FRIEND OF FRIEND

BY

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For ye are brothers; wherefore look not at the things wherein ye differ, but unto those wherein ye are the same, for your end is the same.

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PREFACE

THERE was, when Time was not and the Universe was not. Such is a Hindu teaching. And of everything that eventually came into being the first was a lotus plant. It budded, and unfolded. And from the flower sprang the God.

And now the Wheel of Being is fulfilling its cycle, and the Lotus that is India has again budded. And that bud is near unfolding.

But what will be found at its centre? Another form divine? Or just an ugly canker?

Either result seems possible.

Yet of some measure of responsibility for that result you who read cannot divest yourself.

You may belong to the electorate of Great Britain. Then your responsibility is direct. For though the administration of India is in the hands of Provincial Governments, they are generally controlled by the Viceroy and his Council. The Viceroy in his turn is responsible to the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State is the mouthpiece of Parliament. But Parliament is elected by your fellows and by you.

Or you may be outside that electorate. Then your responsibility is less direct, but none the less real. For the whole world is being canvassed to help to solve the 'Indian Problem'; and world opinion cannot fail to influence the British electorate. What then waits beyond the present?

The wise man who would plan the future will first call to mind the past: and these pages are planned to picture for others what we have seen and felt who have watched the bud of self-fulfilment burgeon, and increase, till it has come to the point of bursting into blossom.

This development is illustrated by stories.

Each story of India is exactly true, and the characters are

types. No liberty has been taken except occasionally to assign events to one character that have occurred to more than one.

If any of my friends recognizes himself in any one character, he may be sure that he has but been true to type.

Names of personages too well known to disguise, are genuine. Sir Malcolm is now Lord Hailey; and Lord Irwin has become Lord Halifax. Other names, chosen with care, are fictitious. Does this small mixture of fact and fiction matter?

C.C.G.

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PART I

ABSOLUTE GOVERNMENT, 1905-09

I

IT was a Sunday at the end of April and the days were uncomfortably hot. I was enjoying the prospect of staying indoors and answering my home mail. My news was that, my training, both revenue and administrative, completed, I had just been gazetted a First Class Magistrate and had the good fortune to be posted again at Jullundur. But as I settled down to write, an urgent message summoned me to the District Magistrate's room.

The District Superintendent of Police was there before me, a tough, wiry man named Broad, who spoke the vernacular and all the local dialects like a native. He and Major Bacon were studying a couple of telegrams which had just come in. They had been dispatched in immediate sequence from the same place. One read, MUSLIMS LOOTING HINDU SHOPS SEND HELP; the other, PEACEFUL MUSLIM WEDDING PARTY BEATEN BY HINDUS GREAT DANGER PLEASE PROTECT. Rahon, the town from which they had come, was about forty miles distant, and the last part of the journey was over sandy, unmetalled roads.

'Not a nice job on this hot and dusty day,' said Major Bacon apologetically, 'but I have no alternative and must send you both. You will have to judge for yourselves when you get there how long you will be out. Send me a telegram as soon as you have sized up the situation.'

Broad had a car of sorts, and it was a matter of minutes only to pile on a minimum of camp luggage, pack in a couple of servants, collect a sandwich lunch, and start. The wheezy old bus was not too good on a metalled highway; it was a painfully poor performer on the sandy track. It spluttered, it boiled, it stuck, but eventually it

was coaxed near enough to Rahon to enable us to walk in, itself to follow when it had cooled down and would deign to start again.

A look-out had been set for us, and a crowd soon collected.

'Thank goodness,' said Broad, 'the fighting is over, but we must see it does not start again.'

'That is up to you,' said I. 'I have to find out what has happened, and who is to blame.'

But it was difficult at first to learn anything from the vociferating crowd, each side and each individual of which was trying to shout his rivals down. Order restored, the salient facts soon emerged. Into this predominantly Hindu town there had come a wedding procession of Muslims, the bridegroom and his party with their band and all their junketing friends. The bride, whom they had come to fetch away, lived with her parents in the butchers' quarter which was outside the main town, but the procession had chosen to pass through the principal thoroughfare, a street sanctified by the presence of many temples, under the shadow of which lived and worked the wealthier shopkeepers, particularly the gold and silver smiths, from whose skilled craftsmanship the town had attained no little fame.

So far, the stories coincided. But what had happened next was vigorously disputed. The Muslims said that they were strangers from Ambala. They had not conceived any discourtesy to the people of Rahon who, they had hoped, would enjoy the trappings of their procession and take pleasure in their music. The detour through the main street had been a very small one, and they had made it in the light-hearted fashion common to all wedding festivals. Suddenly, without warning and without provocation, they had been attacked. They had done what they could to defend themselves, but one of their party had been wounded

so seriously that he was dying of his injuries in hospital. Others were bruised and wounded.

The Hindus' story was very different. They accused the procession of having come down their rich bazaar with the determined intention of looting, and of beating up, in their drunken insolence, any Hindu who might cross their path. The poor Hindus had protected themselves by putting up their shutters, but not before one of their number, Banauti Ram, now in hospital, had been beaten so severely that he was almost senseless, quite speechless, and obviously on the point of dying. Others had suffered contusions and wounds of varying severity.

The shops were indeed closed as was stated, and by a lucky inspiration I ordered them to be opened there and then in the presence of the District Superintendent of Police and myself. What we observed in the next two minutes, the gold, the silver, the jewels carelessly unprotected lying in the very front of the shop, told us the truth, and had we had the power of Naushirwan, the Solomon of Persian history, we could have decided at once the main issue in the case that was to last through three days of police preliminary investigation, weeks of patient hearing by me as a magistrate (procedure demanding two separate cases in which the rival parties were alternately prosecutors and prosecuted), and finally the attention of the Sessions Court, and the Chief Court itself. That one observation could not of course tell us of what individuals the crowds were composed, but it did satisfy me and both the Courts of Appeal on the essential question—who were the aggressors? But even in those days of absolute rule the codes of procedure were inexorable, and they demanded their reams of recorded evidence.

Each side claimed a dying patient in hospital, so to the hospital we went next. The doctor was an able Hindu, and his report was to some extent reassuring. There were

indeed two patients, one a Hindu and the other a Muslim. The Hindu, he said, was shamming. His pulse was normal, there was no internal injury and no sign of external bruising. He was taking milk, and was only pretending pain and a degree of deafness. The Muslim patient he had had to remove to the hospital for infectious diseases. He had not been touched in the affray, but was very seriously ill—indeed, dying—and the cause was pneumonic plague. Of plague, except its disastrously speedy and fatal consequences, but little was known. It was very infectious, but exactly how infection was spread science had not discovered. The doctor was anxious that none of us should visit the sick man, and should we overrule him, then every possible precaution against infection should first be taken. The Hindu patient we certainly could see.

We went into the ward and found a little knot of Hindus grouped dolorously about the bed of a man lying thereon with his eyes closed, and emitting at irregular intervals a suppressed groan. If he were touched on the right side or on the left, the groan would be intensified and he would twist violently in the direction opposite to the touch. 'Thus confirming my diagnosis', added the doctor, 'that there is nothing whatever the matter with him.' It was now late and we were tired.

We made our way to the rest house, picturesquely situated on a mound just outside the village, dined, and were preparing to go to bed, when we were visited by a deputation of Muslims, with the news that their patient had died.

'So now the case assumes a still more serious aspect—MURDER. An innocent member of a merry-making wedding party from another district has been murdered—butchered—in this town of fanatics.'

I confronted them with the opinions of the doctor.

'Oh, you don't believe *him*?' they said. 'He is a Hindu.'

I picked them up on this. If I were to discredit him merely because he was a Hindu, then equally must I consider as of no value anything that they themselves said in support of their own story. Besides, the Hindu doctor could not have been more damaging to the Hindu case than he had been by exposing their allegedly wounded man.

'The matter, however, is simple. I have before me two contradictory statements. You know which is true. For if the Doctor Sahib is correct, there must be some history of plague behind the dead man of which you must be well aware. I cannot decide between you and the doctor, but the Civil Surgeon can. I am prepared to have him sent for at once on this condition: if you are telling the truth, and the corpse has marks of fresh wounding and the man has died of injuries, the Government will pay all expenses of the Civil Surgeon's visit. These will be heavy. But if it is found that the doctor is right, you pay.'

That finished the argument, and was the last heard of that particular accusation.

Two more days passed in police investigations, and then the magisterial inquiry was to commence. There were between thirty and forty accused in each party, and of course the man in hospital had by his own allegation been in the affray, whether as smiter or smitten was still to be determined. I decided to hear the evidence in the open air under the shade of a convenient tree in the compound of the rest house. But the presence of the patient was essential. Again the good doctor proved his worth. He took full responsibility for the man's being present in court. His friends could bring him on a *charpoy*-bed, and whatever he might pretend, he would in fact be perfectly able to follow the proceedings.

So for the next few days the man was regularly brought up on his bed, parked in the shade, and recorded as present

in court. Then came the stage when the case for the prosecution was so far advanced that it was necessary on the following day to hear the pleadings of the accused. And this one had uttered no intelligible word, and had affected to understand none all these days.

The court had risen, and the patient was lying on his back on the *charpoy*. The policeman and I went up to him, and speaking as clearly as my Punjabi would allow, I said to Broad, 'This is a terribly sad case. This poor fellow has heard nothing and spoken nothing for six whole days. That means that paralysis is setting in. There is no other cure but an operation. If he is not on his feet by tomorrow, then operation is inevitable. They will cut him open here,'—and I drew my cane gently across the top of his abdomen—'and here, and here'—and indicated cuts at right angles. 'Only so will consciousness be restored. Of course most such operations prove fatal, but it is the best we can do for him. There is just a chance he may survive.'

Morning came. The court assembled. And when the reader called the name 'Banauti Ram' a sturdy man stepped strongly forward, and in a full, clear voice answered, 'Present!'

II

ON my return I found Major Bacon pleased with his pupil, and I thrilled at his pleasure. His 'Welcome back and well done!' was to me as the pat on the neck and the carrot and the sugar to one of our ponies, which most mornings we used to put over the jumps erected in the wattle-walled corral we had made in the compound. The Major trained them, bare-backed and free of all harness, to start from one end and take a mud wall, a hurdle, a ditch, and a post and rails, to end up with a reward proportioned to the performance.

The sense of strength, and of freedom to use it, was a relief from the bit and bridle of training. Not that under the Major's firm but gentle hands schooling had been dull. By vivid illustration, he guided me to learn the language, the limitations of my authority, something of the ways of the people, and—caution. He himself had started life in the Army and had been transferred later to Civil, as was possible in those days when the turbulent North-West Frontier was part of the charge of the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab.

To compel my progress in the vernacular, he had allotted to me an orderly who could speak nothing but Punjabi and tried me sore till I could understand him and make him understand me. When given an order in my infant Hindustani, he would say, '*Changa, changa* (Very good, very good)!' bolt out of the door, run round the compound asking everybody he met what had the Sahib said, and return shamefaced to confess, '*Sade samajh vichh nahin aya* (I did not understand)'.

Through him, too, I was taught that an Assistant Commissioner cannot appoint or dismiss his own orderly. And with the lesson came a gentle hint on noting.

I was to pay a magisterial visit of inspection and the orderly was to act as guide to the spot. Not only had I myself explained the orders but I had seen to it that they were repeated by my reader. There could be no possible excuse, 'I did not understand'. The morning came. The orderly was not there. The work had to be abandoned for want of guidance; and in my wrath and innocence I directed that he be dismissed *in absentia*.

A day or so later, he filed an appeal, which was sent to me by the Deputy Commissioner with the query, 'Was the orderly's statement taken before the order of dismissal was passed?' The written reply was that it was not.

Orally, and a little hurt, I explained that I had considered the ninety and nine conceivable excuses, but none was sufficient. Therefore I had felt justified in passing an order *in absentia*, as recorded on the file. The file came back with a brief direction also in Latin, '*Audi alteram partem*'. The orderly was sent for and questioned.

'On Monday you were told to present yourself at seven-thirty the following morning to take me to Sobha Singh's well. Did you understand the order?'

'I did understand what Your Honour said. Besides the reader said the same.'

'Then is there any reason why you should not be dismissed? You admit you knew, and yet you did not come. I have no use for orderlies who oversleep.'

'But I did not oversleep.'

'Then why did you not come?'

'Indeed I did start to come, but by Your Honour's favour I was stung in the eye by a hornet; and here is the doctor's certificate.'

Confusion covered me. Here was a hundredth and all-sufficient excuse! And a lesson to me, not only never to condemn anyone unheard but also to be sparing of the use of Latin tags on files.

This incident came back to memory years later when a scholarly colleague was drafted into Army Headquarters to fill a war vacancy. The Army never liked his classical quotations and sometimes disapproved his views; but the Latin continued to be sprinkled in his noting till one day a case came back with the orders of the Commander-in-Chief on one of his proposals. They were terse as Tacitus. 'I, too, know Latin. I consider this suggestion *nil sanguineum bonum*.'

We young civilians had so much to learn. Another cherished idea of mine that had to go by the board was that

British rule was everywhere popular. Coming in to tea one afternoon, I found the Major looking at what at a casual glance appeared to be a public health poster. 'This will interest you,' he said, passing it to me. I then saw that it was a disgusting caricature of one of those medical charts of the human body which portray the limbs with the arteries and veins exposed. All the blood was being drawn off, and the man being bled white. The legend recited statistics of trade and shipping, of offices and salaries, and claimed that India's life was ebbing away as its wealth was drained by the usurping British whose only thought was to extract the last ounce of treasure from a depleted country, regardless of the welfare, and indeed the needs, of the starving millions.

'How utterly horrible!' I exclaimed. 'And what a loathsome lie!'

It was the very first time I had come face to face with anti-British sentiment, and it was a shock. My two brothers were working in different parts of the country; and I had come out, full of high hope, to serve in the province where my father and my grandfather had served before me. My personal servant, my bearer, was the son of a man who had saved my uncle's life by tending him all night when he had been wounded in a Frontier battle. I was seeking, and eventually found, the grandson of my grandfather's *khansamah* and son of my parents' cook to be my cook. He died years later, leaving his widow to be my pensioner. Their daughter married my gardener, and there is a fifth generation growing up to make contact in the hereafter with my own descendants. Looking forward to such an atmosphere, I had taken it for granted that my birthplace would be a home from home, and the people, friends.

And here was this ugly, hateful picture suggesting that we were all leeches sucking the last drop of all that was good, and giving in return just nothing.

'What are you going to do about it?' I asked, indignation hot upon me.

'Some fires must be quenched,' came the reply, 'others, if left untouched, quietly go out. It is a mistake to take action which would create a draught and increase the flame and the mischief. The district is sound. It is wiser for the moment to take no action here, except, of course, to watch even more carefully than before.'

The talk led to a discussion of British policy in India. Everything seemed so vague. Indian aspirations were growing in intensity. The poster with its cruel exaggeration did illustrate at least one truth—that the Services were staffed throughout by British and that, so far as the higher offices were concerned, the money that was taken as revenue did not flow back to the sons of the province as salary. Lord Curzon's regime had seemed to suggest that less niggardly treatment was under consideration. But there had been no official announcements.

'What,' I asked, 'is, in fact, the direction of Government?'

'That is a difficult question to answer,' he replied. 'We have the Queen's Proclamation of 1858 on the one hand, and the hard facts of the present constitution on the other.'

'But the liberty of the subject and the freedom of religion she promised have in fact been granted, and "British justice" is a phrase as common as a two-anna bit.'

'True; but there has been very little progressive association of Indians in the Government, and it is political power that they want. There is no escape from the fact that for all the panoply of power enjoyed by the Viceroy and the Governors, the Secretary of State's control is terribly close. Every big scheme involves expenditure. Orders from Whitehall cannot but be delayed and Whitehall holds the money bags tight.'

'I thought Lord Ripon's regime was marked by a great advance?'

'He did create local boards—we call them District Boards in the Punjab—and municipal committees, but the results have been superlatively disappointing. To my mind the root of the trouble is that there is not enough money at the discretion of provincial and district authorities to meet local needs. Given money, we could develop and expand, and in such activity would necessarily associate the Indian. So long as we are mainly occupied in running the revenue system, dealing out, as you say, British justice, and preserving law and order, the less the talking and the fewer the officials, the greater the efficiency. And if officials are few, in these days they must be British. For the future I am uncertain; for the present, "command (*hukm*)" is the order of the day. Why, even the word Civil Servant is translated *hakim*, the giver of commands.'

Our conversation had reached this point when a note came in from Broad asking the District Magistrate to grant a King's Pardon in a very peculiar murder case. He was anxious that no time be lost in recording a confession.

'You had better hear this,' said Major Bacon, and led the way into his big study.

Having taken his seat at his desk, he rang the bell and the police party appeared. There were two policemen and a farmer, a bearded Sikh zamindar of strong physique, just under six feet in height, with restless, shifty eyes set close together. Having placed him in front of Major Bacon, the policemen withdrew. I was sitting in a chair, listening, but taking no part in the proceedings. A clerk was sitting on the floor making a vernacular report of all that was said. The District Magistrate wrote down the questions and answers in English.

The first questions were formal, directed to satisfy all concerned that the confession was freely volunteered and not given as a result of third degree methods.

For my information, Major Bacon read out the police memorandum which accompanied the prisoner. This related how six months earlier a report had reached the police that Jawan Singh, brother of Shaitan Singh, the man in front of us, had disappeared. This report had been entered at the police station by Shaitan Singh and a third brother, Bewakoof Singh. There was no indication of violence, nor was any motive found to suggest a crime. Only the brothers appeared distressed. The village had assumed that the youngster had gone abroad, perhaps to Australia, and, as he was a bachelor, had made his own arrangements and not bothered to tell anybody. The police made a perfunctory search and the papers were filed.

'Now,' the report continued, 'Shaitan Singh has come forward and states that he can give evidence relating to his brother's disappearance. The evidence will, however, incriminate himself and another. He dares to open his mouth only if a King's Pardon is granted to him. From statements made to the police, which under the peculiar law of India are not evidence, it seems clear that a murder has been committed, and there is no hope of punishing anybody unless the District Magistrate agrees to accede to the request.'

The District Magistrate did agree, and Shaitan Singh was informed that, provided his statement was exactly true, he would not be punished for any crime committed by him which it might disclose. Shaitan Singh then proceeded to tell his story, and as I listened my blood ran cold. The tale was told with complete sang-froid as if it were a recital of any ordinary series of events.

'We were three brothers. Our father died eighteen months ago, leaving us to share his estate. There are two wells and fifteen acres of fertile land, sufficient to make one man rich, two men reasonably comfortably off, but three men poor.

My eldest brother, Bewakoof Singh, and I are married. My brother has three daughters, and I two sons and two daughters. Jawan Singh was unmarried. He lived an easy and comparatively luxurious life, while for us there was nothing beyond the satisfaction of our immediate needs. If our families continued to increase, life would become more and more difficult.

'You will recall that last year the rains failed. That summer both my overworked cattle died. I had to borrow money and the money-lender not only made me sign a bond for two hundred and fifty rupees while he actually handed me only two hundred rupees but he charged me interest at thirty-six per cent. I felt desperate for myself and for my young children, and one night suggested to Bewakoof Singh that the only way out of our present difficulties, and to secure ourselves for the future, would be to acquire Jawan Singh's share. He demurred at first, but fortunately for my purpose the question of the betrothal of his eldest daughter came up a few days later, and his wife, a shrew who leads him by the nose, insisted on his borrowing a large sum of money to make a big splash.

'The upshot of it all was that on a convenient night, when there was no moon, we laid in a stock of country liquor and plied Jawan Singh until he fell into a drunken stupor. We ourselves were just drunk enough to lose our scruples, for we had no quarrel with our brother. We were sitting under a group of trees by the well. I had dug a pit, ostensibly for storing fodder, a few days earlier. Bewakoof Singh fetched his axe and with one blow split the skull of Jawan Singh. He died without a groan. The two of us buried him, filling in the pit first with earth, and above the earth, fodder. You will find the body and the axe in the pit in my compound.'

The gruesome story ended, Shaitan Singh went cheerfully

away. The case was investigated afresh and the fact of the conspiracy and the joint guilt of the brothers was established.

Only about a year earlier there had been a change in the penal code, and the penalty of forfeiture of property, hitherto one of the punishments for murder, had been abolished. This had followed a High Court ruling that forfeiture of an undivided share of Hindu joint property was legally impossible.

So it happened that Jawan Singh was murdered, Bewakoof Singh was hanged, and the whole of the property fell into the hands of Shaitan Singh.

The tragedy of the story left a deep impression. The grip of the money-lender who had behind him the British courts enforcing the sanctity of contracts and assuming, quite falsely, that both parties to such contracts were free agents ; the sacrifice of fraternal affection to personal needs; the utter callousness towards death; the whole Eastern view-point so different from that of the West. Was our judicial system really suited to this country?

I took my troubles to the Major. He agreed that our grafting of English law on India was not an unqualified success, and illustrated his views with a story, which was not without its humour, of a Frontier district.

'Mianwali was my first district and I was out in camp. I had not yet learned to appreciate the intricacies of the Sessions Courts. In a village near by my camp, a murder had been committed, though the people would not have counted that killing a murder. A year or two before there had been a real murder, but the police investigation broke down and the murderer, though well known in the village, was acquitted. The murdered man's widow, whose name I recall was Jamila Khatun, was determined that her husband's death should not go unavenged, and, as the hangman's rope was denied her, she sought out Qatil Khan,

a Pathan gangster. His fee for disposing of the murderer was a thousand rupees. The old lady agreed to the figure, but absolutely refused to pay it all in advance. After long argument, the two agreed on half the sum down, the remaining five hundred rupees to be handed over when the deed was done.

'Unfortunately for the Pathan, the date arranged by him for the murder coincided with my arrival in camp. This meant extra police on the scene, and he was caught almost red-handed. The case seemed so very obvious to me that I hurried through the committal proceedings and sent him up for trial straightaway.

'To my surprise, when I reached Mianwali at the end of my tour a few weeks later, I found that he had been acquitted. The Sessions Judge, a civilian who had been in Judicial nearly all his life and was considerably older than I, took me severely to task. "My dear fellow, it was I who was surprised at your committing anybody on such flimsy evidence. That Pathan had no connexion whatever with the deceased, and your theory of a hired assassin is really too, too Arabian Nights." I swallowed, and turning the conversation, asked the judge if he would care to come out shooting during the approaching Easter holidays. He was a keen *shikari*, and gladly accepted.

'I sent out a camp to the village in which Jamila Khatun and the Pathan were still living. We had a good day after sand-grouse and in the evening I arranged for a Khattak dance, certain it would bring the whole village out to squat round the bonfire. As I had hoped, Jamila and the Pathan were among the spectators. When the judge took his seat, a suppressed titter ran round the crowd. He felt uncomfortable and asked for an explanation.

"Well, you see, your name has been very prominent since you acquitted—do you recognize him?—that Pathan over

there. Of course, since a judicial finding has pronounced him innocent, and your judgement was unusually emphatic on the point, the dead man must have met his fate at some other hand. But the whole village knows that Jamila did hire Qatil Khan to do the killing for five hundred rupees down and five hundred more to be paid when the task was accomplished.

"We caught him so soon after the killing that the second instalment had not passed. When he returned to the village, all cock-a-hoop after acquittal, he went straight to Jamila and demanded his money. But Jamila, relying on your authority, insists that, as he did not do the killing, not only should he not get the five hundred still unpaid but that he should refund the money that she has already handed over.

"The rights and wrongs of the case, night after night, are still under debate by the village greybeards, and opinions are divided."

'The judge laughed. "Evidence in the courtroom gets coloured by the paraphernalia of the court. Here in the countryside everything looks different. I may have been wrong, but for all that I'm damned if I'll give evidence before your village council!" '

The story made me long to understand better the Indian mind. I felt that could only happen when acquaintances become friends. But it was irksome to find how restricted was social intercourse with the Indians met and admired in work and at play. Conditions in this respect have altered out of all recognition, but in 1905 the number of Indians in the Punjab Commission could be counted on the fingers of one hand. Clubs were almost exclusively European, and purdah was most strict. Every week we played our tennis at the Pleaders' Club. There were occasional tea parties, but there was no inter-dining.

After bottling up my thoughts for several weeks, I eventually asked Major Bacon why it was we never entertained our Indian friends. In his great wisdom the Major gave no direct reply, but simply asked me, 'Would you like to?'

'Most certainly,' I said.

'Whom would you like to ask?'

Without hesitation, I named Anant Ram, who was a leading citizen and advocate.

'And whom else?'

At once I realized that there was a problem; for if we were to invite to the Deputy Commissioner's house the leader of the Hindu section of the bar it was incumbent on us to invite the leader of the Muslim section also. Fortunately, he was an equally close, if not closer, friend.

'And whom else?' continued the Major.

And now I was perplexed. These two men were in a class apart, both in their knowledge of English and of English ways. We could talk freely to them, assured that confidence would not be abused. Not one other member of the bar fell quite into that category, while our other friends of good family in the district would not be flattered by an invitation to a small function at which only these two lawyers were present. In the end the dinner resolved itself into a small party of four; and it went pleasantly. But it impressed the first lesson of communal India. If a Hindu is asked, a Muslim must be asked also, and in modern days, a Sikh.

But there was another lesson, and more bitter. This also my guide, philosopher, and friend left me to find out for myself. Shortly after our little party, I was on tour in the district. Now the legal profession is competitive, and while our friends may not have had touts they certainly had agents in the principal towns and villages to recommend them to country litigants uncertain to whom to take their cases. And this was the rumour that ran through the district,

'Take your case to Mr Anant Ram (or to Mr Amin). He is the advocate who dines with the Sahibs.'

III

As soon as the young Assistant Commissioner had found his feet, but before he could walk, he used to be sent for the second stage of his training to what is technically called a Settlement, where he was taught the land revenue system of the province. That meant camp. This training lasted through two winters, the intervening hot weather being spent at his original station in advancing his knowledge of general administration.

The days immediately preceding my transfer to Rohtak for the first part of my Settlement training are vivid in my memory because of the generous kindness of my senior officers. The Sessions Judge, Colonel Stewart, was a dry Scotsman with a caustic tongue and a heart of gold. He knew that I could not yet afford to purchase a gun and that I must take with me a horse—a sufficient strain on the finances of a young entrant into the Service. In those days, after passing our competitive examination, we had to maintain ourselves for a whole year at the university, pay for our equipment and find our passage out; Government contributing for all this period and all this expense exactly one hundred pounds. Our pay, too, on arrival was much less than the salaries of today.

A horse-dealer came to Jullundur with a string of ponies, among which was a pair he wanted to sell together. Of all his animals, only one, and that, one of the pair, was really up to my fourteen stone. The dealer was prepared to sell the pair for five hundred rupees, but would not take less than three hundred for my choice, if sold singly. Three hundred was fifty rupees more than I wanted to spend. The Colonel heard of my difficulty and suddenly discovered

that he required a pony. He bought the pair at the dealer's price, and insisted on letting me have mine for two hundred and fifty. He also produced a gun. 'You will want a gun,' he said, 'I seldom shoot now and this is a spare. Here are some cartridges, not as fresh as they might be, and I should be glad if you would shoot them off for me.'

It was typical of the way in which the elder members of the Service nursed the young. Indeed, although I was of course permitted to pay my share of board, I had been in the country nearly two years before I was allowed to contribute a single rupee towards rent. 'Glad enough to give you room—I have to pay the rent of the house whether you are here or not,' was the invariable reply to my suggestion that I should share all expenses. The war of 1914 broke down to some extent the custom of entertainment by the Commission as a whole; and perhaps the spirit of fraternal camaraderie is not quite so strong now as it was in the past, but it is still there, a feature of the province, which is very precious.

My arrival in Rohtak taught me that *ekkas* may bend and break, but bureaucratic regulations stand inflexible. My transfer coincided with the Christmas holidays and I was due to join my new appointment on the forenoon of the second of January. A cousin, who had just vacated the command of a brigade and was about to retire, was spending with his family a few last months in India at Dehra Dun, and they made me welcome for Christmas. On New Year's Day I left for Delhi by a train which, according to schedule, gave me two hours in which to catch my connexion to Rohtak. My train was late and the connexion missed. I had to waste the whole day, and though I arrived in Rohtak by the very next train, it was already five o'clock. The only conveyance was an *ekka*, a two-wheeled trap, the seats of which were constructed of rope and string on which the

Indian passenger normally sits cross-legged. My weight proved disastrous. As we turned to cross a bridge which spanned the canal cutting on the way to the bungalow, something gave way and we all crashed. Fortunately the pony was imperturbable and stood still until repairs were effected.

Next morning, the head clerk brought me my taking-over-charge certificate, on which he showed my arrival as in the forenoon.

'But I arrived in the afternoon,' I said.

'Yes,' he replied,' but you intended to come in the forenoon and your joining time expired in the forenoon.'

'That was my misfortune, and I can only sign the truth. I will, however, explain to the Chief Secretary. Besides, what does it matter? The Settlement Officer is in camp, and until he returns tomorrow there is nothing I can do anyway.'

Government, however, decided that youngsters must be taught their lessons, and that they are responsible even for miscalculations of the railway. Throughout the thirty-five succeeding years, the permanent Record of Services of Officers showed that I had overstayed my joining time by one day and had forfeited the few days' leave already accumulated.

The Settlement Officer was in his eighth year of service, and seemed very, very senior to us youngsters. He was a clever Oxford scholar by name Eustace. For the first few days he kept under canvas in his compound the batch of us sent to him for training, in order to get to know us, and for us to get to know enough of the local dialect to be trusted in camp by ourselves. As Settlement Collector, he relieved the Deputy Commissioner of much of the Revenue Court work, and sometimes we sat with him to learn procedure and the ways of the legal profession in Court.

It was my first introduction to the peculiar language pleaders used to adopt, and there is stamped on my memory the impassioned peroration of the first speech I ever heard. 'In short, Your Honour, *yih bilkul* reasonable *hai*, *yih bilkul* natural *hai*; *yih bilkul* probable *hai*; and with these few remarks *main baith jata hun*.'[1]

Presently we were sent to prepare the revenue records, each of us to a small village.

In the Punjab, land revenue is assessed on each estate, and generally a village is one estate. It is collected by the Headmen, though the accounts of each individual revenue payer are kept separately. At the introduction of British rule, there was no canal system and the uncultivated waste was vast. With the advent of the canals, waste lands were colonized and the map of 1907 showed a very different picture from that of even twenty years earlier. So much jungle had been broken up that almost every village had to be remeasured.

The villagers hated the Settlement period, but it was great fun for us. The absolute government of the day directed the villagers to bear all the incidental expenses, such as the cost of the chain-men and those doing the coolie work, of whom eight or ten were required daily.

In my village, which was a small one, the cultivators told off by the Headmen were usually late; and as soon as a pair of chain-men were working efficiently their turn would be over and I would have to train their successors. I talked the matter over with the Headmen and suggested they should send me boys, for whom the carrying of flags, the plane table and survey instruments, and the running out of the chain would be a game. A handful of sweets or some fruit at my lunch time kept them happy, and the work proceeded twice as fast.

[1] *Yih*, this; *bilkul*, completely; *hai*, is; *main baith jata hun*, I sit down.

First, we laid down the squares on the land corresponding to the squares on the mapping sheet and then filled in the fields. The map ready, the whole village was called together under the big banyan tree, and the pedigree table of the owners, dating back to the earliest days of British rule, was checked.

My village was very far away from Headquarters and litigation would have been correspondingly expensive. I recall a widow coming forward during the checking and making complaint.

'Sahib, I am old and a widow, and my husband's nephew has seized my land. There is no one to help me.'

I called for the young man. He came forward. And they stood in front of the assembled village, the ageing woman and the very tough-looking nephew. I was seated at a table with the *patwari*, who is the village accountant, and the Headman beside me.

'Have you taken possession of your aunt's land?'

'I have,' he said, 'but I am entitled to it.'

'Has your title been acknowledged in any revenue court?'

'No,' he replied, 'not yet, but the village *patwari*, who keeps the records, knows that I am in possession and I am ready to pay the revenue.'

The *patwari* assented.

I turned to the Headman.

'I take it that the widow has no son?'

'That is correct. And by the custom of the village, she is entitled to manage the property for her lifetime. Of course, she cannot sell it; or mortgage it for a longer period. On her death, the nephew inherits.'

'Then why have you come in now?' I asked, turning to the youngster.

'The woman is a bad character,' said he, 'and is not sitting in her husband's right.'

Again I turned to the Headman, 'What are the facts, and what is the custom?'

'It is true', said he, 'that the woman went to live in the house of her husband's brother who, too, is now dead, and she bore a daughter by him. But according to the special custom of our tribe, it was his duty to take care of her and to raise up seed in his dead brother's name. The woman is, under our custom, entitled to the land.'

I turned to the assembled village and said, 'You have all heard what the Headman has told me. Are the facts as he has related?'

They answered, 'Yes'.

'And is the woman entitled to the land by your custom?'

Again they answered, 'Yes'.

I made the young man touch the feet of his aunt and beg her pardon, and caused an entry to be made in the diary of the *patwari*. And that case was settled on the spot.

With the pedigree table I had to check all the entries relating to title and cultivation. These are so carefully preserved that it is possible to discover exactly what crop was sown on any field in any of the harvests of the twelve preceding years. There is also a record of prices to facilitate disputes regarding rent. Altogether the *patwari* has about thirty different books or documents to keep up to date, and we Assistant Commissioners, like the son of a partner in a big business, were made to work through all the stages of the revenue system from the bottom up.

Before leaving the village on 'promotion' to act as revenue inspector or *kanungo*, I had an evening camp fire when we discussed the hardships of Settlement generally, and the ways of this village in particular. The Settlement staff were looked on as a swarm of locusts. Etiquette demanded that they should be offered hospitality, but the hospitality was abused; and always at the end of Settlement, revenue was enhanced.

We fell to discussing village legends and village feuds. A Mutiny myth was preserved and believed. It told how the Collector of the district in '57 had been an enthusiastic pig-sticker, and rode a wonderful white horse. News came in one day that the Treasury was being attacked, and he went to arrange for its protection. On his return, he found his wife and children had been massacred. The shock drove him out of his mind, and the story tells how, with eyes that seemed ever to be looking into the far distance, he saddled his horse, seized a spear and became lost for several days. Whenever an Indian crossed his path, frenzy would seize him and crying 'A mutineer! A mutineer!' he would ride at him with his spear as if he were a boar. No one attacked him, for all knew that he was mad, and the mad in India are under the protection of Heaven. Eventually he returned to Rohtak, worn and bedraggled, his horse stumbling beneath him, his spear red-tipped, his mind vacant both of the recent and the distant past.

The talk turned to the present.

'Should the British Raj ever be in trouble again, you would do everything you could to help?' questioned I.

'Nothing of the sort,' said they. 'Your British Raj is an unmitigated nuisance.'

'What do you mean?'

They pointed to the village looming a mile away to the west. It was perched, like their own, on a mound rising high from the surrounding plain, and formed of the debris of the fallen-down houses and the refuse of countless generations. The two were very similar in size and antiquity.

'You see that village?' they said. 'From time immemorial we have been at feud and they won the last round. That was in the Mutiny. Ever since then the hand of your law has been so strong upon us that we have never been able to take our revenge. If only you would relax control for

a day, nothing else would matter. Our accounts would be squared.'

Gradually, gradually I was learning something of the peoples amongst whom I was to live and work.

From preparing village records with our own hands, we progressed to the duty of inspection, first as *kanungos* and then as *naib tahsildars*. In that capacity, we passed orders as Assistant Collectors on applications for changes to be made in the revenue records, changes such as must occur whenever any transfer of rights, whether in consequence of death or otherwise, takes place. These are called 'mutations'. We worked in the vernacular, and any order was subject to appeal in the court of the Collector. Lazy Assistant Commissioners used a scribe but most of us wrote with our own hands, difficult though the script was, and illegible as the result might be.

There was always the kindly Eustace to correct our mistakes. Towards the end of our training, he took a bunch of us out on tour with him. It was a good shooting district. One morning the camel man who was with us sighted a herd of buck with a good head among them.

It happened that the only rifle with us that day belonged to the senior-most Assistant Commissioner, who never let anyone forget that he was the senior. Immediately he took command of the situation, told each of us where to take cover, and even posted Eustace himself under a tamarisk tree before turning to give orders to the *shikari*. The *shikari* began to suggest that the rifleman should go over the sand dune to the right and stalk from there the black buck which were grazing about a quarter of a mile away in a field of gram. To the left also there was rising ground and more apparent cover. Impatiently, young Newland waved aside the *shikari's* protest and proceeded to the left.

We all waited. Nearly half an hour passed. A crestfallen

sportsman was back among us with no shot fired. Angrily, he turned upon the *shikari*, 'I took cover,' he said, accusingly. 'Why did those damned beasts bolt?' With hands folded in a typical attitude of supplication and using high flown but perfect language, the *shikari* replied quietly, 'The game, scenting from afar the sweet savour of Your Excellency's presence, fled.'

We returned from camp by train, and Eustace went through our work with us. I have often wondered whether this incident was in his mind when, after commending the results of the rest of us, he picked several holes in the work of this senior colleague; and finally, looking over his glasses, said quietly, but firmly, 'You know, Newland, if you had been a real *patwari*, I should have had to fine you eight annas'.

IV

'I HAVE never understood this box game, this box *bazi*,' a Persian Consul General once said to me in Simla. 'I put on my tail coat, place a top hat on my head, and proceed in my rickshaw to the house of a Member of Council. There, on a tree, I see a little tin box with the inscription, "Lady Fulan. Not at Home". I take off my hat, I bow to the box, I place in it three cards—one for the Master of the house, one for the Lady of the house, and one for the eldest daughter of the house—I bow again, replace my hat, proceed to the next Member of Council's house, repeat the process, and return to lunch—my diplomatic duty done. I must then wait till they do theirs and return my call in such manner as custom approves. If they are very senior, the post is permitted; but if they are junior, then they must visit me—or my box!'

We were in Lahore for our departmental examinations, in transit from Settlement to our hot-weather stations. It

was our duty when free to pay our calls on the wives of senior officers. We had to dress in our very best clothes and, as convention demanded, sally forth at the very hottest time of the day. The uncomfortable ordeal over, we would be invited to tea and tennis to meet the grown-up daughters of those whose retirement drew near. The kindly wives of members of our own Service generally made a point of being at home to receive and get to know us youngsters during the examination week, which came twice a year.

We had to pass at least second class before being gazetted Second Class Magistrates and obtaining our first increments. To my great disappointment I failed in language. I thought this unfair because for weeks past I had been alone in camp, speaking not a word of English, understanding and making myself understood. But the trouble was that in Rohtak the dialect contained more Sanskrit and Hindi than Persian and Arabic, on his intimate knowledge of which my rather pompous examiner somewhat prided himself.

In Hindustani, the common word for water is *pani*; in the Rohtak dialect, it is *jal*; and I completely failed to understand my examiner's first question: '*Rohtak men ab o hawa āp ke muafiq hain* (Are the water and air of Rohtak suited to you)?' Excellent Persianized Urdu which any scholar would use in polite conversation, but quite unintelligible to the villagers amongst whom I had been living and working.

Yet the experience was a foretaste of something that seemed to mar the administration of the Service. The highest appointments went to the secretarial staff, and that staff was selected from those whose family influence, clever noting and city speech attracted promotion. Familiarity with dialect, intimacy with the life of the villager and straightforward presentation of his simple needs were at a discount.

The change from camp to Lahore upset my internal economy, and when I got back to Jullundur I had a slight fever. Major Bacon was disturbed. Among the batch of civilians who had come out the year before mine, there had been two or three casualties from enteric and Deputy Commissioners in charge of my batch had been warned to take special care of us. I was put to bed and told to await the attention of the Civil Surgeon.

Never have I forgotten that Monday. Major Flanagan was a huge Irishman, famous at once for the delicacy of his touch as a surgeon and the strength of his arm when roused. He came in, smoking a whacking great Burma cheroot, and sat down at my bedside. His big eyes gave me a searching look. He examined my tongue, took my pulse, and then said in deep, solemn tones, 'Is there any plague in Rohtak?'

I jumped, 'Good God—no!'

'Happen to know there is,' was the slow and disconcerting reply.

'But—but—I haven't got plague?'

'No, there's nothing the matter with you but overfeeding and under-digestion.'

So began the first hot weather, which passed without too great discomfort, though it was long before the days of electric fans, and still longer before air-conditioning. Day by day, I would say to myself, 'This isn't so bad. When will it get as hot as they say in the books?' and presently the cooling rains, with their myriads of flying insects and other discomforts were on us.

I was lucky in my first monsoon, for it was one of those rare occasions when imagination was justified by experience. We had had nights and days in which the temperature had hardly varied and the wind had been constant in the direction of the desert. In a moment it changed. The Major and

I were dressed for tennis, and the pony and trap were at the door. A dust storm started. I jumped up from my chair in the long drawing room to close the doors and windows. Before I had gone a few feet, a dark pall had settled on the house. A few feet more, and it was black night. Before I could reach the end of the room, the darkness was so intense that quite literally I could not see my hand when I lifted it to the level of my nose.

All the dust that had been raised by the wind of the last few days must have been banked up away in the distant desert and then suddenly, with the veering of the wind, blown back upon us as a solid wall. The phenomenon lasted nearly twenty minutes, and then the black became purple, and the purple merged into afternoon light. I seemed to return to the world after a period of absence and intense solitude; but everything in the world was inches thick in dust.

The following evening in the south and southwest the sky darkened, and the reds and golds of the setting sun made a weird contrast with the gloomy bank of empurpled cloud which rapidly overspread the heavens. Lightning slashed the sky with vivid forks and thunder growled incessantly. We were in the open and hastened to shelter. Presently with the wind came the strange sweet smell of earth that rejoices in moisture after long days of drought. Then came the downpour and the crack of thunder overhead—and a night broken by the drip, drip into the basins we had put out to catch the rain that kept soaking through the parched mud roof.

My failure in the language examination prompted Major Bacon to keep me at my studies throughout the hot weather. At the same time, I was able, especially when touring, to continue in Jullundur the revenue work I had started in Rohtak. I was allowed to hear mutations and such revenue

cases as fell within my limited powers. By the end of the hot weather, I had mastered what remained of my departmentals and this time got a credit in the language. Examinations over, we were sent back to complete our Settlement training and learn how to assess land revenue.

The state insisted that it was the ultimate owner of all land, and that land revenue was not a tax but a rent. This rent was legalized at the equivalent of half a fair economic rent for the estate as a whole during the period of Settlement.

Revenue training is grand. I was taught to rise while it was yet dark and be in the saddle as the sun came over the horizon. Arrived at the village I was to inspect, I would find the local squire, and any others who could afford a horse, waiting to meet me on the boundary. There, too, would be the *patwari* with the village map and all those documents which in the first stages of training I had been taught to prepare. I would dismount and examine the map with the little company around me.

'Tell me what there is you wish me to see. Where is the best land? Where the worst? And what do you consider average? Where are the better, and where the less good, wells? Whereabouts is the village grazing land? And where the waste? What use do you make of it? And what are your intentions for the future?'

We would then ride round the estate and test opinions given by facts seen. The ride might take an hour or more and when it was over we would go into the village. The condition of the houses would tell their own story of progress or decline. The money-lender's would invariably be the best, and built of brick, certainly two and possibly three storeys high, with the front plastered and decorated with pictures of peacocks and scenes from the Hindu scriptures.

In a Hindu village, there would be pigs running about the streets and wallowing in the mud of the pond, over which

the wild fig tree spread its branches. There might be a sacred pipal, with green pigeons flustering in its leaves, and a temple whose masonry steps reached down to the water's edge. I would tether my pony in the shade and there would be grass for it.

Meanwhile, the villagers had collected at their regular meeting place where of an evening, over their *hookahs*, grey-beards and hotheaded youngsters were wont to come together and discuss past, present, and future as it affected them.

My first inquiries were always directed towards tenancies. After all, the Settlement Officer's task was to estimate a theoretical rent for the whole village, and any real rental was an excellent guide. It is curious how revealing is the table of rents when examined with care. Some rents are in cash and some in kind, some a mixture of both; some are exorbitantly heavy and represent interest due to a greedy money-lender rather than the surplus after the necessary living expenses of the labour have been met. But sometimes they are nominal.

There was one village in which quite a considerable proportion of the total area was cultivated by tenants, yet in no single case was a true economic rent paid. The villagers were all related to one another and proud of their common ancestor. But though generations had passed since he had founded the village, it was still united in fraternal bonds. There was no poverty. A family rich in sons would be poor in property, but there would be others where only sons of only sons had inherited wide acres. Their own needs met, such proprietors had given their surplus land to their cousins for cultivation, taking from them sometimes a small nominal rent and sometimes only the equivalent of the Government dues.

From a discussion of rents, we would pass to a discussion of the details of their daily economy—the distance to the

nearest market; the quality of the road; the nature of the transport, bullock cart or pack; the integrity of the brokers in the market town, did they give a fair deal, or would they keep a farmer haggling till the shades of evening were falling, and he had to choose between accepting the low rate then offered and carting his produce back to his village? Only so was it possible to judge the general economic tendency and the extent to which the revenue should be reduced or could be enhanced. Out of such conversations, too, arose projects for future development.

I was fortunate that my assessment report, which covered thirty-six villages, found favour with higher authority, including Government itself; so much so that Eustace asked for me to be posted to him when towards the end of the Settlement he combined the offices of Deputy Commissioner and Settlement Officer and required an assistant.

I finished my task just before Christmas and started for Lucknow where my young brother was in hospital suffering from enteric, but, according to reports which were reaching me, not in danger. I arrived at my destination to find that he had had a hemorrhage while I was in the train and had passed away.

Kind friends did their best to comfort me, and a telegram came from Major Bacon, whose wife was now with him, inviting me back to Jullundur. I took the very next train. It arrived four hours late. On the platform was an Indian friend who had brought his carriage and pair to meet me and had waited all that time. The Bacons had been called to Lahore and would not be back for three days. For those three days and nights I would have been absolutely alone. The horror of having failed my brother, left alone to die, was present with me all the time and sleep was a succession of nightmares.

My Indian friend cherished me as an elder brother might.

All his engagements were cancelled; his motor car, one of the two in the district, his carriage and pair, himself—all were at my service. If I wanted him to have meals with me, it was his pleasure to come; if I wished to get away from the bungalow, his house and his kitchen were at my disposal. And not least of his kindnesses, he introduced me to his brother, a philosopher and scholar, in those days separate from the world and spending many hours in study and meditation.

It was in his house that I first met Annie Besant, and from him I learned an interpretation of theosophy which I have never found in any book.

'You must understand', he said, 'that, under the Almighty, the affairs of this world are in the charge of certain powers who are responsible for the evolution and development of mankind. Nothing is so important as spiritual progress, and the reincarnations of individuals are designed to further this end.

'In the first half of the nineteenth century came the industrial revolution through which knowledge was increased and, with it, material comfort. This of itself tended to materialize men's thoughts. To a world thus prepared, as it were, to disbelieve in the ultimate spiritual realities came Darwin and his theory of evolution. The world of science swallowed the facts, which Darwin had collated, whole, and, in the process of digestion transmuted them into a philosophy of absolute materialism—materialism in which the very existence of the Divine and the spiritual was denied. Something had to be done to check the pendulum which had swung so far from Truth.

'Madam Blavatsky was a soul definitely sent into this world, not from the highest, but from one of the higher regions, with power and with knowledge. I could tell you true stories of her daily life and experience which perhaps

no Englishman would believe, but it was not the exhibition of power that was important so much as the introduction of a force which started the pendulum on its backward swing. The world has now come to realize that it can both accept all the known facts and some, at least, of the theories of Darwin and can also continue to believe in the existence of a spiritual world and a Divine Architect of all the Worlds.'

'But Madam Blavatsky is dead. Has her mantle descended on Annie Besant?'

'That is a difficult question for me. Annie Besant relies on me to translate for her most of the Sanskrit scriptures which she quotes, and we are very close friends. Madam Blavatsky completed the work she came to do, but I do not think that the highest spiritual powers would have withdrawn her from the world so suddenly and sharply that she should have had no successor at all. At the same time, it would be ridiculous to suggest that Annie Besant is in any way an Elisha to Madam Blavatsky's Elijah. She is a woman of great learning, courage, understanding, and power of oratory. Whereas Madam Blavatsky was a higher soul embodied in human flesh, Annie Besant is a human being whose spirit is abnormally brilliant. After her death, theosophy will become one of the world's philosophies and no more.'

'CONGRATULATIONS, Major!' said I.

Major Flanagan, the Civil Surgeon, was driving me home from the Club. He had just returned from a month's leave, during which I had been acting for him as Superintendent of the jail.

'What're you getting at?' inquired he, looking at me suspiciously and puffing a cloud of smoke from his eternal fat cheroot.

'Haven't you read the latest Punjab Gazette? It came in this morning.'

'I've no use for the Gazette. I was told the postings in Lahore.'

'Oh, but you must read this one—it's the one with the review of the report on jail administration, and you get an honourable mention in dispatches,' and, mimicking the official style, continued, 'His Honour has been greatly pleased to observe that, whereas in the previous year there had been more floggings in your jail than in the rest of the province put together, during this last year you reported not one single flogging and yet maintained perfect discipline.'

A grunt was the only comment.

'But, Major,' said I.

'Well?'

'I couldn't help noticing while I was acting for you that a considerable number of prisoners had been "warned for flogging".' 'And mighty ha-r-rd warnings, too,' was the prompt reply.

As we bowled along, I told him that the Chief Secretary had assured me there was no immediate intention of transferring me from Jullundur, and I was contemplating asking one of my sisters to stay with me during the coming cold weather. I was planning to buy a brand new *tum-tum* (buggy), and train the pony Colonel Stewart had helped me to buy.

'Then don't make the mistake young Jones of the Blankshires did when writing to his fiancée.'

'That's a new one on me.'

'Jones was engaged and preparing to set up house, almost as you are. The bride-to-be was coming out and they were to be married in Bombay, when suddenly he got a cable cancelling the engagement. It read: ENGAGEMENT BROKEN. AWAIT LETTER. His fiancée was the daughter

of a country vicar; and when the letter reached the distracted young man, it was very brief. "You disgusting person. I could not possibly marry you, and Mother agrees. How dared you say you were going to get your tum tum painted green for my arrival!" '

The rest of the hot weather passed quickly, and the early part of the cold weather was made the more delightful by my sister's presence. Then came a blow to my domestic arrangements—I was transferred to Kaithal as Subdivisional Officer. It was good to get the charge of a subdivision, but I could not possibly take my sister to its utter loneliness. It was sad to part from friends like the Stewarts and Flanagan, and particularly Major Bacon. In all his training of me, nothing was more valuable and nothing more typical of the government of the times than his parting advice.

'You are going to your first subdivision, and presently you will find yourself in charge of a district. That you will hold for five years. Remember during the first three months to decide the problems that come before you as you think your predecessor would have decided them had he been there. We all of us do our best according to our lights. Each of us has his particular interests and his individual ability; each builds on the foundation laid, or it may be, adds a storey to a building commenced by his predecessor. Never scorn your predecessor's work. To do so would be the hallmark of the amateur and the ill-bred. Such, at least, is Indian opinion, which knows how to value continuity.

'During your second three months, make up your mind what one big work you will initiate for the district—it may be a hospital, or a school, or a stretch of road. Here in Jullundur I am metalling twenty miles of road linking up two important towns, and consider I am lucky to have got the money to do so and to plant trees at the sides. Get

administrative sanction in your first year; it will take you the rest of the five years to see your project through. Goodbye, and God bless you!' Wise words, precious as pearls.

The more liberal constitutions of the future were to make possible more speedy and efficient development; and advance information of postings enabled one to study one's future charge before arrival.

Had officialdom, from Viceroys downwards, made the rest their own, many a reputation would have been enhanced, many a heart-burn saved!

VI

JULLUNDUR was the headquarters of a brigade. There were a British infantry regiment, a regiment of Indian cavalry, two regiments of Indian infantry, and a battery of field artillery. Though the population of Civil Lines was very small and the Station at times, particularly during the touring season, altogether empty of personnel, cantonments supplied a happy round of social life. The last hot weather I had spent living in the mess of one of the Indian infantry regiments, and sharing a bungalow with some of the subalterns. Now I was on my way, for an indefinite period, to a subdivision connected with its headquarters by thirty-six miles of second class road, and stretching out another forty miles where there were no roads at all. It contained not another European, no club, and not even a First Class Magistrate for company.

The Deputy Commissioner, Captain Deere, was another of the military civilians, tall, keen on his work and ingenious, a first class horseman, and clever with a spear, whether taking a tent peg or hunting a boar. He asked me to stay a couple of nights on my way through; and impressed on me the volume of work he expected from me.

'There is plenty of shooting, black buck, chinkara, nilgai, and in their season, black partridge, duck and geese. But remember the days have passed when you can leave your work for the gun. I was once stationed in Gurgaon, and looking over files of "the good old days" have seen orders on the records of revenue cases,

> Parties present. Witness No. 1 on solemn affirmation—

and then a note in the handwriting of the reader
Today there came news of game. There will be no hearing. You cannot do that today. You will find your judicial work heavy as you have to take civil, as well as criminal and revenue cases. You will be wise to study the idiosyncracies of the judge who takes your appeals. He is a retired official, once an extra Assistant Commissioner, who has been made an honorary Divisional and Sessions Judge with headquarters in Delhi—a good fellow when you know him.

'By the way, have you been inoculated against plague? There is a certain amount about.'

I had not. The Civil Surgeon came round, and, having given me my dose, wanted to keep me there for forty-eight hours, but memories of my overstayed joining time at Rohtak were fresh upon me and I was taking no risks. My horses and my pony trap had not yet arrived. They were marching from Jullundur. But a generous Nawab lent me his carriage for the first stage of the journey, and Captain Deere had arranged for the remainder. Fever was high by the time the dusty journey was finished, but the necessary papers were signed, and paper counts for so much in official life.

In the days of Sikh rule, Kaithal was the capital of a small principality, governed by the Bhai Sahib of Kaithal. The present subdivision is almost exactly co-extensive with his old domain, and in the town itself he had built a nine-storied palace, still called the Nau-Mahal. Two storeys had been

dismantled when the building was damaged by lightning, but seven remained. The upper part of the front of the old palace served as rest house for the traveller and home for the subdivisional officer. At the back, the ground floor was used as a godown for camp equipment and quarters for the camp establishment. On the second storey were the courtroom and offices.

The entrance to the town here was over a bridge that spanned a moat, by which were connected a bathing ghat on the right and, on the left, a very considerable pond, extending in heavy rains to the size of a small lake. On the further side were more fine buildings, also dating back to the reign of the Bhai Sahib, and now converted into the headquarters of the subdivisional police. From the roof of the Nau-Mahal, my sleeping place in the hot weather, to the north there was a commanding view of the town, with its fourteen thousand inhabitants, and in all other directions the countryside, green and fertile.

My real predecessor had left for his fresh appointment some days earlier, and the favourite order of the official who had been holding temporary charge was, 'This case should await the decision of the permanent incumbent. Pend!'

There was therefore a heavy pending file.

Moreover, I was told that in less than three weeks' time the big annual fair would take place at Pehowa, and I was responsible for all the arrangements. As I had never had experience of any such *mela*, that meant reading up the rules and regulations and the reports on the fairs held in the past few years. By hard work I got my table sufficiently clear to enable me to go out the twenty-odd miles to the site, adequately prepared, light-hearted and expectant. Ahead was a new adventure.

Pehowa is a very sacred city, for it was there that Brahma came into being ere yet the world was. There was but void;

and then in the void, behold, a pool of water, and on the bosom of the pool there floated a lotus, and from the lotus arose Brahma. The spot where that lotus first took shape is now the centre of a bathing tank built in the heart of the little city. And so great is the sanctity of the waters that whosoever bathes therein at the dark of the moon in that hot-weather month has his sins washed away.

Every year some seventy to one hundred thousand pilgrims flock to the spot, and every house and every courtyard are thronged to overflowing, while in the vacant spaces are the tents of those who have been unable to secure accommodation in the city, and the booths of the merrymakers.

The solid masonry buildings testify to the wealth of its inhabitants. These are mostly Brahmans whose clientele are spread far and wide throughout the neighbouring districts. The family Brahman keeps a pedigree table and a history of all the members of the household—births, marriages, deaths, every detail is recorded. Once a year, if possible on this festival, the head of the family, or if he cannot come himself some representative, brings offerings to the priest, relates the important happenings in the family since the last visit, and performs such sacrificial ceremonies as the pandit may dictate, and his purse can afford. Little cakes are set out for the dead; the procedure to be followed in taking the ashes collected from the funeral pyre to the water of the sacred Ganges is expounded, and appropriate entries are made in the books. The exact hour and date of the birth of a child is given, that the horoscope may be cast.

The needs of the present satisfied, more time is spent in pleasurable delving into the history of the past. The younger generation are reminded of the great deeds of those who have gone before, and are assured in no uncertain terms that whatever good fortune has befallen their house has been the direct result of strict attention to the sacred Vedic ritual.

not forgetting, of course, the charitable support of the poor, if well-covered, Brahman priest.

Clients are many, and none are hurried. They start to come in as much as a week before the night that is the crowning point of the whole festival. I arrived a day or two before the first of the pilgrims was due. The Brahmans had formed some sort of reception committee to represent to the authorities their views on the problems that had to be solved: precautions against pickpockets, the lighting of the tank in such a way that accidents might be avoided while the modesty of purdah was safeguarded, the distance the merry-go-rounds and entertainment booths should be from the holy places, the control of dancing girls and drinks.

Year by year, the greatest anxiety was that there should be sufficient water in the tank; for sometimes even the holy Sarusti runs dry. On such occasions it is customary to add water from the well in the grounds of the very fine rest house, which also was once a palace of the Prince of Kaithal.

Immediately on arrival, I was visited by a well-educated Indian Christian. He told me he was a native of Pehowa and had been born a Brahman. When he was converted, he felt himself inspired with a mission to his caste brothers; and though to him, as a follower of the Gospel, all things were possible; yet, having in view his self-imposed mission, he had held it expedient consistently to continue to observe what he now considered the prejudices of the Brahman community. No kind of food other than that sanctioned by Brahman usage had he allowed himself to eat—it had been cooked by Brahman hands in Brahman fashion; nor had he drunk water from any source that a Brahman might consider polluted.

But here in Pehowa the dominating Brahman community never ceased to persecute him. Fearing the success of his mission, and wishing to outcaste him, they denied him

access to their hallowed well. Only by paying heavily was he able to buy Brahman water for his daily needs. Could not Government, the great Sirkar, come to his assistance?

To my inexperienced self the problem seemed beyond immediate solution. He left me with no promise beyond the stereotyped one of 'consideration'.

Later in the day, the Brahman committee came to visit me. I expressed my pleasure at the privilege of visiting their ancient city and seeing its monuments and studying their ceremonies. They expressed pleasure at the interest I was showing and at the preparations which seemed to promise a successful and profitable fair. 'But, of course, it is sad that the weather has been so dry.'

'Yes,' I concurred, 'more rain would have produced a better crop. Still, though not a good crop, it has not been bad and the mangoes, at least, promise well.'

'But', they interjected, 'it is not so much the local rain, which has indeed been fair, but the rain in the hills which has been disappointing. The rivers are not running with their accustomed strength. The Sarusti itself is far lower than usual, and in the tank there is not enough water for the bathers.'

'That is sad,' I remarked.

'It would indeed be sad,' rejoined they, 'had we not so generous and far-seeing a subdivisional officer.'

They went on to say that they had no doubt that, following the precedent set by my illustrious predecessors in similar circumstances of drought, I would permit them, at no cost to the Sirkar or inconvenience to myself, to provide bullocks and to supplement from the rest house well the scanty waters of the tank.

'Alas, much as the Sirkar would like to help you,' I said, 'I see a grave difficulty here. Is it not true that the water of the Christian is impure to the Brahman?'

They looked at one another and said, 'It is true that we strict Brahmans do not drink the water of the Christian.'

'And,' I continued, 'I understand it is forbidden to permit a Brahman by birth, even though meticulously observant of all Brahman scruples in the matter of food and drink, to draw water from a Brahman well, not because he is ceremonially not pure, but only because he has adopted Christianity.'

A light of understanding broke upon them. They agreed.

'Well, I am a Christian,' I said, 'and I drink of this well, and I use its waters for my bathing. My conscience does not permit me to make myself party to a fraud, whereby pilgrims, who no less than the Brahmans are my peculiar care, should find themselves bathing in mixed Christian and Sarusti waters and thus lose the twofold benefit of ablution and absolution.'

'Nay, nay,' they protested, 'you are the Sirkar, you are a rajah, and by a rajah's use no water is defiled.'

'That I fear I cannot accept,' I said. 'I am not the Sirkar, I am only a servant of the Sirkar; and even were I the Lord-Governor himself, I would still be a Christian first and the Lord-Governor second.'

They chuckled and realized that they were cornered. The leader said quite frankly, 'What are your conditions? We admit that we have made it very difficult for the converted Brahman in the matter of water. We do not know how you learned of this so quickly. But it is evident that both he must have his water and we, ours. We are willing to supply him at our expense with water from our well for a whole year provided you will permit us to save face by having the water sent to him and not drawn by him.'

'If you will draw up a legal agreement to that effect,' I said, 'which will be enforceable in my absence as well as in my presence; and if you will be responsible that the water

from my well is pure for the pilgrims, then there is no more to be said.'

To help me deal expeditiously with the petty cases that arise in every fair, I had been gazetted with summary powers. This meant that instead of recording at length every question and answer and every statement made in the hearing of the case, all that was necessary was to maintain a register in which there were columns for the brief record of the name of the accused, the offence, the pleading, the finding, and sentence. Though no judgement was written, it was wise to add in the column for remarks a very short indication of the witnesses and their testimony.

And presently the police reported that they had captured a pickpocket who had robbed one of the women at the fair.

She was a perfect specimen of humanity, five feet ten inches tall, a strapping Jatni wench, handsome and strong. He was a miserable dwarf, barely five feet in height, furtive and frightened. They were brought into Court by a policeman. And the story was that the lass had been carrying a purse in which was her spending money, and it had been wrenched from her. She had looked down, to see the accused making off, but somehow or other before he was caught he had managed to pass his takings to a confederate.

The prosecutrix repeated all this in the sing-song manner of one reciting a lesson taught. I listened attentively until the tale was told and then, pointing directly to the shrinking little figure and fixing the eye of the Jatni, said to her, slowly and firmly, making every word tell, 'Do you really expect me to believe that *that* had the courage to steal a handbag from the hand of *you*?' raising my hand in the direction of her magnificent stature.

She looked down at the diminutive manikin beside her and broke into a laugh, 'No, Sahib, I do not; but that is what they told me to say.'

But the police were upset. Why could not the young fool of a magistrate accept the perfectly good case—on paper—which they had sent up? Their object was to stop pocket-picking throughout the fair. The man on whom they had tried to fasten this, the first case reported, was a notorious thief, and the brains of a gang of pickpockets. With him away, the rest of the gang would be frightened. That was the way to manage a fair. If the accused had not actually taken this purse, there were dozens he had taken for which he had not been punished. He would not admit this to anyone else, but he would boast his successes to the police. These modern young lawyer magistrates would make administration impossible. The country was going to the dogs!

VII

'In sorrow shall she bring forth'—and the curse is on countries as well as on women. In pain are new constitutions born, and without the fever of unrest there is no constitutional development.

The. Morley-Minto promises of 1907 had the effect of fomenting the Hindu politico-religious wave of trouble that swept the province, and penetrated to even such a remote corner as Kaithal. The leaders calculated that financial pressure was the surest means of securing increased concessions. They raised the slogan: 'Boycott British goods!' and 'Shun British sugar. It is refined by the blood of the sacred cow.'

The fiftieth anniversary of the Mutiny had only just passed, and the story of the pig's fat and cartridges had probalby suggested this new, and equally false, cry.

To me, concerned with law and order and anxious for quietude in the area in my charge, the importance of the movement was its political, and not its economic aspect. I was anxious to nip it in the bud.

There was a certain number of merchants in the principal towns, some very wealthy and influential and some comparatively insignificant, against whom reports were received. The criminal law has a provision whereby a magistrate can direct that security be taken from persons reasonably believed to be likely to cause a breach of the peace. And though these merchants were the last persons in the world to want to hit anybody or to be involved in physical violence, still it was possible to make out a case against them of conspiring to obstruct the lawful business of the lawful vendors of imported sugar in such a way that ultimately there was likely to be a breach of the peace.

The necessary notices to show cause were issued, and as soon as the case came up for hearing, I started out in camp, and arranged a tour programme which involved a visit to all the big villages and towns in the subdivision. The unhappy accused had to trail along with me. Day by day I found myself so very, very busy that it was never possible to give more than fifteen minutes or half an hour to this particular case, which happened always to be called at the end of the cause list. After all, security proceedings are less urgent than prosecutions, in which accused in the custody of the police are involved.

It was true that the shopkeepers had to come round in their bullock carts from place to place and travel in the fresh air in a way that was at once novel and tedious to them. But they were under no restraint; all were on bail. The case dragged on, and very soon each of the accused not only denied that he had ever taken part in any conspiracy as was alleged, but began to disclaim the sentiments attributed to him.

'I object to European sugar? What a ridiculous suggestion! I always eat it myself and am ready to eat it here in the presence of the Court. My enemies have done this

thing. I know cow's blood is never used in refining Cawnpore or any other sugar.'

This expression of opinion was gratifying, and it was good that the whole subdivision should know of it; but I was quite satisfied that the police story also was true, and had action not been taken, there would have been unrest. It was a difficult situation. Fortunately there came back to me what used to be cited as 'The Baker's Case', a somewhat antiquated decision of the Dublin High Court. True, the Indian and British courts had never followed it, but the circumstances were adequately parallel, and in Ireland there had been a conviction.

I decided that the accused should be put on security—but how much? I declared the small and least significant members of the group to be the really dangerous ones, and directed them to provide substantial security. Of the wealthy men, who had really been at the bottom of the whole trouble, I wrote that they were of no serious account in this subdivision and I would be content with a bond in a purely nominal sum of fifty rupees.

This judgement resulted in great bickering; for, though everybody wanted to file an appeal and everybody was agreed that the appeal should be filed jointly, there was heated argument as to who was the greatest among them. Who should instruct counsel and manage the common cause? The smaller fry threw out their chests on the strength of the judicial pronouncement in their favour; the wealthy income-tax payers refused to be subservient to those they knew to be of humbler status than themselves.

They wasted so much time in argument that by the time the appeal was eventually filed, the appellate court had no choice but to throw it out as time-barred—though not without obvious regret!

PART II

MORLEY-MINTO REFORMS, 1909-19

VIII

JUNE. The blistering days merged into breathless nights. The earth was parched. The lake shrunk to a pond, and the pond to a muddy pool; the tortured fish gasped and died, and lay floating on the surface. There was no relaxation, no relief; and then, to chase such little sleep as came after long wooing, there broke into the stillness the blaring of trumpets, the beating of drums, the cries of the torch-bearers and all the noises of wedding procession following wedding procession.

In the sky there had appeared a comet. Its conjunction with the planets was such that the Brahman astrologers pronounced that when the current month was over and the comet entered the next House, no marriage would be propitious throughout the succeeding year, unless perchance a Brahman girl should wed a blue-blooded rajah.

In every household in which there were boys or girls of marriageable, or near marriageable age, preparations were hurried forward, and the remaining three weeks of the month were to see all the weddings that would normally have been spread over the whole year. The heat forbade movement by day. But the nights became hideous; and for us, who worked the day through, there seemed no hope of rest.

The main road to Kaithal from the south, itself a ganglion of a number of village highways, centered on the bridge just outside the Nau-Mahal. It was only when a thoughtful Superintendent of Police posted a guard during the hours of night to divert impending traffic by a few hundred yards to one of the other gateways that sleep became possible.

In earlier days such action would have excited no comment. Indeed it would have been expected. But times were

changing, and the step of every official, however humble, was being watched. If the Proclamation of 1858 had been a false dawn, and the light of the constitutional advance it promised had faded again into the blackness of night, now with the Morley-Minto Reforms was indeed appearing the faint glimmering of the coming day. There was a stirring and a calling; like to the first fluttering in the trees and the early orisons of the birds, voices that rose to a shrill cry as though thereby to hasten the advent of the morning light and the pulsing life it should bring.

Not that the reforms, judged in retrospect, were far-reaching. Only one seat on each of the various Councils, central and provincial, was reserved for an Indian member. Financial powers conceded were negligible. But Councils were enlarged, and opportunities of discussing matters of public interest were given. And when men learned that their voices were heard and that their criticisms provoked action, the small-minded sought every opportunity to distort facts and to paint, with brushes dipped in venom, lurid pictures of the tyrannies of the brutal bureaucrats. And there are always people prone to credit and gloat over discreditable stories.

'Has Your Honour seen the morning's paper?' asked my reader, as I took my seat in Court. 'There is a letter about you—of course, unsigned.'

I read it. It was a long-winded complaint. The writer claimed that hundreds of poor pilgrims, seeking their wonted way into the city, had been roughly handled by the stern police and compelled to traverse enormous distances to their great discomfort, and this only that the subdivisional officer in his lonely glory might sleep undisturbed.

My reader agreed that there were only three, out of the whole fourteen thousand inhabitants of Kaithal, who could have conceived any such idea, and from the style I felt I

could recognize the author. I foresaw a few days hence, when the cutting should have been seen by high authority and transmitted through the usual channels for report, the weariness of composing a satisfying explanation. Fortunately, however, the daily paper was impartial, and before any such official requisition could arrive, there appeared an indignant rejoinder, written by an advocate and friend.

'What a nasty mind the cowardly correspondent, who shelters himself under a *nom de plume*, must have, always trying to find evil where no evil is. It is true that during the night the wedding processions are being routed by the roads that lead immediately to the caravanserais where they put up, and that they are not being allowed to take their dancing girls and bands through the residential quarters of the town during the hours when workers sleep. For this the whole town, at least all decent folk, is grateful, and especially the patients in the hospital on whose behalf the order doubtless was conceived. That the subdivisional officer's house faces the hospital is an accident; and for a great part of every month the officer is on tour. The letter was an obvious effort to excite anti-British feeling among those ignorant of the facts. I challenge the writer to reveal his name and immediately thereon I will publish my own.'

There the incident ended; but it was a useful pointer towards the change in the political atmosphere.

It was in the lawyers' bar-room that criticism was most outspoken and pleaders were quick to resent and take advantage of any loss of temper by an irritated magistrate, provoked perhaps by fatuous arguments repeated *ad nauseam*. There was a class of pleader who thought his livelihood depended on the length of time for which he could hold the attention of the court, and as his clients could not understand a word of English, he would plead and gesticulate with ever-increasing fervour as they watched him with

wonderment and admiration, ignorant of the inaccuracy of his statements and the incoherence of his arguments. The readiest remedy, as I quickly found out, was to insist on arguments being in the vernacular. I would smilingly object to English.

'I know that your English is much better than my Urdu; but Urdu is the language of the court, and I shall be grateful for your help to improve mine by listening to yours. Besides, you will like to have your clients follow your eloquence.'

A brother officer, who also had held charge of Kaithal, had been less fortunate. In an unhappy moment, exasperation drove him to call a pleader a fool. The pleader at once wrote a long screed of complaint to Government, expecting by so doing to increase his own prestige. In due course, a report was demanded and my colleague eventually directed to make a formal apology.

No litigant is likely to employ counsel who he thinks is not *persona grata* with the court. The pleader in this case had expected a letter which his touts could publish and he could show to his clientele, proving what great influence he had with the Sahib. But my friend decided that the apology should be as public as possible. There was coming before him a case of general interest which was likely to fill his courtroom with spectators. The pleader was briefed for it. He called him forward and said,

'Lala Sahib, a few weeks ago, when you were pleading before me and started to repeat the same argument for the third time, I lost my temper and called you a fool. I should not have lost my temper. And I should not have called you a fool. But as you had, to my knowledge, immediately reported the matter to Government, there was nothing I could do till the orders of Government were received. I am directed to tender you an apology. And that I hereby do in open court. You will realize that if you had not

exasperated me into thinking you a fool I would never have used the expression.'

The legal profession was absorbing a large portion of the best intellects of the day, and it is easy to understand the demand for the separation of administrative from judicial functions which was being voiced, at first cautiously, but presently with ever-increasing volume. The Punjabi Government's treatment of the problem, at this time wrapped in the dim future, must give students of political science furiously to think.

With the growing complexity of administration, Deputy Commissioners gave less time to court work. But when the Morley-Minto Reforms were introduced, the major part of each day was spent in their courtrooms by Assistant Commissioners and several hours in theirs by Deputy Commissioners, who, month by month, disposed of a not inconsiderable number of original cases as well as a heavy file of appeals.

Captain Deere had suggested that the Appellate Court which heard my cases was worth study.

There are some judges who, when sitting in appeal, seem to feel that they must do something for the appellant, and my judge had a tendency in that direction. The first three criminal appeals which went to him from me came back with the findings unaltered, but the sentences reduced. I gathered that it was for this the District Magistrate had warned me to look out. And from that day onwards, to whatever sentence I thought appropriate for the crime I was punishing I added what I mentally assessed as 'Sessions Judge's compensation allowance'.

My impression that the Court disliked dismissing an appeal *in toto* seemed confirmed by a civil case in which to us in Kaithal the proper decision seemed perfectly clear, and yet the divisional court was evidently seeking grounds for inter-

ference. The case came back for report three times. For my final reply I sought out all the longest legal terms I could muster, hoping to drive the judge to a dictionary.

This was not a happy state of affairs, and I took the first opportunity of spending a week-end in Delhi and making friends with the judge himself. He discovered in the course of conversation that I had been placed in the third bracket in order of merit in my Law Tripos and had been near the top in this subject in the I. C. S. examination. The kindly, clever old judge realized what I was getting at, and told me he was glad to have met me, 'But, listen, young man, don't use such terribly long words in future'.

'Very good, Judge. But you know it was only when you shortened my sentences that I lengthened my words.'

After that, I had no more trouble, and my cases stood the test of appeal. But one unfortunate convict, whose appeal was pending at the time of the conversation, had to languish in jail not only throughout the nine months' sentence I wished him to serve, but also through six months' 'Judge's compensation allowance' in addition.

IX

MORE interesting and more difficult than punishment is the prevention of crime. In all riverain tracts, where there is water, down which to float the animals by night, and thick jungle, in which to hide them by day, there is temptation to cattle-rustling. In some parts of the province it is looked on as a legitimate and manly sport rather than a crime; and in one district, at least, no self-respecting girl would accept a fiancé who had not to his credit one or more successful adventures.

The *modus operandi*, to use the police term, is everywhere much the same. No rustler works by himself. There is a

chain of confederates from village to village, and towards its end the chain usually branches in more than one direction, ending up in places where there are frequent cattle fairs convenient for the passing on of the prey to innocent purchasers.

Europe is apt to wonder at the illiteracy of India; but it does not realize that in vast areas there is real work on the farm for the child, who at a very early age is able to handle the cattle, take them to the grazing grounds, watch over them by day, and drive them home and even help in the milking at night.

Sometimes an animal will stray, and where the jungle is dense there the hovering thief has his opportunity. If he can entice a stray still farther away and into still more difficult country, the boy goes home one short, and by the time the search party and the trackers are out, the thief has got to the river and swum down it with his booty, and handed it over to his confederate miles away. It will be eighty to a hundred miles distant in less than a week, and sold.

The Naili tract of the subdivision affords ideal cover for the cattle thief, and as the population was scant and the people poor, the temptation was great, and the greater in this particular season because of the scarcity verging on famine.

Cattle-rustling troubles the magistrate not merely because it is a crime in itself, or because of its unfortunate economic consequences, but because it is very provocative, if not of riots, certainly of dangerous fights. The man who has lost his animal, and turned out with his relatives and friends, usually knows at the end of his wearying search in what direction, and probably through whose hands, the creature has passed. But proof is another matter. His enemy may boast to him that he is the champion who has pulled the

theft off, and then challenge the victim to find evidence. The *lathi*, the heavy bamboo weapon which the zamindar has ever to hand, is in many cases the answer; and if two start to fight, others join in.

When cattle-rustling cases came into my court, I mystified, and at times irritated, each witness who appeared before me, by asking not only the usual questions—his own name, his parentage, occupation and tribe—but also the history and whereabouts of his closer relatives, and those of his wife.

After a time I knew something of the natural links of those who had come before me. They were entered in a register, with cross references. Every person, when accused, would produce what at first seemed a perfect alibi. But by the aid of my book it became possible to trace relationships which otherwise would have been unsuspected, and sometimes motives that would have baffled the country police. Occasionally false evidence would be given on behalf of a friend, or even an acquaintance, on the simple condition that a like service would be rendered when the other was, as some day he surely would be, in like trouble.

Eventually, partly thanks to the book and partly to my own continuous touring, the spate of cases died down, and the rustlers, Indian fashion, waited patiently for better times ahead, when the present tyranny of vigilance should be over.

Generous folk at home had equipped me with an excellent Burroughs Wellcome touring medicine chest, and as in those days of official penury, when 'The Poor' was the stereotyped sobriquet of the Punjab, hospitals and dispensaries were few and far between, there were constant demands on my stock of remedies, especially for malaria, and, curiously, for constipation. So inadequate, according to modern notions, was the provision of medical attention

that even in an important centre like Pehowa there was but a small and poorly staffed dispensary.

One day, when my camp was there and I had a heavy cause list fixed, I had gone out on inspection before breakfast. The waters of the Sarusti and another seasonal torrent are headed up to form a reservoir, from which the Sarusti canal, in those days managed by the subdivisional officer with the assistance of one trained overseer, takes off. The reservoir was drying unusually fast, and a discussion of the consequent problems had taken me longer than I had intended.

The ground was all puddled by the feet of innumerable cattle, who had watered there as the supply receded. I looked at my watch, saw it was already ten o'clock, by which time I should have been miles away in court, turned to those who were with me—'We must gallop home'—pressed my heels into the flanks of my horse, felt him gather himself for increased pace, and then there is a mental picture of his neck sloping away from me.

When I opened my eyes, the first thing I did was to look again at my watch. It was exactly noon. I had been 'out' for two hours. I found myself in the shade of a tree, clasped to the strong and kindly bosom of Nasib Khan, the local squire, my face and shirt drenched with water, my head aching, and my brain bemused. For some minutes I could not be sure whether I was in England in my uncle's house, and all my life in India a dream, or was in India, with all the recollection of that home strong upon me.

But presently the dancing visions settled into focus, and I bade the zaildar get me back to Pehowa where unfortunate litigants were waiting. After I had been carried about half a mile on a *charpoy*, I recovered sufficiently to mount my horse. It had been my fault for trying to speed over that puddled ground on which a tumble was almost inevitable.

and we walked home somewhat subdued, but not much the worse for wear, except for my throbbing head and scarred brow.

I realized I was suffering from concussion, and I wanted to know whether in such condition stimulants should be taken or avoided. I sent for the dispenser in charge, and found him incoherent, and quite incapable of assisting me. Nor did my Burroughs Wellcome book of words cater for a case of this sort. Finally I had no recourse but to ask the frightened dispenser to let me see his book. I discovered he had been studying concussion, and had reached and underlined the words. '...Here the patient will go blue at the lips and presently expire'.

I, however, refused to co-operate and by three o'clock was in my court and busy. I found I could not think back or recall what had passed in the cases in which hearings had already commenced; but I could think forward, and give proper attention to new complaints and petitions. I had the good sense not to press myself, and in a week was well again.

When the home mail came out, there was a letter from my aunt telling how, at exactly the period of my unconsciousness as it proved, she had wakened her husband to tell him that I had had an accident. 'Whether riding, driving or motoring I cannot say. But he came and stood by my bedside, a mark on his forehead, and seemed to want to get me to help. He wanted to take my hand and hurry me away. But he said nothing. Only he was very pale.'

My fame as a doctor was at times embarrassing. One smiling morning in spring, when nature was at her greenest and kindest, I was riding into camp and had just been handed over by the squire, whose area I had traversed, to the one in whose charge was the village where my tents were pitched. Whereas our progress up to that point

had been light-hearted, even gay, him I found morose and sullen.

'What a face to pull on such a heavenly day as this,' said I. 'Zaildar Sahib, you ought to be ashamed of yourself.'

'I am sorry, but my wife and child are dying,' was his unexpected reply. 'Nevertheless Praise be to Allah that Your Honour has come. So shall she live.'

Inquiries elicited that there had been born a girl baby, and the disappointed mother would neither feed it nor take nourishment herself. Both were fading away, and the local medicine men and women could do nothing.

'But, Zaildar Sahib, you must understand. I am no doctor. Like everyone else, I carry around simple remedies for the simple ailments of day to day—the colic, and the fever—but serious sickness I would not dare to touch. Your purdah rules would not allow me to see the patient, and even if I could I should know no more.' The zaildar continued to plead, but I continued adamant. We reached camp and he went off in deep disappointment, while I bathed and breakfasted.

Before I had sat down to the morning's round of papers, there he was back again. 'I cannot understand it, Sahib; my wife is dying and you will not even try to save her.'

I still resisted; but in the afternoon back he came again; and again entreated, 'Unless you help, she will not live'.

'Do you really mean that?' asked I. 'If you are convinced that, unaided, she must die, and if you will not turn round afterwards and say that her death is due to my wrong medicine, why, then I will do my best.'

'Before Allah I do not think that she will live the day through. The Angel of Death is already in the house. But if you can bring her back from the brink of the grave, all praise to the All-Merciful....If you cannot, then what must

be, must be. To you will be my gratitude for the attempt. The results are not even in your hands.'

I looked through my medicine chest, and chose a strychnine-and-iron tonic. I decided to risk double doses, and gave minute instructions: 'Give the first dose with a sip of milk, and tell her to rest and not worry. After half an hour, give her the next dose and tell her that the Sahib says that, having taken it, ten minutes later she will ask for a glass of milk. This she will want neither cold nor yet hot, but tepid. An hour later give her the third dose, and tell her that then she herself will ask for a saucer of rice cooked in milk. Just an hour after that, and again remind her that the Sahib says this is what she herself will feel, she will want to nurse the baby. Go, and do this in the name of the All-Merciful, the Giver of Mercies.'

When he had gone, I bade my reader get hold of the best horseman he could find and tell him to gallop off, changing horses on the way, to the nearest hospital, alas, no less than thirty-five miles away, bearing a note to the doctor. Therein I set out the difficulty with which I had been faced and the action I had taken. 'If I have done wrong, for God's sake send an antidote! If right, confirm, and instruct how to continue the treatment.'

The messenger had not returned next morning when I moved on. But there was hope on the face of the squire; for all had transpired as I had told him to say it would, and both patients were still alive.

Not for another six months was I in that out-of-the-way spot. This time, when the zaildar met me, he was smiling. It was not easy to pluck up courage to inquire. I had of course heard of the doctor's approval of my treatment, but not of its results. Eventually, I said, 'Well, Zaildar Sahib, I am glad to see you looking happy. Is all well at home?'

'Indeed and it is, Sahib, and I never cease to pray the

blessings of Allah on the head of you who restored to me my wife.'

'But the little one—what of her?'

'Oh, she died,' he responded with careless nonchalance.

'Alas! I am sorry.'

'But what matter, Sahib? The bud has indeed gone; but the plant remains.'

X

STRONGLY as experience impressed on me the need of greater medical facilities for the countryside, it was altogether beyond the power of a mere subdivisional officer to provide them. Major Bacon's advice had been, in effect, to build on whatever foundation my predecessors had laid; and that foundation was ready to hand.

The Sarusti, after passing through Pehowa, scoured its way through the Naili tract of the Guhla sub-tahsil, and eventually petered out in Patiala State territory. Some twenty-five years earlier, there had been a system of earthwork dams at various places in the river bed, and the villagers on either bank must have attained considerable prosperity. Street after street of tumbled-down brick houses showed how far they had prospered above the average mud and plaster hut of the ordinary Indian village. But with this prosperity had come malaria; and so great was the scourge that Government had ordered the destruction of the dams. With the dams, prosperity also vanished; and the wealthy but unhealthy area had become a series of ruins, many of whose inhabitants were eking out a precarious living by working as day labourers.

In the gorges of the higher reaches, there was nothing that the amateur could do. But lower down the main stream, the soil was firmer and the pace of the water, reduced in volume by all that the bifurcations in the friable upper

reaches had drained off, slowed down. There the villagers year by year used to construct small earthwork dams from which channels leading to their fields were fed. But there was always danger of rioting, as the villagers lower down the stream were denied their share of water by those above.

It was not difficult to envisage a satisfactory solution. A big earthwork embankment, semicircular in shape, was necessary to drive back into the main channel waters lost through the principal bifurcations. In the river bed itself, a series of masonry sluice gates, controlled by a simple system of wooden sleepers, would reduce the danger of silting resultant from the annual earthen embankments. Finally, rotational turns of the various villages would come under official management.

The previous year an attempt had been made to construct the big embankment. The floods had been exceptionally heavy. The wings of the embankment had not been carried far enough on either side. Then came the raging torrent, making a frontal attack, while surface water slipped round the weak points. Under the double pressure, the earthwork gave way, and weeks of voluntary labour were wasted.

Spring had come round again and the problem was to induce the people to make a second effort for their salvation. There were thirty-two villages which would benefit, should the scheme prove a success. In them, there was more than sufficient idle labour. Old bricks, from which mortar could be made, and good clay, from which new bricks could be burned, were plentiful. From bitter experience of the past, a correct design for the future was in our hands. Moreover, a former chief engineer of the Punjab had been good enough to visit the site, assist in the design, and give his expert approval to the project. The district board (a body corresponding closely to a county council) lent the services

of an engineer. Money there was none. The difficulty was to persuade the disheartened people to start again.

It happened that in this area was a *kanungo* of the old school, a man of little learning but very great experience, respected by all for his piety, his integrity, his ripe judgement, and his unbiased decisions. His name, Rahim Baksh, appropriately recalled the Bestower of Mercies and his influence was the greater because higher officials seldom visited this remote and poverty-stricken tract. I discussed the situation with him in great detail, and we finally decided to hold, on the site of the dam, a durbar, at which all the villagers would be present and rewards would be distributed to those who had done outstanding work the year before. We prepared a method of approach, realizing that to the usual stereotyped arguments we would find an uncompromising answer: Had Allah wished the bund to succeed He would not have allowed it to be broken last year. His blessing could not be on the work.

The day came and there was a satisfactory crowd of several hundreds gathered in the gorge, which made an excellent amphitheatre for our durbar. The people, polite, but somewhat sullen, were obviously expecting to be cajoled and were determined to resist. The durbar was formally opened and rewards were distributed in the customary way. Everything seemed to be going according to expectations. Then came my speech. I painted a picture of their patent poverty and distress, and contrasted it with the prosperity which would follow from the scheme when complete. I touched on Allah's way with man, how man is tempered in the fire and man's strength increased by overcoming failure.

'But', I went on, 'after all, this is only how your problem appears to me. It is you who know from experience whether I speak truth or lies. None but you can work out

your own salvation. If you want my help, it is freely at your service; if you do not, I have no quarrel.'

This was an unexpected note; and they looked at one another. Then their spokesman said, 'Verily, Sahib, Allah is against us. We will not build the embankment.'

Hardly were the words out of his mouth when Rahim Bakhsh came into the arena, and, with an air of one who was being unfairly treated, begged leave to be granted a hearing.

'Sahib, I ask of your sense of fairness what crime have I committed?' he said. 'The whole world knows that in the whole of the Punjab there is no district less popular among Government servants than this Karnal, nor is there any subdivision more backward than this Kaithal, and in this Kaithal there is no area so devoid of amenities, so lacking in schools, so innocent of everything to make life worth-while for us who have seen the wider outside world, as this subdivision of Guhla. For my sins I have suffered here throughout two long years. Surely I may now ask for a transfer. Take me from these ungrateful people.'

As his speech proceeded, dismay spread on the faces of the audience. It was one thing to resist pressure to do work; quite another to lose the services of the only man who knew them well, in whom they had complete confidence, under whose control labour would be apportioned evenly and just arbitration given in their small jealousies and quarrels. It was one thing to refuse to build the embankment; quite another to lose forever the chance of being organized should they wish to change their minds.

Their apprehension was deepened by my reply to Rahim Baksh.

'No fault indeed has been found with you, but rather praise. Last year, our engineers made a mistake in design; this year, that has been corrected. I had thought that the people would understand, and would remember the proverb,

"When man makes effort, God gives help". But if they wish to make no effort, you are entitled to your transfer.' And turning to the people, by now wavering, I said, with a note of joy in my voice, 'Is it really true that you wish to abandon this project?'

'Yes,' came the answer, though less certainly than before.

'Splendid! That is simply splendid for me,' I said, 'for you will recall how last year I toiled with you all through the scorching hot weather, the snakes, the mosquitoes, and the hundred and one miseries of this distant and forgotten spot. Now if you will only be quite, quite sure that the work is not to proceed this summer, then I will get my period of leave in the hills, enjoy my rest, recover my health, and leave the cares of this subdivision behind me. The choice is entirely with you.'

At this there were murmurings. 'There is, however,' I continued, 'one point which, although it will not of course affect your decision, must in fairness be put to you. Your decision today will be irrevocable. You know whither these waters flow?'

'Yes,' they answered, 'to the State territory.'

'Well, the State is proposing,' I said, 'to open up just such a scheme as I initiated for you, provided there is certainty that the flow of the water will not be interrupted by irrigation works on British territory. So you have only to say a final "No". Rahim Baksh will then get his transfer, I shall get my holiday, and the Patiala State now and forever will rejoice in the use of the water your generosity has given.'

Strange, but true, in half-an-hour they were at work on the embankment. Sweet fruit from bitter jealousy!

The work was started, but all Rahim Baksh's knowledge and tact, and all my own courage and patience were drawn upon before success was achieved. Food prices had run high, and with the best will in the world the labourers were

finding it difficult to fill their stomachs. Fortunately the project had won the approval of the Deputy Commissioner and the District Board, and a sum of five hundred rupees was given me as a famine grant-in-aid. Rahim Baksh cleverly laid this out to the very best advantage and it was made to suffice for two full meals for each labourer during the most critical fourteen days. By the end of that time the construction was so far advanced that the villagers themselves were determined to see it through.

Further encouragement came in the shape of an unexpected visit, not to the site itself but to Kaithal from His Honour, the Lieutenant-Governor. Never before had Kaithal had the distinction of a visit from so important an official. Improved communications and the motor car were making themselves felt.

But the Lieutenant-Governor was as searching as he was kind, and I had a difficult moment. He had seen photos of the work and the letter from the chief engineer commending the design. He had accepted my assurance that the labour had been distributed amongst the villages according to the benefits it was expected they would receive. He then asked me the direct question, 'Granted that the villages as a whole desire this work to be completed, can you assure me that the individual labourers are volunteers?'

As has already been explained, we were passing out of the period when young officers could exact forced labour. Indian politicians were now quick to criticize any abuse of executive power; and to seize on instances that might support their demand that executive and judicial authority should be divorced.

I looked His Honour straight in the face. I asked, 'May I tell you the exact truth?'

He smiled—evidently pleased that he had discovered

a difficulty. 'Tell me everything. There are always hurdles to be taken.'

'My estimate', I said, 'is that eighty per cent of the workers are genuine volunteers. Of the remainder, most are compelled by village opinion to do their proper share. The very few remaining malcontents have been threatened with security proceedings. As Your Honour knows, cattle-lifting is a curse of this tract and there is hardly anyone who cannot come under suspicion sufficient to justify police inquiries. The threat of such proceedings keeps the worst grumblers at work.'

To my great relief, he put his hand on my youthful shoulder and said, 'I understand. Remember that though we cannot always support them, we at the top must often rely on youthful indiscretions.'

At least two more dangers had to be passed. The Deputy Commissioner, encouraged by the success of my voluntary work, had sent up to Government a big scheme of his own which, involving the expenditure of over a lakh of rupees, was designed to provide masonry regulators where the river bed was wide and deep and the work still more difficult. The project was with higher authority; and orders were awaited.

Meanwhile, I was out inspecting my work which seemed to be progressing very satisfactorily. The morning was one of brilliant sunshine. In the distance, the first sign of monsoon clouds was appearing on the hills and there was a foretaste of monsoon in the air.

Riding along the bank where it had been strengthened in front of one of the regulators, we came suddenly on three huge cobras, their long bodies glistening in the sun as they lay, stretched out at intervals of about ten yards, with their heads bent towards the water channel. Two we killed with bamboos, fortunately carried by some of the party. The

third was hit, but succeeded in getting back into its hole, possibly to die.

A superstitious old man in my escort shook his head. 'That is a bad omen, Sahib. Three dangers ahead. Two you scotch, but the third—will it prove fatal?' I laughed at his fears, and the inspection finished, went back to camp.

That evening a telegram came from the Commissioner addressed to the Deputy Commissioner, and repeated to me: 'Project not approved. Stop all work on the Sarusti.'

My heart stood still. I knew that if work was stopped even for a day, weeks and weeks of labour would be wasted, and my poor villages doomed. Only by putting forth every ounce of effort could we achieve completion before the rains broke. I recalled the Lieutenant-Governor's visit, and his encouragement, and remembered that the Commissioner had not seen the site. Taking heart, I determined to carry on instead of stopping the work while argument proceeded. But it was not an easy decision.

The second danger followed quickly. The very next day came news that the Commissioner himself was about to visit the subdivision. He arrived the following Sunday morning and was evidently out of sorts, as the Deputy Commissioner explained when he handed over the duty of escorting him to me and went back to headquarters with evident relief.

The Commissioner was busy all that day, but next morning we started out together to camp in tents, he very kindly entertaining me at meals. On Tuesday we were close to the Sarusti, and at breakfast, as was his wont, he asked me if there was anything I wished him to inspect. With as good a smile as I could muster on my face, and my heart somewhere down in my boots, I replied, 'Yes, Sir, I should like you to see the progress of the work on the Sarusti'.

Quick as lightning, he replied, 'But I thought I had ordered you to stop all that!'

'I did get a telegram a few days ago, Sir, saying that work should cease and I was contemplating asking for confirmation that my interpretation was correct when the news of your tour was announced. As you will recall, the Sarusti scheme falls into two distinct projects. The small voluntary effort for which I am responsible is not only not costing the Government anything, but was commended by His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor when he visited Kaithal very recently.

'The other project is expensive and would require your approval as well as that of Government, and Government would have to find the money. Moreover, sanction to it would involve the reversal of previous policy. It seemed to me that the telegram must refer to that work, and to that work only.

'Had I stopped my own small work, already blessed by Government, weeks of effort would have been wasted irretrievably. I therefore decided to carry on until you had had an opportunity of seeing the situation for yourself.'

The reference to the Lieutenant-Governor's visit threw the Commissioner on his guard. And somewhat grudgingly he said, 'I do not think that was my intention; but I will look up the files'.

And we set forth.

It happened that day that there was a thunderstorm in the distant hills—was that the danger foreshadowed by the third cobra?—and the villagers, fearful lest the rain should overtake their incomplete work, had turned out, as they had been turning out for the last few days, at full strength. There must have been at least five hundred at work. The Commissioner was amazed.

'How are you paying for all this?' he asked.

'I am not paying for it,' I said. 'We officials and the

villagers planned this work together. We are supervising and the villagers are working out their own salvation.'

'But somebody must be paying something,' he insisted.

'We did get five hundred rupees from the District Board, but that was spent long ago. We have not had an anna from any other source.'

'You cannot expect me to believe that these five hundred men are co-operating for their own benefit. There must be some explanation,' he said.

I pointed to the lowering clouds in the distance and suggested that they were responsible for the energy displayed. Still he was not satisfied.

'You were right in thinking the number above normal; but, of course, they were expecting a visit from you.'

At last I had found an answer that proved satisfying. And pleased with the work, he went on to his *shikar*, while I remained to inspect further details. He had good luck, and brought back a black buck with a good head. That night at dinner, to my relief, he told me that the interpretation of the telegram had been correct. It was the work on the Upper Sarusti which he had intended should be stopped. That was not difficult; for it had never started.

Our luck held—did that cobra die of its wounds?—for the very day following the completion of the work down came the torrent. A day earlier it might have been disastrous, but the work stood firm and the regulators held. The villagers reaped their first bumper harvest after many years. Added to my pleasure was the fact that his good work was accepted as a qualification, instead of examinations, and Rahim Baksh was promoted to Naib Tahsildar.

Time passed.

The rolling years had been for me full of incidents, some happy, some tragic. Death visited my home; illness and accident, my person. But the dark hours seemed to have

ended and I was happily recuperating in a post to which, considering my juniority, I was lucky to have been appointed. Instead of suffering the dust storms and discomforts of the plains, I was luxuriating, a District Judge, in the coolth and comforts of Simla. But just during this particular month work was heavy, and one afternoon I had not risen until nearly six. It was a very tired judge who was seeking the shelter of his rooms.

My hour for visitors was in the early morning before the Court sat, and on reaching the Club it was not without annoyance that I observed a little group of men obviously waiting to see me. One of them appeared to be holding in his hand some sort of gift. By the mercy of Heaven, I had the good fortune to suppress any initial expression of irritation and quietly asked them who they were and what their errand. To my amazement, I found that they were a deputation of Headmen from the remote parts of that subdivision now several years behind me.

Weariness dissolved in pleasure as I listened to their talk. They had come asking for literally nothing. They had followed my career, my fortunes and misfortunes, in every detail, rejoicing in the one and sympathizing in the other. And now they wanted me to know how successful was the irrigation scheme which we had worked out together, and how grateful they were for my share therein. What they were holding in their hands cried aloud in the summer heat to Heaven. It was a gift which they had carried many miles across the plains to the nearest station and then up the weary way to Simla by rail. '*Huzoor ki bandat se Huzoor ki machhli* (From Your Honour's bunds, Your Honour's fish')!

XI

BUT I am anticipating.

There was still a cold weather to spend in the sub-

division, which by now I considered peculiarly mine, and in it to enjoy the sweets of nascent power, power to soften the hardness and increase the happiness of the lives around.

The district official still considered himself the master of departments. The heads of departments were remote brass hats, and effective only to the extent that they enjoyed the support and confidence of the local authority.

So little did I, in the loneliness of my distant charge, appreciate their organization, that on one occasion I ordered the local Public Works Department Overseer to make a culvert on the high road, and when he very properly refused to do anything of the kind without due authorization from his own chiefs, tore up the King's Highway myself.

Shortly afterwards, information came that the superintending engineer, accompanied by his executive, was to visit Kaithal. The prospect of seeing two white faces filled me with joy, and I laid myself out to give them the best lunch and the heartiest welcome in my power.

At lunch I told them how, with some difficulty, I had been able to get water down to their road to irrigate the fields of a poor widow on the other side. There was only a fortnight in which sowing was possible. I could not get their overseer to understand the urgency of the case, so had taken the matter over; and felt they would be pleased.

A curious look passed between them. And then the superintending engineer spoke.

'As a matter of fact this visit was planned to give you an official wigging, or at least to hear what you had to say before you were reported to Government for trespassing on Public Works Department property, and poaching on their preserves. We have inspected the spot and seen the culvert you have constructed. It is not a bad bit of work, except that the slope is too acute.

'But you must remember that these roads are our res-

ponsibility, not yours. Please don't do it again, and if you will reduce the slope—you obviously have a competent engineer—we will let the matter rest there. Your intentions were of the best.'

The improvement in the culvert was easy. The widow got her water, and her crop; and that was what mattered most. But the experience illustrated the delays that follow when control is decentralized and departments divide and rule.

One department, to which in those days we all bowed and could not see too strong, was that in charge of plague and cholera.

That cholera's best ally was fear had been impressed on me by an incident in my father's experience. There were two men, one of whom was genuinely ill, and cholera was suspected. His friend came to see him but did not do more than poke his nose inside the tent, 'Can't tell you how sorry I am, old man,' and bolted. Fear worked on him. The patient recovered. The friend was buried the following morning, having developed only some of the symptoms of cholera.

The incident was fresh in my mind when, returning to Kaithal from camp one morning, I found a group of men waiting for me on the outskirts of the town. One of the menials who lived in the quarters under the courtroom had died that morning of cholera, of which there were sporadic cases during that melon season. I had to do some rapid thinking.

If I accepted their suggestion, and went elsewhere, fear certainly, and panic perhaps, would follow. What was the sensible, what the right thing to do?

I had already seen to it that there was a plentiful supply of lime ready at hand for the purposes of disinfection. I directed that a horseman should go ahead and see that

wherever the room or the soil had been fouled, and wherever the patient had been, should be freely limed. I said that I would inspect everything myself. I postponed court by one hour to do so, and carried on.

Confidence was restored, and by the mercy of Heaven the sickness was stayed.

Plague is a nightmare of the past, almost forgotten now. If an occasional case crops up, everybody in the neighbourhood is inoculated, all rats are destroyed; and there is no epidemic. What to do, is known; and it is done. Even the children are taught that if there are no rats, and no rat fleas, there will be no plague; and that the plague flea prefers the rat, if it can get it, to man as a host.

The public health departments are ceaseless, therefore, in their vigilance. The campaign against rats never stops. If rat mortality is reported, all the necessary precautions are taken, and mankind is saved.

But in those distant days, Haffkine's remedy was not yet perfected. The etiology of the disease was still under investigation. All that was known of this outbreak was that, in 1896, a ship had come to the port of Bombay, from the Far East, bearing a man sick of this strange bubo-forming disease, which spread and spread. With ever-increasing virulence, it cut its path of death—south, east, and north—feasting on blood, fresh, unresisting, unprotected blood.

And the doctors were aghast, helpless. Some thought it an air-borne disease; for closed rooms seemed more dangerous than open. Others deduced that the infection hung about the floors; for men who slept on the ground, or on low beds, were attacked, while those whose beds were high, escaped. The first two feet or so of all the walls of all the rooms were disinfected. But the plague continued.

There had been segregation, the misery of plague camps.

Inoculation had been tried, and had failed. In the consequent terror, the camps had to be abandoned. The deadly sickness spread, as flame through dry forest before a rising wind. Men turned for consolation to the doctrine of predestination. *What must be, must be. It is ordained.* And courage to resist was being sapped.

There was a morning when we were approaching a large village standing on rising ground. The fields were rich with ripening corn, the sky clear, and the soft wind of spring was stirring. Ahead of us, some little distance from the village gateway, was a well, and a small farm. Cattle were tethered, and calling restlessly. No human being was in sight. Suddenly from out the door there rushed a girl distraught, her hair streaming in the wind, her hands outstretched, palms outward, her eyes vacant, as she ran in wild directionless flight, and screaming, screaming, crossed our path.

The squire in attendance with me spurred forward; and this was the tale he brought back. The girl was a chosen bride; and two nights before, the bridegroom's party, some thirty souls, had come to this plague-stricken village to fetch her away. The first night there had been great feasting, and much drinking, and after carousal the party had huddled together in the close living room to sleep. 'Today, of thirty, two remain alive; and among the dead, the groom. And Allah has had mercy on her brain,' he concluded.

We went on, saddened. At the gate of the village there should have been twelve Headmen to meet me. There were but two. The other ten were either dead, or burying their dead.

And even when, a few years later, science had learned both to cure and to prevent, it still required the district officer's tact and influence to secure a hearing for the doctors, and acceptance of their advice. There were those who would

die themselves rather than take the life of a rat; those who preferred the almost certain risk of infection in close unventilated quarters to any possible breach of purdah; and always the fatalists, assured that man can do nothing to stem the tide or change the hour that Omnipotent Destiny has appointed.

When epidemics were bad, schools would be closed. Schools there were in the countryside, but few and far between. So few, that a feature of one's visit was the distribution of sweets, one big round yellow ball of succulence to each boy. And a budget of fifty rupees generally covered a year's inspections. Then, as now, the walls used to be plastered with texts; and on one occasion in a big school I rashly inquired the meaning of the motto placarded in front of me: 'The child is father to the Man.' There was dead silence; even the master confessed himself puzzled; and then one precocious youth piped up, with hand uplifted, 'Please, Sir, even a boy can become the parent of a son'. I was more cautious in my questions thereafter.

The agricultural department was in its cradle in Lyallpur. There was a wild rice in the Naili tract, probably a kind of ratoon of the old crops, a relic of the days when the waters covered the land, and those who were not malaria-stricken were prosperous. But there was none from whom to take advice about it; none who would be interested. The youngster who 'wanted to put everything right at once' was restrained rather than encouraged in that penurious age. 'Slowly slowly catchee monkey', was the approved slogan.

Yet there were signs of better things to come.

The co-operative department was born. That fact alone involved some recognition that British standards of justice, as seen in the ordinary civil courts, were not entirely appropriate to the economy of the Punjab countryside.

Finance is as essential to the farmer who crops the surface, as it is to the landowner who develops the minerals beneath it. Every crop demands capital. The man and the cattle who take part in the ploughing and the sowing have to be kept alive till harvest; and when cattle die, and instruments wear out, they must be replaced. The earth gives a return rich enough to reward both the labourer for his toil and the financier for his assistance; provided, always provided, there is patience to endure occasional seasons of drought or of flood, and moderation in demand.

But when the banker alone is literate, when the written, if never understood, bond, signed by a blurred thumb impression, is proof before which all the oral evidence in the world is valueless, and if interest at thirty-six per cent is reasonable, then the temptation to the village financier may well be overwhelming, so that once to borrow may spell ruin.

I have seen a whole farm sold up to meet a debt, which started with a loan of the equivalent of a shilling, borrowed for the purchase of an axe! The rest was interest on interest.

The Co-operative Department was started with the hope of bringing down the rate of interest to a modest twelve and a half per cent; but it, too, was still in its infancy.

Like Rohtak, Karnal was under settlement, so that the department of land records had not to worry over district officials. The Settlement Officer was about to take three months' leave, and I had the exceptional good fortune to be appointed to officiate for him.

By the oddity of the financial system of the day, during those three months I drew more pay than I touched again for nearly ten years. And when the permanent incumbent returned, there arose one of those conflicts between private and official interest, which, from time to time, perplexed

members of a Service tied down by hide-bound financial regulations.

The farmer communities are governed by customary law. Customs may differ, not only from tribe to tribe, but even within sections of a tribe. A son inherits from his father, and must give his mother maintenance. But if there are no sons, to what is the widow, and to what are the daughters of the house entitled? Does a distant reversioner, say a sixth cousin, have the same rights as, for instance, the deceased's brother? Can a widow, whom custom has left to manage an estate, alienate it; and, if so, for what period?

At every settlement there is drawn up a record prepared by the Settlement Officer, purporting to contain in the form of question and answer the customary law of a unit of the district, or, if possible, of the district as a whole.

Some Settlement Officers, in the good old days of absolute government, quite blatantly had set down, not what the facts were, but what they had thought they ought to be. Few, if any, had illustrated their answers by quoting chapter and verse.

My legal training dictated what ought to be done. I obtained sanction to have money spent on searching the civil records of the court of my friend, the judge in Delhi; and I directed my *patwaris* and revenue officers to search the mutation records to find out what had actually happened in the villages in the area, about a quarter of the whole district, which was under my revision. I
produce a volume of customary law,
only the answers of the villagers, but
the courts, when the law had been co
ments of parties, when it had not.

The method became standard for
years.

But the incongruity was that I w

myself, as soon as this officiating term of three months was over. I could not possibly get the work finished in that time, nor could I conveniently complete it away from the district. Yet the pay rules were such that, if I had gone, as I could have, on leave from my post as Settlement Officer, I should have drawn nearly three times the allowances I actually did, when, my self-imposed task completed, I went on leave as Assistant Commissioner. Conscience is often expensive.

Leave came round at last, however; and I had to bid farewell to the district and the dear old subdivision.

'We are sorry to lose you, Sahib,' said one of the local squires. 'We like you.'

I began to purr with pleasure. 'But,' he went on, 'it is not that you do not make mistakes. You have made plenty;' my face fell, 'but you make them yourself.'

The significance of this implied advice, not to put oneself into the hands of a confidant, was emphasized many years later in Baghdad when I was discussing this very danger with an Arab friend. And this is the parable wherewith he instructed me:

Once upon a time, there was a young Prince of Baghdad whose father sent him, when he had finished his schooling, to the University at Aleppo. Among his college companions was the son of a rich merchant of Cairo. The two became great friends; but naturally, their studies completed, they drifted apart.

Many years later, the father of the Prince died; and the son ascended the throne. He was well-liked by his subjects; and was returning, flushed and happy, from his coronation procession through the capital, when, just as he was about to enter the palace doors, he noticed a figure whom he thought he recognized, save that the mien was haggard, and the clothes, though clean, were threadbare. He put out both hands and went towards him.

'Surely, surely, it is Ahmed, son of Khalil?'

'In truth, Your Majesty, Ahmed, once your friend and now no longer worthy either to be called such, or even to be called son of Khalil.'

'But what has happened?' asked the King. 'When last we were together, you were more wealthy even than my father, for all his kingdom.'

'Alas, Your Majesty,' said Ahmed, 'it is a long tale.'

'Well,' said the King, 'you shall come and tell it to me.'

The following afternoon the King summoned Ahmed to the palace, and asked him to relate all that had happened to him during the recent past. Ahmed was full of contrition.

'Your Majesty,' he said, 'I am a fool, and have acted as a fool. My father died, leaving me great warehouses and rich caravans trading farthest east and farthest south; but I attended not to my affairs. I enjoyed the fruits of wealth and luxury; and soon found myself beggared by untrustworthy servants, quick to profit where the master's eye was without sight. Today I travel, working for those who once worked for me. It was by chance I came to Baghdad; and, by chance, my visit coincided with the most auspicious event of Your Majesty's life. You have been sober and are prosperous; I have been spendthrift and am ruined.'

'Oh, come,' said the King, 'what is an auspicious day for me shall be an auspicious day for you. Your friendship was precious to me then, and you must let me do something for you now. What would you like to be? Director of Public Instruction? Chief of my Police? Keeper of my Treasure? Warden of the Harem? Say the word and the office is yours.'

'Nay, nay, Your Majesty,' said Ahmed, 'I am not worthy. I mean to build my humble life again from the beginning.'

'But I cannot live in royal splendour and have my friend a beggar. You must let me do something for you.'

'Then, Your Majesty,' said Ahmed, 'permit me to settle here and work; and it may be my fortunes will change. But I must seek out my own livelihood; lest there arise again temptation, such as the temptations which have wrought in me such evil in the past. I would, therefore, crave of Your Majesty one boon, and one boon only.

'Every Friday,' continued Ahmed, 'Your Majesty holds a public durbar. You hear the petitions of your people; and if you have aught to communicate to them, you communicate it then. Grant me permission always to attend that durbar; and when it is over, and the petitions answered and the work is done, beckon me; and, in the eyes of all your people, whisper in my ear, "Ahmed, thou fool, remember thy folly." So, Your Majesty, shall I stray no more from the path that is straight and narrow.'

For all his persuasions, the King could not turn Ahmed from his resolve, or prevail on him to accept any office on his pay-roll. But week succeeded week, and every Friday Ahmed was present at the public durbar; and every Friday the King whispered in his ear, as he had promised to do. The King noticed that Ahmed's features became less weary and that his raiment was now good and new.

One day, some eight months later, when spring was in the air and the green crops along the canal banks promised a rich harvest, Ahmed came to the King and, to his surprise, begged him of his graciousness to spend a short week-end in his newly acquired house. A little mystified, yet for old sake's sake, the King consented.

They set off down the river in a sailing ship, and presently came to a broad canal, where they were met by a rowing vessel with luxuriously appointed and curtained seats for the Royal visitor and his host. There were other vessels, only a little less magnificent, for the suite and the luggage.

They passed on, through rich fields and blossoming orchards and meadows stocked with splendid herds.

Said the King, 'And whose are these?'

'They are Your Majesty's', said Ahmed, 'and after Your Majesty's, your humble servant's.'

They passed a forest teeming with game; and the same question was followed by the same answer. Then came a palace, where they alighted, and found themselves attended by Circassian slaves of entrancing beauty.

'And whose is this?' asked His Majesty.

Again came the reply: 'Your Majesty's, and after Your Majesty, your humble servant's. And all is Your Majesty's bestowing.'

By this time the King was vexed, but decided to wait before saying anything further. A sumptuous dinner was followed by dancing and music, restrained and exquisite in taste, perfect in colour and in tone. At last the attendants were sent away; and the time came to retire. The King turned wrathfully upon his host and said,

'Thou art my host, and in thy house it is not fitting that I speak angry words; but, Ahmed, thou has fooled me.'

'Nay, nay, Your Majesty, every dinar that I have, I owe to your generosity.'

'But,' said the King, 'this is nonsense. I offered you an appointment, and offered you work. You refused both. You cannot have built up all this wealth from merchandise in one short season.'

'Nay, nay, Your Majesty. It is Your Majesty's free gift. Consider, Your Majesty. Do you not send for me every Friday at your public durbar, and, in the eyes of all your people, whisper words in my ear?'

'Aye,' said the King, 'and I say to you, and in truth I say it again, and with special meaning: "Ahmed, thou fool, remember thy folly!"'

'Yes, Your Majesty, that is what you say; but *none but I can hear.*'

XII

ADJOINING the hospital at Kaithal, and opposite the Nau-Mahal, was a Hindu temple with a choir of boys, who often used to join me for a constitutional after their evening service, a foretaste of the Boy Scouting of later days.

The temple bell had a delightfully rich tone; and on my return from leave, when visiting my old headquarters to pick up my goods and chattels to furnish my first home, I offered to buy it. There was a preliminary reluctance, but eventually the priest agreed, for a fairly generous sum, to part with what I meant to be a memento of happy times. Alas, while I kept it, disease, disaster, and death were to dog my destiny!

Again I was to learn not to tread on departmental toes.

We were back in Rohtak, I working under the good Eustace and in charge of all the work he could unload on an Assistant Commissioner. That included the daily correspondence.

One of our small European community was dangerously ill. The Civil Surgeon, a clever, careful Indian Christian, prescribed a particular drug which was not on sale in the local market, and of which his own supply was exhausted.

'But it is all right,' he said. 'Some days ago, I submitted an emergency indent. If it does not arrive today, it will tomorrow.'

Hungrily, morning after morning, I tore open all covers from Lahore, hoping to find the railway receipt. Nothing came; and the patient grew weaker. Then, when days had passed, came a letter from the Inspector General's office: 'I have received your emergency indent . . . Please explain why it is emergent.'

Fury blazed within me. I wrote that the word *emergent* meant that supplies were exhausted and more were emergently required. A life was hanging in the balance. Was the function of the Inspector General of Civil Hospitals to save life, or, by delay, to destroy? I addressed the envelope myself to the Inspector General by name.

A telegram came, authorizing the Civil Surgeon to do what he had not dared to do without such authority, to purchase from Delhi. It was perhaps stupid of me not to have thought of this before; but in my ignorance of the country I had imagined that supplies could come only from Lahore.

The telegram was followed by an official letter to Eustace, instructing him to give me a formal and official dressing-down for daring to be so rude to the head of the department. Eustace protested, explaining my relation to the patient, and suggested that the high authorities who lived in the comforts of Simla and Lahore might bear in mind the difficulty, in times of stress, of life in distant districts. The Government was obdurate, and in due course the lecture was delivered; but with a kindliness which made me realize that if, at the centre, heads could be brazen, here, in the country, there were hearts of gold.

The bell tolled. I found myself alone again; and presently in charge of a district for the first time, an officiating charge which lasted three months.

Fate seems quick to try out one's weak spots. There had been no rain for some little time. The skies were a brilliant blue; and I was out in the garden enjoying the comparative coolness of the early morning. The orderly reported that two zamindars wished to see me. 'But it is Sunday,' I protested, 'and it is not my custom to give interviews on the Sabbath.'

He went away, to return after a few minutes. The zamindars begged the favour of an audience as their work

was urgent—the floods were out. Reluctantly, I went to them. They told me that the river had burst its banks; and their village, which had been almost demolished and then rebuilt three years previously, was again threatened. Thinking of the weather, and not realizing from how far away the river was fed, I felt incredulous. I told them to go back and help, if due, would come.

I sent out the tahsildar to report. He was a grand Pathan from the Frontier, with unusual initiative and daring. He had, on one occasion, saved the life of a British officer by cutting down his assailant just in time. He was to horrify me a few days later, when the flood danger was past, by applying for leave for a fortnight. 'I have just had news, Sahib, that one of a family with which we are at feud has killed my cousin. It is essential that I go to the Frontier to square the account.' Just the man for a crisis such as this. He stayed in the village to organize work, and sent back word to me that the danger was very real and help was wanted.

The Superintendent of Police was a keen athlete. The District tournaments were on, and his hockey team happened to be at headquarters. I went over to see him. He sent the Eleven straight away to the village. We ourselves followed; and, before evening, had the embankment encircling the village site raised to a sufficient height to keep the waters out. But only just in time. It had been a narrow escape, and I had learned not to delay in hearing urgent appeals.

I was not a great *shikari*, and my knowledge of wild animals was very limited. I certainly knew nothing about wolves other than what the zoo and the story books teach the ordinary person. One morning a petition was presented, asking for the Government reward on the head of a wolf. I was not very suspicious; and my reader did not bat an eyelid. I thought it safer, however, to take the advice of the Super-

intendent of Police, a man of great experience. Without looking at the carcass, I sent it over to the police office to inquire if the demand was in order. A reply came back that it was. The reward was paid, and the transaction duly entered in the Government accounts.

To my surprise, about ten days later, seven or eight carcasses were brought in, each, it was claimed, that of a wolf. This time I decided to see for myself. Except that the snouts were unusual, the bodies looked very much like those of jackals. On closer examination, I found that the heads had been battered, elongated, and stuffed with straw. It seemed clear enough that the first 'wolf' had also been a jackal; and I took the policeman to task. He had left the matter to his deputy, and the deputy had imagined that the point at issue was, not the identity of the carcass, but the rate of the reward.

There was an amusing sequel. Some eighteen months later, I had to draft the Annual Report on the Destruction of Dangerous Snakes and Animals in the Punjab for that year. Office noting, and eventually the Report itself, drew attention to an unusual phenomenon. For the first time in forty years, in a summer month, a wolf had been seen and destroyed in the plains.

The more I learnt, the more I found to learn, in dull contrast with those brilliant passing visitors who are conscious intuitively of all the cures of all of India's ills. Fratricide had crossed my path; and now came parricide.

There had been a riotous affray organized by the young bloods of two families constantly at feud with one another.

To the joy of one party, an aged man on their side had been so severely wounded that there seemed no hope of his survival. He was taken to hospital, and then a story concocted for the police of grave assault with murderous

intent. Were the man to die, the enemy was likely to get very severe punishment.

The doctor, however, was skilful, and to the horror and disgust of the sons their father began to recover.

A family council was held. Permission was sought and obtained to supplement the hospital fare with home-made dishes. The old man died. Unfortunately for the sons, a post-mortem was held and poison was found. It fell to me to take the statement of the young parricides. They simply could not understand my attitude.

'Surely,' I said, 'you did not intend to murder your father?'

'You could not call it murder,' they replied. 'He had been hit on the head by the family's hereditary foes. All he wanted was that our enemies should suffer. That was why he had come out with us to the fight.

'He looked for nothing more from this life. He had worn all the clothes there were in this life for him; he had eaten all the food there was in this life for him; he had drunk all the drink there was in this life for him; what greater joy could he have than to lay down life itself that the hated enemy might suffer?'

It is a relief to turn from a story of cruelty and gruesome death to another memory of great kindness, and of sweet young life. With the advent of the cold weather, I was to hand over charge to the new incumbent. He was a very senior civilian, already in sight of retirement. He had gone on long leave, and many of his contemporaries hardly expected him to return. But back he came, complete, with wife and first-born. The train from Bombay reaches Ludhiana shortly after midnight; and, to avoid disturbing me, he telegraphed to the tahsildar asking that preparation be made for himself and his family in the dak bungalow, the travellers' rest house.

I collected them at the station, and took them to my bungalow, which was to be their home. There they found awaiting them fires in their rooms, hot water bottles, hot refreshment for themselves; and, for the child, a single man's conception of a cradle, milk to be heated, and tins of Allenbury's Food, Nos. 1, 2, and 3, all set in a row, if haply one might meet requirements.

Next day my successor said he did not want to take over charge yet; and insisted on waiting till the last half day of his joining time had expired. With pay regulations as they then were, that meant a gift to me of a full twenty rupees a day.

Presently I found myself asked for, and appointed, as Personal Assistant to the Commissioner. He was himself the son of a former Lieutenant-Governor, and, for the first time, I was given as it were a bird's-eye view of British Government in the Punjab, the interaction of departments, and the fight against corruption.

One of the difficulties in that fight has always been the different standards held by men in different walks of life. The acceptance of commission is routine in business; anathema in Government.

Once, in later years, there was an occasion when the purchase by a club of the land and the buildings was under consideration. The business members of the committee suggested that they be allowed to handle the problem; the figure the official members had thought fair was, in their opinion, much too high. After some weeks of negotiation, a committee meeting was called in the hope that their results would be confirmed. There was an 'I told you so' look on the face of the triumphant negotiator.

'We have got the vendor to agree to the smaller sum which, in our opinion, is all the property is worth.'

'Splendid!' said the official bloc. 'Is it for cash down?'

'There is just one condition, an ordinary business clause, in the draft agreement. The vendor insists that the Deputy Commissioner guarantee to let him purchase a property in the district, which it is understood Government has for sale, and also that he use his influence, nothing more, with Government to assist him to acquire land in a colony district.'

The official bloc blew up; but to this day, their commercial friends feel they let the club down.

To the administrator the matter is now fairly simple: *no gift can be accepted*. But in the days of the bureaucracy, even when bridled with the Morley-Minto Reforms, there were still gifts which were considered customary. 'My own dignity does not permit me to approach Your Honour with empty hands', was a current phrase. The visitor who had a garden would bring of his fruit and flowers; and the visitor who had none, would buy in the market. For visits at Christmas time, the rates became stereotyped, so much for an Assistant Commissioner, so much more for a Deputy Commissioner, and so much magnificently more for the Commissioner. Even after she had made generous contribution to the hospital, and distributed their quota to the servants, the lady of the house was able to fill her pantries with fruit and vegetables for as long a period as they would stay fresh.

If a newcomer of unknown reputation were to come to a district, a basket of flowers and fruit would be sent to him. A succeeding basket might contain a box of biscuits. If that was not returned, a third might have a bottle of whisky; and then the foundation would be laid for a money bribe when special favours were required.

Different departments were exposed to different temptations. The difference between simple and grievous hurt can turn on the number of days the injury will endure. The first report of a doctor is expected to carry great weight in a court. Again, it is comparatively easy for a medical man

to give a true opinion with such hesitation as to raise a doubt.

A pleader once complained to me, that, on the arrival of a new Civil Surgeon in the district, the prosecution in a case of grievous hurt had brought him a thousand rupees to pass on to the doctor to prevent him from reversing the correct report of the tahsil physician. The litigants were assured that they had no cause for fear; the newcomer's reputation was unstained. 'They took away their thousand rupees; briefed me in the case, which they won. But though I saved for them their bribe, I have been unable to collect my own infinitely more modest fee.'

Another very profitable department to the unscrupulous is jails. I once congratulated a comparatively poorly paid official, who had recently retired, on the palatial house he had built.

'It must have cost a fortune,' said I. 'How did you manage it?'

'Are bygones, bygones; and can I speak without prejudice?'

I had learnt by now not to poke my nose unnecessarily into the affairs of other departments, and so promised him to take no action.

'Well, the truth is,' he said, 'that in the jail department it is almost impossible to avoid handsome additions to your salary. If you don't take them yourself somebody else will. You cannot stop the leakages. The opium eater will get his opium; and the jail allowance of letters never satisfies. Letters in and letters out bring in considerable 'postage'. Then the jail staff and the doctor share in the payments made by malingerers who exchange the comforts of hospital for the rigours of the jail.'

That recalled an incident in a district, normally healthy, in which the Superintendent of Police found his staff severely depleted by the number of men going on sick leave, each application supported by a medical certificate for which the

normal fee was ten to fifteen rupees a time. Eventually matters came to such a pass that he called on the Civil Surgeon to tell him that sickness had increased to such an extent that he was bound to apply to Government for an addition to his sanctioned strength. 'My dear fellow, don't do that. Why didn't you tell me before? I will stop giving certificates.'

Where land and water are concerned, decisions can have a real cash value to the parties. The Colonization Officer has to distribute virgin soil; and some sites are much richer than others. He is bombarded with petitions for transfers and exchanges. The ordinary brief order on a petition is either *accepted* (*manzur*) or *rejected* (*na-manzur*). The Urdu for name is 'nam'; and one ingenious reader was credited with having made a fortune out of the letter 'm' by converting petitions on which the order had been 'na manzur' to 'nam manzur' himself being ready to plead, should he be discovered, misunderstanding of what the Colonization Officer had said.

Canal water reaches the fields from an outlet designed to carry a definite volume of water at a definite rate per second. As channels improve or deteriorate, as silt is under or out of control, the draw-off of an outlet may vary; and there is a temptation to correct errors by remodelling. The threat, and the power to fulfil it, can be profitable. Lower down the scale is the revenue accountant, who can perhaps be feed to record as rain land, acres which in fact received canal water; and sometimes, particularly where the channels are seasonal, it is truly difficult to be sure where the irrigated crop ends and the unirrigated begins.

Nothing is more irritating to the honest official than to be accused improperly of corruption. The high official has to keep his eyes and ears always open, but to be cautious in his action.

Though everyone is prepared to condemn the bribe-taker, public opinion does not accept that bribe-giving is the real disease. There is a story told of a petition made against an honest judge which ran somewhat to this effect:

'I knew he was keen on horses; and I spent a thousand rupees in buying a good one, which I sent to him. Not only has he refused the gift, but he has decided the case against me. *Where is British justice?*'

There is also the tale of the astute judge who took five hundred rupees from each side, it being understood that the unsuccessful litigant would get his money back. The plaintiff lost, and went to the judge for the return of his bribe.

'Wait,' said the judge. 'A divisional court is influenced more by the judgement of the lower court than by the evidence on which it is based; and the decision of the divisional court is much more weighty than that of the first court. I promised to help you; and I have written such a judgement in defendant's favour as no judge on earth could uphold. If I am wrong, I shall very gladly refund your money, but I have risked my reputation and think I have well deserved every anna of it.'

The event justified his forecast. Then the defendant came to him, wailing.

'I am very sorry,' he said, 'but you must admit that I did my best for you. I twisted every argument in your favour and have now got it in the neck from the divisional judge. What more could you ask from me?'

As for the political department, only the treasuries of the smaller States know what a vast field, from cash 'tips' for the clerical staff, to the cost of the tiger shoot and its incidentals, given to the Political Agent, is covered by the innocent-looking formula 'usual facilities'.

Members of the Commission, of course, were generally not approached; though an Assistant Commissioner told me of

an attempt on him shortly after he had reached Kulu, that haunt of beauty. He was sitting in the late afternoon at his papers, when a very pretty damsel, who must have bribed his orderly, slipped into his room.

'Who are you and what do you want?'

'Please, Mother says she has a case in your court tomorrow, and she asked me to bring you this shawl,' and the girl pointed to the fine Kashmir shawl she was wearing.

'How dare you come on such an errand?' was the angry response. 'Go away. Here! Orderly! Orderly!'

But the orderly had disappeared.

'Please, Mother says, if you will not take the shawl'—swinging the shawl from her shoulders and revealing a very graceful figure—'perhaps, perhaps you will take me.'

XIII

THE hills are queer, especially the sub-Himalayas. My philosopher friend always insists that it is because of all the black magic and human sacrifices they have seen, of Kali and her dread rites. Not far from Simla, there stands a temple of Kali on the edge of an abyss, over which, according to legend, in days of drought they used to throw her sacrifice, the fairest lass in the village.

In Kangra, through which I used to pass on my way to Mandi, where I had been appointed Settlement Officer, a curious tale was told of Jacob and his servant. Jacob was a brother officer, who later lost his life in the great earthquake. The servant was a Muslim. They camped one day at a village in which there was a Hindu shrine of peculiar sanctity. The Muslim, spurning idols and denying the possibility of any spiritual power outside his own faith, insulted both the deity and the guardian of his temple.

He got back to the camp in safety; but before the morning, when it was time to march, he was found in a state of coma.

Even more than in the plains, hospitals were few and very far between; and though Jacob had his medicine chest, this seizure was beyond his skill. He decided to suspend his tour, in the hope that twenty-four hours of rest would effect a cure. The following morning, however, saw no change.

The alteration in plans brought to his tent the local notables, and to them he laid bare his difficulties. A certain Elder asked if he might have a word with him in private.

'Your servant, Sahib,' he said, 'is suffering from the traditional punishment which this god has power to inflict; and, unless something is done, you must expect that within a few days he will die.'

'But what can be done?' asked the perplexed officer. 'Hot fomentations have been applied, and his limbs have been massaged, all without result. His breathing is regular, and his pulse is low. But he seems to hear nothing, to see nothing, and certainly he eats nothing. I do not know what to do.'

'My advice,' said his friend, 'is to strike camp and move off.'

'But would not that be dangerous?' inquired the Assistant Commissioner.

'I think not. You see,' said the Indian, 'this godling's power is limited to these four ranges of hills, and beyond them he is powerless.'

This conversation took place in the tent of the officer, and, so far as is known, was overheard by no one. Orders were given to march the following morning, the invalid to be carried on a litter.

The moment the litter crossed the threshold of the godling's boundary, the bearer began to move, and by evening had completely recovered.

One of my first tasks as Settlement Officer was to lay the boundary between Mandi and Suket over a stretch of fourteen

miles, where it had been in dispute for over a century. Very many heads had been broken, and some lives had been lost; as the subjects of these two States each claimed the same forest and the same grazing grounds.

A decision was supposed to have been made in 1854 when a British officer, Barrie, was surveying the tract. There was in existence a field book, in which were recorded the distances between the various boundary pillars set up, and also what was called a map.

The durbars, as the Governments of Indian States are called, had agreed that Barrie's settlement was to stand. All that had to be done was to find his line on the spot.

The mountains here are in some places more than 10,000 feet high, and one was just within range of perpetual snow. The time limit within which survey could be carried out was restricted. Two commissions, consisting of three officers each, had studied the documents on the spot; and each had given the problem up, as insoluble.

Yet for my settlement a decision was indispensable.

I took my camp to the point at which the dispute started, and found gathered there two huge crowds, one from each State, facing one another angrily, and spoiling for a fight. My first step was to limit the numbers from each State to fifty, with a threat to cut them down further if there should be any disorder.

I always took a luncheon interval off, and during that interval made them dance a hill dance for me, a Mandi man alternating with a Suketni, and all of them dancing. In a hill dance all the participants link arms, and weave a course round and round a circle. The harmony of the dance soon produced harmony of mind; and we had no quarrelling.

But the puzzle was still to be solved. I promised that I would go over whatever boundary each side claimed; and, if both were impossible, then I would seek a third solution.

The local claims, setting each their boundary deep in the other's State, bore no relation to the known facts, and were quickly rejected.

How then were the map and the field book to be harmonized with the terrain? One thing was clear. Though Barrie had signed the papers, he could not possibly have done the work himself. The alleged map was a long, blue, waving line traced on paper, with no definite indication of the territory through which it was passing, other than that vague sense of direction conveyed by the waves. The field book, if followed literally, made nonsense: so many chains north, south, east, or west, taking one to spots, such as a point on the face of a precipice, where no boundary pillar could ever have been laid.

The starting point was known. It lay in a narrow valley, dark and eerie; one in which the hours of daylight were few. I cast for a line here and a line there, but all were clearly wrong. I thought back. If Barrie had not made the map himself, then it would have been the work of some *patwari* of the day, quite possibly a man without a compass, or one unused to its points. What if 'north' to him had just meant 'uphill'? Somehow in that far off wildness it seemed a not unreasonable interpretation. North is always 'up'.

I made a fresh cast, assuming north to be uphill; and east and west to right and left of it. To my surprise, we found the debris of a destroyed bit of masonry, possibly a pillar, just where the field book's measurements said one had been built. We carried on, and found that with this interpretation the map became intelligible. The resulting pillar points were all reasonably situated—on the centre of a ridge, on the top of a cliff, on some well defined natural mark—and in a considerable number of places we found ruins.

When I had finished, I found that this interpretation gave the rich forest area to Suket; and the Mandi durbar protested

against my decision. But it was upheld by Government. And what had been for so long a dotted area, with boundary unknown, on the survey maps, is now inked in. Suket has not yet recovered from its astonishment that an official in the pay of its rival could give a decision against its paymaster!

But in Mandi, had I enraged the tutelary deities? There are temples each with a grove on almost every hill top.

Each hill has its idol, and each idol a defined sphere. Over a group of idols there is usually one superior spirit, whose temple is visited ceremonially once a year, or once every few years, by underling deities.

Once, in a ruined temple, I found a travelled Brahman together with three or four youths who had wandered out from the neighbouring city for their evening walk. The pundit had an interesting and intelligent face, and I entered into conversation,

'Punditji, you are telling these lads of the different powers of the different gods. On the top of every hill in sight there is a temple or a grove. Do you really believe in such distribution of spirit power? Does not your brain compel you to confess the omnipotent majesty of the Supreme God, Parmeshwar, Lord of All?'

His reply staggered me then, and has given food for thought ever since. He answered my question with a question.

'Sahib,' he said very simply, 'verily, Parmeshwar is Lord of all. But if you were an Indian in a district in the Punjab and you had a petition to prefer, would you address it to the King in London or to the Deputy Commissioner?'

He then proceeded to explain that no local god has power except over those who accept him. If you trusted in him, he would protect you within the limits of his local jurisdiction; if, having accepted him, you afterwards abjured him, then and then only would his wrath be manifest.

The deity most powerful of all, who is credited particularly with power over rain, is enshrined on the top of a very high hill, his temple hidden in a grove of trees, which has a depth of three miles. At the back of the temple, the hillside falls sharply down an escarpment, at the foot of which is a small lake.

Once a year, shortly before the rainy season, the god holds his annual festival; and the crowds which attend it form the largest gathering of the year. Offerings are made to the god and to the priests. These are not Brahmans, but men selected by the god from the farmer community. When a vacancy occurs, the village assembles, and the men dance, till on one the spirit descends and he becomes priest.

The suppliant, who wishes his or her prayers to be answered, brings a small votive offering, a silver image of the object desired, in the case of women most usually a male child; and this, after presentation at the shrine, is cast ceremonially into the lake. Some say the lake must contain vast treasure; others, that the priests are skilled to poach.

The immediate cause of my appointment as Settlement Officer had been a small rebellion in the State; and the unrest, of which that was a manifestation, was due, not so much to the weight, as to the unevenness, of the burden of the land tax, the revision of which was long overdue.

The settlement of land revenue, even in the Punjab, was a process disliked by the peasantry; and on arrival at Mandi I found that, however pleasant the people were to me personally—at the end of the first fortnight I dismissed the double police guard sent for my protection—there was an air of non-co-operation, strengthening to actual hostility, against my official duties. So much so, that I asked for and obtained Government's permission to spend my first three months without any Settlement staff, simply touring the State, and studying the people and their peculiarities. I took my medicine chest round with me. My permanganate of potash

that cleansed wounds, and my simple remedies that cured fevers and disordered stomachs, made my comings welcome.

I soon discovered that revenue payers fell into two classes: the peasant, and the 'gentleman'. There was a fixed rate of land revenue on all land that was under cultivation when the last settlement was made. This was paid by both classes; but, in addition, each peasant had to present himself at the palace, where he would indeed be fed free, but must work for no other remuneration during no less than three months in the year—months perhaps vital for his agriculture.

If, however, the owner of land could get himself officially classed as a *safaid-posh*, the wearer of white raiment, which is the term I have translated by 'gentleman', then he was excused this burden.

Again, in the decades which had passed since the land was surveyed, many fields had gone out of cultivation; and many new acres had been broken up. Some men were burdened with the payment of a tax for land which had long since ceased to be productive; while others, and these generally of the 'gentleman' class, were enjoying the fruits of virgin, or comparatively virgin, soil, revenue free.

The preliminary operations of a Settlement, the purchase of instruments, tents, and other equipment, and the payment of staff, are expensive. And it was necessary that the revenue show some increase as soon as possible.

That treasure in the lake—could I draw on that? No—the thought flashed, but was immediately dismissed.

It was, however, obvious that where there are two sets of people on one of whom the burden of taxation is greater than on the other, the lightly taxed can afford to pay more than the heavily taxed for rights in land. There was therefore a natural tendency for the class of 'gentlemen' to be increased at the expense of the peasant, who was the real backbone of the State.

There seemed a fair prospect of increasing the revenues considerably by a settlement, which should give obvious justice to all, and yet make no heavy increase in the rates of taxation. So presented, I hoped the settlement would become popular.

His Highness agreed, and we decided to hold a State durbar at the annual festival of the deity. At this, I would explain to the people exactly what I had in mind; and announce that, in order to reduce the comparative burden on the peasant, the period of forced labour would be assessed at so much per month, and those who were excused labour would pay in cash.

The durbar was still a few weeks off and I was sitting in my office when a deputation of the priests of the temple was announced.

'We hear, Sahib, that you are proposing to come to our temple, and to hold a durbar in the grounds. We have come to tell you that the deity objects.'

'But the deity is the protector of the people of the State, and I am coming with His Highness the Rajah, himself of divine descent, to do good to the people. Can you tell me exactly what it is to which the deity objects?'

'His sacred grove has never been invaded by any foreigner, and he wishes that rule to remain inviolate.'

'Then,' I said, 'can you explain how it is that the survey maps record a bench-mark, set in the temple precincts some years ago by a British officer?'

'We cannot,' they answered frankly, 'but we will inquire.' And away they went.

They came back again a few days later and said, 'The god says that it is quite true that that bench-mark was set up by a British officer; but he visited the shrine only by day. No one has ever slept there.'

I heaved a sigh of relief. 'If that is the whole trouble,

there is an easy remedy. I will guarantee not to sleep within the sacred grove, but will pitch my tent outside.'

They were not very happy, but went away, to return a few days later.

'The god says that all Europeans wear leather, and he cannot tolerate leather near his shrine.'

'That, too, is easy,' said I. 'I will guarantee to wear no leather at all. I will discard my boots and wear the grass shoes of the countryside.'

On their next visit, they raised a fresh objection.

'The god hears that you propose to dredge the lake and take the treasure out.'

That gave me to think. There had been in my mind not more than the image of the thought, nothing that I could even call a thought itself. I had said not a word to anybody. The coincidence was odd.

'I can give you my solemn assurance that I have myself no such intention; and would not countenance any such proposal.'

They departed, defeated in argument, but patently disgruntled. In my own mind I felt convinced that the only god in the machine was the committee of 'gentlemen' whose wings were about to be clipped.

Plans were made for our camp; and the Rajah and I set out. The last day's journey would be up a very steep mountain slope, and could be traversed only on foot. His Highness was to be carried in a State chair, and I would march.

But the durbar was never held. The night before, and much earlier than usual, the rains descended in such torrents that the paths were washed away, and transport by chair was impossible. I was down with fever, my temperature 105 degrees, with just sufficient control of my senses, before fading into delirium, to leave directions to the Wazir of the

State not to bother about sending my body for burial the hundred and fifty miles of difficult journey to British territory, but to have it burned, so that the ashes only need be buried.

It was enteric; and more than a year passed before I was fit for duty. I lost that work. My account with the deity is still open.

XIV

THIRTEEN months of enteric meant long months on leave; and following the wise policy that all administrative officers should do a spell in judicial, and vice versa, on return to duty, I found myself District Judge, Simla, where, as has already been related, my old friends from Kaithal made contact with me. From time to time, so long as they lived, both Rahim Baksh and Nasib Khan kept in touch. Rahim Baksh left no sons; but Nasib Khan's grandson, now reigning in his stead, always comes for help when trouble threatens.

The special interest of judicial work in Simla is its variety: land suits involving lakhs—bankruptcy—probate—matrimonial, debt sometimes petty, sometimes unusual, such as the liability of a young cavalry officer for the bills of a bride enticed to extravagance; all this forming a weft through which runs the woof of the troubles of Indian village life, the quarrels of the zamindars, the entanglements consequent on the advent into her brother-in-law's house of the brother's widow, the criminal cases.

A lawsuit is the bitter fruit of sore hearts; the winner gloats, and the loser despairs. But sometimes it is possible to find a middle way, and bring content to both; and hope to achieve this end gives a human interest to what would otherwise be drab. The work sharpens the wits too, for there is much faking, nickel served up as silver.

One of my puzzles was a prosecution by the police of a woman, whom we will call Beaulada, for the abduction of the son of her neighbour, Phulawa.

The homes of the women were perched, one above the other, in a village very far away from Simla, and far also from the nearest police station. Phulawa's husband was poor. He had only a small patch of land; and Phulawa had already borne him three sons and one daughter. Beaulada had been married twice; was already twenty-seven, and childless. She was becoming desperate.

One day Phulawa told her friend that, to her great annoyance, seeing how poor they were, she had again conceived. The women had a long talk; and two days later Beaulada rejoiced her husband with the promise of a child. The months passed by. Beaulada kept herself more and more to the house.

Then came a day when the guns of rejoicing were fired off and Phulawa's fourth son saw the light. The husband was sent away on his long trek to report the birth at the registry kept at the police station. While he was away, from Beaulada's house also the guns were fired and the birth of a son announced. Beaulada's husband went off likewise to report; and the weather and distances were such that neither husband could return for some days.

When they came back, Phulawa's child was missing. 'I had gone out for a short time,' she said, 'and when I came back, there was no trace of the baby. Alas, I fear a panther has taken it.'

Again the husband went off to the police station. As a matter of routine, a police constable visited the houses. There was so much open space around them that the story of the panther seemed incredible, nor was there any sign of blood or bones. The young constable was ambitious, and wanted a successful case. He investigated with such

energy that here was Beaulada in my court on a charge of having swooped down and unlawfully abducted the child.

The prosecution evidence sounded most convincing. A medical expert testified that Beaulada had probably never had a child at all, certainly not in recent years. Phulawa's breasts, as to my embarrassment she desired to demonstrate, were still full. Her little daughter gave lisping evidence which was word-perfect, telling how she had seen Beaulada come down to her mother's room, where the baby was, at the time when her mother was out, and then go back to her house with her hands stretched out as if hiding something under her apron.

Each woman was emphatic in her protests that the child was hers. Unfortunately, the child itself had died in Beaulada's house while the case was still being investigated.

What I had before me were two women, each claiming to be the mother of the same child, and evidence that satisfied the letter of the law to show that one of them had stolen the child of the other. Yet the women had been friends.

At length light dawned on me, and I said to Beaulada, 'You know as well as I that Phulawa gave birth to the child. By refusing to give any reasonable explanation of how he came into your possession, you are in peril of two years' imprisonment; but even so you are lucky. For to take so young a child away from its own mother was a very dangerous act; and you might well be here on a charge of manslaughter.'

The woman in her broke down the barriers and with tears welling in her eyes, she blu
Sahib, he was so ill when she sold him to

The mother had been glad enough to
unwanted child and secure the favours
neighbour and friend. But only if nobod

about it. The other was quite content to go to jail for two years, provided she could continue to assert to all the world that she was not barren, but had been the mother of a male child.

And now came 4 August 1914.

All leave was stopped. And those of us who were acting in senior appointments had to revert, again to become assistants. There were many quick changes. From Simla, I was posted to Amritsar, six weeks later to Lahore, four weeks later to Campbellpur as Assistant District Judge. Those in authority were certain, just as I was convinced to the contrary, that the war would be over in three or, at the most, six months. The third time that I volunteered for military service I was told that any further applications would be considered insubordinate. Civilians were to do their job; and not endeavour to get away for a joy-ride into Berlin.

Still backing my opinion, and having made friends with the captain in charge of the sections of the Royal Horse Artillery Battery stationed at Campbellpur, I was being taught to drive. I had also been appointed secretary of the Mess, as it seemed that I would be the longest permanent member.

Suddenly down came a telegram: REPORT AT KARACHI AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AS ASSISTANT CENSOR. Almost the whole station helped me pack, and I got away on the night train, to be met at Karachi by a bewildered colonel who asked why had I come so quickly—he did not want me for a fortnight!

As Assistant Cable Censor, I found my colleagues were a Levantine merchant from the Middle East, a seedsman from Mussoorie, and a promoted sergeant-major of a volunteer corps. Work was wearying; but there was the Boat Club and crews to train and regattas to organize.

Then one day a message came through that added interest to life. It was from the London branch of a foreign firm to their Indian correspondents, complaining bitterly that the news contained in a letter which had reached them had not been cabled. As a matter of fact, the firm had done their best to cable it; but I had found in it matter so objectionable that I had withheld the cable without informing the senders.

This cable suggested that commercial letters were getting through improperly. My immediate chief was very doubtful; but, as I pressed, agreed to refer the matter to Simla. We were eventually thanked for the action we had taken; and I was transferred to postal censorship with instructions to make proposals for improving the organization.

Letter censorship means working at terrific pressure when the overseas mail comes in or is going out; but during the rest of the week the work is light, and I used some of my spare time in passing Persian by the High Proficiency standard.

I had now been transferred to Bombay; and from there went to Mesopotamia to take over as Revenue Commissioner.

The seven years which were to elapse before I was back in India brought me in contact with famous men and famous places; gave me opportunities of work on a scale beyond the dreams of a district officer; and allowed me a close insight into the machinery, not only of the British Government, but of international politics.

I was in Baghdad eleven days after it fell, having journeyed up from Basra in a tug appointed for me by the far-seeing A. T. Wilson. For nine months I was the only trained civilian with Sir Percy Cox, the Chief Political Officer, who was in charge of the whole political staff and all the civil administration of the occupied territory. I was given a very free hand, and thus was able to initiate and administer

an agricultural development scheme which made it possible for the army to obtain, in the area forward of Kut, its full requirements of fifty thousand tons of wheat. Over forty-nine thousand tons of grain, together with a corresponding amount of straw, we collected as revenue or repayment of cash loan.

The army was prepared to spend £400,000 to get these fifty thousand tons. The net cost to it eventually was a little over £20,000 only. An added satisfaction, to one used to Indian methods, was that out of disbursements exceeding £280,000, of which £260,000 were loans repaid at harvest in kind, there was not a single penny held under objection in audit. Every payment was pre-audited.

In connexion with this project, we built two brand-new canals originally designed by Willcocks to complete the Hindyah Barrage on the Euphrates. They brought under cultivation nearly a hundred thousand acres; and all this almost within sound of the enemy's guns.

We carved out districts, instructed selected young army officers in the elements of administration, re-opened courts and schools, and above all revived agriculture. A cotton experimental farm was started at Hinaidi, and wherever troops were in summer quarters, there was a vegetable garden. The year before, scurvy had emaciated men; and its corresponding disease had been fatal to horses. That year there was fresh green food for all. Men were fit; and hospitals, human and equine, so far as this disease went, empty.

It was a pleasing tribute that, before the then Shah of Persia fell, his Government asked for me by name, *à tout prix*, to reorganize the land revenue system of the whole kingdom. Politics were to be barred; in all other respects I was to have a free hand. Even T. E. Lawrence, who attacked every other aspect of the political administration of Mesopotamia and its revenue control after my departure,

was careful to distinguish between the post- and pre-armistice periods.

For, the war over, I was in London; brought into the India Office to act as 'Assistant Secretary in the Political Department' and as such to provide Mr Montagu with what he styled 'my Mesopotamia expert'.

The affairs of the Middle East, Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Persia, used to be considered by a Middle East cabinet committee, over which Lord Curzon presided, and at which the interested departments were represented. What happened there, of course, is not for the telling.

But we humbler fry were able to appreciate both the greatness and, at times, the meanness of the very great. We saw the origin of the quarrel between Montagu and Curzon, the rights and wrongs of which the world at present does not fully know; why and how the bag-and-baggage policy of Lord Balfour was abandoned; and, as regards Mesopotamia, it was heart-breaking to watch the revenue administration mishandled by amateurs—politicals, expert at weaving words, but altogether inexpert in direct administration.

The cloud, the size of a man's hand, that portended the agony of the coming storm of rebellion in Iraq, was manifest in August 1919, three-quarters of a year before it broke.

What a strange combination of circumstances prevented the action that could have blown that cloud away! Grouse shooting and British holidays, misunderstandings, misconceptions, personal conceit, jealousies, and sickness—each played its part. The deepest horrors of that rebellion are fortunately known to few, and the principal actors on the political stage of Mesopotamia, Sir Arnold Wilson and Sir Percy Cox, have passed away. The store of Mesopotamian memories is rich.

While I was gathering experience of administration in an Arab country, from Whitehall as well as in the country itself, and of king-making, India was passing through the initial stages of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms.

The only Indian file that passed through my hands was that on which Mr Montagu decided to forbid the acceptance even of fruit and vegetables by all Government officers. 'It will be much easier for them', said he, 'if they can shield themselves under cover of a direct order from me!'

When Faisal was safe on his throne, the Secretary of State wanted me to return to India—and so it was arranged.

A few days later I was in the House; and heard the cold, calculated, cutting speech in which Mr Austen Chamberlain informed the astonished House that the Prime Minister had that afternoon accepted Mr Montagu's resignation.

PART III

MONTAGU-CHELMSFORD REFORMS, 1919-37

XV

UNREST had attended the advance of 1907; but the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms were born in a bath of blood. Officialdom was furious. In the clubs retired civilians and soldiers who had served in the country would grunt at one another. 'How can the Indians govern themselves? Look what a mess they have made of their municipalities and district boards.' 'Without British control what man in his senses would expect justice? It will be each community for itself.' 'Imagine elections! How many rupees a vote?' 'And the councils—what bear gardens they will be! What a Babel of tongues to begin with.'

It was at Mr Montagu that the invective was directed. He knew it; and was hurt. Resignation haunted him. I can see him standing with his back to the mantelpiece in his room at Whitehall, orating (he seemed to find it difficult to use simple language), 'I do not know, my dear Garbett, why I should trouble you with the vacillations and perturbations of a Secretary of State; but what passes my comprehension is why am I, one member of the joint Cabinet, held responsible for decisions of His Majesty's Government? The Resolution of 1917, on which the Reforms are based, was indeed drafted by me, but in a form considerably milder than that in which it emerged from the Cabinet after it had been edited by the Foreign Secretary himself. I do not pretend that I was not overjoyed at his liberalization of my more conservative draft. But no one thinks of blaming him!'

It was easy to understand his reference to Cabinet joint responsibility; for it seemed to an India-trained official that, in Mr Lloyd George's Coalition Cabinet, papers were 'circulated for the information of my colleagues' which

in the East would never have got past an Under-Secretary. But Mr Montagu deceived himself if he failed to realize that, but for him, for weal, as the grumblers thought, or for woe, as others are very certain, the Reforms would have been less generous and certainly presented differently.

Mr Montagu was a very kindly chief, but in his make-up was something of the exaggeration which is normal only in the East. 'You do look bucked,' once said to me my immediate chief when I had come back from an interview for which I had been called by the Secretary of State. It was the invitation of the Persian Government to me to take charge of their land administration throughout the kingdom, and Mr Montagu had been extraordinarily complimentary, and generous in his promises. I told my chief exactly what had been said.

'That's fine,' he remarked, 'and I, too, appreciate the good work to which he referred. But, while I do not want to discourage you, do remember that when any other Cabinet Minister promises ten, you can reasonably expect a hundred; but if Mr Montagu promises you a hundred, you will be lucky to see ten.'

For all that, his heart was big and his judgement of Eastern thought sure. And there are those who must regret that his advice was not followed more closely in the beginning when decisions that were later forced from Britain's hand could have been given as a gracious, generous gesture.

He remained in power long enough to see the period of diarchy through its initial, and, alas, blood-stained, stages. I was myself spared immediate contact with the rioting in the Punjab and the dire tragedy of Jallianwalla Bagh. By the time I returned in the summer of 1922 calm prevailed and administration was taking its normal course under the new conditions. The number of civilians who had preferred to retire on proportionate pension, a concession which

accompanied the Reforms, rather than serve under the semi-Indianized Government, was very small. At first sight one felt, *plus ca change, plus c'est la même chose.*

In the district to the temporary charge of which I was first appointed, there did indeed seem to be some lessening of control. Dacoities were unfortunately numerous, and I was not satisfied with the out-turn of the magisterial staff. I had to be cautious because the officer for whom I was officiating was acting as Commissioner, and would return. Each of the magistrates, when he called to pay his official respects, complained of overwork and all hoped that I would secure some addition to the staff to relieve their overburdened selves. Their out-turn was nothing like what Major Bacon had taken from me in Jullundur, and it seemed to me that there was an aftermath of slackness following on the disorganization of normal functioning which the disturbances had caused.

Discreet inquiries from non-official visitors disclosed that the staff were coming to Court late and leaving early. I circulated a notice saying that I was anxious to see that each courtroom had a supply of furniture, carpets, and fixtures suitable to its dignity, and I proposed as soon as possible to visit the various courtrooms. I would come either at ten or at four. If I did happen to visit a courtroom I usually found some reason leading the Magistrate to expect another visit. Six weeks later the pending file was normal and there was no more talk of additional help.

Kind fate sent me next to Simla and Lahore as Senior Secretary to the Financial Commissioners and enabled me to appreciate the working of the new system.

The Reforms were in fact far-reaching. The old jest could no longer hold that the I.C.S. as a title was a *lucus a non lucendo* in that its members were not *Indian* and not *Civil* and not *Servants,* but British arrogant bureaucrats.

The proportion of Indians in every service was rapidly increasing. There was a Council in which, as in Parliament, questions could be, and indeed were, asked, if ever an officer might seem to cross the line of civility. And that we were servants and no longer *hakims* was manifest. The proudest post in the Service had always been that of Financial Commissioner; and the Financial Commissioner had corresponded officially with Government through his own secretariat. Steward of all Government property, he had ruled an *imperium in imperio.*

Now the stewardship was in the hands of the Honourable, the Member for Revenue, an Indian of mark, and the Financial Commissioner became his Secretary. In the districts, the effect of the change was less immediately apparent, as, when one casts a stone into the centre of a lake, some time elapses before the ripples reach the shore. But men at the top, who had been accounted seditious a few years earlier, were framing their policies and devising schemes which were presently greatly to accelerate the rate of progress. Finance, as always, was the limiting factor; but the new Indian politicians planned for the future—a future in which they would themselves share, in a way few Lieutenant-Governors, with their five-year tenure, had dared.

The Indian peasant likes to speak of the district official as *chhota khuda*, a little god, and the pace at which the mills of the British had ground often seemed to justify the ascription.

We have in my own family experience of a posthumous award of the Indian Mutiny Medal eighty-one years after it was earned. More serious was the delay in deciding the Kangra Forest Settlement of 1882. Very important issues were involved, but the proposals lay on the office tables of Government for over fifteen years before orders were passed. Under the new regime, men had to move. Projects were

prepared; to materialize as funds permitted. Education was to expand. The day was to come when no villager need walk more than five miles to a dispensary. The burden of land revenue, which in practice had been reduced almost to this figure, was brought down by law to twenty-five per cent, instead of fifty per cent, of the theoretical rent. Village councils, called *panchayats*, were to be encouraged and given statutory powers. All the beneficent departments of Government received fresh impetus.

By the time my tenure of office as Senior Secretary was complete, the wheels were moving.

XVI

A MORNING in March, the sun bright, the air crisp. The train from the south steamed into Hassan Abdal. Out stepped two ladies, one middle-aged, short of stature, but with the brisk, commanding bearing of a Mother Superior, and, behind her glasses, the quick, restless eyes of a journalist; following her, a graceful brunette, with a ready camera thrown over her left shoulder.

'I am Katherine Mayo,' said the first to alight, 'and let me introduce my friend, Miss Moyca Newell. You are——?'

'Yes, I am Mr Garbett. I got His Excellency's telegram only late yesterday afternoon. The orderly will see to your luggage if you will come with me in my car.'

As we drove to the dak bungalow, I explained that I was in camp with my wife and child at this town and therefore there had been some delay in the arrival of the Governor's telegram. Not that that had been very informative. I showed it to them: TWO AMERICAN LADIES ARRIVING BY MAIL CAMPBELLPUR FROM 'PINDI ON SIXTH LEAVING FOR PESHAWAR EVENING TRAIN SEVENTH DESIROUS SEEING DISTRICT OFFICER'S LIFE SHALL PERSONALLY APPRECIATE ANY COURTESIES EXTENDED. SD HAILEY. 'That hasn't

given me time to do more than wire to the Deputy Commissioner at 'Pindi to ask you to detrain here and to let them know at Hazro, a small town nearby, that I would inspect it this afternoon instead of the day after tomorrow, as was in my original programme. Is that all right?'

They laughed, and Miss Mayo said, 'We do want to see whatever you can show us, but we do not want to be a nuisance.'

'You'll be no nuisance at all,' I said. 'I take it that you want to get a potted experience of life in a district. So I am going to give you lunch at the dak bungalow, and you are being put up there for the night in just the same way as any traveller would be. I have deliberately refrained from ordering a special meal. I merely told the *khansamah*, the manager in charge, that two travellers were coming. He was to reserve rooms and provide lunch for three. I propose to take you this afternoon to a town of some twenty thousand inhabitants where we shall be able to see the schools, hospitals, municipal buildings, and all the normal machinery of administration at work.

'This evening, I hope you will dine with my wife and me. She is at the rest house, a mile away, with the infant. Tomorrow, I will show you the pretty little town here and then take you to Campbellpur, where I will give you lunch and invite the leading citizens to tea. But, you know, Sir Malcolm Hailey has given me only a very slender clue, and I am not at all sure that this is what you really want.'

We swung up the slope to the long, low one-storied adobe building that looked across the plain to the Kala Chitta range of hills beyond. Both my guests chuckled, and Miss Mayo said, 'Oh, but this is grand. I love your dak bungalow idea, and the whole programme sounds fine. I'll tell you our story tonight.'

They found their rooms just adequately furnished, but

clean; and they thoroughly enjoyed the simple fare—soup, roast pigeon, and, if they had only known it, the inevitable brown custard with stewed fruit. When they had sorted themselves out and were ready for the road, we started off for Hazro, past the rich corn land of Burhan, across the Haro bridge with a deep pool beneath, in which from time to time lurks a ten-pound mahseer, past the water mills, the feeding ground of the smaller fry, through eroding ravines, till presently we turned to the right off the main road and came to a village school.

I had not intended to stop there, but the village had heard of my coming and there was a big WELCOME over the gateway, and a little crowd of people with smiling faces waiting. We pulled up, and greetings were exchanged.

Miss Mayo's quick eye at once detected the peculiar feature of all the buildings in sight—from the ground upwards the first three feet were of stone, the rest being finished off according to the means of the owner, some in stone, some in brick, and some in mud and plaster. There were a number of depressions, and a main drain at the side of the road with channels leading to it from the depressions. We looked at the children, and I was glad to see an obvious improvement in health. The villagers explained that fever had been much less severe that year than they were accustomed to. 'Praise be to Allah and Your Honour's care!'

There was obviously some story, and Miss Mayo insisted on hearing it in full. I told it as we motored slowly onwards to the town we were to visit next, pointing out the second drain on the other side of the road, the willows planted on its bank, and the feeder channels taking water down to the main stream, which we crossed two miles farther on.

'This river is called the Chel. The subsoil here is peculiar. There must be an impermeable stratum, perhaps thirty feet or so below the surface. You see the hills that fringe this

plain, like the bumps around the palm of your hand? If you will imagine your line of life to be the Indus, the palm exactly represents this countryside. Down the higher ground the drainage soaks slowly to the plain, and then, in the middle of the winter, wells up, so that in December and January there used to be a vast *jhil*, excellent for duck and snipe shooting, but disastrous to the comfort and health of over twenty villages.

'I was staggered, on my first inspection of that school we have just visited, to see how sickly all the boys seemed. I sent the doctor out to take a spleen census, and the return showed ninety-seven per cent. Something had to be done. There are some fine old soldiers in the village, and they and the Headmen and I went into a huddle. They decided to dig the drain and the channels you have seen on the left of the road. That took off part of the surface water.

'I then reported to Government: "Here are people who do what they can for themselves and deserve help." Sir Malcolm Hailey's Government, ever quick to encourage initiative, at once gave a grant which enabled us to double the work; hence, the second drain you have seen.

'A few weeks after their construction, we had heavy winter rains—you will realize why the foundations are all in stone—but the drains functioned and, instead of the usual weeks of misery, the village streets were quickly dry. I had come back from Court, and was busy one evening with my files when my compound was invaded by a small crowd of men. I went out to them to ask what was their trouble.

' "No trouble, Sahib. We have come in from Bahadur Khan just to say, Thank you. Those drains are working splendidly."

' "Well," I said, "it's extraordinarily nice of you to come and see me to tell me all this, but it was Government who gave the money, and if you really mean the thanks you are

expressing, wouldn't it be simpler to put them on paper so that I can send them up to the Lord Governor himself?"

' "On our heads and on our eyes," said their spokesman, a Persian scholar.

'Two days later came a document in flowery Urdu, telling nothing more than the truth, but written entirely by themselves, and signed by everyone in the village who could write his name, and thumb-marked by others. How distant we were from the days when I first came out and months, even years, passed between project and fulfilment! In a miraculously short space of time, Government, who were genuinely pleased by the people's recognition, sent down a drainage engineer, and now look round you.'

We had reached a spot from which we could see feeder drains running from all the villages that fringed the Chel on either side. The stiff land was being broken up, and the marsh and the *jhil* had disappeared.

'And what was the value of your first crop?' questioned the alert Miss Mayo.

'We put it at eighty thousand rupees,'—out flashed her notebook—'you can verify from any of the people we will meet.'

Miss Newell chipped in, 'Isn't there a cantonment somewhere near here? What do the sportsmen say—*shikaris*, you call them, don't you?'

'The game book records the pitiful tale, and I fear my name is mud.'

We were now at the outskirts of Hazro, and there was a long line of functionaries and friends drawn up to meet us, first the officials in strict order of precedence, then the military pensioners, resplendent with their medals. Rai Sahib Gopal Das, the wealthy honorary magistrate, as soon as presentations were ended, asked that my guests and I would honour him by coming to tea. He had arranged a

little party in his garden and all the local *élite* would be there.

We thanked him, and promised to come after a rapid inspection of the institutions of the town: the veterinary hospital, with its eight to a dozen operations a day; the municipal building, its rooms dark and cool in the hot weather, set in well-kept grounds; a high school, the extensions of which in solid brick were under construction; the one and only hospital, with its uneven floor and rather uncared-for appearance. Again the notebook came out.

'Do you get any women patients? I see none but men in the wards, and no special ward for women.'

'You will observe, madam,' said the doctor, 'that we are at some distance from the city walls. The women will not come out so far. Purdah here is very strict.'

'So much so', I interpolated, 'that in that Pathan village you can see over there'—and I pointed to the northwest—'they objected to my riding through the streets lest the women in their courtyards see me. That, at any rate, is how they put it.'

'Is nothing done for the women?' the inquirer persisted. 'Surely they need it.'

'Need it, they do,' I agreed, and told her the story which she repeated in her book, telling me afterwards she had heard it elsewhere also, of how the superstitious, holding that death in childbirth was an active manifestation of demons, would cast the dying woman on the floor and drive nails through her palms to hunt the devils from the house.

'There is a small dispensary for women kept at the city gate, and the lady doctor keeps a bed or two in her house for in-door patients. But ask the Deputy Commissioner; he can tell you more about it,' said the doctor.

I told Miss Mayo how, with my wife's help—she actually designed the building—we were about to construct a four-

teen-bed hospital for women very close to the town itself.

At tea, I was careful to leave my companions to talk unhindered by an official's presence, and was intrigued at the sparkling eyes, the busy pencil, and the copious notes as question obviously followed question where they were sitting.

The sun dropped; and after bidding grateful farewells, we returned towards our camp. The ladies thrilled at the thought that this was the very Grand Trunk Road down which Kim and his Lama had passed, and that they must have seen such sights as that string of camels bivouacking to our left, and smelt such smells as drifted down to us from the pungent smoke of their wood and dung-cake fires.

That night after dinner round a cosy fire, Miss Mayo unfolded the purpose of her visit. It is curious that in all the clamour that greeted the publication of her book this very vital point of motive has been entirely forgotten, if ever known.

'I'm not an ordinary globe-trotter or a novelist, hoping in a few weeks' tour to write a romance of Indian life; nor am I come with a mission to praise or blame the Indian people or the British administration. I am concerned only with America and American politics. You in Europe, and indeed the great mass of our own people, do not understand how peculiarly the Great War has affected us; or at what a parting of the ways we stand in these, for us, most critical days.

'For the first time our people, whose aloofness had been comparable only to your own insularity, found themselves cheek by jowl with the rest of the world. In a casual sort of way we had thought of a German as a person who lived in Germany, a Frenchman in France, and an Italian in Italy. Now it was borne in on us that each nation had an individual character and that that was the essential; the longitude and latitude of each country, an accident. But when we

turned the searchlight on ourselves, we found that Americans were still just persons who lived in the U.S.A., it may be with a tendency to grow a particular shape of beard and adopt a particular tone of speech, but not a common character.

'And we determined that those days must be over; and that "American" must stand for something—something fine. And that brings the post-war development down to current politics. We have two schools of thought, one saying "base your Americanism on Germany", the other, "on Britain". You British, as usual, are asleep, but the pro-Germans are up and doing, strong and subtle, very conscious that on the turn of the wheel today will depend our loyalties of tomorrow. But does this bore you?'

'Very far from it,' said my wife. 'My husband has his stories of international intrigue, and even I have played a small part. Please, please go on!'

'Well, you see,' she continued, 'the German side have in the past used British policy in Ireland as the best stick with which to beat Britain. "We are the land of the free," they said, "these oppressors of Ireland and everything about them, their ways and their thinking, are anathema."

'You know as well as I the funds that have come over the ocean for anti-British factions in Ireland itself. But now you have taken that stick away from them, and your enemies have been looking for another to take its place. They have pitched on India. All over America you will find a sort of infiltration of allegedly typical Indian thought and Indian teaching. Even among the church notices in the daily papers are published the times and places of meetings to be held by some professed saint or *swami*, and everywhere a subtle suggestion is played up that the soulful, spiritual Indian people are being oppressed and bullied by the unimaginative, brutal, beef-eating British—the West cannot fathom and should not control the Orient.

'Miss Newell traces her descent from the early Dutch settlers. My experience up to date and my knowledge of the Great War incline me towards Britain, but I feel that neither I nor my people really know the truth. If, as your detractors say, you are making a mess of things in India, cutting the spirituality out of the lives of a naturally spiritual people, bludgeoning the fine edge of their sensitive souls, then the less we in America model ourselves upon you, the better. We are as sound in sentiment as we are in business.

'You will see that the issue is a very great one. If we drift apart now, we remain apart. And what if another world war comes? Remember we have not joined your League of Nations. The pity of it is that to so few is vision granted.

'I am using my personal influence and my reputation as a publicist nominally to report on a matter of public health—ought the quarantine regulations to be tightened or can they be relaxed? But that is camouflage. What I do want to find out is the truth; and so to present it to my people that they may realize the justice or injustice of the denunciations of your rule in India, which the Germans in particular are outpouring, directly and indirectly, and often through agencies that have no suspicion that they are being used.'

'I have myself had experience of foreign propaganda,' I said, 'and the most subtle has always seemed to me what I christened the *mahout* system. The *mahout* controls the elephant by keeping open a sore spot on his head. One of the favourite tricks of the foreign organizers of internal disorder is not to preach open dissatisfaction with the Government but to introduce agents; first to gain the goodwill of the people around them, and next to search out any hidden grievance or sore, then work on it, prod it, irritate

and foment it, till it erupts in open virulence, apparently spontaneously.

'Possibly somewhat similar methods are being followed in America, and the Germans, realizing your generosity and sentimentality, are seeking to decry the British by exaggerations and falsehoods. The British, they say, are self-centred; fine feelings they have none.'

'You have hit it,' said Miss Mayo, and Miss Newell nodded silent approval.

Next morning we walked through Hassan Abdal, whose buildings vividly illustrate the conflict which the British district official has always to watch. Within a few yards of each other are the edges of an ancient Muslim mosque, now in ruins yet still venerated; a Hindu temple, its whitened spire surmounted by a trident of gold glittering in the sun; and the huge, if garish, gurdwara, which the Sikhs had just completed. Nearby was a small, but well-kept, Christian cemetery, dating back to the time of John Nicholson.

'With each community jealous of its rights and greedy to encroach, each persuaded that in its teaching only is the whole truth to be found, each having its separate annual fairs, you can imagine how acute tension can be,' I explained. 'We district officers, who spend our time in striving for peace, are amazed at the fatuous folly of those who think we try to keep the communities apart. Still more that we deliberately inflame them. What inefficient idiots we would be if, with that our object, and with all this material to our hand, we had not long ago lit an unquenchable fire! What a poor opinion they have of our ability who think that what is, is all that we could do!'

We motored into Campbellpur, and I showed them the district courts and district offices, the kind of correspondence and court work that comes in the daily routine. Then,

after lunch and a rest, there came to tea the three leading gentlemen of the town, two of them lawyers, one a banker. I left them to it.

As we went to the train, Miss Mayo said, 'That has not taken me much further. There were three horses running, and a dead heat at the finish. One of your friends is advanced, and says that the present reforms do not go nearly far enough; another is a die-hard, and wants back the old British regime, when disputes were settled on the spot in camp, quick decisions and little paper; the third is a staunch supporter of the powers that be, and looks forward to progressive advances, but says that the meal they have just been given will test their digestive powers to their utmost.

'It has been good to see you. Bring your wife and child to visit us in America.'

We were staying with them in Miss Newell's lovely home in the Bedford Hills the day the book came out. Miss Mayo showed me her workroom, a studio built in the grounds, where were filed her dozens of notebooks and her documents—referenced and cross-referenced—so that she could produce at a moment's notice chapter and verse of her authority for every statement of fact made in the volume. Little did she realize the bitterness it would arouse in India, or how impossible it was with safety to extend to her the invitation she desired, to spend another cold weather in the district among the people of a country her pen had embittered, whom yet she loved.

Had she been alive in 1943, would she have traced to the same subtle inspiration the antagonism to Britain wherever it is to be found in America today?

XVII

LATER, I was to be the first to call him 'Your Excellency'; now, he was presenting me with an Address.

Tall and soldierly, his bearing a testimony to the birth and traditions of his house, yet all unconscious of the great destiny awaiting him, the President of the Municipal Committee was greeting the new Deputy Commissioner on his first visit to Hassan Abdal.

The town, nestling in a warm valley that smiled back on the distant snow-capped mountains, was gay with bunting, the paved streets unusually clean, the schoolboys on holiday, their Scouts drawn up as a guard of honour—all was peace and happiness. It seemed impossible that a few months later the same town should awaken to the crack of the rifle, the shrill of the whistle of alarm, the call of the bugle, and the groans of the dying.

It was this way. When, nearly a year before, I had taken over charge, the outgoing officer had explained that, as the district at certain points was within three miles of tribal territory, every year it suffered loss from trans-Frontier raids. He estimated the annual bill at about one lakh, one hundred thousand rupees. A recent, and unfortunately very successful, raid had been on the headquarters of the tahsil which lay farthest south, an indication of the audacity of the Pathans and their scorn of our police.

It was necessary to get down at once to improving the local system of defence. This involved study of the details of the more recent raids.

I found that I had to contend with difficult terrain and lack of communications. A range of hills, the Kala Chitta, starting from a point on the Indus nearest the tribal area, runs across the district like a rib. Between that point and Campbellpur, the cantonment and headquarters of the district, flows through a deep ravine the river Haro, a tributary of the Indus. When in spate, it is unfordable. But there was no bridge; and there were no roads. Police stations were scattered at intervals; but there was no

telephone and no organized system of intercommunication.

A fund had been started a few years earlier for the provision of arms to villagers who could not afford to purchase them, but lived in exposed tracts. Nonetheless, the use of their arms by licensees had never been effective. Should an alarm occur, each owner of a weapon considered his duty limited to the preservation of his own property and to the protection of his own household. This was the foundation laid by my predecessors on which I had to build.

It seemed like wanting the moon to hope for telephonic communication between police stations, but all the same I had an estimate prepared. Next, all arms licences were called in and redistributed only to those who subscribed to a condition endorsed on each: *I agree as a condition of this licence to turn out and defend my village if attacked by dacoits and to assist in pursuit up to the limits of my* zail.

In this district, there were thirty-six police stations. A complete list of licensees was given to each station house officer, S.H.O., as the officer in charge of the police station was called. Each S.H.O. was to study his area and see to it that there was a reasonable distribution of licences in each important village. Then he was to call together the licensees of each village, and arrange with them who should be the leader, who the second in command, and so on down the list, each being responsible to keep in touch with the leader. Should there be an alarm, all the licensees were to collect at the house of whoever was in charge, concert a plan, and then proceed to attack the dacoits at the danger point. Police officers were encouraged to create false alarms by way of practice, and rewards were promised for efficiency.

In my heart of hearts, I hardly dared hope the scheme would work; but it was taken up with promising enthusiasm, and it did put heart into the people who saw that something

was being attempted on their behalf.

Then came the news one midnight that a band of Frontier dacoits was attacking Hassan Abdal.

The attack had been on the establishment of one of the big merchants. His house ran round four sides of a courtyard, itself the size of a small *serai*, where in days gone by, caravans of camels from the north had brought their merchandize, carpets and dried fruits of Afghanistan, to exchange for the grain and the cloth and the fine muslins of India. Trade had declined; and the proprietor had had to reduce his staff, among them a Pathan, dismissed with less than what he claimed was his due. Nursing his grievance, and back on the Frontier, he sought out a gang of desperadoes whom he inflamed with his tale of the wealth of the merchant and the defencelessness of the town.

The gang had crossed the Indus on skins, and, lying up by day, cautiously crept through the Kala Chitta by night. Reaching the hill overhanging Hassan Abdal in the early morning, the main body had bivouacked, while the leader, with his second-in-command and the informer, in disguise as a woman, went into the town to reconnoitre. Well satisfied with the promise of rich booty, they returned to wait in their lair till the young moon had set. Then, dividing up into small parties, they passed through the town by different gates, to concentrate again at the selected spot at a given time.

The town slept.

Suddenly the attack began. As the door was battered down, rifles were fired into the air. Confident that, on hearing the shots, the citizens with guns would shut themselves up in their houses, the gang took no thought of cover. But the firing pressed the button, and the new machinery began to move. The licensees collected, and the leader disposed them with real skill—some on the roofs of neigh-

bouring houses, others at the corners of the streets through which the dacoits might beat a retreat.

The police station is at a little distance. Its bugle rang out; but before the guard could collect its muskets and reach the spot, the amateur defence had already killed three of the enemy. As the police reinforcements took station, the din increased. Looting gave way to self-protection. A fourth dacoit was hit, and the leader decided to withdraw. Led by the informer, they found an unguarded back alley and nearly all made good their escape. But one more was hit. Just outside the walls, they killed a constable, the only casualty on our side, while he was guarding an exit round which they had slipped.

The news flashed to the Frontier, and Handyside, the veteran, started for the scene. He was delighted to find, among the men killed, some of the worst outlaws, members of a band of Shinwaris, he had been hunting. He raced back to Peshawar to turn out the Frontier Constabulary, which presently arrived by special train.

Meanwhile, of the five casualties among the dacoits, four were dead, the fifth in hospital. His story on recovery was a pitiful condemnation of Frontier administration. His home was in the barren hills of tribal territory. This was the third raid in which he had joined. So hard was it to make a livelihood beyond the Border that he had again risked his life, this time eventually to lose it to the hangman's rope, in spite of the fact that the proceeds of the second raid had shared out at less than three rupees apiece.

Meanwhile, in Lahore the new Legislative Council was sitting, for the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms were in full swing.

There was more money to spend, and a great many more people to be consulted in the spending of it. The official bloc in the Legislative Council was large, but the people

also had a representation beyond the dreams of the agitators of 1907, and they made themselves felt.

By a strange coincidence, on the day following the night of the raid the Council were busy with the budget, and the police estimates were under debate. The usual tirades had commenced—how unpopular were the police, how unsympathetic their handling of the public, how completely out of touch with the countryside. Unexpectedly, a messenger bearing a telegram with an IMMEDIATE slip attached to it was seen to approach the Finance Member, who intervened as soon as the speaker on the floor of the House had sat down. The telegram brought the news of the success at Hassan Abdal, and emphasized that it had been due to the close co-operation of public and police. Arguments ended; the estimates were passed.

What to us was more important, a grateful Government turned a generous eye in our direction. Our pursuit had been prompt; yet we had failed to catch the raiders by just half an hour. We would have caught them had there been a road to the Haro and across the Kala Chitta by which we could have cut off their retreat. Government gave me a grant of twenty thousand rupees to spend on roads. With that it was possible to revive a long disused alignment connecting the Haro with the plains on the far side of the Kala Chitta. The telephone project was approved, and the instruments quickly installed. And the district has ever since had peace from such raiding—a lakh a year saved!

Absolute government had moved with the slow deliberation of a stream in summer; under the new Constitution the pace was that of a spate in winter. Major Bacon had been content to metal twenty miles of road in five years; in three years, the Attock District saw three hundred and ten miles, not all metalled, but all made motorable. Lorries replaced camels. And the surplus summer fruits, the pumpkins

and the melons, which hitherto had rotted in the fields, now found a market.

'Curious thing,' said the officer in charge of the Gurkha detachment at the Attock Fort, when dining with me one night that summer, 'this outpost duty from Jhelum, though pleasant enough in the cold weather, is usually hated in the summer. Inside the Fort, it seems ten degrees hotter than anywhere else, and in the past our men have loathed coming here. Today I had a deputation of Indian officers asking if they might have a double spell. Do you know why?'

'No,' I answered. 'There's no fishing and no shooting at this time of year. What is it?'

'I had to inquire myself. The fact is, fruit and vegetables have become very plentiful and very cheap!'

Then I realized that this was a tribute to our new road system, whereby in effect licences were given to contractors in return for contributions sufficient to make a road motorable. That was only one of the reforms that benefited the people and cost the exchequer practically nothing.

The moving spirit among the Indians now in power was pressing district officers to constitute official *panchayats*. My predecessors had all reported that the *panchayat* system was impossible in this district, politically one of the most 'backward' in the province.

It was a district of big men. The Nawab of Pindigheb, an historic Victorian figure, dominated his wide estates and no tenant would lift his head but with his permission. The Sirdar of Kot had the controlling influence in thirty-two villages, of which he owned several. In Shamsabad lived the Chief of the powerful Awan tribe. Lawa, in the south-west of the district, was the biggest single estate in the Punjab, straggling over forty miles and containing a large number of hamlets, each of which was big enough to form an ordinary plains village.

Here, and in Tammam, and in Makhad, once the most northerly port reached by Her Majesty's Indus Flotilla, the clan system prevailed. If a riot or a murder occurred, the first person to be told would be the chief of the particular clan. The police would hear the story only after it had been mulled over and prepared for their investigation, with such additional names thrown in among the list of accused as the condition of the local feuds seemed to dictate. The idea of starting village councils in so aristocratic an area seemed likely to run counter to all local tradition.

Nonetheless, times were changing and a new spirit was abroad, and there undoubtedly were estates in which the establishment of *panchayats* would make for the progress and contentment of the people in the way in which the wise Indian statesman desired.

There is one village, Burhan, close to Hassan Abdal. The Superintendent of Police recommended the imposition of a punitive police post there. The record of violent crime that had gone unpunished in the last three years fully justified him. Ownership is divided between two tribes, Khattars and Pathans, both very tough, and almost balanced in numbers. Their fields are fertile and well-watered. Through them runs the Haro; and near its banks the subsoil water encourages well irrigation.

The previous year, rust had cursed the district, and there had been complete failure of the wheat crop. The reformed Government, far less difficult to persuade than the unbending bureaucracy of the past, had broken its rules and permitted me, who had the very much vaster successful experiment in Mesopotamia behind me, to purchase and advance carefully selected seed, instead of cash, to the farmers. Here, too, the experiment had proved a huge success, and the new wheat was giving a yield estimated at from one-sixteenth

to one-eighth heavier than their original type. This naturally gave me some personal prestige over and above that accorded to my official rank.

The biggest man in the village was the head of the Pathans, whose family held an hereditary title, and with it a small emolument. I took the recommendation of the Superintendent of Police with me, collected this title holder, a jagirdar, as we called him, the Headmen, and anyone else who cared to listen. I had with me the tahsildar, himself by birth a squire of distant Lawa, and a man respected for his faith and his honesty.

We discussed the situation. There was no attempt to disguise the facts. The village was divided into two clans. A kind of schoolboy code of honour ordained that there was no loyalty higher than loyalty to a fellow clansman. Forsworn evidence was always available whenever any member of one side was in court against one of the other. Violent crimes were fairly frequent; and never a conviction. Nevertheless, the imposition of punitive police would sap their resources. In practice, the post would live free; and in any case, the legitimate bill was always heavy. It might prevent outbreaks; it would not kill, in fact it would tend to exacerbate the underlying spirit of dissension.

'Then why not try a *panchayat*?' I asked.

They agreed that the idea had its attractions, and my recommendation meant much. But it seemed impossible.

I left the tahsildar to wrestle with them. It took him nearly a week of argument, but the mullah of the local mosque threw in his weight, and by a small local variation of the kind of *panchayats* sanctioned by law, a village council was formed, each member of which swore on the Koran that in all decisions he would pay no regard to kith or kin, clansman or official, but only to Allah and His justice.

A few days later, the first case came before the Council.

Jehangir Khan, the jagirdar, presided. One of the menials in the village had a small plot of land and his crop had been damaged by a herd of goats. The herdsman, confident in his patron, had snapped his fingers at the menial's protests. The village was assembled; the story told; the facts admitted.

'How much damage has been done?' inquired Jehangir Khan.

A figure of twenty-four annas was claimed, and admitted. All eyes were fixed on the President; for they were his goats and it was his herdsman.

'I assess compensation of twenty-four annas,' he said, 'with four annas costs.'

The members concurred. The sum was paid. The crestfallen herdsman slunk away. But the *panchayat* was established, and flourishes to this day; though Jehangir Khan, peace be upon him, sleeps with his fathers.

Some eighteen months later, I was again in the village.

Violence had ceased, and what petty, almost accidental, torts had been committed had been brought before the *panchayat* and dealt with faithfully. While we were discussing these matters and the new wheat and the prospects of the harvest, there was a clamour outside.

'What is it?' I asked.

'Oh, it is some old woman wanting to bother Your Honour, and they won't let her in.'

'Please admit her,' I said.

An aged and very respectably dressed dame entered.

'I am sorry they closed the door, Mother,' I said. 'What is your complaint?'

'But it isn't a complaint,' she answered. 'I am the widow of Subadar Sinazor Khan, who died ten years ago. My well land borders the footpath that leads from the village to the station. For nine years after my husband's death, the passersby took most of my corn. This year, thanks to

Your Honour's *panchayat*, for the first time I have reaped my own. I wanted to see and thank you.'

In another village not far from Burhan, a *panchayat* once sat up all night over a very difficult case. A bullock had been poisoned. The owner accused a fellow villager, who was loud in his protests of innocence. No police and no court could ever have got to the bottom of the crime; but after literally hours of questioning and cross-questioning, the guilt was fixed on, and a confession taken from, the accused man's brother, whom none in the first instance suspected.

A *panchayat* under the law has power only in its own village, but there is nothing to stop a *panchayat* which establishes a reputation from becoming a court of arbitration in other disputes.

A *panchayat* in the Murree Hills acquired almost the fame of Naushirwan. Two of its judgments, each in a different village, reflected the social customs of the day. One was a petition preferred by a horrid old money-lender of sixty, who had bought the sixteen-year-old daughter of a debtor to be his bride. Shuddering at the thought of his senile amours, she had eloped with a handsome young hillman. A search party had recovered them; and in earlier years a fight and a killing would have resulted. The *panchayat*, by an order far exceeding its legal powers, but one which was accepted and obeyed, decreed compensation of three hundred rupees, which it happened the young man could afford. 'And they lived happily ever after.'

Panchayats are bound by no restricting rules of evidence or laws of limitation. Perhaps the greatest reward I ever received for the trouble in starting one particular *panchayat*, and starts are always troublesome, was the joy of a very humble village tailor, who, through the offices of the *panchayat*, recovered one rupee eight annas from the squire's son, sewing charges for a braided coat he had made for the

young blood ten years previously! It was just bravado that had delayed payment, but the grudge had been a festering sore in the poor tailor's mind.

Diarchy in the district could be a success, at any rate in the Punjab. Year by year the Provincial Government received a windfall, running into lakhs, from the Government of India; and those departments which were ready with their schemes got the biggest share of the booty. Solid masonry high schools were springing up all over the district; the agricultural department was studying local conditions and local climates by means of experimental farms; the co-operative department embarked on its ambitious scheme of consolidation of holdings; communications were opening up. And if the district officer was less of a *hakim*, so also the chief in his fastnesses, who had been able to bully and even murder, came under control.

The district officer who worked with his people found his days full and happy. There is an innate generosity in the Indian villager, at any rate of the North, a courtliness, a grace. There was a squire in my district who had fallen foul of his tenants, and was hurt with me. His bailiff had prosecuted certain villagers for arson when a haystack had caught fire. The squire was so influential, and the accused so poor, that I took the case into my own court, and went out to decide it on the spot. The evidence was false, and the men acquitted. The squire thought I had let him down.

He had bought a motor car, and his place was three and a half miles from the main road. There were bridle paths, but no carriage road between his house and the thoroughfare. And the distance was too short to make it worth the while of the local authority or Government to construct a road. The villagers, quite possibly emboldened by the failure of the prosecution, took an impish pleasure in so arranging their plough land that the car was practically imprisoned.

The squire could get out only at the risk of broken springs.

A deputation from the village visited me when I was on tour in the neighbourhood but a few miles away.

'We have a grievance, Sahib. You and your household visit every big village around here, but you never come to us.'

'I have visited you on horseback often enough,' I said.

'But your lady and your child never come.'

'How can they?' I answered. 'There is no road and the child is too young yet to ride.'

'Is it only the matter of the road? If there were a road, would they come?'

'The day after the road is motorable, if they are here, come they will.'

'Then we will give the road, if you will give it your name.'

A strip of road over three and one half miles long means a snip here and a snip there from the land of three or four dozen owners, and though my revenue assistant was a saintly Pir, I did not believe that even he could secure agreement on the spot to fulfil this oral promise. But he did, and within twenty-four hours.

It was a perfect solution to the problem of the squire. Forty-eight hours later still, there was an opening ceremony—the road had been demarcated, mutations attested, all legal formalities completed, the land handed over; and ourselves, the squire, and his people, friends again.

XVIII

SIR Malcolm Hailey had been translated to the United Provinces, and Sir Geoffrey de Montmorency reigned in his stead. But the good work went on at the same increased tempo, and there was just the same feeling of support at the back. Not till many years had passed did I learn that the Governor alone had insisted on supporting

me in the matter of the Shyok Dam; and that, against the advice of the Government of India and of his own Secretariat.

It was midsummer. I had just that evening ridden up the weary hill to Sakesar, the little hill station where district officials of Attock are allowed to get a breath of fresher air for six weeks or so in the summer months. Tired, I was just turning into bed when a clear-the-line telegram was put into my hands. It recited that an enormous glacier had blocked a valley hundreds of miles away near the sources of the Indus; a vast lake had formed behind it; nobody knew when it would break—it might even have broken; but a tremendous flood was to be expected.

WARN THE VILLAGES AND TAKE ALL PRECAUTIONS, it concluded.

The first thing to do was to get back to Campbellpur, in order to be on the spot. That meant striking camp at four in the morning to catch a train at Mianwali, thirty-odd miles away. Back in Campbellpur, I found another telegram awaiting me: GOVERNMENT OF INDIA HAVING CONSULTED ALPINE EXPERT CONSIDER FLOOD UNLIKELY CAUSE APPRECIABLE RISK AT ATTOCK. EARLIER INSTRUCTIONS CANCELLED.

I did not know who that Alpine expert might be, but instinctively I doubted him. In the days of Sikh rule, preceding the British occupation, there had been an earthquake in Kashmir; a mountain had blocked the course of the Indus, and in the summer the river bed had become dry. A Sikh army had encamped thereon. Behind the barrier the waters piled up, till there came a day when the earth could no longer resist the strain. The floods descended; the whole army was wiped out, and the country flooded as far as the Hazro. The ballad that tells the tale is still sung. Why should not history repeat itself? If the terrain between the source

and the Attock bridge were such as to absorb the flood today, why had it not absorbed it then?

Fortunately, the Attock bridge itself was under construction, and a resident engineer was in charge. I piled into my car and went off to consult him. It so happened that his work had reached a particularly critical stage, and the Chief Engineer of the North-Western Railway, with other experts, had come down for a conference.

My news was of moment to them, and we pooled our knowledge and experience. The resident engineer himself had had experience of small, as it were tidal waves, up to five feet high coming down stream; and his records showed many sharp and sudden rises not always attributable to rainfall. We felt it would be foolish not to anticipate a flood of anything from twenty-five to thirty feet. And if that glacier flood happened to come down on top of a rain spate, there might be a rise in the river of between fifty and sixty feet. That would be disaster.

The railway determined to take no avoidable risks; and made all preparations to meet the flood. I sent their views and mine to Government, begged them to arrange for clear-the-line messages from as close to the scene of the glacier as possible direct to Campbellpur, and asked approval to my taking such local measures as might be possible. Sir Geoffrey ordered accordingly.

It was a difficult problem. The flood might be on its way; it might never come this year. If I passed any orders, I should be responsible for the consequences and there might be claims for compensation. It was on this occasion a relief to reflect that the day of the *hakim* had passed.

There is a convenient village on the high ground overlooking the river and the plain adjoining it; and to it I summoned the Headmen of all the villages likely to be affected. They came, and a big crowd with them. I told

them exactly what information I had had, minimizing neither the difficulty of the uncertainty in which it left us all nor the danger, which appeared to me to be acute.

'And why have I called you together?' I continued. 'Not to give you any straight instructions, but that we may take counsel together. You are grown men, fathers of families, and you must judge for yourselves. I can only offer advice and help.'

'We who know the river,' said their spokesman, 'share Your Honour's fears. But this uncertainty complicates the problem. Your Honour's experience is wide. What think you?'

From where we sat under a tree the whole plain was visible, and much of the high ground surrounding it. Here and there were dotted villages.

'Am I not right in thinking that most of you in the plain have relatives on the higher ground? And,' turning to the local squire who lived in the village on the higher ground where we were sitting, 'surely there are charitably-minded who will take in guests, should there be any who have no folk of their own to go to?'

This appeal to Muslim hospitality found an immediate response.

'Then,' I said, replying to my questioner, 'I know what I, as husband and father, would do if I were in your place. I would at once send to my relations on higher ground anyone in my household who for any reason, old age, infancy, or infirmity, could not move or be moved quickly. After all, the cold weather comes soon in the fastnesses where the ice is, and if there is no flood during the next four weeks, then the danger is past till next year. It is no great burden for the dwellers in safety. I would not myself leave my village or my work. I would not take down to the grazing on the river bank any animals other than those that could move

quickly, and I would have only strong men, not young boys, in charge of them.'

The view found favour.

'Then if you villagers will do this on your part, I, on mine, will guarantee to let you have all the information that comes to me as quickly as possible.'

Again we discussed ways and means, and eventually this plan emerged. Most villages already had a gong; any that had not, would at once provide one. This they could manage themselves. A village watchman would be appointed to stay by that gong, or provide a substitute, throughout the twenty-four hours of the day. The gong must be powerful enough for the sound to reach the limits of their grazing grounds. Fortunately, the plain is densely populated, and the villages close to one another.

I was to arrange with the Superintendent of Police to post at the Hazro police station, which was close to a telegraph office, the twenty-four fastest runners in the force, probably their first and second hockey teams. These would take turns, one on and one off duty. Each pair would have a definite round of villages to which the one on duty would run on receipt of the signal. They would go straight to the watchman and have the gong beaten.

All agreed, and the plan was put into operation at once. Whatever news reached me was translated into a short bulletin, printed at the local press, and sent round to the villages by the waiting runners, whose interest and muscles were thus kept in play.

Came Sunday, eleven-thirty at night, and I had just got to bed, when a clear-the-line telegram came. SHYOK DAM BROKEN. SD WAZIR LEH. A doubt crossed my mind—the information was so meagre—but I could take no risks. I got into my ever-waiting car, went myself to the telegraph office, and passed on the news, not only to Hazro, but also

to the Frontier district across the river, and to Mianwali down stream. I then drove the seventeen miles to Hazro, and found the runners had all got off half an hour before. The machinery worked.

But no flood came that day or the next. Then came another telegram: SORRY CAMPFIRE MISTAKEN FOR SIGNAL BEACON.

The villagers, with the sound sense of the men of the North, took nothing amiss, and with me recognized that we had had the value of a dress rehearsal and the excitement of a *première*. The glacier held throughout the summer.

A year later I was in 'Pindi, and received a telegram from my successor in Attock asking for lorries to be sent to Hazro to help in the evacuation. He had made that valuable addition to my plan. About a fortnight later, to my surprise and pleasure, I received the thanks of Government because, 'in consequence of your careful forethought, though a twenty-seven-foot flood came down, not a single human life was lost. Only three head of cattle have been reported missing, but whether due to the flood or not is uncertain.'

What pleased me even more than the thanks of Government was my junior Indian colleague's courtesy in disclaiming credit for a scheme which, after all, he had put into operation. The generous camaraderie of the Punjab Commission still lived unaffected by Indianization.

The people were saved. But the Alpine expert had made a Himalayan blunder!

XIX

WHILE we in the North were occupied with parochial progress, elsewhere there was unrest and agitation. Bengal was ablaze with terrorism. And the more Lord Irwin conciliated, the more difficult did district administration become. The old soldiers could not understand it.

The Rawalpindi District, to which I had been transferred

when the umpire called 'time' in Campbellpur, runs back into the sub-Himalayas; and camping in the deodar forests in the early summer is delightful—never by car, always either on horseback or, more usually, on foot. A mile and a half outside Lehtrar, I was met by an escort of ninety-one military men, in uniforms and medals, most of them officers. After introductions, we bunched together. I sat on a wall, and we discussed the general situation before they formed fours and marched me into camp.

'It passes our comprehension, Sahib. Our creed is "Friend of Friend, and Foe of Foe". These men are out against your Raj. Why do you parley with them?'

I did my best to explain our policy, but they shook their heads.

'Sedition is a sickness, and sickness spreads. Why let the youth of the Punjab be corrupted?'

They were true prophets, for we did have a difficult summer. Then came the arrest of Mr Gandhi and shops were closed in mourning.

Rawalpindi is the headquarters of an army; and the Indian business community fattens on providing supplies. Many families kept a member in each camp, courting the favours of Government and Congress simultaneously. The first day of the strike, I arranged for a European Deputy Superintendent of Police with two or three officers to go through the principal streets, and openly and deliberately write down the names of all those whose shops were closed. Within a few hours, each proprietor had received a note.

'Your shop is closed. Before I report to the Army recommending that your name and that of your immediate relatives be removed from the list of possible contractors, I am prepared to hear any explanation you may care to offer. But my letter will otherwise be sent the day after tomorrow.'

The number of deaths that were reported among near relatives of those shopkeepers, which had necessitated their mourning, must have equalled the annual toll of grandmothers on Derby Day. But there was no more closing of shops on a big scale.

I followed the same line of appeal to self-interest some years later, when I was Commissioner of Multan. Elsewhere students had been striking in various colleges, and I instructed my Deputy Commissioners to telegraph to me should any of the schools in my division be affected. Sure enough, in came a telegram that the students of the Intermediate College at Alipur had ceased work.

I directed the Deputy Commissioner to visit the College and ask for the names of all the boys on strike, of their parents, and of their brothers; and requested him to inform the Headmaster that none of the boys would ever be recommended by me for any post in Government service, however humble or however great, and that the chances of their brothers and the good name of their parents also would be affected. On the third day, a hot and bothered Divisional Inspector of Schools asked for an interview. He inquired if there was truth in the rumour he had heard.

'It is exactly true,' I said.

'But,' he stammered, 'you simply c-can't pass such an order.'

'But I have passed it,' I smiled.

'But you c-can't ruin the young boys' futures like that,' he persisted.

'It is not I who am ruining anybody; and no one else but I is responsible for recommendations I make. Where there are hundreds of applications for any one post, it is difficult to select the best candidate. But essential qualifications are a sense of discipline and a modicum of strength of character. If these boys are leaders, they are ill-dis-

ciplined; if led, they are weak. My order stands. And', I continued, 'the wider the publicity you give it, the more I shall be pleased.'

Still protesting, he left me. But there were no more strikes.

More difficult were the bombs. Though there were eleven found or exploded in the district that year, none did serious damage. For myself, I had a fairly narrow escape from the booby trap bomb. That morning, preparing for possible rioting, I had been going the rounds of the planned strong points with a policeman and therefore was out later than usual. As I got back to my study, the telephone rang. 'Another bomb has exploded in the same house'—that was the first I had heard of the earlier one.

We learned afterwards that identical procedure had been adopted simultaneously at several places in the Punjab; and in some there had been casualties. In a selected empty house two bombs were placed: the first, to make noise and much smoke and attract authority to the spot; the second, timed to go off half an hour later to kill. They were planted by a terrorist from outside, a recruit of a curious organization whose captured literature revealed an immorality and a lewdness completely out of focus with its professed patriotism. But local disloyalists were few, usually cranks with a grievance, or—and here was a real problem for our masculine regime—women, and men under their women's influence. The Reforms had given a bite of liberty; now they wanted the whole cherry.

I had been called to Headquarters as Chief Secretary. Lord Irwin and Mr Gandhi had each called off active operations. It was in the bond that the battle was drawn; neither side should claim a victory; prisoners would be released; none should be victimized; and in future law and order would be respected.

Mr Gandhi could promise, but he could not exact performance. The returned jailbird was met at the station by a band and a procession; and the fulsome flattery addressed to the 'national heroes' suggested that each was as far above the law as the tyrant of the Greek City-State. Law was flouted; agitation increased. Congress did not play the game.

For a few weeks Government held its hand. The Governor himself was carrying an unforeseen handicap, as we were just entering the period when the effect of the 1914 war on recruitment was most acutely felt. For a number of years there had been no retirements and no recruitment; and then, a big loss of trained men. The shortage was so great that some districts were being held by officers with less than three years' service.

'In the first six months of your time as Chief Secretary,' said to me on the eve of retirement an Inspector General of Police, a man of long and tried experience, 'you have been through more than any other Chief Secretary in the whole of his four years' of office.'

The closest possible touch had to be maintained with the districts; but in such a way that the young Deputy Commissioner felt that he was being strengthened and supported, and his initiative encouraged.

Once I was called to the telephone from the stalls of a Simla theatre to advise one such magistrate, at whose headquarters a riot was threatening.

'There is a perfectly innocent film going to be shown. But somehow or other the Muslim mob has it that it is an insult to their faith, and they threaten to wreck the Sikh proprietor's house as well as the theatre. The Sikhs are spoiling for a scrap. Can you give me any advice?'

'Is there a Mohammedan proprietor of a cinema in your town?'

'Two or three.'

'Then I suggest you put it about that one of them, disappointed at not securing the contract for this particular film, is using their religious fervour to serve his private ends; his thought, not for the Holy Prophet but for his personal gain. Make the mob feel they are being fooled.'

The medicine worked; and it happened that the words were true. I had only guessed that the history of another town might be repeating itself.

To agitation inside the province were added disturbances in Kashmir and a rebellion in Alwar, Indian States closely interconnected with Punjab districts to the north and south. But, the Bhagat Singh gang apart, we were comparatively free from the assassinations which Bengal was enduring.

The unimaginative, ponderous Government of India laughed at the panacea I proposed. I still have the impertinence to think them wrong.

I wanted them to cut away the motive. The terrorist's real motive was and is glorification, the halo that illuminates the head of the national hero—a golden halo that provides for the future of his relatives should he, if caught, fail to escape as so many had escaped before him, through one of all the loop-holes the intricacies of the penal law so lavishly provide for the criminal. The income from the sale of photos at four annas apiece is in itself wealth. *Paisa,* money, a strong motive everywhere, in India is compelling.

I wished to see that the families of the murdered were compensated by the State with real generosity; and that a fine, at least equivalent to that compensation, was exacted without mercy, first, from the estate of the murderer, next, from his nearest relatives, and lastly, from a widening circle to include the distant relatives, the fellow town- or tribesmen, or the associates, as the circumstances of each particular crime might justify. Conscious that butchering spelt their own ruin, those who now praised would then curse. And

what would hurt the butcher most would be the knowledge that at the expense of those near and dear to him, the family of the butchered was being permanently enriched. For the compensation would be assessed at not less than double the ordinary pension, and that capitalized.

'Ridiculous!' said a Home Secretary. 'The law makes no such provision.'

'But punitive police are paid for by a levy on the village. The principle is there. I cannot see your difficulty.'

'Your imagination runs riot; and anyhow the Secretary of State would never agree,' was all the satisfaction I could get.

But, in 1942, collective fining was introduced by an Indianized Cabinet; and, though Government has not yet caught up with the psychology of my suggestion, compensation has been increased.

All this ferment was a prelude to wider liberty to come. Liberty means elections, and elections, in principle and in detail, are an idea foreign to India. The vernacular has no word for 'vote' or 'ballot'. But Eatanswill has its oriental counterparts, where wit meets wit.

Officials, of course, are supposed to stand aloof from elections, but blood is more binding than red tape.

It once happened that the brother of a candidate was an engineer on construction duty who controlled a large force of labour, a voting strength well into three figures, but at some distance from the polling booths. The voters were released from duty to collect at a given point, and the requisite number of lorries were to arrive to transport them to the polls. A few minutes before the scheduled time, lorries rolled up.

'Are these Umaidwar Singh's lorries?'

'Pile in. Pile in. There's no time to lose.'

In they piled, and were driven off—into the desert in the

opposite direction, and kept there till the polls were closed! Umaidwar Singh lost his election.

More amusing was an election in Lahore, the capital of the province, before the necessary legislation was amended, and personation became a cognizable offence.

The men of the Chel area, who supply lascars to Bombay, watchmen to the Far East, and traders everywhere, are clever actors. And one ingenious candidate brought down a lorry-load. He set up a miniature Clarkson's store in the neighbourhood of the polling booths, with disguises of every possible kind complete.

Every candidate, as a matter of course, gave a tip to the petty official whose duty it was to hand out the voting cards to certified voters—lest he be too curious.

The candidate's agent had a list of the voters, which included the name, parentage, address, and ballot number. The Pathan would memorize one, present himself to the man at the gate: 'My number is——, my name is——.......' Provided this corresponded with the printed list, no further questions were asked, and he was given his ballot. He marked it, cast it, went out, and returned to the changing tent, to reappear a few minutes later as somebody else.

To such lengths of boldness did they go on this occasion that a judge of the High Court, a well-known resident of Lahore, coming down in the luncheon interval to cast his vote, found it had already been cast.

Such difficulties were overcome good-humouredly. The flames of terrorism, at great cost, were reduced to smouldering embers; and, in the consequent calm, the Round Table Conference began its sittings. A new constitution was foreshadowed, the fourth under which I was to serve.

It was during the concluding stages of the Conference, not at the time when the Act came into effect, that the birth pangs became acute; and agitation renewed. The point

at issue was the weightage to be given to minorities, and the leaders of Sikh opinion in the Punjab were advised to make their influence felt. It was easy to light a fire, very difficult to put it out.

The Governor fell seriously ill; the Member in charge of law and order was on leave, his place filled by an officer who had been out of touch for some time with administrative problems. Communal bickering between Sikhs and Mohammedans reached such a pitch of intensity that the district magistrates of the two principal cities of the Punjab reported independently that they expected the gravest disorders within a week. The Governor's condition worsened and he had to go on leave. The Revenue Member, Sir Sikander Hyat-Khan, was appointed to act for him.

As by magic the fever subsided. Every Indian knew that if there was disorder while an Indian was Governor, the hands of the diehards in Parliament would be strengthened immeasurably. While the situation was eased by the fact of his appointment, the administration was continued with the same high British tradition of impartiality and skill. The crisis passed; the fury of the Sikhs sank to a grumble. They number only thirteen per cent of the Punjab's population. Theirs was the rule before the British came, and their wealth, and corresponding contribution to the revenues of the province, and their military services to India and the Empire far exceed their numerical proportion. It was to secure as big a weightage as possible that agitation had started; and now, when agitation was forbidden, they resorted to paper.

It was typical of the happy relations that prevailed between the civilian and the leaders of political thought that, though I was Chief Secretary and it would be to me that the representation would be addressed, and through me it would be answered, yet it was to me that the two leaders

came to explain the position, and ask for help.

'Here is our rough draft,' they said. 'It contains all the points we want to make, but we are not satisfied with the English and we think the set-up might be improved. Please draft it for us.'

That suited me. Time spent on reconnaissance is never wasted! And the answer was ready by the time the document was received.

In much the same way, I kept in touch with the editors of the newspapers, though having at times to confiscate whole editions, even the press itself. An editor is seldom seditious 'by nature'; but the unspiced paper does not sell, and sedition is a cheap and attractive flavour.

'You've caused me the loss of some thousands of rupees,' said the editor of a big Muslim daily, who had planned a seditious edition with coloured illustrations.

'Yes, and you cost me a whole night's sleep,' said I. 'Why couldn't you finish your printing at an earlier hour? It was three o'clock before the first paper rolled off your machines and could be brought to me, who had to sit up, wait for it, and satisfy myself that it really was seditious before I could sign the order proscribing it, and get to bed. Do be kinder in future.'

XX

MULTAN is one of the oldest cities in the world. Not only for centuries, but for millennia, did it remain impregnable. Alexander failed, and nearly died, before its walls. When it was besieged in 1848 by Edwardes' Army, the Battery train was commanded by my grandfather and comprised not only his regulars of the Bengal Artillery but also reinforcements from the Indus Naval Flotilla. A happy shot from one of his guns blew up the magazine of the fort and breached the walls. Multan surrendered.

Of all Commissioners' charges, this division offers the poorest amenities but the richest interest. It contains every variety of Indian life: from the poor tribal area of the Baluch Hills, where the possession of half a dozen sheep is wealth, to the rich colony districts of Lyallpur and Montgomery, equipped with all the latest implements and all the latest devices of modern agricultural science; from the wandering gypsy to the citizen, the origin of whose home is lost in the mists of antiquity; from the inundation canals, with their banks piled high with silt, to weir-controlled irrigation, so devised that silt clearance is a thing of the past; from the law courts with their rigid codes, to tribal law administered by *jirgas*, the council of the tribesmen, who, clad in flowing white raiment, their turbans set over long, black oiled curls, sit, matchlock at back, conservative and stern, in deliberation under the leadership of their *tumandar*, the head of the clan.

The area is almost identical with that of Ireland, and the population more dense by a million and a half. Whatever the meteorologists may say, every good Multani, be he Muslim or Hindu, knows that Multan is the hottest place on earth—to no other spot does the sun come so close.

The curse was laid upon it when the first Muslim fakir came to the ancient Hindu city and demanded to make sacrifice and eat thereof, as the holy Koran commands, on the approaching day which would commemorate the sacrificial offer of his son Isaac by the patriarch Abraham. The enraged Hindu king built a high tower and set a ladder against it. He had the fakir taken, with the animal he had bought, to the top, and the ladder removed.

'Make your sacrifice if you will,' he said, 'but no fire shall you have. For fire is sacred, and shall not cook that which has had life.'

So the fakir stood on the top of the tower. And day came.

And he made his sacrifice. And as the sun rose high in the heavens he called aloud unto Allah the All-Merciful to show forth His mercy. And Allah bade the sun descend, and the flesh was cooked, and the fakir feasted. Nor has the sun ever withdrawn, for still can men cook by its rays in Multan.

Twenty hours away by train is Quetta, whose summer population is increased by shopkeepers and labourers of the division, seeking to supplement their living.

It was on the last Friday in May 1935 that the earth greatly quaked.

Though hundreds of miles from the scene of the disaster, of officials of my rank, I was the nearest, and had the privilege from time to time of rendering some small assistance. Within a few hours of the news reaching us, a courageous band of Multan citizens had set forth, carrying their food with them, and had presented themselves by the first available train to the authorities in Quetta. They arrived before the order forbidding all entry from outside into that city of desolation had been promulgated. Afterwards, the authorities themselves told me that they had expected this group of lawyers, business men and others, to be simply certificate-hunters, and the first tasks which were allotted were, though useful, the most unpleasant that could be devised. When they found that these were not only cheerfully but efficiently undertaken, and also that the group was completely self-contained, even in the matter of food and cooking, their gratitude was great.

Their task done, the leader of the little band visited me to tell me his story, first-hand evidence of the courage with which the disaster was faced and the skill with which impromptu hospitals, billets, and messing were arranged for all. The band of Boy Scouts from Lahore under that hero, the late Wing-Commander Hogg, carried on the ghastly,

stinking task of excavating decomposed bodies and restoring sanitation, after strong men had dropped out, exhausted. Hogg stopped only when blood-poisoning from his self-imposed, infectious labours forced him to desist.

Congress, ever seeking a stick to lay on Government, at once sought out my friend; and, both in Multan and at Lahore, tried to persuade him to falsify his story. But he would not, and could not had he would; for, by a clear-the-line telephone call, I had arranged, before he left my office, for his journey to Simla to take his news in person to the Governor and to the Viceroy. The unofficial spoken word is a commentary, rich and rare, on official reports of such happenings as this.

His band had got through, but no other volunteers were admitted. The Central Government had even tried to prevent the Bishop of Lahore, that champion of muscular Christianity, from hurrying to the spot; but it would have taken more than the Government of India to prevent him from giving all the secular assistance he could as a man, as well as the episcopal solace only he could render to the wounded, the bereaved, the dying.

It was from him that a letter had just reached me by the nine-thirty post. It was in pencil, hastily written on a leaf torn from a pocket note-book, and this is what it said:

> Dear C,
>
> We badly want sixty sweepers, a hundred beds, and fifty lanterns. Can you help?

For the sweepers, I immediately telephoned to the municipal authorities of the two big towns, Multan and Lyallpur; and I was scratching my head, wondering how and where to find beds and lanterns, when a visitor was announced. He was one of the Hindu business men of the town.

The books of men of his profession are kept with scrupulous accuracy. Those maintained for the joint family may not

be the same as those kept for the income-tax inspector; but the arithmetic of each set will be flawless, and in each there will be an account opened in the name of a particular god or goddess, or just 'charity'.

After we had exchanged customary greetings, I asked my caller if there had been any particular event to which I owed the pleasure of this visit.

'Yes, indeed,' he replied. 'I know Your Honour will be pleased to learn that my eldest son's marriage has passed off most happily.'

'I am so glad,' said I. 'But tell me, Lala Sahib, on an occasion such as this your expenditure must have been very great?'

'Certainly,' said he, smiling. 'A Hindu in my position does not marry his eldest son for nothing.'

'And am I right in supposing', I continued, 'that you have set aside a percentage in the name of charity?'

'How well you know us, Sahib,' he assented, somewhat wonderingly.

'And is that sum still to the goddess' credit, unspent?'

'It is indeed,' he returned.

'I wonder how many beds and lanterns it would provide?' said I, and I passed over to him the Bishop's letter.

He read it carefully. To my joy, I saw pleasure as well as enlightenment brighten his countenance. He spent a few minutes in thought.

'I think, Sahib, it would run to about half the requirements.'

'The order is a large one,' said I. 'Are so many beds and so many lanterns immediately available in the market?'

'I am not sure, but I rather think they are, as a consignment arrived very recently.'

'Well,' I said, 'can you suggest any way that I can get the remainder?'

Again he pondered, and then asked me, 'Knowing you, I suppose you want to get them off today?'

'Yes,' I said, 'on the two-thirty Mail.'

'That does not give much time,' said he, 'but will you spare half an hour to me to do what I can?'

'Gladly and gratefully.'

Off he went.

I rang up the Deputy Commissioner, asked him to go to the station and arrange for a wagon, and ascertain the cost. I did not know where the money was coming from, but was determined that it should be found. Fortunately, the wise Punjab Government had that very morning sent, to this and other Deputy Commissioners within hail of the scene of the disaster, a thousand rupees each for contingent expenditure in connexion with the earthquake. This was primarily intended for the relief of evacuees, and refugees returning to their own homes.

About twenty minutes later, the Deputy Commissioner telephoned that the railway authorities had agreed to give the wagon, even though it was to be attached to a mail train, and had promised to push it through at once to Quetta from the junction at Rohri.

'But,' he protested, 'the cost is much heavier than I expected—over four hundred rupees. I should not feel justified in sanctioning this expenditure without your specific direction.'

I told him that I would shoulder full responsibility. What was wanted, was wanted quickly. For all I knew, lives might be in the balance. And in any case I strongly hoped to have nothing to pay for the beds and the lanterns.

'That's good enough for me,' said the Deputy Commissioner. 'I will see to my end.'

Hardly was the conversation finished, when back came my Indian friend in his car. He entered, beaming.

'It's all arranged, Your Honour,' said he. 'I have given half and collected the remainder from various friends. Where and when do you want delivery?'

He was immediately put in touch with the Deputy Commissioner, and my small share in the benefaction was over.

The mail train took with it one half the number of sweepers and all the beds and lanterns. To my sorrow, I could not find the full quota of men from my own division, and had to get the rest from Lahore. They arrived twenty-four hours later.

The telegram announcing their coming had hardly arrived, when the train bearing them steamed in. The Bishop said that to them it seemed that a miracle had happened. His happy letter of thanks is treasured among the family records of my Hindu friend.

There were constantly little things to be done for the evacuees passing through in their ambulance trains, as well as for those struggling with the aftermath in Quetta itself. There was no thought of recessing in the Hills, the usual refuge from the blazing heat.

Then, one morning early in July, the newspaper announced that His Excellency the Viceroy and Lady Willingdon, on a date about the middle of the month, were going to brave the discomforts and visit Quetta themselves. They would stop at Multan from seven to ten in the morning.

They would be with me, then, during the breakfast hour. How ought a Commissioner to invite a Viceroy to breakfast? Could I not write direct to Lady Willingdon as a friend? Or must I be formal? Should I write to the Military Secretary? Or the Governor? I did think that Simla might have let me have advance information.

These thoughts were passing through my head when in came the post; and a letter from the Military Secretary

telling me that Their Excellencies were delighted to accept my kind invitation to them and their Staff to breakfast. It was not till some weeks had passed that the Punjab Governor explained that, as soon as the tentative programme had reached him, he had conveyed the invitation on my behalf, but had forgotten to tell me!

So far so good. But I still did not know how many were coming, so I wrote to the Military Secretary to inquire, and sketched the hot weather breakfast I proposed to offer, beginning with the ordinary *spécialité de la Maison Garbett,* chilled fruit, junket, and cream, with a tablespoonful of rum per plate. In his reply, the Military Secretary 'was desired to explain that Their Excellencies wished only a very simple breakfast—bacon and eggs. There was much to do and Their Excellencies did not wish to waste time over a meal. The Staff would number five. His Excellency would ride in my car and the bracket on the right should be drilled for his banner; Her Excellency would accompany the Deputy Commissioner and her banner would be on the left.'

Bacon in July! And Multan gave up bacon in March. Bacon in July! A simple breakfast!

I took my troubles to the mess president of an Indian regiment, and after some confabulation we decided that the probabilities were the Canteen Contractors' Syndicate in Karachi, eighteen hours away, if given a free hand in the matter of ice, would solve my trouble. In order to make the most of whatever brief time was allotted, I collected six friends, each to be in charge of one of the guests, with instructions where to take him to wash his hands, where to sit at table, and what item of food and drink to look after. I switched on the whole of the menu I had myself designed, only adding the bacon—and very good bacon it was.

The day arrived; and punctually at seven Their Excellencies detrained. A Guard of Honour was drawn up outside

the station, and while His Excellency reviewed it, escorted by the Officer Commanding, the next senior officer was to talk to Her Excellency. 'But I, too, should like to meet all these men who have turned out on this hot day to salute us. Why not?'

And of course she did. Small variation Number One to stereotyped programme. The parade over, it was time to start for the hospital.

'But can't we both go with Mr Garbett? I'm sure he won't mind sitting in front.'

'With pleasure,' I said. 'I had hoped you might, and bored my left bracket in anticipation.' Variation Number Two.

We got to the hospital, crammed with patients from Quetta; and after inspecting the wards and cheering the sick and maimed, Their Excellencies spoke to a large number of outpatients and other evacuees assembled in the compound.

This, the main object of the visit, over, we returned to the house, where all the arrangements went like clockwork. Without trespassing on the allotted minutes, my guests were able to dispose of and enjoy an ample meal. Even Their Excellencies fell for the chilled loganberries, though jibbing at the rum!

As we assembled to go into the grounds, the Military Secretary produced a parcel he had been vainly endeavouring for some little time to conceal behind his back, and Her Excellency presented me with a lovely silver cigarette box, a happy memento of the day.

'I am afraid, Your Excellency, I have not deserved it. You see I varied my orders.'

'And quite right, too, my boy,' laughed Lord Willingdon.

On the lawn they reviewed in some detail the Boy Scouts. Some had gone to Rohri, the first junction from Quetta, where they had taken the names and addresses of all evacuees, as they passed to their various destinations—thus

collecting some data towards the tale of the missing and survivors. I had been asked by Government to give effect to this suggestion of mine, and the volunteers had left Multan within six hours of receipt of sanction, complete with printed instructions, blank lists in triplicate, pencils, tents, and food.

His Excellency, tall, slim, erect, attended by the two smartest and tiniest Scouts imaginable, who acted as his aides-de-camp, moved round the troops. His kindly words and generous acknowledgments were a full reward for the work done at Rohri and down at the railway station, day or night, whenever a train passed through. Ten o'clock drew near; but there had to be one more small variation as Her Excellency, delighting the heart of the chaplain, desired to see the Garrison Church, and hear the tone of the bells.

Formal goodbyes were complete, and the guard was raising the whistle to his lips. I summoned courage to express my irreverent thought: 'Do you know, Your Excellency, I rather think you take a naughty delight in departing from the details of your Staff's most sacrosanct directions. You vary every programme with the unexpected, but never dislocate seriously.'

The train began to move; but her answer flashed, 'What? Only I?'

XXI

THE city of Multan is a volcano, sometimes quiescent, sometimes a rumble, sometimes in eruption. Ever and again, the two big sects into which Islam is divided, Sunni and Shia, break into open quarrelling; for the two houses of Koreish and Gilan are rivals, with a history comparable to that of Guelph and Ghibelline. At one time, one, the next, the other, is in ascendancy. Even when the Koreish are in political power, it is their venerated Makhdum,

the lord of the Gilanis, whom his devotees seek out, that they may touch his stirrup as he rides on his white Arab steed, or the leather of his shoes, or the hem of his garment; that it be his hand that is raised to bless them.

But inter-sect disturbances are trivial compared with the rioting, murder, and arson, that break out from time to time when the Muslim or Hindu mobs become inflamed. The death-roll may run to double figures on each side, and the damage by loot and burning to tens of thousands of rupees. The total number of citizens within the city wall and those in the suburbs without are balanced; but, while in the city seventy-five per cent are Hindus, the exact reverse is the case in the suburbs.

In the heart of the city is the shrine of Narsingh; and Multan claims that this was his birthplace, in an age gone by. And this is the story of Narsingh.

It was many, many centuries before the birth of Christ, and there reigned in Multan a king whose piety and devotion secured the favour of Heaven. So virtuous was he that when he prayed to Brahma that his arm should be invincible in his battles with mankind, his prayer was granted. But Brahma had failed to peep into the future. Presently, invulnerable to the sword of man, the king thought himself immortal, and claimed the worship that was due from man to Heaven.

All else obeyed him save only his son. 'Though you slay me, Father, you are still my father and human; only to the gods, to whom we owe our existence and from whom you derive your power, is worship due.' And to Brahma he prayed for protection. Brahma granted him that he should not die at his father's hands; but could not save him from the devilish tortures inflicted on him. He was bound to an iron pillar and left to scorch naked in the sun; his skin was flayed; but still he lived.

The gods took counsel together; they could not break their promise that no son of man could take the life of the king. Therefore they created a demon, half human, half lion, both *Nar* and *Singh*, who went forth to battle and destroyed the impious claimant to Heaven's immortality. And he is worshipped to this day, his black image set in a temple on the highest point of the citadel; and venerated by citizens and pilgrims.

It is at festivals, which often follow fasts, that men's fervour is heightened, and temper, short. And of Muslim festivals, the Moharrum is the longest and most trying. It is a Passion Play recalling the last sad ten days when the little band of the Holy Prophet's descendants with their followers were done to death outside the gates of Karbala. They had been called from the holy city of Medina to assume temporal power, with a capital in what is now Iraq; and had trekked the weary, waterless miles across the Arabian desert. And while they were trekking, the swordsmen of Syria sought sway for themselves; and there was none to welcome the little caravan on its arrival.

Slay them by direct attack the Syrians dare not. But the Eastern mind saw no such impiety in compelling death by thirst and hunger. So a guard was set over against the Euphrates river, and the water-course that led to Karbala itself. The warriors of the little band sought to break through, but they were driven back; till finally all perished, save a few women who were exiled to Damascus, where their tombs are fresh and beautiful to this day.

The pageantry of the Moharrum repeats the last ten days of the heroic struggle; and devout Muslims furnish bands of actors to play the parts. Custom has stereotyped the points at which stops shall be made and performances given, the number of the troupes, and approximately their size.

The streets are lined and the roofs are crowded. During

the first nine days the plays are in the evening and at night. The last day's celebrations begin at sunrise; and, at Karbala itself and in the cities near it, they are carried out with grim realism. The warriors slash themselves till faces, breasts, and back are streaming with blood. The women on the housetops, draped all in black, wail their lament as the litters carrying corpses pass by, a gory spectacle. They look down on motionless human legs attached apparently to a bleeding, headless corpse. The spectator sickens, till an older hand points out the double litter—the living trunk below, only the knees above, the body simulated by the carcass of a headless sheep, the neck bone sticking out in its bleeding ugliness.

In recent years tension had been so strong that throughout the Moharrum troops had been at riot stations in the city as a precautionary measure. This year harmony prevailed, and officers were interested spectators, none on duty. The District Superintendent of Police had gone on short leave. It had been a trying fortnight, for on his shoulders had lain the main burden of composing the differences between the rival troupes of players and those who overstayed their time in their desire to exhibit their prowess where crowds were thickest. He was thankful that no major issue had been raised. The Deputy Commissioner was on tour.

Most of the station was playing tennis at the Club.

There is only one thing that is certain
there is no such thing as certainty.
preening themselves on the happy issue
gerous days, the fire awakened in men'
smoulder. A chance word, a misunde
an insult to the Holy Prophet, whose m
mourned anew, was enough to set every
Hindu, and provoke every Hindu against

I was amongst the tennis players. By a rare stroke of luck, my partner was the Officer Commanding the station and our opponents were the Commandant and Adjutant of the Indian Regiment. I was serving and the score was 40-15 in the eleventh game when an inspector, obviously with a very urgent message, came up on a motor cycle. With a hasty word of excuse, I ran over to him. He said, 'A Hindu has just been killed in the heart of the city, and a riot has started.' I explained briefly to my companions what had happened, apologized for breaking off the game, slipped on a blazer, told the inspector to send someone for his motor cycle, popped him into my car and started off, bareheaded and without even a stick in my hand, for the city.

There is a police station just outside the Haram Gate, and as we came up to it, we found the ambulance with the corpse on its way to the mortuary. Of the two officials at the police station, I took the rather frightened looking magistrate along with me, leaving the sub-inspector, who had given me the latest news, in charge of the station. He sent with us one constable, who followed behind, while I, with the magistrate on one side and the inspector on the other, started for the scene of the murder.

A circular road runs round the city wall and the magistrate took me along this, the city being on our left. Presently, from within there arose a demoniacal howling, as of a mob lashing itself to fury, expressing venom and hatred such as I had never heard before and hope never to hear again. Obviously that spot must be visited first.

My quivering guide assured me that the way to get to it was to carry straight on and enter the city by the next big gate. A few moments later, the uproar, which had been in front but to the left, was definitely behind us. The magistrate still insisted that we should go on. I turned on

my heel and asked the constable, 'Is there no quicker way to the spot?' He laughed and said, 'Of course there is,' and pointed to a narrow opening and steps up the wall about twenty yards behind us.

We quickened pace. As I got to the foot of the steps, some men, who had been watching on the top of the wall, ran off and shouted to the crowd that I was coming. We found ourselves on the broad rampart. On rushing to the other side of it, we saw below us a crowd that was shrieking, 'Death to the Mayor! Death to the Mayor!' and demonstrating outside his private house.

I shouted to them to be quiet and bade them clear off; whereupon they broke into two bands, one running off to the left by a road leading to the centre of the town, the other to the right in the direction of the scene of the murder, which it was my intention to visit. I therefore rushed off to the right, but was relieved to find coming towards me a European sergeant of police with a small posse of constables. They were asked to follow up the other half of the crowd and see that they did no mischief; while we were likely very shortly to come up with the rest.

A little farther on we came to a small bazaar through which a crowd had passed. We found some Muslim shopkeepers completely hysterical, declaring that their shops had been attacked and looted, and that they were ruined. The first three had reduced themselves to such incoherence that there was nothing for it but to send them off to the police station to have their statements recorded.

By this time there had gathered round me a fairly large crowd—Hindus tense and anxious, Muslims full of suppressed fury. And both sides were trying to put forth spokesmen to give their different accounts of what had happened. It was obvious that the version of neither side would be accepted by the other, and that the immediate necessity

was to relax tension. Somehow or other I had to raise a laugh.

Fortunately the bazaar was on a definite slope, and down the drain, which passed under the overhanging ledges, was flowing filthy sullage water. In one shop, which obviously had not been severely damaged, was a *pan* and betel vendor wailing, '*Lutgya! Lutgya! Margya!* (Ruined! Ruined! Dead!)' It was quite obvious that there had been little to loot in that tiny shop. Two pans from his scales had been placed in the centre of the road, covering something which had apparently been thrown there by the passing crowd. I lifted them, and found one or two cowries and a few *pan* leaves. My eye luckily lighted on a cowrie which had slipped into the gutter.

'Poor man,' I said, 'we cannot allow you to be ruined. Come, let us gather up what is left from the wreck.'

He looked at me with faint suspicion in his eye. But as I lifted up a cowrie and put it into his hand, he was impelled to pick up the others and the *pan* leaves.

'Come, come,' I said, 'we must restore the ruin, you poor, poor man. See, here is another cowrie, and you who are ruined cannot afford to lose that.'

The crowd had caught the general drift and a roar of laughter went up as, very gingerly and hating every moment of it, the *pan* vendor lifted the little shell from the filthy stream. The outburst of hysterical exaggeration was over; and balance was restored.

A little farther up was the scene of the murder, a narrow lane that debouched from the main bazaar with nothing, except some fresh blood, to mark the sinister tragedy, or reveal the circumstances thereof.

Normality restored here, I made my way, bearing continuously left, to the centre of the city, where was a square in front of the police station. Into this was pouring the

other half of the mob which had broken on our approach to the Mayor's house. They had done some damage to the Muslim shops in the bazaar, and had been followed by the completely ineffective police who had watched them but had arrested no one, whether from fright or folly I never made out. But there they were, ready to demonstrate before the police station. It did not make my mind any the easier to observe large piles of bricks collected for a building which was to be erected in the neighbourhood. I stood on one of the piles, raised my hand, and insisted on the people sitting down, which presently they did. I then demanded silence, and addressed them in brief sentences.

'You are Hindus, angry that a brother Hindu has been murdered?'

The crowd roared back, 'Yea, verily.'

'Well, angry as you may be, you are not half so angry as I. You have lost a brother Hindu. But it is I who am responsible for the liberty and safety of you all. I am seeing the King's Peace being broken in broad daylight in the capital town of my division. You want the murderers arrested. I want that more than you do. Now this is only the latest of many riots in Multan. And have the guilty persons ever been punished?'

'No!'

'And why? Is it not that when one community attacks, the other counter-attacks? Are there not always cross-cases, so that the one cancels out the other?'

'That, Sahib, is true talk.'

'And does not whoever comes into court exaggerate and lie, accusing the innocent with the guilty?'

'Who can deny it?'

'Now,' I continued, 'I want to make a bargain with you. For my part, I promise not to rest from pursuing the guilty until they are caught, but you must guarantee three things.

First, there will be no counter-assaults. Second, recompense shall be paid for whatever damage has been done this afternoon. Third, you will help the police in every manner possible, no lies to be told, and no false evidence to be adduced. Is that agreed?'

And the crowd vociferated, 'Agreed!'

They went off in surprisingly good temper, shouting '*Jai Sirkar, Jai Sirkar* (Victory to Government!)'

The fury of the first frenzy had passed. And though not for many days did the city return to normal life, there was no arson and no looting. The troops, who during this short interlude were assembled by my tennis opponents to move into riot stations, were never called on for duties more exacting than patrolling.

Nevertheless, a sense of dissatisfaction lingers. That tennis match was never decided.

PART IV

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ACT, 1935

XXII

MOTHER India was in travail. Fever developed and threatened to prove fatal. One crisis was surmounted by the appointment of an Indian as Acting-Governor of the Punjab. The fever fell, as though charmed by a magical analgesic. But still the child did not come to the birth. All the great doctors, assembled round the big table, consulted, and consulted; but nothing happened. Finally, India's representatives begged England's Premier to perform a Caesarian, giving solemn promise that the child so born would receive from them its infant nurture and be cherished to maturity. But, save in the Muslim provinces, again performance failed the promise.

Parliament passed the hotly contested Bill; and long months followed while the formalities, still to be completed, received feverish attention. At last March 1937 arrived. All Government's preparations were accomplished. Rules and regulations had poured from the Press, and *finis* was written to the many volumes. Elections had been fought and excitement had subsided.

Politically all was calm, the expectant hush of watchers for the dawn. But the deities, or demons, who preside over beginnings, and make it their care that no rich harvest shall follow save where the sharpened share has cut and furrowed, were discontent. And throughout the richest corn lands of the province, where the heavy crop was waiting for the scythe, there swept a devastating hailstorm of a ferocity unknown to history.

Adjoining our vegetable garden was a plot in which my amateur self was trying out the latest varieties of wheat and cane recommended by the agricultural experts; for

personal experience always helps discussion and gives edge to advice. And on this twenty-ninth of March it was nearly ready for reaping. The flower garden was ablaze with colour. It had been a glorious day, the sky bright and clear. We had come in for tea. Suddenly, the sky became overcast and the wind rose. It increased to a gale; and with the gale came hail.

Ten minutes' terror; and it had passed on. The sun came out; but the garden was not. Not a plant survived—all was flattened as though a million devils had swung their flails and then a crushing roller had ironed everything out. Great lumps of ice the size of pigeons' eggs whitened the glistening lawn. Even the branches of great trees were cracked and broken. As we stood at the window watching, my wife burst into tears. 'The poor, poor people.' We got into the car and drove north and south, east and west—destruction everywhere. Back to the telephone and telegraph, and news came tumbling in.

What a start for the First Free Government who would take office two days later—the total loss of a crop that had promised to be a bumper one, along a line some three hundred miles in length and from ten to thirty miles in breadth. The rough estimate ascertained was telegraphed, a sad birthday greeting to the Premier. His immediate response was heartening: YOU HAVE AUTHORITY TO SPEND ONE LAKH ON RELIEF AS FIRST INSTALMENT PLEASE CONVEY TO THE PEOPLE THE SYMPATHY OF MYSELF AND GOVERNMENT AND OUR ASSURANCE THAT THEIR NEEDS WILL BE CARED FOR. The prompt reply, the generous giving, the confidence in us old bureaucrats that was implied in that first telegram, were a happy augury for the future of this statesman's regime. In curious contrast, some ten days later, long after every district officer had been out to see with his own eyes and help with his own hands, and when reports were already

in draft, there came official instructions from the Financial Commissioner bidding me direct the Collectors to proceed to camp and investigate the damage done. Quaint slow-moving relic of the days gone by. His file had to be in order.

As the reports poured in, the difficulty of the administrative problem increased. The storm had not cut just a simple swathe through the division, but starting in Dera Ghazi Khan had proceeded by leaps and bounds, beating down a group of fields, then leaving untouched a space—it might be a hundred yards, it might be a quarter of a mile—then down again, the jumps becoming smaller as the storm gathered way. Each district contained, as it were, a series of catastrophes, the limits of each of which had to be ascertained before relief could be assessed or compensation awarded. While there was this diversity of shape and area, in other respects the disaster was uniform; and it was essential that in all the districts the standards of relief should be uniform likewise.

Accordingly, their preliminary investigations completed, all the Deputy Commissioners and irrigation staff were collected for a conference.

The fuller the information, the graver the disaster proved. So rich had been the promise of the harvest that many farmers had borrowed on the strength of it, and had spent their borrowings. Ruin faced them. With the crops, the animals had suffered. In one field alone there had been a flock of fifty sheep. They had huddled together, as sheep will, heads to the centre. In three minutes all were killed. It was a Muslim village, and a couple of rams were still panting out their last breath as their owner rushed up to them, thinking at least to profit by their flesh. The knife flashed in ceremonial slaughter. But the meat was so bruised that it was altogether uneatable. In one village, in which every field was wiped out, men thought that the

Day of Judgement was upon them, and for three days and nights refused to stir outside their darkened doors.

The date for the first session of the first Legislative Assembly was fixed; and no topic was likely to be of such interest as this hailstorm. The infant Ministry might stand or fall by their handling of the situation. And indeed wider and deeper issues than the surface problem were involved.

Would sound finance be thrown overboard, and reckless extravagance supersede the cautious policy of the old bureaucracy? How far would thought of the future be brought into the balance when weighing the calls of the present? And the permanent officials—would the new Government work through them, winning their confidence and confirming their prestige; or would they seek to ride rough-shod over them? How the opponents of this freedom-giving Act would gloat if they erred on this side or on that; how narrow was the divide between guiding and driving, between wise generosity and reckless spending!

The temptation to be lavish and purchase cheap popularity must have been great. But, before deciding anything, the Ministry desired the revered and aged Honourable Member for Revenue to visit the scene of the disaster; and he and I spent many days touring together through each district and probing the difficulties, penetrating where there were roads and no roads, where it was safe and where it was dangerous to travel.

We came to a village threshing-floor. The sheaves were stacked around; and the bullocks were treading out the corn, patiently, ceaselessly, round and round. The men rushed to us, their hands extended, bearing samples of the separated grain, and on their faces a new consternation, a fresh despair. 'See! See! The corn is perished—shrivelled! There is no flour, no food, and there will be no seed.'

The storm had not been kind enough to leave clearly

demarcated lines; and the serrated edges of the devastated crop were fields, some severely, some lightly, and some half, damaged. Where the stalks had not been beaten down or had seemed to recover, they had been assessed accordingly; and were reaped and brought with the harvest of the untouched fields to be threshed. And now this unexpected result, upsetting our careful calculations—a Pelion on the Ossa of the first disaster.

'What do you propose now?' asked the Minister. 'There must be a revision of our plans; but I can remember no rule for cases like this. Surely the rules apply only to failure found in the fields?'

'That is exactly correct,' I replied. And added that I had been faced with a similar difficulty once before, when in another district in my division, there had been a similar tragedy. On that occasion a high dry wind had parched the ears just as they were ripening, and a similar shrivelling had resulted. We had investigated the comparatively limited area, village by village, sampled the grain on the threshing-floor, assessed its percentage of damage to normal, and compensated by a rate applied to all the fields whose produce came to that floor. Field to field exactitude was no longer possible, and some may have profited and others lost, but by and large there was a fair adjustment between the revenue payer and the State. And the farmers were content.

Land revenue in the Canal Colonies is assessed with the aid of the irrigation authorities, who are careful guardians of their interests as a commercial department, and always ready to contest any proposal that tends to diminish their profits. They said that once the crop was out and off the field, their responsibility was ended; and water rate and revenue as assessed were due. So said the rule.

But the rule never contemplated a case like this. Authority

was on the spot. The Minister summoned the Chief Engineer, and called a conference. It was finally decided to follow the precedent established two years earlier; though that had at the time been treated as an exceptional case.

But to the stricken area this catastrophe of shrivelling was novel, and the farmer hoped that the combination of circumstances—a new form of disaster, a new government, and, above all, a Sikh Minister deciding a problem that was to affect the welfare of many Sikh villages—would suffice to secure them novel generosity, complete remission.

Total remission is a prize, or price, reserved for deeds or disasters of superlative magnitude; such as conspicuous bravery in the defeat of dacoits, or an unmitigated general calamity.

There was a missionary once whose church was filled to overflowing three Sundays running, but the fourth it was deserted. Despair succeeding to his elation, he sought the reason.

'Padre Sahib, you preached about remission and promised to tell us how to obtain that blessing. We thought you meant revenue, not sins!'

In India, news seems to travel by telepathy. The decision of the conference was reached at five-thirty on a Saturday afternoon. At seven forty-five the following morning, we set out with a prearranged programme. The Deputy Commissioner, who had been in the district nearly a year, accompanied us.

About ten miles from the bungalow, at a spot not in our schedule, we found a crowd of five hundred villagers desiring an audience. They had set up a canopy and arranged chairs and a table.

They were led by a spokesman, a Sikh with a smattering of law, a long tongue, and boundless self-confidence. They

had heard of the Minister's decision, and would have none of it. It would not work. It was unjust. The people would not accept it. Better that no one should pay any revenue than that some who could not afford it should be forced to sell their household goods to meet Government demands. What kind of popular government was this?

With their Deputy Commissioner to open and explain, and their Minister to close with the pronouncement of his orders, I felt a mere Commissioner could sit back.

The Deputy Commissioner addressed the people, who sat in serried rows. Their spokesman, prominent in front, leaning against a pillar, replied. He refused to be convinced, and the people murmured their assent to his protestations.

The Minister took the case over. He recognized the spokesman and exposed him as an outsider and a professional agitator; but though somewhat shaken, the wind-bag held the audience. Finally, almost in despair, I asked leave to intervene. 'Please do,' said the Minister. 'This man tires me.'

Sitting on my left was a Subadar in uniform, his breast covered with medals, one of which showed he had been in Iraq. I turned to him, ignoring the spokesman. 'Subadar Sahib, I think we were both in Iraq together; and you probably saw more battle fighting than I did. You and I have been listening to the arguments, the battle between Government and our Sikh friend. Government have been saying that they wish to adopt a measure in which they have confidence; the clever young lawyer has been expounding its difficulties. Now, Subadar Sahib, I want you, with your experience, to tell the Minister and the people in front of you the answer to this question: when going into battle, by whom do you prefer to be led, by a man of experience or a man of theory?'

'Why of course by a man of experience,' he replied.

Then, turning to the people, I asked, 'You know me, and you can trust my word?'

'We do and we can.'

'I tell you I have had experience, and I tell you I have worked this measure, and I pledge you my word that it is fair. Whom do you trust, this stranger, or your Commissioner?'

It sufficed. They pulled down the still-protesting agitator and sped us on our way.

The long tour ended. The Minister took me back to Lahore to meet the Premier, who received us at his home.

Now the Ministry was still a child of a few days, and each Minister had had correspondence that ran into hundreds of letters daily, had been faced with numerous problems put to him, some frivolous, some serious, and had accumulated a wealth of new experiences to share.

Uppermost in our minds was the hailstorm: the rules we proposed to break; the solution, equitable alike to state and subject, we recommended.

My official mind was all agog to watch the new working. What would the Premier say? How would he begin to tackle the problem? Would he prefer the old conservatism, or would he be pleased with our initiative? Of all our adventures, which would interest him most? Where would he begin?

And after greeting us, this was the first question that he put:

'Sardar Sahib, are you finding you get time enough for your morning and evening prayers?'

XXIII

'WHAT on earth is that man doing, taking that pail of stinking filth at this hour through the city?' and I pointed to an ill-clad coolie who was carrying down the paved street a leaking bucket from which night-soil was dripping.

I was out for an early morning ride with the Deputy Commissioner of Multan, and we were going through the heart of the city itself.

'That's what passes for a municipal sweeper,' he said.

'And is that a municipal bucket? They ought to be ashamed of themselves.'

'Oh, haven't I told you about the municipal sanitary system here? I believe every Deputy Commissioner, including the Governor himself when he was here in my present post, has tried to break it, but all have failed. Of the subsidiary sources of municipal income, the largest is the auction of the night-soil; and the successful bidders are responsible for removing it. The contractors are either owners of the fertile well-land around the city, or are under obligation to provide the required manure. The wretched inhabitants have their receptacles cleaned at the time it suits the farmer or the contractor.'

'So the determining factor in the efficiency of a bucket is not what nuisance is caused by droppings but whether it is more profitable to mend the leak or lose the dripping? A pretty state of things for a city with a population of 120,000! Can't you do anything?' I inquired.

'We've got an Executive Officer now, and though he is stronger than the presidents of old, still he has to keep the committee sweet—a tough job in the circumstances,' he laughed. 'Any subsidiary staff for scavenging employed by the municipality is looked on by each of the members as an addition to his domestic retinue!'

'Then here and now I declare war!' I said.

Home again, we got out the last health report. It was up to date. Deaths from tuberculosis were startling enough; but what hit us in the face was the entry,

Deaths from typhoid fever—157

• There is a Deputy Director of Public Health in charge

of a huge circle, with headquarters at Rawalpindi. He came down at our request, and spent the best part of a week investigating in detail the existing horrors, and preparing a new project. He calculated that by taking up unused, unfertile ground within a reasonable radius of the city, trenching the night-soil, and selling it only when it had been converted into perfect compost, it would be possible to finance a satisfactory sewage system.

There would be opposition, which would hope to carry on the fight till the present Deputy Commissioner and Commissioner had been transferred. The contractors had very considerable pull; and there are always plausible objections at hand against the expenditure of such considerable capital outlay as would be required. We realized that we must have behind us the public—the electorate. Besides, I wanted them to know the truth.

It was arranged that the municipal committee hold a meeting at which I also should be present; and that the public be encouraged to attend. They did, in large numbers. The body of the hall, the gallery, the windows, the entrance—all were packed to overflowing. The Deputy Director and the Deputy Commissioner sat on my right and on my left. The long table was filled by the councillors. The Municipal Medical Officer of Health read out the most recent vital statistics. He explained that they could not be accepted as exactly accurate.

'Purdah is observed here; in consequence an indefinite number of cases go unrecognized and not all deaths are recorded. It is more than probable that among deaths attributed simply to "fever" are some due to typhoid.'

I repeated the figures relating to typhoid; and contniuing in the vernacular so that all should understand, turned to the Deputy Director :

'Am I right in thinking that typhoid is a preventible disease?'

'Yes. A very occasional stray case apart, typhoid has been stamped out of England and of America.'

'And how?'

'The first essential is an efficient system of sanitation. The carrier of typhoid is filth.'

'You have seen the sanitary, or rather insanitary, arrangements for removing the filth of this city, and you have heard the doctor's report. You are our professional expert. In your opinion, is there any connexion between the two? Let me put it plainly, is our sewage system responsible for the deaths from typhoid?'

'It is not a question of opinion,' the Scotsman answered bluntly. 'It is a fact.'

'Then whoever is responsible for the sewage system is, perhaps indirectly, responsible for these deaths?'

'That seems simple logic.'

There was a shuffling in the gallery and in the hall. The point had gone home. The councillors stirred, a little uneasily; and I addressed them. I suggested that bygones should be bygones. If in the past they had done nothing, they could blame the Commissioners, who had not put the facts before them. But now we knew; I knew, and they knew. Each of us had a responsibility to shoulder. Mine was to expound and advise; theirs, to act. And help in their acting was present in their midst.

'The lives of the citizens', I concluded, 'are precious to me. And every preventible death that may occur hereafter is the inescapable responsibility of each one of you, to God and to me. It will be a black weight in the *karma* of every Hindu councillor—yours—' my finger pointed,—'and yours, and yours. And from you, my brother Muslim, who, like me, are of the People of the Book, from you,' and again the

finger sought them out, one by one, 'from you I shall demand that life on the dread Day of Resurrection.'

There was complete silence; and in that silence the Deputy Commissioner and I left.

There was still much clearing up to do; but the major battle was won.

East or West, abuse of power in local bodies is common enough. In the West there is the added shame that public opinion condemns what in the East it did for centuries condone. The lawgiver was automatically above the law; codes and rules were for the ruled, not for the ruler. What the political department might term 'the usual facilities' were attached to many posts: the fruits of the jail garden to the superintendent of the jail; jail labour to the municipal, and perhaps to the judge's and the Deputy Commissioner's, garden. But those days are gone.

There was a time when Sir Sikander Hyat-Khan had been Revenue Member for five years. As such, he was responsible for the Irrigation Department, a dignitary whom subordinate officers, seeking favourable postings, would strive to please in this way and in that. One day a friend of mine, the owner of wide estates, came to him and complained bitterly that the outlet regulating the water to his lands in the colony was being reduced for the second time in three years.

'You are lucky,' said the Honourable Member. 'My squares are under the control of the same energetic engineer, and he has reduced my water five times in four years.'

No one in the department knew where his lands lay !

Such whole-hearted patriotism, love of the country and all, truly all, its inhabitants, is on the lips of many, but in the hearts of few. Loyalties are so numerous, and so often conflicting; no matter of surprise considering for how few decades that congeries of race and tongues, creeds and cus-

toms, which comprise the sub-continent, has been compressed by British rule into that framework we call India. What Brahman, speaking of himself as an Indian, is conscious of a Bhil as a brother? What Pathan, of a Dravidian? What Parsee millionaire in Bombay, of a head-hunting Naga in the forests of Assam? The current is setting in that direction, but currents can curl and bend back on their course.

In the Punjab, the clash of loyalties is perhaps a greater factor in normal life than elsewhere; because there alone are the three great communities balanced—Sikh and Hindu and Muslim. The 'rest' are only five per cent, 'Christians and Others'.

The Punjabi accepts three distinct ties, and is expected to be loyal to each.

There is the tie of the big religious group to which he may belong, and a call to defend his temple, his *gurdwara* his mosque, as the case may be, will inflame him till reason is lost in riot.

Within the broader bounds of his religion, his particular sect will claim his loyalty. Brahman supports Brahman, and Khatri, Khatri. Throughout their history the Sikhs have been split up into rival groups, called *misals*, and the *misal* makes its claim. In Islam, the Sunni will support the Sunni against the Shia.

And now a third cleavage is becoming more and more pronounced, the economic cleavage between the townsman and the countryman; and each group looks askance at the other.

The call of patriotism is apt to pale before such personal claims.

A Hindu member of a superior service was in grave trouble and his papers were before the Public Service Commission, which contained among its members a Hindu. The father of the man, who was not of a status to meet in an ordinary

way the Member of the Commission, went to call on him. On receiving his card, the Member himself withdrew; and asking his brother to get rid of the unwelcome visitor as quickly as possible, made it clear that he could not himself see him. Courtesy made it necessary to permit the caller to enter the house; but it was conveyed to him quite clearly that he could not see the official, and that there was no other real reason for his presence. The Lala thought to wear down opposition by simply sitting, and he sat.

Two hours passed. 'Excuse me,' said the brother, 'I really must be going. I have an engagement.' And he went out.

After waiting a little longer in solitude, the seeker of favours gave it up. And as he left, he turned to the servant at the door and spat at him, 'Where is your master's loyalty?'

XXIV

'How unreal are politics!' commented the Government Whip. 'Yesterday each community was drawing into itself, separating from the others. Yesterday we combined only in condemning the British bureaucrat and his rule. Today we meet in our first All-Indian House—and give our first cheers to a British bureaucrat's handling of all our communities in a common calamity.'

The Cabinet—it is easier to call them a Cabinet though their official style is the more clumsy 'Council of Ministers'—had approved; and the House had endorsed. The Honourable Minister's tour had been a success.

There are six Ministries. The Premier, with the portfolio of law and order; a Revenue Minister, in charge of forests and irrigation as well as of land revenue; a Finance Minister, who combines therewith jails; a Minister for Development, in charge of colonies and what are known as the beneficent

departments—agriculture, veterinary, co-operative, industries, and such like; a Minister for Public Works—the Punjab roads are the best in India;—and lastly, a Minister for Education, whose portfolio includes also the Directorate of Public Health as well as the Office of the Inspector General of Civil Hospitals, departments curiously divorced, and leading separate, almost rival existences.

From the very first the Cabinet was delightfully original.

In Whitehall, every Ministry has not only its own building and its own staff, but its own atmosphere, and its own peculiar traditions. The first time I had to take a file from the India Office to the Foreign Office I lost my way in that august building, and opening a door by mistake found a group of eight or nine secretaries, each wearing the same type of black coat, much the same tie, and the same big, round, dark-rimmed glasses. They were all seated solemnly round a table.

'I am so sorry to have interrupted you. I am looking for Clarkson's room,' I said, my looks apparently expressing my mystification at the conclave.

'Oh, don't worry, don't worry,' and the seniormost of them waved his pen airily. 'We are just hunting a formula.'

Officials of the Treasury used to affect mannerisms as stiff and formal as is the style of their letters: 'I am directed by the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury to acquaint you, for the information of Mr Secretary Soanso,. . . .'

By comparison the Colonial Office is casual, while the India Office wears an air of cheery good-fellowship.

I had expected that the Ministers would similarly seek each his own building and each his own staff. But that would have been the way of extravagance, and it was avoided.

Instead, the Secretariat continued to function as it had

in the past. There was only this difference, that the orders of Government were taken from the new Ministers, who sometimes played ball with their subjects, as experience showed the weight of work to be heavier here and lighter there. In consequence, the same Secretary might serve one, two, or even three, masters. And of course he had to be ready to help his Minister where technical knowledge was required. In bureaucratic days, preliminary notes of explanation were seldom necessary, because it was to an expert that papers were submitted.

And now there were politicians at the head, men quick to gauge the public temper. A magnet, however valuable, cannot attract steel that is beyond the field of its influence; and an expert's advice falls useless on unwilling ears. It is the politician who judges just where the magnetic field ends. And as he has to persuade the House, so the administrator has to persuade him.

Sometimes a Minister prefers to have the meat served up to him and to season, shape, and size the sausages himself. But generally they like to have the sausages sent up all ready for cooking, 'on appro'. And with the sending there would be an explanatory note. I had thought this extra work would be distasteful. The Ministers made it pleasurable.

There was a very difficult file in which intricate problems were involved, an unelucidated section in the law itself, conflicting precedents, and the enunciation of a policy. It was not easy to make up my own mind; and when I had, it was still more difficult to set the case out clearly and concisely, so as to waste none of the busy Minister's time. There was considerable delay which from many a bureaucratic superior would have called forth a rebuke. A brief apology was added to the file. It came back with this note: 'The excellence and completeness of the note fully justify the delay. I sanction all the proposals.'

The father and mother of delay is the Finance Department. In bureaucratic days, when it took a district officer five years to complete a single project, procedure demanded, first, a submission of a scheme more or less in the rough. This had to be considered by the chain of officials concerned. If the originator was a sub-divisional officer, the case passed through the hands of the Deputy Commissioner, the Commissioner, and probably the Financial Commissioner, and was then passed on to the Secretary to Government concerned. He consulted the Finance Department, and, if the scheme were approved, eventually would issue orders, in which 'administrative sanction' was conveyed.

Down the same chain the orders went back, and finally reached the sub-divisional officer, but with the warning that 'administrative sanction' did not imply permission to proceed, only to enter the scheme in his budget. Possibly the date for the budget had just elapsed; and then everything had to stand by for another year. When the season came round, the papers were submitted for detailed scrutiny, and this time considered in relation to all other applications to share what money might be available for new expenditure.

By the time both financial and administrative sanction had been conveyed, the official who had planned the scheme had probably either gone on leave, or been transferred; and his successor's interests were centred in something else.

Financial assent has still to be recorded before expenditure can be authorized on many matters, even though budget provision exists. And the Finance Department can be obstructive. Stories are told of civilian financial advisers setting their amateur opinion above the expert advice of technicians, the civilian withholding assent to a military plan, not on financial grounds but because he, forsooth, thought he knew better.

I had one such experience, but only one. The Finance Secretary of the day had once been a secretary to my predecessor, and on a proposal of mine, after briefly admitting that there was no financial objection, spread himself over several sheets of foolscap, attacking the recommendation on 'revenue grounds'. Had he brought his doubts to me, I would gladly have considered and could have resolved them; but the file went up to Government direct. The Minister sent the file back to me, and we discussed it. Having exposed the fallacies of the Finance Secretary's arguments orally, I asked permission to send the file up again in my own way. It reached him with the brief note, 'H.M. need not read more than the first three lines of F.S.'s note. There is no financial objection.' H.M. sanctioned the proposal and took care that the file came back through the F.S.'s office.

The first budget, on which the new Ministry had to work, had been framed by the Legislative Assembly, before they took office. The outgoing British Finance Member had played the game with a very straight bat, and overcoming the temptation to retire with the glory of a giver of great gifts, had saved up a balance of over half a crore (Rs. 5,000,000). And the problem was how to spend the surplus wisely for the best benefit of an agricultural province.

Some day mankind will overcome the tyranny of an annual budget and look at least three years ahead, planning their spending in the first, their expectations in the second, and their hopes in the third; revising annually as hope is raised to expectation, and expectation to actual disbursements. But at present the one-year budget system holds its stupid sway. Finance must indeed see that driving is careful, even cautious, and that the Car of the State does not start on a journey for which there is not adequate petrol and oil. But the annual braking, pull-up and overhaul slows the pace of progress.

And the young Government wanted results quickly. Their scheme was ingenious. They decided to put aside the bulk of the surplus into a Development Fund, to be supplemented, when good years came, till it was nearly doubled. With the funds so earmarked, they would launch a five-year programme in which expenditure would be maintained at an even level.

Heads of departments, in consultation with district officers, were to study the requirements of each district and jointly frame a project providing for the expenditure of the first year, and, in addition, looking ahead with expectancy and hope. The Minister also allotted to each Deputy Commissioner a fairly substantial sum for expenditure 'at his discretion' within the scope of the scheme. So was the old bureaucratic machinery cleverly adapted to modern requirements. How far away seemed the snail's pace of Major Bacon's day!

More money meant more staff. And the appointment of staff involves the exercise of patronage. The communal spectre rattled his bones. If each Minister were left to make his own appointments in his own department, considerations of the ballot, if nothing else, would secure a preponderance of favours to the community or class to which he owed his seat. Certainly under the semi-Indianized constitution it would often have been possible to guess the community of the Minister by studying statistics of appointments in his departments during his tenure of office.

It was not long before a formula was devised. The loaves and fishes were to be apportioned according to the representation of the communities in the Assembly. The Muslims, who number fifty-five per cent of the province, would get fifty per cent of the posts; Hindus, twenty-five; Sikhs, whose numbers are only thirteen per cent, thanks to the weightage accorded them would get twenty; Christians, two and one half; the remaining 'Others', two and one half.

But the application of the policy presented a hundred and one problems.

The Sikh community are concentrated in the centre of the Punjab. How are their reservations to be taken up in Gurgaon in the south or in Mianwali in the north? Is a modernized Sikh, who shaves, to be classified as a Sikh? Qualified 'Others' are rare; are standards to be lowered? In the northern districts Muslims preponderate far in excess of the fifty per cent allotted to them; will a northern Muslim be handicapped proportionately? Similarly will the Hindu in the north have a better chance than a Hindu in the Ambala division, where their numbers are greater?

If all patronage were to be centralized, local officers would be embarrassed. Many a man's assistance to Government is prompted by the hope of favours for his son; and it is the local officer who requires that assistance. Moreover, a centrally appointed staff, for the lower ranks at least, would necessitate higher rates of pay. A man can live and work in his home town more cheaply than elsewhere.

Is natural aptitude to be ignored? The Sikh has a flair for mechanics, and, if statistics of past appointments are a fair indication, also for agricultural science. The Hindu mode of life is better suited to the clerical profession than that of either Sikh or Muslim. The Muslim makes the better policeman and is the tougher man.

Besides, counting heads may be good arithmetic, and good religion; but it is poor administration. A Muslim policeman in Jubbulpore discussing local riots with me told me the communities were equally balanced.

'But surely', I protested, 'the Hindus are much more numerous?'

'Oh, numerous! I thought you referred to comparative strength. In that we are about equal. In numbers we are just five per cent.'

Again, admitted that the ultimate object is to insure the correct proportion in every service, by what date is that object to be attained?

In each service, in addition to the officials holding permanent posts, there are those holding acting, below them those holding temporary, posts, and below them again, accepted candidates. In no cadre are the proportions exact. Were adjustments to begin in any of these classes, or only in the future? If the disparity were rectified by flooding the next appointments to fall vacant with the community that was in the minority, then at some future date there would be a solid bloc of men of that community in all the key posts, and it is always easy for a key man to arrange the postings or opportunities of his subordinates in such a way that only the men of his choice are found to be properly qualified when the moment comes for promotion.

All these problems had to be solved, and were—by the combination of simple arithmetic, commonsense, and good humour.

But the bureaucratic old-stager shook his head. Often he had to make do with a man of the right community and the wrong training. At first it was irksome.

One way of solving the difficulty was, when posting men of influence to offices far beyond their ability to hold them, to give them a clever deputy or assistant to prop them up.

But are not these growing pains? If India is to realize herself, there must be a fusion of States and provinces into a single whole. And the fusion should start at the bottom. When education and practice have levelled the aptitudes of all classes and communities, the importance of communal distinctions will tend to disappear.

And even the old-stager had to admit that somehow or other the new scheme works. If the tools given to the modern official are less efficient than those of his predecessors',

the greater credit to him for the good work he continues to turn out! For the new order is still preserving the old form of administration and the Deputy Commissioner is still very much the head of his district.

This is curious. In theory, government by ministers and a parliament is logically expressed through departmental control. The Deputy Commissioner is a relic of the time when a small, well-paid professional class ran the whole business of Government. There are, however, two reasons why he should continue. The first is the Indian's instinctive respect for authority; the second, the ever-present danger of communal rioting.

Whether from these or other considerations, the Punjab Government make it a point of policy, as did their predecessors before them, to uphold the prestige of the district official. But using the same machinery, the people's government is able to probe deeper into the people's lives, and ameliorate what the bureaucratic government did not dare to touch.

Purdah still dominates, and the spasmodic efforts of occasional enthusiasts to improve the Indian home met with small encouragement in the days of the bureaucracy. 'It is their country, their problem; it is not for us to interfere.' In the first year of the new Government plans were laid—initiated, it is true, by a British officer—for the establishment of a school for women, to train in the first year at least one woman for each district to go out and instruct her sisters in such simple subjects as cooking, sewing, and all the details of homecraft. She would make her headquarters with or near the lady health visitor, and the two would work together.

It would have been very difficult for any of the earlier Governments to have sanctioned a cess such as the Muslim community imposed on itself, to be collected with the land revenue, the proceeds to be applied to the restoration of the

Badshahi Mosque, the central place of Muslim worship in Lahore. The people's government had no difficulty.

Not that the majority community enjoys any liberty or licence at the expense of the rest. When Khaksars became a menace they were suppressed, even though they had to be ejected from the mosques in which they had sought refuge.

The leader of the movement, Allama Mashriqi, in the early days of his venture, visited me when I was Chief Secretary. He had been an official in the education department of the North-West Frontier. He was the author of a number of books and supposed to be learned. He brought with him an Englishman whose recent conversion to Islam had been filling the columns of the Muslim Press. But over their coffee, it became evident that the Allama's knowledge of the world was sadly limited, and his friend, who had been advertizing himself as Sir James Brunton, Baronet, an imposter.

The pseudo-Sir James gave himself away when he told me that his friend had been educated at 'Oxford College' and he himself had been at 'Bally Ole'. Poor Balliol!

XXV

'I'M WORRIED,' said the Deputy Commissioner of Hissar, who had just come into my office. 'This famine has been going on so long that I am afraid for my people. They seem so weak that any epidemic might just sweep them away. I've been out on tour, and though I am not doctor enough to be certain, they seem to me emaciated and on the verge of a breakdown.'

I rang up the Director of Public Health. He was the man who, as Deputy Director, had helped me to clean up the filth of Multan. He came over at once, listened to Stacy, and questioned him.

'I will come down and see for myself, but I had better collect my nutrition expert. He is out in Lyallpur.'

Thirty-six hours later, they were away; and five days after, were back.

'Stacy is right. There is a lot of scurvy; more threatening; and the intense cold of winter is approaching. We must get down to this right away.'

The Inspector General of Civil Hospitals was consulted, and he agreed that, if Government would approve, as it did, the dispensaries in this area should be handed over to the Director's charge.

Itinerating medical relief was planned. The whole of our famine relief administration was reviewed from the point of view of the health expert, and overhauled.

Famine had been raging for two years in this, the most waterless of all the Punjab districts. It adjoins Delhi, and the Chief Commissioner there once remarked, 'I wish we had data to test my theory. It seems to me as if this whole area is undergoing a period of desiccation such as must, at some geological period, have overtaken the once-populated deserts of the world.'

Whether he was right or not, the fact remained that it was five years since this vast tract had had rain enough for a good harvest.

When first it had become plain that famine conditions were setting in, the new Punjab Government hoped that these would continue only up to the next monsoon and, having a good balance at the bank, decided to treat the people much more generously than had been the rule in bureaucratic days. They raised the rates sanctioned in the Code for payment of labour, and the Premier himself promised that efforts would be made to provide so much fodder that there should be milk in every household.

But again the rains failed; and it became evident that the high rates were attracting labour from all the surrounding country, much of it State territory, and that it was being

supported at the expense of the Punjabi taxpayer. Rates had to come down. This time the old bureaucracy was right.

The works themselves, or most of them, though started strictly in accordance with the Code, were clumsy and expensive things. The moral basis of famine works is the very sound maxim: *He that will not work, neither shall he eat.* But it does seem ridiculous to excavate a huge tank as one famine work; and then to fill it up again as another. Yet this has actually occurred.

The Code was compiled at the beginning of the century, and much has changed since then. For one thing, the colony districts have greatly increased the food supply of the province. There are roads everywhere. Rail and motor have replaced the donkey, camel, and bullock cart. Famine then meant lack of food; today, lack of purchasing power. Then, people would flock to famine works because only there could they obtain food; today, the village shops continue to function, and, given the purchasing power, the villager can maintain himself in his home. He is infinitely happier so. There may be just one animal, a goat, or perhaps a donkey; or there may be some infirm member of the family.

An officer on famine duty was asked for indoor relief for the great grandmother of the applicant.

'Great grandmother?' he queried. 'How old is she?'

'She says she is a hundred,' was the answer.

'That's a tough one,' he said. 'But I'll come and see for myself.'

He did; and was taken inside a hut where lay a bag of skin and bones, half blind, and toothless, but still human; thereafter something of a gold mine, for generous provision in the future compensated for the doubt of the past.

With such mouths to feed, the works system alone cannot solve the whole problem. In Hissar, there were more than

thirty famine works in being at one time, and a dozen others in the unprotected tracts of two adjoining districts. But the workers almost without exception trudged to their tasks and back.

Staff, too, was strained. The Code contemplated payment daily or every second day. That meant the transport of vast quantities of heavy copper coin, safes in which to keep it, guards to protect it, and cashiers to disburse it. There were opportunities for embezzlement in every direction. The headman of a gang would add a name or two; the overseer of a series of gangs had his opportunities; the cashier's accounts were easily faked.

In order to keep any cattle alive, fodder had to be imported by train-loads, often, and usually, to stations where there were no adequate weighing machines. Worse still, by collusion with the railway staff, bills could be presented with verificatory documents attached, for whole wagons that had never been dispatched. 'Accounts are wrong by thirty thousand rupees,' said the Finance Minister at one stage. 'We must find where the error lies, even if it costs another thirty thousand.'

This was the system which had been running according to schedule since the beginning of the famine. It had sufficed while there was a reserve of money and a reserve of health. Now both stocks were at the point of exhaustion, and the outlook for me, who had only just succeeded to the charge, was bleak.

'It's all wrong,' said Colonel Silver, shaking his head. 'Your Code is dated about 1900, and in 1900 the science of nutrition was in its infancy. The Code seems to have been compiled by some mathematical civilian who assumed that the older you grow, the more food you require. We've known for years that the adolescent, at certain stages, requires more food than the adult. Children require milk.

Everybody requires green food, and if they can't get that, they must get vitamins in some other form. The formulae in this Code are wrong.'

'We can tackle that,' I said. 'What about the works themselves?'

'If the people stayed on the works and were fed there,' he said, 'there would be something to be said for them. But from a health point of view, nothing could be more unsatisfactory than your existing camps. People walk from six to eight miles, sometimes more, to a camp, spend a few hours scratching a bit of earth, or carrying baskets, and filling their lungs with dust and dirt. They are paid a pittance, and walk home again, having expended energy, the replacement of which in food would cost more than half their wage.'

It would have been inhuman to have tried to compel the people to live in on the works. As far as eye could see, there was the unrelieved monotony of sandy plain. Even a tree was a rare sight. Morning and afternoon, the winds would rise, driving grit and sand, covering everything, penetrating everything, making existence miserable. Riding through it mile after mile, I have had to check at every few hundred yards to wipe away a rope of sand and saliva from my lips.

And now came the threat of scurvy. In the lower hills there grows a shrub, its fruit in shape and appearance like a big yellow gooseberry. Its vernacular name is *amla*. The Brahmans know of it, and it is under its branches that, in certain seasons and in certain places, they worship the Lord Krishna. It is packed with vitamin C. Who first thought of it, I have forgotten, but the directorate tried it and it proved magical.

Scurvy came under control, but for thousands, whose health was being undermined from lack of green food and milk, some fresh prophylactic had to be devised.

Touring a few weeks later, I was met on the outskirts of a village by the doctor. He was probably the only person there who knew English, and I was not a little surprised to find the way to his headquarters blazed by the sign, 'To Germination Centre'.

On arrival, we found a small courtyard in which there was an enormous water jar, containing several firkins; this was filled, half with grain and half with water. In two adjoining rooms there were spread out blankets, and on them grain which had been taken from the pot, some, twenty-four, some, forty-eight hours previously. The grain had been covered with another damp blanket and now was sprouting. It was dished out twice a week, a handful apiece to every man, woman, and child at the works. Those not at the works were encouraged to prepare it too.

But presently, for the multitude of works, indoor relief was substituted. In every village a house-to-house census was taken of persons and their property. A Naib tahsildar was given an area such that he could visit every village every fortnight. Over him was an Assistant Commissioner, inspecting once a month.

If possible, work was found in the village. Tanks were deepened, wells cleaned, streets paved, a by-pass, or a communicating road to the railway or trunk road, constructed. Scouting; Red Cross work, such as first aid; adult schools; a touring magic lantern; anything that could brighten these drab lives, without pauperizing them, was encouraged. Relief was distributed fortnightly, and the household could budget and spend more profitably than when living literally from day to day. Staff was reduced; supervision increased.

'It is unfair, Sahib,' said a decrepit old man to me. 'Why am I not given relief?'

He certainly looked doddery enough. I turned inquiringly to the Assistant Commissioner.

'What has happened to your camel? Are you not still getting fifteen rupees a month from the Naib tahsildar?' he rapped out.

These youngsters knew their job; and it was a much happier, stronger population that I saw next time I toured.

The new Constitution had enabled us to disregard the old Code; but that Code, an all-India document, manifestly required revision. The Government of India sent forth an admonition to provincial authorities to prepare for a conference. The months, the years, rolled by; those who had handled this famine, dispersed. The conference has not yet been assembled.

The famine brought into strong relief one, perhaps the greatest, boon which the Absolute Government bestowed on the province. No tribe can be dispossessed of its ancestral land by the moneyed classes. Had there been no Alienation of Land Act, the farming community, in the course of a famine such as this, would have lost its land to the capitalists. The Act preserved them. It is an Act that has had to be amended frequently, to close the gaps made by judicial decisions in the wall of protection it seeks to erect.

A Martian once paid a secret visit to Earth, and this was his report:

'These Earth folk create legislative bodies, which in different parts of their world they call by different names, such as Council, Kuomintang, Senate, Parliament, Assembly.

'There is always a group of leaders, and laws are usually initiated by them. These leaders employ the best legal advisers they can find. They explain to them in simple words what they want enacted, and then tell them to translate it into legal jargon. For laws have a language of their own. The ordinary person has 'a house', the lawyer 'a tenement'; 'death' is 'decease'; 'property' a 'demesne'; land free of land tax is land held on 'fee simple'; and so forth.

'What they call a Bill is drafted, and this is laid before the whole body; which spends weeks and weeks in discussing it in principle, then in detail, and finally word by word. When it has apparently reached its final shape, it is referred back to what they call a Select Committee, on which again there are always experienced lawyers to make quite sure that the Bill expresses exactly what they want, and directs, in correct language, that this shall be done and that shall not be done. The Bill is passed and becomes an Act.

'In Mars, of course, what it is determined shall be done, is done. But here on Earth, concurrently with the body of men who make laws, they set up a totally different body of men to interpret them. These they call judges, and these judges frame a kind of law of their own; and by means of one particular branch of it, which they call the Law of Interpretation, presently succeed in making lawful what the law-making body had decreed to be unlawful.

'The law-making body then obediently sets to work and patches up their old Act, restoring to it the meaning they originally intended, and destroying the value of the decision of the judges. And so the game goes on, till some Acts look very much like a beggar's garment covered with multiple patches of different sizes and different colours.

'It happened that a copy of the works of one Will Shakespeare had reached Mars, and the official who received this report had been reading them. His comment at the foot of the report was a human quotation,

"What fools these mortals be." '

When I came back to earth, I was looking at the Alienation of Land Act again and its latest amendment. The Act had said quite plainly that no member of an agricultural tribe could sell his land or mortgage it for more than a specified term of years to anyone who was not a tribesman.

But the money-lender said, 'This is not going to bother me. Here, Gharib, you owe me five hundred rupees. Makruz Khan owes me twelve hundred, and he has got a very nice well. You, Gharib, want a little more money for your daughter's wedding. I am quite prepared to lend you that on condition that you arrange with Makruz Khan that he sell his well to you. Makruz is willing to do this because I shall allow him to live on his well and work it, nominally as your tenant, but really as mine. The rents and profits will all come to me. If you two do not agree, I shall sue you in the courts, claim every penny of interest, which, as you know, is in the bond at thirty-six per cent. I will sell up everything you have that is movable, and whenever you have a crop, I will have that seized.'

The Government records show a sale by Makruz to Gharib. The land appears to be in the possession of a tribesman; and the civil court has said that there is nothing illegal. The number of such cases in the Punjab would run into thousands.

Some of the debts go back to the wave of inflation which succeeded the last war. Wheat rose to eight rupees a maund, the standard weight of eighty pounds, and the farmers found their pockets full of money, and their credit expanded. They bought motor cars, invested in cotton factories and sugar mills, and launched out on a large scale. But they still thought in maunds of grain rather than in rupees. That second-hand car, in his reckoning, had not cost the farmer eight hundred rupees, but one hundred maunds of wheat.

Then came the crash. Wheat fell to two rupees, and even to one and a half. By the operation of the money market, the farmer's debt had increased fourhundredfold, and more. He was in distress; and yet judicial decisions were sapping the protection which the Act, to him a Magna Charta, had accorded.

The new Government faced the situation boldly, and passed a series of Acts, all intended to help the indebted farmer. Money-lenders had to keep legible accounts. Transactions that had slipped through judge-made gaps were cancelled, and with retrospective effect. Debt Conciliation Boards were strengthened, and markets were controlled. These Acts were christened 'Black' in the towns, but in the country, 'Golden'.

The political scientist of the future will find in this legislation food for thought and material for lectures. Hitherto, he has considered the association of executive and judicial power in one hand as a symbol of a tyrannical, oligarchical, or bureaucratic period, of a backward society, as the modernist would say. In theory, the more popular the government, the less the power of the executive, the wider the power of the Courts of Justice. But this legislation upsets all such theory.

There is a history behind it. To few is the time factor so important as it is to the farmer. He must sow in season and reap in season. He cannot afford to be at the beck and call of law courts, where justice is, in every respect, blind. He cannot avoid his human disputes, but he asks that regard be paid to his peculiar circumstances.

British rule from the very beginning has given him a wide-eyed, sympathetic machinery for the disposal of his quarrels relating to his rent and tenure, executive officers who tour and can hold court in the village itself. In this capacity, they are Collectors; and the chain of appeal ends, not in the High Court, but in the court of the Financial Commissioner, the highest executive official in the province.

Act after Act passed by the first Punjabi Government removes litigation under it from the judiciary, and transfers it to the courts under the control of the Financial

Commissioner. Political progress has strengthened the administrative, and weakened the judiciary, to such an extent that a large number of civil courts have been closed.

The report of our Martian friend and the comments of his officers on this aspect of developments are still awaited.

But the townsmen were furious, and decided to test the strength of Government. When the harvest of 1941 came to market, the grain dealers refused to buy.

'All your modern legislation is directed against us. This latest Marketing Act is impossible. We will close our shops.'

The farmer has not usually got storage; and without proper storage wheat quickly deteriorates. The problem of land revenue was difficult, but not insoluble. The financing of the farmer raised very serious issues. The Cabinet had passed the legislation through the House, and had kept the subsequent negotiations in their own hands. Not till one Monday morning, when the situation was nearly hopeless, did they hand it over to the executive. Said the Finance Minister, 'I estimate this strike is going to cost one crore and seventy-five lakhs'.

There was only one thing to do, set about purchasing, and advertise the determination to do so as widely as possible. That set the merchants thinking. Were they risking their livelihood?

Storage was hired, and staff employed. Thanks to the free hand given by the Premier, four hundred thousand gunny bags were ordered from Calcutta by telegram. The ghost of financial red tape groaned.

It was on a Friday morning of that week that the Finance Minister made his gloomy forecast.

At three-thirty that afternoon came a telegram from Amritsar—the strike was off.

XXVI

'SOME succeed by luck; some by good management.' Yet it seems that luck favours the good manager.

For decades past, the Governments of the Punjab had been anxiously watching a creeping sickness, a salinity, which was first reducing and then destroying the fertility of thousands and thousands of fields. By 1941, one and a quarter million acres of arable land had become unculturable and the disease had attained such momentum that annually not less than twenty-five thousand, and in some years fifty thousand, acres were perishing. A deadly sickness, and there was no cure.

The farmer thought there was some poison in the soil, and that infection spread. It sometimes looked like that. In a good field bald patches would appear; these would grow larger, stretching out one to the other till they coalesced. But sometimes the whole field would collapse simultaneously, usually after an absolutely bumper crop. One year magnificent; the next dead, completely dead.

Revenue officers shook their heads. 'The "Prosperous Punjab" will return to its old poverty; the golden cornfields will revert to barren desert.'

All the resources of science were harnessed in the search for a remedy. Year by year, a water-logging conference under the presidency of the Governor himself was held, usually at Government House. They called it a 'water-logging' conference because the salt condition seemed to be associated with water-logging. It is not; but that discovery was made much later.

Decade succeeded decade, and no solution was found. Some tried this remedy, and some, that. Money was spent in scraping off the top soil; removing the efflorescence to the side or digging it into pits; and a crop would be harvested. Came the rains, and all was as before—the old salt had

mingled with the new.

The farmer never had any doubt regarding the direction in which to look for help. 'My land is becoming salty. Give me more water,' he said.

'My dear, good man,' said the irrigation engineer, 'do use your wits. Before the canal came, your land was sweet; now the canal has come, it has become saline. The root of your trouble must be the water. We will give you less water, not more.' And the outlets of the weaker villages were reduced.

One morning, before the new Government was a year old, there came to my room Mr S.H.Bigsby, the Chief Engineer, and Brigadier McKenzie Taylor, the Director of Irrigation Research.

'Eureka—or whatever Archimedes would have said if he had been plural—we have found the remedy. But how, oh how, will we ever get it adopted?'

They explained. They had been conducting experiments on a small scale, and were now satisfied they should be tried out on a large.

The remedy was twofold. Water, lots of water, and a specified rotation of crops.

Lots of water! Alas, poor officialdom. It had been wrong. The farmer had been right. Experience again had beaten theory—the simple man on the spot ahead of the wise man in his office.

It was salt in the soil surface that killed the crop, salt within the food range of its roots. Drive the salt beyond that range, and keep it there; and that part of the battle was won.

But while King Salt had reigned, he had sucked out of the humus chemicals essential to fertility; and those must be replaced.

Again the good doctor prescribed: after water, rice; and after rice, a nitrogen-fixing crop; the treatment to be applied under 'medical' supervision, till laboratory tests showed the 'patient' to be disease-free.

'A sporting zaildar in Sheikhupura let us try this on a patch of his land. It was white with salt. It is now salt-free, and has a bumper crop. I am sure we are right. But how can we convince others?'

'I take it you want a really big experiment?' I said. 'That means people you can trust; people who will not take the water given for experiment and apply it to fatten the crops in their good fields; people, too, who will follow the prescription to the letter.'

'Yes,' replied the Chief Engineer. 'It comes down to this. We want authority to choose our fields, and offer concessions covering the cost of water and land revenue. The Acts and the Rules make no provision for a case such as this, but if there are no concessions, there can be no pioneers. Can you help? It is beyond us.'

They were like doctors with a new-found treatment in a disease-stricken town. They had a cure, but no patients.

The stereotyped routine would have been to start amending the Acts and the Rules under them. Matters in the field would have continued to drift, while the papers passed properly, and with due dignity, through the correct channels.

The new Government knows the value of red tape—a good servant, but not a master. And it keeps scissors to shear it away when necessary.

Most of the Ministers own estates themselves, and they understood. Three weeks later, I found myself, in addition to my other duties, Chairman of the newly constituted Land Reclamation Board, with Mr Bigsby and the drainage engineer as the only other members. All our recommendations regarding concessions were approved. Only the Finance Ministry braked. But a year later they must have regretted it as they stared at the first financial results—one hundred and ten per cent profit!

Others had digged, watered, tended. Fortune gave the ripened plum for plucking to the new Government. But a gardener's work is never done. This tree has grown to overshadow yonder shrub; the beauty of that border is spent, and it should be cut away; pruning is wanted here, planting there.

The new Government, aware of the places where special care was called for, promptly dispatched Commissions to inquire and report.

'This wretched Commission is cutting the whole of the ground from under our feet, curing the complaints we had hoped to exploit,' was overheard by an Indian member of the Forest Commission when travelling in the Hills and spending a night at a rest house in which was also a Congress agitator and his comrade, who thought their companion already asleep.

Forest administration had indeed gone awry. Perspective was lost. The Government which preceded the British rule, and indeed the Governments of the Indian States in the Hills to this day, have always insisted that ownership in the forests rests with Government. Only the trees close to the hamlets belong to the villagers; and among these for many years the best, especially the cedar, were claimed as Royal.

They are simple, conservative folk, these men of the Hills. The Kangra District in size approximates to the principality of Wales. And in between Kangra proper and its sub-division, Kulu, lies Mandi State, of which once I was Assistant Superintendent. One summer when I was out in camp, there reached me a petition from the farmers of one of the valleys.

'Sir, our rains are overdue, and our crops are parched. Please arrange.'

I stared at it. Luckily, I had with me the *Wazir*.

'How on earth can I deal with a request like this?'

'Oh, that is just a matter of routine. You send it for disposal to the police station in whose jurisdiction the rain god's temple lies.'

Obediently, I did so.

A fortnight later there came a very hurt reminder.

'We asked your help a fortnight ago, and nothing has happened. Please send assistance very quickly.'

Again I consulted my expert.

'This should be endorsed to the Sub-Inspector in charge of the police station, with an order to call on the priests for a report. They must explain what action has been taken on the former petition. You should say that you are disappointed and displeased at the lack of results.'

A week later a second, and angrier, reminder came.

'Our crops, our cattle, are perishing; our lives are in danger and nothing has been done. Is the Government asleep?'

'And what now, *Wazir* Sahib?'

'I suggest the time has come to be stern. The god and his priests should be ordered to come into Mandi town, where they will be incarcerated. It is a two-day journey for them. The ordinary procedure is to give them three days; and, if by the fourth day rain has not come, the priests will be deprived of food and water till it rains, and on the fifth day the god will be scourged.'

The god was carried down in his palanquin and installed in the lock-up kept for the purpose. The priests looked anxious.

Happily for them, on the third day the clouds began to gather, and it rained and rained and rained.

The heaviest forests are in the Kangra circle. Following annexation, the rights of the Government and the rights of the villagers were investigated and proposals for a forest settlement submitted. This was the case which lay on the table of Government for fifteen years.

In that settlement, broadly speaking, forests were divided into three rings. The trees closest to the hamlet were given to it for its use; in the next ring, the villagers had extensive, but not complete, rights of user; the upper portion was reserved for Government.

As population increased and there were more mouths to feed, and more folk to shelter, timber would be required for new houses, and land for cropping. Goats multiplied, and goats are the machine-gun of young vegetation.

Their own trees destroyed, the villagers turned on the protected area, and, by trespass and encroachment, ruined that; and then desired the facilities of the protected forest to be granted to them from the reserve. Forest guards, in insufficient number, were appointed, like gamekeepers in a nobleman's estate, to prevent poaching. Antagonism was acute. On the one side, that mysterious invisible entity called Government, and its agent, the Forest Department; and on the other, all the forest dwellers.

Yet to the Punjab, the proper maintenance of the vegetation of the hills, high and low, was, is, and always will be, of cardinal importance. The wealth and welfare of the Land of the Five Rivers depends on its canals; the canals on the rivers; the rivers on the mountain streams and springs; and these on the storing of Nature's moisture in mossy bank and covered field. The trees must break the force of the monsoon storm, that the waters come softly to the ground and soak slowly in. So only will there be water in the thirsty winter months.

But if the trees are cut unmercifully, the naked earth will be swept away in the next shower. Even cultivated fields, unless the ploughing is at the right angle to the slope, will quickly disappear. The hillman, who asks leave to deforest five acres that he and his wife and children may have

sustenance, may start an avalanche that will ruin the homes of as many hundred, when the full tale is told.

The new Commission was typical of the new Government. It worked in the open under the trees. Each and every complaint was heard and decided, so far as decision was possible, on the spot. At its early sessions, two or three hundred villagers were present; at its latest, five thousand—many who had journeyed three days out and had to journey three days back, carrying their food with them.

Through the vast number of detailed recommendations made by the Commission, there ran the single policy: 'The People and Government are One. It should be impossible in the future for Government Reports to contain such phrases as "this recommendation will be to the interests both of Government and the people". Nothing is good for the one that is not good for the other, albeit the Government may have to protect an individual from himself, when that individual is intent on destroying his capital and ruining himself, his neighbours, and his descendants.'

The forests were to be worked as though owned by a joint stock company. The Forest Department would provide the managing direction and the staff. The villagers would form committees and arrange for the closure and afforestation of their own grazing grounds, being allowed to participate in the Government's reserved forests in proportion to the extent to which they threw, as it were, their own property into the common heap.

Henceforward, it was not on Government property, but on common land, that the encroacher would prey. The Forest Department, no longer an enemy, would be an adviser and friend.

It took fifteen years to pass orders on the settlement proposals; orders on our Report were passed in two months. Four years later, and success was apparent. The scheme is working.

THE PUNJAB AND OTHER PROVINCES

A new breeze, fresh and free, sweeps the ancient mountains and whispers through the trees.

XXVII

'THE gypsy warned me!' But I did not heed.

He was a pleader from Lucknow, and we were travelling back to India; I, returning from what I expected to be my very last leave. We had exchanged the usual commonplaces of passengers: 'Glorious weather!' 'Yesterday's run was good.' 'Did you see the flying fish?' and so on.

Abruptly one morning he asked me, 'You do belong to the Indian Civil Service? Tell me, is your Service as hated in the Punjab as it is in the United Provinces?'

I bristled. He hastened to defend himself.

'Please do not be offended. My son is in your Service. But Indians or Britishers, we others make no distinction between them. It seems to us their only thought is to make money, as much and as quickly as they can, and then retire.'

'I am sure you are wrong, even about your own province,' I said. 'As for the Punjab, you are hopelessly out.'

I had some reason for feeling hurt. Years before, I had promised Sir Sikander that I would be there if the New Constitution came through, and he became Premier. I had just refused a very advantageous offer of congenial work in the business world that would have given me a better livelihood at once and lasted well beyond the date of my compulsory retirement. But Sir Sikander was about to become Premier, and I had my promise to keep.

The gypsy had warned me; but it was not till the war gave me a duty which took me all over India that I was able to appreciate how different is the Punjab from the rest of India. Even the civilians of the province seem different; and to be imbued with the spirit of the land they serve, the spirit of affection for their work, and 'all out' service. There, and

there only, have the officers of the Indian Civil Service their own war charity fund, a fund that distributed over a hundred thousand rupees in less than two years.

The big province that adjoins the Punjab to the south is the United Provinces. John Lawrence laid the foundation of British rule in the Punjab. But what he approved, his brother Henry in the United Provinces, who had inherited the *taluqdari* system, disapproved. The policies were diametrically opposite. The supports of John's building were the small farmers; of Henry's, the very big squires and feudal nobles. In the Punjab, the word 'zamindar' connotes 'peasant proprietor'; in the United Provinces, 'lord of the manor'.

John's instructions to his first Settlement Officers were: 'Be as generous as you can.' Henry, dealing with the owners of wide estates, could take more exactly what was considered Government's due. But the owners took it all, and more, out of their tenants.

A jingle that passed in later years to distinguish two Deputy Commissioners, each remembered in the same district, might have been coined for them.

Henry Sahib amir parwar;
Jan Sahib gharib parwar.[1]

Successors to those great names of the middle of the last century have accentuated this divergence of policy.

In the Punjab, as we have seen, the executive is strengthened, even more than before, by the People's Government. The Commissioner of a division is in every way the head of his division. When departmental questions are to the fore, he will consult the local departmental heads, and send up an agreed divisional opinion. Similarly in the district, the Deputy Commissioner does lead.

In the United Provinces, the Commissioner is little more than a superior revenue court, ignorant, it may be, even of

[1]Henry cherished the rich; John, the poor.

the working of the Criminal Investigation Department in his division.

In 1942 in the Punjab, there was co-operation and quiet; in the United Provinces murder and riot, riot that less skilfully handled might have led to disaster.

If the United Provinces is the province of the big zamindar, Bombay is the home of Big Business. There are indeed the Mahrattas, fine fighting material, but backward in education. But the feature of the province is the number of big mill-owners and moneyed men, their main aim, more money, and more power to get that money.

Congress is strong there; but they expect to dominate Congress, and that Congress will dominate the future Government. The expectation is widespread. There are candidates for commissions who fear the prospect of that Government, and are anxious to be recruited to some arm of the Forces, such as the engineers, where they can learn a trade.

'We do not mind being killed; but if we survive, we have our lives to live, and a Congress-minded Government will penalize us for having volunteered. We must be able to stand on our own feet.'

The population of Madras is large; its recruiting effort was slow at the start. The contribution of Bengal and Assam, of Bihar and Orissa, is negligible.

There are, of course, brilliant exceptions within the provinces, as, for instance, those already mentioned, or the Rajputs, or the domiciled Nepalese; but province for province, the Punjab is *facile princeps* in all war effort. Under its Indian Government it has surpassed in every way its own record in the first Great War.

The Punjab civilians understand the soldier. It would be impossible for a Punjab civilian to write, as did one of another province, asking for reconsideration of a candidate who had been rejected for the Air Force on medical grounds.

He was too short in the leg to reach controls, and too colour-blind to read signals.

'If he is small,' wrote the Commissioner, 'he is light—surely an advantage in an aircraft. As for his eyes, the dials are black and white. In my opinion, he should make an excellent night flier.'

It is difficult for those who have not lived in India to understand how such things can be; just as it is difficult for those whose homes are inland to envisage the things of the sea.

A candidate for the Navy was asked if he knew anything about naval instruments.

'Oh, yes,' he said, 'a compass tells you the north.'

'Quite right. And a sextant?'

'Oh, Sir,' was the shocked reply. 'I am not married.'

With certain splendid exceptions, universities in the past have not been good training grounds for the officer. Even the University Training Corps is more of a 'game' or 'subject'. Marks for proficiency are given in a degree examination; and simple drill is elevated to 'military science'.

It was disappointing in the third year of the war to find an athletic, well-born, intelligent company sergeant-major scorning the idea of a commission.

'My father is a high official in an Indian State. There is a soft job waiting for me.'

It was the Punjab that first closed all recruitment to civilian employment till after the war. Temporary makeshifts must carry on wherever there is a vacant post. The permanent choice will await the return of the men in the field, and they will have the preference.

Palmam qui meruit, ferat.

Other provinces slowly followed suit, though few went to such lengths. Not that they can be blamed. The

Centre, from which they should have derived inspiration, lagged no less.

There was a Conference in Simla in July 1941, and it had fallen to me to express, somewhat forcibly, the views of the Punjab Government on the war effort elsewhere. When the official work was over, an Honourable Member of His Excellency the Viceroy's Executive Council, no less, said to me as we walked homewards,

'But you don't really believe the war will come to India?'

This was in July 1941. Almost incredible, but true.

Nevertheless, it was with some amazement that at one university I heard a student of ripe military age and bearing explain,

'I am doing a post-graduate course, marking time. I have a scholarship', he added proudly, 'for Cambridge. I will go there after the war.'

'You're not joining up?'

'Oh, no! I have my research.'

'And who will there be to talk to, and what will you have to talk about in a post-war Cambridge, every one but you having done his bit?'

The students of today claim a freedom of speech and right of criticism of their parents and elders that would have horrified all preceding generations. They must expect that their children in their turn will criticize even more freely.

'Daddy, what did you do to protect your mother and sisters, and home, when war came near and ships were sunk and cities were bombed?'

And when Daddy answers,

'Sonny, my political leader did nothing, and told me to do nothing,' will not that child turn his great, dark eyes on his father and question,

'Daddy, are you sure you did not funk it?'

XXVIII

THE ungrateful East!

How common a *cliché!* And how false! It was probably invented by the servant who wrapped his Lord's talent in a napkin, and did not even leave it on deposit at the bank. Those who have sown in the field of service find they reap, some thirtyfold, some sixtyfold, and some an hundredfold.

There is the memory of the fishes from 'Your Honour's bunds'; of the Subadar's widow, who returned to give thanks; and there are countless others. But especially of those who crowded the hour when the sun of service was setting, when none had anything to gain by touching vanity or pleasing by a picture more painted than true.

Such was the goodbye at Charehan in the Murree Hills when old Captain Mana Khan, then past his three score years and ten, said, as the shadows lengthened, 'Forgive me, Sahib, if I go home now'.

'But surely you are staying the night here?'

'Oh, no, Sahib. You are leaving us, and I had to come to see you and say goodbye. I walked the sixteen miles here, and I will walk them back again.'

Such were the farewells in Attock from the ordinary village folk, who had heard I was motoring through two tahsils on my last visit before retirement. A group of villagers in every village on the road, each with its little band, the squealing fife and the throbbing tom-tom; and the men, fifteen years older than when I had lived among them, pressing round to touch me in farewell.

How well worthwhile were all the hours of thought and toil! How suddenly rich and warm the heart! People of the Punjab, *Ave atque vale!*

PART V

αἴλινον αἴλινον εἰπέ,

τὸ δ' εὖ νικάτω.

Of woe, of woe the tale,
But let the good prevail.

EPILOGUE—THE FUTURE

XXIX

'WRITING a book about India?' said a journalist friend. 'Nobody will read it, unless in the last chapter you tell them what the solution of the Indian problem is going to be.'

'Don't be a mutt!' said another. 'Don't date your book. If you do, the reading public will turn to the last chapter first. Then, if you've given the right answer to the Indian Question, they'll say "*vieux jeu*—stale game": if you're wrong, they'll say, "Not worth reading, this bloke," and throw the book aside!'

My trouble is that, unlike my journalist friend, I have had a judicial training and want my evidence complete before I form my judgements.

The care-free journalist can arrive in India with his solution already packed in his bag. His paper has a policy, and he has come to find facts to prove it right.

And that is always easy. For of India, as of the Bible, it might have been written,

Hic liber est in quo quaerit sua dogmata quisque;
Invenit et pariter dogmata quisque sua.

This is a book in which each individual dogmatist seeks to find his dogma proved; and as he seeks he finds, each the proof of his own dogma.

But one who would contemplate the problem steadily and whole must confess that three chapters of the book of evidence are disappointingly meagre. There is a doubt

about the meaning of 'India'; the forum is not determined; and who knows precisely in what kind of world post-war India will be set?

These chapters should be amplified before a reliable forecast can be made.

XXX

THE first chapter would concern the exact limits of India.

Till quite recently the Viceroy and Governor-General controlled Burma as if it were a part of India. Its borders were contiguous, and it is no more foreign to other parts of India than they are to one another. There are Jains and Buddhists in Delhi as in Rangoon, and far more closely akin to the Burman than is the Punjabi to the Assamese.

Again, with a considerable strain on language, the leader of the Muslim League insists that Muslims constitute a 'nation', and are something apart from the rest. Some thought, some conviction has stirred him; though his expression of it seems unfortunate. But whether the expression is accurate or not, this much is apparent and important, that speaking in the name of ninety millions he denies identity with the remaining three hundred millions.

Not that these figures can be taken as exact; for none who saw the last census at work could trust its results, except as relative approximations.

'I've been travelling, and have been counted five times,' said a European in the Club. 'I did protest, but each enumerator where the train stopped was so anxious to bag a real live European!'

And that was nothing to the ardent Haji, who would swell the list of Muslim voters, or to his Hindu rival, out to do him down.

If British India is still in the building-yards, and like Kipling's ship before it found itself, what of the Indian States? What will be their relation to the ship? They are even more individual, and find combination with one another or federation with the rest of India an unattractive prospect. Yet their area is nearly as great.

Is not the very conception of India as a stable entity an incident of British rule? Earlier Powers may have had fleeting visions of a unified India; but there never was solid reality till all these 'peoples, nations, and languages' fell for guidance into a single hand.

If that hand is to be removed, why should they hang together? They are infinitely more diverse than Dutch and Luxembourger, French and Fleming, Spaniard and Italian, even Swede and Swiss. A traveller can pass from Calais to Constantinople without changing his train. But no one has ever suggested that on that account there must be one, and only one, Government throughout.

Before anyone starts to solve the problem of India, he must be quite sure *what is India.*

The second chapter would contain the names of the Powers who will make the decision, with an indication of their knowledge and their sanity. It is important to know your judge.

Murphy was an Irishman whose Counsel, in Murphy *v.* O'Brien, was desperately fighting a losing case. He had just managed to stave off a decision that afternoon; to the irritation of the judge, who, seeing the weakness of his argument, had been striving to close down.

'Shure, and I've a brace of fine fat ducks,' said his ignorant farmer client. 'And would it sweeten the judge if I sent them round for his dinner?'

'Sweeten the Judge! You're almost on the rocks already,' cried his flabbergasted Counsel. 'You'd be foundered and

sunk if you did any such thing; and find yourself in jail to boot.'

'Is that so? Shure, I didn't mane any harm at all, at all.'

Wearily the Counsel took up his papers next day; but to his surprise found a very different judge, as kindly as he had been hard, seeming to seek out any little point that told in his client's favour, and dealing mercilessly with any exaggeration, any slip on the other side.

To his utter amazement, he won the verdict; and told his client he was the luckiest man on earth.

'And all thanks to Your Honour, I'm saying; and Glory be to them ducks!'

'You don't mean you sent them?' inquired the horrified lawyer.

'Shure and I did; but the name on the card was O'Brien!'

And now it seems that the future of India is to be decided in the forum of the world, a world in which every country has its own viewpoint, its peculiar bias. There is appeal to Russia, appeal to China, appeal to the United States. And the United States is toying with that appeal—will they ever be able even to whisper the phrase 'Monroe Doctrine' again?

Not that there is not justification for a world forum.

Prior to 1914, the world cultivated nationalism; and nations kept armies and navies to fight their battles for them, their Davids and Goliaths on an expanded scale. By their achievements the nations stood or fell. The years of war taught that war involves, not just the fighting forces, but the whole people; and that one people involves the next; till all the world is embroiled.

Nationalism is out of date; and the future is for the cosmopolitan. Each nation is the brother nation's keeper.

But will the Peace Makers see it? Will they, or won't

they, be given vision? The statesmen of today think they are sane, but so did the statesmen of yesterday.

Yet was it sanity to talk of 'squeezing till the pips squeak', to win cheers by that talk, and then leave Germany to arm and arm, and flout? Was it sanity to go on with the League of Nations, when its founders had spurned it? Was it sanity to expect to preserve law and order without a single policeman, not one to shield from misdemeanour within, or protect from peril without? Even London cannot continue without its Bobby!

The third chapter would explain the constitution of the future world.

When barons held sway, John Hodge in his village was careful to pay his dues to the Lord of the Manor, and to look to him for protection. They were lord and man.

When the King's peace superseded baronial power, John Hodge gave the Lord Baron the go-by.

There is much talk of self-determination; but it is only the same old problem in modern dress. It is possible to have small units, it is possible to find the cost of their administration, if, but only if, the Eagles of War have perished and the Dove of Universal Peace reigns.

It were wise to know the conditions of the future, before starting to remould the present.

XXXI

EVEN if these data had been available, my journalist friend should not have asked a mere district official to try to make a forecast, not of what he felt should be done, but of what others would do. The viewpoint of the district officer often fails to coincide with that of the Centre.

I heard Neville Chamberlain's speech announcing war when I was sitting at the side of a Hissar road, on my way to a famine centre. And I said to my Indian friend, who

owned the car and its radio, 'That will resolve the tension. The Viceroy will surely expand his Council tomorrow.' But tomorrow became a week; the week, months; and the months, years. The springtide at its flood was missed; and men had fallen to questioning, 'What can I get out of this?' not 'What can I give?', as they would have done had it been possible to enlist them when the waters first were full.

Others thought likewise; but, of course, we were wrong. The clumsy old machinery had to be cranked up and set on its creaking course to grind out its slow results.

But by the time they appeared, they were stale.

In the province, too, we were wrong. There were those who wanted at once to start to expand technical schools and train mechanics. To begin with, just twenty thousand rupees (£1,500) were wanted for one school. A high official in the Government of India waved the suggestion aside, 'The war would be over before the course would be finished. Finance would never agree.'

We wanted, too, to prepare for the recruiting drive, to us so imminent: local institutions preparing local men, strengthening their bodies, training their minds, teaching them letters, instructing them in first aid, and preparing a civilian organization to care for their homes when they were away. It was all so easy then. But the General Staff frowned. 'You cannot trespass on our arena.'

It seemed almost a crime to look ahead.

XXXII

THOUGH prophecy might be foolish, nevertheless there are already manifest certain dangers, that must be marked in order that they may be avoided; certain difficulties that must be stated in order that they may be solved; and certain guiding principles, without which no solution can be permanent.

The first danger is the danger of haste. This reads a little oddly, at any rate to me, who through nearly forty years of service have been trying to get the slow-moving British machine to speed up and take the gear of the East.

Once when in charge of Excise Administration I was presiding over the annual conference with distillers.

'I have a certain responsibility for the accuracy of statements on your labels,' I said. 'The public knows that the designs require Government's approval. I am not very particular about your pictures, but I must be careful that the captions are truthful. This label bears the words "matured whisky". What,' I asked innocently, 'does the word "matured" mean?'

Distiller looked at distiller, questioningly.

There was a moment of tension and apprehension. Then their spokesman, with an apologetic laugh, replied,

'In England, "matured" means in the cask for not less than three years; but, you see,' he hesitated slightly, and then the words came with a rush, 'maturity-in-the-East-arrives-so-quickly that here we mature in two!'

The East does prefer quick decisions; but when the form of the future Government is in question, can a decision properly be reached while the flower of India, the fighting forces, is still in the field?

India at War is a good title on a pamphlet, but in truth all India, like all Gaul, is divided into three parts, of which one, the smallest, is at war; the second is making money by supplying the munitions of war; but the third, and in numbers far the largest, is, if not sitting at home doing nothing, actively obstructing the war effort.

The soldier has no politics. But he has a home; and when the war is over, that home is to be worthy of the soldier. If a decision were forced now, there would be a call on the

soldier to insure that his voice be heard in debate that affects the future of his home. Else he would fear lest the jackal politician seize the prize his valour had secured.

In loyalty to those who are loyal to her, to those who have made her foes theirs, England may have to stay her hand.

The second danger is the danger of accepting, while the fighting men are away, the invitation, not unattractive to some in certain parts of India, to 'quit India'. Hitherto, England has been the umpire in the ring of many boxing matches, mostly communal, and has separated the combatants when they clinched. There are those who would like her to get out of the ring now, and leave the combatants and their seconds, who would at once join in, to fight it out. Blood would flow freely; and when it was over, the ring itself would be unrecognizable.

Over one result, no one would shed a tear. Those who have qualified themselves for the Insignia of the Grand Cross of the Order of the Fifth Column would be dangling from gallows as high as their column.

But the British are not quitters. Ask Hitler. And if they have obligations, they must discharge them. Nor have they ever accepted the doctrine that might is right. They will not quit.

The third danger is the danger of the grip of the business man. Infant administrations, in history as well as in fiction, have been exploited by financiers; and there are signs enough of such a future for India. Big business men have protested to the Secretary of State that they want no 'protection'. Is it that they are confident that their money bags can give them all the protection they require?

One of India's most experienced European business men, asked to predict, replied, 'I fear I can see nothing but graft after the war; graft that will dwarf the rackets of America. Seth Paisawala is blowing the trumpet of *swaraj*.

Why? So that he can buy up that British-financed shipping company cheap. Sir Kapasji Catchaboy is only a millionaire; he will be a multi-millionaire if he can "protect" Indian mill industries. The Indian farmer, in tens of thousands, will suffer by the restriction of his cotton market. But all the Catchaboys will have their villas at Monte Carlo, their yachts and their palaces.'

The Atlantic Charter promises freedom from enslavement. There has been little industrial enslavement in India, because there has been little industry. But industry is now expanding; and India must profit by the lessons of the West, and the power of Capital over Labour must be controlled.

Big business has already had one success. It has dominated Congress; Congress, the fourth and gravest danger.

Let it be quite clear that I, at least, can distinguish many individual Congressmen from that organized Congress whose secrets came out only when its leaders were locked in. The events of the summer of 1942 have shown starkly where the Congress Command stands—with the enemies of the Allies.

Stand thou on that side, for on this am I.

Treacherous protestations of loyalty accompanying acts of sabotage: hundreds of railway stations burnt, and communications cut; but to their disappointment the invader failed them. Such is Congress—love on its lips, hate in its heart.

Has Congress control over those who act in its name? Then it is responsible for the butchering of the two Canadian airmen on a railway platform, who, clad only in shorts and shirts, stepped out of their carriage in innocence and peace—to be butchered; whose bodies were stripped and paraded through the town and then thrown into the river.

Has Congress no control? Then why these clamorous claims of leadership?

And their leader, what of him? What is in his mind?

'The devil himself,' said Mr Justice Hawkins, 'knoweth not what is in the mind of man.' And another said, 'By their fruits shall ye know them.'

And his fruits would have been an India in chains, the chains of Germany and its dictator, who boasts that the Oriental is fit only to be a hewer of wood and drawer of water; the chains of Japan and its syphilis-ridden ravishers of women, barbaric torturers of men.

To this his crooked course has led; and yet his original war-cry has been but *swaraj*.

It is a curious feature of Indian politics that though there are many parties there is one slogan. The Muslim League, the Mahasabha, the Khalsa, the Congress, what you will, all blazon the word *swaraj* on their banners. It seems the word can only mean, 'Government of the people, by ME, for Myself'.

Certainly to Congress and the Mahasabha, *swaraj* did mean Hindu domination, and it is this that Islam cannot accept. And herein is the crux of the whole problem. The virile peoples fear lest democratic machinery, designed for a literate, educated electorate, be operated to vest power in the hands of a small, clever plutocracy, to whom, rightly or wrongly, they believe the old Brahman ideals of caste, infanticide, and suttee may still appeal. They fear, too, that this group would cold-shoulder, indeed would persecute, those who have taken up arms; and that those very Indians for whom the West seeks freedom, would find themselves enslaved by this new domination. Judging by the Congress-inspired infamies of 1942, it would not matter how this domination was to be secured; anyhow would do, any crooked how.

Haste, quitting, the grip of the financier, the coils of Congress, all these are dangers which, in the final settlement, must be avoided.

XXXIII

But there are still questions to be solved, difficulties rather than dangers.

There is the philosophical problem raised by the very word 'democracy'. Democracy implies that all men are equal, a counting of heads, the domination of the brilliant few by the ignorant many. The English-speaking people look to the Bible, but the Bible makes it clear that in the world of Being there are stars that differ one from another in glory; there are archangels as well as angels; there are rulers over ten cities and rulers over five; there are Principalities and Powers and all the Majesty of Heaven. While there is justice for all, brotherhood for all, there are still inequalities in value.

It is questionable whether the majority of Indians want democracy in the sense that the West understands it. In many States to this day the Rajah is not merely a ruler, he is as divine to his subjects as is the Emperor of Japan to his. Like him, some of the rulers claim descent from the sun, others from the moon. And their people accept the claim. Perhaps they are more logical than we. For democracy, sound enough as a broad principle, breaks down even in theory in application. It is an excellent doctrine for a majority community; but does it represent values? Not apparently in Jubbulpore.

The democracy that emerged from the Round Table Conference was, after all, a very qualified democracy, with its Reserved Seats, Protected Areas, Communal Franchise, and its Weightages. It should not pass the wit of the framers of the new constitution, profiting by the experience of the old, to devise some plan that will meet India's wants. For it is those wants that are to be satisfied.

A little girl was sent by her mother to a butcher's shop.

The benevolent butcher looked down on her tiny form with kindly eyes, and said,

'Well my little girl, and what is it that you want?'

The Cockney child looked at him wistfully, and replied,

'Oh, sir, it's not what I wants! I wants a diamond dog collar, and I wants a drive in the park, and I wants a seat at the next Coronation, and I wants—oh, I wants lots of things,' and she sighed. 'But it's not what I wants, it's what Mummy wants, and Mummy wants half-a-pound-off-the-scrag-end-of-a-neck-of-mutton-on-the-nod-till-Monday.'

When the type of constitution has been settled, there will still remain the supreme difficulty—how to produce unity out of so much diversity.

Can a fairy be found able to combine all the colours of the political rainbow into a single ray of light? That is the ideal to be sought. Judging by the results of human efforts up to date, no such happy issue seems possible.

Then there remain but two alternatives: the sword and the word.

If the decision is to be by the sword, it cannot be lasting. If by the word, then there must be compromise; and parties to a compromise are seldom satisfied. Each thinks the other has taken too much and given too little. But it is really a kind of sum in political arithmetic; and a mathematical statesman is required who can discover the lowest common multiple and determine the greatest common denominator.

XXXIV

DIFFICULTIES and dangers are, like the final Commandments of the Bible, prohibitions which begin 'Thou shalt not'. But a place has been reached on the highway of progress, whence are visible two road-signs bearing positive instructions.

The first says: HERE WHITEHALL ENDS.

Whitehall's relation to India is rapidly becoming, if it has not already become, an anachronism; and its control must disappear as soon as that consummation can be achieved without undue disturbance of the even tenor of constitutional evolution. It was politically pathetic that though one Cabinet Minister could be sent to make personal contact and speed up the Far East, and another to the Middle East, yet the difficulty of sending one to assist India in this way was insuperable, even in the darkest days of war.

The second says: ROAD CLOSED TO TRAFFIC OF SERVICE POLITICIANS.

The Administrative Service must shed its political wings. It may have been pleasant, like the insects in the rainy season, to flutter round the light, winged and decorous; but the Service's real work is on the ground. At the Centre as in the provinces, the servant must learn to serve.

XXXV

BUT something still remains, something it takes courage to write.

It hurts that India should turn to the forum of the world for the solution of her problems. It hurts that we servants of the King in India have so lost face, so fallen from the high standing of our forefathers.

What has happened? The answer can be stated very briefly: *We are no longer trusted.*

Why? It is possible to point to minor causes.

There is the growing complexity of the task of the Civil Servant. The bureaucrat had but to decide, and see that his decision was, subject to the courts, carried out.

Now his authority is limited, both at the Centre and in the provinces.

At the Centre, the Civil Servant has to take orders, execute

them, and justify them in the Assembly. He has to catch votes; and this is an art that calls for artifice. A spade is no longer a spade; and apologies are tendered, where credit is deserved. We minimize our own achievements; and magnify all else. We have forgotten the exhortation, 'Be strong'—forgotten it in thought, word and deed.

In the province, the Civil Servant recommends, and takes orders. But above him there are two authorities: the Government, represented by his Minister; the Governor, with his Special Responsibility. But no man, not even a Heaven-born Indian Civil Servant, can every day and in every way successfully serve two masters.

The scope for misunderstanding is vast; and from misunderstanding is born distrust.

Indianization, too, has its difficulties, as well as its advantages. The modern constitution, bureaucracy-cum-democracy, has its absurdities in theory, its extravagances in practice—all making for distrust.

There is loss of touch.

The successful civilian of yesterday was the man with the gun on his shoulder, who moved among the people and knew them and their language. Now, he is a budding parliamentarian, and sits in Delhi and Simla. The old adage is reversed. The modern version reads, *verba non acta*. In the old days, posts in the Central Secretariat were of three, four, or at most five, years' tenure. There was constant circulation between province and Centre—good for the Centre, good for the province, good for the man. Now, the Centre has such attractions that even if district life were to beckon back the man, worn with the drudgery of the unremitting desk, the woman and the child would tie him to the clean city with its wide avenues, shaded streets, incomparable vistas, and delightful homes and gardens. What a contrast with the camps of dirty, dust-driven Hissar!

If he were not clever, he would not have got where he is; and presently he persuades his chief that he is indispensable. The barnacle sticks to his soft secretarial seat. Nor can one blame him, for there he can catch the eye of The Great. So it is that of Such is the Kingdom of Governors.

But these are all minor matters.

The major matter is that we are thought weak and unreliable. Those who have stood by us, say we do not stand by them. Those who have always fought us, say our words are false. If we were to quit, and likewise if we were to hand over to a small plutocracy, the first would be true. If we do not give freedom, the second.

It was when politics came into our administration that our good name went out. The old power and the new politics became fused; the result, disaster. The very word 'political' to the Indian has a sinister meaning, and especially to the Indian politician, more familiar with the lobbies of Westminster and Delhi than his father was with his Deputy Commissioner's office.

Once I referred a difficult problem to a superior of the new school for advice. It came. *Mat kaho han; mat kaho nahin. Poleetical jawab do.*[1] A cunning, crafty answer that might mean *yes* or *no* when the event had reached its climax.

Some high officials here, and, worse still, high officials dealing with India's politics in London and from London, however honest they may have been in intention, have seemed and are believed by the Great among the Indians, not to have run straight. And as a people we are fallen from our high estate.

The best of India, the Indian Army, never faltered; because it knew but one strong, straight canon, 'Friend of Friend, Foe of Foe'. Straight dealing is what the Hindu expects and respects. No other serves. The inner mysteries of the

[1] Do not say 'yes'; do not say 'no'. Give a political answer.

Sikh tell of the very Path which is ever on the lips of the Muslim at his constant prayer, the straight path. *Sirat al mustaqim.*

One Paul, a man of Tarsus, knew that Path well. Our forefathers trod it and our sons must. Only such are fit to bring England's name abroad, be it as Servant, be it as Ambassador. All others shame her fame and cripple her working.

Wholehearted confidence must again be won, and it will be won when India knows that every Englishman's 'yea' is *yea*, and 'nay' is *nay*.

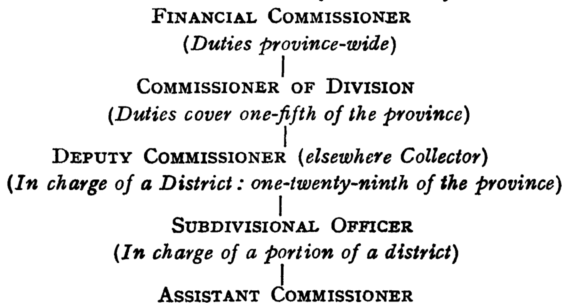
India does not really want to be quit of the type of men who used to serve her; India does not really want to be alone, separated from the Empire and its protecting power. She does want to feel free and to be honoured. She does want to live in a clear, clean atmosphere.

The goal is waiting at the end of a course that seems long. But the only path that will reach it is

> The Path that is straight:
> The Path of those who know His grace;
> From whom His wrath is hid;
> The Path of those who stray not.

GLOSSARY

audi alteram partem (Lat.), hear the other side.
badshah, king.
baksh, bestower.
Banauti Ram (*Banoutee Ram*), Ram, the shammer.
bandat (plural of *band*), an embankment, earthen dam, bund.
bazi (Persian), game, play.
beaulada (*bay-o-lada*), without offspring.
bewakoof (*bay-wa-koof*), without sense, foolish.
bhai, brother.
Brahma, God, the Creator.
brahman, the highest Hindu caste.
cantonment, a military town under military administration; separate, and usually at a little distance, from the corresponding civil city.
charpoy (*char*, four; *poy*, feet) a light bedstead in which cordage and webbing replace springs.
chitta, white. Kala (black) Chitta: the name of a mountain range.
Commissioner—The executive hierarchy in the Punjab is:



Cox, Major-General Sir Percy, G.C.M.G., G.C.I.E., C.S.I., first High Commissioner of Iraq.
dacoity, robbery with violence.
dak, post.
dak bungalow (lit., a posting house), a rest house that serves as an inn.
district, an administrative unit, containing, in the Punjab, an average of 3,750 square miles, with a population averaging 750,000.

The executive head of a district is styled Collector in relation to his revenue work; District Magistrate as head of the magistracy; and in the north, Deputy Commissioner in his administrative capacity.

The staff consists of an Assistant District Magistrate, with co-extensive powers of sentence and jurisdiction, to assist in the

disposal of criminal work; a Revenue Assistant for revenue work; and such number of first, second, and third class magistrates as are necessary to cope with criminal litigation.

A district is divided into four or five *tahsils*, each under a *tahsildar*, assisted by a deputy or *naib tahsildar*. These officers have second and third class magisterial powers, that is, power of sentence limited to six months and one month's rigorous imprisonment. They are responsible for the collection of revenue and the maintenance of the land records. For the latter purpose, they control the *kanungo* staff, who in turn supervise the *patwaris*, or village accountants, the humblest individual on the revenue ladder.

fakir, a mendicant devotee.

fulan, so-and-so.

gharib (*ghareeb*), poor.

Gurdwara, Sikh place of worship, where a copy of the writings of the Venerated Teacher, the Guru, is kept and reverenced.

hookah, a long-stemmed, and often many-stemmed tobacco pipe, smoked through water.

hukm, an order. From it is derived *hakim* (*hah-kim*), a giver of orders, ruler; hakim (*hakeem*), a doctor (who orders prescriptions).

imperium in imperio, supreme authority, 'empire', within the jurisdiction of another authority.

I.C.S., Indian Civil Service.

jagir (*jah-geer*, lit., a taker of land), the right to receive a stated amount of land revenue; or exemption from the payment of such amount.

jagirdar, the holder of a *jagir*.

jamila (*jameela*), beautiful.

Jat (m), **jatni** (f.), a martial tribe of Scythian origin centred in the south-west Punjab.

jawan, young.

jhil, marsh, pond or small lake—shooting ground for water-fowl.

-ji, a term of respect.

kala, black. Kala Chitta (white), a range of mountains.

kanungo (lit., the speaker (*go*) of the canon or law), a revenue official. *See* district.

kapas, cotton.

karma, a philosophic term to express the resultant of the law of cause and effect on the life of the individual.

Khattak dance, the Khattaks are a Pathan tribe settled in the mountain fastnesses of the north-west frontier of India: their dance is an

exhilarating war dance round a bonfire, to the accompaniment of drums and pipes.

Khalsa, the Sikh body politic.

khansamah, head servant, usually cook.

khatri, a Hindu caste. Khatris were originally warriors; in modern times, mostly business men.

khatun (f. of *khan*), lady.

Kut, i.e., Kut-al-Amara, town in Iraq, besieged and captured by the Turks in the Great War of 1914-18 and later retaken.

lala, honorific address of Hindus of the middle castes.

lathi, a bamboo stave, usually about five foot long, used as a weapon of offence and defence by every Punjabi farmer.

lucus a non lucendo, a figure of speech whereby a name is given because of some quality that is absent, e.g. 'grove' (*lucus*) from 'light' (*lux*), because there is no light in a grove.

maha, big. e.g. maharajah, a title superior to that of rajah.

mahal, storey; a building.

Mahasabha, a Hindu political organization, the counterpart of the Muslim League.

mahout, the keeper and driver of an elephant.

makruz, indebted.

mela, a country fair.

monsoon (lit., season), generally meaning the rainy season.

Moharrum, a Muslim religious celebration: a Passion Play in pious memory of the martyrs, Hassan and Hussain.

mullah, a professed Muslim theologian; colloquial form of 'maulavi'.

Muslim League, the political organization of the Muslims as such. Its present head, Mr Jinnah, preaches that community of religion constitutes a 'nation'.

naib, deputy.

nar, human, *singh*, lion.

nau, nine.

Naushirwan (*nowsheerwan*), a Shah of Persia, celebrated for his exact justice.

nawab (the origin of *nabob*), a Muslim title of distinction, sometimes hereditary, as in the case of Ruling Princes, e.g. 'His Highness the Nawab of Bhopal'. Sometimes a personal appellation conferred by Government.

nallah, dry water-course: the going usually treacherous and the sides steep.

nil sanguineum bonum, no bloody good !

paisa wala, money man, man interested in money, miserly.

palmam qui meruit, ferat, let him who deserved the palm, bear it.

pan, the leaf of the betel vine (*piper betle*), in which the nut of the areca palm, smeared with lime, is wrapped for chewing. It is the commonest stimulant of the East.

panchayat (*panch,* five), a village council, originally of five persons.

pandit, courtesy title of the Brahmans. A learned man.

Pathan, a frontier tribe, noted for its reckless bravery.

patwari, village accountant, and keeper of the village records.

phulawa, *phul,* fruit, *awa,* bringing.

pipal (*peepul*), a species of fig tree, held sacred by the Hindus. Favourite habitat of the green pigeon.

Pir, Muslim holy man and teacher. A title that tends to become hereditary.

purdah (lit. screen), the curtain that screens the women's apartments—also used for the seclusion itself.

qatil (*qah-til*), murderer.

rahim (*raheem*), merciful: an attribute of Allah.

raj, rule or kingdom.

rajah, a ruler.

reader, the court official who maintains the vernacular records of court cases, and reads out the petitions in the vernacular.

sahib, an Arabic word of respect, used as 'sir' in address.

serai, an extensive enclosed court with unfurnished rooms, where travelling caravans can halt. The old posting inn of the East.

sessions judge. The judicial hierarchy in a province is:

HIGH COURT
(*formerly Chief Court*)

DIVISIONAL JUDGES (*Civil*)	SESSIONS JUDGES
|	|
DISTRICT SUB-JUDGES	DISTRICT AND FIRST-CLASS MAGISTRATES
	|
	SECOND-AND THIRD-CLASS MAGISTRATES

seth (*sate*), courtesy appellation of bankers.

shaitan, Satan.

Shias and **Sunnis,** two Muslim sects.

shikar, game.

shikari, a person who goes after game. A sportsman.

GLOSSARY

Singh, a tribal name adopted by Sikhs and Rajputs.

Sikh (lit. a disciple), disciples of Guru Nanak and his successors. A monotheistic religious community derived from Hinduism. The Sikhs attained independence from the Moghul Empire but became absorbed in the British Empire during the first half of the nineteenth century.

sirkar (lit. *sir*, head), government.

subadar, Indian Commander of a Company in the Indian Army: a rank corresponding to that of Captain.

swami, a title of respect and veneration accorded to certain Hindu saints.

tahsil, *see* DISTRICT.

tahsildar, *see* DISTRICT.

taluq, a group of villages constituting a large estate owned by a taluqdar. A small administrative unit.

taluqdar, owner of a taluq. Enjoys a position akin to a feudal noble. There are none in the Punjab, but many in the United Provinces.

tum tum, a buggy.

Urdu (lit. the language of the Moghul camp), the lingua franca of India, combining words of Sanskrit and Arabic origin.

wazir, the title given in some Indian States to their Prime Minister.

Wilson, Sir Arnold T., K.C.I.E., C.S.I., C.M.G., M.P. During 1917-18 acted as Civil Commissioner in Iraq. Killed in action, 1940.

zail, a group of villages varying in number according to local custom and administrative convenience.

zaildar, an influential non-official, but officially recognized as the head of a *zail*. He receives a small emolument in return for services rendered to government officials.

zamindar, a holder of land. In the Punjab a peasant. In the United Provinces and Bengal, a landed proprietor.

VICEROYS REFERRED TO IN THE BOOK

Marquess of Ripon .. [illegible]
Lord Curzon .. ..
Earl of Minto .. ..
Lord Hardinge of Penshurst
Lord Chelmsford .. ..
Earl of Reading .. ..
Lord Irwin .. ..
Earl of Willingdon ..
Marquess of Linlithgow ..

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