped heads that had a slight suggestion of a pigtail. Nepal being poor mountain country, the Gurkhas came into India for work, and many of them enlisted in the famous Gurkha regiments, nowadays divided between the British and the Indian armies. Robert bought one of their curved knives or *kukris*, guaranteed sharp enough to cut through a silver coin at one blow, though Robert never seemed able to manage it.

On the way home they visited the Buddhist monastery at Ghoom, which was gaily painted in red and blue. Long white

streamers, with writing on them, fluttered from tall posts 'Prayer-flags', explained Mr Woodstock

'Prayer-flags ?' echoed Carol

'Yes You see, these people are great believers in prayer I think they reason something like this a prayer written down, or silently thought out in your mind, is just as good as a prayer said In that case, if you write your prayer on a flag and wave it, it counts as a prayer each time you wave it And if the wind waves it for you, what's the difference ?'

'It seems a labour-saving sort of religion', said Carol with a laugh

'Here's another notion', said her father as they went inside one of the buildings 'They write their prayers on a wheel, and every time the wheel turns the prayer goes up to heaven What about this for mass production ?'

A monk was squatting beside a row of eight painted wooden cylinders, jerking a leather strap to and fro By an ingenious device each prayer-wheel worked the next one in the row, so that one motion sent eight prayers simultaneously on their way to heaven

'I suppose', whispered Carol doubtfully as they went out again, 'it's all quite *logical*'

'Some very strange things are', Mr Woodstock agreed 'But is logic everything ?'

MOTHER GANGES

FROM Darjeeling they returned to Calcutta, and thence by train to Benares, where their first move was to hire a boat on the Ganges. The broad river stretched before them, twinkling with a million ripples. There was no doubt this was the way to see the city.

The holy city of Hinduism rose from the left bank of the Ganges, a jumbled skyline of temple-roofs crowning the steep bluff, down which flight after flight of steps, all crowded with figures, reached to the water's edge. What Jerusalem was to Jew and Christian, and what Mecca was to the Muslim, Benares was to the pious Hindu.

It was pleasant to lean back in the stern of the river-boat, shaded by a canopy and fanned by a slight breeze off the water. At first, coming down from the bracing altitude of Darjeeling, they had been quite bowled over by the heat and humidity of Calcutta and the Ganges plain. Carol and Robert still felt drowsy. They leaned back, trailing their fingers in the tepid river, while the boatmen rowed just enough to keep the craft drifting on a straight course down-stream.

'Don't go sucking your fingers afterwards', their father warned them. 'Not only do all the drains come straight into the river, but so do the bathers—pilgrims from every part of India, and suffering from every horrible disease there is.'

'Ugh!' cried Carol, and pulled in her hand as though it had been bitten. Robert did the same. 'What makes Benares so holy?' she asked.

'It always has been. Mother Ganges is thought of as a goddess. You see, water is the source of life, and the river comes down from the Himalayas where the gods are supposed to live. This is a great place for worshipping Siva, too. But here he's worshipped as a life-giver, not a destroyer. They say that anyone who dies within the boundaries of Benares goes straight to Siva's heaven—however wicked he's been, and even if he's not a Hindu. If you can't

arrange to die here, the next best thing is to make the pilgrimage, bathe in the water, and drink some '

'Ugh!' exclaimed Carol again

'That's usually what foreigners feel', agreed Mr Woodstock cheerfully. 'What we must remember is that the pilgrims disbelieve in germs just as firmly as you and I disbelieve in their gods and goddesses. It's no use going through India with your nose in the air—you'll never understand the country if you do. Let's not look for things to be superior about, let's look for some more things we can admire. That view, for instance '

It seemed, as they lay back under the canopy, that it was the city and not their boat which was gliding by. First came the ancient observatory, massive, with broad steps leading to the terraced roof where Brahmin priests had studied astronomy centuries ago, then came a temple, with a holy man in a yellow robe, telling his beads in the shadow of a tamarind tree, then, one by one, the bathing *ghats*—steep staircases descending to the swirling river, in which thousands of pilgrims were bathing and filling their bottles

It was a vivid scene, what with the pinks and purples and greens and yellows of the pilgrims' clothing, the white sails of boats skimming across the blue river, and the golden dome and spire of Siva's great temple glistening under a cloudless sky. Even the ordinary houses with their carved overhanging balconies and eaves seemed more brightly coloured than elsewhere. Altogether, thought Carol, Benares from the river was like a wonderful theatre backcloth. Her father was thinking that he must certainly mount a camera in one of these river-boats, and was regretting, as he had already done many times during the tour, that he would not be able to film in colour.

This was the most Indian of the great cities they had visited so far. It was not, like Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras, the creation of the East India Company, nor was it westernized like the centre of Hyderabad. Benares, with its sacred bulls of Siva lurching through narrow streets, its thousand temples thronged with a hundred thousand pilgrims, was much the same city as it must have been before the Muslim invaders, let alone the British, set foot in it.

'Whichever way you turn in India, you can bet that religion is round the next corner'

Robert summed up his experience with some justice. The Parsee Towers of Silence, Kalighat, the prayer-wheels of Darjeeling, the pilgrims of Benares . . . half of his most vivid impressions so far seemed bound up with one religion or another.

His father smiled. 'True enough. I think India's one part of the world where people genuinely put their religion first. Till you realize that, you won't understand anything. And remember—you haven't learnt anything about Islam yet.'

'Islam?' Carol echoed. 'Oh—you mean the Muslim religion? Mohammedans?'

'Yes. The various names *are* a bit tricky.'

'We're leaving all that till we get to Pakistan, aren't we?'

Mr Woodstock nodded. 'It seems more logical, since Pakistan is a Muslim state. Only, don't forget we've been seeing Muslims all the time in India too.'

'Yes, I remember Mr Gupta told us there were millions of them in India, and he hoped they'd stay.'

'We've seen mosques everywhere we've been', Robert pointed out. 'Even in little places like Pachmarhi.'

'Just hold on to that thought', their father advised them. 'Meanwhile, it's Buddhism we're dealing with just now.'

They had driven three or four miles outside Benares to a place called the Deer Park. Rather to their disappointment there were no signs of any deer, though it was certainly like a country park—grassy, with scattered trees. Ruined foundations of brickwork were dotted here and there, and in one place rose an immense solid tower, shaped like a giant pepper-pot. They could see that it had once been faced with stone and beautifully carved, but nearly all this outer casing had gone, leaving plain brickwork, tufted with weeds.

'What is it?' Carol asked.

It was the monument, said the guide-book, marking the spot where Buddha had begun his teaching. Here, squatting cross-legged under a tree, the former prince had preached to the five disciples who had, like himself, given up the ordinary interests and occupations of the world. He had taught them his Four Noble

Truths, and that lesson had been for Buddhism what the Sermon on the Mount had been for Christianity. It had made this spot one of the holiest sites of the Buddhist religion and, as the teaching had spread all over Eastern Asia, pilgrims had flocked to the Deer Park from Ceylon and Siam, Tibet and China.

Asoka, the king who had made Buddhism powerful, had set up a *stupa* or shrine to mark the place. Later on the great 'pepper-pot' tower had been built over the *stupa*. It looked very desolate that afternoon, looming above the trees of the silent park, without a pilgrim in view, while a few miles away beside the Ganges there were thousands going up and down the *ghat* staircases.

'It seems strange', Carol murmured, 'that Buddhism was so strong in India once—and it sounds such a gentle, *good* religion—and now it's practically gone.'

'It was a very hard religion to follow, in its pure form', said her father. 'Rather a religion of giving up and doing without, like that of the monks in the Middle Ages.'

'*They* couldn't keep it up. The Church got into an awful state, didn't it?'

'So did the Buddhists. They forgot the pure teachings of their founder, just as people of all religions tend to. You saw the end of it at Darjeeling—a lazy monk turning eight prayer-wheels at one go, and probably thinking about what he would be having for dinner!'

They took the train again and moved on to Cawnpore. They were still in the hot Ganges Plain. Bengal and its jute-fields were a distant memory, so were the fresh green paddy-fields of Bihar, which made its capital city, Patna, so famous for rice, before reaching Benares they had entered United Provinces, now renamed Uttar Pradesh, which stretched on and on to Delhi—but they were still in the same flat plain, so flat that many of the villages stood on earth embankments, as a safeguard against floods.

Mother Ganges, they learned, was a temperamental parent. Every yard of her course was holy—fifteen hundred miles of it, from the glacier source in the Himalayas to the outlet, far beyond Calcutta, in the Bay of Bengal. But she was very apt to change that course, sometimes flooding thousands of square miles of

country, making islands where no islands had been before, and leaving to the south of her villages which had previously been on the northern bank.

'They put up with it—the river brings down so much fertile soil each year', Mr Woodstock said 'The floods spread it all over the surrounding country—it's so rich that the farmers don't need to manure their fields. Some of them get three harvests in one year. Even as things are, India is the hungriest country in the world. You can imagine how badly off it would be without the Ganges.'

They had quite a family argument over Cawnpore, and whether they should turn aside to visit Lucknow, not far away. Robert remembered all the adventure stories and stirring ballads he had read about the Mutiny of 1857. He wanted to see the well at Cawnpore into which the massacred prisoners had been thrown. He wanted to see the ruined Residency at Lucknow where a small British force had stood a long siege until relief came. It was the only building in the world, he reminded them, where the Union Jack was never hauled down at sunset, but flew by night as well as by day in memory of the heroic defenders.

'It doesn't now', said his father dryly.

'Then I think it's a shame. I was thinking you'd be sure to put that into the film.'

'You must remember, Robert, that what our history books call the "Indian Mutiny" means something quite different to people here—they imagine it was more like a War of Independence.'

'Aren't you going to show the well?'

'Certainly not.'

'But Dad——! The Massacre of Cawnpore and the Relief of Lucknow—it's almost the only bit of Indian history I remember! Except for Clive and the Battle of Plassey.'

'Don't you think that's rather a pity?' Mr Woodstock looked at his son squarely. 'You've seen something of the country by now, don't you think there are other things better worth remembering?'

'Who wants to drag up a lot of old battles and horrible atrocities?' Carol came to her father's support. 'Mr MacIntyre said——'

'But these things happened', Robert retorted stubbornly. 'They were true.'

'Of course', Mr Woodstock agreed. 'I'm not suggesting truth

should ever be hushed up But we've only so many thousand feet of film, and we've got to pick our subjects carefully '

In the end they decided to leave both Cawnpore and Lucknow out of the picture Cawnpore was almost entirely a modern industrial city, famous for woollen and cotton materials and leather goods of all kinds Some people called it the Manchester of India. Mr Woodstock said he could get all the photographs he wanted of mills and factory chimneys when his camera unit went to Bombay and Calcutta

Lucknow sounded more attractive—an ancient city which had once possessed kings of its own and was still full of historic buildings Carol rather fancied a shopping trip there, for it was well known for its gold and silver brocades and similar luxury goods, but she knew in her heart that she would only be tantalized by things she could not afford

'You'll find all the shops you want where we're going', Mr Woodstock assured her 'And even more historic buildings than anything Lucknow can show We'll be seeing the Taj Mahal by moonlight to-morrow evening '

MEMORIES OF THE MOGULS

‘It—it doesn’t look real’, said Carol huskily

They stood in the moonlit gardens of the Taj Mahal. Tall cypress trees threw inky shadows across lawns that were like silver-grey velvet. A breeze ruffled the surface of the pools, so that the moon’s reflection broke and shook, then grew steady again.

Above all this the building itself seemed to float against the night sky. The great central dome, the four smaller domes, glowed with the soft lustre of gigantic pearls. Standing apart, one at each corner of the raised terrace on which the Taj was built, four slender minarets pointed like fingers to heaven.

‘Is it a mosque, Dad?’ inquired Robert

‘Surely it was a palace?’ Carol suggested. Once again the poem of Kubla Khan came into her mind, especially the part about ‘the pleasure-dome’. What feasts she could picture inside that fairy-tale building, with swaying dance-girls and haunting music and golden goblets of ice-cooled wine! She was surprised when her father answered softly:

‘No. It was a memorial to the Emperor’s wife.’

‘He must have loved her very much.’

‘He did.’

Carol was glad. She had been trying to imagine these bygone people as human beings, with the same feelings as herself. It wasn’t always easy. She had been told, not an hour before, about the great Emperor Akbar with his household of five thousand women and girls, divided into companies with appointed leaders, like an army formation. She felt closer to his grandson, Shah Jahan, who had loved one wife so much, and lost her, and raised the wonderful Taj Mahal as a memorial to her beauty.

Strolling there in the moonlit gardens they talked of the days when Agra was the centre of a mighty empire. Mr Woodstock told them how the Muslim peoples had invaded India from the north and overthrown most of the old Hindu kingdoms. One of their

leaders, Baber, had set up the empire in the early sixteenth century—

‘Henry the Eighth’s time’, interjected Carol, who liked to fix dates in relation to the history she knew.

The Emperor was known as the Great Mogul, or Mongol, because his people sprang from Central Asia. Gradually they spread their power over most of India. It reached its height with Akbar the Great, who reigned at the same time as Queen Elizabeth. He was a wise ruler, and carried out all kinds of reforms in the laws and system of taxation. Although he was a Muslim he realized that most of his subjects were Hindus and tried to unite his people by blending the two religions together. He set an example himself by marrying a Hindu, a Rajput princess, and his son had done the same.

‘But not his grandson?’

‘No. Shah Jehan married Mumtaz-i-Mahal, and this is her monument. But he still treated the Hindus fairly. It was his son, Aurangzebe, who upset everything. He was a fanatical Muslim and started persecuting the Hindus. They hit back—there were revolts in many places—and that was when Sivaji appeared on the scene.’

‘Who was Sivaji?’

‘He was a Mahratta—they’re one of the most warlike of the Hindu peoples. Sivaji made himself master of the hill-country in the west, round Bombay. He’s still remembered as the great Hindu hero, a sort of Robin Hood and Hereward the Wake. I don’t think the Mogul Empire ever quite recovered from the shaking it had in those days. But that’s enough history for to-night.’

‘You can’t get on without history’, said Carol slowly. ‘Everything’s jumbled otherwise. Just one place after another.’

They strolled once more round the garden before turning back to their hotel. They scarcely spoke during those last few minutes. They all realized that they were looking at one of the wonders of the world, and that probably they would never see it again. They wanted to remember it, just as it was, with the pearly domes softly reflected in the still pools, and the black cypresses and the white minarets thrusting upwards towards the stars.

It would have been impossible to understand either Agra, or Delhi afterwards, if they had not found out something of Mogul history. They spent a busy day in Agra, trying to see everything worth seeing and to decide what the film should show.

In the morning they explored the Fort, a tremendous stronghold with battlemented walls seventy feet high and a mile and a half round, with eight-sided towers dotted along its length. Within these walls lay a positive maze of courtyards, gateways, and entrance-halls. It was impossible to carry away any distinct impression of them all, though they felt sure they would remember the exquisite Pearl Mosque, built of pure white marble by that same Shah Jehan who had raised the Taj Mahal. The rest of the Fort would remain in their minds as a picture of immense strength and magnificence—a fitting symbol for the Mogul Empire as a whole. It had been here that the Great Mogul had received ambassadors not only from the most distant kings of Asia but from James the First of England.

After lunch and a short rest they drove out a few miles along the Delhi road to visit the tomb of Akbar, a platform of red sandstone raised on pointed Moorish arches, dignified and rather simpler than most Indian architecture. They liked the square grass lawn in front of it, shaded by ancient trees. It seemed a peaceful resting-place for one who had never been beaten in battle, never failed in a siege, and yet had worked all his life for the brotherhood of Hindu and Muslim.

'And now', said Mr Woodstock, 'we'll turn from a dead man to a dead city. Fatehpur-Sikri', he added to the taxi-driver.

'What do you mean, Dad?' asked Robert. 'Where are we going?'

Their father explained as the car sped along between the fields, green with young wheat and vividly splashed with poppies. Akbar had once been returning from a campaign and had halted at the foot of a rocky hill before entering Agra. In spite of his recent victory he was deeply unhappy: the twin children born to his Hindu Empress had just died, leaving him without a son. A holy man who lived on the ridge as a hermit promised him that another son should be born to him if only he too would make his home there. Akbar obeyed, set up his summer-palace at Fatehpur-Sikri,

and in due time was rewarded by the birth of the prince who afterwards became the Emperor Jehangir

'There you are', said Mr Woodstock after they had driven for some miles. Sure enough a high rocky ridge lay across their road, towered and battlemented like a citadel in a legend. The likeness to something in a legend was even greater when they had left the car and passed inside. Here was no ruin, but a complete little city with mosque and shrine and palace, sleeping in the late afternoon sun. Not a sound disturbed the silence but that of their own feet.

They wandered round, speaking with lowered voices. They passed through a wonderful gateway, the Buland Darwaza, which the guide book told them was the most beautiful entrance to a mosque anywhere in the world. Inside, under a canopy inlaid with mother-of-pearl, was the tomb of Salim Chisti, the hermit who had foretold the birth of the prince.

They went into the Diwan-i-Khas, or Hall of Private Audience, where Akbar had discussed religion and statecraft and Persian poetry with his friends. They stared up, blinking in the sunshine, at the lofty tower he set up over the grave of his favourite elephant. They stood in the small plain room where Akbar used to sleep, and in the Pachisi Court, on whose large red sandstone squares he played chess with lovely slave-girls as pieces. He must have been a strange man, they decided, a curious mixture of simplicity and showiness.

'But where *is* everybody?' Robert asked. 'Surely someone lives here nowadays?'

Mr Woodstock shook his head. 'No. Fatehpur-Sikri was given up soon after Akbar's time. Within fifty years of its being built, it was entirely deserted again.'

Carol shook her head too, though she did not speak. She was trying to imagine how any one *could* have given up such a place. And then, remembering the loveliness of Agra and the Jumna River, and knowing that the Moguls had possessed other palaces in Delhi and Lahore, she began to understand. Fatehpur-Sikri had meant something special to Akbar and his Hindu wife, and their son Jehangir, but to those who had come afterwards it had meant nothing.

Perhaps it was better that Fatehpur-Sikri had remained as it was, an empty sleeping city, spellbound like something in an old tale

They had often wondered why the newspapers at home spoke of 'New Delhi' whenever they published dispatches from the Indian capital. When they got there, they realized that there were two distinct cities, the old Mogul Delhi, standing on the site of six previous ones, and the modern British creation nearby, laid out—as Carol said—like geometry, neat but quite soulless.

'I can't *fill* my picture with architecture', her father protested, 'and history doesn't photograph half so well as geography. Still, we'd better trace out the Mogul story to the end, I suppose.'

So they left the twentieth century behind with their suitcases in Maiden's Hotel, and set off to explore the old city to which Shah Jehan had moved his capital from Agra, three hundred years before. They went into the Fort and visited his great hall of assembly, the Diwan-i-Am, with its sixty red sandstone pillars (red sandstone seemed one of the chief building materials in all these cities) supporting a flat roof. There was a recess in the wall at the far end. 'That', said their father, 'is where the Peacock Throne used to stand. It was covered with jewels, it had golden legs, and it was valued at six million pounds.'

Robert whistled. 'I don't wonder it's not on show to visitors.' 'It's not on show for the very good reason that nobody knows what became of it.'

'Nobody *knows*?' Carol knitted her brows, scenting a mystery.

'Delhi was looted by Nadir Shah—he was a Persian soldier of fortune at the beginning of the eighteenth century. He swept down from the northern hills with an army of wild horsemen. It's supposed that he took the Peacock Throne away with him, but nobody will ever know.'

'Why was it called the Peacock Throne?'

'Two peacocks stood behind it with their tails spread—not real birds, you know, but made entirely of sapphires, rubies, emeralds, pearls, every jewel you can think of.'

'I bet Nadir Shah took them as well', said Robert.

'It seems likely.'

They crossed a pretty little garden of flowering shrubs and came

to the Diwan-i-Khas, a pavilion of shimmering white marble, overhanging the Jumna River and commanding a wide view across the plain towards the tawny hills in the distance. They felt they could agree with the Persian inscription running round the delicately inlaid walls, 'If there be a Paradise upon the face of the earth, it is this—it is this.'

When they left the Fort they walked along the Chandni Chauk, once famous as the richest street in the world. It was full of jewellers' shops, silversmiths' and goldsmiths', and Carol was tempted many a time but, as she said, she had the best protection of all against such temptations—an almost empty purse.

A little further on they came to the Jama Masjid, or Great Mosque, standing on a rocky hillock and offering the best all-round view of the old city. They had to climb a long flight of steps but it was well worth while. A gateway at the top gave them a view of the vast front courtyard inside, a hundred and fifty yards square, paved with granite and inlaid with marble, and with fountains playing in a central tank where the faithful could wash before prayer. The mosque itself had three great domes of white marble striped with black, and gigantic minarets at each corner striped with alternate bands of marble and red sandstone. It had taken five thousand workmen to build it, working for six years.

'What happened to the Moguls in the end?' Carol asked.

'Their empire got very shaky in the eighteenth century', answered her father. 'That was why the East India Company started empire-building on its own account—they knew that if they didn't acquire power and territory somebody else would, and they wanted to make sure of a peaceful India where they could still trade. Actually there *was* a Mogul right down to the time of the Mutiny, though for ages he'd been only a puppet in the hands of the Company. He was here in Delhi when the Mutiny broke out, and rather naturally he backed the mutineers—hadn't much choice, poor old boy. When the British stormed the city he was caught and sentenced to imprisonment for life. He died in prison in Burma a few years later. And that was the end of the Moguls.'

It was a pathetic, inglorious finish, thought Carol, for the family which had ruled India for so long and created all the glory she had seen during the last few days.

MR SINGH THE SIKH

NEW DELHI was a complete contrast to the ancient Mogul capital.

In place of high ramparts and narrow gateways there was openness, almost bareness. Instead of shadowy byways like deep ravines there were giant ribbons of concrete road, often shaded by nothing more substantial than a lamp-post. Instead of the babbling life of the bazaars there was an almost countrified calm, broken only by the hoot of cars and the swish of tyres on well-kept surfaces. With its vast expanses of lawn New Delhi was more like a park than a city.

What buildings there were loomed huge and white, on the same scale as the roads and lawns. There was an immense round affair, with dozens of columns, like the bottom tier of a wedding cake which had been left unfinished. This was the Council Chamber, the Parliament building of the new Indian Republic. Close to this was the former Imperial Secretariat, housing Government offices. Beyond, as a kind of architectural climax, there was the palace of the Viceroy—now the President's official home—looking across lawns and fountains to a War Memorial arch.

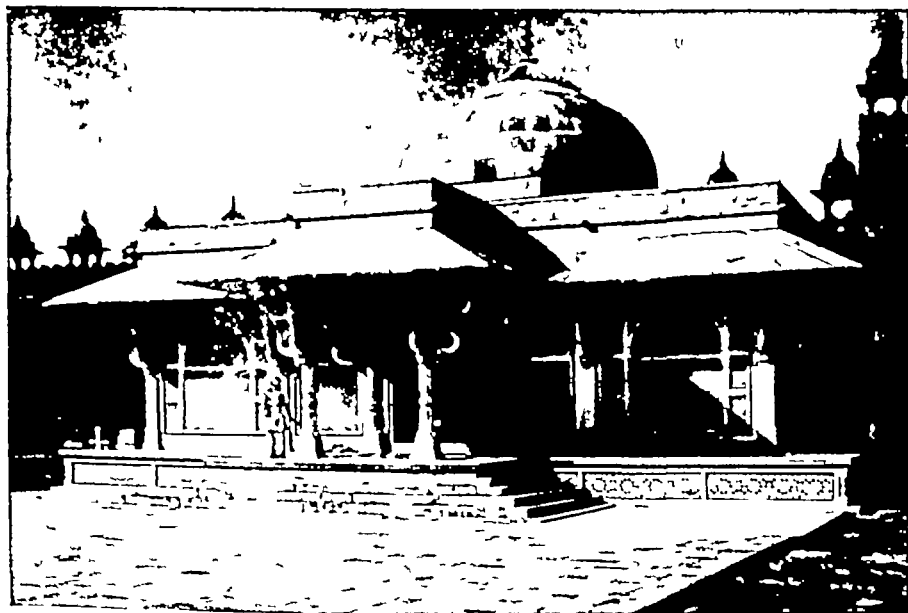
New Delhi, said Mr Woodstock, had been built just before 1914, when the capital of India was moved from Calcutta. The site covered five square miles, and the famous English architect, Sir Edwin Lutyens, had been given the task of creating a new city worthy of its position. He had tried to combine the classical style of the West with various Oriental ideas, but—well, they could see for themselves—the result had not been too happy.

‘Of course, it's *imposing*, in a kind of way’, said Robert slowly.

‘It was meant to be. I think “imposing” is the word. You “impose” on people when you're not sincere—and I don't think Britain was quite sincere when she built New Delhi. I can imagine the Civil Servants saying to each other, “Of course, all this pomp and show is a lot of rot really, but the Indians expect it.” And I



By courtesy of the High Commissioner for India



ABOVE *The great Fort of Delhi, heart of the later Mogul Empire* BELOW *The tomb of Salim Chisti, in the deserted city of Fatehpur-Sikri*



By courtesy of the High Commissioner for India

From the shimmering white marble Diwan-i-Khas, or Hall of Private Audience, Carol and Robert could see the lovely Pearl Mosque of Delhi Fort

feel that even Lutyens himself was thinking rather on those lines when he put in that archway supported by elephants'

'You mean—as it was India, he felt he *ought* to chuck in a few elephants?'

'More or less', said Mr Woodstock with a laugh

'I suppose it's all very well laid out', put in Carol dubiously

'So are corpses', Robert quickly retorted 'New Delhi's dead—dead as a concrete elephant'

It seemed a pity that all this sham magnificence would be the most lasting visible memorial of British rule. Britain had given many important things to India—railways and irrigation, schools, hospitals, and law courts. Yet travellers in years to come would see the Taj Mahal to remind them of the Moguls, and wonders like Ellora to recall still older dynasties, and only the cracking concrete of New Delhi as the symbol of western civilization

'Perhaps', said Carol hopefully, 'it will look better as a ruin.'

They went to see an Information Officer to ask some questions about the new Government. Everything was changing so rapidly since the departure of the British and the division of the country into two. Nearly all reference-books were out of date and Mr Woodstock did not want his film to be the same

They were received by a charming young official in a pale pink turban, and with a wonderful curly black beard. Robert was puzzled when his father addressed the man at once as 'Mr Singh', although no name had been mentioned. When he raised the point afterwards Mr Woodstock laughed

'I saw at once that he was a Sikh, and all Sikhs are named Singh. Of course they have other names to distinguish them, but they may be rather tongue-twisting and you'll be quite safe to call them Mr Singh'

'You mean, if a man's name is Singh, he's a Sikh?'

'Oh, no, not necessarily. But if he is a Sikh, then his last name is Singh'

Carol had groaned at that. 'If I spend another fifty years in this country I *may* learn to identify people at sight. I know that Muslims often wear baggy trousers and Hindus wear tight ones, like thin jodhpurs, but so many don't wear any at all!'

But before that, they had had a long and interesting session with the Information Officer.

'It is difficult to answer all your questions quite definitely', he explained. 'We are just coming out of a transition period. One cannot change a system of government overnight—least of all in a country like ours. As you know, under the British we had a central government here in New Delhi. Under that, there were provincial governments in places like Bombay, Madras, Calcutta, and so on, with all kinds of powers of their own. And inside the provinces again, the big towns had municipal councils to run the affairs of the city, with power to levy taxes on the people.'

'Did everybody have a vote?' Robert asked.

'By no means. Only a minority. It was argued that the poor people were too ignorant to use a vote properly. It is true, of course, that most of our people *are* ignorant. But our plan now is to have a true democracy, with a vote for every man, and we are changing over to that basis as fast as we can.'

He went on to explain that even under the British the vast majority of Government positions had been held by Indians. But certain key positions were reserved for Europeans, as were certain vital departments of government, and Indians had felt that they were still ruled, through a British Viceroy, from London.

'For example', he said, 'when Britain went to war with Germany in 1939, India was not consulted. She found herself automatically at war, because London said so. Canada and Australia and the other Dominions were not treated like that. They declared war by their own decisions.'

'Well, you're independent now', said Mr Woodstock.

'True! We have no longer a Viceroy to deal with, taking his orders from London. Mr Nehru, our Prime Minister, is as free as the Prime Minister of Britain.'

'I suppose', said Robert, 'you run a parliament now more or less like the one in England—you know, different ministers, and bills and acts and question time and so forth?'

Mr Singh smiled. 'I would not say it was quite the same, but we do have all those things you mention. We Indians have been brought up in British traditions, we admire the British form of democracy, but we are suiting it to our own needs. We adopted a

new constitution in 1948. It included some of the ideas we liked in the American and French systems, but it was closer to the British Parliamentary method than anything else.

He told them a good deal about some of the men—and women—who had led India to independence. The Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, was a high-caste Hindu, son of a well-known lawyer and political figure, born in Allahabad. Nehru was sent to Harrow School and Cambridge University. His upbringing was that of an upper-class English boy—'You should read his *Autobiography*,' said Mr Singh. 'It is a fine book by a fine man, and it will help you to understand the new India.'

In spite of these early influences, Nehru had never forgotten that he was an Indian, and that his country was not free. He had entered politics, and had spent much time in prison because of his views. He had gone through a period of great bitterness against the British, but he had lived to see the two nations part peacefully and come together again as equal friends.

'Some people think Mr Nehru is too westernized', said Mr Singh. 'He is more scientific than religious. He is a Socialist and admires many of the things which have been done in Soviet Russia, though he is certainly no Communist. He prefers western democratic methods.'

Mr Singh's tone changed when he came to speak of Gandhi—the Mahatma, or Gandhiji, as he called him. There was a kind of reverence in his voice. 'There was no one like the Mahatma', he said. 'Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, Untouchables—he was the friend of all. His murder was one of the crimes of history.'

He told them briefly how Gandhi had struggled all his life for Indian independence. A Hindu of the *bama* or business caste, he had been married at thirteen and he started life in a very ordinary way. Then he had been to London and qualified as a lawyer. From there he had gone to South Africa, where he had worked for the downtrodden Indian immigrants. In the Boer War he had worked with an ambulance. Then he had returned to India and dedicated his life to the cause of national freedom.

He spoke of the marches and campaigns Gandhi had led, of his fasts and his numerous spells of imprisonment, his pacifism and his vegetarianism, his prayer meetings and 'days of silence', and

his spinning-wheel. Mr Singh pointed to a photograph on the wall, and they recognized at once the wizened little figure in shawl and loin-cloth, with prominent ears, and eyes twinkling behind his spectacles

'He was a saint', said Mr Singh, 'but not a solemn one. He loved a joke. I have heard him giggle like a schoolboy.'

He told them of those last weeks, when Muslims and Sikhs and Hindus were killing each other in many districts. Gandhi was determined to stop the slaughter. He announced that he would take no food unless the fighting ceased. Days passed, and he grew steadily weaker. Then came a halt in the strife and Gandhi felt he could break his fast.

'But there were some Hindu fanatics who did not want peace. They wanted to stamp out the Muslim religion in this country, and set up an all-Hindu State—which was never the aim of Gandhiji or of our present Government. They made a plot. Someone went to Gandhiji's evening prayer meeting here in New Delhi—it was held in the garden of a private house, but anyone could go, and several hundreds were there that night. Gandhiji came across the garden—he was very weak still, and of course he was seventy-eight. He smiled and greeted people. Then a young Hindu stepped forward with a revolver, and shot him at point-blank range. He died half an hour later, and our whole nation went into mourning. He was not only a saint but a martyr, and India will never forget him.'

Young Mr Singh was keenly interested in the idea of the film and offered all kinds of assistance. When he heard they were travelling to Amritsar in a day or two he grew quite excited. It was his own native city. What was more, it was the holy city of the Sikhs. Did they know all about the Sikhs? An Indian film without the Sikhs would be *Hamlet* without the prince! For a few moments he frowned at his desk diary, then he smiled.

'I myself have business in Amritsar. At least, there are things I can do there. You go the day after to-morrow? Good. I find myself called to Amritsar that very same day! We can go together, and then I shall be quite sure that you see everything, and get your facts correct.'

Amritsar lay to the north-west, in the Punjab. The Ganges and its tributaries were now left behind. When they crossed a big river, the Sutlej, they learned that it was flowing the other way, to join the Indus in Pakistan. Amritsar itself lay within a few miles of the frontier, a city of stormy memories.

What they afterwards remembered most was the Golden Temple. It was not very large in itself—a squarish building of inlaid marble with a shining dome of gold foil on a copper foundation—but it was so remarkably situated, standing out in the midst of a square pool, which (as usual in India) people insisted on calling by the prosaic name of ‘tank’. There it stood in beautiful isolation, the reflection of its walls and gilded dome quivering ever so slightly in the pale green water. And all round the pool, instead of palm trees, was the humming city.

‘Guru Nanak, the founder of our faith, made this tank when he built Amritsar’, said Mr Singh. ‘It is called “the pool of immortality”—Amritsar itself means “the city of immortality”’. The first temple was built by Arjun, but the Afghans destroyed it, and it was rebuilt about two hundred years ago.’

He explained that Guru Nanak was a holy man who had lived about the time of the English Henry the Eighth. He had tried to combine the best elements of the Hindu and Muslim religions, purifying them of superstitions. The Sikh religion which he founded taught men to believe in one God and not to worship idols. Sikhs did not believe in caste, but they would not eat beef. They could marry Hindus but not Muslims. They had their own Sikh temples and their own scriptures, the *Granth-sahib*.

The Woodstocks were able to see this sacred book. Passing through a gateway they walked out along a causeway, balustraded on either side, to the Golden Temple in the middle of the water. There, under the dome, shaded from strong light by a silken canopy, lay the holy book of the Sikhs.

Mr Singh explained that there were only four million followers of this religion, most of whom lived in the Punjab, ‘but’, he added with a grim smile, ‘we have not been idle in the history of India.’

His was a warlike people. Until a century ago they had ruled great tracts of land. They had fought stubbornly against the

British: when finally conquered, they had served the King-Emperor with loyalty and courage. They held hard to all their traditional customs and beliefs—they must never, for instance, cut their hair or shave. They were required also to carry a steel dagger, but in times of upheaval the Government was often forced to forbid this.

‘There have been many upheavals in recent years’, he said ‘No one has suffered as we Sikhs have in this division of India. So many of us lived on the other side of what is now the border’

They were quite sorry to part from Mr Singh the next day, but an even sadder parting had to be faced. With tears in his eyes Moti refused to cross the border with them into Muslim territory.

So they said a sorrowful goodbye. Moti appeared with long garlands of bright orange marigolds, which he insisted on hanging round their necks. Even Robert wore his chain of flowers without a murmur, though he was glad that none of his friends at home could see him. But he would not have hurt Moti’s feelings for the world.

Their last memory of Amritsar was not of Mr Singh and his bushy black beard, nor of the Golden Temple reflected in the pool of immortality, but of a wistful brown-skinned figure, his khaki shirt-tails fluttering in the draught of the train as it hurried away.

'UNDER THE CRESCENT FLAG

It was hard to realize at first that they had crossed a frontier and were now in a new country, under the green flag with the star and crescent of Pakistan

'You mustn't expect everything to *look* different', their father warned them 'We've come only thirty miles from Amritsar and for centuries Lahore and Amritsar have been close neighbours—and in modern times they've even been in the same province, sharing the same local government The Mogul Emperors spent a good deal of time here in Lahore—in fact Jehangir's buried here—so I expect we shall see plenty of their buildings just as we did in Delhi and Agra '

They drove through broad modern streets, which might almost have been American, to Faletti's Hotel where they had arranged to meet an old Army friend of Mr Woodstock's, known in family circles as 'Ginger Whiskers'. 'But for Heaven's sake don't call him that', their father exhorted them Perhaps I oughtn't to have told you His full name is Sheikh Surajjudin Bahadur, V C , O.B.I.'

'But we'll *never* remember all that!' cried Carol.

'You needn't Call him "sahib".'

'I thought "sahib" was for Europeans ?'

'Goodness, no It's a greeting of respect, and he's entitled to it. He was the Risaldar-Major—that's like a Regimental Sergeant-major, only even more so He was a terrific fellow.'

But Ginger Whiskers, when he rose to greet them on the hotel veranda, was less terrifying than he sounded Tall he certainly was, and every inch the old soldier, but his voice was gentle and he spoke with great precision Carol was fascinated by the vivid hue of his well-trimmed beard and such hair as showed under his *puggaree*—a twisted head-dress of spotless muslin, with two ends dangling down at the back An absurd thought flashed through her mind with that henna-dyed beard removed, what a charming

school matron the old man would have made! She dared not look at Robert

He, had she but known it, was fascinated by Ginger Whiskers in quite another way. What appealed to Robert was the knowledge that this man had won the V.C. in 1916, that he had (in his own words) been 'born in the Army' and had served in a dozen dangerous campaigns in great wars and little wars, with adventures in all kinds of places from Flanders to the North-west Frontier, and from East Africa to Burma. Ginger Whiskers must have some tales to tell, and Robert meant to hear them in due course.

It looked as though there would be ample opportunity, for Ginger Whiskers had everything mapped out—they were to stay with him and he would hear of no refusal. He had retired from the Army to a village some twenty miles west of Lahore, where he had bought land and (with his pension) ranked as a well-to-do and notable person.

'If you will honour my humble house', he said solemnly. 'You will find everything quite sanitary. You will not refuse, Woodstock Sahib?'

'We shall be delighted, sahib, if it isn't too much trouble.'

They had a brief look round Lahore before they went. They saw the fine modern quarter with the university and other well-laid-out buildings, equal to anything they had yet seen. They saw the Golden Mosque and the Fort, once a Mogul stronghold. They ended up with a walk through the narrow bazaars—streets barely three yards wide, overshadowed by tall houses with open shops below, piled high with silks and cottons, brass pots and ornaments, fried fish and sticky sweets, curry and heaps of grain. Lahore, Mr Woodstock reminded them, was the scene of Kipling's *Kim*—and this part of the city, at least, seemed to have altered little in the fifty years since then.

After long years of honourable service, Ginger Whiskers had beaten his sword into a plough-share with the greatest enthusiasm. Farming was his passion. As they drove across the plain, trailing a long wake of khaki dust behind them, he gave a non-stop commentary on the fields they were passing and on the superiority of his own enlightened methods.

'The Punjab has always been the progressive province', he announced with pride

'Does that mean tractors and chemical fertilizers?' Robert managed to get in

'No, no, sahib! Not yet, at least. In our country we have still far to go. We have to teach the peasant how to use even the manure of his own cattle properly—too many of them dry it and burn it as fuel. That is wasteful. They must learn also to bank up their hillside fields so that the soil is not washed away in the rainy season every year, to make irrigation channels where water is scarce, to sow new seeds and crops, to breed better sheep and goats and cattle, and take care of them—all this, and much more, sahib. I have to teach the ignorant people in my village.'

'They must be glad to learn', said Carol politely

'Not always, Miss Woodstock.' The ginger beard wagged sorrowfully. 'They are very, as you say in English, stick-in-the-mud. I say to them, measure how much milk each cow gives, keep records, so that you know which are the best animals, then you will know which to breed calves from, and which to slaughter—but what do you think they say to me, these ignorant fellows?'

'I can't imagine', said Carol, though she could imagine various remarks, all disrespectful to Ginger Whiskers. But she would not have hurt his feelings for the world.

'They say', he went on, 'that milk is the gift of God, and that it would be an insult to Him to measure His gifts! What can one do with such ignorant fellows?'

Mr Woodstock's eyes were twinkling. 'I seem to remember you had a way with them in the old days, on the barrack square, sahib.'

'Ah, yes!' The veteran chuckled. 'I have not quite forgotten all my powers of persuasion!'

They were now entering the village. He pointed out the belt of trees he had persuaded the people to plant, so that they would have wood to burn, and could keep all their cow-dung for the fields. 'And that is the new well we are digging', he said, pointing. 'We had a Government engineer to tell us where to dig. In the old days they would throw a bucket of water over a goat and run after him—and wherever he first stopped to shake himself, they

would make their new well, even if it was in the middle of the village filth!’

The car caused intense excitement. Children came running from all sides. Squatting men stood up and salaamed. Women vanished indoors, but peered from the shadows. It was clear that Ginger Whiskers was a personage in the district.

They drew up in front of a large bungalow, built of sun-dried brick but in semi-western style. Ginger Whiskers had not seen the world without noticing things. He had spent a lifetime in Army barracks and he knew the importance of cleanliness and order. He had seen how country-folk lived in France and Italy and Palestine, and he had evidently determined that his house should embody the best features of all he had seen. Neatly-rolled mosquito-nets hung over each bedstead. The sanitary arrangements were the best possible in a village without drains, and there was a tin bath, filled from old petrol tins, for the convenience of visitors. The rooms seemed empty to western eyes, but bright and clean. There were patterned Kashmir rugs on the floors and just two pictures on the white-washed walls—a photograph of a somewhat younger Ginger Whiskers in the middle of a regimental hockey team, and a coloured portrait of George the Fifth.

There were several servants about, including a smart youth named Abdul whom Mr Woodstock agreed to try as a bearer. A little boy and girl greeted them with shy curiosity, and then vanished into the back regions. ‘My children by my third wife’, said their host, stroking his beard proudly. But of their mother, and of any other wives who might be on the premises, there was no sign.

‘She’s in *purdah*’, Mr Woodstock managed to murmur, while they were left for a moment to unpack. ‘We shan’t see her—except perhaps you, Carol. For all his other modern ideas, the old chap’s very very strict on religion.’

‘Has he a harem?’ she whispered excitedly.

‘I don’t know—I doubt it, but I’m sure I daren’t ask. You may be able to find out.’

‘The little girl isn’t in *purdah*.’

‘She will be when she’s a bit older.’

Ginger Whiskers proved more approachable than Mr Woodstock had believed possible. As a devout Muslim he was most anxious that they should understand his faith and that evening, after a tremendous meal of boiled mutton and rice followed by tea and delicious sticky cakes, they all sat along the veranda watching the sun set and listening to his explanations of Islam. The word itself, they learned, was Arabic for 'resignation to the will of God'.

They were amazed to find that Jesus Christ was deeply venerated by Muslims, and so were Abraham and Moses. 'They were all prophets of God', said Ginger Whiskers firmly, 'like Mohammed who came after. We share their teachings with you—we keep the same commandments. Like you, we detest the worship of idols. Like the Jews, we will not eat pork. In some ways we are much stricter than either of you—we may not drink wine nor gamble—but for the most part we are very much closer to your way of thinking than we are to that of, say, the Hindus.'

'I can see that', Mr Woodstock agreed.

'When I knew you first, sahib, during the war, I was not a Muslim Leaguer. As a soldier of the King-Emperor I had no politics. But the British have gone, and the country has been divided, and I have come to see that it was necessary. It is better that we should have our own government and not be at the mercy of the Brahmins and the Congress wallahs.'

'I'm all at sea', Robert broke in. 'Of course I've heard of the Muslim League, and Brahmins, but what's a Congress wallah?'

His father laughed. 'Will you explain, sahib?'

'Most willingly.' And Ginger Whiskers told them how the Indian National Congress had been started many years ago, and how it had developed into a great political movement for independence. It had been open to all but, with Hindus in the majority and high-caste Brahmins winning most of the leadership, many of the Muslims had come to believe it did not represent them fairly. Most—but not all of them—had broken away and formed an opposition party, the Muslim League, under Mohammed Ali Jinnah. In a few years they had grown rapidly in strength, proclaiming as their policy that India should be divided into two States, India or Hindustan for the Hindus, and Pakistan, 'the land

of the pure in heart', for the Muslims. When the war with Germany and Japan was over, the two great parties had not been able to agree, but finally, in August, 1947, the British had handed over their power to a Government of India in Delhi and a Government of Pakistan in Karachi.

'It was most difficult, of course', said Ginger Whiskers soberly. 'If all the Hindus had lived in one part and all the Muslims in another it would have been easier, but they were all mixed up. Here in the Punjab the province had to be split in half. There were riots and bloodshed, as you will have heard, and terrible sufferings—millions of Hindus trekked through this countryside, I saw them myself, on their way to India, and soon we saw millions of our own people trekking the other way, driving their animals and carrying their goods. But of course they had to leave their houses behind in India, and their land, and for a farmer to lose his land is the most terrible thing that can happen.'

Mr Woodstock looked at his host keenly. He had known him under difficult conditions. They were old comrades, and he was fairly sure he could speak frankly without giving offence.

'You know, if you ask me', he said, 'this division of India has been a tragedy. Geography meant it to be one country, not two. The people need to be able to exchange their produce more easily, not less—they don't want Customs barriers between them. And Pakistan needs India even more than India needs you—she's got the minerals, she's got the factories—'

Ginger Whiskers checked him politely with a raised hand. 'Much of what you say is true, sahib. I have said it myself in the past. But the division has come, and we must make the best of it. It is the will of God. Some things are even more important than minerals and factories.'

'Why is it so difficult for you to get on with Hindus?' Robert asked. 'I mean—you used to.'

'Under the British, yes, and under the Moguls, but they were Muslims, you see. It is a Hindu *government* that most of us fear. The Hindu way of life is utterly different from ours, and we are afraid it might be forced on us. Suppose, for instance, a Hindu government forbade us to kill cattle and eat beef.'

'Yes . . . I see . . . that would upset your farming.'

'There are so many differences between us.' The old man spread out his pale brown hand and ticked off the fingers one by one 'Islam is democratic and holds all men equal' Hinduism has the caste system Any man can become a Muslim if he wishes you must be born a Hindu, you cannot be converted We believe in one God, they have many. We consider that ours is a pure religion, and theirs is full of abominations We are disgusted by their idols We are offended by their music, which our holy book, the *Koran*, forbids Hindus are allowed as many wives as they like——'

'But aren't Muslims?' Carol burst out eagerly, now that this thorny subject had been mentioned

'Oh, no, Miss Woodstock' Ginger Whiskers looked quite shocked Then he laughed 'It is true the *Koran* permits us to have as many as four, but that is for princes and millionaires' Very few of us have more than one wife. As in your own country, even one is quite expensive enough' At least I find it so'

'But——' Robert blundered in 'We thought you had three wives?'

Ginger Whiskers nodded gravely 'I have been married three times, but twice I am a widower'

'Oh . . I'm awfully sorry'

The old man laughed to put him at his ease again 'Did you think I had a harem? No, the Prophet allowed us up to four wives—there are good reasons for that Suppose the first wife has no children? That is very sad for both of them But why should the man never have children? Of course he may divorce his wife and send her away, but that would be unkind It is better to let him have another wife But Islam says that each wife must be treated fairly and equally'

'All the same', said Carol, 'I'd hate to be Number One'

'There need never be a Number Two', Ginger Whiskers hastened to explain 'Marriage with us is not a religious ceremony, it is a legal agreement When it is drawn up the bride can make a condition that she shall be the only wife That is often done In any case, there are more men than there are women to go round, so there is not even one wife each'

Carol felt that the old gentleman had, in that case, done rather

well for himself, but she liked him too much to begrudge him any happiness he had found in his declining years.

It was quite dark by now. The trees rustled against a sky of dusky velvet. Over the eastern horizon stood a thin new moon, sharp as a scimitar.

They stood up, said good-night all round, and went indoors to sleep for the first time in Pakistan.

THE HOUSE OF MANY STOREYS

THEY stayed in the village for several days and learned a great deal which helped them to understand the poverty and backwardness of both Pakistan and India, and the huge tasks which awaited the governments of both Republics,

Ginger Whiskers had several good men to support him, men who had served abroad, who could read and write a little, and who were open to new ideas. This was a progressive village in a progressive region. Robert could appreciate that when he remembered the aboriginal village they had seen in Central Provinces.

The villagers mostly wore coarse cloth made by hand on their own looms. Even the bracelets and bangles carried by the women were usually made by local workmen. They ate two meals a day—usually a wheaten cake with vegetable curry, but seldom much meat, though they had milk and butter from cows and buffaloes. Even so, as they were Muslims, they ate more meat than Hindus did.

Most of them were farmers, and very hard-working. There were also craftsmen of one kind or another, such as a blacksmith, carpenter, potter, barber, and so on. There was a shopkeeper who was the village money-lender too, though this side of his business had declined a good deal of late, Ginger Whiskers explained with a chuckle.

‘The money-lender used to be the curse of every village in the country—he still is, in many places. Every farmer gets into debt sooner or later, then he gets into the clutches of the *bania*—and never gets out of them again.’

‘Can’t he just pay back the debt when he has a good year?’ Robert asked.

‘It is all he can do to pay the *interest*’, retorted the old soldier. ‘Imagine, fifty per cent! Sometimes seventy-five per cent interest! What could a poor man do? But things are better now. We are proud that we in the Punjab passed the first law limiting interest

to eighteen per cent, and that is quite enough. Now we have co-operative societies and banks, which lend money to farmers at twelve per cent. We have such a bank in every district now, and in Lahore there is the central bank of the Co-operative Union, with many millions at its disposal. The old kind of private money-lender is fast going out of business here.'

Carol saw Mrs Ginger Whiskers only once. She was invited to drink tea and eat little cakes with her one afternoon. They sat in a tiny square of garden, hidden from the world by walls and trelliswork. Her hostess was fairly young, pale of skin, black of hair, and pretty in a plump way. She seemed even more shy than Carol, which was hardly surprising, since she led such a quiet life and met so few people. She knew no English, and Carol's Urdu was still at the elementary stage, so that conversation limped. However, by petting the little children and admiring their mother's jewellery, Carol managed to keep going until it was polite to say good-bye.

The poorer women, who had to do their own work, could not keep strict *purdah*. Carol saw them in chattering groups at the corn-grinder's, or filling their jars at the well, and wondered if they were not happier than the ladies. The men were no less fond of a gossip. They used to gather every evening in the middle of the village, smoking and discussing local politics.

'We have also a proper *panchayat*', her host explained.

'What's that, sahib?'

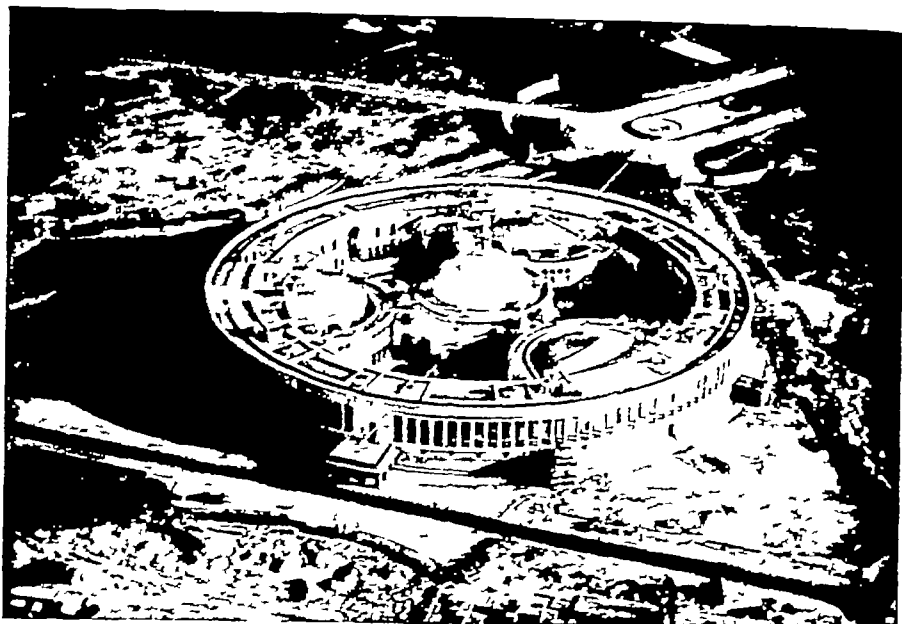
'It is a council of five. They are elected by all the men in the village. I, naturally, am chairman of our *panchayat*. We are responsible for local government—for things like taxes, the digging of new wells, sanitation, vaccination, getting rid of the rats, all such matters connected with health.' He went on to explain that the Government was trying to get people to elect these local councils everywhere, in place of the old system of one headman, who might sometimes act as a dictator.

'Teaching them democracy', Robert murmured.

'We Muslims believe in democracy. Our faith teaches that all men are equal in the sight of God.' And Ginger Whiskers marched on through the village, twirling his moustache and looking infinitely superior to everyone within sight.



Once the richest street in the world, Chandri Chauk, Old Delhi, still glittered with many goldsmiths' and silversmiths' shops



Photos by courtesy of the High Commissioner for India



ABOVE The immense round Government Council Chamber at New Delhi with dozens of columns looked rather like the bottom tier of a wedding cake BELOW What the Woodstocks remembered most about Amritsar was the Golden Temple, its gilded dome and walls reflected in the pale green water

That evening they unfolded the map and discussed their next move. Pakistan was an awkward country to cover, for it fell into two quite separate portions. The smaller, consisting of a tiny part of Assam and part of Bengal, they had long since left behind them unvisited, for it lay east of Calcutta. They were all the more anxious to do justice to the main part of the country.

To their surprise, Ginger Whiskers took the decision out of their hands 'With your permission, sahib, I shall escort you for the rest of your journey. You must have someone to explain.'

'But——' Mr Woodstock began

It was impossible to argue with the old man. The wanderlust had seized him again. The traveller in three continents was determined to make one last journey before finally settling down as village squire.

'You must see the Frontier, sahib', he announced, his eyes kindling with memories. 'You must see the ancient places, like Mohenjo Daro, and the great modern dams But first, on our way to the Khyber, we must get off the train at Rawalpindi and spend a few days in Kashmir. It is getting late in the season, so we had better lose no time'

They set off two days later, with their new bearer, Abdul, and Ginger Whiskers' own servant, Mohammed Ali, travelling by rail from Lahore to Rawalpindi, and then hiring a car for the journey up to Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir.

The future of Kashmir was at that time still undecided and it was a question which had led to much trouble between the two countries. On the one hand, the Hindu Maharajah wished to attach himself to the Indian Union; on the other, some of his subjects, being Muslim, preferred to join Pakistan.

'Like Hyderabad', Robert suggested, 'only the other way round.'

At present the government was headed by the pro-Indian Ghulam Mohammed Bakshi, with a large majority, and it looked as though Kashmir was firmly attached to India But Ginger Whiskers complained darkly that this position had been reached only by deposing and imprisoning the former premier, Sheikh Abdullah, by terrorizing his pro-Pakistani followers, and by other doubtful methods which would have been frowned on in

Delhi if the truth were known there. The dispute had dragged on for years

'Well, thank goodness', Mr Woodstock broke in with a laugh, 'we don't have to settle it. We've only to look at the scenery'

It was worth looking at.

'We call Kashmir "the House of Many Storeys"', explained the old soldier as the road climbed, mile after mile 'The land rises like this all the way to Srinagar, and then beyond that to the frontier stations like Gilgit. And last of all one comes to the Hindu Kush, the mountains we call "the Roof of the World".'

Even the entry into Kashmir was dramatic. A fine suspension bridge crossed the roaring, tumbling waters of the Jhelum—'one of the five great rivers of the Punjab', said Ginger Whiskers proudly. 'It finally runs into the Indus.' They were to see a good deal of the river, for it made a sharp bend just above the suspension bridge and, instead of leaving it behind them, they found it was their constant companion as they climbed the valley. Whenever the engine was silent, their ears were immediately filled with the roar of waters.

They saw several of the swaying rope footbridges which are so popular in adventure stories. They were V-shaped, with one rope for the feet and another on each side, four feet higher, for the hands to grip. Forked branches were fastened at intervals to keep the three ropes spread out in their V-shape. It looked about as safe as a tight-rope across Niagara, and Carol covered her eyes the first time they saw a shepherd coming across.

'That is natural', said the old soldier sympathetically 'Even the Kashmiri women are often blindfolded when they have to come across. The men carry them on their backs.'

Robert's admiration for the Kashmiri men increased. He would not have fancied the trip across those boiling rapids in any circumstances, least of all with a blindfolded Carol on his back. 'Are there often accidents?' he inquired.

'Oh, yes. People go on using the bridge until sooner or later the rope breaks. They say, "Why should we repair it until we have to?"'

Further up its course the Jhelum was quieter. It flowed through the Vale of Kashmir, spreading out into reed-fringed lakes. Here

it was navigable. They saw boats called *shukaras*, long and narrow, with two or three men in the stern plying paddles in the shape of a heart or a lotus-leaf. There were house-boats, too, great Noah's-Ark-like craft, which were not moored in one place as at home but could be towed up and down the river, from lake to lake.

'They were made popular by the British and other foreign tourists', explained Ginger Whiskers. 'There was a State law that no European could own a house in Kashmir—but nothing was said about living in boats.'

'What fun!' said Carol. 'I wish we were staying long enough!'

The Vale of Kashmir was the most beautiful place they had yet seen. Smaller valleys opened out on every side. Rivers and streams came tumbling down to swell the Jhelum and its three lakes. The floor of the valley was mostly meadow-land, its fresh grass flecked with wild flowers of various hues. The lower mountainsides were densely wooded—first with majestic walnut-trees and cedars and chenars now turning vivid yellow and red with autumn, then with dark, soft pines. Above them, said Ginger Whiskers, there were birch-trees, giving place to stunted juniper, then to grass and bare rock, and finally to the perpetual snows. From their present low level they saw these remote heights only as bands and patches of different colours, greys and greens and browns and mauves, leading up to the glassy whiteness of the peaks.

This was the Switzerland of Asia. The Mogul Emperors had loved it centuries before. They had planted the first poplars, whose magnificent descendants now lined the road into Srinagar. By the waters of Lake Dal, Akbar had laid out the Nasim Bagh, the 'Garden of the Morning Wind'. His son, Jehangir, had beautified Srinagar with pleasure-gardens of his own. This, Mr Woodstock pointed out, was the scene of those sentimental *Indian Love Lyrics* still popular with light orchestras and amateur singers.

'*Pale hands I loved, beside the Shalimar* . . . ' Carol began to sing in a dewy-eyed, soulful way, until Robert's fingers closed upon her throat.

Srinagar stretched for three miles along both sides of the Jhelum, with seven bridges linking the two halves and a constant traffic of boats up and down. Most of the houses leant drunkenly

across the narrow alleys at various angles, for the local builders disdained to use a plumb-line, they were confident that they could trust their eyes. Sometimes the top storeys almost touched, and beams had been inserted to prevent one building pushing down another.

'But it is very convenient in case of fire', said Ginger Whiskers, 'and also when pursued by the police'

'Pity Dad's not making that sort of film', said Robert regretfully.

Srinagar was a good place to buy Kashmir rugs and shawls, and Carol was tempted on every side. She fell in love with an embroidered jacket in a white woollen material, with red and blue and green designs twisting all up the full sleeves and down the back. The old man carried out the transaction for her, and saved her a good deal of the price originally asked.

At the Saffa Kadal bridge they saw a large square building called the Yarkandi Serai. Picturesque men in long quilted coats were unloading bales of merchandise from shaggy ponies and weird-looking yaks.

'This is the rest-house for travellers from Central Asia', Ginger Whiskers told them. 'The bridge is the starting-point of the roads to Afghanistan and the Soviet Union. That is one reason why Kashmir is so important, remember—just behind those peaks lie Russia, and China, and Afghanistan. Kashmir is a key to our back-door.'

'And these merchants have come—from over there?' said Carol incredulously, looking up at the snows.

'Oh, yes. And they'll go back.'

'What kind of things do they carry?'

'Oh, carpets, skins—even china cups! Yes, they come all those miles across the high passes, and the cups arrive safely.'

Mr Woodstock and the old soldier had a surprise for them at the end of the day. Instead of going to Nedou's Hotel as they had expected, they were driven down to the reedy shores of Lake Dal, where, in a lily-spangled backwater, they saw the two servants waving from a house-boat.

'I thought', said Ginger Whiskers, 'you might enjoy two or three days in Noah's Ark!'

He was right Those days were unforgettable To wake and see the morning sunlight slanting down through the woods, and the high glaciers reflected in the unruffled lake . . . to dive from the Ark into that chilly water and to emerge gasping a few seconds later, to clamber out into the fluffy bath-towel that Abdul held ready, and, dried and dressed, to sit down to breakfast laid on deck . . . to spend energetic mornings tramping up to the mountain-pastures or *margs* and lazy afternoons being towed along the waterways around Srinagar . . . to watch the incessant bustle and movement of other boatmen, and to gaze into the silent distances at the serene majesty of Nanga Parbat, 'the naked mountain', soaring to 26,700 feet . . . all these were impressions that would never fade

All too soon it was time to go back Mr Woodstock had prepared this part of his shooting-script They must say good-bye to Noah's Ark, good-bye to the Naked Mountain and the Shalimar and the Garden of the Morning Wind, to the Roof of the World and to the House of Many Storeys

Never mind, Robert consoled himself They were going to the Khyber.

THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER

'We are getting near the Frontier', said the old soldier, pointing through the carriage-window. 'See—even those men working in the fields have rifles!'

There was a new light in his eye. From the minute the train had rumbled over the Indus bridge, out of the Punjab and into the North-West Frontier Province, he had seemed to grow younger with every turn of the wheels which carried them onwards to Peshawar. He pronounced the word 'Frontier' in a tone which made the capital F practically quiver in the air before them.

Even Carol, who had often dipped into Robert's adventure-stories when they were both younger, realized that the boundary between Pakistan and Afghanistan was no ordinary frontier. It was the romantic country of hill-top forts and wild raids, depicted by Kipling and a host of lesser writers. Would the real thing, she wondered, prove a disappointment?

'Those men are Pathans', Ginger Whiskers continued. 'Good friends, bad enemies, and proud as the Devil. They speak Pushtu—when they speak at all! They are not so very different from the Afghan peoples on the other side.'

The children stared at the Pathans with renewed interest. They all seemed very tall, were as light-skinned as a European, and tended to have large hooked noses. They slouched about their fields in peculiar baggy trousers, rifles slung on their backs or laid ready to hand.

'Who are they afraid of?' asked Carol. 'Raiders from the hills, I suppose.'

'Mainly, Miss Woodstock.' (Ginger Whiskers would never address her without the greatest respect.) 'It is second nature with these men to fight, and to be ready to fight.'

'Why *do* the tribesmen come raiding? They must get killed and wounded themselves sometimes. You wouldn't think they'd do it for the fun of the thing.'

THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER

The old man explained that they did not. Though fighting was in their blood even the wild hill-men preferred peace to war. They were driven to come raiding because they could not get a full livelihood in their stony mountains. Only a quarter of the land in the Province itself was fit for farming, and very much less of the No Man's Land beyond the Frontier. So, from time immemorial, the hill-men had come raiding their more prosperous neighbours. In the past the Government of India had recognized this and had found it simpler in the long run to pay the tribes a subsidy of money, so long as they behaved themselves.

Looking at the map they saw that the North-West Frontier Province was long and thin in shape, and that they were crossing its narrow waist to its only considerable town, Peshawar. Afghanistan lay to the north-west in front, Kashmir and the Punjab behind them to the east, and a great area marked Baluchistan to the south-west, stretching away to Persia and the sea.

'You have not time to go there', said the old man sadly.

'We've time', said Mr Woodstock, 'but we haven't space in our film.' He looked dejected for a moment. 'People who know the country are going to grumble like mad over this picture. They'll all say I've left out the most important things. I can hear the critics shrieking, "This man pretends to show India to our young people, and he hasn't a single shot of Thingummybad, or the cultivation of the coco-nut, or——"'

'There's too much of everything, Dad', Carol soothed him. 'You can't put it all in. The audience would be muddled.'

'There are very few people in Baluchistan, although it looks so large on the map', Ginger Whiskers assured them. 'Less than a million. It is a sun-baked country. They grow some fruit and maize in the valleys, and there is fishing along the sea-coast. That is about all. There are three times as many people in this Province.'

A few minutes later the train pulled into Peshawar, where they hurried to a hotel to change and wash off the dust which covered them. It was hard to believe, standing under a tepid shower in a modern bathroom, that one was little more than ten miles from the famous Khyber Pass.

Peshawar was a walled town with a few wide streets like the Kissa Kahani, but for the most part the usual narrow lanes between tall,

huddled houses of brick and mud. A fort, the Bala Hissar, stood just outside the walls, and the military quarter, the Cantonments, lay two miles away, the barracks and bungalows lining pleasant roads, shady with trees and bright with flowers. The travellers, however, were more interested in the life of the town itself.

Here, as in Srinagar, they caught fascinating glimpses of a remoter world beyond the border, but now, instead of yaks lumbering in from Sinkiang and Tibet, they saw long strings of splay-footed camels, laden with the products of Kabul and Bokhara and Samarkand. Tall men strode beside them, with turbans or skull-caps or hats of curly black wool, with loose-hung embroidered jackets revealing sashes stuffed with knives, and rifles—or sometimes long, old-fashioned guns with decorated butts—slanting across their shoulders.

‘If those are the peaceful merchants’, Carol whispered, ‘what are the men like who attack them?’

Ginger Whiskers chuckled. ‘It is not always easy to tell the difference!’

Groups of merchants, their business done, squatted in the street round the open stalls and shops, drinking green tea, cracking walnuts, or chewing dried mulberries. Their dark eyes swivelled round at the English girl as she passed. Carol made a private resolution not to move a step without her father or Ginger Whiskers. One attempted kidnapping had been quite enough. She began to see some slight point in the Muslim women’s *burka*, that combined hood and cloak like a collapsed tent, which left only the eyes visible.

‘So they don’t know whether they’re stealing a pretty girl or an old hag’, she pointed out to Robert, ‘until they get the parcel home and unpack it!’

‘Don’t you go in for a *burka*’, he retorted unkindly. ‘You’re safer as you are’

The next morning they drove up to the Khyber. They had both imagined, for some reason, that the Pass lay beyond the Frontier—that they would stand at the entrance, looking across barbed wire, and see it winding mysteriously into the forbidden hills. It was rather a shock to find that it lay on their own side of the

border and that they might have gone through it by train. Mr Woodstock, however, had wanted to see it by road, so he had applied for the necessary permits, and these had been granted, since all was quiet for the time being.

'If I need permits to drive through, what shall I need for a camera?' he wondered.

'You must be discreet, sahib', said Ginger Whiskers solemnly. 'The Khyber is so strategic—naturally the Government must be careful. No doubt the matter can be arranged.'

Disappointment vanished when the young people saw the Pass. It was a savage place of brown and grey rock, as though the earth had died, leaving only a skeleton. Precipices towered on either side, hundreds of feet overhead. In places it was like a wide valley, with space for separate little hills to rise in the middle, crowned with loop-holed forts. In others it narrowed to a gloomy defile where there was only just space for the motor-road and the parallel track for camel caravans. Even the railway was a thing of romance, as well as a feat of engineering. Each little station was a fortified strong-point in itself.

For thousands of years this had been the corridor for armies invading India. There were one or two other passes in the North-west, such as the Bolan Pass in Baluchistan, but the Khyber, leading down from Kabul, had always been the favourite. Alexander had ridden this way at the head of his Greeks—having conquered most of the known world, he had set his eyes upon the Ganges. The memory of that amazing youth still lingered in the hills after twenty-three centuries, and 'Iskander' was a legendary hero to Afghan boys whose hot blood still had a mixture of Macedonian in it.

'He was a great man', said Ginger Whiskers respectfully. 'He bridged the Indus, he would have marched to Bengal—who knows, perhaps to China? But the desert beat him, the Thar as we call it. His men would go no further, so he turned back. But he founded cities——'

'He left a good deal of Greek civilization in these parts', said Mr Woodstock. 'I've seen coins in museums, and statues that were just like Greek ones. I believe his influence lasted a long time in the North-west.'

Carol half-closed her eyes and tried to imagine the Pass as it must have looked on the day when Alexander the Great rode through on his favourite charger, Bucephalus, with the long lances of the Greek phalanx shimmering behind him like a forest of saplings. Wipe out the metalled road, some concrete, a stretch of railway-track . . . what else had been added? The frowning crags must have looked the same, the dust would have risen in the same khaki clouds, and even the camel caravans must have drawn into the side to let the column pass, as they did now for modern traffic.

Not only Greeks had passed this way. The guide-book spoke of the slave-raiding Muslims under Mahmud who had swept down about the time that William's Normans were sweeping into England . . . There had been Tamerlane's fierce Mongols, flat-faced and slit-eyed, crop-headed under their shaggy caps . . . Baber had followed, to conquer the Indian plains and create the Mogul Empire . . . Nadir Shah had ridden after him, to raid the capital of his successors and steal their Peacock Throne . . . Only in the last century had the tide turned, and the cliffs had looked down upon British armies marching the other way. Would they ever witness an invasion again—in either direction?

Ginger Whiskers spoke as the car slid to a stop. 'This is as far as we can go, sahib.' They all got out. There were frontier guards who inspected their permits. There was—of all things—a turnstile at the barrier 'For all the world', said Mr Woodstock indignantly, 'like the entrance to a seaside pier.' A huge notice announced very clearly:

IT IS ABSOLUTELY FORBIDDEN
TO CROSS THIS BORDER
INTO AFGHAN TERRITORY

They could only stare past it at the road winding away up the Kabul valley into the heart of Central Asia. Camel-bells tinkled in the dry air. A caravan passed slowly out of sight, and, as they turned reluctantly back to their waiting car, Carol remembered some haunting lines of Flecker she had once learnt

*And softly through the silence beat the bells
Along the Golden Road to Samarkand*

LIVING WATERS AND DEAD CITIES

'We can do nothing without water', said the old soldier 'The bravest garrison is lost without it. It is the same with a nation Fortunately we in Pakistan have some mighty water-bottles—and there is our biggest!'

He pointed across the vast blue expanse of the River Indus, and shading their eyes from the glare they looked at the long white concrete dam with its arched spans running for a mile from bank to bank Robert began to count them, but gave up at thirty-six The light which came up off the water was too dazzling, and Carol, thumbing the book of words, had by that time discovered that there were sixty-six arches in all It was an impressive piece of engineering, this Sukkur Barrage, but they did not fully take in its majesty until they had gone some distance along the embankment, downstream, and were able to look up at it from below Then it loomed over them like a mountain-ridge.

'Water is precious in Pakistan', explained Ginger Whiskers 'The monsoon does not blow in the North-west Upper Sind has only three or four inches of rain in a year No wonder it is almost a desert!'

Robert considered. He remembered a camping holiday in the Lake District, notoriously the wettest part of England, and he knew that the annual rainfall there worked out at about one hundred inches It was difficult to imagine the Assam hills where four hundred inches of rain fell in about four months, instead of being spread over the whole year. Meanwhile they were in Sind Province, standing beside the broad Indus, and the country looked anything but a desert He said so.

'Of course, sahib! But this dam has been built some years now—and it was not built for nothing. The water is collected here and spread through forty thousand miles of irrigation-canals Where we used to have scrub and sand only, we have a million acres of wheat, a million acres of cotton, and more than half a million

acres of rice. When the work is completed, there will be five million acres irrigated. It used to be a desert province—there were, not five million people living there—but now the desert is beginning to blossom.'

'But where does all the water come from, if there's no rain to speak of?'

'From the snows of the Himalayas, sahib. Remember the Jhelum tumbling down through Kashmir? And the Kabul River near Peshawar? Those are only two of the rivers that make up the Indus. Some of this water we see started in Tibet.'

'You ought to feature water in the film, Dad,' said Carol, 'as it's so important. Mountain waterfalls and lakes, and concrete dams and canals in the fields——'

'Women gossiping at village wells', said Robert.

'And those ancient square tanks, as they call them——'

'And a really sizzling rainstorm during the monsoon—you can fake it if you can't wait till next year——'

'And hydro-electricity', Mr Woodstock himself suggested.

'And the flooded rice-fields', put in Ginger Whiskers, 'with the farmer knee-deep in mud and water as he ploughs'

'And the way standing water breeds malarial mosquitoes', said Carol

'And infected wells spread cholera!' cried Robert

'Stop, stop!' pleaded their father. 'You see how it is—I could use every foot of negative on one theme alone. This film is going to drive me crazy.'

From the Sukkur Barrage they travelled on by train to Dokri, and then drove eight miles to the excavations at Mohenjo-Daro. Ginger Whiskers was as curious as the Woodstocks, for the ruins had been discovered only in the last thirty years, and he had never visited the 'City of the Dead', as it was called. He was inclined to be a little suspicious, too. He had been brought up to believe that his country's civilization had started with the early invasions of the Aryan people, men like himself, four thousand years before. He had been taught to despise the races who had lived in the peninsula before that time. He did not like this new claim that they too had been highly civilized—that their culture

indeed had been one of the oldest in the world, as ancient as that of Egypt and Mesopotamia.

But when they reached Mohenjo-Daro wonder overcame his prejudice. The ruins were not so impressive at first sight, for they were all level with the ground or lower, and could not be expected to strike the eye like the palaces and mosques of later centuries. They reminded Robert and Carol more of the photographs they had seen of Pompeii. It was only when an enthusiastic archaeologist showed them round that they began to visualize the place as it must have looked when it was a city not of the dead but of the living.

'There are really three cities', explained Mr Sikander Khan the archaeologist. 'They were built one on top of the other in successive ages—like Troy, you know. The first dates from 3,300 B.C., the last from 2,700 B.C.'

'All well before the first Aryan invasions', murmured Mr Woodstock with a shrewd glance at his old comrade.

'The lay-out is quite amazingly modern', continued Mr Sikander Khan. He pointed out the straight, well-paved streets and said there was proof that the inhabitants had driven about in chariots. They had also tamed the ox, the camel, and the elephant.

'How do you know all these things?' asked Robert.

'Oh, there are various methods. We find bronze statuettes, inscriptions in a picture-language, bones—all kinds of things. The refuse-heaps are always a great source of information to archaeologists.'

'The refuse-heaps?' Carol echoed.

'Oh, yes. We can tell from the bones what kind of meat people ate. We know for instance that these people ate pork, which we consider unclean, and in the same way we can tell that they went fishing. We find seeds of the wheat and barley which they once harvested—they have been preserved by the extreme dryness of the climate here.'

'Just like Egypt', said Mr Woodstock.

'Then we find broken pots in the rubbish-heaps, and piece them together again. We can tell that they turned out pottery on a lathe, and were experts at glazing it. They were good at metalwork

also—they cast things in bronze, and they made ornaments of gold and silver.'

He led them along the sunken streets, pointing out the foundations of the various buildings. Most of them seemed to have been made of burnt brick but others were of stone. It was possible to see their lay-out as clearly as if it had been on an architect's plan.

'Look at the drains', begged Mr Sikander Khan. 'They are perhaps the most remarkable feature of all. Mohenjo-Daro had modern drainage almost five thousand years ago—and how many villages in Pakistan and India possess it to-day? No, I admit even here there was no water laid on, but there were good filter-wells just outside, and stone baths for everybody.'

'Were there any wonderful palaces?' Carol inquired

'We have found none. But we have found no slums, either. Even the poorest people seem to have lived in decent houses. These were the workers' quarters we are just coming to now. As you see, they were two-room houses with private baths. The kitchens were tiled, and see—here was a chute for the rubbish, as in the most modern flats!'

They had dressed in well-woven cotton and woollen clothes, he went on. They had worn ornaments of jade and lapis-lazuli. They had loved dancing and music and hunting. Even some of their children's playthings had been found. And they had made contacts with far-distant countries, for some of their seals had been identified among the ruins of Mesopotamia.

Ginger Whiskers shook his head, marvelling. 'Never did I know of such things', he admitted

The archaeologist smiled. 'You are a Punjabi?' he inquired. He himself was a hook-nosed Pathan, but his accent showed that he was as much at home in the quadrangles of Oxford as in the ravines of the Khyber.

The old man squared his shoulders. 'I am a Punjabi', he said proudly.

'Then you should go and see Harappa in your own Province—it is only twenty miles from Rawalpindi, and it belongs to the same civilization as Mohenjo-Daro.'

Ginger Whiskers beamed. 'I can see my travels are not over, after all!'

The archæologist had turned to Robert and Carol again. 'Will you remember the most remarkable thing about this place?' he asked. 'More remarkable than the drains or the workers' dwellings! It is this though we have found implements for hunting animals, we have never yet dug up a single weapon of war!'

THE BIRTH OF A NATION

THE journey, so far as Robert and Carol were concerned, was drawing to a close

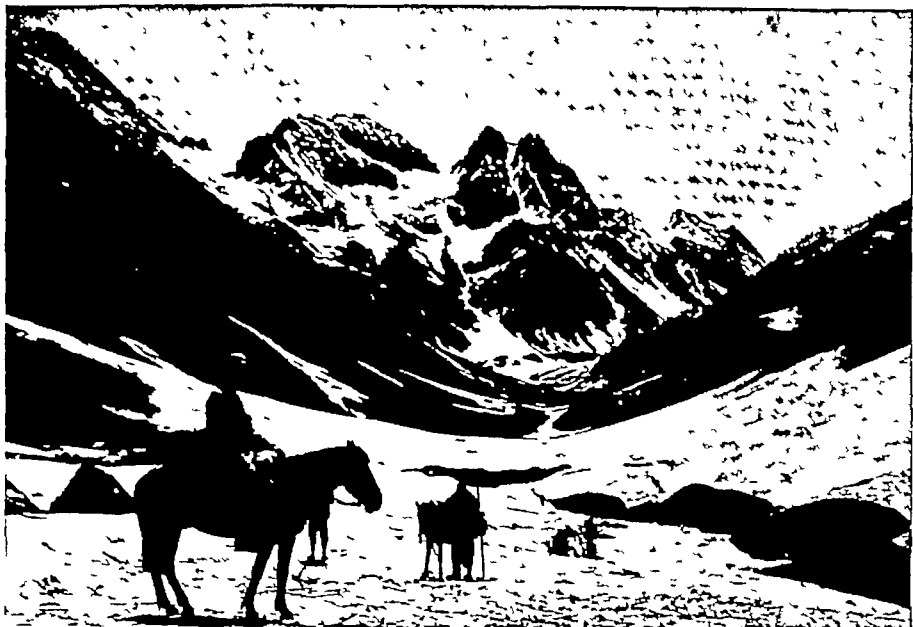
The train to Karachi was the last they would travel in until they reached home again. Their passages by air were booked and after a few days in the Pakistan capital they would be off. Mr Woodstock's film-unit was expected at Karachi airport about the same time, and his travels would soon begin all over again. He promised faithfully to be home as early in the New Year as he possibly could.

They found Karachi an extremely modern city, which was not surprising since it had been only a fort until just over a century ago. It had expanded rapidly in the past few years, with the development of air travel and the growth of prosperity and population in Sind Province, following the Sukkur irrigation scheme. Now it was not merely the capital of a province but the capital of the new Republic, and the only seaport in Western Pakistan.

'Almost all our imports and exports now have to pass through Karachi', explained Ginger Whiskers. 'You have seen what our land routes are like—roads like the Khyber and the mountain-trails that lead out through Kashmir! It is a great strain on the docks and railways, now we no longer share the use of Bombay and Calcutta.'

'One of the drawbacks of dividing the country', said Mr Woodstock bluntly. 'Geography meant India to be one, not two.'

'Man does not live by geography alone, sahib', retorted the old man with dignity. 'We do not complain. We have a port for our eastern territories, too—Chittagong, which serves Assam and the Muslim half of Bengal—and we shall manage. What was Karachi itself a hundred years ago? A dangerous roadstead outside, where even small boats, they say, ran the risk of upset as they crossed the bar. Yet see what a fine port the British made of it! We too, sahib, know how to overcome difficulties.'

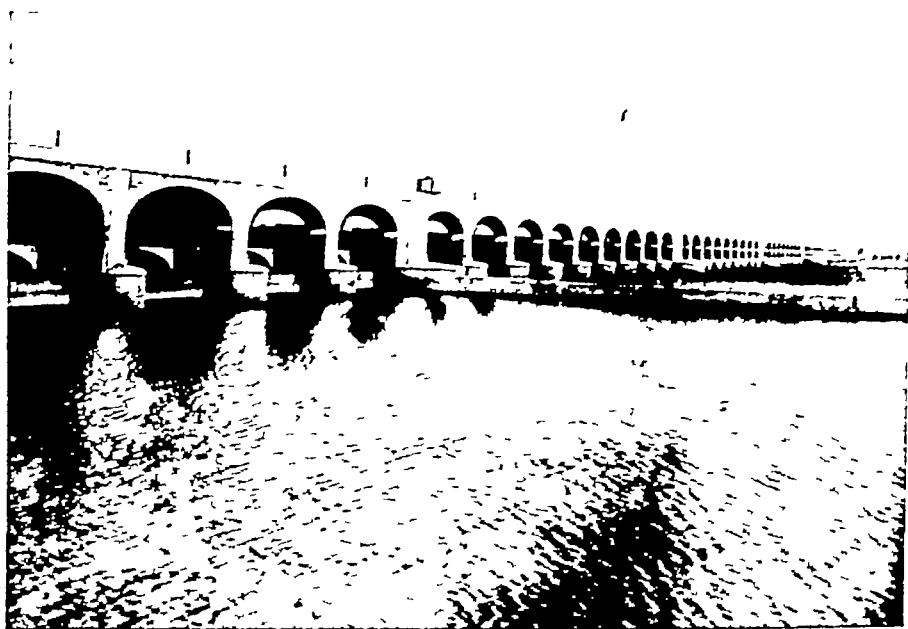


By courtesy of the High Commissioner for India



By courtesy of the High Commissioner for India

ABOVE Among the peaks and glaciers in 'The House of Many Storeys', as Kashmir is often called BELOW A caravan from Tibet resting in the hills



ABOVE *Peshawar, thronged with merchants from Afghanistan and Central Asia bringing carpets, skins, china, and many other things for sale* BELOW *The great Sukkur Barrage, spanning the River Indus, where water is collected to be spread through 40,000 miles of irrigation channels*

It was as well, thought Carol, for Pakistan had plenty to contend with. That evening they heard all about them from Mr Hanif, whom Mr Woodstock and Ginger Whiskers had known as an Education Officer in the Indian Army, and who was now a member of the new Government service.

He arrived very late for dinner at their hotel. He was a dark, dapper little Bombay Muslim, wearing western clothes and smoking far too many cigarettes in an effort to soothe his over-strained nerves. He was profuse in his apologies.

'I couldn't get away from the office', he explained as soon as he had greeted his old friends and been introduced to the young people. 'Every night this week it has been the same. You know how it is—things pile up and pile up on your desk, inquiries, reports, complaints, reminders—'

'Worse than the Army?' chuckled Mr Woodstock.

'You've no idea', said Mr Hanif fervently. 'But it is calm now compared with what it was at first. *We* had to start everything from the beginning. Pakistan was a new country, born—you might say—almost overnight. Suddenly Britain announced the date she was leaving, as we wanted, and there were to be two Dominions, also as we wanted—republics now.'

'Your Mr Jinnah got his way all right.'

'On that main point, yes. His dream of Pakistan was realized within a few months. But try to imagine what those few months were like to us in New Delhi!' He turned to Robert and Carol. 'Imagine if Britain or America decided one day to split into halves! Picture the scenes in Washington if the old division between North and South was made again—or in London, if all the Yorkshire and Lancashire Civil Servants had to go off and start a new government in Manchester! That's how it was with us. Even those of us who had prayed for the division found it very hard when the time came. We had to leave Hindu colleagues who had often been our good friends. We had to uproot ourselves and our families—I myself, for instance, had never set foot in what is now my country!'

'I can imagine some frightful tangles in the departments', said Mr Woodstock amusedly, 'when it came to sorting out the files and papers—which to take and which to leave.'

'It will never be sorted out', said Mr Hanif with deep conviction. 'You should have been there with your camera, Mr Woodstock. Such scenes! Clerks screaming at each other, "You shall not take this file!" "We must—there is more Pakistan business than Indian in it!"' He laughed ruefully. 'I fancy a good many inconvenient documents got left behind. I must confess I decided there were one or two troublesome items that might well be sunk for ever!'

'It seems to have had its funny side'

'But its tragic also. You remember all the riots when the great movement started, Muslims passing into Pakistan, Hindus and Sikhs travelling the other way? Those were terrible days. Trains were stopped by the mob, there were atrocities and counter-atrocities, sometimes hundreds of passengers from a single train were murdered. Some of our clerks were among those victims, poor fellows. The files they had charge of were burnt during the looting—I expect some of our departmental correspondence is still blowing about the fields somewhere between here and Delhi.'

'It must have been frightful', said Carol, remembering what she had read in the papers during that period.

'It was. It makes me ashamed to grumble over my own small troubles now—but I'm afraid it doesn't stop my grumbling, all the same.'

'You certainly started off badly', said Mr Woodstock. 'Files all mixed up or missing, some of the staff Hindus and still in Delhi, others murdered during the move—'

'And when we get to Karachi, more confusion—and such crowds! I talk about my "office"—it was only a corner then, we were jammed elbow to elbow in one small room. Not enough typewriters, not enough telephones, not enough anything. What can you expect though? Karachi was only the capital of a small province. It has still all the local government to house, but now it must also find buildings for the central government of the country.'

'No wonder you told us not to call at your office, and said we could talk better outside! Well, now, apart from all these temporary difficulties, what's the outlook for Pakistan? That's what we want to ask you.'

'I am an optimist', said Mr Hanif 'I pray only for two things.'
'What are the two things you want?'

'First, peace. Peace always, if possible, but especially for these first years. We are in no fit state either to quarrel with the Hindus or to keep the Frontier against a foreign invader And the second thing we need is capital, foreign money invested in our industries '

'I thought the foreign capitalist had always been the villain of the piece?'

'Ah, but this is different ' Mr Hanif explained that Pakistan was weak in mines and manufacturing industries—the Hindus had always taken the lead there, while the Muslims had preferred to farm the land quietly in the old way. In the modern world this would no longer do. They must train Muslims for the industrial work which had formerly been done by others, and they must try to develop all the resources inside their own territory.

Pakistan had some mines producing low-grade coal but not nearly as much as she would need. Already her railways had sometimes been living a hand-to-mouth existence, with only a few days' fuel supply. She must either develop her own mines, import millions of tons from India or overseas from places as far away as South Africa, or convert wherever possible to oil and water power. Almost certainly she would have to combine these various remedies So far she had little hydro-electrical power and only two small oil fields, though there was hope of striking oil again in Sind, Assam, and the Punjab.

'That's where foreign capital can help us', explained Mr Hanif. 'The Burmah Oil Company has already spent four million pounds in prospecting, and means to spend more.'

A new oil well, he went on, had in recent years been sunk in the desert north-east of the city Half a million pounds had already been spent in setting up the machinery, building a small town for the workers, and laying a railway. They could see how the money went.

'Can we feed ourselves?' Ginger Whiskers demanded 'I can promise that we of the Punjab will do our part and more But what is the position as a whole?'

Mr Hanif assured him that he need not worry on that score.

Of some foodstuffs, like wheat, they could normally expect a surplus. Others, like sugar, they would have to import, either from India or from Java, where it was cheaper. They had plenty to export in return for these foreign foodstuffs or for other products, such as oil, iron, and steel, which they would need to buy from outside.

'Cotton, for instance, and jute from Eastern Pakistan—though we shall gain more from them when we have our own mills and factories, so that we can make them up ourselves instead of selling the raw materials. Wool too, and hides. Tea from our eastern regions, and tobacco. We grew a third of the total tobacco crop in the old days, though the population of Pakistan is only about one-fifth of the old Indian Empire.'

'What is the population?' asked Carol.

Mr Hanif shrugged his shoulders with a comical look of despair. 'Who knows for certain? When even Cabinet Ministers sit down to their work without up-to-date maps and no reliable statistics to go on? We reckon roughly seventy-five million. Nobody has counted them yet!'

'You've certainly got a job on', said Robert respectfully.

Mr Hanif drew his coffee towards him and stirred it. Then he lit another cigarette. 'We know it', he admitted. 'Nowhere more than in my department do we know it. Education. I am sorry to say that we Muslims have often lagged behind the Hindus in education. Here in Sind Province, for example, only one person in twenty-five can read and write—probably the percentage is even less since we won our independence.'

'Why less?' demanded Mr Woodstock, puzzled.

'So often that one man in twenty-five was a Hindu, and as like as not he has gone. Teachers, clerks, overseers—in every concern you visit there are gaps left by the Hindus. We have to educate men to take their places. And then we have to go forward from that point and educate everybody, so that we can make the country we plan to have.'

'You know—it's rather thrilling', said Carol slowly.

Mr Hanif's tired face relaxed into a smile. 'It certainly is', he agreed heartily.

SCHOOL AGAIN!

'A SCHOOL ?' queried Robert 'We'll be seeing enough of schools in a few weeks'

'He doesn't mean it', said Carol 'I think it would be fun to go '

They had a day to spare before leaving for home They had been swimming and they had visited the cinema Robert had spent a morning at the seaplane station built on the reclaimed land to the west of the harbour, where he had seen a large B O A C flying-boat land its passengers at the jetty, and then drawn up the slipway for some essential repair He had passed an afternoon watching the powerful electric cranes unloading cargo, two tons at a time, into waiting railway waggons, and he had seen the Bulk Oil Pier where tankers pumped their oil ashore by pipe-line direct to the installation of the importing company Carol had spent these hours in the shops

Now there seemed little fresh to see in Karachi Mr Hanif suggested that they should visit a local school, and they accepted his offer to arrange matters 'I am sending you to a country school, just outside the city', he told them over the 'phone 'For one thing, this particular school is giving a concert to-morrow, and that will interest you, I think. Also, a little village school is much more typical of our country than some big modern place in the centre of Karachi.'

He was too busy to go with them but they still had the company of Ginger Whiskers, who was determined to wave a final farewell to the young people before returning to the Punjab This would be their last day all together, and a school concert seemed quite an amusing thing to finish with.

The village school was a pleasant white-washed building which stood back in a garden gay with flowers The *munshi*, or school-master, who came forward to greet them as the car stopped, explained that the gardening was all done by the scholars, and there was keen competition to have the best plot

He was a plump, middle-aged man, the *munshi*, with a kind of frock coat of thin grey cotton, and a black fez. He had a good-humoured, easy-going face, but they soon realized that he was extremely keen on his school.

'Naturally', said Mr Woodstock afterwards 'Hanif wouldn't have sent us to a slack headmaster. I bet this is one of the most go-ahead village schools in the neighbourhood. You can't blame Hanif—he wants us to see the best, not the worst.'

The *munshi* led them inside, and there was a mighty swish and rattle as dozens of boys shot to their feet, knocking back the tip-up seats of their desks. Robert and Carol felt partly important and partly rather silly as they followed their elders down the central aisle and turned to face the class when they reached the black-board end.

The *munshi* waved the boys into their seats again and told them to go on writing, which they did, but with frequent raising of heads to peep at the strangers. 'Our school, you see', he explained in excellent but slightly sing-song English, 'is built in the form of a letter T—or, if we count my office behind this partition, in the shape of a cross.' He smiled slightly. 'There is no religious significance!'

They looked about them. The main classroom was the one through which they had already passed, but to right and left were smaller rooms, shut off only by long curtains which were now drawn aside so that one teacher could supervise the entire school. The left-hand arm of the T was occupied by girls of various ages.

'We have eleven girls and nearly eighty boys', said the *munshi*. 'You will realize many parents do not yet think that daughters should be educated as well as sons. But this has always been a most progressive school. All creeds sit together—Muslim, Hindu, Untouchable, Christian—but at present there are only Muslim children in the village.'

The desks seemed rather crowded together, but otherwise the classrooms looked comfortable and cheerful. Robert was amused by the large mottoes in English on the walls, 'Be Polite', and 'Learn to Obey'. There were coloured posters, too, teaching the importance of health, housing, and new farming methods. In a

place of honour, where no doubt the King-Emperor's portrait had hung in the old days, was a framed photograph of the Muslim leader, who had become Governor-General of the Dominion so shortly before he died, Mr Jinnah. He had a shrewd, distinguished face, and was dressed as usual in smart western style with collar and tie. Even from his photograph they could recognize those qualities of fire and obstinacy which had forced the division of the old India into two.

'I will not ask the pupils to recite to you', said the *munshi* with a smile. 'You will hear them this evening. Will you come and sit down in the office?' Leaving an assistant teacher in charge, he led the way behind the partition into a small room full of books and papers. 'Now', he went on, when they were all settled in chairs, 'what can I tell you?'

'Please, *munshi sahib*', said Carol, 'I'd like to know what they learn here. I mean, if it's the same as at home.'

The *munshi* laughed. 'I can't tell you exactly what they *learn*, these rascals of ours, but I can tell you what we teach. It isn't always the same thing! I think the main subjects are the same in all countries. They learn history and geography—but of course it is from a different point of view. They must learn first and foremost about their own new country and its close neighbours. We teach them for instance about the other Muslim countries—Persia and Arabia, Egypt, Iraq, and so on. But they must also learn about Europe and America.'

'Do they do maths.?' inquired Robert.

'Of course! Is not India the birthplace of mathematics? Was it not the Muslims who gave you your numerals and algebra in the first place?'

'Thanks for the numerals anyway', said Robert.

'Do the girls do domestic science?' asked Carol.

'Oh, yes, while the boys are doing handicrafts.'

'What about English, *munshi sahib*?' put in Mr Woodstock.

'Not at the early stages', said the *munshi* promptly. 'Later, English is taught. Otherwise, all subjects are given in Urdu, which is the mother-tongue. In other parts of the country, where the children speak another language such as, say, Pushtu, they are taught in that language, and learn Urdu as a compulsory second

language. That is necessary, so that our country may be knit together as a nation'

They talked on long after the classes were dismissed to prepare for the concert. The *munshi* admitted that there were many difficulties to be overcome. Teachers had always been miserably paid in the past, sometimes as little as fifteen rupees a month, and good men had been driven out of the profession. He quoted one who had found it paid much better to sell cakes from house to house. It would take a long time to improve conditions, attract better men, and train them.

'A new scheme was brought in a few years ago', he said, 'and although there has been the split since then we in Pakistan are still working to the same general aim—that is, free and compulsory schooling for every child in the country, more technical education, and half the places in the high schools made free. We are also making a drive to get grown-ups to learn reading and writing.' He smiled. 'I shan't see it all come to pass in *my* time. It will be thirty or forty years before we can compare with the general level in the West, but we are doing what we can. One of our great problems is to make people understand what education is *for*. In this country people have always thought of it just as a means to an examination and a diploma, so that they could get a soft job! But diploma-hunting will not get us anywhere, and we have to show them that education is something much more.'

The concert was held in an oblong hall normally used for film-shows. There were chairs along the walls on both sides, occupied by the notables of the district, but most of the floor was covered with squatting villagers, chattering as busily as though they were schoolboys, not proud parents.

'Aren't there any mothers?' Carol whispered to Ginger Whiskers who sat beside her. So far as she could see, she was the only female in the hall.

He bent his henna'd head towards her. 'Of course, Miss Woodstock! They want to see their children perform. But all the ladies are at the back. I beg your pardon—the Muslim ladies, I should say.'

Carol checked a giggle with some difficulty. The old man was

always so gravely polite. She turned her head. Not only were the Muslim ladies quite literally relegated to a back seat but they were completely hidden from view. A long white sheet hung across the hall by means of a rope, effectively shutting off the rear half from any view of the front half, not to mention the stage. Only a continual babble of feminine voices, and the occasional appearance of an inquisitive face beneath a shyly-lifted corner of the sheet, revealed the presence of the fond mothers.

'*Purdah* ladies cannot sit in full view of all the men in the village', Ginger Whiskers reminded her.

'But they won't see anything that way!'

'Oh, when the lights in the hall go down, and the curtain goes up on the stage, they will draw the sheet to one side.'

After that it was surprising to see girls taking as big a part in the concert as the boys—sometimes, indeed, when they were dressed up in weird costumes it was hard to tell which was which. As Carol had noticed often during the tour, the boys sometimes had such delicate features that they would have passed for pretty girls. Others, again, had comical, ugly faces that would have labelled them anywhere.

It was a long concert. One turn followed another endlessly, and some of the turns were lengthy in themselves. There were songs, sung in high nasal voices, like the droning of gigantic insects. They seemed to have twenty or thirty verses each, and the longer they were the more the audiences loved them. There was a butterfly dance, when half a dozen girls danced round in a circle, singing as they went, but instead of tripping round on their points as the girls at Carol's ballet-class would have done, they stamped their bare feet on the echoing stage in time to the music.

'Butterflies?' queried Robert in a hoarse whisper. 'Or buffaloes?'

They could see the producer hovering anxiously in the wings—school-producers, thought Carol, were much the same the whole world over. At intervals the teacher blew a whistle, which was the cue for the circling butterflies to stop, reverse, and dance round the opposite way. The music was, to western ears, so monotonous that perhaps the whistle was needed to mark these occasions.

Some of the boys were born comedians. Even without understanding much of the dialogue, Robert and Carol could enjoy

their gestures and grimaces, and they could guess from the howls of laughter around them that some good jokes were being cracked. At times it was fairly obvious that these jokes were local and even personal. They were all taken in good part. Afterwards, looking back over the long tour and remembering all the signs of poverty and suffering they had seen, the young travellers were glad to think that their last evening had given them such vivid memories of laughter and fun.

The concert lasted nearly three hours. The grand finale, sung by the whole company in front of a highly-decorated back-cloth, was adapted from a song by one of the great Muslim poets, Mohammed Iqbal. Changing 'India' to 'Pakistan', the school sang lustily.

*Sare jahan se achha Pakistan hamara
Ham bulbulen hain iski, yih gulistan hamara . .*

which Ginger Whiskers translated to them during the drive back to Karachi:

*The finest country in the world is our Pakistan,
We are its nightingales, it is our rose-garden,
The highest mountain-range, the neighbour of the sky,
Is our sentinel and our protector;
In its lap play thousands of rivers
Making a garden that is the envy of the world . . .*

They sat up late in the hotel that night, giving Mr Woodstock final instructions about all the thousand and one things which must somehow be worked into his shooting-script.

Son and daughter poured in contradictory suggestions from either side. Temples and tea-farms and the Taj Mahal, cows and cotton and child-marriages and Christianity and caste, panthers and Parsees and *panchayats* and *purdah*—

'And the Punjab!' insisted Ginger Whiskers.

'And polygamy!' retorted Carol.

Mr Woodstock laid down his pencil and writing-pad with a gesture of despair. 'Understand once for all', he pleaded. 'I can *not* put the whole of India and Pakistan into this film. I can't put a quarter. I can't put one per cent. And for every one I satisfy,

SCHOOL AGAIN!

there will be ninety-nine people who're quite sure they could have made a better selection.'

Ginger Whiskers leant forward and said gently. 'You are not expected to tell the whole story, sahib. Only one thing we ask you to do: make the young people of other countries more interested in us, more anxious to learn. There are books, there can be more films in days to come . . . If they wish to know more, nothing can stop them. Just persuade them to open the door which stands between us, that is all we ask you to do.'

There was silence for a moment. Robert broke it. 'I think, Dad', he said quietly, 'that Gin—— ——I mean, the sahib is absolutely right.' The old Punjabi's eyes twinkled as he patted the boy on the back.

'Yes', he assured him, 'always be guided by Ginger Whiskers Sahib!'

INDEX AND PRONUNCIATIONS

KEY TO PRONUNCIATIONS

a	as in bat	ā	as in bate	á	as in calm	ǎ	as in aunt (pronounced very shortly)
e	as in bet	ē	as in beat	e	as in her		
i	as in bit	ī	as in bite				
o	as in cot	ō	as in coat	oo	as in soot	ōō	as in coo
u	as in cut	ū	as in cute				
ow	as in cow	aw	as in fawn (very short)				
g	as in gold	ġ	as ch in Scotch loch				

Other letters are pronounced as in English. If one syllable is to be stressed more than another it is followed by ' (thus, am-rit'sār). Authorities do not all agree about the pronunciations of some of these names, but those given here are in general use.

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GLOSSARY

Babu (bā'bōō) clerk
Bania (bān'ye) merchant class
Banyan (bān'yān) kind of tree
Burka (boor'ke) hood and cloak
Burra sahib (bā're sah'ib) head of
 department or firm
Chaitya (chit'ye) place of assembly
Charpoy (char'poy) rope bed
Char-wallah (char wā'la) tea vendor
Crore (crawr) ten million (usually
 in counting money)
Dhurzi (dār'zī) tailor
Dudh (dōōd) milk
Ghat (gat) landing-place, wharf
Goondas (gōōn'dās) criminal types
Gur'm pani (gār'oom pa'nē) hot
 water
Kukri (koo'krē) Gurkha knife

Lakhi (lak) one hundred thousand
 (usually in counting money)
Mali (ma'lē) gardener
Marg (mārg) pasture
Munshi (moon'shē) schoolmaster
Narb Tahsildar (nīb tā-sil'dar) local
 government official
Puggaree (pug'ā-rē) head-dress
Sahib (Sah'ib) Sir general term of
 respect
Salaam (sā-lām) greetings
Sealdah (sē-al'dē) railway terminus
 at Calcutta
Shikaras (shi-kā'rēs) river boats
Stupa (stōō-pā) Buddhist shrine
Tahsil (tā'sil) local government
 office
Teek hai (tēk hī) all right
Vihara (vi-hā're) dwelling cave

