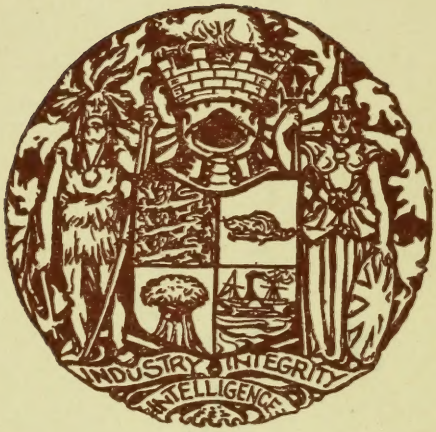

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OF

THE WORKS OF

RUDYARD KIPLING

FROM SEA TO SEA

AND OTHER SKETCHES

VOL. IV

FROM SEA TO SEA

AND OTHER SKETCHES

LETTERS OF TRAVEL

BY

RUDYARD KIPLING

IN FOUR VOLUMES

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Jan.-Feb., 1888

CHAPTER I

A Real Live City

WE are all backwoodsmen and barbarians together—we others dwelling beyond the Ditch, in the outer darkness of the Mofussil. There are no such things as Commissioners and heads of departments in the world, and there is only one city in India. Bombay is too green, too pretty, and too stragglesome; and Madras died ever so long ago. Let us take off our hats to Calcutta, the many-sided, the smoky, the magnificent, as we drive in over the Hughli Bridge in the dawn of a still February morning. We have left India behind us at Howrah Station, and now we enter foreign parts. No, not wholly foreign. Say rather too familiar.

All men of a certain age know the feeling of caged irritation—an illustration in the *Graphic*, a bar of music or the light words of a friend from home may set it ablaze—that comes from the knowledge of our lost heritage of London. At Home they, the other men, our equals, have at their disposal all that Town can supply—the roar of the streets, the lights, the music, the pleasant places, the millions of their own kind, and a wilderness full of pretty, fresh-coloured Englishwomen, theatres and restaurants. It is their right. They accept it as such, and even affect to look upon it with contempt. And we—we have nothing except the few amusements that we painfully build up for ourselves—the dolorous dissipations of gymkhanas where every one knows everybody else, or the chastened intoxication of dances where all engagements are booked, in ink, ten days ahead, and where everybody's antecedents are as patent as his or her method of waltzing. We have been deprived of our inheritance. The men at home are enjoying it all, not knowing how fair and rich it is, and we at the most can only fly westward for a few months and gorge what, properly speaking, should take seven or eight or ten luxurious years. That is the lost heritage of London; and the knowledge of the forfeiture, wilful or forced, comes to most men at times and seasons, and they get cross.

Calcutta holds out false hopes of some return. The dense smoke hangs low, in the chill of the morning, over an ocean of roofs, and, as the city wakes, there goes up to the smoke a deep, full-throated boom of life and motion and humanity. For this reason does he who sees Calcutta for the first time hang joyously out of the *ticca-gharri* and sniff the smoke, and turn his face toward the tumult, saying: 'This is, at last, some portion of my heritage returned to me. This is a city. There is life here, and there should be all manner of pleasant things for the having, across the river and under the smoke.'

The litany is an expressive one and exactly describes the first emotions of a wandering savage adrift in Calcutta. The eye has lost its sense of proportion, the focus has contracted through overmuch residence in up-country stations—twenty minutes' canter from hospital to parade-ground, you know—and the mind has shrunk with the eye. Both say together, as they take in the sweep of shipping above and below the Hughli Bridge: 'Why, this is London! This is the docks. This is Imperial. This is worth coming across India to see!'

Then a distinctly wicked idea takes possession of the mind: 'What a divine—what a heavenly place to *loot*!' This gives place to a much worse

devil—that of Conservatism. It seems not only a wrong but a criminal thing to allow natives to have any voice in the control of such a city—adorned, docked, wharfed, fronted, and reclaimed by Englishmen, existing only because England lives, and dependent for its life on England. All India knows of the Calcutta Municipality; but has any one thoroughly investigated the Big Calcutta Stink? There is only one. Benares is fouler in point of concentrated, pent-up muck, and there are local stenches in Peshawar which are stronger than the B. C. S.; but, for diffused, soul-sickening expansiveness, the reek of Calcutta beats both Benares and Peshawar. Bombay cloaks her stenches with a veneer of assafœtida and tobacco; Calcutta is above pretence. There is no tracing back the Calcutta plague to any one source. It is faint, it is sickly, and it is indescribable; but Americans at the Great Eastern Hotel say that it is something like the smell of the Chinese quarter in San Francisco. It is certainly not an Indian smell. It resembles the essence of corruption that has rotted for the second time—the clammy odour of blue slime. And there is no escape from it. It blows across the *maidan*; it comes in gusts into the corridors of the Great Eastern Hotel; what they are pleased to call the 'Palaces of Chowringhi' carry it; it swirls round the Bengal Club; it

pours out of by-streets with sickening intensity, and the breeze of the morning is laden with it. It is first found, in spite of the fume of the engines, in Howrah Station. It seems to be worst in the little lanes at the back of Lal Bazar where the drinking-shops are, but it is nearly as bad opposite Government House and in the Public Offices. The thing is intermittent. Six moderately pure mouthfuls of air may be drawn without offence. Then comes the seventh wave and the queasiness of an uncultured stomach. If you live long enough in Calcutta you grow used to it. The regular residents admit the disgrace, but their answer is: 'Wait till the wind blows off the Salt Lakes where all the sewage goes, and *then* you'll smell something.' That is their defence! Small wonder that they consider Calcutta is a fit place for a permanent Viceroy. Englishmen who can calmly extenuate one shame by another are capable of asking for anything—and expecting to get it.

If an up-country station holding three thousand troops and twenty civilians owned such a possession as Calcutta does, the Deputy Commissioner or the Cantonment Magistrate would have all the natives off the board of management or decently shovelled into the background until the mess was abated. Then they might come on again and talk of 'high-handed oppression' as much as they liked. That

stink, to an unprejudiced nose, damns Calcutta as a City of Kings. And, in spite of that stink, they allow, they even encourage, natives to look after the place! The damp, drainage-soaked soil is sick with the teeming life of a hundred years, and the Municipal Board list is choked with the names of natives—men of the breed born in and raised off this surfeited muck-heap! They own property, these amiable Aryans on the Municipal and the Bengal Legislative Council. Launch a proposal to tax them on that property, and they naturally howl. They also howl up-country, but there the halls for mass-meetings are few, and the vernacular papers fewer, and with a strong Secretary and a President whose favour is worth the having and whose wrath is undesirable, men are kept clean despite themselves, and may not poison their neighbours. Why, asks a savage, let them vote at all? They can put up with this filthiness. They *cannot* have any feelings worth caring a rush for. Let them live quietly and hide away their money under our protection, while we tax them till they know through their purses the measure of their neglect in the past, and when a little of the smell has been abolished, let us bring them back again to talk and take the credit of enlightenment. The better classes own their broughams and barouches; the worse can shoulder an English-

man into the kennel and talk to him as though he were a cook. They can refer to an English lady as an *aurat*; they are permitted a freedom—not to put it too coarsely—of speech which, if used by an Englishman toward an Englishman, would end in serious trouble. They are fenced and protected and made inviolate. Surely they might be content with all those things without entering into matters which they cannot, by the nature of their birth, understand.

Now, whether all this genial diatribe be the outcome of an unbiassed mind or the result first of sickness caused by that ferocious stench, and secondly of headache due to day-long smoking to drown the stench, is an open question. Anyway, Calcutta is a fearsome place for a man not educated up to it.

A word of advice to other barbarians. Do not bring a north-country servant into Calcutta. He is sure to get into trouble, because he does not understand the customs of the city. A Punjabi in this place for the first time esteems it his bounden duty to go to the *Ajaib-ghar*—the Museum. Such an one has gone and is even now returned very angry and troubled in the spirit. 'I went to the Museum,' says he, 'and no one gave me any abuse. I went to the market to buy my food, and then I sat upon a seat. There came an orderly who

said, "Go away, I want to sit here." I said, "I am here first." He said, "I am a *chaprassi*! get out!" and he hit me. Now that sitting-place was open to all, so I hit him till he wept. He ran away for the Police, and I went away too, for the Police here are all Sahibs. Can I have leave from two o'clock to go and look for that man and hit him again?'

Behold the situation! An unknown city full of smell that makes one long for rest and retirement, and a champing servant, not yet six hours in the stew, who has started a blood-feud with an unknown *chaprassi* and clamours to go forth to the fray.

Alas for the lost delusion of the heritage that was to be restored! Let us sleep, let us sleep, and pray that Calcutta may be better to-morrow.

At present it is remarkably like sleeping with a corpse.

CHAPTER II

The Reflections of a Savage

MORNING brings counsel. *Does* Calcutta smell so pestiferously after all? Heavy rain has fallen in the night. She is newly washed, and the clear sunlight shows her at her best. Where, oh where, in all this wilderness of life shall a man go?

The Great Eastern hums with life through all its hundred rooms. Doors slam merrily, and all the nations of the earth run up and down the staircases. This alone is refreshing, because the passers bump you and ask you to stand aside. Fancy finding any place outside the Levée-room where Englishmen are crowded together to this extent! Fancy sitting down seventy strong to *table d'hôte* and with a deafening clatter of knives and forks! Fancy finding a real bar whence drinks may be obtained! and, joy of joys, fancy stepping out of the hotel into the arms of a live, white,

helmeted, buttoned, truncheoned Bobby! What would happen if one spoke to this Bobby? Would he be offended? He is not offended. He is affable. He has to patrol the pavement in front of the Great Eastern and to see that the crowding carriages do not jam. Toward a presumably respectable white he behaves as a man and a brother. There is no arrogance about him. And this is disappointing. Closer inspection shows that he is not a *real* Bobby after all. He is a Municipal Police something and his uniform is not correct; at least if they have not changed the dress of the men at home. But no matter. Later on we will inquire into the Calcutta Bobby, because he is a white man, and has to deal with some of the 'toughest' folk that ever set out of malice aforethought to paint Job Charnock's city vermilion. You must not, you cannot cross Old Court House Street without looking carefully to see that you stand no chance of being run over. This is beautiful. There is a steady roar of traffic, cut every two minutes by the deep roll of the trams. The driving is eccentric, not to say bad, but there is the traffic — more than unsophisticated eyes have beheld for a certain number of years. It means business, it means money-making, it means crowded and hurrying life, and it gets

into the blood and makes it move. Here be big shops with plate-glass fronts—all displaying the well-known names of firms that we savages only correspond with through the Parcels Post. They are all here, as large as life, ready to supply anything you need if you only care to sign. Great is the fascination of being able to obtain a thing on the spot without having to write for a week and wait for a month, and then get something quite different. No wonder pretty ladies, who live anywhere within a reasonable distance, come down to do their shopping personally.

'Look here. If you want to be respectable you mustn't smoke in the streets. Nobody does it.' This is advice kindly tendered by a friend in a black coat. There is no Levée or Lieutenant-Governor in sight; but he wears the frock-coat because it is daylight, and he can be seen. He refrains from smoking for the same reason. He admits that Providence built the open air to be smoked in, but he says that 'it isn't the thing.' This man has a brougham, a remarkably natty little pill-box with a curious wabble about the wheels. He steps into the brougham and puts on—a top-hat, a shiny black 'plug.'

There was a man up-country once who owned a top-hat. He leased it to amateur theatrical

companies for some seasons until the nap wore off. Then he threw it into a tree and wild bees hived in it. Men were wont to come and look at the hat, in its palmy days, for the sake of feeling homesick. It interested all the station, and died with two seers of *babul*-flower honey in its bosom. But top-hats are not intended to be worn in India. They are as sacred as home letters and old rose-buds. The friend cannot see this. He allows that if he stepped out of his brougham and walked about in the sunshine for ten minutes he would get a bad headache. In half an hour he would probably die of sun-stroke. He allows all this, but he keeps to his Hat and cannot see why a barbarian is moved to inextinguishable laughter at the sight. Every one who owns a brougham and many people who hire *ticca-gharris* keep top-hats and black frock-coats. The effect is curious, and at first fills the beholder with surprise.

And now, 'Let us see the handsome houses Where the wealthy nobles dwell.' Northerly lies the great human jungle of the native city, stretching from Burra Bazar to Chitpore. That can keep. Southerly is the *maidan* and Chowringhi. 'If you get out into the centre of the *maidan* you will understand why Calcutta is called the City of Palaces.' The travelled American

said so at the Great Eastern. There is a short tower, falsely called a 'memorial,' standing in a waste of soft, sour green. That is as good a place to get to as any other. The size of the *maidan* takes the heart out of any one accustomed to the 'gardens' of up-country, just as they say Newmarket Heath cows a horse accustomed to a more shut-in course. The huge level is studded with brazen statues of eminent gentlemen riding fretful horses on diabolically severe curbs. The expanse dwarfs the statues, dwarfs everything except the frontage of the far-away Chowringhi Road. It is big—it is impressive. There is no escaping the fact. They built houses in the old days when the rupee was two shillings and a penny. Those houses are three-storied, and ornamented with service-staircases like houses in the Hills. They are very close together, and they have garden walls of masonry pierced with a single gate. In their shut-upness they are British. In their spaciousness they are Oriental, but those service-staircases do not look healthy. We will form an amateur sanitary commission and call upon Chowringhi.

A first introduction to the Calcutta *durwân* or door-keeper is not nice. If he is chewing *pân*, he does not take the trouble to get rid of his quid. If he is sitting on his cot chewing

sugar-cane, he does not think it worth his while to rise. He has to be taught those things, and he cannot understand why he should be reproved. Clearly he is a survival of a played-out system. Providence never intended that any native should be made a *concierge* more insolent than any of the French variety. The people of Calcutta put a man in a little lodge close to the gate of their house, in order that loafers may be turned away, and the houses protected from theft. The natural result is that the *durwân* treats everybody whom he does not know as a loafer, has an intimate and vendible knowledge of all the outgoings and incomings in that house, and controls, to a large extent, the nomination of the servants. They say that one of the estimable class is now suing a bank for about three lakhs of rupees. Up-country, a Lieutenant-Governor's servant has to work for thirty years before he can retire on seventy thousand rupees of savings. The Calcutta *durwân* is a great institution. The head and front of his offence is that he will insist upon trying to talk English. How he protects the houses Calcutta only knows. He can be frightened out of his wits by severe speech, and is generally asleep in calling hours. If a rough round of visits be any guide, three times out of seven he is fragrant of drink. So

much for the *durwân*. Now for the houses he guards.

Very pleasant is the sensation of being ushered into a pestiferously stablesome drawing-room. 'Does this always happen?' 'No, not unless you shut up the room for some time; but if you open the shutters there are other smells. You see the stables and the servants' quarters are close to.' People pay five hundred a month for half a dozen rooms filled with scents of this kind. They make no complaint. When they think the honour of the city is at stake they say defiantly: 'Yes, but you must remember we're a metropolis. We are crowded here. We have no room. We aren't like your little stations.' Chowringhi is a stately place full of sumptuous houses, but it is best to look at it hastily. Stop to consider for a moment what the cramped compounds, the black soaked soil, the netted intricacies of the service-staircases, the packed stables, the seethment of human life round the *durwâns'* lodges, and the curious arrangement of little open drains mean, and you will call it a whited sepulchre.

Men living in expensive tenements suffer from chronic sore throat, and will tell you cheerily that 'we've got typhoid in Calcutta now.' Is the pest ever out of it? Everything seems to be built with a view to its comfort. It can lodge com-

fortably on roofs, climb along from the gutter-pipe to piazza, or rise from sink to veranda and thence to the topmost story. But Calcutta says that all is sound and produces figures to prove it; at the same time admitting that healthy cut flesh will not readily heal. Further evidence may be dispensed with.

Here come pouring down Park Street on the *maidan* a rush of broughams, neat buggies, the lightest of gigs, trim office brownberrys, shining victorias, and a sprinkling of veritable hansom cabs. In the broughams sit men in top-hats. In the other carts, young men, all very much alike, and all immaculately turned out. A fresh stream from Chowringhi joins the Park Street detachment, and the two together stream away across the *maidan* toward the business quarter of the city. This is Calcutta going to office—the civilians to the Government Buildings and the young men to their firms and their blocks and their wharves. Here one sees that Calcutta has the best turn-out in the Empire. Horses and traps alike are enviably perfect, and—mark the touchstone of civilisation —*the lamps are in their sockets!* The country-bred is a rare beast here; his place is taken by the Waler, and the Waler, though a ruffian at heart, can be made to look like a gentleman. It would be indecorous to applaud the winking harness, the

perfectly lacquered panels, and the liveried *saises*. They show well in the outwardly fair roads shadowed by the Palaces.

How many sections of the complex society of the place do the carts carry? *First*, the Bengal Civilian who goes to Writers' Buildings and sits in a perfect office and speaks flippantly of 'sending things into India,' meaning thereby he refers matters to the Supreme Government. He is a great person, and his mouth is full of promotion-and-appointment 'shop.' Generally he is referred to as a 'rising man.' Calcutta seems full of 'rising men.' *Secondly*, the Government of India man, who wears a familiar Simla face, rents a flat when he is not up in the Hills, and is rational on the subject of the drawbacks of Calcutta. *Thirdly*, the man of the 'firms,' the pure non-official who fights under the banner of one of the great houses of the City, or for his own hand in a neat office, or dashes about Clive Street in a brougham doing 'share work' or something of the kind. He fears not 'Bengal,' nor regards he 'India.' He swears impartially at both when their actions interfere with his operations. His 'shop' is quite unintelligible. He is like the English city man with the chill off, lives well and entertains hospitably. In the old days he was greater than he is now, but still he bulks large. He is rational in so far that he will

help the abuse of the Municipality, but womanish in his insistence on the excellences of Calcutta. Over and above these who are hurrying to work are the various brigades, squads, and detachments of the other interests. But they are sets and not sections, and revolve round Belvedere, Government House, and Fort William. Simla and Darjeeling claim them in the hot weather. Let them go. They wear top-hats and frock-coats.

It is time to escape from Chowringhi Road and get among the long-shore folk, who have no prejudices against tobacco, and who all use very much the same sort of hat.

CHAPTER III

The Council of the Gods

He set up conclusions to the number of nine thousand seven hundred and sixty-four . . . he went afterwards to the Sorbonne, where he maintained argument against the theologians for the space of six weeks, from four o'clock in the morning till six in the evening, except for an interval of two hours to refresh themselves and take their repasts, and at this were present the greatest part of the lords of the court, the masters of request, presidents, counsellors, those of the accompts, secretaries, advocates, and others; as also the sheriffs of the said town.—*Pantagruel.*

'THE Bengal Legislative Council is sitting now. You will find it in an octagonal wing of Writers' Buildings: straight across the *maidan*. It's worth seeing.' 'What are they sitting on?' 'Municipal business. No end of a debate.' So much for trying to keep low company. The long-shore loafers must stand over. Without doubt this Council is going to hang some one for the state of the City, and Sir Steuart Bayley will

be chief executioner. One does not come across councils every day.

Writers' Buildings are large. You can trouble the busy workers of half a dozen departments before you stumble upon the black-stained staircase that leads to an upper chamber looking out over a populous street. Wild orderlies block the way. The Councillor Sahibs are sitting, but any one can enter. 'To the right of the Lât Sahib's chair, and go quietly.' Ill-mannered minion! Does he expect the awe-stricken spectator to prance in with a war-whoop or turn Catherine-wheels round that sumptuous octagonal room with the blue-domed roof? There are gilt capitals to the half pillars and an Egyptian-patterned lotus-stencil makes the walls gay. A thick-piled carpet covers all the floor, and must be delightful in the hot weather. On a black wooden throne, comfortably cushioned in green leather, sits Sir Steuart Bayley, Ruler of Bengal. The rest are all great men, or else they would not be there. Not to know them argues oneself unknown. There are a dozen of them, and sit six a-side at two slightly curved lines of beautifully polished desks. Thus Sir Steuart Bayley occupies the frog of a badly made horse-shoe split at the toe. In front of him, at a table covered with books and pamphlets and papers, toils a secretary. There is a seat for the

Reporters, and that is all. The place enjoys a chastened gloom, and its very atmosphere fills one with awe. This is the heart of Bengal, and uncommonly well upholstered. If the work matches the first-class furniture, the inkpots, the carpet, and the resplendent ceilings, there will be something worth seeing. But where is the criminal who is to be hanged for the stench that runs up and down Writers' Buildings staircases; for the rubbish heaps in the Chitpore Road; for the sickly savour of Chowringhi; for the dirty little tanks at the back of Belvedere; for the street full of smallpox; for the reeking gharri-stand outside the Great Eastern; for the state of the stone and dirt pavements; for the condition of the gullies of Shampooker, and for a hundred other things?

'This, I submit, is an artificial scheme in supersession of Nature's unit, the individual.' The speaker is a slight, spare native in a flat hat-turban, and a black alpaca frock-coat. He looks like a scribe to the boot-heels, and, with his unvarying smile and regulated gesticulation, recalls memories of up-country courts. He never hesitates, is never at a loss for a word, and never in one sentence repeats himself. He talks and talks and talks in a level voice, rising occasionally half an octave when a point has to be driven home. Some of his periods sound very familiar. This, for instance,

might be a sentence from the *Mirror*: 'So much for the principle. Let us now examine how far it is supported by precedent.' This sounds bad. When a fluent native is discoursing of 'principles' and 'precedents,' the chances are that he will go on for some time. Moreover, where is the criminal, and what is all this talk about abstractions? They want shovels not sentiments, in this part of the world.

A friendly whisper brings enlightenment: 'They are ploughing through the Calcutta Municipal Bill —plurality of votes, you know. Here are the papers.' And so it is! A mass of motions and amendments on matters relating to ward votes. Is *A* to be allowed to give two votes in one ward and one in another? Is section 10 to be omitted, and is one man to be allowed one vote and no more? How many votes does three hundred rupees' worth of landed property carry? Is it better to kiss a post or throw it in the fire? Not a word about carbolic acid and gangs of sweepers. The little man in the black dressing-gown revels in his subject. He is great on principles and precedents, and the necessity of 'popularising our system.' He fears that under certain circumstances 'the status of the candidates will decline.' He riots in 'self-adjusting majorities,' and 'the healthy influence of the educated middle classes.'

For a practical answer to this, there steals across the council chamber just one faint whiff of the Stink. It is as though some one laughed low and bitterly. But no man heeds. The Englishmen look supremely bored, the native members stare stolidly in front of them. Sir Steuart Bayley's face is as set as the face of the Sphinx. For these things he draws his pay,—low wage for heavy labour. But the speaker, now adrift, is not altogether to be blamed. He is a Bengali, who has got before him just such a subject as his soul loveth, —an elaborate piece of academical reform leading nowhere. Here is a quiet room full of pens and papers, and there are men who must listen to him. Apparently there is no time limit to the speeches. Can you wonder that he talks? He says 'I submit' once every ninety seconds, varying the form with 'I do submit, the popular element in the electoral body should have prominence.' Quite so. He quotes one John Stuart Mill to prove it. There steals over the listener a numbing sense of nightmare. He has heard all this before somewhere—yea; even down to J. S. Mill and the references to the 'true interests of the ratepayers.' He sees what is coming next. Yes, there is the old Sabha, Anjuman, journalistic formula: 'Western education is an exotic plant of recent importation.' How on earth did this man drag Western education into

this discussion? Who knows? Perhaps Sir Steuart Bayley does. He seems to be listening. The others are looking at their watches. The spell of the level voice sinks the listener yet deeper into a trance. He is haunted by the ghosts of all the cant of all the political platforms of Great Britain. He hears all the old, old vestry phrases, and once more he smells the Smell. *That* is no dream. Western education is an exotic plant. It is the upas tree, and it is all our fault. We brought it out from England exactly as we brought out the ink-bottles and the patterns for the chairs. We planted it and it grew—monstrous as a banian. Now we are choked by the roots of it spreading so thickly in this fat soil of Bengal. The speaker continues. Bit by bit we builded this dome, visible and invisible, the crown of Writers' Buildings, as we have built and peopled the buildings. Now we have gone too far to retreat, being 'tied and bound with the chain of our own sins.' The speech continues. We made that florid sentence. That torrent of verbiage is Ours. We taught him what was constitutional and what was unconstitutional in the days when Calcutta smelt. Calcutta smells still, but We must listen to all that he has to say about the plurality of votes and the threshing of wind and the weaving of ropes of sand. It is Our own fault.

The speech ends, and there rises a grey Englishman in a black frock-coat. He looks a strong man, and a worldly. Surely he will say, 'Yes, Lala Sahib, all this may be true talk, but there's a vile smell in this place, and everything must be cleaned in a week, or the Deputy Commissioner will not take any notice of you in *durbar*.' He says nothing of the kind. This is a Legislative Council, where they call each other 'Honourable So-and-so's.' The Englishman in the frock-coat begs all to remember that 'we are discussing principles, and no consideration of the details ought to influence the verdict on the principles.' Is he then like the rest? How does this strange thing come about? Perhaps these so English office fittings are responsible for the warp. The Council Chamber might be a London Board-room. Perhaps after long years among the pens and papers its occupants grew to think that it really is, and in this belief give *résumés* of the history of Local Self-Government in England.

The black frock-coat, emphasising his points with his spectacle-case, is telling his friends how the parish was first the unit of self-government. He then explains how burgesses were elected, and in tones of deep fervour announces, 'Commissioners of Sewers are elected in the same way.' Whereunto all this lecture? Is he trying to run a

motion through under cover of a cloud of words, essaying the well-known 'cuttle-fish trick' of the West?

He abandons England for a while, and *now* we get a glimpse of the cloven hoof in a casual reference to Hindus and Mahometans. The Hindus will lose nothing by the complete establishment of plurality of votes. They will have the control of their own wards as they used to have. So there is race-feeling, to be explained away, even among these beautiful desks. Scratch the Council, and you come to the old, old trouble. The black frock-coat sits down, and a keen-eyed, black-bearded Englishman rises with one hand in his pocket to explain his views on an alteration of the vote qualification. The idea of an amendment seems to have just struck him. He hints that he will bring it forward later on. He is academical like the others, but not half so good a speaker. All this is dreary beyond words. Why do they talk and talk about owners and occupiers and burgesses in England and the growth of autonomous institutions when the city, the great city, is here crying out to be cleansed? What has England to do with Calcutta's evil, and why should Englishmen be forced to wander through mazes of unprofitable argument against men who cannot understand the iniquity of dirt?

A pause follows the black-bearded man's speech. Rises another native, a heavily built Babu, in a black gown and a strange head-dress. A snowy white strip of cloth is thrown duster-wise over his shoulders. His voice is high, and not always under control. He begins, 'I will try to be as brief as possible.' This is ominous. By the way, in Council there seems to be no necessity for a form of address. The orators plunge *in medias res*, and only when they are well launched throw an occasional 'Sir' towards Sir Steuart Bayley, who sits with one leg doubled under him and a dry pen in his hand. This speaker is no good. He talks, but he says nothing, and he only knows where he is drifting to. He says: 'We must remember that we are legislating for the Metropolis of India, and therefore we should borrow our institutions from large English towns, and not from parochial institutions.' If you think for a minute, that shows a large and healthy knowledge of the history of Local Self-Government. It also reveals the attitude of Calcutta. If the city thought less about itself as a metropolis and more as a midden, its state would be better. The speaker talks patronisingly of 'my friend,' alluding to the black frock-coat. Then he flounders afresh, and his voice gallops up the gamut as he declares, 'and *therefore* that makes all the difference.' He hints

vaguely at threats, something to do with the Hindus and the Mahometans, but what he means it is difficult to discover. Here, however, is a sentence taken *verbatim*. It is not likely to appear in this form in the Calcutta papers. The black frock-coat had said that if a wealthy native 'had eight votes to his credit, his vanity would prompt him to go to the polling-booth, because he would feel better than half a dozen *gharri-wans* or petty traders.' (Fancy allowing a *gharri-wan* to vote! He has yet to learn how to drive.) Hereon the gentleman with the white cloth: 'Then the complaint is that influential voters will not take the trouble to vote? In my humble opinion, if that be so, adopt voting-papers. *That* is the way to meet them. In the same way—the Calcutta Trades' Association—you abolish all plurality of votes: and that is the way to meet *them*.' Lucid, is it not? Up flies the irresponsible voice, and delivers this statement, 'In the election for the House of Commons plurality are allowed for persons having interest in different districts.' Then hopeless, hopeless fog. It is a great pity that India ever heard of anybody higher than the heads of the Civil Service. Once more a whiff of the Stink. The gentleman gives a defiant jerk of his shoulder-cloth, and sits down.

Then Sir Steuart Bayley: 'The question before

the Council is,' etc. There is a ripple of 'Ayes' and 'Noes,' and the 'Noes' have it, whatever it may be. The black-bearded gentleman springs his amendment about the voting qualifications. A large senator in a white waistcoat, and with a most genial smile, rises and proceeds to smash up the amendment. Can't see the use of it. Calls it in effect rubbish. The black dressing-gown, he who spoke first of all, speaks again, and talks of the 'sojourner who comes here for a little time, and then leaves the land.' Well it is for the black gown that the sojourner does come, or there would be no comfy places wherein to talk about the power that can be measured by wealth, and the intellect 'which, sir, I submit, cannot be so measured.' The amendment is lost; and trebly and quadruply lost is the listener. In the name of sanity and to preserve the tattered shirt-tails of a torn illusion, let us escape. This is the Calcutta Municipal Bill. They have been at it for several Saturdays. Last Saturday Sir Steuart Bayley pointed out that at their present rate they would be about two years in getting it through. Now they will sit till dusk, unless Sir Steuart Bayley, who wants to see Lord Connemara off, puts up the black frock-coat to move an adjournment. It is not good to see a Government close to. This leads to the formation of blatantly

self-satisfied judgments, which may be quite as wrong as the cramping system with which we have encompassed ourselves. And in the streets outside Englishmen summarise the situation brutally, thus: 'The whole thing is a farce. Time is money to us. We can't stick out those everlasting speeches in the municipality. The natives choke us off, but we know that if things get too bad the Government will step in and interfere, and so we worry along somehow.'

Meantime Calcutta continues to cry out for the bucket and the broom.

CHAPTER IV

On the Banks of the Hughli

THE clocks of the city have struck two. Where can a man get food? Calcutta is not rich in respect of dainty accommodation. You can stay your stomach at Peliti's or Bonsard's, but their shops are not to be found in Hastings Street, or in the places where brokers fly to and fro in office-jaunts, sweating and growing visibly rich. There must be some sort of entertainment where sailors congregate. 'Honest Bombay Jack' supplies nothing but Burma cheroots and whisky in liqueur-glasses, but in Lal Bazar, not far from 'The Sailors' Coffee-rooms,' a board gives bold advertisement that 'officers and seamen can find good quarters.' In evidence a row of neat officers and seamen are sitting on a bench by the 'hotel' door smoking. There is an almost military likeness in their clothes. Perhaps 'Honest Bombay Jack' only

keeps one kind of felt hat and one brand of suit. When Jack of the mercantile marine is sober, he is very sober. When he is drunk he is—but ask the river police what a lean, mad Yankee can do with his nails and teeth. These gentlemen smoking on the bench are impassive almost as Red Indians. Their attitudes are unrestrained, and they do not wear braces. Nor, it would appear from the bill of fare, are they particular as to what they eat when they attend *table d'hôte*. The fare is substantial and the regulation 'peg'—every house has its own depth of peg if you will refrain from stopping Ganymede—something to wonder at. Three fingers and a trifle over seems to be the use of the officers and seamen who are talking so quietly in the doorway. One says—he has evidently finished a long story—'and so he shipped for four pound ten with a first mate's certificate and all; and that was in a German barque.' Another spits with conviction and says genially, without raising his voice, 'That was a hell of a ship. Who knows her?' No answer from the assembly, but a Dane or a German wants to know whether the *Myra* is 'up' yet. A dry, red-haired man gives her exact position in the river—(How in the world can he know?)—and the probable hour of her arrival. The grave debate drifts into a

discussion of a recent river accident, whereby a big steamer was damaged, and had to put back and discharge cargo. A burly gentleman who is taking a constitutional down Lal Bazar strolls up and says: 'I tell you she fouled her own chain with her own forefoot. Hev you seen the plates?' 'No.' 'Then how the —— can any —— like you —— say what it —— well was?' He passes on, having delivered his highly flavoured opinion without heat or passion. No one seems to resent the garnish.

Let us get down to the river and see this stamp of men more thoroughly. Clark Russell has told us that their lives are hard enough in all conscience. What are their pleasures and diversions? The Port Office, where live the gentlemen who make improvements in the Port of Calcutta, ought to supply information. It stands large and fair, and built in an orientalised manner after the Italians at the corner of Fairlie Place upon the great Strand Road, and a continual clamour of traffic by land and by sea goes up throughout the day and far into the night against its windows. This is a place to enter more reverently than the Bengal Legislative Council, for it controls the direction of the uncertain Hughli down to the Sandheads; owns enormous wealth; and spends huge sums on the frontaging of river banks, the expansion of jetties,

and the manufacture of docks costing two hundred lakhs of rupees. Two million tons of sea-going shippage yearly find their way up and down the river by the guidance of the Port Office, and the men of the Port Office know more than it is good for men to hold in their heads. They can without reference to telegraphic bulletins give the position of all the big steamers, coming up or going down, from the Hughli to the sea, day by day, with their tonnage, the names of their captains and the nature of their cargo. Looking out from the veranda of their office over a lancer-regiment of masts, they can declare truthfully the name of every ship within eye-scope, and the day and hour when she will depart.

In a room at the bottom of the building lounge big men, carefully dressed. Now there is a type of face which belongs almost exclusively to Bengal Cavalry officers—majors for choice. Everybody knows the bronzed, black-moustached, clear-speaking Native Cavalry officer. He exists unnaturally in novels, and naturally on the Frontier. These men in the big room have his cast of face so strongly marked that one marvels what officers are doing by the river. 'Have they come to book passages for home?' 'Those men? They're pilots. Some of them draw between two and three thousand rupees a month. They are responsible for half a million pounds' worth of cargo some-

times.' They certainly are men, and they carry themselves as such. They confer together by twos and threes, and appeal frequently to shipping lists.

'Isn't a pilot a man who always wears a pea-jacket and shouts through a speaking-trumpet?' 'Well, you can ask those gentlemen if you like. You've got your notions from Home pilots. Our's aren't that kind exactly. They are a picked service, as carefully weeded as the Indian Civil. Some of 'em have brothers in it, and some belong to the old Indian army families.' But they are not all equally well paid. The Calcutta papers echo the groans of the junior pilots who are not allowed the handling of ships over a certain tonnage. As it is yearly growing cheaper to build one big steamer than two little ones, these juniors are crowded out, and, while the seniors get their thousands, some of the youngsters make at the end of one month exactly thirty rupees. This is a grievance with them; and it seems well-founded.

In the flats above the pilots' room are hushed and chapel-like offices, all sumptuously fitted, where Englishmen write and telephone and telegraph, and deft Babus for ever draw maps of the shifting Hughli. Any hope of understanding the work of the Port Commissioners is thoroughly

dashed by being taken through the Port maps of a quarter of a century past. Men have played with the Hughli as children play with a gutter-runnel, and, in return, the Hughli once rose and played with men and ships till the Strand Road was littered with the raffle and the carcasses of big ships. There are photos on the walls of the cyclone of '64, when the *Thunder* came inland and sat upon an American barque, obstructing all the traffic. Very curious are these photos, and almost impossible to believe. How can a big, strong steamer have her three masts razed to deck-level? How can a heavy country-boat be pitched on to the poop of a high-walled liner? and how can the side be bodily torn out of a ship? The photos say that all these things are possible, and men aver that a cyclone may come again and scatter the craft like chaff. Outside the Port Office are the export and import sheds, buildings that can hold a ship's cargo apiece, all standing on reclaimed ground. Here be several strong smells, a mass of railway lines, and a multitude of men. 'Do you see where that trolly is standing, behind the big P. and O. berth? In that place as nearly as may be the *Govindpur* went down about twenty years ago, and began to shift out!' 'But that is solid ground.' 'She sank there, and the next tide made a scour-hole on one side of her. The re-

turning tide knocked her into it. Then the mud made up behind her. Next tide the business was repeated—always the scour-hole in the mud and the filling up behind her. So she rolled, and was pushed out and out until she got in the way of the shipping right out yonder, and we had to blow her up. When a ship sinks in mud or quicksand she regularly digs her own grave and wriggles herself into it deeper and deeper till she reaches moderately solid stuff. Then she sticks.' Horrible idea, is it not, to go down and down with each tide into the foul Hughli mud?

Close to the Port Offices is the Shipping Office, where the captains engage their crews. The men must produce their discharges from their last ships in the presence of the shipping master, or, as they call him, 'The Deputy Shipping.' He passes them after having satisfied himself that they are not deserters from other ships, and they then sign articles for the voyage. This is the ceremony, beginning with the 'dearly beloved' of the crew-hunting captain down to the 'amazement' of the deserter. There is a dingy building, next door to the Sailors' Home, at whose gate the cast-ups of all the seas stand in all manner of raiment. There are the Seedee boys, Bombay *serangs* and Madras fishermen of the salt villages; Malays who insist upon marrying Calcutta women, grow jealous

and run *amok*; Malay-Hindus, Hindu-Malay-whites, Burmese, Burma-whites, Burma-native-whites; Italians with gold ear-rings and a thirst for gambling; Yankees of all the States, with Mulattoes and pure buck-niggers; red and rough Danes, Cingalese, Cornish boys fresh taken from the plough-tail, 'corn-stalks' from colonial ships where they got four pound ten a month as seamen; tun-bellied Germans, Cockney mates keeping a little aloof from the crowd and talking in knots together; unmistakable 'Tommies' who have tumbled into seafaring life by some mistake; cockatoo-tufted Welshmen spitting and swearing like cats; broken-down loafers, grey-headed, penniless and pitiful, swaggering boys, and very quiet men with gashes and cuts on their faces. It is an ethnological museum where all the specimens are playing comedies and tragedies. The head of it all is the 'Deputy Shipping,' and he sits, supported by an English policeman whose fists are knobby, in a great Chair of State. The 'Deputy Shipping' knows all the iniquity of the river-side, all the ships, all the captains, and a fair amount of the men. He is fenced off from the crowd by a strong wooden railing behind which are gathered the unemployed of the mercantile marine. They have had their spree—poor devils!—and now they will go to sea again on as low a wage as three

pound ten a month, to fetch up at the end in some Shanghai stew or San Francisco hell. They have turned their backs on the seductions of the Howrah boarding-houses and the delights of Colootollah. If Fate will, 'Nightingale's' will know them no more for a season. But what skipper will take some of these battered, shattered wrecks whose hands shake and whose eyes are red?

Enter suddenly a bearded captain, who has made his selection from the crowd on a previous day, and now wants to get his men passed. He is not fastidious in his choice. His eleven seem a tough lot for such a mild-eyed civil-spoken man to manage. But the captain in the Shipping Office and the captain on his ship are two different things. He brings his crew up to the 'Deputy Shipping's' bar, and hands in their greasy, tattered discharges. But the heart of the 'Deputy Shipping' is hot with him, because, two days ago, a Howrah crimp stole a whole crew from a down-dropping ship, insomuch that the captain had to come back and whip up a new crew at one o'clock in the day. Evil will it be if the 'Deputy Shipping' finds one of these bounty-jumpers in the chosen crew of the *Blenkindoon*.

The 'Deputy Shipping' tells the story with heat. 'I didn't know they did such things in Calcutta,' said the captain. 'Do such things!

They'd steal the eye-teeth out of your head there, Captain.' He picks up a discharge and calls for Michael Donelly, a loose-knit, vicious-looking Irish-American who chews. 'Stand up, man, stand up!' Michael Donelly wants to lean against the desk, and the English policeman won't have it. 'What was your last ship?' '*Fairy Queen.*' 'When did you leave her?' ''Bout 'leven days.' 'Captain's name?' 'Flahy.' 'That'll do. Next man: Jules Anderson.' Jules Anderson is a Dane. His statements tally with the discharge-certificate of the United States, as the Eagle attesteth. He is passed and falls back. Slivey, the Englishman, and David, a huge plum-coloured negro who ships as cook, are also passed. Then comes Bassompra, a little Italian, who speaks English. 'What's your last ship?' '*Ferdinand.*' 'No, after that?' 'German barque.' Bassompra does not look happy. 'When did she sail?' 'About three weeks ago.' 'What's her name?' '*Haidée.*' 'You deserted from her?' 'Yes, but she's left port.' 'The 'Deputy Shipping' runs rapidly through a shipping-list, throws it down with a bang. ''Twon't do. No German barque *Haidée* here for three months. How do I know you don't belong to the *Jackson's* crew? Cap'en, I'm afraid you'll have to ship another man. He must stand over. Take the rest away and make 'em sign.'

The bead-eyed Bassompra seems to have lost his chance of a voyage, and his case will be inquired into. The captain departs with his men and they sign articles for the voyage, while the 'Deputy Shipping' tells strange tales of the sailor-man's life. 'They'll quit a good ship for the sake of a spree, and catch on again at three pound ten, and by Jove, they'll let their skippers pay 'em at ten rupees to the sovereign—poor beggars! As soon as the money's gone they'll ship, but not before. Every one under rank of captain engages here. The competition makes first mates ship sometimes for five pounds or as low as four ten a month.' (The gentleman in the boarding-house was right, you see.) 'A first mate's wages are seven ten or eight, and foreign captains ship for twelve pounds a month and bring their own small stores—everything, that is to say, except beef, peas, flour, coffee, and molasses.'

These things are not pleasant to listen to while the hungry-eyed men in the bad clothes lounge and scratch and loaf behind the railing. What comes to them in the end? They die, it seems, though that is not altogether strange. They die at sea in strange and horrible ways; they die, a few of them, in the Kintals, being lost and suffocated in the great sink of Calcutta; they die in strange places by the water-side, and the Hughli

takes them away under the mooring-chains and the buoys, and casts them up on the sands below, if the River Police have missed the capture. They sail the sea because they must live; and there is no end to their toil. Very, very few find haven of any kind, and the earth, whose ways they do not understand, is cruel to them, when they walk upon it to drink and be merry after the manner of beasts. Jack ashore is a pretty thing when he is in a book or in the blue jacket of the Navy. Mercantile Jack is not so lovely. Later on, we will see where his 'sprees' lead him.

CHAPTER V

With the Calcutta Police

> The City was of Night—perchance of Death,
> But certainly of Night.
>
> *The City of Dreadful Night.*

IN the beginning, the Police were responsible. They said in a patronising way that they would prefer to take a wanderer round the great city themselves, sooner than let him contract a broken head on his own account in the slums. They said that there were places and places where a white man, unsupported by the arm of the Law, would be robbed and mobbed; and that there were other places where drunken seamen would make it very unpleasant for him.

'Come up to the fire look-out in the first place, and then you'll be able to see the city.' This was at No. 22 Lal Bazar, which is the head-quarters of the Calcutta Police, the centre of the great web of telephone wires where Justice sits all

day and all night looking after one million people and a floating population of one hundred thousand. But her work shall be dealt with later on. The fire look-out is a little sentry-box on the top of the three-storied police offices. Here a native watchman waits to give warning to the brigade below if the smoke rises by day or the flames by night in any ward of the city. From this eyrie, in the warm night, one hears the heart of Calcutta beating. Northward, the city stretches away three long miles, with three more miles of suburbs beyond, to Dum-Dum and Barrackpore. The lamplit dusk on this side is full of noises and shouts and smells. Close to the Police Office, jovial mariners at the sailors' coffee-shop are roaring hymns. Southerly, the city's confused lights give place to the orderly lamp-rows of the *maidân* and Chowringhi, where the respectabilities live and the Police have very little to do. From the east goes up to the sky the clamour of Sealdah, the rumble of the trams, and the voices of all Bow Bazar chaffering and making merry. Westward are the business quarters, hushed now; the lamps of the shipping on the river; and the twinkling lights on the Howrah side. 'Does the noise of traffic go on all through the hot weather?' 'Of course. The hot months are the busiest in the year and money's tightest. You should see the brokers cutting about at that season.

Calcutta *can't* stop, my dear sir.' 'What happens then?' 'Nothing happens; the death-rate goes up a little. That's all!' Even in February, the weather would, up-country, be called muggy and stifling, but Calcutta is convinced that it is her cold season. The noises of the city grow perceptibly; it is the night side of Calcutta waking up and going abroad. Jack in the sailors' coffee-shop is singing joyously: 'Shall we gather at the River —the beautiful, the beautiful, the River?' There is a clatter of hoofs in the courtyard below. Some of the Mounted Police have come in from somewhere or other out of the great darkness. A clog-dance of iron hoofs follows, and an Englishman's voice is heard soothing an agitated horse who seems to be standing on his hind-legs. Some of the Mounted Police are going out into the great darkness. 'What's on?' 'A dance at Government House. The Reserve men are being formed up below. They're calling the roll.' The Reserve men are all English, and big English at that. They form up and tramp out of the courtyard to line Government Place, and see that Mrs. Lollipop's brougham does not get smashed up by Sirdar Chuckerbutty Bahadur's lumbering C-spring barouche with the two raw Walers. Very military men are the Calcutta European Police in their set-up, and he who knows their composition knows

some startling stories of gentlemen-rankers and the like. They are, despite the wearing climate they work in and the wearing work they do, as fine a five-score of Englishmen as you shall find east of Suez.

Listen for a moment from the fire look-out to the voices of the night, and you will see why they must be so. Two thousand sailors of fifty nationalities are adrift in Calcutta every Sunday, and of these perhaps two hundred are distinctly the worse for liquor. There is a mild row going on, even now, somewhere at the back of Bow Bazar, which at nightfall fills with sailormen who have a wonderful gift of falling foul of the native population. To keep the Queen's peace is of course only a small portion of Police duty, but it is trying. The burly president of the lock-up for European drunks—Calcutta central lock-up is worth seeing—rejoices in a sprained thumb just now, and has to do his work left-handed in consequence. But his left hand is a marvellously persuasive one, and when on duty his sleeves are turned up to the shoulder that the jovial mariner may see that there is no deception. The president's labours are handicapped in that the road of sin to the lock-up runs through a grimy little garden—the brick paths are worn deep with the tread of many drunken feet—where a man can

give a great deal of trouble by sticking his toes into the ground and getting mixed up with the shrubs. A straight run-in would be much more convenient both for the president and the drunk. Generally speaking—and here Police experience is pretty much the same all over the civilised world—a woman-drunk is a good deal worse than a man-drunk. She scratches and bites like a Chinaman and swears like several fiends. Strange people may be unearthed in the lock-ups. Here is a perfectly true story, not three weeks old. A visitor, an unofficial one, wandered into the native side of the spacious accommodation provided for those who have gone or done wrong. A wild-eyed Babu rose from the fixed charpoy and said in the best of English, 'Good morning, sir.' '*Good* morning. Who are you, and what are you in for?' Then the Babu, in one breath: 'I would have you know that I do not go to prison as a criminal but as a reformer. You've read the *Vicar of Wakefield*?' 'Ye-es.' 'Well, *I* am the Vicar of Bengal—at least that's what I call myself.' The visitor collapsed. He had not nerve enough to continue the conversation. Then said the voice of the authority: 'He's down in connection with a cheating case at Serampore. May be shamming insane, but he'll be seen to in time.'

The best place to hear about the Police is the fire look-out. From that eyrie one can see how difficult must be the work of control over the great, growling beast of a city. By all means let us abuse the Police, but let us see what the poor wretches have to do with their three thousand natives and one hundred Englishmen. From Howrah and Bally and the other suburbs at least a hundred thousand people come in to Calcutta for the day and leave at night. Then, too, Chandernagore is handy for the fugitive law-breaker, who can enter in the evening and get away before the noon of the next day, having marked his house and broken into it.

'But how can the prevalent offence be house-breaking in a place like this?' 'Easily enough. When you've seen a little of the city you'll see. Natives sleep and lie about all over the place, and whole quarters are just so many rabbit-warrens. Wait till you see the Machua Bazar. Well, besides the petty theft and burglary, we have heavy cases of forgery and fraud, that leave us with our wits pitted against a Bengali's. When a Bengali criminal is working a fraud of the sort he loves, he is about the cleverest soul you could wish for. He gives us cases a year long to unravel. Then there are the murders in the low houses—very curious things they are. You'll see the house where Sheikh Babu

was murdered presently, and you'll understand. The Burra Bazar and Jora Bagan sections are the two worst ones for heavy cases; but Colootollah is the most aggravating. There's Colootollah over yonder—that patch of darkness beyond the lights. That section is full of tuppenny-ha'penny petty cases, that keep the men up all night and make 'em swear. You'll see Colootollah, and then perhaps you'll understand. Bamun Bustee is the quietest of all, and Lal Bazar and Bow Bazar, as you can see for yourself, are the rowdiest. You've no notion what the natives come to the police station for. A man will come in and want a summons against his master for refusing him half-an-hour's leave. I suppose it *does* seem rather revolutionary to an up-country man, but they try to do it here. Now wait a minute, before we go down into the city and see the Fire Brigade turned out. Business is slack with them just now, but you time 'em and see.' An order is given, and a bell strikes softly thrice. There is a rush of men, the click of a bolt, a red fire-engine, spitting and swearing with the sparks flying from the furnace, is dragged out of its shelter. A huge brake, which holds supplementary horses, men, and hatchets, follows, and a hose-cart is the third on the list. The men push the heavy things about as though they were pith toys. The men clamber up, some one says softly, 'All

ready there,' and with an angry whistle the fire-engine, followed by the other two, flies out into Lal Bazar. Time—1 min. 40 secs. 'They'll find out it's a false alarm, and come back again in five minutes.' 'Why?' 'Because there will be no constables on the road to give 'em the direction of the fire, and because the driver wasn't told the ward of the outbreak when he went out!' 'Do you mean to say that you can from this absurd pigeon-loft locate the wards in the night-time?' 'What would be the good of a look-out if the man couldn't tell where the fire was?' 'But it's all pitchy black, and the lights are so confusing.'

'You'll be more confused in ten minutes. You'll have lost your way as you never lost it before. You're going to go round Bow Bazar section.'

'And the Lord have mercy on my soul!' Calcutta, the darker portion of it, does not look an inviting place to dive into at night.

CHAPTER VI

The City of Dreadful Night

And since they cannot spend or use aright
The little time here given them in trust,
But lavish it in weary undelight
Of foolish toil, and trouble, strife and lust—
They naturally clamour to inherit
The Everlasting Future—that their merit
May have full scope. . . . As surely is most just.
The City of Dreadful Night.

THE difficulty is to prevent this account from growing steadily unwholesome. But one cannot rake through a big city without encountering muck.

The Police kept their word. In five short minutes, as they had prophesied, their charge was lost as he had never been lost before. 'Where are we now?' 'Somewhere off the Chitpore Road, but you wouldn't understand if you were told. Follow now, and step pretty much where we step —there's a good deal of filth hereabouts.'

The thick, greasy night shuts in everything. We have gone beyond the ancestral houses of the Ghoses and the Boses, beyond the lamps, the smells, and the crowd of Chitpore Road, and have come to a great wilderness of packed houses—just such mysterious, conspiring tenements as Dickens would have loved. There is no breeze here, and the air is perceptibly warmer. If Calcutta keeps such luxuries as Commissioners of Sewers and Paving, they die before they reach this place. The air is heavy with a faint, sour stench—the essence of long-neglected abominations—and it cannot escape from among the tall, three-storied houses. 'This, my dear Sir, is a *perfectly* respectable quarter as quarters go. That house at the head of the alley, with the elaborate stucco-work round the top of the door, was built long ago by a celebrated mid-wife. Great people used to live here once. Now it's the—. Aha! Look out for that carriage.' A big mail-phaeton crashes out of the darkness and, recklessly driven, disappears. The wonder is how it ever got into this maze of narrow streets, where nobody seems to be moving, and where the dull throbbing of the city's life only comes faintly and by snatches. 'Now it's the what?' 'The St. John's Wood of Calcutta—for the rich Babus. That "fitton" belonged to one of them.' 'Well, it's not much of a place to look at!' 'Don't

judge by appearances. About here live the women who have beggared kings. We aren't going to let you down into unadulterated vice all at once. You must see it first with the gilding on—and mind that rotten board.'

Stand at the bottom of a lift-shaft and look upwards. Then you will get both the size and the design of the tiny courtyard round which one of these big dark houses is built. The central square may be perhaps ten feet every way, but the balconies that run inside it overhang, and seem to cut away half the available space. To reach the square a man must go round many corners, down a covered-in way, and up and down two or three baffling and confused steps. 'Now you will understand,' say the Police kindly, as their charge blunders, shin-first, into a well-dark winding staircase, 'that these are not the sort of places to visit alone.' 'Who wants to? Of all the disgusting, inaccessible dens —Holy Cupid, what's this?'

A glare of light on the stair-head, a clink of innumerable bangles, a rustle of much fine gauze, and the Dainty Iniquity stands revealed, blazing—literally blazing—with jewellery from head to foot. Take one of the fairest miniatures that the Delhi painters draw, and multiply it by ten; throw in one of Angelica Kaufmann's best portraits, and add anything that you can think of from Beckford

to Lalla Rookh, and you will still fall short of the merits of that perfect face! For an instant, even the grim, professional gravity of the Police is relaxed in the presence of the Dainty Iniquity with the gems, who so prettily invites every one to be seated, and proffers such refreshments as she conceives the palates of the barbarians would prefer. Her maids are only one degree less gorgeous than she. Half a lakh, or fifty thousand pounds' worth—it is easier to credit the latter statement than the former—are disposed upon her little body. Each hand carries five jewelled rings which are connected by golden chains to a great jewelled boss of gold in the centre of the back of the hand. Ear-rings weighted with emeralds and pearls, diamond nose-rings, and how many other hundred articles make up the list of adornments. English furniture of a gorgeous and gimcrack kind, unlimited chandeliers, and a collection of atrocious Continental prints are scattered about the house, and on every landing squats or loafs a Bengali who can talk English with unholy fluency. The recurrence suggests—only suggests, mind—a grim possibility of the affectation of excessive virtue by day, tempered with the sort of unwholesome enjoyment after dusk—this loafing and lobbying and chattering and smoking, and unless the bottles lie, tippling, among the foul-tongued handmaidens

of the Dainty Iniquity. How many men follow this double, deleterious sort of life? The Police are discreetly dumb.

'Now don't go talking about "domiciliary visits" just because this one happens to be a pretty woman. We've *got* to know these creatures. They make the rich man and the poor spend their money; and when a man can't get money for 'em honestly, he comes under *our* notice. Now do you see? If there was any "domiciliary visit" about it, the whole houseful would be hidden past our finding as soon as we turned up in the courtyard. We're friends—to a certain extent.' And, indeed, it seemed no difficult thing to be friends to any extent with the Dainty Iniquity who was so surpassingly different from all that experience taught of the beauty of the East. Here was the face from which a man could write *Lalla Rookhs* by the dozen, and believe every word that he wrote. Hers was the beauty that Byron sang of when he wrote . . .

'Remember, if you come here alone, the chances are that you'll be clubbed, or stuck, or, anyhow, mobbed. You'll understand that this part of the world is shut to Europeans—absolutely. Mind the steps, and follow on.' The vision dies out in the smells and gross darkness of the night, in evil,

time-rotten brickwork, and another wilderness of shut-up houses.

Follows, after another plunge into a passage of a courtyard, and up a staircase, the apparition of a Fat Vice, in whom is no sort of romance, nor beauty, but unlimited coarse humour. She too is studded with jewels, and her house is even finer than the house of the other, and more infested with the extraordinary men who speak such good English and are so deferential to the Police. The Fat Vice has been a great leader of fashion in her day, and stripped a zemindar Raja to his last acre—insomuch that he ended in the House of Correction for a theft committed for her sake. Native opinion has it that she is a 'monstrous well-preserved woman.' On this point, as on some others, the races will agree to differ.

The scene changes suddenly as a slide in a magic-lantern. Dainty Iniquity and Fat Vice slide away on a roll of streets and alleys, each more squalid than its predecessor. We are 'somewhere at the back of the Machua Bazar,' well in the heart of the city. There are no houses here —nothing but acres and acres, it seems, of foul wattle-and-dab huts, any one of which would be a disgrace to a frontier village. The whole arrangement is a neatly contrived germ and fire

trap, reflecting great credit upon the Calcutta Municipality.

'What happens when these pig-sties catch fire?' 'They're built up again,' say the Police, as though this were the natural order of things. 'Land is immensely valuable here.' All the more reason, then, to turn several Haussmanns loose into the city, with instructions to make barracks for the population that cannot find room in the huts and sleeps in the open ways, cherishing dogs and worse, much worse, in its unwashen bosom. 'Here is a licensed coffee-shop. This is where your servants go for amusement and to see nautches.' There is a huge thatch shed, ingeniously ornamented with insecure kerosene lamps, and crammed with drivers, cooks, small store-keepers and the like. Never a sign of a European. Why? 'Because if an Englishman messed about here, he'd get into trouble. Men don't come here unless they're drunk or have lost their way.' The hack-drivers —they have the privilege of voting, have they not?—look peaceful enough as they squat on tables or crowd by the doors to watch the nautch that is going forward. Five pitiful draggle-tails are huddled together on a bench under one of the lamps, while the sixth is squirming and shrieking before the impassive crowd. She sings of love as understood by the Oriental—the love that dries

the heart and consumes the liver. In this place, the words that would look so well on paper have an evil and ghastly significance. The men stare or sup tumblers and cups of a filthy decoction, and the *kunchenee* howls with renewed vigour in the presence of the Police. Where the Dainty Iniquity was hung with gold and gems, she is trapped with pewter and glass; and where there was heavy embroidery on the Fat Vice's dress, defaced, stamped tinsel faithfully reduplicates the pattern on the tawdry robes of the *kunchenee*.

Two or three men with uneasy consciences have quietly slipped out of the coffee-shop into the mazes of the huts. The Police laugh, and those nearest in the crowd laugh applausively, as in duty bound. Thus do the rabbits grin uneasily when the ferret lands at the bottom of the burrow and begins to clear the warren.

'The *chandoo*-shops shut up at six, so you'll have to see opium-smoking before dark some day. No, you won't, though.' The detective makes for a half-opened door of a hut whence floats the fragrance of the Black Smoke. Those of the inhabitants who are able promptly clear out—they have no love for the Police—and there remain only four men lying down and one standing up. This latter has a pet mongoose coiled round his neck. He speaks English fluently. Yes, he has

no fear. It was a private smoking party and—'No business to-night—show how you smoke opium.' 'Aha! You want to see. Very good, I show. Hiya! you'—he kicks a man on the floor—'show how opium-smoke.' The kickee grunts lazily and turns on his elbow. The mongoose, always keeping to the man's neck, erects every hair of its body like an angry cat, and chatters in its owner's ear. The lamp for the opium-pipe is the only one in the room, and lights a scene as wild as anything in the witches' revel; the mongoose acting as the familiar spirit. A voice from the ground says, in tones of infinite weariness: 'You take *afim*, so'—a long, long pause, and another kick from the man possessed of the devil—the mongoose. 'You take *afim*?' He takes a pellet of the black, treackly stuff on the end of a knitting-needle. 'And light *afim*.' He plunges the pellet into the night-light, where it swells and fumes greasily. 'And then you put it in your pipe.' The smoking pellet is jammed into the tiny bowl of the thick, bamboo-stemmed pipe, and all speech ceases, except the unearthly chitter of the mongoose. The man on the ground is sucking at his pipe, and when the smoking pellet has ceased to smoke will be halfway to *Nibban*. 'Now you go,' says the man with the mongoose. 'I am going smoke.' The hut door closes upon

a red-lit view of huddled legs and bodies, and the man with the mongoose sinking, sinking on to his knees, his head bowed forward, and the little hairy devil chattering on the nape of his neck.

After this the fetid night air seems almost cool, for the hut is as hot as a furnace. 'Now for Colootollah. Come through the huts. There is no decoration about *this* vice.'

The huts now gave place to houses very tall and spacious and very dark. But for the narrowness of the streets we might have stumbled upon Chowringhi in the dark. An hour and a half has passed, and up to this time we have not crossed our trail once. 'You might knock about the city for a night and never cross the same line. Recollect Calcutta isn't one of your poky up-country cities of a lakh and a half of people.' 'How long does it take to know it then?' 'About a lifetime, and even then some of the streets puzzle you.' 'How much has the head of a ward to know?' 'Every house in his ward if he can, who owns it, what sort of character the inhabitants are, who are their friends, who go out and in, who loaf about the place at night, and so on and so on.' 'And he knows all this by night as well as by day?' 'Of course. Why shouldn't he?' 'No reason in the world. Only

it's pitchy black just now, and I'd like to see where this alley is going to end.' 'Round the corner beyond that dead wall. There's a lamp there. Then you'll be able to see.' A shadow flits out of a gully and disappears. 'Who's that?' 'Sergeant of Police just to see where we're going in case of accidents.' Another shadow staggers into the darkness. 'Who's *that*?' 'Soldier from the Fort or a sailor from the ships. I couldn't quite see.' The Police open a shut door in a high wall, and stumble unceremoniously among a gang of women cooking their food. The floor is of beaten earth, the steps that lead into the upper stories are unspeakably grimy, and the heat is the heat of April. The women rise hastily, and the light of the bull's eye—for the Police have now lighted a lantern in regular London fashion—shows six bleared faces—one a half-native half-Chinese one, and the others Bengali. 'There are no men here!' they cry. 'The house is empty.' Then they grin and jabber and chew *pan* and spit, and hurry up the steps into the darkness. A range of three big rooms has been knocked into one here, and there is some sort of arrangement of mats. But an average country-bred is more sumptuously accommodated in an Englishman's stable. A horse would snort at the accommodation.

'Nice sort of place, isn't it?' say the Police genially. 'This is where the sailors get robbed and drunk.' 'They must be blind drunk before they come.' 'Na—na! Na sailor men ee—yah!' chorus the women, catching at the one word they understand. 'Arl gone!' The Police take no notice, but tramp down the big room with the mat loose-boxes. A woman is shivering in one of these. 'What's the matter?' 'Fever. Seek. Vary, *vary* seek.' She huddles herself into a heap on the *charpoy* and groans.

A tiny, pitch-black closet opens out of the long room, and into this the Police plunge. 'Hullo! What's here?' Down flashes the lantern, and a white hand with black nails comes out of the gloom. Somebody is asleep or drunk in the cot. The ring of lantern-light travels slowly up and down the body. 'A sailor from the ships. He'll be robbed before the morning most likely.' The man is sleeping like a little child, both arms thrown over his head, and he is not unhandsome. He is shoeless, and there are huge holes in his stockings. He is a pure-blooded white, and carries the flush of innocent sleep on his cheeks.

The light is turned off, and the Police depart; while the woman in the loose-box shivers, and moans that she is 'seek; vary, *vary* seek.'

CHAPTER VII

Deeper and Deeper still

I built myself a lordly pleasure-house,
Wherein at ease for aye to dwell.
I said, 'O Soul, make merry and carouse,
Dear soul, for all is well.'

The Palace of Art.

AND where next? I don't like Colootollah.' The Police and their charge are standing in the interminable waste of houses under the starlight. 'To the lowest sink of all, but you wouldn't know if you were told.' They lead till they come to the last circle of the Inferno—a long, quiet, winding road. 'There you are; you can see for yourself.'

But there is nothing to be seen. On one side are houses—gaunt and dark, naked and devoid of furniture: on the other, low, mean stalls, lighted, and with shamelessly open doors, where women stand and mutter and whisper one to another.

There is a hush here, or at least the busy silence of an office or counting-house in working hours. One look down the street is sufficient. Lead on, gentlemen of the Calcutta Police. We do not love the lines of open doors, the flaring lamps within, the glimpses of the tawdry toilet-tables adorned with little plaster dogs, glass balls from Christmas-trees, and—for religion must not be despised though women be fallen—pictures of the saints and statuettes of the Virgin. The street is a long one, and other streets, full of the same pitiful wares, branch off from it.

'Why are they so quiet? Why don't they make a row and sing and shout, and so on?' 'Why should they, poor devils?' say the Police, and fall to telling tales of horror, of women decoyed and shot into this trap. Then other tales that shatter one's belief in all things and folk of good repute. 'How can you Police have faith in humanity?'

'That's because you're seeing it all in a lump for the first time, and it's not nice that way. Makes a man jump rather, doesn't it? But, recollect, you've *asked* for the worst places, and you can't complain.' 'Who's complaining? Bring on your atrocities. Isn't that a European woman at that door?' 'Yes. Mrs. D——, widow of a soldier, mother of seven children.'

'Nine, if you please, and good evening to you,' shrills Mrs. D——, leaning against the door-post, her arms folded on her bosom. She is a rather pretty, slightly made Eurasian, and whatever shame she may have owned she has long since cast behind her. A shapeless Burmo-native trot, with high cheek-bones and mouth like a shark, calls Mrs. D—— 'Mem-Sahib.' The word jars unspeakably. Her life is a matter between herself and her Maker, but in that she—the widow of a soldier of the Queen—has stooped to this common foulness in the face of the city, she has offended against the White race. 'You're from up-country, and of course you don't understand. There are any amount of that lot in the city,' say the Police. Then the secret of the insolence of Calcutta is made plain. Small wonder the natives fail to respect the Sahib, seeing what they see and knowing what they know. In the good old days, the Honourable the Directors deported him or her who misbehaved grossly, and the white man preserved his face. He may have been a ruffian, but he was a ruffian on a large scale. He did not sink in the presence of the people. The natives are quite right to take the wall of the Sahib who has been at great pains to prove that he is of the same flesh and blood.

All this time Mrs. D—— stands on the thresh-

old of her room and looks upon the men with unabashed eyes. Mrs. D—— is a lady with a story. She is not averse to telling it. 'What was—ahem—the case in which you were—er—hmn—concerned, Mrs. D——?' 'They said I'd poisoned my husband by putting something into his drinking water.' This is interesting. 'And—ah—*did* you?' 'Twasn't proved,' says Mrs. D—— with a laugh, a pleasant, lady-like laugh that does infinite credit to her education and upbringing. Worthy Mrs. D——! It would pay a novelist—a French one let us say—to pick you out of the stews and make you talk.

The Police move forward, into a region of Mrs. D——'s. Everywhere are the empty houses, and the babbling women in print gowns. The clocks in the city are close upon midnight, but the Police show no signs of stopping. They plunge hither and thither, like wreckers into the surf; and each plunge brings up a sample of misery, filth and woe.

A woman—Eurasian—rises to a sitting position on a cot and blinks sleepily at the Police. Then she throws herself down with a grunt. 'What's the matter with you?' 'I live in Markiss Lane and'—this with intense gravity—'I'm *so* drunk.' She has a rather striking gipsy-like face, but her language might be improved.

'Come along,' say the Police, 'we'll head back to

Bentinck Street, and put you on the road to the Great Eastern.' They walk long and steadily, and the talk falls on gambling hells. 'You ought to see our men rush one of 'em. When we've marked a hell down, we post men at the entrances and carry it. Sometimes the Chinese bite, but as a rule they fight fair. It's a pity we hadn't a hell to show you. Let's go in here—there may be something forward.' 'Here' appears to be in the heart of a Chinese quarter, for the pigtails—do they ever go to bed?—are scuttling about the streets. 'Never go into a Chinese place alone,' say the Police, and swing open a postern gate in a strong, green door. Two Chinamen appear.

'What are we going to see?' 'Japanese gir—— No, we aren't, by Jove! Catch that Chinaman, *quick*.' The pigtail is trying to double back across a courtyard into an inner chamber; but a large hand on his shoulder spins him round and puts him in rear of the line of advancing Englishmen, who are, be it observed, making a fair amount of noise with their boots. A second door is thrown open, and the visitors advance into a large, square room blazing with gas. Here thirteen pigtails, deaf and blind to the outer world, are bending over a table. The captured Chinaman dodges uneasily in the rear of the procession. Five—ten—fifteen seconds pass, the Englishmen standing in the full

light less than three paces from the absorbed gang who see nothing. Then the burly Superintendent brings his hand down on his thigh with a crack like a pistol-shot and shouts: 'How do, John?' Follows a frantic rush of scared Celestials, almost tumbling over each other in their anxiety to get clear. One pigtail scoops up a pile of copper money, another a chinaware soup-bowl, and only a little mound of accusing cowries remains on the white matting that covers the table. In less than half a minute two facts are forcibly brought home to the visitor. First, that a pigtail is largely composed of silk, and rasps the palm of the hand as it slides through; and secondly, that the forearm of a Chinaman is surprisingly muscular and well-developed. 'What's going to be done?' 'Nothing. There are only three of us, and all the ringleaders would get away. We've got 'em safe any time we want to catch 'em, if this little visit doesn't make 'em shift their quarters. Hi! John. No pidgin to-night. Show how you makee play. That fat youngster there is our informer.'

Half the pigtails have fled into the darkness, but the remainder assured and trebly assured that the Police really mean 'no pidgin,' return to the table and stand round while the croupier manipulates the cowries, the little curved slip of bamboo, and the soup-bowl. They never gamble, these

innocents. They only come to look on, and smoke opium in the next room. Yet as the game progresses their eyes light up, and one by one put their money on odd or even—the number of the cowries that are covered and left uncovered by the little soup-bowl. *Mythan* is the name of the amusement, and, whatever may be its demerits, it is clean. The Police look on while their charge plays and loots a parchment-skinned horror—one of Swift's Struld-brugs, strayed from Laputa—of the enormous sum of two annas. The return of this wealth, doubled, sets the loser beating his forehead against the table from sheer gratitude.

'Most immoral game this. A man might drop five whole rupees, if he began playing at sun-down and kept it up all night. Don't you ever play whist occasionally?'

'Now, we didn't bring you round to make fun of this department. A man can lose as much as ever he likes and he can fight as well, and if he loses all his money he steals to get more. A Chinaman is insane about gambling, and half his crime comes from it. It *must* be kept down. Here we are in Bentinck Street and you can be driven to the Great Eastern in a few minutes. Joss-houses? Oh yes. If you want more horrors, Superintendent Lamb will take you round with him to-morrow afternoon at five. Good night.'

The Police depart, and in a few minutes the silent respectability of Old Council House Street, with the grim Free Kirk at the end of it, is reached. All good Calcutta has gone to bed, the last tram has passed, and the peace of the night is upon the world. Would it be wise and rational to climb the spire of that Kirk, and shout: 'O true believers! Decency is a fraud and a sham. There is nothing clean or pure or wholesome under the Stars, and we are all going to perdition together. Amen!' On second thoughts it would not; for the spire is slippery, the night is hot, and the Police have been specially careful to warn their charge that he must not be carried away by the sight of horrors that cannot be written or hinted at.

'Good morning,' says the Policeman tramping the pavement in front of the Great Eastern, and he nods his head pleasantly to show that he is the representative of Law and Peace and that the city of Calcutta is safe from itself at the present.

CHAPTER VIII

Concerning Lucia

TIME must be filled in somehow till five this afternoon, when Superintendent Lamb will reveal more horrors. Why not, the trams aiding, go to the Old Park Street Cemetery?

'You want go Park Street? No trams going Park Street. You get out here.' Calcutta tram conductors are not polite. The car shuffles unsympathetically down the street, and the evicted is stranded in Dhurrumtollah, which may be the Hammersmith Highway of Calcutta. Providence arranged this mistake, and paved the way to a Great Discovery now published for the first time. Dhurrumtollah is full of the People of India, walking in family parties and groups and confidential couples. And the people of India are neither Hindu nor Mussulman — Jew, Ethiop, Gueber, or expatriated British. They are the Eurasians, and there are hundreds and hundreds

of them in Dhurrumtollah now. There is Papa with a shining black hat fit for a counsellor of the Queen, and Mamma, whose silken dress is tight upon her portly figure, and The Brood made up of straw-hatted, olive-cheeked, sharp-eyed little boys, and leggy maidens wearing white, open-work stockings calculated to show dust. There are the young men who smoke bad cigars and carry themselves lordily—such as have incomes. There are also the young women with the beautiful eyes and the wonderful dresses which always fit so badly across the shoulders. And they carry prayer-books or baskets, because they are either going to mass or the market. Without doubt, these are the People of India. They were born in it, bred in it, and will die in it. The Englishman only comes to the country, and the natives of course were there from the first, but these people have been made here, and no one has done anything for them except talk and write about them. Yet they belong, some of them, to old and honourable families, hold houses in Sealdah, and are rich, a few of them. They all look prosperous and contented, and they chatter eternally in that curious dialect that no one has yet reduced to print. Beyond what little they please to reveal now and again in the newspapers, we know nothing about their life which touches

so intimately the White on the one hand and the Black on the other. It must be interesting—more interesting than the colourless Anglo-Indian article; but who has treated of it? There was one novel once in which the second heroine was an Eurasienne. She was a strictly subordinate character and came to a sad end. The poet of the race, Henry Derozio, —he of whom Mr. Thomas Edwards wrote a history,—was bitten with Keats and Scott and Shelley, and overlooked in his search for material things that lay nearest to him. All this mass of humanity in Dhurrumtollah is unexploited and almost unknown. Wanted, therefore, a writer from among the Eurasians, who shall write so that men shall be pleased to read a story of Eurasian life; then outsiders will be interested in the People of India, and will admit that the race has possibilities.

A futile attempt to get to Park Street from Dhurrumtollah ends in the market—the Hogg Market men call it. Perhaps a knight of that name built it. It is not one-half as pretty as the Crawford Market, in Bombay, but . . . it appears to be the trysting-place of Young Calcutta. The natural inclination of youth is to lie abed late, and to let the seniors do all the hard work. Why, therefore, should Pyramus, who has to be ruling account forms at ten, and Thisbe, who *cannot* be

interested in the price of second-quality beef, wander, in studiously correct raiment, round and about the stalls before the sun is well clear of the earth? Pyramus carries a walking-stick with imitation silver straps upon it, and there are cloth tops to his boots; but his collar has been two days worn. Thisbe crowns her dark head with a blue velvet Tam-o'-Shanter; but one of her boots lacks a button, and there is a tear in the left-hand glove. Mamma, who despises gloves, is rapidly filling a shallow basket, that the coolie-boy carries, with vegetables, potatoes, purple brinjals, and—O Pyramus! Do you ever kiss Thisbe when Mamma is not by?—garlic—yea, *lusson* of the bazaar. Mamma is generous in her views on garlic. Pyramus comes round the corner of the stall looking for nobody in particular—not he—and is elaborately polite to Mamma. Somehow, he and Thisbe drift off together, and Mamma, very portly and very voluble, is left to chaffer and sort and select alone. In the name of the Sacred Unities do not, young people, retire to the meat-stalls to exchange confidences! Come up to this end, where the roses are arriving in great flat baskets, where the air is heavy with the fragrance of flowers, and the young buds and greenery are littering all the floor. They won't—they prefer talking by the dead, unromantic muttons, where there are

not so many buyers. There must have been a quarrel to make up. Thisbe shakes the blue velvet Tam-o'-Shanter and says, 'Oah yess!' scornfully. Pyramus answers: 'No-a, no-a. Do-ant say thatt.' Mamma's basket is full and she picks up Thisbe hastily. Pyramus departs. *He* never came here to do any marketing. He came to meet Thisbe, who in ten years will own a figure very much like Mamma's. May their ways be smooth before them, and after honest service of the Government, may Pyramus retire on 250 rupees per mensem, into a nice little house somewhere in Monghyr or Chunar!

From love by natural sequence to death. Where *is* the Park Street Cemetery? A hundred hack-drivers leap from their boxes and invade the market, and after a short struggle one of them uncarts his capture in a burial-ground—a ghastly new place, close to a tram-way. This is not what is wanted. The living dead are here—the people whose names are not yet altogether perished and whose tombstones are tended. 'Where are the *old* dead?' 'Nobody goes there,' says the driver. 'It is up that road.' He points up a long and utterly deserted thoroughfare, running between high walls. This is the place, and the entrance to it, with its gardener waiting with one brown, battered rose for the visitor, its grilled door and its professional notices,

bears a hideous likeness to the entrance of Simla churchyard. But, once inside, the sightseer stands in the heart of utter desolation—all the more forlorn for being swept up. Lower Park Street cuts a great graveyard in two. The guide-books will tell you when the place was opened and when it was closed. The eye is ready to swear that it is as old as Herculaneum and Pompeii. The tombs are small houses. It is as though we walked down the streets of a town, so tall are they and so closely do they stand—a town shrivelled by fire, and scarred by frost and siege. Men must have been afraid of their friends rising up before the due time that they weighted them with such cruel mounds of masonry. Strong man, weak woman, or somebody's 'infant son aged fifteen months,' for each the squat obelisk, the defaced classic temple, the cellaret of chunam, or the candlestick of brickwork—the heavy slab, the rust-eaten railings, whopper-jawed cherubs, and the apoplectic angels. Men were rich in those days and could afford to put a hundred cubic feet of masonry into the grave of even so humble a person as 'Jno. Clements, Captain of the Country Service, 1820.' When the 'dearly beloved' had held rank answering to that of Commissioner, the efforts are still more sumptuous and the verse . . . Well, the following speaks for itself:—

Soft on thy tomb shall fond Remembrance shed
The warm yet unavailing tear,
And purple flowers that deck the honoured dead
Shall strew the loved and honoured bier.

Failure to comply with the contract does not, let us hope, entail forfeiture of the earnest-money; or the honoured dead might be grieved. The slab is out of his tomb, and leans foolishly against it; the railings are rotted, and there are no more lasting ornaments than blisters and stains, which are the work of the weather, and not the result of the 'warm yet unavailing tear.'

Let us go about and moralise cheaply on the tombstones, trailing the robe of pious reflection up and down the pathways of the grave. Here is a big and stately tomb sacred to 'Lucia,' who died in 1776 A.D., aged 23. Here also be lichened verses which an irreverent thumb can bring to light. Thus they wrote, when their hearts were heavy in them, one hundred and sixteen years ago:—

What needs the emblem, what the plaintive strain,
What all the arts that sculpture e'er expressed,
To tell the treasure that these walls contain?
Let those declare it most who knew her best.

The tender pity she would oft display
Shall be with interest at her shrine returned,
Connubial love, connubial tears repay,
And Lucia loved shall still be Lucia mourned.

Though closed the lips, though stopped the tuneful breath,
The silent, clay-cold monitress shall teach—
In all the alarming eloquence of death
With double pathos to the heart shall preach.

Shall teach the virtuous maid, the faithful wife,
If young and fair, that young and fair was she,
Then close the useful lesson of her life,
And tell them what she is, they soon must be.

That goes well, even after all these years, does it not? and seems to bring Lucia very near, in spite of what the later generation is pleased to call the stiltedness of the old-time verse.

Who will declare the merits of Lucia—dead in her spring before there was even a *Hickey's Gazette* to chronicle the amusements of Calcutta, and publish, with scurrilous asterisks, the *liaisons* of heads of departments? What pot-bellied East Indiaman brought the 'virtuous maid' up the river, and did Lucia 'make her bargain' as the cant of those times went, on the first, second, or third day after her arrival? Or did she, with the others of the batch, give a spinsters' ball as a last trial—following the custom of the country? No. She was a fair Kentish maiden, sent out, at a cost of five hundred pounds, English money, under the captain's charge, to wed the man of her choice, and *he* knew Clive well, had had dealings with Omichand, and talked to men who had lived

through the terrible night in the Black Hole. He was a rich man, Lucia's battered tomb proves it, and he gave Lucia all that her heart could wish: a green-painted boat to take the air in on the river of evenings, Coffree slave-boys who could play on the French horn, and even a very elegant, neat coach with a genteel rutlan roof ornamented with flowers very highly finished, ten best polished plate glasses, ornamented with a few elegant medallions enriched with mother-o'-pearl, that she might take her drive on the course as befitted a factor's wife. All these things he gave her. And when the convoys came up the river, and the guns thundered, and the servants of the Honourable the East India Company drank to the king's health, be sure that Lucia before all the other ladies in the Fort had her choice of the new stuffs from England and was cordially hated in consequence. Tilly Kettle painted her picture a little before she died, and the hot-blooded young writers did duel with small-swords in the Fort ditch for the honour of piloting her through a minuet at the Calcutta theatre or the Punch House. But Warren Hastings danced with her instead, and the writers were confounded —every man of them. She was a toast far up the river. And she walked in the evening on the bastions of Fort William, and said, 'La! I protest!' It was there that she exchanged con-

gratulations with all her friends on the 20th of October, when those who were alive gathered together to felicitate themselves on having come through another hot season; and the men—even the sober factor saw no wrong here—got most royally and Britishly drunk on Madeira that had twice rounded the Cape. But Lucia fell sick, and the doctor—he who went home after seven years with five lakhs and a half, and a corner of this vast graveyard to his account—said that it was a pukka or putrid fever, and the system required strengthening. So they fed Lucia on hot curries, and mulled wine worked up with spirits and fortified with spices, for nearly a week; at the end of which time she closed her eyes on the weary river and the Fort for ever, and a gallant, with a turn for *belles-lettres*, wept openly as men did then and had no shame of it, and composed the verses above set, and thought himself a neat hand at the pen—stap his vitals! But the factor was so grieved that he could write nothing at all—could only spend his money—and he counted his wealth by lakhs—on a sumptuous grave. A little later on he took comfort, and when the next batch came out—

But this has nothing whatever to do with the story of Lucia, the 'virtuous maid, the faithful wife.' Her ghost went to a big Calcutta powder ball that very night, and looked very beautiful. I met her.

AMONG THE RAILWAY FOLK

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CHAPTER I

A Railway Settlement

JAMALPUR is the headquarters of the East India Railway. This in itself is not a startling statement. The wonder begins with the exploration of Jamalpur, which is a station entirely made by, and devoted to, the use of those untiring servants of the public, the railway folk. They have towns of their own at Toondla and Assensole; a sun-dried sanitarium at Bandikui; and Howrah, Ajmir, Allahabad, Lahore, and Pindi know their colonies. But Jamalpur is unadulteratedly 'Railway,' and he who has nothing to do with the E. I. Railway in some shape or another feels a stranger and an interloper. Running always east and southerly, the train carries him from the torments of the North-west into the wet, woolly warmth of Bengal, where may be found the hothouse heat

that has ruined the temper of the good people of Calcutta. The land is fat and greasy with good living, and the wealth of the bodies of innumerable dead things; and here—just above Mokameh—may be seen fields stretching, without stick, stone, or bush to break the view, from the railway line to the horizon.

Up-country innocents must look at the map to learn that Jamalpur is near the top left-hand corner of the big loop that the E. I. R. throws out round Bhagalpur and part of the Bara-Banki districts. Northward of Jamalpur, as near as may be, lies the Ganges and Tirhoot, and eastward an off-shoot of the volcanic Rajmehal range blocks the view.

A station which has neither Judge, Commissioner, Deputy, or 'Stunt, which is devoid of law courts, *ticca-gharries*, District Superintendents of Police, and many other evidences of an over-cultured civilisation, is a curiosity. 'We administer ourselves,' says Jamalpur proudly, 'or we did—till we had local self-government in—and now the racket-marker administers us.' This is a solemn fact. The station, which had its beginnings thirty odd years ago, used, till comparatively recent times, to control its own roads, sewage, conservancy, and the like. But, with the introduction of local self-government, it was ordained

that the 'inestimable boon' should be extended to a place made by, and maintained for, Europeans, and a brand-new municipality was created and nominated according to the many rules of the game. In the skirmish that ensued, the Club racket-marker fought his way to the front, secured a place on a board largely composed of Babus, and since that day Jamalpur's views on government have not been fit for publication. To understand the magnitude of the insult, one must study the city —for station, in the strict sense of the word, it is not. Crotons, palms, mangoes, wellingtonias, teak, and bamboos adorn it, and the poinsettia and bougainvillea, the railway creeper and the *Bignonia venusta*, make it gay with many colours. It is laid out with military precision; to each house its just share of garden, its red-brick path, its growth of trees, and its neat little wicket gate. Its general aspect, in spite of the Dutch formality, is that of an English village, such a thing as enterprising stage-managers put on the theatres at home. The hills have thrown a protecting arm round nearly three sides of it, and on the fourth it is bounded by what are locally known as the 'sheds'; in other words, the station, offices, and workshops of the Company. The E. I. R. only exists for outsiders. Its servants speak of it reverently, angrily, despitefully, or enthusiastically as 'The Company';

and they never omit the big, big C. Men must have treated the Honourable the East India Company in something the same fashion ages ago. 'The Company' in Jamalpur is Lord Dufferin, all the Members of Council, the Body-Guard, Sir Frederick Roberts, Mr. Westland, whose name is at the bottom of the currency notes, the Oriental Life Assurance Company, and the Bengal Government all rolled into one. At first when a stranger enters this life, he is inclined to scoff and ask, in his ignorance, '*What* is this Company that you talk so much about?' Later on, he ceases to scoff; for the Company is a 'big' thing—almost big enough to satisfy an American.

Ere beginning to describe its doings, let it be written, and repeated several times hereafter, that the E. I. R. passenger carriages, and especially the second-class, are just now horrid—being filthy and unwashen, dirty to look at, and dirty to live in. Having cast this small stone, we will examine Jamalpur. When it was laid out, in or before the Mutiny year, its designers allowed room for growth, and made the houses of one general design—some of brick, some of stone, some three, four, and six roomed, some single men's barracks and some two-storied—all for the use of the employés. King's Road, Prince's Road, Queen's Road, and Victoria Road—Jamalpur is loyal—cut the breadth of the

station; and Albert Road, Church Street, and Steam Road the length of it. Neither on these roads nor on any of the cool-shaded smaller ones is anything unclean or unsightly to be found. There is a dreary village in the neighbourhood which is said to make the most of any cholera that may be going, but Jamalpur itself is specklessly and spotlessly neat. From St. Mary's Church to the railway station, and from the buildings where they print daily about half a lakh of tickets, to the ringing, roaring, rattling workshops, everything has the air of having been cleaned up at ten that very morning and put under a glass case. There is a holy calm about the roads—totally unlike anything in an English manufacturing town. Wheeled conveyances are few, because every man's bungalow is close to his work, and when the day has begun and the offices of the 'Loco.' and 'Traffic' have soaked up their thousands of natives and hundreds of Europeans, you shall pass under the dappled shadows of the trees, hearing nothing louder than the croon of some bearer playing with a child in the veranda or the faint tinkle of a piano. This is pleasant, and produces an impression of Watteau-like refinement tempered with Arcadian simplicity. The dry, anguished howl of the 'buzzer,' the big steam-whistle, breaks the hush, and all Jamalpur is alive with the tramping of tiffin-seeking feet.

The Company gives one hour for meals between eleven and twelve. On the stroke of noon there is another rush back to the works or the offices, and Jamalpur sleeps through the afternoon till four or half-past, and then rouses for tennis at the institute.

In the hot weather it splashes in the swimming bath, or reads, for it has a library of several thousand books. One of the most flourishing lodges in the Bengal jurisdiction—'St. George in the East'—lives at Jamalpur, and meets twice a month. Its members point out with justifiable pride that all the fittings were made by their own hands; and the lodge in its accoutrements and the energy of the craftsmen can compare with any in India. But the institute is the central gathering place, and its half-dozen tennis-courts and neatly-laid-out grounds seem to be always full. Here, if a stranger could judge, the greater part of the flirtation of Jamalpur is carried out, and here the dashing apprentice—the apprentices are the liveliest of all—learns that there are problems harder than any he studies at the night school, and that the heart of a maiden is more inscrutable than the mechanism of a locomotive. On Tuesdays and Fridays the volunteers parade. A and B Companies, 150 strong in all, of the E. I. R. Volunteers, are stationed here with the band. Their

uniform, grey with red facings, is not lovely, but they know how to shoot and drill. They have to. The 'Company' makes it a condition of service that a man must be a volunteer; and volunteer in something more than name he must be, or some one will ask the reason why. Seeing that there are no regulars between Howrah and Dinapore, the 'Company' does well in exacting this toll. Some of the old soldiers are wearied of drill, some of the youngsters don't like it, but—the way they entrain and detrain is worth seeing. They are as mobile a corps as can be desired, and perhaps ten or twelve years hence the Government may possibly be led to take a real interest in them and spend a few thousand rupees in providing them with real soldier's kits—not uniform and rifle merely. Their ranks include all sorts and conditions of men—heads of the 'Loco.' and 'Traffic,'—the Company is no respecter of rank—clerks in the 'audit,' boys from mercantile firms at home, fighting with the intricacies of time, fare, and freight tables; guards who have grown grey in the service of the Company; mail and passenger drivers with nerves of cast-iron, who can shoot through a long afternoon without losing temper or flurrying; light-blue East Indians; Tyne-side men, slow of speech and uncommonly strong in the arm; lathy apprentices who have not yet 'filled out'; fitters, turners,

foremen, full, assistant, and sub-assistant station-masters, and a host of others. In the hands of the younger men the regulation Martini-Henry naturally goes off the line occasionally on hunting expeditions.

There is a twelve hundred yards range running down one side of the station, and the condition of the grass by the firing butts tells its own tale. Scattered in the ranks of the volunteers are a fair number of old soldiers, for the Company has a weakness for recruiting from the Army for its guards who may, in time, become stationmasters. A good man from the Army, with his papers all correct and certificates from his commanding officer, can, after depositing twenty pounds to pay his home passage, in the event of his services being dispensed with, enter the Company's service on something less than one hundred rupees a month and rise in time to four hundred as a station-master. A railway bungalow—and they are as substantially built as the engines—will cost him more than one-ninth of the pay of his grade, and the Provident Fund provides for his latter end.

Think for a moment of the number of men that a line running from Howrah to Delhi must use, and you will realise what an enormous amount of patronage the Company holds in its hands. Naturally a father who has worked for the line

expects the line to do something for the son; and the line is not backward in meeting his wishes where possible. The sons of old servants may be taken on at fifteen years of age, or thereabouts, as apprentices in the 'shops,' receiving twenty rupees in the first and fifty in the last year of their indentures. Then they come on the books as full 'men' on perhaps Rs. 65 a month, and the road is open to them in many ways. They may become foremen of departments on Rs. 500 a month, or drivers earning with overtime Rs. 370; or if they have been brought into the audit or the traffic, they may control innumerable Babus and draw several hundreds of rupees monthly; or, at eighteen or nineteen, they may be ticket-collectors, working up to the grade of guard, etc. Every rank of the huge, human hive has a desire to see its sons placed properly, and the native workmen, about three thousand, in the locomotive department only, are, said one man, 'making a family affair of it altogether. You see all those men turning brass and looking after the machinery? They've all got relatives, and a lot of 'em own land out Monghyr-way close to us. They bring on their sons as soon as they are old enough to do anything, and the Company rather encourages it. You see the father is in a way responsible for his son, and he'll teach him all he knows, and in that way the Company

has a hold on them all. You've no notion how sharp a native is when he's working on his own hook. All the district round here, right up to Monghyr, is more or less dependent on the railway.'

The Babus in the traffic department, in the stores' issue department, in all the departments where men sit through the long, long Indian day among ledgers, and check and pencil and deal in figures and items and rupees, may be counted by hundreds. Imagine the struggle among them to locate their sons in comfortable cane-bottomed chairs, in front of a big pewter inkstand and stacks of paper! The Babus make beautiful accountants, and if we could only see it, a merciful Providence has made the Babu for figures and detail. Without him, the dividends of any company would be eaten up by the expenses of English or city-bred clerks. The Babu is a great man, and, to respect him, you must see five score or so of him in a room a hundred yards long, bending over ledgers, ledgers, and yet more ledgers—silent as the Sphinx and busy as a bee. He is the lubricant of the great machinery of the Company whose ways and works cannot be dealt with in a single scrawl.

CHAPTER II

The Shops

THE railway folk, like the army and civilian castes, have their own language and life, which an outsider cannot hope to understand. For instance, when Jamalpur refers to itself as being 'on the long siding,' a lengthy explanation is necessary before the visitor grasps the fact that the whole of the two hundred and thirty odd miles of the loop from Luckeeserai to Kanu-Junction *via* Bhagalpur is thus contemptuously treated. Jamalpur insists that it is out of the world, and makes this an excuse for being proud of itself and all its institutions. But in one thing it is badly, disgracefully provided. At a moderate estimate there must be about two hundred Europeans with their families in this place. They can, and do, get their small supplies from Calcutta, but they are dependent on the tender mercies of the bazaar for their meat,

which seems to be hawked from door to door. There is a Raja who owns or has an interest in the land on which the station stands, and he is averse to cow-killing. For these reasons, Jamalpur is not too well supplied with good meat, and what it wants is a decent meat-market with cleanly controlled slaughtering arrangements. The 'Company,' who gives grants to the schools and builds the institute and throws the shadow of its protection all over the place, might help this scheme forward.

The heart of Jamalpur is the 'shops,' and here a visitor will see more things in an hour than he can understand in a year. Steam Street very appropriately leads to the forty or fifty acres that the 'shops' cover, and to the busy silence of the loco. superintendent's office, where a man must put down his name and his business on a slip of paper before he can penetrate into the Temple of Vulcan. About three thousand five hundred men are in the 'shops,' and, ten minutes after the day's work has begun, the assistant superintendent knows exactly how many are 'in.' The heads of departments—silent, heavy-handed men, captains of five hundred or more—have their names fairly printed on a board which is exactly like a pool-marker. They 'star a life' when they come in, and their few names alone

represent salaries to the extent of six thousand a month. They are men worth hearing deferentially. They hail from Manchester and the Clyde, and the great ironworks of the North: pleasant as cold water in a thirsty land is it to hear again the full Northumbrian burr or the long-drawn Yorkshire 'aye.' Under their great gravity of demeanour—a man who is in charge of a few lakhs' worth of plant cannot afford to be riotously mirthful—lurks melody and humour. They can sing like north-countrymen, and in their hours of ease go back to the speech of the iron countries they have left behind, when 'Ab o' th' yate' and all 'Ben Briarly's' shrewd wit shakes the warm air of Bengal with deep-chested laughter. Hear 'Ruglan' Toon,' with a chorus as true as the fall of trip-hammers, and fancy that you are back again in the smoky, rattling North!

But this is the 'unofficial' side. Go forward through the gates under the mango trees, and set foot at once in sheds which have as little to do with mangoes as a locomotive with Lakshmi. The 'buzzer' howls, for it is nearly tiffin time. There is a rush from every quarter of the shops, a cloud of flying natives, and a procession of more sedately pacing Englishmen, and in three short minutes you are left absolutely alone among arrested wheels and belts, pulleys, cranks, and

cranes—in a silence only broken by the soft sigh of a far-away steam-valve or the cooing of pigeons. You are, by favour freely granted, at liberty to wander anywhere you please through the deserted works. Walk into a huge, brick-built, tin-roofed stable, capable of holding twenty-four locomotives under treatment, and see what must be done to the Iron Horse once in every three years if he is to do his work well. On reflection, Iron Horse is wrong. An engine is a she—as distinctly feminine as a ship or a mine. Here stands the *Echo*, her wheels off, resting on blocks, her underside machinery taken out, and her side scrawled with mysterious hieroglyphics in chalk. An enormous green-painted iron harness-rack bears her piston and eccentric rods, and a neatly painted board shows that such and such Englishmen are the fitter, assistant, and apprentice engaged in editing that *Echo*. An engine seen from the platform and an engine viewed from underneath are two very different things. The one is as unimpressive as a cart; the other as imposing as a man-of-war in the yard.

In this manner is an engine treated for navicular, laminitis, back-sinew, or whatever it is that engines most suffer from. No. 607, we will say, goes wrong at Dinapore, Assensole, Buxar, or wherever

it may be, after three years' work. The place she came from is stencilled on the boiler, and the foreman examines her. Then he fills in a hospital sheet, which bears one hundred and eighty printed heads under which an engine can come into the shops. No. 607 needs repair in only one hundred and eighteen particulars, ranging from mud-hole-flanges and blower-cocks to lead-plugs, and platform brackets which have shaken loose. This certificate the foreman signs, and it is framed near the engine for the benefit of the three Europeans and the eight or nine natives who have to mend No. 607. To the ignorant the superhuman wisdom of the examiner seems only equalled by the audacity of the two men and the boy who are to undertake what is frivolously called the 'job.' No. 607 is in a sorely mangled condition, but 403 is much worse. She is reduced to a shell—is a very elle-woman of an engine, bearing only her funnel, the iron frame and the saddle that supports the boiler.

Four-and-twenty engines in every stage of decomposition stand in one huge shop. A travelling crane runs overhead, and the men have hauled up one end of a bright vermilion loco. The effect is the silence of a scornful stare—just such a look as a colonel's portly wife gives through her *pince-nez* at the audacious

subaltern. Engines are the 'livest' things that man ever made. They glare through their spectacle-plates, they tilt their noses contemptuously, and when their insides are gone they adorn themselves with red lead, and leer like decayed beauties; and in the Jamalpur works there is no escape from them. The shops can hold fifty without pressure, and on occasion as many again. Everywhere there are engines, and everywhere brass domes lie about on the ground like huge helmets in a pantomime. The silence is the weirdest touch of all. Some sprightly soul—an apprentice be sure—has daubed in red lead on the end of an iron tool-box a caricature of some friend who is evidently a riveter. The picture has all the interest of an Egyptian cartouche, for it shows that men have been here, and that the engines do not have it all their own way.

And so, out in the open, away from the three great sheds, between and under more engines, till we strike a wilderness of lines all converging to one turn-table. Here be elephant-stalls ranged round a half-circle, and in each stall stands one engine, and each engine stares at the turn-table. A stolid and disconcerting company is this ring-of-eyes monsters; 324, 432, and 8 are shining like toys. They are ready for their turn of duty, and are as spruce as hansoms. Lacquered

chocolate, picked out with black, red, and white, is their dress, and delicate lemon graces the ceilings of the cabs. The driver should be a gentleman in evening dress with white kid gloves, and there should be gold-headed champagne bottles in the spick-and-span tenders. Huckleberry Finn says of a timber raft, 'It amounted to something being captain of that raft.' Thrice enviable is the man who, drawing Rs. 220 a month, is allowed to make Rs. 150 overtime out of locos. Nos. 324, 432, or 8. Fifty yards beyond this gorgeous trinity are ten to twelve engines who have put in to Jamalpur to bait. They are alive, their fires are lighted, and they are swearing and purring and growling one at another as they stand alone. Here is evidently one of the newest type—No. 25, a giant who has just brought the mail in and waits to be cleaned up preparatory to going out afresh.

The tiffin hour has ended. The buzzer blows, and with a roar, a rattle, and a clang the shops take up their toil. The hubbub that followed on the Prince's kiss to the sleeping beauty was not so loud or sudden. Experience, with a foot-rule in his pocket, authority in his port, and a merry twinkle in his eye, comes up and catches Ignorance walking gingerly round No. 25. 'That's one of the best we have,' says Experience, 'a four-wheeled coupled bogie they call her. She's by Dobbs.

She's done her hundred and fifty miles to-day; and she'll run in to Rampore Haut this afternoon; then she'll rest a day and be cleaned up. Roughly, she does her three hundred miles in the four-and-twenty hours. She's a beauty. She's out from home, but we can build our own engines—all except the wheels. We're building ten locos. now, and we've got a dozen boilers ready if you care to look at them. How long does a loco. last? That's just as may be. She will do as much as her driver lets her. Some men play the mischief with a loco. and some handle 'em properly. Our drivers prefer Hawthorne's old four-wheeled coupled engines because they give the least bother. There is one in that shed, and it's a good 'un to travel. But eighty thousand miles generally sees the gloss off an engine, and she goes into the shops to be overhauled and refitted and replaned, and a lot of things that you wouldn't understand if I told you about them. No. 1, the first loco. on the line, is running still, but very little of the original engine must be left by this time. That one there came out in the Mutiny year. She's by Slaughter and Grunning, and she's built for speed in front of a light load. French-looking sort of thing, isn't she? That's because her cylinders are on a tilt. We used her for the mail once, but the mail has grown heavier and

heavier, and now we use six-wheeled coupled eighteen-inch, inside cylinder, 45-ton locos. to shift thousand-ton trains. *No!* All locos. aren't alike. It isn't merely pulling a lever. The Company likes its drivers to know their locos., and a man will keep his Hawthorne for two or three years. The more mileage he gets out of her before she has to be overhauled the better man he is. It pays to let a man have his fancy engine. A man must take an interest in his loco., and that means she must belong to him. Some locos. won't do anything, even if you coax and humour them. I don't think there are any unlucky ones now, but some years ago No. 31 wasn't popular. The drivers went sick or took leave when they were told off for her. She killed her driver on the Jubbulpore line, she left the rails at Kajra, she did something or other at Rampur Haut, and Lord knows what she didn't do or try to do in other places! All the drivers fought shy of her, and in the end she disappeared. They said she was condemned, but I shouldn't wonder if the Company changed her number quietly, and changed the luck at the same time. You see, the Government Inspector comes and looks at our stock now and again, and when an engine's condemned he puts his dhobi-mark on her, and she's broken up. Well, No. 31 was condemned, but

there was a whisper that they only shifted her number, and ran her out again. When the drivers didn't know, there were no accidents. I don't think we've got an unlucky one running now. Some are different from others, but there are no man-eaters. Yes, a driver of the mail *is* somebody. He can make Rs. 370 a month if he's a covenanted man. We get a lot of our drivers in the country, and we don't import from England as much as we did. 'Stands to reason that, now there's more competition both among lines and in the labour market, the Company can't afford to be as generous as it used to be. It doesn't cheat a man though. It's this way with the drivers. A native driver gets about Rs. 20 a month, and in his way he's supposed to be good enough for branch work and shunting and such. Well, an English driver'll get from Rs. 80 to Rs. 220, and overtime. The English driver knows what the native gets, and in time they tell the driver that the native'll improve. The driver has that to think of. You see? That's competition!'

Experience returns to the engine-sheds, now full of clamour, and enlarges on the beauties of sick locomotives. The fitters and the assistants and the apprentices are hammering and punching and gauging, and otherwise technically disporting themselves round their enormous patients, and

their language, as caught in snatches, is beautifully unintelligible.

But one flying sentence goes straight to the heart. It is the cry of Humanity over the Task of Life, done into unrefined English. An apprentice, grimed to his eyebrows, his cloth cap well on the back of his curly head and his hands deep in his pockets, is sitting on the edge of a tool-box ruefully regarding the very much disorganised engine whose slave is he. A handsome boy, this apprentice, and well made. He whistles softly between his teeth, and his brow puckers. Then he addresses the engine, half in expostulation and half in despair, 'Oh, you condemned old female dog!' He puts the sentence more crisply—much more crisply—and Ignorance chuckles sympathetically.

Ignorance also is puzzled over these engines.

CHAPTER III

Vulcan's Forge

IN the wilderness of the railway shops—and machinery that planes and shaves, and bevels and stamps, and punches and hoists and nips—the first idea that occurs to an outsider, when he has seen the men who people the place, is that it must be the birthplace of inventions—a pasture-ground of fat patents. If a writing-man, who plays with shadows and dresses dolls that others may laugh at their antics, draws help and comfort and new methods of working old ideas from the stored shelves of a library, how, in the name of Common-sense, his god, can a doing-man, whose mind is set upon things that snatch a few moments from flying Time or put power into weak hands, refrain from going forward and adding new inventions to the hundreds among which he daily moves?

Appealed to on this subject, Experience, who had served the E. I. R. loyally for many years,

held his peace. 'We don't go in much for patents; but,' he added, with a praiseworthy attempt to turn the conversation, 'we can build you any mortal thing you like. We've got the *Bradford Leslie* steamer for the Sahibgunge ferry. Come and see the brass-work for her bows. It's in the casting-shed.'

It would have been cruel to have pressed Experience further, and Ignorance, to foredate matters a little, went about to discover why Experience shied off this question, and why the men of Jamalpur had not each and all invented and patented something. He won his information in the end, but it did not come from Jamalpur. *That* must be clearly understood. It was found anywhere you please between Howrah and Hoti Mardan; and here it is that all the world may admire a prudent and far-sighted Board of Directors. Once upon a time, as every one in the profession knows, two men invented the D. and O. sleeper—cast-iron, of five pieces, very serviceable. The men were in the Company's employ, and their masters said: 'Your brains are ours. Hand us over those sleepers.' Being of pay and position, D. and O. made some sort of resistance and got a royalty or a bonus. At any rate, the Company had to pay for its sleepers. But thereafter, and the condition exists to this

day, they caused it to be written in each servant's covenant, that if by chance he invented aught, his invention was to belong to the Company. Providence has mercifully arranged that no man or syndicate of men can buy the 'holy spirit of man' outright without suffering in some way or another just as much as the purchase. America fully, and Germany in part, recognises this law. The E. I. Railway's breach of it is thoroughly English. They say, or it is said of them that they say, 'We are afraid of our men, who belong to us, wasting their time on trying to invent.'

Is it wholly impossible, then, for men of mechanical experience and large sympathies to check the mere patent-hunter and bring forward the man with an idea? Is there no supervision in the 'shops,' or have the men who play tennis and billiards at the institute not a minute which they can rightly call their very own? Would it ruin the richest Company in India to lend their model-shop and their lathes to half a dozen, or, for the matter of that, half a hundred, abortive experiments? A Massachusetts organ factory, a Racine buggy shop, an Oregon lumber-yard, would laugh at the notion. An American toy-maker might swindle an employé after the invention, but he would in his own interests help the man to 'see what comes of the thing.' Surely a wealthy,

a powerful and, as all Jamalpur bears witness, a considerate Company might cut that clause out of the covenant and await the issue. There would be quite enough jealousy between man and man, grade and grade, to keep down all but the keenest souls; and, with due respect to the steam-hammer and the rolling-mill, we have not yet made machinery perfect. The 'shops' are not likely to spawn unmanageable Stephensons or grasping Brunels; but in the minor turns of mechanical thought that find concrete expressions in links, axle-boxes, joint packings, valves, and spring-stirrups something might—something would—be done were the practical prohibition removed. Will a North-countryman give you anything but warm hospitality for nothing? Or if you claim from him overtime service as a right, will he work zealously? 'Onything but t' brass,' is his motto, and his ideas are his 'brass.'

Gentlemen in authority, if this should meet your august eyes, spare it a minute's thought, and, clearing away the floridity, get to the heart of the mistake and see if it cannot be rationally put right. Above all, remember that Jamalpur supplied no information. It was as mute as an oyster. There is no one within your jurisdiction to—ahem—'drop upon.'

Let us, after this excursion into the offices,

return to the shops and only ask Experience such questions as he can without disloyalty answer.

'We used once,' says he, leading to the foundry, 'to sell our old rails and import new ones. Even when we used 'em for roof beams and so on, we had more than we knew what to do with. Now we have got rolling-mills, and we use the rails to make tie-bars for the D. and O. sleepers and all sorts of things. We turn out five hundred D. and O. sleepers a day. Altogether, we use about seventy-five tons of our own iron a month here. Iron in Calcutta costs about five-eight a hundredweight; ours costs between three-four and three-eight, and on that item alone we save three thousand a month. Don't ask me how many miles of rails we own. There are fifteen hundred miles of line, and you can make your own calculation. All those things like babies' graves, down in that shed, are the moulds for the D. and O. sleepers. We test them by dropping three hundredweight and three hundred quarters of iron on top of them from a height of seven feet, or eleven sometimes. They don't often smash. We have a notion here that our iron is as good as the Home stuff.'

A sleek white and brindled pariah thrusts himself into the conversation. His house appears to be on the warm ashes of the bolt-maker. This

is a horrible machine, which chews red-hot iron bars and spits them out perfect bolts. Its manners are disgusting, and it gobbles over its food.

'Hi, Jack!' says Experience, stroking the interloper, 'you've been trying to break your leg again. That's the dog of the works. At least he makes believe that the works belong to him. He'll follow any one of us about the shops as far as the gate, but never a step further. You can see he's in first-class condition. The boys give him his ticket, and, one of these days, he'll try to get on to the Company's books as a regular worker. He's too clever to live.' Jack heads the procession as far as the walls of the rolling-shed and then returns to his machinery room. He waddles with fatness and despises strangers.

'How would you like to be hot-potted there?' says Experience, who has read and who is enthusiastic over *She*, as he points to the great furnaces whence the slag is being dragged out by hooks. 'Here is the old material going into the furnace in that big iron bucket. Look at the scraps of iron. There's an old D. and O. sleeper, there's a lot of clips from a cylinder, there's a lot of snipped-up rails, there's a driving-wheel block, there's an old hook, and a sprinkling of boiler-plates and rivets.'

The bucket is tipped into the furnace with a

thunderous roar and the slag below pours forth more quickly. 'An engine,' says Experience reflectively, 'can run over herself so to say. After she's broken up she is made into sleepers for the line. You'll see how she's broken up later.' A few paces further on, semi-nude demons are capering over strips of glowing hot iron which are put into a mill as rails and emerge as thin, shapely tie-bars. The natives wear rough sandals and some pretence of aprons, but the greater part of them is 'all face.' 'As I said before,' says Experience, 'a native's cuteness when he's working on ticket is something startling. Beyond occasionally hanging on to a red-hot bar too long and so letting their pincers be drawn through the mills, these men take precious good care not to go wrong. Our machinery is fenced and guard-railed as much as possible, and these men don't get caught up in the belting. In the first place, they're careful—the father warns the son and so on—and in the second, there's nothing about 'em for the belting to catch on unless the man shoves his hand in. Oh, a native's no fool! He knows that it doesn't do to be foolish when he's dealing with a crane or a driving-wheel. You're looking at all those chopped rails? We make our iron as they blend baccy. We mix up all sorts to get the required quality. Those rails have just been

chopped by this tobacco-cutter thing.' Experience bends down and sets a vicious-looking, parrot-headed beam to work. There is a quiver—a snap—and a dull smash and a heavy rail is nipped in two like a stick of barley-sugar.

Elsewhere, a bull-nosed hydraulic cutter is rail-cutting as if it enjoyed the fun. In another shed stand the steam-hammers; the unemployed ones murmuring and muttering to themselves, as is the uncanny custom of all steam-souled machinery. Experience, with his hand on a long lever, makes one of the monsters perform: and though Ignorance knows that a man designed and men do continually build steam-hammers, the effect is as though Experience were maddening a chained beast. The massive block slides down the guides, only to pause hungrily an inch above the anvil, or restlessly throb through a foot and a half of space, each motion being controlled by an almost imperceptible handling of the levers. 'When these things are newly overhauled, you can regulate your blow to within an eighth of an inch,' says Experience. 'We had a foreman here once who could work 'em beautifully. He had the touch. One day a visitor, no end of a swell in a tall, white hat, came round the works, and our foreman borrowed the hat and brought the hammer down just enough to press the nap and no more.

"How wonderful!" said the visitor, putting his hand carelessly upon this lever rod here.' Experience suits the action to the word and the hammer thunders on the anvil. 'Well, you can guess for yourself. Next minute there wasn't enough left of that tall, white hat to make a postage-stamp of. Steam-hammers aren't things to play with. Now we'll go over to the stores. . . .'

Whatever apparent disorder there might have been in the works, the store department is as clean as a new pin, and stupefying in its naval order. Copper plates, bar, angle, and rod iron, duplicate cranks and slide bars, the piston rods of the *Bradford Leslie* steamer, engine grease, files, and hammer-heads—every conceivable article, from leather laces of beltings to head-lamps, necessary for the due and proper working of a long line, is stocked, stacked, piled, and put away in appropriate compartments. In the midst of it all, neck deep in ledgers and indent forms, stands the many-handed Babu, the steam of the engine whose power extends from Howrah to Ghaziabad.

The Company does everything, and knows everything. The gallant apprentice may be a wild youth with an earnest desire to go occasionally 'upon the bend.' But three times a week, between 7 and 8 P.M., he must attend the night-school and sit at the feet of M. Bonnaud, who teaches him mechanics

and statics so thoroughly that even the awful Government Inspector is pleased. And when there is no night-school the Company will by no means wash its hands of its men out of working-hours. No man can be violently restrained from going to the bad if he insists upon it, but in the service of the Company a man has every warning; his escapades are known, and a judiciously arranged transfer sometimes keeps a good fellow clear of the down-grade. No one can flatter himself that in the multitude he is overlooked, or believe that between 4 P.M. and 9 A.M. he is at liberty to misdemean himself. Sooner or later, but generally sooner, his goings-on are known, and he is reminded that 'Britons never shall be slaves'—to things that destroy good work as well as souls. Maybe the Company acts only in its own interest, but the result is good.

Best and prettiest of the many good and pretty things in Jamalpur is the institute of a Saturday when the Volunteer Band is playing and the tennis courts are full and the babydom of Jamalpur—fat, sturdy children—frolic round the band-stand. The people dance—but big as the institute is, it is getting too small for their dances—they act, they play billiards, they study their newspapers, they play cards and everything else, and they flirt in a sumptuous building, and in the hot weather the

gallant apprentice ducks his friend in the big swimming-bath. Decidedly the railway folk make their lives pleasant.

Let us go down southward to the big Giridih collieries and see the coal that feeds the furnace that smelts the iron that makes the sleeper that bears the loco. that pulls the carriage that holds the freight that comes from the country that is made richer by the Great Company Bahadur, the East Indian Railway.

THE GIRIDIH COAL-FIELDS

THE GIRIDIH COAL-FIELDS

CHAPTER I

On the Surface

SOUTHWARD, always southward and easterly, runs the Calcutta Mail from Luckeeserai, till she reaches Madapur in the Sonthal Parganas. From Madapur a train, largely made up of coal-trucks, heads westward into the Hazaribagh district and toward Giridih. A week would not have exhausted 'Jamalpur and its environs,' as the guide-books say. But since time drives and man must e'en be driven, the weird, echoing bund in the hills above Jamalpur, where the owls hoot at night and hyenas come down to laugh over the grave of 'Quillem Roberts, who died from the effects of an encounter with a tiger near this place, A.D. 1864,' goes undescribed. Nor is it possible to deal with Monghyr, the head-

quarters of the district, where one sees for the first time the age of Old Bengal in the sleepy, creepy station, built in a time-eaten fort, which runs out into the Ganges, and is full of quaint houses, with fat-legged balustrades on the roofs. Pensioners certainly, and probably a score of ghosts, live in Monghyr. All the country seems haunted. Is there not at Pir Bahar a lonely house on a bluff, the grave of a young lady, who, thirty years ago, rode her horse down the cliff and perished? Has not Monghyr a haunted house in which tradition says sceptics have seen much more than they could account for? And is it not notorious throughout the countryside that the seven miles of road between Jamalpur and Monghyr are nightly paraded by tramping battalions of spectres —phantoms of an old-time army, massacred who knows how long ago? The common voice attests all these things, and an eerie cemetery packed with blackened, lichened, candle-extinguisher tombstones persuades the listener to believe all that he hears. Bengal is second—or third is it?—in order of seniority among the Provinces, and like an old nurse, she tells many witch-tales.

But ghosts have nothing to do with collieries, and that ever-present 'Company,' the E. I. R., has more or less made Giridih—principally more. 'Before the E. I. R. came,' say the people, 'we

had one meal a day. Now we have two.' Stomachs do not tell fibs, whatever mouths may say. That 'Company,' in the course of business, throws about five lakhs a year into the Hazaribagh district in the form of wages alone, and Giridih Bazar has to supply the wants of twelve thousand men, women, and children. But we have now the authority of a number of high-souled and intelligent native prints that the Sahib of all grades spends his time in 'sucking the blood out of the country,' and 'flying to England to spend his ill-gotten gains.'

Giridih is perfectly mad—quite insane! Geologically, 'the country is in the metamorphic higher grounds that rise out of the alluvial flats of Lower Bengal between the Osri and the Barakar rivers.' Translated, this sentence means that you can twist your ankle on pieces of pure white, pinky, and yellowish granite, slip over weather-worn sandstone, grievously cut your boots over flakes of trap, and throw hornblende pebbles at the dogs. Never was such a place for stone-throwing as Giridih. The general aspect of the country is falsely park-like, because it swells and sinks in a score of grass-covered undulations, and is adorned with plantation-like jungle. There are low hills on every side, and twelve miles away bearing south the blue bulk of the holy hill of Parasnath,

greatest of the Jain Tirthankars, overlooks the world. In Bengal they consider four thousand five hundred feet good enough for a Dagshai or Kasauli, and once upon a time they tried to put troops on Parasnath. There was a scarcity of water, and Thomas of those days found the silence and seclusion prey upon his spirits. Since twenty years, therefore, Parasnath has been abandoned by Her Majesty's Army.

As to Giridih itself, the last few miles of train bring up the reek of the 'Black Country.' Memory depends on smell. A noseless man is devoid of sentiment, just as a noseless woman, in this country, must be devoid of honour. That first breath of the coal should be the breath of the murky, clouded tract between Yeadon and Dale —or Barnsley, rough and hospitable Barnsley—or Dewsbury and Batley and the Derby Canal on a Sunday afternoon when the wheels are still and the young men and maidens walk stolidly in pairs. Unfortunately, it is nothing more than Giridih—seven thousand miles away from Home and blessed with a warm and genial sunshine, soon to turn into something very much worse. The insanity of the place is visible at the station door. A G.B.T. cart once married a bathing-machine, and they called the child *tum-tum*. You who in flannel and Cawnpore harness drive bamboo-carts about up-

country roads, remember that a Giridih *tum-tum* is painfully pushed by four men, and must be entered crawling on all-fours, head first. So strange are the ways of Bengal!

They drive mad horses in Giridih—animals that become hysterical as soon as the dusk falls and the country-side blazes with the fires of the great coke ovens. If you expostulate tearfully, they produce another horse, a raw, red fiend whose ear has to be screwed round and round, and round and round, before she will by any manner of means consent to start. The roads carry neat little eighteen-inch trenches at their sides, admirably adapted to hold the flying wheel. Skirling about this savage land in the dark, the white population beguile the time by rapturously recounting past accidents, insisting throughout on the super-equine 'steadiness' of their cattle. Deep and broad and wide is their jovial hospitality; but somebody—the Tirhoot planters for choice—ought to start a mission to teach the men of Giridih what to drive. They know *how*, or they would be severally and separately and many times dead, but they do not, they do not indeed, know that animals who stand on one hind leg and beckon with all the rest, or try to pigstick in harness, are not trap-horses worthy of endearing names, but things to be pole-axed! Their feelings are hurt when you say this.

'Sit tight,' say the men of Giridih; 'we're insured! We can't be hurt.'

And now with grey hairs, dry mouth, and chattering teeth to the collieries. The E. I. R. estate, bought or leased in perpetuity from the Serampore Raja, may be about four miles long and between one and two miles across. It is in two pieces, the Serampore field being separated from the Karharbari (or Kurhurballi or Kabarbari) field by the property of the Bengal Coal Company. The Raneegunge Coal Association lies to the east of all other workings. So we have three companies at work on about eleven square miles of land.

There is no such thing as getting a full view of the whole place. A short walk over a grassy down gives on to an outcrop of very dirty sandstone, which in the excessive innocence of his heart the visitor naturally takes to be the coal lying neatly on the surface. Up to this sandstone the path seems to be made of crushed sugar, so white and shiny is the quartz. Over the brow of the down comes in sight the old familiar pit-head wheel, spinning for the dear life, and the eye loses itself in a maze of pumping sheds, red-tiled, mud-walled miners' huts, dotted all over the landscape, and railway lines that run on every kind of gradient. There are lines that dip into valleys and disappear round the shoulders of slopes, and lines that career

on the tops of rises and disappear over the brow of the slopes. Along these lines whistle and pant metre-gauge engines, some with trucks at their tail, and others rattling back to the pit-bank with the absurd air of a boy late for school that an unemployed engine always assumes. There are six engines in all, and as it is easiest to walk along the lines one sees a good deal of them. They bear not altogether unfamiliar names. Here, for instance, passes the 'Cockburn' whistling down a grade with thirty tons of coal at her heels; while the 'Whitly' and the 'Olpherts' are waiting for their complement of trucks. Now a Mr. T. F. Cockburn was superintendent of these mines nearly thirty years ago, in the days before the chord-lines from Kanu to Luckeeserai were built, and all the coal was carted to the latter place; and surely Mr. Olpherts was an engineer who helped to think out a new sleeper. What may these things mean?

'Apotheosis of the Manager,' is the reply. 'Christen the engines after the managers. You'll find Cockburn, Dunn, Whitly, Abbot, Olpherts, and Saise knocking about the place. Sounds funny, doesn't it? Doesn't sound so funny when one of these idiots does his best to derail Saise, though, by putting a line down anyhow. Look at that line! Laid out in knots—by Jove!' To the unprofessional eye the rail seems all correct;

but there must be something wrong, because 'one of those idiots' is asked why in the name of all he considers sacred he does not ram the ballast properly.

'What would happen if you threw an engine off the line! Can't say that I know exactly. You see, our business is to keep them *on*, and we do that. Here's rather a curiosity. You see that pointsman! They say he's an old mutineer, and when he relaxes he boasts of the Sahibs he has killed. He's glad enough to eat the Company's salt now.' Such a withered old face was the face of the pointsman at No. 11 point! The information suggested a host of questions, and the answers were these: 'You won't be able to understand till you've been down into a mine. We work our men in two ways: some by direct payment—under our own hand, and some by contractors. The contractor undertakes to deliver us the coal, supplying his own men, tools, and props. He's responsible for the safety of his men, and of course the Company knows and sees his work. Just fancy, among these five thousand people, what sort of effect the news of an accident would produce! It would go all through the Sonthal Parganas. We have any amount of Sonthals besides Mahometans and Hindus of every possible caste, down to those Musahers who eat pig. They don't

require much administering in the civilian sense of the word. On Sundays, as a rule, if any man has had his daughter eloped with, or anything of that kind, he generally comes up to the manager's bungalow to get the matter put straight. If a man is disabled through accident he knows that as long as he's in the hospital he gets full wages, and the Company pays for the food of any of his women-folk who come to look after him. *One*, of course; not the whole clan. That makes our service popular with the people. Don't you believe that a native is a fool. You can train him to everything except responsibility. There's a rule in the workings that if there is any dangerous work—we haven't choke-damp; I will show you when we get down—no gang must work without an Englishman to look after them. A native wouldn't be wise enough to understand what the danger was, or where it came in. Even if he did, he'd shirk the responsibility. We can't afford to risk a single life. All our output is just as much as the Company want—about a thousand tons per working day. Three hundred thousand in the year. We could turn out more? Yes—a little. Well, yes, twice as much. I won't go on, because you wouldn't believe me. There's the coal under us, and we work it at any depth from following up an outcrop down to six hundred feet. That

is our deepest shaft. We have no necessity to go deeper. At home the mines are sometimes fifteen hundred feet down. Well, the thickness of this coal here varies from anything you please to anything you please. There's enough of it to last your time and one or two hundred years longer. Perhaps even longer than that. Look at that stuff. That's big coal from the pit.'

It was aristocratic-looking coal, just like the picked lumps that are stacked in baskets of coal agencies at home with the printed legend atop 'Only 23s. a ton.' But there was no picking in this case. The great piled banks were all equal to sample, and beyond them lay piles of small, broken, 'smithy' coal. 'The Company doesn't sell to the public. This small, broken coal is an exception. That is sold, but the big stuff is for the engines and the shops. It doesn't cost much to get out, as you say; but our men can earn as much as twelve rupees a month. Very often when they've earned enough to go on with they retire from the concern till they've spent their money and then come on again. It's piece-work and they are improvident. If some of them only lived like other natives they would have enough to buy land and cows with. When there's a press of work they make a good deal by overtime, but they don't seem to keep it. You should see Giridih Bazar

on a Sunday if you want to know where the money goes. About ten thousand rupees change hands once a week there. If you want to get at the number of people who are indirectly dependent or profit by the E. I. R. you'll have to conduct a census of your own. After Sunday is over the men generally lie off on Monday and take it easy on Tuesday. Then they work hard for the next four days and make it up. Of course there's nothing in the wide world to prevent a man from resigning and going away to wherever he came from—behind those hills if he's a Sonthal. He loses his employment, that's all. But they have their own point of honour. A man hates to be told by his friends that he has been guilty of shirking. And now we'll go to breakfast. You shall be "pitted" to-morrow to any depth you like.'

CHAPTER II

In the Depths

'PITTED to any extent you please.' The only difficulty was for Joseph to choose his pit. Giridih was full of them. There was an arch in the side of a little hill, a blackened brick arch leading into thick night. A stationary engine was hauling a procession of coal-laden trucks—'tubs' is the technical word—out of its depths. The tubs were neither pretty nor clean. 'We are going down in those when they are emptied. Put on your helmet and keep it on, and keep your head down.'

There is nothing mirth-provoking in going down a coal-mine—even though it be only a shallow incline running to one hundred and forty feet vertical below the earth. 'Get into the tub and lie down. Hang it, no! This is not a railway carriage: you can't see the country out of the windows. Lie down in the dust and don't lift your head. Let her go!'

The tubs strain on the wire rope and slide down fourteen hundred feet of incline, at first through a chastened gloom, and then through darkness. An absurd sentence from a trial report rings in the head: 'About this time prisoner expressed a desire for the consolations of religion.' A hand with a reeking flare-lamp hangs over the edge of the tub, and there is a glimpse of a blackened hat near it, for those accustomed to the pits have a merry trick of going down sitting or crouching on the coupling of the rear tub. The noise is deafening, and the roof is very close indeed. The tubs bump, and the occupant crouches lovingly in the coal dust. What would happen if the train went off the line? The desire for the 'consolations of religion' grows keener and keener as the air grows closer and closer. The tubs stop in darkness spangled by the light of the flare-lamps which many black devils carry. Underneath and on both sides is the greasy blackness of the coal, and, above, a roof of grey sandstone, smooth as the flow of a river at evening. 'Now, remember that if you don't keep your hat on, you'll get your head broken, because you will forget to stoop. If you hear any tubs coming up behind you step off to one side. There's a tramway under your feet: be careful not to trip over it.'

The miner has a gait as peculiarly his own as

Tommy's measured pace or the bluejacket's roll. Big men who slouch in the light of day become almost things of beauty underground. Their foot is on their native heather; and the slouch is a very necessary act of homage to the great earth, which if a man observe not, he shall without doubt have his hat—bless the man who invented pith hats!—grievously cut.

The road turns and winds and the roof becomes lower, but those accursed tubs still rattle by on the tramways. The roof throws back their noises, and when all the place is full of a grumbling and a growling, how under earth is one to know whence danger will turn up next? The air brings to the unacclimatised a singing in the ears, a hotness of the eyeballs, and a jumping of the heart. 'That's because the pressure here is different from the pressure up above. It'll wear off in a minute. *We* don't notice it. Wait till you get down a four-hundred-foot pit. *Then* your ears will begin to sing, if you like.'

Most people know the One Night of each hot weather—that still, clouded night just before the Rains break, when there seems to be no more breathable air under the bowl of the pitiless skies, and all the weight of the silent, dark house lies on the chest of the sleep-hunter. This is the feeling in a coal-mine—only more so—much more so, for

the darkness is the 'gross darkness of the inner sepulchre.' It is hard to see which is the black coal and which the passage driven through it. From far away, down the side galleries, comes the regular beat of the pick—thick and muffled as the beat of the labouring heart. 'Six men to a gang, and they aren't allowed to work alone. They make six-foot drives through the coal—two and sometimes three men working together. The rest clear away the stuff and load it into the tubs. We have no props in this gallery because we have a roof as good as a ceiling. The coal lies under the sandstone here. It's beautiful sandstone.' It *was* beautiful sandstone—as hard as a billiard table and devoid of any nasty little bumps and jags.

There was a roaring down one road—the roaring of infernal fires. This is not a pleasant thing to hear in the dark. It is too suggestive. 'That's our ventilating shaft. Can't you feel the air getting brisker? Come and look.'

Imagine a great iron-bound crate of burning coal, hanging over a gulf of darkness faintly showing the brickwork of the base of a chimney. 'We're at the bottom of the shaft. That fire makes a draught that sucks up the foul air from the bottom of the pit. There's another down-draw shaft in another part of the mine where the

clean air comes in. We aren't going to set the mines on fire. There's an earth and brick floor at the bottom of the pit the crate hangs over. It isn't so deep as you think.' Then a devil—a naked devil—came in with a pitchfork and fed the spouting flames. This was perfectly in keeping with the landscape.

More trucks, more muffled noises, more darkness made visible, and more devils—male and female—coming out of darkness and vanishing. Then a picture to be remembered. A great Hall of Eblis, twenty feet from inky-black floor to grey roof, upheld by huge pillars of shining coal, and filled with flitting and passing devils. On a shattered pillar near the roof stood a naked man, his flesh olive-coloured in the light of the lamps, hewing down a mass of coal that still clove to the roof. Behind him was the wall of darkness, and when the lamps shifted he disappeared like a ghost. The devils were shouting directions, and the man howled in reply, resting on his pick and wiping the sweat from his brow. When he smote the coal crushed and slid and rumbled from the darkness into the darkness, and the devils cried *Shabash!* The man stood erect like a bronze statue, he twisted and bent himself like a Japanese grotesque, and anon threw himself on his side after the manner of the dying gladiator. Then spoke the still small

voice of fact: 'A first-class workman if he would only stick to it. But as soon as he makes a little money he lies off and spends it. That's the last of a pillar that we've knocked out. See here. These pillars of coal are square, about thirty feet each way. As you can see, we make the pillar first by cutting out all the coal between. Then we drive two square tunnels, about seven feet wide, through and across the pillar, propping it with balks. There's one fresh cut.'

Two tunnels crossing at right angles had been driven through a pillar which in its under-cut condition seemed like the rough draft of a statue for an elephant. 'When the pillar stands only on four legs we chip away one leg at a time from a square to an hour-glass shape, and then either the whole of the pillar crashes down from the roof or else a quarter or a half. If the coal lies against the sandstone it carries away clear, but in some places it brings down stone and rubbish with it. The chipped-away legs of the pillars are called stooks.'

'Who has to make the last cut that breaks a leg through?'

'Oh! Englishmen, of course. We can't trust natives for the job unless it's very easy. The natives take kindly to the pillar-work though. They are paid just as much for their coal as though

they had hewed it out of the solid. Of course we take very good care to see that the roof doesn't come in on us. You would never understand how and why we prop our roofs with those piles of sleepers. Anyway, you can see that we cannot take out a whole line of pillars. We work 'em *en échelon*, and those big beams you see running from floor to roof are our indicators. They show when the roof is going to give. Oh! dear no, there's no dramatic effect about it. No splash, you know. Our roofs give plenty of warning by cracking and then collapse slowly. The parts of the work that we have cleared out and allowed to fall in are called goafs. You're on the edge of a goaf now. All that darkness there marks the limit of the mine. We have worked that out piece-meal, and the props are gone and the place is down. The roof of any pillar-working is tested every morning by tapping—pretty hard tapping.'

'Hi yi! yi!' shout all the devils in chorus, and the Hall of Eblis is full of rolling sound. The olive man has brought down an avalanche of coal. 'It is a sight to see the whole of one of the pillars come away. They make an awful noise. It would startle you out of your wits. But there's not an atom of risk.'

('Not an atom of risk.' Oh, genial and courteous host, when you turned up next day

blacker than any sweep that ever swept, with a neat half-inch gash on your forehead—won by cutting a 'stook' and getting caught by a bounding coal-knob—how long and earnestly did you endeavour to show that 'stook-cutting' was an employment as harmless and unexciting as wool-samplering!)

'Our ways are rather primitive, but they're cheap, and safe as houses. Doms and Bauris, Kols and Beldars, don't understand refinements in mining. They'd startle an English pit where there was fire-damp. Do you know it's a solemn fact that if you drop a Davy lamp or snatch it quickly you can blow a whole English pit inside out with all the miners? Good for us that we don't know what fire-damp is here. We can use flare-lamps.'

After the first feeling of awe and wonder is worn out, a mine becomes monotonous. There is only the humming, palpitating darkness, the rumble of the tubs, and the endless procession of galleries to arrest the attention. And one pit to the uninitiated is as like to another as two peas. Tell a miner this and he laughs—slowly and softly. To him the pits have each distinct personalities, and each must be dealt with differently.

CHAPTER III

The Perils of the Pits

AN engineer, who has built a bridge, can strike you nearly dead with professional facts; the captain of a seventy-horse-power Ganges river-steamer can, in one hour, tell legends of the Sandheads and the James and Mary shoal sufficient to fill half a *Pioneer*, but a couple of days spent on, above, and in a coal-mine yields more mixed information than two engineers and three captains. It is hopeless to pretend to understand it all.

When your host says, 'Ah, such an one is a thundering good fault-reader!' you smile hazily, and by way of keeping up the conversation, adventure on the statement that fault-reading and palmistry are very popular amusements. Then men explain.

Every one knows that coal-strata, in common with women, horses, and official superiors, have

'faults' caused by some colic of the earth in the days when things were settling into their places. A coal-seam is suddenly sliced off as a pencil is cut through with one slanting blow of the penknife, and one-half is either pushed up or pushed down any number of feet. The miners work the seam till they come to this break-off, and then call for an expert to 'read the fault.' It is sometimes very hard to discover whether the sliced-off seam has gone up or down. Theoretically, the end of the broken piece should show the direction. Practically its indications are not always clear. Then a good 'fault-reader,' who must more than know geology, is a useful man, and is much prized; for the Giridih fields are full of faults and 'dykes.' Tongues of what was once molten lava thrust themselves sheer into the coal, and the disgusted miner finds that for about twenty feet on each side of the tongue all coal has been burnt away.

The head of the mine is supposed to foresee these things and more. He can tell you, without looking at the map, what is the geological formation of any thousand square miles of India; he knows as much about brickwork and the building of houses, arches, and shafts as an average P.W.D. man; he has not only to know the intestines of a pumping or winding engine, but must be able to take them to pieces with his own hands, indicate

on the spot such parts as need repair, and make drawings of anything that requires renewal; he knows how to lay out and build railways with a grade of one in twenty-seven; he has to carry in his head all the signals and points between and over which his locomotive engines work; he must be an electrician capable of controlling the apparatus that fires the dynamite charges in the pits, and must thoroughly understand boring operations with thousand-foot drills. He must know by name, at least, one thousand of the men on the works, and must fluently speak the vernaculars of the low castes. If he has Sonthali, which is more elaborate than Greek, so much the better for him. He must know how to handle men of all grades, and, while holding himself aloof, must possess sufficient grip of the men's private lives to be able to see at once the merits of a charge of attempted abduction preferred by a clucking, croaking Kol against a fluent English-speaking Brahmin. For he is literally the Light of Justice, and to him the injured husband and the wrathful father look for redress. He must be on the spot and take all responsibility when any specially risky job is under way in the pit, and he can claim no single hour of the day or the night for his own. From eight in the morning till one in the afternoon he is coated with coal-dust and oil. From one till eight in the

evening he has office work. After eight o'clock he is free to attend to anything that he may be wanted for.

This is a soberly drawn picture of a life that Sahibs on the mines actually enjoy. They are spared all private socio-official worry, for the Company, in its mixture of State and private interest, is as perfectly cold-blooded and devoid of bias as any great Department of the Empire. If certain things be done, well and good. If certain things be not done the defaulter goes, and his place is filled by another. The conditions of service are graven on stone. There may be generosity; there undoubtedly is justice, but above all, there is freedom within broad limits. No irrepressible shareholder cripples the executive arm with suggestions and restrictions, and no private piques turn men's blood to gall within them. They work like horses and are happy.

When he can snatch a free hour, the grimy, sweating, cardigan-jacketed, ammunition-booted, pick-bearing ruffian turns into a well-kept English gentleman, who plays a good game of billiards, and has a batch of new books from England every week. The change is sudden, but in Giridih nothing is startling. It is right and natural that a man should be alternately Valentine and Orson, specially Orson. It is right and natural to drive—always behind a mad horse—away and away towards the lonely hills

till the flaming coke ovens become glow-worms on the dark horizon, and in the wilderness to find a lovely English maiden teaching squat, filthy Sonthal girls how to become Christians. Nothing is strange in Giridih, and the stories of the pits, the raffle of conversation that a man picks up as he passes, are quite in keeping with the place. Thanks to the law, which enacts that an Englishman must look after the native miners, and if any one be killed must explain satisfactorily that the accident was not due to preventable causes, the death-roll is kept astoundingly low. In one 'bad' half-year, six men out of the five thousand were killed, in another four, and in another none at all. As has been said before, a big accident would scare off the workers, for, in spite of the age of the mines—nearly thirty years—the hereditary pitman has not yet been evolved. But to small accidents the men are orientally apathetic. Read of a death among the five thousand——

A gang has been ordered to cut clay for the luting of the coke furnaces. The clay is piled in a huge bank in the open sunlight. A coolie hacks and hacks till he has hewn out a small cave with twenty foot of clay above him. Why should he trouble to climb up the bank and bring down the eave of the cave? It is easier to cut in. The Sirdar of the gang is watching round the shoulder

of the bank. The coolie cuts lazily as he stands. Sunday is very near, and he will get gloriously drunk in Giridih Bazar with his week's earnings. He digs his own grave stroke by stroke, for he has not sense enough to see that undercut clay is dangerous. He is a Sonthal from the hills. There is a smash and a dull thud, and his grave has shut down upon him in an avalanche of heavy-caked clay.

The Sirdar calls to the Babu of the Ovens, and with the promptitude of his race the Babu loses his head. He runs puffily, without giving orders, anywhere, everywhere. Finally he runs to the Sahib's house. The Sahib is at the other end of the collieries. He runs back. The Sahib has gone home to wash. Then his indiscretion strikes him. He should have sent runners—fleet-footed boys from the coal-screening gangs. He sends them and they fly. One catches the Sahib just changed after his bath. 'There is a man dead at such a place'—he gasps, omitting to say whether it is a surface or a pit accident. On goes the grimy pit-kit, and in three minutes the Sahib's dogcart is flying to the place indicated.

They have dug out the Sonthal. His head is smashed in, spine and breastbone are broken, and the gang-Sirdar, bowing double, throws the blame of the accident on the poor, shapeless, battered

dead. 'I had warned him, but he would not listen! *Twice* I warned him! These men are witnesses.'

The Babu is shaking like a jelly. 'Oh, sar, I have never seen a man killed before! Look at that eye, sar! I should have sent runners. I ran everywhere! I ran to your house. You were not in. I was running for hours. It was not my fault! It was the fault of the gang-Sirdar.' He wrings his hands and gurgles. The best of accountants, but the poorest of coroners is he. No need to ask how the accident happened. No need to listen to the Sirdar and his 'witnesses.' The Sonthal had been a fool, but it was the Sirdar's business to protect him against his own folly. 'Has he any people here?'

'Yes, his *rukni*,—his kept-woman,—and his sister's brother-in-law. His home is far-off.'

The sister's brother-in-law breaks through the crowd howling for vengeance on the Sirdar. He will send for the police, he will have the price of his brother's blood full tale. The windmill arms and the angry eyes fall, for the Sahib is making the report of the death.

'Will the Government give me *pensin*? I am his wife,' a woman clamours, stamping her pewter-ankleted feet. 'He was killed in your service. Where is his *pensin*? I am his wife.'

'You lie! You're his *rukni*. Keep quiet! Go! The pension comes to *us*.'

The sister's brother-in-law is not a refined man, but the *rukni* is his match. They are silenced. The Sahib takes the report, and the body is borne away. Before to-morrow's sun rises the gang-Sirdar may find himself a simple 'surface-coolie,' earning nine *pice* a day; and in a week some Sonthal woman behind the hills may discover that she is entitled to draw monthly great wealth from the coffers of the Sirkar. But this will not happen if the sister's brother-in-law can prevent it. He goes off swearing at the *rukni*.

In the meantime, what have the rest of the dead man's gang been doing? They have, if you please, abating not one stroke, dug out all the clay, and would have it verified. They have seen their comrade die. He is dead. *Bus!* Will the Sirdar take the tale of clay? And yet, were twenty men to be crushed by their own carelessness in the pit, these same impassive workers would scatter like panic-stricken horses.

Turning from this sketch, let us set in order a few stories of the pits. In some of the mines the coal is blasted out by the dynamite which is fired by electricity from a battery on the surface. Two men place the charges, and then signal to be drawn up in the cage which hangs in the pit-eye. Once

two natives were entrusted with the job. They performed their parts beautifully till the end, when the vaster idiot of the two scrambled into the cage, gave signal, and was hauled up before his friend could follow.

Thirty or forty yards up the shaft all possible danger for those in the cage was over, and the charge was accordingly exploded. Then it occurred to the man in the cage that his friend stood a very good chance of being, by this time, riven to pieces and choked.

But the friend was wise in his generation. He had missed the cage, but found a coal-tub—one of the little iron trucks—and turning this upside down, crawled into it. When the charge went off, his shelter was battered in so much, that men had to hack him out, for the tub had made, as it were, a tinned sardine of its occupant. He was absolutely unhurt, but for his feelings. On reaching the pit-bank his first words were, 'I do not desire to go down to the pit with *that* man any more.' His wish had been already gratified, for 'that man' had fled. Later on, the story goes, when 'that man' found that the guilt of murder was not at his door, he returned, and was made a mere surface-coolie, and his brothers jeered at him as they passed to their better-paid occupations.

Occasionally there are mild cyclones in the pits.

An old working, perhaps a mile away, will collapse: a whole gallery sinking bodily. Then the displaced air rushes through the inhabited mine, and, to quote their own expression, blows the pitmen about 'like dry leaves.' Few things are more amusing than the spectacle of a burly Tyneside foreman who, failing to dodge round a corner in time, is 'put down' by the wind, sitting-fashion, on a knobby lump of coal.

But most impressive of all is a tale they tell of a fire in a pit many years ago. The coal caught light. They had to send earth and bricks down the shaft and build great dams across the galleries to choke the fire. Imagine the scene, a few hundred feet underground, with the air growing hotter and hotter each moment, and the carbonic acid gas trickling through the dams. After a time the rough dams gaped, and the gas poured in afresh, and the Englishmen went down and leeped the cracks between roof and dam-sill with anything they could get. Coolies fainted, and had to be taken away, but no one died, and behind the first dams they built great masonry ones, and bested that fire; though for a long time afterwards, whenever they pumped water into it, the steam would puff out from crevices in the ground above.

It is a queer life that they lead, these men of the coal-fields, and a 'big' life to boot. To describe

one half of their labours would need a week at the least, and would be incomplete then. 'If you want to see anything,' they say, 'you should go over to the Baragunda copper-mines; you should look at the Barakar ironworks; you should see our boring operations five miles away; you should see how we sink pits; you should, above all, see Giridih Bazar on a Sunday. Why, you haven't seen anything. There's no end of a Sonthal Mission hereabouts. All the little dev—dears have gone on a picnic. Wait till they come back, and see 'em learning to read.'

Alas! one cannot wait. At the most one can but thrust an impertinent pen skin-deep into matters only properly understood by specialists.

IN AN OPIUM FACTORY

IN AN OPIUM FACTORY

ON the banks of the Ganges, forty miles below Benares as the crow flies, stands the Ghazipur Factory, an opium mint as it were, whence issue the precious cakes that are to replenish the coffers of the Indian Government. The busy season is setting in, for with April the opium comes up from the districts after having run the gauntlet of the district officers of the Opium Department, who will pass it as fit for use. Then the really serious work opens, under a roasting sun. The opium arrives by *challans*, regiments of one hundred jars, each holding one maund, and each packed in a basket and sealed atop. The district officer submits forms—never was such a place for forms as the Ghazipur Factory—showing the quality and weight of each pot, and with the jars comes a person responsible for the safe carriage of the string, their delivery, and their virginity. If any pots are broken or tampered with, an unfortunate individual called

the import-officer, and appointed to work like a horse from dawn till dewy eve, must examine the man in charge of the *challan* and reduce his statement to writing. Fancy getting any native to explain how a jar has been smashed! But the Perfect Flower is about as valuable as silver.

Then all the pots have to be weighed, and the weight of each pot is recorded on the pot, in a book, and goodness knows where else, and every one has to sign certificates that the weighing is correct. The pots have been weighed once in the district and once in the factory. None the less a certain number of them are taken at random and weighed afresh before they are opened. This is only the beginning of a long series of checks. Then the testing begins. Every single pot has to be tested for quality. A native, called the *purkhea*, drives his fist into the opium, rubs and smells it, and calls out the class for the benefit of the opium examiner. A sample picked between finger and thumb is thrown into a jar, and if the opium examiner thinks the *purkhea* has said sooth, the class of that jar is marked in chalk, and everything is entered in a book. Every ten samples are put in a locked box with duplicate keys, and sent over to the laboratory for assay. With the tenth boxful—and this marks the end of the *challan* of a hundred jars—the Englishman in charge of the

testing signs the test-paper, and enters the name of the native tester and sends it over to the laboratory. For convenience' sake, it may be as well to say that, unless distinctly stated to the contrary, every single thing in Ghazipur is locked, and every operation is conducted under more than police supervision.

In the laboratory each set of ten samples is thoroughly mixed by hand: a quarter-ounce lump is then tested for starch adulteration by iodine, which turns the decoction blue, and, if necessary, for gum adulteration by alcohol, which makes the decoction filmy. If adulteration be shown, all the ten pots of that set are tested separately till the sinful pot is discovered. Over and above this test, three samples of one hundred grains each are taken from the mixed set of ten samples, dried on a steam-table, and then weighed for consistence. The result is written down in a ten-columned form in the assay register, and by the mean result are those ten pots paid for. This, after everything has been done in duplicate and countersigned, completes the test and assay. If a district officer has classed the opium in a glaringly wrong way, he is thus caught and reminded of his error. No one trusts any one in Ghazipur. They are always weighing, testing, and assaying.

Before the opium can be used it must be

'alligated' in big vats. The pots are emptied into these, and special care is taken that none of the drug sticks to the hands of the coolies. Opium has a knack of doing this, and therefore coolies are searched at most inopportune moments. There are a good many Mahometans in Ghazipur, and they would all like a little opium. The pots after emptying are smashed up and scraped, and heaved down the steep river-bank of the factory, where they help to keep the Ganges in its place, so many are they and the little earthen bowls in which the opium cakes are made. People are forbidden to wander about the river-front of the factory in search of remnants of opium on the shards. There are no remnants, but people will not credit this. After vatting, the big vats, holding from one to three thousand maunds, are probed with test-rods, and the samples are treated just like the samples of the *challans*, everybody writing everything in duplicate and signing it. Having secured the mean consistence of each vat, the requisite quantity of each blend is weighed out, thrown into an alligating vat, of 250 maunds, and worked up by the feet of coolies.

This completes the working of the opium. It is now ready to be made into cakes after a final assay. Man has done nothing to improve it since it streaked the capsule of the poppy—this mys-

terious drug. April, May, and June are the months for receiving and manufacturing opium, and in the winter months come the packing and the despatch.

At the beginning of the cold weather Ghazipur holds, locked up, a trifle, say, of three and a half millions sterling in opium. Now, there may be only a paltry three-quarters of a million on hand, and that is going out at the rate per diem of one Viceroy's salary for two and a half years.

There are ranges and ranges of gigantic godowns, huge barns that can hold over half a million pounds' worth of opium. There are acres of bricked floor, regiments on regiments of chests; and yet more godowns and more godowns. The heart of the whole is the laboratory, which is full of the sick faint smell of an opium-joint where they sell *chandu*. This makes Ghazipur indignant. 'That's the smell of pure opium. We don't need *chandu* here. You don't know what real opium smells like. *Chandu-khana* indeed! That's refined opium under treatment for morphia, and cocaine, and perhaps narcotine.' 'Very well, let's see some of the real opium made for the China market.' 'We shan't be making any for another six weeks at earliest; but we can show you one cake made, and you must imagine two hundred and fifty men making 'em as hard as they can—one every four minutes.'

A Sirdar of cake-makers is called, and appears with a miniature wash-board, on which he sets a little square box of dark wood, a tin cup, an earthen bowl, and a mass of poppy-petal cakes. A larger earthen bowl holds what looks like bad Cape tobacco.

'What's that?'

'Trash—dried poppy-leaves, not petals, broken up and used for packing the cakes in. You'll see presently.' The cake-maker sits down and receives a lump of opium, weighed out, of one seer seven chittacks and a half, neither more nor less. 'That's pure opium of seventy consistence.' Every allowance is weighed.

'What are they weighing that brown water for?'

'That's *lewa*—thin opium at fifty consistence. It's the paste. He gets four chittacks and a half of it.' 'And do they weigh the petal-cakes?' 'Of course.' The Sirdar takes a brass hemispherical cup and wets it with a rag. Then he tears a petal-cake, which resembles a pancake, across so that it fits into the cup without a wrinkle, and pastes it with the thin opium, the *lewa*. After this his actions become incomprehensible, but there is evidently a deep method in them. Pancake after pancake is torn across, dressed with *lewa*, and pressed down into the cup; the fringes hanging over the edge of the bowl. He takes half-

pancakes and fixes them skilfully, picking now first-class and now second-class ones, for there are three kinds of them. Everything is gummed on to everything else with the *lewa*, and he presses all down by twisting his wrists inside the bowl till the bowl is lined half an inch deep with them, and they all glisten with the greasy *lewa*. He now takes up an ungummed pancake and fits it carefully all round. The opium is dropped tenderly upon this, and a curious washing motion of the hand follows. The mass of opium is drawn up into a cone as, one by one, the Sirdar picks up the overlapping portions of the cakes that hung outside the bowl and plasters them against the drug for an outside coat. He tucks in the top of the cone with his thumbs, brings the fringe of cake over to close the opening, and pastes fresh leaves upon all. The cone has now taken a spherical shape, and he gives it the finishing touch by gumming a large *chupatti*, one of the 'moon' kind, set aside from the first, on the top, so deftly that no wrinkle is visible. The cake is now complete, and all the Celestials of the Middle Kingdom shall not be able to disprove that it weighs two seers one and three-quarter chittacks, with a play of half a chittack for the personal equation.

The Sirdar takes it up and rubs it in the bran-

like poppy trash of the big bowl, so that two-thirds of it are powdered with the trash and one-third is fair and shiny poppy-petal. 'That is the difference between a Ghazipur and a Patna cake. Our cakes have always an unpowdered head. The Patna ones are rolled in trash all over. You can tell them anywhere by that mark. Now we'll cut this one open and you can see how a section looks.' One-half of an inch, as nearly as may be, is the thickness of the shell all round the cake, and even in this short time so firmly has the *lewa* set that any attempt at sundering the skin is followed by the rending of the poppy-petals that compose the *chupatti*. 'Now you've seen in detail what a cake is made of—that is to say, pure opium 70 consistence, poppy-petal pancakes, *lewa* of 52.50 consistence, and a powdering of poppy trash.'

'But why are you so particular about the shell?'

'Because of the China market. The Chinaman likes every inch of the stuff we send him, and uses it. He boils the shell and gets out every grain of the *lewa* used to gum it together. He smokes that after he has dried it. Roughly speaking, the value of the cake we've just cut open is two pound ten. All the time it is in our hands we have to look after it and check it, and treat it as though it were gold. It mustn't have too much moisture

in it, or it will swell and crack, and if it is too dry John Chinaman won't have it. He values his opium for qualities just the opposite of those in Smyrna opium. Smyrna opium gives as much as ten per cent of morphia, and if nearly solid—90 consistence. Our opium does not give more than three or three and a half per cent of morphia on the average, and, as you know, it is only 70, or in Patna 75, consistence. That is the drug the Chinaman likes. He can get the maximum of extract out of it by soaking it in hot water, and he likes the flavour. He knows it is absolutely pure too, and it comes to him in good condition.'

'But has nobody found out any patent way of making these cakes and putting skins on them by machinery?'

'Not *yet*. Poppy to poppy. There's nothing better. Here are a couple of cakes made in 1849, when they tried experiments in wrapping them in paper and cloth. You can see that they are beautifully wrapped and sewn like cricket balls, but it would take about half an hour to make one cake, and we could not be sure of keeping the aroma in them. There is nothing like poppy plant for poppy drug.'

And this is the way the drug, which yields such a splendid income to the Indian Government, is prepared.

THE
SMITH ADMINISTRATION

THE SMITH ADMINISTRATION[1]

THE COW-HOUSE JIRGA

HOW does a King feel when he has kept peace in his borders, by skilfully playing off people against people, sect against sect, and kin against kin? Does he go out into the back veranda, take off his terai-crown, and rub his hands softly, chuckling the while—as I do now? Does he pat himself on the back and hum merry little tunes as he walks up and down his garden? A man who takes no delight in ruling men—dozens of them—is no man. Behold! India has been squabbling over the Great Cow Question any time these four hundred years, to the certain knowledge of history and successive governments. I, Smith, have settled it. That is all!

The trouble began, in the ancient and well-established fashion, with a love-affair across the

[1] The following are newspaper articles written between 1887 and 1888 for my paper.—R. K.

Border, that is to say, in the next compound. Peroo, the cow-boy, went a-courting, and the innocent had not sense enough to keep to his own creed. He must needs make love to Baktawri, Corkler's *coachwan's* (coachman) little girl, and she being betrothed to Ahmed Buksh's son, *ætat* nine, very properly threw a cow-dung cake at his head. Peroo scrambled back, hot and dishevelled, over the garden wall, and the vendetta began. Peroo is in no sense chivalrous. He saved Chukki, the *ayah's* (maid) little daughter, from a big pariah dog once; but he made Chukki give him half a *chupatti* for his services, and Chukki cried horribly. Peroo threw bricks at Baktawri when next he saw her, and said shameful things about her birth and parentage. 'If she be not fair to me, I will heave a rock at she,' was Peroo's rule of life after the cow-dung incident. Baktawri naturally objected to bricks, and she told her father.

Without, in the least, wishing to hurt Corkler's feelings, I must put on record my opinion that his *coachwan* is a *chamar*-Mahometan, not too long converted. The lines on which he fought the quarrel lead me to this belief, for he made a Creed-question of the brick-throwing, instead of waiting for Peroo and smacking that young cateran when he caught him. Once beyond my

borders, my people carry their lives in their own hand—the Government is not responsible for their safety. Corkler's *coachwan* did not complain to me. He sent out an Army—Imam Din, his son—with general instructions to do Peroo a mischief in the eyes of his employer. This brought the fight officially under my cognisance; and was a direct breach of the neutrality existing between myself and Corkler, who has 'Punjab head,' and declares that his servants are the best in the Province. I know better. They are the tailings of my compound—'casters' for dishonesty and riotousness. As an Army, Imam Din was distinctly inexperienced. As a General, he was beneath contempt. He came in the night with a hoe, and chipped a piece out of the dun heifer, —Peroo's charge,—fondly imagining that Peroo would have to bear the blame. Peroo was discovered next morning weeping salt tears into the wound, and the mass of my Hindu population were at once up and in arms. Had I headed them, they would have descended upon Corkler's compound and swept it off the face of the earth. But I calmed them with fair words and set a watch for the cow-hoer. Next night, Imam Din came again with a bamboo and began to hit the heifer over her legs. Peroo caught him—caught him by the leg—and held on for the dear

vengeance, till Imam Din was locked up in the gram-godown, and Peroo told him that he would be led out to death in the morning. But with the dawn, the Clan Corkler came over, and there was pulling of turbans across the wall, till the Supreme Government was dressed and said, 'Be silent!' Now Corkler's *coachwan's* brother was my *coachwan*, and a man much dreaded by Peroo. He was not unaccustomed to speak the truth at intervals, and, by virtue of that rare failing, I, the Supreme Government, appointed him head of the *jirga* (committee) to try the case of Peroo's unauthorised love-making. The other members were my bearer (Hindu), Corkler's bearer (Mahometan), with the *ticca-dharzi* (hired tailor), Mahometan, for Standing Counsel. Baktawri and Baktawri's father were witnesses, but Baktawri's mother came all unasked and seriously interfered with the gravity of the debate by abuse. But the *dharzi* upheld the dignity of the Law, and led Peroo away by the ear to a secluded spot near the well.

Imam Din's case was an offence against the Government, raiding in British territory and maiming of cattle, complicated with trespass by night—all heinous crimes for which he might have been sent to gaol. The evidence was deadly conclusive, and the case was tried summarily in the presence

of the heifer. Imam Din's counsel was Corkler's *sais*, who, with great acumen, pointed out that the boy had only acted under his father's instructions. Pressed by the Supreme Government, he admitted that the letters of marque did not specify cows as an object of revenge, but merely Peroo. The hoeing of a heifer was a piece of spite on Imam Din's part. This was admitted. The penalties of failure are dire. A *chowkidar* (watchman) was deputed to do justice on the person of Imam Din, but sentence was deferred pending the decision of the *jirga* on Peroo. The *dharzi* announced to the Supreme Government that Peroo had been found guilty of assaulting Baktawri, across the Border in Corkler's compound, with bricks, thereby injuring the honour and dignity of Corkler's *coachwan*. For this offence, the *jirga* submitted, a sentence of a dozen stripes was necessary, to be followed by two hours of ear-holding. The Corkler *chowkidar* was deputed to do sentence on the person of Peroo, and the Smith *chowkidar* on that of Imam Din. They laid on together with justice and discrimination, and seldom have two small boys been better trounced. Followed next a dreary interval of 'ear-holding' side by side. This is a peculiarly Oriental punishment, and should be seen to be appreciated. The Supreme Government then

called for Corkler's *coachwan* and pointed out the bleeding heifer, with such language as seemed suitable to the situation. Local knowledge in a case like this is invaluable. Corkler's *coachwan* was notoriously a wealthy man, and so far a bad Mussulman in that he lent money at interest. As a financier he had few friends among his co-servants. On the other hand, in the Smith quarters, the Mahometan element largely predominated; because the Supreme Government considered the minds of Mahometans more get-at-able than those of Hindus. The sin of inciting an illiterate and fanatic family to go forth and do a mischief was duly dwelt upon by the Supreme Government, together with the dangers attending the vicarious *jehad* (religious war). Corkler's *coachwan* offered no defence beyond the general statement that the Supreme Government was his father and his mother. This carried no weight. The Supreme Government touched lightly on the inexpediency of reviving an old creed-quarrel, and pointed out at venture, that the birth and education of a *chamar* (low-caste Hindu), three months converted, did not justify such extreme sectarianism. Here the populace shouted like the men of Ephesus, and sentence was passed amid tumultuous applause. Corkler's *coachwan* was ordered to give a dinner, not only to the Hindus whom he had

insulted, but also to the Mahometans of the Smith compound, and also to his own fellow-servants. His brother, the Smith *coachwan*, unconverted *chamar*, was to see that he did it. Refusal to comply with these words entailed a reference to Corkler and the 'Inspector Sahib,' who would send in his constables, and, with the connivance of the Supreme Government, would harry and vex all the Corkler compound. Corkler's *coachwan* protested, but was overborne by Hindus and Mahometans alike, and his brother, who hated him with a cordial hatred, began to discuss the arrangements for the dinner. Peroo, by the way, was not to share in the feast, nor was Imam Din. The proceedings then terminated, and the Supreme Government went in to breakfast.

Ten days later the dinner came off and was continued far into the night. It marked a new era in my political relations with the outlying states, and was graced for a few minutes by the presence of the Supreme Government. Corkler's *coachwan* hates me bitterly, but he can find no one to back him up in any scheme of annoyance that he may mature; for have I not won for my Empire a free dinner, with oceans of sweetmeats? And in this, gentlemen all, lies the secret of Oriental administration. My throne is set where it should be—on the stomachs of many people.

A BAZAR DHULIP

I and the Government are roughly in the same condition; but modesty forces me to say that the Smith Administration is a few points better than the Imperial. Corkler's *coachwan*, you may remember, was fined a caste-dinner by me for sending his son, Imam Din, to mangle my dun heifer. In my last published administration report, I stated that Corkler's *coachwan* bore me a grudge for the fine imposed upon him, but among my servants and Corkler's, at least, could find no one to support him in schemes of vengeance. I was quite right—right as an administration with prestige to support should always be.

But I own that I had never contemplated the possibility of Corkler's *coachwan* going off to take service with Mr. Jehan Concepcion Fernandez de Lisboa Paul—a gentleman semi-orientalised, possessed of several dwelling-houses and an infamous temper. Corkler was an Englishman, and any attempt on his *coachwan's* part to annoy me would have been summarily stopped. Mr. J. C. F. de L. Paul, on the other hand . . . but no matter. The business is now settled, and there is no necessity for importing a race-question into the story.

Once established in Mr. Paul's compound,

Corkler's *coachwan* sent me an insolent message demanding a refund, with interest, of all the money spent on the caste-dinner. The Government, in a temperately framed reply, refused point-blank, and pointed out that a Mahometan by his religion could not ask for interest. As I have stated in my last report, Corkler's *coachwan* was a renegade *chamar*, converted to Islam for his wife's sake. The impassive attitude of the Government had the effect of monstrously irritating Corkler's *coachwan*, who sat on the wall of Mr. Paul's compound and flung highly flavoured vernacular at the servants of the State as they passed. He said that it was his intention to make life a burden to the Government—profanely called Eschmitt Sahib. The Government went to office as usual and made no sign. Then Corkler's *coachwan* formulated an indictment to the effect that Eschmitt Sahib had, on the occasion of the caste-dinner, pulled him vehemently by the ears, and robbed him of one rupee nine annas four pie. The charge was shouted from the top of Mr. Paul's compound wall to the four winds of Heaven. It was disregarded by the Government, and the refugee took more daring measures. He came by night, and wrote upon the whitewashed walls with charcoal disgraceful sentences which made the Smith servants grin.

Now it is bad for any Government that its servants should grin at it. Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft; and irreverence is the parent of rebellion. Not content with writing, Corkler's *coachwan* began to miscall the State—always from the top of Mr. Paul's wall. He informed intending *mussalchis* (scullions) that Eschmitt Sahib invariably administered his pantry with a polo-stock; possible *saises* (grooms) were told that wages in the Smith establishment were paid yearly; while *khitmatgars* (butlers) learnt that their family honour was not safe within the gate-posts of the house of 'Eschmitt.' No real harm was done, for the character of my rule is known among all first-class servants. Still, the vituperation and all its circumstantial details made men laugh; and I choose that no one shall laugh.

My relations with Mr. Paul had always—for reasons connected with the incursions of hens—been strained. In pursuance of a carefully mature plan of campaign I demanded of Mr. Paul the body of Corkler's *coachwan*, to be dealt with after my own ideas. Mr. Paul said that the man was a good *coachwan* and should not be given up. I then temperately—always temperately—gave him a sketch of the ruffian's conduct. Mr. Paul announced his entire freedom from any responsibility in this matter, and requested that

the correspondence might cease. It was vitally necessary to the well-being of my administration that Corkler's *coachwan* should come into my possession. He was daily growing a greater nuisance, and had drawn unto him a disaffected dog-boy, lately in my employ.

Mr. Paul was deaf to my verbal, and blind to my written entreaties. For these reasons I was reluctantly compelled to take the law into my own hands—and break it. A *khitmatgar* was sent down the length of Mr. Paul's wall to 'draw the fire' of Corkler's *coachwan*, and while the latter cursed him by his gods for ever entering Eschmitt Sahib's service, Eschmitt Sahib crept subtilely behind the wall and thrust the evil-speaker into the moonlit road, where he was pinioned, in strict silence, by the ambushed population of the Smith compound. Once collared, I regret to say, Corkler's *coachwan* was seized with an unmanly panic; for the memory of the lewd sentences on the wall, the insults shouted from the top of Mr. Paul's wall, and the warnings to wayfaring table-servants, came back to his mind. He wept salt tears and demanded the protection of the law and of Mr. Paul. He received neither. He was paraded by the State through the quarters, that all men and women and little children might look at him. He was then formally appointed last and

lowest of the carriage-grooms—*nauker-ke-nauker* (servant of servants)—in perpetuity, on a salary which would never be increased. The entire Smith people—Hindu and Mussulman alike—were made responsible for his safe-keeping under pain of having all the thatch additions to their houses torn down, and the Light of the Favour of the State—the Great *Hazur-ki-Mehrbani*—darkened for ever.

Legally the State was wrongfully detaining Corkler's *coachwan*. Practically, it was avenging itself for a protracted series of insults to its dignity.

Days rolled on, and Corkler's *coachwan* became carriage-*sais*. Instead of driving two horses, it was his duty to let down the steps for the State to tread upon. When the other servants received cold-weather coats, he was compelled to buy one, and all extra lean-to huts round his house were strictly forbidden. That he did not run away, I ascribe solely to the exertions of the domestic police—that is to say, every man, woman, and child of the Smith Kingdom. He was delivered into their hands, for a prey and a laughing-stock; and in their hands, unless I am much mistaken, they intend that he shall remain. I learn that my *khansamah* (head-butler) has informed Mr. Paul that his late servant is in gaol for robbing

the Roman Catholic Chapel, of which Mr. Paul is a distinguished member; consequently that gentleman has relaxed his attempts to unearth what he called his 'so good *coachwan*.' That *coachwan* is now a living example and most lively presentment of the unrelaxing wrath of the State. However well he may work, however earnestly strive to win my favour, there is no human chance of his ever rising from his present position so long as Eschmitt Sahib and he are above the earth together. For reasons which I have hinted at above, he remains cleaning carriage-wheels, and will so remain to the end of the chapter; while the story of his fall and fate spreads through the bazars, and fills the ranks of servantdom with an intense respect for Eschmitt Sahib.

A broad-minded Oriental administration would have allowed me to nail up the head of Corkler's *coachwan* over the hall door; a narrow-souled public may consider my present lenient treatment of him harsh and illegal. To this I can only reply that I know how to deal with my own people. I will never, never part with Corkler's *coachwan*.

THE HANDS OF JUSTICE

Be pleased to listen to a story of domestic trouble connected with the Private Services

Commission in the back veranda, which did good work, though I, the Commission, say so, but it could not guard against the Unforeseen Contingency. There was peace in all my borders till Peroo, the cow-keeper's son, came yesterday and paralysed the Government. He said his father had told him to gather sticks—dry sticks—for the evening fire. I would not check parental authority in any way, but I did not see why Peroo should mangle my *sirris*-trees. Peroo wept copiously, and, promising never to despoil my garden again, fled from my presence.

To-day I have caught him in the act of theft, and in the third fork of my white Doon *sirris*, twenty feet above ground. I have taken a chair and established myself at the foot of the tree, preparatory to making up my mind.

The situation is a serious one, for if Peroo be led to think that he can break down my trees unharmed, the garden will be a wilderness in a week. Furthermore, Peroo has insulted the Majesty of the Government. Which is Me. Also he has insulted my *sirris* in saying that it is dry. He deserves a double punishment.

On the other hand, Peroo is very young, very small, and very, very naked. At present he is penitent, for he is howling in a dry and husky fashion, and the squirrels are frightened.

The question is—how shall I capture Peroo? There are three courses open to me. I can shin up the tree and fight him on his own ground. I can shell him with clods of earth till he makes submission and comes down; or, and this seems the better plan, I can remain where I am, and cut him off from his supplies until the rifles—sticks I mean—are returned.

Peroo, for all practical purposes, is a marauding tribe from the Hills—head-man, fighting-tail and all. I, once more, am the State, cool, collected, and impassive. In half an hour or so Peroo will be forced to descend. He will then be smacked: that is, if I can lay hold of his wriggling body. In the meantime, I will demonstrate.

'Bearer, bring me the *tum-tum ki chabuq* (carriage-whip).'

It is brought and laid on the ground, while Peroo howls afresh. I will overawe this child. He has an armful of stolen sticks pressed to his stomach.

'Bearer, bring also the *chota mota chabuq* (the little whip)—the one kept for the *punnia kutta* (spaniel).'

Peroo has stopped howling. He peers through the branches and breathes through his nose very hard. Decidedly, I am impressing him with a show of armed strength. The idea of that cruel whip-thong curling round Peroo's fat little brown

stomach is not a pleasant one. But I must be firm.

'Peroo, come down and be hit for stealing the Sahib's wood.'

Peroo scuttles up to the fourth fork, and waits developments.

'Peroo, will you come down?'

'No. The Sahib will hit me.'

Here the *goalla* appears, and learns that his son is in disgrace. 'Beat him well, Sahib,' says the *goalla*. 'He is a *budmash*. I never told him to steal your wood. Peroo, descend and be very much beaten.'

There is silence for a moment. Then, crisp and clear from the very top of the *sirris*, floats down the answer of the treed dacoit.

'*Kubbi, kubbi nahin* (Never—never—No!).'

The *goalla* hides a smile with his hand and departs, saying: 'Very well. This night I will beat you dead.'

There is a rustle in the leaves as Peroo wriggles himself into a more comfortable seat.

'Shall I send a *punkha-coolie* after him?' suggests the bearer.

This is not good. Peroo might fall and hurt himself. Besides I have no desire to employ native troops. They demand too much batta. The *punkha-coolie* would expect four annas for

capturing Peroo. I will deal with the robber myself. He shall be treated judicially, when the excitement of wrong-doing shall have died away, as befits his tender years, with an old bedroom slipper, and the bearer shall hold him. Yes, he shall be smacked three times,—once gently, once moderately, and once severely. After the punishment shall come the fine. He shall help the *malli* (gardener) to keep the flower-beds in order for a week, and then——

'Sahib! Sahib! Can I come down?'

The rebel treats for terms.

'Peroo, you are a *nut-cut* (a young imp).'

'It was my father's order. He told me to get sticks.'

'From this tree?'

'Yes; Protector of the Poor. He said the Sahib would not come back from office till I had gathered many sticks.'

'Your father didn't tell me that.'

'My father is a liar. Sahib! Sahib! Are you going to hit me?'

'Come down and I'll think about it.'

Peroo drops as far as the third fork, sees the whip, and hesitates.

'If you will take away the whips I will come down.'

There is a frankness in this negotiation that I

respect. I stoop, pick up the whips, and turn to throw them into the veranda.

Follows a rustle, a sound of scraped bark, and a thud. When I turn, Peroo is down, off and over the compound wall. He has not dropped the stolen firewood, and I feel distinctly foolish.

My prestige, so far as Peroo is concerned, is gone.

This Administration will now go indoors for a drink.

THE SERAI CABAL

Upon the evidence of a scullion, I, the State, rose up and made sudden investigation of the crowded *serai*. There I found and dismissed, as harmful to public morals, a lady in a pink *saree* who was masquerading as somebody's wife. The utter and abject loneliness of the *mussalchi*, that outcaste of the cook-room, should, Orientally speaking, have led him to make a favourable report to his fellow-servants. That he did not do so I attributed to a certain hardness of character brought out by innumerable kickings and scanty fare. Therefore I acted on his evidence and, in so doing, brought down the wrath of the entire *serai*, not on my head,—for they were afraid of me,—but on the humble head of Karim Baksh, *mussalchi*. He had accused the

bearer of inaccuracy in money matters, and the *khansamah* of idleness; besides bringing about the ejectment of fifteen people—men, women, and children—related by holy and unholy ties to all the servants. Can you wonder that Karim Baksh was a marked boy? Departmentally, he was under the control of the *khansamah*, I myself taking but small interest in the subordinate appointments on my staff. Two days after the evidence had been tendered, I was not surprised to learn that Karim Baksh had been dismissed by his superior; reason given, that he was personally unclean. It is a fundamental maxim of my administration that all power delegated is liable to sudden and unexpected resumption at the hands of the Head. This prevents the right of the Lord-Proprietor from lapsing by time. The *khansamah's* decision was reversed without reason given, and the enemies of Karim Baksh sustained their first defeat. They were bold in making their first move so soon. I, Smith, who devote hours that would be better spent on honest money-getting, to the study of my servants, knew they would not try less direct tactics. Karim Baksh slept soundly, over against the drain that carries off the water of my bath, as the enemy conspired.

One night I was walking round the house when

the pungent stench of a *hookah* drifted out of the pantry. A *hookah*, out of place, is to me an abomination. I removed it gingerly, and demanded the name of the owner. Out of the darkness sprang a man, who said, 'Karim Baksh!' It was the bearer. Running my hand along the stem, I felt the loop of leather which a *chamar* attaches, or should attach, to his pipe, lest higher castes be defiled unwittingly. The bearer lied, for the burning *hookah* was a device of the groom —friend of the lady in the pink *saree*—to compass the downfall of Karim Baksh. So the second move of the enemy was foiled, and Karim Baksh asleep as dogs sleep, by the drain, took no harm.

Came thirdly, after a decent interval to give me time to forget the Private Services Commission, the *gumnamah* (the anonymous letter)—stuck into the frame of the looking-glass. Karim Baksh had proposed an elopement with the sweeper's wife, and the morality of the *serai* was in danger. Also the sweeper threatened murder, which could be avoided by the dismissal of Karim Baksh. The blear-eyed orphan heard the charge against him unmoved, and, at the end, turning his face to the sun, said: 'Look at me, Sahib! Am I the man a woman runs away with?' Then pointing to the *ayah*, 'Or she the woman to tempt a Mussulman?' Low as was Karim Baksh, the *mussalchi*, he could

by right of creed look down upon a she-sweeper. The charge under Section 498, I. P. C., broke down in silence and tears, and thus the third attempt of the enemy came to naught.

I, Smith, who have some knowledge of my subjects, knew that the next charge would be a genuine one, based on the weakness of Karim Baksh, which was clumsiness—phenomenal ineptitude of hand and foot. Nor was I disappointed. A fortnight passed, and the bearer and the *khansamah* simultaneously preferred charges against Karim Baksh. He had broken two tea-cups and had neglected to report their loss to me; the value of the tea-cups was four annas. They must have spent days spying upon Karim Baksh, for he was a morose and solitary boy who did his cup-cleaning alone.

Taxed with the fragments, Karim Baksh attempted no defence. Things were as the witnesses said, and I was his father and his mother. By my rule, a servant who does not confess a fault suffers, when that fault is discovered, severe punishment. But the red *Hanuman*, who grins by the well in the bazar, prompted the bearer at that moment to express his extreme solicitude for the honour and dignity of my service. Literally translated, the sentence ran, 'The zeal of thy house has eaten me up.'

Then an immense indignation and disgust took possession of me, Smith, who have trodden, as far as an Englishman may tread, the miry gullies of native thought. I knew—none better—the peculations of the bearer, the vices of the *khansamah*, and the abject, fawning acquiescence with which these two men would meet the basest wish that my mind could conceive. And they talked to me—thieves and worse that they were—of their desire that I should be well served! Lied to me as though I had been a griff but twenty minutes landed on the Apollo Bunder! In the middle stood Karim Baksh, silent; on either side was an accuser, broken tea-cup in hand; the *khansamah*, mindful of the banished lady in the pink *saree*; the bearer remembering that, since the date of the Private Services Commission, the whisky and the rupees had been locked up. And they talked of the shortcomings of Karim Baksh—the outcaste—the boy too ugly to achieve and too stupid to conceive sin—a blunderer at the worst. Taking each accuser by the nape of his neck, I smote their cunning skulls the one against the other, till they saw stars by the firmamentful. Then I cast them from me, for I was sick of them, knowing how long they had worked in secret to compass the downfall of Karim Baksh.

And they laid their hands upon their mouths

and were dumb, for they saw that I, Smith, knew to what end they had striven.

This Administration may not control a revenue of seventy-two millions, more or less, per annum, but it is wiser than—some people.

THE STORY OF A KING

If there be any idle ones who remember the campaign against Peroo, the cow-man's son, or retain any recollection of the great intrigue set afoot by all the servants against the scullion,—if, I say, there be any who bear in mind these notable episodes in my administration, I would pray their attention to what follows.

The *Gazette of India* shows that I have been absent for two months from the station in which is my house.

The day before I departed, I called the Empire together, from the bearer to the *sais'* friends' hanger-on, and it numbered, with wives and babes, thirty-seven souls—all well-fed, prosperous, and contented under my rule, which includes free phenyle and quinine. I made a speech—a long speech—to the listening peoples. I announced that the inestimable boon of local self-government was to be theirs for the next eight weeks. They said that it was 'good talk.' I laid upon the

Departments concerned the charge of my garden, my harness, my house, my horse, my guns, my furniture, all the screens in front of the doors, both cows, and the little calf that was to come. I charged them by their hope of presents in the future to act cleanly and carefully by my chattels; to abstain from fighting, and to keep the *serai* sweet. That this might be done under the eye of authority, I appointed a Viceroy—the very strong man Bahadur Khan, *khitmatgar* to wit—and, that he might have a material hold over his subjects, gave him an ounce-phial of cinchona febrifuge, to distribute against the fevers of September. Lastly—and of this I have never sufficiently repented—I gave all of them their two months' wages in advance. They were desperately poor, some of them,—how poor only I and the money-lender knew,—but I repent still of my act. A rich democracy inevitably rots.

Eliminating that one financial error, could any man have done better than I? I know he could not, for I took a plebiscite of the Empire on the matter, and it said with one voice that my scheme was singularly right. On that assurance I left it and went to lighter pleasures.

On the fourth day came the *gumnameh*. In my heart of hearts I had expected one, but not so soon—oh, not so soon! It was on a postcard,

and preferred serious accusations of neglect and immorality against Bahadur Khan, my Viceroy. I understood then the value of the anonymous letter. However much you despise it, it breeds distrust—especially when it arrives with every other mail. To my shame be it said I caused a watch to be set on Bahadur Khan, employing a tender Babu. But it was too late. An urgent private telegram informed me: 'Bahadur Khan secreted sweeper's daughter. House leaks.' The head of my administration, the man with all the cinchona febrifuge, had proved untrustworthy, and—the house leaked. The agonies of managing an Empire from the Hills can only be appreciated by those who have made the experiment. Before I had been three weeks parted from my country, I was compelled, by force of circumstance, to rule it on paper, through a hireling executive—the Babu—totally incapable of understanding the wants of my people, and, in the nature of things, purely temporary. He had, at some portion of his career, been in a subordinate branch of the Secretariat. His training there had paralysed him. Instead of taking steps when Bahadur Khan eloped with the sweeper's daughter, whom I could well have spared, and the cinchona febrifuge, which I knew would be wanted, he wrote me voluminous reports on both thefts. The leakage of the house

he dismissed in one paragraph, merely stating that 'much furniture had been swamped.' I wrote to my landlord, a Hindu of the old school. He replied that he could do nothing so long as my servants piled cut fuel on the top of the house, straining the woodwork of the verandas. Also, he said that the *bhisti* (water-carrier) refused to recognise his authority, or to sprinkle water on the road-metal which was then being laid down for the carriage drive. On this announcement came a letter from the Babu, intimating that bad fever had broken out in the *serai*, and that the servants falsely accused him of having bought the cinchona febrifuge of Bahadur Khan, ex-Viceroy, now political fugitive, for the purpose of vending retail. The fever and not the false charge interested me. I suggested—this by wire—that the Babu should buy quinine. In three days he wrote to know whether he should purchase common or Europe quinine, and whether I would repay him. I sent the quinine down by parcel post, and sighed for Bahadur Khan with all his faults. Had he only stayed to look after my people, I would have forgiven the affair of the sweeper's daughter. He was immoral, but an administrator, and would have done his best with the fever.

In course of time my leave came to an end, and I descended on my Empire, expecting the worst.

Nor was I disappointed. In the first place, the horses had not been shod for two months; in the second, the garden had not been touched for the same space of time; in the third, the *serai* was unspeakably filthy; in the fourth, the house was inches deep in dust, and there were muddy stains on most of the furniture; in the fifth, the house had never been opened; in the sixth, seventeen of my people had gone away and two had died of fever; in the seventh, the little calf was dead. Eighthly and lastly, the remnant of my retainers were fighting furiously among themselves, clique against clique, creed against creed, and woman against woman; this last was the most overwhelming of all. It was a dreary home-coming. The Empire formed up two deep round the carriage and began to explain its grievances. It wept and recriminated and abused till it was dismissed. Next morning I discovered that its finances were in a most disorganised condition. It had borrowed money for a wedding, and to recoup itself had invented little bills of imaginary expenses contracted during my absence.

For three hours I executed judgment, and strove as best I could to repair a wasted, neglected, and desolate realm. By 4 p.m. the ship of state had been cleared of the greater part of the raffle, and its crew—to continue the metaphor—had

beaten to quarters, united and obedient once more.

Though I knew the fault lay with Bahadur Khan — wicked, abandoned, but decisive and capable-of-ruling-men Bahadur Khan — I could not rid myself of the thought that I was wrong in leaving my people so long to their own devices.

But this was absurd. A man can't spend all his time looking after his servants, can he?

THE GREAT CENSUS

Mowgi was a *mehter* (a sweeper), but he was also a Punjabi, and consequently, had a head on his shoulders. Mowgi was my *mehter*—the property of Smith who governs a vast population of servants with unprecedented success. When he was my subject I did not appreciate him properly. I called him lazy and unclean; I protested against the multitude of his family. Mowgi asked for his dismissal,—he was the only servant who ever voluntarily left the Shadow of my Protection,—and I said: 'O Mowgi, either you are an irreclaimable ruffian or a singularly self-reliant man. In either case you will come to great grief. Where do you intend to go?' 'God knows,' said Mowgi cheerfully. 'I shall leave my wife

and all the children here, and go somewhere else. If you, Sahib, turn them out, they will die! For you are their only protector.'

So I was dowered with Mowgi's wife—wives rather, for he had forgotten the new one from Rawalpindi; and Mowgi went out to the unknown, and never sent a single letter to his family. The wives would clamour in the veranda and accuse me of having taken the remittances, which they said Mowgi must have sent, to help out my own pay. When I supported them they were quite sure of the theft. For these reasons I was angry with the absent Mowgi.

Time passed, and I, the great Smith, went abroad on travels and left my Empire in Commission. The wives were the feudatory Native States, but the Commission could not make them recognise any feudal tie. They both married, saying that Mowgi was a bad man; but they never left my compound.

In the course of my wanderings I came to the great Native State of Ghorahpur, which, as every one knows, is on the borders of the Indian Desert. None the less, it requires almost as many printed forms for its proper administration as a real district. Among its other peculiarities, it was proud of its prisoners—*kaidis* they were called. In the old days Ghorahpur was wont to run its dacoits through

the stomach or cut them with swords; but now it prides itself on keeping them in leg-irons and employing them on 'remunerative labour,' that is to say, in sitting in the sun by the side of a road and waiting until some road-metal comes and lays itself.

A gang of *kaidis* was hard at work in this fashion when I came by, and the warder was picking his teeth with the end of his bayonet. One of the fettered sinners came forward and *salaamed* deeply to me. It was Mowgi,—fat, well fed, and with a twinkle in his eye. 'Is the Presence in good health and are all in his house well?' said Mowgi. 'What in the world are you doing here?' demanded the Presence. 'By your honour's favour I am in prison,' said he, shaking one leg delicately to make the ankle-iron jingle on the leg-bar. 'I have been in prison nearly a month.'

'What for—dacoity?'

'I have been a Sahib's servant,' said Mowgi, offended. 'Do you think that I should ever become a low dacoit like these men here? I am in prison for making a numbering for the people.'

'A what?' Mowgi grinned, and told the tale of his misdeeds thus:—

'When I left your service, Sahib, I went to Delhi, and from Delhi I came to the Sambhur Salt

Lake over there!' He pointed across the sand. 'I was a Jemadar of *mehters* (a headman of sweepers) there, because these Marwarri people are without sense. Then they gave me leave because they said that I had stolen money. It was true, but I was also very glad to go away, for my legs were sore from the salt of the Sambhur Lake. I went away and hired a camel for twenty rupees a month. That was shameful talk, but these thieves of Marwarris would not let me have it for less.'

'Where did you get the money from?' I asked.

'I have said that I had stolen it. I am a poor man. I could not get it by any other way.'

'But what did you want with a camel?'

'The Sahib shall hear. In the house of a certain Sahib at Sambhur was a big book which came from Bombay, and whenever the Sahib wanted anything to eat or good tobacco, he looked into the book and wrote a letter to Bombay, and in a week all the things came as he had ordered—soap and sugar and boots. I took that book; it was a fat one; and I shaved my moustache in the manner of Mahometans, and I got upon my camel and went away from that bad place of Sambhur.'

'Where did you go?'

'I cannot say. I went for four days over the

sand till I was very far from Sambhur. Then I came to a village and said: "I am Wajib Ali, Bahadur, a servant of the Government, and many men are wanted to go and fight in Kabul. The order is written in this book. How many strong men have you?" They were afraid because of my big book, and because they were without sense. They gave me food, and all the headmen gave me rupees to spare the men in that village, and I went away from there with nineteen rupees. The name of that village was Kot. And as I had done at Kot, so I did at other villages,—Waka, Tung, Malair, Palan, Myokal, and other places,—always getting rupees that the names of the strong young men might not be written down. I went from Bikanir to Jeysulmir, till my book in which I always looked wisely so as to frighten the people, was back-broken, and I got one thousand seven hundred and eight rupees twelve annas and six pies.'

'All from a camel and a Treacher's Price List?'

'I do not know the name of the book, but these people were very frightened of me. But I tried to take my *takkus* from a servant of this State, and he made a report, and they sent troopers, who caught me,—me, and my little camel, and my big book. Therefore I was sent to prison.'

'Mowgi,' said I solemnly, 'if this be true,

you are a great man. When will you be out of prison?'

'In one year. I got three months for taking the numbering of the people, and one year for pretending to be a Mahometan. But I may run away before. All these people are very stupid men.'

'My arms, Mowgi,' I said, 'will be open to you when the term of your captivity is ended. You shall be my body-servant.'

'The Presence is my father and my mother,' said Mowgi. 'I will come.'

'The wives have married, Mowgi,' I said.

'No matter,' said Mowgi. 'I also have a wife at Sambhur and one here. When I return to the service of the Presence, which one shall I bring?'

'Which one you please.'

'The Presence is my protection and a son of the gods,' said Mowgi. 'Without doubt I will come as soon as I can escape.'

I am waiting now for the return of Mowgi. I will make him overseer of all my house.

THE KILLING OF HATIM TAI

Now *Hatim Tai* was condemned to death by the Government, because he had stepped upon his *mahout*, broken his near-hindleg-chain, and punched poor old pursy *Durga Pershad* in the ribs till that venerable beast squealed for mercy. *Hatim Tai* was dangerous to the community, and the *mahout's* widow said that her husband's soul would never rest till *Hatim's* little, pig-like eye was glazed in the frost of death. Did *Hatim* care? Not he. He trumpeted as he swung at his pickets, and he stole as much of *Durga Pershad's* food as he could. Then he went to sleep and looked that 'all the to-morrows should be as to-day,' and that he should never carry loads again. But the minions of the Law did not sleep. They came by night and scanned the huge bulk of *Hatim Tai*, and took counsel together how he might best be slain.

'If we borrowed a seven-pounder,' began the Subaltern, 'or, better still, if we turned him loose and had the Horse Battery out! A general inspection would be nothing to it! I wonder whether my Major would see it?'

'Skittles,' said all the Doctors together. 'He's *our* property.' They severally murmured, 'arsenic,' 'strychnine,' and 'opium,' and went their way, while *Hatim Tai* dreamed of elephant loves, wooed

and won long ago in the Doon. The day broke, and savage *mahouts* led him away to the place of execution; for he was quiet, being 'fey,' as are both men and beasts when they approach the brink of the grave unknowing. 'Ha, *Salah*! Ha, *Budmash*! To-day you die!' shouted the *mahouts*, 'and Mangli's ghost will rode you with an *ankus* heated in the flames of *Put*, O murderer and tun-bellied thief.' 'A long journey,' thought *Hatim Tai*. ''Wonder what they'll do at the end of it.' He broke off the branch of a tree and tickled himself on his jowl and ears. And so he walked into the place of execution, where men waited with many chains and grievous ropes, and bound him as he had never been bound before.

'Foolish people!' said *Hatim Tai*. 'Almost as foolish as Mangli when he called me—the pride of all the Doon, the brightest jewel in Sanderson Sahib's crown—a "base-born." I shall break these ropes in a minute or two, and then, between my fore and hind legs, some one is like to be hurt.'

'How much d'you think he'll want?' said the first Doctor. 'About two ounces,' answered the second. 'Say three to be on the safe side,' said the first; and they did up the three ounces of arsenic in a ball of sugar. 'Before a fight it is best to eat,' said *Hatim Tai*, and he put away the *gur* with a *salaam*; for he prided himself upon his

manners. The men fell back, and *Hatim Tai* was conscious of grateful warmth in his stomach. 'Bless their innocence!' thought he. 'They've given me a *mussala*. I don't think I want it; but I'll show that I'm not ungrateful.'

And he did! The chains and the ropes held firm. 'It's beginning to work,' said a Doctor. 'Nonsense,' said the Subaltern. 'I know old *Hatim's* ways. He's lost his temper. If the ropes break we're done for.'

Hatim kicked and wriggled and squealed and did his best, so far as his anatomy allowed, to buck-jump; but the ropes stretched not one inch.

'I am making a fool of myself,' he trumpeted. 'I must be calm. At seventy years of age one should behave with dignity. None the less, these ropes are excessively galling.' He ceased his struggles, and rocked to and fro sulkily. 'He is going to fall!' whispered a Doctor. 'Not a bit of it. Now it's my turn. We'll try the strychnine,' said the second.

Prick a large and healthy tiger with a corking-pin, and you will, in some small measure, realise the difficulty of injecting strychnine subcutaneously into an elephant nine feet eleven inches and one-half at the shoulder. *Hatim Tai* forgot his dignity and stood on his head, while all the world wondered. 'I told you that would fetch him!' shouted the

apostle of strychnine, waving an enormous bottle. 'That's the death-rattle! Stand back all!'

But it was only *Hatim Tai* expressing his regret that he had slain Mangli, and so fallen into the hands of the most incompetent *mahouts* that he had ever made string-stirrups. 'I was never jabbed with an *ankus* all over my body before; and I *won't* stand it!' blared *Hatim Tai*. He stood upon his head afresh and kicked. 'Final convulsion,' said the Doctor, just as *Hatim Tai* grew weary and settled into peace again. After all, it was not worth behaving like a baby. He would be calm. He was calm for two hours, and the Doctors looked at their watches and yawned.

'Now it's my turn,' said the third Doctor. '*Afim* lao.' They brought it—a knob of Patna opium of the purest, in weight half a seer. *Hatim* swallowed it whole. Ghazipur excise opium, two cakes of a seer each, followed, helped down with much *gur*. 'This is good,' said *Hatim Tai*. 'They are sorry for their rudeness. Give me some more.'

The hours wore on, and the sun began to sink, but not so *Hatim Tai*. The three Doctors cast professional rivalry to the winds and united in ravaging their dispensaries in *Hatim Tai's* behalf. Cyanide of potassium amused him. Bisulphide of

mercury, chloral (very little of that), sulphate of copper, oxide of zinc, red lead, bismuth, carbonate of baryta, corrosive sublimate, quicklime, stramonium, veratrium, colchicum, muriatic acid, and lunar caustic, all went down, one after another, in the balls of sugar; and *Hatim Tai* never blenched.

It was not until the Hospital Assistant clamoured: 'All these things Government Store and Medical Comforts,' that the Doctors desisted and wiped their heated brows. ''Might as well physic a Cairo sarcophagus,' grumbled the first Doctor, and *Hatim Tai* gurgled gently; meaning that he would like another *gur*-ball.

'Bless my soul!' said the Subaltern, who had gone away, done a day's work, and returned with his pet eight-bore. 'D'you mean to say that you haven't killed *Hatim Tai* yet — three of you? Most unprofessional, I call it. You could have polished off a battery in that time.' 'Battery!' shrieked the baffled medicos in chorus. 'He's got enough poison in his system to settle the whole blessed British Army!'

'Let me try,' said the Subaltern, unstrapping the gun-case in his dog-cart. He threw a handkerchief upon the ground, and passed quickly in front of the elephant. *Hatim Tai* lowered his head slightly to look, and even as he did so the spherical shell smote him on the 'Saucer of Life'

—the little spot no bigger than a man's hand which is six inches above a line drawn from eye to eye. 'This is the end,' said *Hatim Tai*. 'I die as *Niwaz Jung* died!' He strove to keep his feet, staggered, recovered, and reeled afresh. Then, with one wild trumpet that rang far through the twilight, *Hatim Tai* fell dead among his pickets.

'Might ha' saved half your dispensaries if you'd called me in to treat him at first,' said the Subaltern, wiping out the eight-bore.

A SELF-MADE MAN

Surjun came back from Kimberley, which is Tom Tiddler's Ground, where he had been picking up gold and silver. He was no longer a Purbeah. A real diamond ring sparkled on his hand, and his tweed suit had cost him forty-two shillings and sixpence. He paid two hundred pounds into the Bank; and it was there that I caught him and treated him as befitted a rich man. 'O Surjun, come to my house and tell me your story.'

Nothing loath, Surjun came — diamond ring and all. His speech was composite. When he wished to be impressive he spoke English checkered with the Low Dutch slang of the Diamond Fields. When he would be expressive, he returned to his

vernacular, and was as native as a gentleman with sixteen-and-sixpenny boots could be.

'I will tell you my tale,' said Surjun, displaying the diamond ring. 'There was a friend of mine, and he went to Kimberley, and was a firm there selling things to the digger-men. In thirteen years he made seven thousand pounds. He came to me —I was from Chyebassa in those days—and said, "Come into my firm." I went with him. Oh no! I was not an emigrant. I took my own ship, and we became the firm of Surjun and Jagesser. Here is the card of my firm. You can read it: "Surjun and Jagesser Dubé, De Beer's Terrace, De Beer's Fields, Kimberley." We made an iron house,—all the houses are iron there,—and we sold, to the diggers and the Kaffirs and all sorts of men, clothes, flour, mealies, that is Indian corn, sardines and milk, and salmon in tins, and boots, and blankets, and clothes just as good as the clothes as I wear now.

'Kimberley is a good place. There are no pennies there—what you call *pice*—except to buy stamps with. Threepence is the smallest piece of money, and even threepence will not buy a drink. A drink is one shilling, one shilling and threepence, or one shilling and ninepence. And even the water there, it is one shilling and threepence for a hundred gallons in Kimberley. All things

you get you pay money for. Yes, this diamond ring cost much money. Here is the bill, and there is the receipt stamp upon the bill—"Behrendt of Dutoitspan Road." It is written upon the bill, and the price was thirteen pounds four shillings. It is a good diamond—Cape Diamond. That is why the colour is a little, little soft yellow. All Cape diamonds are so.

'How did I get my money? 'Fore Gott, I cannot tell, Sahib. You sell one day, you sell the other day, and all the other days—give the thing and take the money—the money comes. If we know man very well, we give credit one week, and if very, very well, so much as one month. You buy boots for eleven shillings and sixpence; sell for sixteen shillings. What you buy at one pound, you sell for thirty shillings—at Kimberley. That is the custom. No good selling bad things. All the digger-men know and the Kaffirs too.

'The Kaffir is a strange man. He comes into the shops and say, taking a blanket, "How much?" in the Kaffir talk—So!'

Surjun here delivered the most wonderful series of clicks that I had ever heard from a human throat.

'That is how the Kaffir asks "How much?"' said Surjun calmly, enjoying the sensation that he had produced.

'Then you say, "No, *you* say," and you say it

so.' (More clicks and a sound like a hurricane of kisses.) 'Then the Kaffir he say: "No, no, that blanket your blanket, not my blanket. *You* say."' 'And how long does this business last?' 'Till the Kaffir he tired, and *says*,' answered Surjun. 'And then do you begin the real bargaining?' 'Yes,' said Surjun, 'same as in bazar here. The Kaffir he says, "I can't pay!" Then you fold up blanket, and Kaffir goes away. Then he comes back and says "*gobu*," that is Kaffir for blanket. And so you sell him all he wants.'

'Poor Kaffir! And what is Kimberley like to look at?'

'A beautiful clean place—all so clean, and there is a very good law there. This law. A man he come into your compound after nine o'clock, and you say *vootsac*—same as *nickle jao*—and he doesn't *vootsac*; suppose you shoot that man and he dies, and he calls you before magistrate, he can't do nothing.'

'Very few dead men can. Are you allowed to shoot before saying "*vootsac*"?'

'Oh Hell, yes! Shoot if you see him in the compound after nine o'clock. That is the law. Perhaps he have come to steal diamonds. Many men steal diamonds, and buy and sell without license. That is called Aidibi.'

'What?'

'Aidibi.'

'Oh! "I. D. B." I see. Well, what happens to them?'

'They go to gaol for years and years. Very many men in gaol for I. D. B. Very many men your people, very few *mine*. Heaps of Kaffirs. Kaffir he swallows diamond, and takes medicine to find him again. You get not less than ten years for I. D. B. But I and my friend, we stay in our iron house and mind shop. That too is the way to make money.'

'Aren't your people glad to see you when you come back?'

'My people is all dead. Father dead, mother dead; and only brother living with some children across the river. I have been there, but that is not my place. I belong to nowhere now. They are all dead. After a few weeks I take my steamer to Kimberley, and then my friend he come here and put his money in the Bank.'

'Why don't you bank in Kimberley?'

'I wanted to see my brother, and I have given him one thousand rupees. No, one hundred pounds; that is more, more. Here is the Bank bill. All the others he is dead. There are some people of this country at Kimberley,—Rajputs, Brahmins, Ahirs, Parsees, Chamars, Bunnias, Telis,—all kinds go there. But my

people are dead. I shall take my brother's son back with me to Kimberley, and when he can talk the Kaffir talk, he will be useful, and he shall come into the firm. My brother does not mind. He sees that I am rich. And now I must go to the village, Sahib. Good day, sir.'

Surjun rose, made as if to depart, but returned. The Native had come to the top.

'*Sahib!* Is this talk for publish in paper?'

'Yes.'

'Then put in about this diamond ring.' He went away, twirling the ring lovingly on his finger.

Know, therefore, O Public, by these presents, that Surjun, son of Surjun, one time resident in the village of Jhusi, in the District of Allahabad, in the North-West Provinces, at present partner in the firm of Surjun and Jagesser Dubé, De Beer's Terrace, De Beer's Fields, Kimberley, who has tempted his fortune beyond the seas, owns legally and rightfully a Cape stone, valued at thirteen pounds four shillings sterling, sold to him by Behrendt of Dutoitspan Road, Kimberley.

And it looks uncommonly well.

THE VENGEANCE OF LAL BEG

This is the true story of the terrible disgrace that came to Jullundri *mehter*, through Jamuna, his wife. Those who say that a *mehter* has no caste, speak in ignorance. Those who say that there is a caste in the Empire so mean and so abject that there are no castes below it, speak in greater ignorance. The *arain* says that the *chamar* has no caste; the *chamar* knows that the *mehter* has none; and the *mehter* swears by Lal Beg, his god, that the *od*, whose god is Bhagirat, is without caste. Below the *od* lies the *kaparia-bawaria*, in spite of all that the low-caste *Brahmins* say or do. A *Teji mehter* or a *Sundoo mehter* is as much above a *kaparia-bawaria* as an Englishman is above a *mehter*. Lal Beg is the *Mehter*-god, and his image is the Glorified Broom made of peacocks' feathers, red cloth, scraps of tinsel, and the cast-off finery of English toilette tables.

Jamuna was a *Malka-sansi* of Gujrat, an eater of lizards and dogs, one 'married under the basket,' a worshipper of Malang Shah. When her first husband was cast into the Lahore Central Gaol for lifting a pony on the banks of the Ravee, Jamuna cut herself adrift from her section of the tribe and let it pass on to Delhi. She believed that the Government would keep her man for two or three

days only; but it kept him for two years,—long enough for a *sansi* to forget everything in this world except the customs of her tribe. Those are never forgotten.

As she waited for the return of her man, she scraped acquaintance with a *mehtranee ayah* in the employ of a Eurasian, and assisted her in the grosser portions of her work. She also earned money,—sufficient to buy her a cloth and food. 'The *sansi*,' as one of their proverbs says, 'will thrive in a desert.' 'What are you?' said the *mehtranee* to Jamuna. 'A *Boorat mehtranee*,' said Jamuna, for the *sansi*, as one of their proverbs says, are quick-witted as snakes. 'A *Boorat mehtranee* from the south,' said Jamuna; and her statement was not questioned, for she wore good clothes, and her black hair was combed and neatly parted.

Clinging to the skirts of the Eurasian's *ayah*, Jamuna climbed to service under an Englishman —a railway employé's wife. Jamuna had ambitions. It was pleasant to be a *mehtranee* of good standing. It will be better still, thought Jamuna, to turn Mussulman and be married to a real table-servant, openly, by the *mullah*. Such things had been; and Jamuna was fair.

But Jullundri, *mehter*, was a man to win the heart of woman, and he stole away Jamuna's in

the dusk, when she took the English babies for their walks.

'You have brought me a stranger-wife. Why did you not marry among your own clan?' said his grey-haired mother to Jullundri. 'A stranger-wife is a curse and a fire.' Jullundri laughed; for he was a jemadar of *mehters*, drawing seven rupees a month, and Jamuna loved him.

'A curse and a fire and a shame,' muttered the old woman, and she slunk into her hut and cursed Jamuna.

But Lal Beg, the very powerful God of the *mehters*, was not deceived, and he put a stumbling-block in the path of Jamuna that brought her to open shame. 'A *sansi* is as quick-witted as a snake'; but the snake longs for the cactus hedge, and a *sansi* for the desolate freedom of the wild ass. Jamuna knew the chant of Lal Beg, the prayer to the Glorified Broom, and had sung it many times in rear of the staggering, tottering pole as it was borne down the Mall. Lal Beg was insulted.

His great festival in the month of *Har* brought him revenge on Jamuna and Jullundri. Husband and wife followed the Glorified Broom, through the station and beyond, to the desolate grey flats by the river, near the Forest Reserve and the Bridge-of-Boats. Two hundred *mehters* shouted

and sang till their voices failed them, and they halted in the sand, still warm with the day's sun. On a spit near the burning *ghât*, a band of *sansis* had encamped, and one of their number had brought in a ragged bag full of lizards caught on the Meean Meer road. The gang were singing over their captures, singing that quaint song of the 'Passing of the *Sansis*,' which fires the blood of all true thieves.

Over the sand the notes struck clearly on Jamuna's ear as the Lal Beg procession re-formed and moved Citywards. But louder than the cry of worshippers of Lal Beg rose the song of Jamuna, the sober *Boorat mehtranee*, and mother of Jullundri's children. Shrill as the noise of the night-wind among rocks went back to the *sansi* camp the answer of the 'Passing of the *Sansis*,' and the *mehters* drew back in horror. But Jamuna heard only the call from the ragged huts by the river, and the call of the song—

'The horses, the horses, the fat horses, and the sticks, the little sticks of the tents. *Aho! Aho!*
Feet that leave no mark on the sand, and fingers that leave no trace on the door. *Aho! Aho!*
By the name of Malang Shah; in darkness, by the reed and the rope. . . .'

So far Jamuna sang, but the head man of the procession of Lal Beg struck her heavily across the

mouth, saying, 'By this I know that thou art a *sansi*.'

HUNTING A MIRACLE

Marching-orders as vague as the following naturally ended in confusion: 'There's a priest somewhere, in Amritsar or outside it, or somewhere else, who cut off his tongue some days ago, and says it's grown again. Go and look.' Amritsar is a city with a population of one hundred and fifty thousand, more or less, and so huge that a tramway runs round the walls. To lay hands on one particular man of all the crowd was not easy; for the tongue having grown again, he would in no way differ from his fellows. Now, had he remained tongueless, an inspection of the mouths of the passers-by would have been some sort of guide. However, dumb or tongued, all Amritsar knew about him. The small Parsee boy, who appears to run the refreshment-room alone, volunteered the startling information that the 'Priest without the tongue could be found all anywhere, in the city or elsewhere,' and waved his little hands in circles to show the vastness of his knowledge. A booking-clerk—could it be possible that he was of the Arya-Samaj?—had also heard of the *Sadhu*, and, pen in hand, denounced him as an impostor, a 'bad person,' and a 'fraudulent mendicant.' He

grew so excited, and jabbed his pen so viciously into the air that his questioner fled to a *ticca-gharri*, where he was prompted by some Imp of Perversity to simulate extreme ignorance of the language to deceive the driver. So he said twice with emphasis, '*Sadhu?*' 'Jehan,' said the driver, 'fush-class, Durbar Sahib!' Then the fare thrust out his tongue, and the scales fell from the driver's eyes. '*Bahut accha*,' said the driver, and without further parley headed into the trackless desert that encircles Fort Govindghar. The Sahib's word conveyed no meaning to him, but he understood the gesture; and, after a while, turned the carriage from a road to a plain.

Close to the Lahore Veterinary School lies a cool, brick-built, tree-shaded monastery, studded with the tombs of the pious founders, adorned with steps, terraces, and winding paths, which is known as Chajju Bhagat's Chubara. This place is possessed with the spirit of peace, and is filled by priests in salmon-coloured loin-cloths and a great odour of sanctity. The Amritsar driver had halted in the very double of the Lahore *chubara*—assuring his fare that here and nowhere else would be found the *Sadhu* with the miraculous tongue.

Indeed the surroundings were such as delight the holy men of the East. There was a sleepy breeze through the *pipals* overhead, and a square

court crammed with pigeon-holes where one might sleep; there were fair walls and mounds and little mud-platforms against or on which fires for cooking could be built, and there were wells by the dozen. There were priests by the score who sprang out of the dust, and slid off balconies or rose from cots as inquiries were made for the *Sadhu*. They were nice priests, sleek, full-fed, thick-jowled beasts, undefiled by wood-ash or turmeric, and mostly good-looking. The older men sang songs to the squirrels and the dust-puffs that the light wind was raising on the plain. They were idle—very idle. The younger priests stated that the *Sadhu* with the tongue had betaken himself to another *chubara* some miles away, and was even then being worshipped by hordes of admirers. They did not specify the exact spot, but pointed vaguely in the direction of Jandiala. However, the driver said he knew and made haste to depart. The priests pointed out courteously that the weather was warm, and that it would be better to rest a while before starting. So a rest was called, and while he sat in the shadow of the gate of the courtyard, the Englishman realised for a few minutes why it is that, now and then, men of his race, suddenly going mad, turn to the people of this land and become their priests; as did —— on the Bombay side, and later ——, who

lived for a time with the *fakir* on the top of Jakko. The miraculous idleness — the monumental sloth of the place; the silence as the priests settled down to sleep one by one; the drowsy drone of one of the younger men who had thrown himself stomach-down in the warm dust and was singing under his breath; the warm airs from across the plain and the faint smell of burnt *ghi* and incense, laid hold of the mind and limbs till, for at least fifteen seconds, it seemed that life would be a good thing if one could doze, and bask, and smoke from the rising of the sun till the twilight—a fat hog among fat hogs.

The chase was resumed, and the *gharri* drove to Jandiala—more or less. It abandoned the main roads completely, although it was a 'fush-class,' and comported itself like an *ekka*, till Amritsar sunk on the horizon, or thereabouts, and it pulled up at a second *chubara*, more peaceful and secluded than the first, and fenced with a thicker belt of trees. There was an eruption under the horses' feet and a scattering of dust, which presently settled down and showed a beautiful young man with a head such as artists put on the shoulders of Belial. It was the head of an unlicked devil, marvellously handsome, and it made the horses shy. Belial knew nothing of the *Sadhu* who had cut out the tongue. He scowled at the driver,

scowled at the fare, and then settled down in the dust, laughing wildly, and pointing to the earth and the sky. Now for a native to laugh aloud, without reason, publicly and at high noon, is a gruesome thing and calculated to chill the blood. Even the sight of silver coinage had no effect on Belial. He dilated his nostrils, pursed his lips, and gave himself up to renewed mirth. As there seemed to be no one else in the *chubara*, the carriage drove away, pursued by the laughter of the Beautiful Young Man in the Dust. A priest was caught wandering on the road, but for long he denied all knowledge of the *Sadhu*. In vain the Englishman protested that he came as a humble believer in the miracle; that he carried an offering of rupees for the *Sadhu*; that he regarded the *Sadhu* as one of the leading men of the century, and would render him immortal for at least twelve hours. The priest was dumb. He was next bribed—extortionately bribed—and said that the *Sadhu* was at the Durbar Sahib preaching. To the Golden temple accordingly the carriage went and found the regular array of ministers and the eternal passage of Sikh women round and round the Grunth; which things have been more than once described in this paper. But there was no *Sadhu*. An old *Nihang*, grey-haired and sceptical —for he had lived some thirty years in a church

as it were—was sitting on the steps of the tank, dabbling his feet in the water. 'O Sahib,' said he blandly, 'what concern have you with a miraculous *Sadhu*? You are not a Poliswala. And, O Sahib, what concern has the *Sadhu* with you?' The Englishman explained with heat—for fruitless drives in the middle of an October day are trying to the temper—his adventures at the various *chubaras*, not omitting the incident of the Beautiful Young Man in the Dust. The *Nihang* smiled shrewdly: 'Without doubt, Sahib, these men have told you lies. They do not want you to see the *Sadhu*; and the *Sadhu* does not desire to see you. This affair is an affair for us common people and not for Sahibs. The honour of the Gods is increased; but *you* do not worship the Gods.' So saying he gravely began to undress and waddled into the water.

Then the Englishman perceived that he had been basely betrayed by the *gharri*-driver, and all the priests of the first *chubara*, and the wandering priest near the second *chubara*; and that the only sensible person was the Beautiful Young Man in the Dust, and *he* was mad.

This vexed the Englishman, and he came away. If *Sadhus* cut out their tongues and if the great Gods restore them, the devotees might at least have the decency to be interviewed.

THE EXPLANATION OF MIR BAKSH

> My notion was that you had been
> (Before they had this fit)
> An obstacle that came between
> Him and ourselves and it.

'That's the most important piece of evidence we've heard yet,' said the king, rubbing his hands. So now let the jury . . .'

'If any one of them can explain it,' said Alice, 'I'll give him sixpence. *I* don't believe there's an atom of meaning in it.'—*Alice in Wonderland.*

This, Protector of the Poor, is the *hissab* (your bill of house-expenses) for last month and a little bit of the month before,—eleven days,—and this, I think, is what it will be next month. Is it a long bill in five sheets? Assuredly yes, Sahib. Are the accounts of so honourable a house of the Sahib to be kept on one sheet only? This *hissab* cost one rupee to write. It is true that the Sahib will pay the one rupee; but consider how beautiful and how true is the account, and how clean is the paper. Ibrahim, who is the very best petition-writer in all the bazar, drew it up. Ahoo! Such an account is this account! And I am to explain it all? Is it not written there in the red ink, and the black ink, and the green ink? What more does the Heaven-born want? Ibrahim, who

is the best of all the petition-writers in the bazar, made this *hissab*. There is an envelope also. Shall I fetch that envelope? Ibrahim has written your name outside in three inks—a very *murasla* is this envelope. An explanation? Ahoo! God is my witness that it is as plain as the sun at noon. By your Honour's permission I will explain, taking the accounts in my hand.

Now there are four accounts—that for last month, which is in red; that for the month before, which is in black; that for the month to come, which is in green; and an account of private expense and dispens, which is in pencil. Does the Presence understand that? Very good talk.

There was the bread, and the milk, and the cow's food, and both horses, and the saddle-soap for last month, which is in green ink. No, red ink—the Presence speaks the truth. It was red ink, and it was for last month, and that was fifty-seven rupees eight annas; *but* there was the cost of a new manger for the cow; to be sunk into mud, and that was eleven annas. But I did not put *that* into the last month's account. I carried that over to *this* month—the green ink. No? There is no account for this month? Your Honour speaks the truth. Those eleven annas I carried thus—in my head.

The Sahib has said it is not a matter of eleven

annas, but of seventy-seven rupees. That is quite true; but, O Sahib, if I, and Ibrahim, who is the best petition-writer in the bazar, do not attend to the annas, how shall your substance increase? So the food and the saddle-soap for the cows and the other things were fifty-seven rupees eight annas, and the servants' wages were a hundred and ten—all for last month. And now I must think, for this is a large account. Oh yes! It was in Jeth that I spoke to the *Dhobi* about the washing, and he said, 'My bill will be eleven rupees two pies.' It is written there in the green ink, and that, in addition to the soap, was sixty-eight rupees, seven annas, two pies. All of last month. *And* the hundred and ten rupees for the servants' wages make the total to one hundred and seventy-eight rupees, seven annas, two pies, as Ibrahim, who is the best petition-writer in the bazar, has set down.

But I said that all things would only be one hundred and fifty? Yes. That was at first, Sahib, before I was well aware of all things. Later on, it will be in the memory of the Presence that I said it would be one hundred and ninety. But that was before I had spoken to the *Dhobi*. No, it was before I had bought the trunk-straps for which you gave orders. I remember that I said it would be one hundred and ninety. Why is the

Sahib so hot? Is not the account long enough? I know always what the expense of the house will be. Let the Presence follow my finger. That is the green ink, that is the black, here is the red, and there is the pencil-mark of the private expenses. To this I add what I said six weeks ago before I had bought the trunk-straps by your order. And so that is a *fifth* account. Very good talk! The Presence has seen what happened last month, and I will now show the month before last, and the month that is to come—together in little brackets; the one bill balancing to the other like swinging scales.

Thus runs the account of the month before last:—A box of matches three pies, and black thread for buttons three annas (it was the best black thread), *khas-khas* for the *tatties* twelve annas; and the other things forty-one rupees. To which that of the month to come had an answer in respect to the candles for the dog-cart; but I did not know how much these would cost, and I have written one rupee two annas, for they are always changing their prices in the bazar. And the oil for the carriage is one rupee, and the other things are forty-one rupees, and that is for the next month.

An explanation? Still an explanation? *Khuda-ka-kusm!* Have I not explained and has not Ibrahim,

who is notoriously the best petition-writer in the bazar, put it down in the red ink, and the green ink, and the black; and is there not the private dispens account, withal, showing what should have been but which fell out otherwise, and what might have been but could not?

Ai, Sahib, what can I do? It is perhaps a something heavy bill, but there were reasons; and let the Presence consider that the *Dhobi* lived at the *ghat* over against the river, and I had to go there—two *kos*, upon my faith!—to get his bill; and, moreover, the horses were shod at the hospital, and that was a *kos* away, and the Hospital Babu was late in rendering his accounts. Does the Sahib say that I should know how the accounts will fall—not only for the month before last, but for this month as well? I do—I did—I will do! Is it my fault that more rupees have gone than I knew? The Sahib laughs! Forty years I have been a *khansamah* to the Sahib-log—from *mussalchi* to mate, and head *khansamah* have I risen (*smites himself on the breast*), and never have I been laughed at before. Why does the Sahib laugh? By the blessed *Imams*, my uncle was cook to Jan Larens, and I am a priest at the Musjid; and I am laughed at? Sahib, seeing that there were so many bills to come in, and that the *Dhobi* lived at the *ghat* as I have said, and the Horse hospital

was a *kos* away, and God only knows where the sweeper lived, but *his* account came late also, it is not strange that I should be a little stupid as to my accounts, whereof there are so many. For the *Dhobi* was at the *ghat*, etc. Forty years have I been a *khansamah*, and there is no *khansamah* who could have kept his accounts so well. Only by my great and singular regard for the welfare of the Presence does it come about that they are not a hundred rupees wrong. For the *Dhobi* was at the *ghat*, etc. And I will *not* be laughed at! The accounts are beautiful accounts, and only I could have kept them.

. . . . .

Sahib—Sahib! Garibparwar! I have been to Ibrahim, who is the best petition-writer in the bazar, and he has written all that I have said—all that the Sahib could not understand—upon pink paper from Sialkot. So now there are the five accounts *and* the explanation; and for the writing of all six you, O Sahib, must pay! But for my honour's sake do not laugh at me any more.

A LETTER FROM GOLAM SINGH

From Golam Singh, Mistri, Landin, Belait, to Ram Singh, Mistri, son of Jeewun Singh, in the town of Rajah Jung, in the tehsil of Kasur, in the district of Lahore, in the Province of the Punjab.

Wah Gooroojee ki futteh.

Call together now our friends and brothers, and our children and the Lambardar, to the big square by the well. Say that I, Golam Singh, have written you a letter across the Black Water, and let the town hear of the wonders which I have seen in Belait. Rutton Singh, the *bunnia*, who has been to Delhi, will tell you, my brother, that I am a liar; but I have witnesses of our faith, besides the others, who will attest when we return what I have written.

I have now been many days in Belait, in this big city. Though I were to write till my hand fell from my wrist, I could not state its bigness. I myself know that, to see one another, the Sahib-log, of whom there are crores of crores, use the railway dâk, which is laid not above the ground as is the *Sirkar's* railway in our own country, but underneath it, below the houses. I have gone down myself into this rail together with the other witnesses. The air is very bad in those places, and this is why the Sahib-log have become white.

There are more people here than I have ever seen. Ten times as many as there are at Delhi, and they are all Sahibs who do us great honour. Many hundred Sahibs have been in our country, and they all speak to us, asking if we are pleased.

In this city the streets run for many miles in a straight line, and are so broad that four bullock-carts of four bullocks might stand side by side. At night they are lit with English lamps, which need no oil, but are fed by wind which burns. I and the others have seen this. By day sometimes the sun does not shine, and the city becomes black. Then these lamps are lit all day and men go to work.

The bazars are three times as large as our bazars, and the shopkeepers, who are all Sahibs, sit inside where they cannot be seen, but their name is written outside. There are no *bunnias'* shops, and all the prices are written. If the price is high, it cannot be lowered; nor will the shop-keeper bargain at all. This is very strange. But I have witnesses.

One shop I have seen was twice as large as Rajah Jung. It held hundreds of shopkeeper-sahibs and *memsahibs*, and thousands who come to buy. The Sahib-log speak one talk when they purchase their bazar, and they make no noise.

There are no ekkas here, but there are yellow and green *ticca-gharries* bigger than Rutton Singh's house, holding half a hundred people. The horses here are as big as elephants. I have seen no ponies, and there are no buffaloes.

It is not true that the Sahibs use the *belaitee punkah* (the thermantidote) like as you and I made for the Dipty Sahib two years ago. The air is cold, and there are neither coolies nor verandas. Nor do the Sahibs drink *belaitee panee* (soda-water) when they are thirsty. They drink water—very clean and good—as we do.

In this city there are plains so vast that they appear like jungle; but when you have crossed them you come again to lakhs of houses, and there are houses on all sides. None of the houses are of mud or wood, but all are in brick or stone. Some have carved doors in stone, but the carving is very bad. Even the door of Rutton Singh's house is better carved; but Rutton Singh's house could be put into any fore-court of these *belaitee* houses. They are as big as mountains.

No one sleeps outside his house or in the road. This is thought shameless; but it is very strange to see. There are no flat roofs to the houses. They are all pointed; I have seen this and so have the others.

In this city there are so many carriages and

horses in the street that a man, to cross over, must call a police-*wallah*, who puts up his hand, and the carriages stop. I swear to you by our father that on account of me, Golam Singh mistri, all the carriages of many streets have been stopped that I might cross like a Padshah. Let Rutton Singh know this.

In this city for four annas you may send news faster than the wind over four hundred *kos*. There are witnesses; and I have a paper of the Government showing that this is true.

In this city our honour is very great, and we have learned to *shekand* like the *Sahib-logue*. All the *memsahibs*, who are very beautiful, look at us, but we do not understand their talk. These *memsahibs* are like the *memsahibs* in our country.

In this city there are a hundred dances every night. The houses where they *nautch* hold many thousand people, and the *nautch* is so wonderful that I cannot describe it. The Sahibs are a wonderful people. They can make a sea upon dry land, and then a fire, and then a big fort with soldiers—all in half an hour while you look. The other men will say this too, for they also saw what I saw at one of the *nautches*.

Rutton Singh's son, who has become a pleader, has said that the Sahibs are only men like us black men. This is a lie, for they know more than we

know. I will tell. When we people left Bombay for Belait, we came upon the Black Water, which you cannot understand. For five days we saw only the water, as flat as a planed board with no marks on it. Yet the Captain Sahib in charge of the fire-boat said, from the first, 'In five days we shall reach a little town, and in four more a big canal.' These things happened as he had said, though there was nothing to point the road, and the little town was no bigger than the town of Lod. We came there by night, and *yet* the Captain Sahib knew! How, then, can Rutton Singh's son say such lies? I have seen this city in which are crores of crores of people. There is no end to its houses and its shops, for I have never yet seen the open jungle. There is nothing hidden from these people. They can turn the night into day [I have seen it], and they never rest from working. It is true that they do not understand carpenter's work, but all other things they understand, as I and the people with me have seen. They are no common people.

Bid our father's widow see to my house and little Golam Singh's mother; for I return in some months, and I have bought many wonderful things in this country, the like of which you have never seen. But your minds are ignorant, and you will say I am a liar. I shall, therefore, bring my

witnesses to humble Rutton Singh, *bunnia*, who went to Delhi, and who is an owl and the son of an owl.

Ap-ki-das, Golam Singh.

THE WRITING OF YAKUB KHAN

From Yakub Khan, Kuki Khel, of Lala China, Malik, in the Englishman's City of Calcutta with Vahbtahn Sahib, to Katal Khan, Kuki Khel, of Lala China, which is in the Khaibar. This letter to go by the Sirkar's mail to Pubbi, and thence Mahbub Ali, the writer, takes delivery and, if God pleases, gives to my son.

Also, for my heart is clean, this writing goes on to Sultan Khan, on the upper hill over against Kuka Ghoz, which is in Bara, through the country of the Zuka Khel. Mahbub Ali goes through if God pleases.

To My Son.—Know this. I have come with the others and Vahbtahn (Warburton) Sahib, as was agreed, down to the river, and the rail-dâk does *not* stop at Attock. Thus the Mullah of Tordurra lied. Remember this when next he comes for food. The rail-dâk goes on for many days. The others who came with me are witnesses to this. Fifteen times, for there was but little to do in the dâk, I made all the prayers from the *niyah* to the *munajat*, and yet the journey was not ended. And at the places where we stopped there were often to be seen the fighting-men of the

English, such as those we killed, when certain of our men went with the Bonerwals in the matter of Umbeyla, whose guns I have in my house. Everywhere there were fighting-men; but it may be that the English were afraid of us, and so drew together all their troops upon the line of the rail-dâk and the fire-carriage. Vahbtahn Sahib is a very clever man, and he may have given the order. None the less, there must be many troops in this country; more than all the strength of the Afridis. But Yar Khan says that all the land, which runs to the east and to the west many days' journey in the rail-dâk, is also full of fighting-men, and big guns by the score. Our Mullahs gave us no news of this when they said that, in the matter of six years gone, there were no more English in the land, all having been sent to Afghanistan, and that the country was rising in fire behind them. Tell the Mullah of Tordurra the words of Yar Khan. He has lied in respect to the rail-dâk, and it may be that he will now speak the truth regarding what his son saw when he went to Delhi with the horses. I have asked many men for news of the strength of the fighting-men in this country, and all say that it is very great. Howbeit, Vahbtahn Sahib is a clever man and may have told them to speak thus, as I told the women of Sikanderkhelogarhi to speak when we were pressed by the Sangu Khel, in

that night when you, my son, took Torukh Khan's head, and I saw that I had bred a man.

If there be as many men throughout the place as I have seen and the people say, the mouth of the Khaibar is shut, and it were better to give no heed to our Mullahs. But read further and see for what reasons I, who am a Malak of the Kuki Khel, say this. I have come through many cities —all larger than Kabul. Rawal Pindi, which is far beyond the Attock, whence came all the English who fought us in the business of six years gone. That is a great city, filled with fighting-men—four thousand of both kinds, and guns. Lahore is also a great city, with another four thousand troops, and that is one night by the rail-dâk from Rawal Pindi. Amritsar has a strong fort, but I do not know how many men are there. The words of the people who go down with the grapes and the almonds in the winter are true, and our Mullahs have lied to us. Jullundur is also a place of troops, and there is a fort at Phillour, and there are many thousand men at Umballa, which is one night, going very swiftly in the rail-dâk, from Lahore. And at Meerut, which is half a day from Umballa, there are more men and horses; and at Delhi there are more also, in a very strong fort. Our people go only as far south as Delhi; but beyond Delhi there are no more strong Punjabi

people—but only a mean race without strength. The country is very rich here, flat, with cattle and crops. We, of the villages of the Khaibar alone, could loot these people; but there are more fighting-men at Agra, and at Cawnpore, and at Allahabad, and many other places, whose names do not stay with me. Thus, my son, by day and by night, always going swiftly in the rail-dâk we came down to this very big city of Calcutta.

My mouth dripped when I saw the place that they call Bengal—so rich it was; and my heart was troubled when I saw how many of the English were there. The land is very strongly held, and there are a multitude of English and half-English in the place. They give us great honour, but all men regard us as though we were strange beasts, and not fighting-men with hundreds of guns. If Yar Khan has spoken truth and the land throughout is as I have seen, and no show has been made to fill us with fear, I, Yakub Khan, tell you, my son, and you, O Sultan Khan! that the English do well to thus despise us; for on the Oath of a Pathan, we are only beasts in their sight. It may be that Vahbtahn Sahib has told them all to look at us in this manner—for, though we receive great honour, no man shows fear, and busies himself with his work when we have passed by. Even that very terrible man, the Governor

of Kabul, would be as no one in this great City of Calcutta. Were I to write what I have seen, all our people would say that I was mad and a liar. But this I will write privately, that only you, my son, and Sultan Khan may see; for ye know that, in respect to my own blood, I am no liar. There are lights without oil or wood burning brightly in this city; and on the water of the river lie boats which go by fire, as the rail-dâk goes, carrying men and fighting-men by two and three thousand. God knows whence they come! They travel by water, and therefore there must be yet another country to the eastward full of fighting-men. I cannot make clear how these things are. Every day more boats come. I do not think that this is arranged by Vahbtahn Sahib; for no man in those boats takes any notice of us; and we feel, going to and from every place, that we are children. When that Kaffir came to us, three years agone, is it in thy memory how, before we shot him, we looked on him for a show, and the children came out and laughed? In this place no children laugh at us; but none the less do we feel that we are all like that man from Kafirstan.

In the matter of our safe-conduct, be at ease. We are with Vahbtahn Sahib, and his word is true. Moreover, as we said in the *jirgah*, we have been brought down to see the richness of the country,

and for that reason they will do us no harm. I cannot tell why they, being so strong,—if these things be not all arranged by Vahbtahn Sahib,—took any trouble for us. Yar Khan, whose heart has become so soft within him in three days, says that the louse does not kill the Afridi, but none the less the Afridi takes off his upper-coat for the itching. This is a bitter saying, and I, O my son, and O my friend Sultan Khan, am hard upon believing it.

I put this charge upon you. Whatever the Mullah of Tordurra may say, both respecting the matter that *we* know of, which it is not prudent to write, and respecting the going-out in spring against the Sangu Khel, do you, my son, and you, Sultan Khan, keep the men of the Khaibar villages, and the men of the Upper Bara, *still*, till I return and can speak with my mouth. The blood-feuds are between man and man, and these must go forward by custom; but let there be no more than single shots fired. We will speak together, and ye will discover that my words are good. I would give hope if I could, but I cannot give hope. Yar Khan says that it were well to keep to the blood-feuds only; and he hath said openly among us, in the smoking-time, that he has a fear of the English, greater than any fear of the curses of our Mullahs. Ye know that I am a man unafraid.

Ye knew when I cut down the Malik of the Sipah Khel, when he came into Kadam, that I was a man unafraid. But this is no matter of one man's life, or the lives of a hundred, or a thousand; and albeit I cursed Yar Khan with the others, yet in my heart I am afraid even as he is. If these English, and God knows where their homes lie, for they come from a strange place, we do not know how strong in fighting men,—if, O my son, and friend of my heart Sultan Khan, these devils can thus fill the land over four days' journey by this very swift rail-dâk from Peshawar, and can draw white light, as bright as the sun, from iron poles, and can send fire-boats full of men *from the east*, and moreover, as I have seen, can make new rupees as easily as women make cow-dung cakes, —what can the Afridis do?

The Mullah of Tordurra said that they came from the *west*, and that their rail-dâk stopped at Attock, and that there were none of them except those who came into our country in the great fight. In all three things he has lied. Give no heed to him. I myself will shoot him when I return. If he be a Saint, there will be miracles over his tomb, which I will build. If he be no Saint, there is but one Mullah the less. It were better that he should die than take the Khaibar villages into a new blockade; as did the Mullah

of Kardara, when we were brought to shame by Jan Larens and I was a young man.

The black men in this place are dogs and children. To such an one I spoke yesterday, saying, 'Where is Vahbtahn Sahib?' and he answered nothing, but laughed. I took him by the throat and shook him, only a little and very gently, for I did not wish to bring trouble on Vahbtahn Sahib, and he has said that our customs are not the customs of this country. This black man wept, and said that I had killed him, but truly I had only shaken him to and fro. He was a fat man, with white stockings, dressed in woman's fashion, speaking English, but acting without courtesy either to the Sahibs or to us. Thus are all the black people in the city of Calcutta. But for these English, we who are here now could loot the city, and portion out the women, who are fair.

I have bought an English rifle for you, my son, better than the one which Shere Khan stole from Cherat last summer, throwing to two thousand paces; and for Sultan Khan an English revolver, as he asked. Of the wonders of this great city I will speak when we meet, for I cannot write them.

When I came from Lala China the tale of blood between our house and the house of Zarmat Shah lacked one on our side. I have been gone many

days, but I have no news from you that it is made even. If ye have not yet killed the boy who had the feud laid upon him when I went, do nothing but guard your lives till ye get the new rifle. With a steady rest it will throw across the valley into Zarmat Shah's field, and so ye can kill the women at evening.

Now I will cease, for I am tired of this writing. Make Mahbub Ali welcome, and bid him stay till ye have written an answer to this, telling me whether all be well in my house. My blood is not cold that I charge you once again to give no ear to the Mullahs, who have lied, as I will show; and, above all else, to keep the villages still till I return. Nor am I a clucking hen of a Khuttick if I write last, that these English are devils, against whom only the Will of God can help us.

And why should we beat our heads against a rock, for we only spill our brains:

And when we have the Valley to content us, why should we go out against the Mountain?

A strong man, saith Kabir, is strong only till he meet with a stronger.

A KING'S ASHES

1888: On Wednesday morning last, the ashes of the late ruler of Gwalior were consigned to the Ganges without the walls of Allahabad Fort. Scindia died in June of last year, and, shortly

after the cremation, the main portion of the ashes were taken to the water. Yesterday's function, the disposal of what remained (it is impossible not to be horrible in dealing with such a subject), was comparatively of an unimportant nature, but rather grim to witness.

Beyond the melon-beds and *chappar* villages that stand upon the spit of sun-baked mud and sand by the confluence of the Jumna and the Ganges, lies a flag-bedizened home of *fakirs*, *gurus*, *gosains*, *sanyasis*, and the like. A stone's throw from this place boils and eddies the line of demarcation between the pure green waters of the Jumna and the turbid current of the Ganges; and here they brought the ashes of Scindia. With these came minor functionaries of the Gwalior State, six Brahmins of the Court, and nine of Scindia's relatives. In his lifetime, the Maharaja had a deep and rooted distrust of his own family and clan, and no Scindia was ever allowed office about him. Indeed, so great was his aversion that he would not even permit them to die in the Luskar, or City of Gwalior. They must needs go out when their last hour came, and die in a neighbouring *jaghir* village which belonged to Sir Michael Filose, one of that Italian family which has served the State so long and faithfully. When such an one had died, Scindia,

by his own command, was not informed of the event till the prescribed days of mourning had elapsed. Then notice was given to him by the placing of his bed on the ground,—a sign of mourning,—and he would ask, not too tenderly, 'Which Scindia is dead?'

Considering this unamiable treatment, the wonder was that so many as nine of his own kin could be found to attend the last rites on that sun-dried mud-bank. There was, or seemed to be, no attempt at ceremony, and, naturally enough, no pretence at grief; nor was there any gathering of native notables. The common crowd and the multitude of priests had the spectacle to themselves, if we except a few artillerymen from the Fort, who had strolled down to see what was happening to 'one of them (qualified) kings.' By ten o'clock, a tawdry silken litter bearing the ashes and accompanied by the mourners, had reached the water's edge, where wooden cots had been run out into the stream, and where the water-deepened boats had been employed to carry the press of sight-seers. Underfoot, the wet ground was trodden by hundreds of feet into a slimy pulp of mud and stale flowers of sacrifice; and on this compost slipped and blundered a fine white horse, whose fittings were heavy with bosses of new

silver. He, and a big elephant, adorned with a necklace of silver plaques, were a gift to the priests who in cash and dinners would profit by the day's work to the extent of eight or ten thousand rupees.

Overhead a hundred *fakirs'* flags, bearing devices of gods, beasts, and the trident of Shiva, fluttered in the air; while all around, like vultures drawn by carrion, crowded the priests. There were burly, bull-necked, freshly oiled ruffians, sleek of paunch and jowl, clothed in pure white linen; mad wandering mendicants carrying the peacock's feather, the begging bowl, and the patched cloak; salmon-robed *sanyasis* from up-country, and evil-eyed *gosains* from the south. They crowded upon the wooden bedsteads, piled themselves upon the boats, and jostled into the first places in the crowd in the mud, and all their eyes were turned toward two nearly naked men who seemed to be kneading some Horror in their hands and dropping it into the water. The closely packed boats rocked gently, the crowd babbled and buzzed, and uncouth music wailed and shrieked, while from behind the sullen, squat bulk of Allahabad Fort the booming of minute-guns announced that the Imperial Government was paying honour to the memory of His Highness Maharaja Jyaji Rao Scindia, G.C.B., G.C.S.I., once owner of twenty thou-

sand square miles of land, nearly three million people, and treasure untold, if all tales be true. Not fifty yards upstream, a swollen dead goat was bobbing up and down in the water in a ghastly parody on kidlike skittishness, and green filth was cast ashore by every little wave.

Was there anything more to see? The white horse refused to be led into the water and splashed all the bystanders with dirt, and the elephant's weight broke up the sand it was standing on and turned it to a quag. This much was visible, but little else; for the clamouring priests forbade any English foot to come too near, perhaps for fear that their gains might be lessened. Where the press parted, it was possible to catch a glimpse of this ghoulish kneading by the naked men in the boat, and to hear the words of a chanted prayer. But that was all.

THE BRIDE'S PROGRESS

> And school foundations in the act
> Of holiday, three files compact,
> Shall learn to view thee as a fact
> Connected with that zealous tract
> 'Rome, Babylon, and Nineveh.'
>
> *The Burden of Nineveh.*

It would have been presumption and weariness deliberately to have described Benares. No man,

except he who writes a guide-book, 'does' the Strand or Westminster Abbey. The foreigner —French or American—tells London what to think of herself, as the visitor tells the Anglo-Indian what to think of India. Our neighbour over the way always knows so much more about us than we ourselves. The Bride interpreted Benares as fresh youth and radiant beauty can interpret a city grey and worn with years. Providence had been very good to her, and she repaid Providence by dressing herself to the best advantage—which, if the French speak truth, is all that a fair woman can do toward religion. Generations of untroubled ease and well-being must have builded the dainty figure and rare face, and the untamable arrogance of wealth looked out of the calm eyes. 'India,' said The Bride philosophically, 'is an incident only in our trip. We are going on to Australia and China, and then Home by San Francisco and New York. We shall be at Home again before the season is quite ended.' And she patted her bracelets, smiling softly to herself over some thought that had little enough to do with Benares or India—whichever was the 'incident.' She went into the city of Benares. Benares of the Buddhists and the Hindus—of Durga of the Thousand Names—of two Thousand Temples,

and twice two thousand stenches. Her high heels rang delicately upon the stone pavement of the gullies, and her brow, unmarked as that of a little child, was troubled by the stenches. 'Why does Benares smell so?' demanded The Bride pathetically. '*Must* we do it, if it smells like this?' The Bridegroom was high-coloured, fair-whiskered, and insistent, as an Englishman should be. 'Of course we must. It would never do to go home without having seen Benares. Where is a guide?' The streets were alive with them, and the couple chose him who spoke English most fluently. 'Would you like to see where the Hindus are burnt?' said he. They would, though The Bride shuddered as she spoke, for she feared that it would be very horrible. A ray of gracious sunlight touched her hair as she turned, walking cautiously in the middle of the narrow way, into the maze of the byways of Benares.

The sunlight ceased after a few paces, and the horrors of the Holy City gathered round her. Neglected rainbow-hued sewage sprawled across the path, and a bull, rotten with some hideous disease that distorted his head out of all bestial likeness, pushed through the filth. The Bride picked her way carefully, giving the bull the wall. A lean dog, dying of mange, growled and yelped

among her starveling puppies on a threshold that led into the darkness of some unclean temple. The Bride stooped and patted the beast on the head. 'I think she's something like *Bessie*,' said The Bride, and once again her thoughts wandered far beyond Benares. The lanes grew narrower and the symbols of a brutal cult more numerous. Hanuman, red, shameless, and smeared with oil, leaped and leered upon the walls above stolid, black stone bulls, knee-deep in yellow flowers. The bells clamoured from unseen temples, and half-naked men with evil eyes rushed out of dark places and besought her for money, saying that they were priests—*padris*, like the *padris* of her own faith. One young man—who knows in what Mission school he had picked up his speech?—told her this in English, and The Bride laughed merrily, shaking her head. 'These men speak English,' she called back to her husband. 'Isn't it funny!'

But the mirth went out of her face when a turn in the lane brought her suddenly above the burning-*ghât*, where a man was piling logs on some Thing that lay wrapped in white cloth, near the water of the Ganges. 'We can't see well from this place,' said the Bridegroom stolidly. 'Let us get a little closer.' They moved forward through deep grey dust—white sand of the river and black dust of

man blended—till they commanded a full view of the steeply sloping bank and the Thing under the logs. A man was laboriously starting a fire at the river end of the pile; stepping wide now and again to avoid the hot embers of a dying blaze actually on the edge of the water. The Bride's face blanched, and she looked appealingly to her husband, but he had only eyes for the newly lit flame. Slowly, very slowly, a white dog crept on his belly down the bank, toward a heap of ashes among which the water was hissing. A plunge, followed by a yelp of pain, told that he had reached food, and that the food was too hot for him. With a deftness that marked long training, he raked the capture from the ashes on to the dust and slobbered, nosing it tentatively. As it cooled, he settled, with noises of animal delight, to his meal and worried and growled and tore. 'Will!' said The Bride faintly. The Bridegroom was watching the newly lit pyre and could not attend. A log slipped sideways, and through the chink showed the face of the man below, smiling the dull thick smile of death, which is such a smile as a very drunken man wears when he has found in his wide-swimming brain a joke of exquisite savour. The dead man grinned up to the sun and the fair face of The Bride. The flames sputtered and caught and spread. A man waded out knee-deep

into the water, which was covered with greasy black embers and an oily scum. He chased the bobbing driftwood with a basket, that it might be saved for another occasion, and threw each take on a mound of such economies or on the back of the unheeding dog deep in the enjoyment of his hot dinner.

Slowly, very slowly, as the flames crackled, the Smiling Dead Man lifted one knee through the light logs. He had just been smitten with the idea of rising from his last couch and confounding the spectators. It was easy to see he was tasting the notion of this novel, this stupendous practical joke, and would presently, always smiling, rise up, and up, and up, and . . .

The fire-shrivelled knee gave way, and with its collapse little flames ran forward and whistled and whispered and fluttered from heel to head. 'Come away, Will,' said The Bride, 'come away! It is too horrible. I'm sorry that I saw it.' They left together, she with her arm in her husband's for a sign to all the world that, though Death be inevitable and awful, Love is still the greater, and in its sweet selfishness can set at naught even the horrors of a burning-*ghât*.

'I never thought what it meant before,' said The Bride, releasing her husband's arm as she recovered herself; 'I see now.' 'See what?'

'Don't you know?' said The Bride, 'what Edwin Arnold says:—

> For all the tears of all the eyes
> Have room in Gunga's bed,
> And all the sorrow is gone to-morrow
> When the white flames have fed.

I see now. I think it is very, *very* horrible.' Then to the guide, suddenly, with a deep compassion, 'And will you be—will you be burnt in that way, too?' 'Yes, your Ladyship,' said the guide cheerfully, 'we are all burnt that way.' 'Poor wretch!' said The Bride to herself. 'Now show us some more temples.' A second time they dived into Benares City, but it was at least five long minutes before The Bride recovered those buoyant spirits which were hers by right of Youth and Love and Happiness. A very pale and sober little face peered into the filth of the Temple of the Cow, where the odour of Holiness and Humanity are highest. Fearful and wonderful old women, crippled in hands and feet, body and back, crawled round her; some even touching the hem of her dress. And at this she shuddered, for the hands were very foul. The walls dripped filth, the pavement sweated filth, and the contagion of uncleanliness walked among the worshippers. There might have been beauty in the Temple of the Cow; there certainly was horror enough and to spare;

but The Bride was conscious only of the filth of the place. She turned to the wisest and best man in the world, asking indignantly, 'Why don't these horrid people clean the place out?' 'I don't know,' said The Bridegroom; 'I suppose their religion forbids it.' Once more they set out on their journey through the city of monstrous creeds —she in front, the pure white hem of her petticoat raised indignantly clear of the mire, and her eyes full of alarm and watchfulness. Closed galleries crossed the narrow way, and the light of day fainted and grew sick ere it could climb down into the abominations of the gullies. A litter of gorgeous red and gold barred the passage to the Golden Temple. 'It is the Maharani of Hazaribagh,' said the guide, 'she coming to pray for a child.' 'Ah!' said The Bride, and turning quickly to her husband, said, 'I wish mother were with us.' The Bridegroom made no answer. Perhaps he was beginning to repent of dragging a young English girl through the iniquities of Benares. He announced his intention of returning to his hotel, and The Bride dutifully followed. At every turn lewd gods grinned and mouthed at her, the still air was clogged with thick odours and the reek of rotten marigold flowers, and disease stood blind and naked before the sun. 'Let us get away quickly,' said The Bride; and they escaped to the

main street, having honestly accomplished nearly two-thirds of what was written in the little red guide-book. An instinct inherited from a century of cleanly English housewives made The Bride pause before getting into the carriage, and, addressing the seething crowd generally, murmur, 'Oh! you horrid people! Shouldn't I like to wash you.'

Yet Benares—which name must certainly be derived from *be*, without, and *nares*, nostrils—is not entirely a Sacred Midden. Very early in the morning, almost before the light had given promise of the day, a boat put out from a *ghât* and rowed upstream till it stayed in front of the ruined magnificence of Scindia's Ghât—a range of ruined wall and drunken bastion. The Bride and Bridegroom had risen early to catch their last glimpse of the city. There was no one abroad at that hour, and, except for three or four stone-laden boats rolling down from Mirzapur, they were alone upon the river. In the silence a voice thundered far above their heads: '*I bear witness that there is no God but God.*' It was the mullah, proclaiming the Oneness of God in the city of the Million Manifestations. The call rang across the sleeping city and far over the river, and be sure that the mullah abated nothing of the defiance of his cry for that he looked down upon a sea of temples and smelt the incense

of a hundred Hindu shrines. The Bride could make neither head nor tail of the business. 'What is he making that noise for, Will?' she asked. 'Worshipping Vishnu,' was the ready reply; for at the outset of his venture into matrimony a young husband is at the least infallible. The Bride snuggled down under her wraps, keeping her delicate, chill-pinked little nose toward the city. Day broke over Benares, and The Bride stood up and applauded with both her hands. It was finer, she said, than any transformation scene; and so in her gratitude she applauded the earth, the sun, and the everlasting sky. The river turned to a silver flood and the ruled lines of the *ghâts* to red gold. 'How can I describe this to mother?' she cried, as the wonder grew, and timeless Benares roused to a fresh day. The Bride nestled down in the boat and gazed round-eyed. As water spurts through a leaky dam, as ants pour out from the invaded nest, so the people of Benares poured down the *ghâts* to the river. Wherever The Bride's eye rested, it saw men and women stepping downwards, always downwards, by rotten wall, worn step, tufted bastion, riven water-gate, and stark, bare, dusty bank, to the water. The hundred priests drifted down to their stations under the large mat-umbrellas that all pictures of Benares represent so faithfully.

The Bride's face lighted with joy. She had found a simile. 'Will! Do you recollect that pantomime we went to ages and ages ago—before we were engaged—at Brighton? Doesn't it remind you of the scene of the Fairy Mushrooms—just before they all got up and danced, you know? Isn't it splendid?' She leaned forward, her chin in her hand, and watched long and intently; and Nature, who is without doubt a Frenchwoman, so keen is her love for effect, arranged that the shell-like pink of The Bride's cheek should be turned against a dull-red house, in the windows of which sat women in blood-red clothes, letting down crimson turban-cloths for the morning breeze to riot with. From the burning-*ghât* rose lazily a welt of thick blue smoke, and an eddy of the air blew a wreath across the river. The Bride coughed. 'Will,' she said, 'promise me when I die you won't have me cremated—if cremation is the fashion then.' And 'Will' promised lightly, as a man promises who is looking for long years.

The life of the city went forward. The Bride heard, though she did not understand, the marriage-song, and the chant of prayers, and the wail of the mourners. She looked long and steadfastly at the beating heart of Benares and at the Dead for whom no day had dawned. The place was

hers to watch and enjoy if she pleased. Her enjoyment was tempered with some thought of regret; for her eyebrows contracted and she thought. Then the trouble was apparent. 'Will!' she said softly, 'they don't seem to think much of *us*, do they?' Did she expect, then, that the whole city would make obeisance to young Love, robed and crowned in a grey tweed travelling dress and velvet toque?

The boat drifted downstream, and an hour or so later the Dufferin Bridge bore away The Bride and Bridegroom on their travels, in which India was to be 'only an incident.'

'A DISTRICT AT PLAY'

1887

Four or five years ago, when the Egerton Woollen Mills were young, and Dhariwal, on the Amritsar and Pathankot Line, was just beginning to grow, there was decreed an annual holiday for all the workers in the Mill. In time the little gathering increased from a purely private *tamasha* to a fair, and now all the Gurdaspur District goes a-merrymaking with the Mill-hands. Here the history begins.

On the evening of Friday, the 20th of August,

an Outsider went down to Dhariwal to see that *mela*. He had understood that it was an affair which concerned the People only—that no one in authority had to keep order—that there were no police, and that everybody did what was right in their own eyes; none going wrong. This was refreshing and pastoral, even as Dhariwal, which is on the banks of the Canal, is refreshing and pastoral. The Egerton Mills own a baby railway—twenty-inch gauge—which joins on to the big line at Dhariwal station, so that the visitor steps from one carriage into another, and journeys in state.

Dusk was closing in as the locomotive—it wore a cloth round its loins and a string of beads round its neck—ran the tiny carriage into the Mill-yard, and the Outsider heard the low grumble of turbines, and caught a whiff of hot wool from a shed. (The Mills were running and would run till eleven o'clock that night, because, though holidays were necessary, orders were many and urgent.) Both smell and sound suggested the North country at once,—bleak, paved streets of Skipton and Keighley; chimneys of Beverley and Burnley; grey stone houses within stone walls, and the moors looking down on all. It was perfectly natural, therefore, to find that the Englishmen who directed the departments of the

establishment were from the North also; and delightful as it was natural to hear again the slow, staid Yorkshire tongue. Here the illusion stopped; for, in place of the merry rattle of the clogs as the Mill-hands left their work, there was only the soft patter of naked feet on bare ground, and for purple, smoke-girt moors, the far-off line of the Dalhousie Hills.

Presently, the electric light began its work, and a tour over the Mills was undertaken. The machinery, the thousands of spindles, and the roaring power-looms were familiar as the faces of old friends; but the workers were strange indeed. Small brown boys, naked except for a loin-cloth, 'pieced' the yarn from the spindles under the strong blaze of the electric light, and semi-nude men toiled at the carding-machine between the whirring belts. It was a shock and a realisation—for boys and men seemed to know their work in almost Yorkshire fashion.

But the amusement and not the labour of the Mill was what the Outsider had come to see—the amusement which required no policemen and no appearance of control from without.

Early on Saturday morning all Dhariwal gathered itself on the banks of the Canal—a magnificent stretch of water—to watch the swimming-race, a short half-mile downstream. Forty-three

bronzes had arranged themselves in picturesque attitudes on the girders of the Railway bridge, and the crowd chaffed them according to their deserts. The race was won, from start to finish, by a tailor with a wonderful side-stroke and a cataract in one eye. The advantage counter-balanced the defect, for he steered his mid-stream course as straight as a fish, was never headed, and won, sorely pumped, in seven minutes and a few seconds. The crowd ran along the bank and yelled instructions to its favourites at the top of its voice. Up to this time not more than five hundred folk had put in an appearance, so it was impossible to judge of their behaviour in bulk.

After the swimming came the greased pole, an entertainment the pains whereof are reserved for light-limbed boys, and the prizes, in the shape of gay cloths and rupees, are appropriated by heavy fathers. The crowd had disposed itself in and about the shadow of the trees, where one might circulate comfortably and see the local notabilities.

They are decidedly Republicans in Dhariwal, being innocent of *Darbaries*, C.I.E.'s, fat old gentlemen in flowered brocade dressing-gowns, and cattle of that kind. Every one seemed much on a level, with the exception of some famous wrestlers,

who stood aside with an air of conscious worth, and grinned cavernously when spoken to. They were the pick of the assembly, and were to prove their claims to greatness on the morrow. Until the Outsider realised how great an interest the Gurdaspur District took in wrestling, he was rather at a loss to understand why men walked round and round each other warily, as do dogs on the eve of a quarrel.

The greasy-pole competition finished, there was a general move in the direction of the main road, and couples were chosen from among the Mill-hands for a three-legged race. Here the Outsider joyfully anticipated difficulty in keeping the course clear without a line of policemen; for all crowds, unless duly marshalled, *will* edge forward to see what is going on.

But the democracy of Dhariwal got into their places as they were told, and kept them, with such slight assistance as three or four self-constituted office-bearers gave. Only once, when the honour of two villages *and* the Mill was at stake in the Tug-of-War, were they unable to hold in, and the Englishmen had to push them back. But this was exceptional, and only evoked laughter, for in the front rank of all—yellow-trousered and blue-coated—was a real live policeman, who was shouldered about as impartially as the rest. More impartially,

in fact; for to keep a policeman in order is a seldom-given joy, and should be made much of.

Then back to the Mill bungalow for breakfast, where there was a gathering of five or six Englishmen,—Canal Officers and Engineers. Here follows a digression.

After long residence in places where folk discuss such intangible things as Lines, Policies, Schemes, Measures, and the like, in an abstract and bloodless sort of way, it was a revelation to listen to men who talk of Things and the People—crops and ploughs and water-supplies, and the best means of using all three for the benefit of a district. They spoke masterfully, these Englishmen, as owners of a country might speak, and it was not at first that one realised how every one of the concerns they touched upon with the air of proprietorship were matters which had not the faintest bearing on their pay or prospects, but concerned the better tillage or husbandry of the fields around. It was good to sit idly in the garden, by the guava-trees, and to hear these stories of work undertaken and carried out in the interests of, and, best of all, recognised by, Nubbi Buksh—the man whose mind moves so slowly and whose life is so bounded. They had no particular love for the land, and most assuredly no hope of gain from it. Yet they spoke as though their hopes of salvation were centred

on driving into a Zemindar's head the expediency of cutting his wheat a little earlier than his wont; or on proving to some authority or other that the Canal-rate in such and such a district was too high. Every one knows that India is a country filled with Englishmen, who live down in the plains and do things other than writing futile reports, but it is wholesome to meet them in the flesh.

To return, however, to the 'Tug-of-War' and the sad story of the ten men of Futteh Nangal. Now Futteh Nangal is a village of proud people, mostly sepoys, full in the stomach; and Kung is another village filled with Mill-hands of long standing, who have grown lusty on good pay. When the tug began, quoth the proud men of Futteh Nangal: 'Let all the other teams compete. We will stand aside and pull the winners.' This *hauteur* was not allowed, and in the end it happened that the men of Kung thoroughly defeated the sepoys of Futteh Nangal amid a scene of the wildest excitement, and secured for themselves the prize,—an American plough,—leaving the men of Futteh Nangal only a new and improved rice-husker.

Other sports followed, and the crowd grew denser and denser throughout the day, till evening, when every one assembled once more by the banks of the Canal to see the fireworks, which were im-

pressive. Great boxes of rockets and shells, and wheels and Roman-candles, had come up from Calcutta, and the intelligent despatchers had packed the whole in straw, which absorbs damp. This didn't spoil the shells and rockets—quite the contrary. It added a pleasing uncertainty to their flight and converted the shells into very fair imitations of the real article. The crowd dodged and ducked, and yelled and laughed and chaffed, at each illumination, and did their best to fall into the Canal. It was a jovial scuffle, and ended, when the last shell had burst gloriously on the water, in a general adjournment to the main street of Dhariwal village, where there was provided a magic-lantern.

At first sight it does not seem likely that a purely rustic audience would take any deep interest in magic-lanterns; but they did, and showed a most unexpected desire to know what the pictures meant. It was an out-of-door performance, the sheet being stretched on the side of a house, and the people sitting below in silence. Then the native doctor—who was popular with the Mill-hands—went up on to the roof and began a running commentary on the pictures as they appeared; and his imagination was as fluent as his Punjabi. The crowd grew irreverent and jested with him, until they recognised a portrait of one of the native

overseers and a *khitmutgar*. Then they turned upon the two who had achieved fame thus strangely, and commented on their beauty. Lastly, there flashed upon the sheet a portrait of Her Majesty the Empress. The native doctor rose to the occasion, and, after enumerating a few of our Great Lady's virtues, called upon the crowd to *salaam* and cheer; both of which they did noisily, and even more noisily, when they were introduced to the Prince of Wales. One might moralise to any extent on the effect produced by this little demonstration in an out-of-the-way corner of Her Majesty's Empire.

Next morning, being Sunday and cool, was given up to wrestling. By this time the whole of the Gurdaspur District was represented, and the crowd was some five thousand strong. Eventually, after much shouting one hundred and seventy men from all the villages, near and far, were set down to wrestle, if time allowed. And in truth the first prize—a plough, for the man who showed most 'form'—was worth wrestling for. Armed with a notebook and a pencil, the Manager, by virtue of considerable experience in the craft, picked out the men who were to contend together; and these, fearing defeat, did in almost every instance explain how their antagonist was too much for them. The people sat down in companies upon the grass, village by village, flanking a huge square marked

on the ground. Other restraint there was none. Within the square was the roped ring for the wrestlers, and close to the ring a tent for the dozen or so of Englishmen present. Be it noted that anybody might come into this tent who did not interfere with a view of the wrestling. There were no lean brown men, clasping their noses with their hands and following in the wake of the Manager Sahib. Still less were there the fat men in gorgeous raiment before noted—the men who shake hands 'Europe fashion' and demand the favour of your interest for their uncle's son's wife's cousin.

It was a sternly democratic community, bent on enjoying itself, and, unlike all other democracies, knowing how to secure what it wanted.

The wrestlers were called out by name, stripped, and set to amid applauding shouts from their respective villages and trainers. There were many men of mark engaged,—huge men who stripped magnificently; light, lean men, who wriggled like eels, and got the mastery by force of cunning; men deep in the breast as bulls, lean in the flank as greyhounds, and lithe as otters; men who wrestled with amicable grins; men who lost their tempers and smote each other with the clenched hand on the face, and so were turned out of the ring amid a storm of derision from all four points of the compass; men as handsome as statues of

the Greek gods, and foul-visaged men whose noses were very properly rubbed in the dirt.

As he watched, the Outsider was filled with a great contempt and pity for all artists at Home, because he felt sure that they had never seen the human form aright. One wrestler caught another by the waist, and lifting him breast-high, attempted to throw him bodily, the other stiffening himself like a bar as he was heaved up. The *coup* failed, and for half a minute the two stayed motionless as stone, till the lighter weight wrenched himself out of the other's arms, and the two came down, —flashing through a dozen perfect poses as they fell,—till they subsided once more into ignoble scuffle in the dust. The story of that day's strife would be a long one were it written at length,— how one man did brutally twist the knee of another (which is allowed by wrestling law, though generally considered mean) for a good ten minutes, and how the twistee groaned, but held out, and eventually threw the twister, and stalked round the square to receive the congratulations of his friends; how the winner in each bout danced joyfully over to the tent to have his name recorded (there were between three and four hundred rupees given in prizes in the wrestling matches alone); how the Mill-hands applauded their men; and how Siddum, Risada, Kalair, Narote, Sohul, Maha,

and Doolanagar, villages of repute, yelled in reply; how the Sujhanpur men took many prizes for the honour of the Sugar mills there; how the event of the day was a tussle between a boy—a mere child—and a young man; how the youngster nearly defeated his opponent amid riotous yells, but broke down finally through sheer exhaustion; how his trainer ran forward to give him a pill of dark and mysterious composition, but was ordered away under the rules of the game. Lastly, how a haughty and most wonderfully ugly weaver of the Mill was thrown by an outsider, and how the Manager chuckled, saying that a defeat at wrestling would keep the weaver quiet and humble for some time, which was desirable. All these things would demand much space to describe and must go unrecorded.

They wrestled—couple by couple—for six good hours by the clock, and a Kashmiri weaver (why are Kashmiris so objectionable all the Province over?) later on in the afternoon, was moved to make himself a nuisance to his neighbours. Then the four self-appointed office-bearers moved in his direction; but the crowd had already dealt with him, and the Dormouse in *Alice in Wonderland* was never so suppressed as that weaver. Which proves that a democracy can keep order among themselves when they like.

The Outsider departed, leaving the wrestlers still at work, and the last he heard as he dived through that most affable, grinning assembly, was the shout of one of the Mill-hands, who had thrown his man and ran to the tent to get his name entered. Freely translated, the words were exactly what Gareth, the Scullion-Knight, said to King Arthur:—

> Yea, mighty through thy meats and drinks am I,
> And I can topple over a hundred such.

Then back to the Schemes and Lines and Policies and Projects filled with admiration for the Englishmen who live in patriarchal fashion among the People, respecting and respected, knowing their ways and their wants; believing (soundest of all beliefs) that 'too much progress is bad,' and compassing with their heads and hands real, concrete, and undeniable Things. As distinguished from the speech which dies and the paper-work which perishes.

WHAT IT COMES TO

'Men instinctively act under the excitement of the battle-field, only as they have been taught to act in peace.' . . . These words deserve to be engraved in letters of gold over the gates of every barrack and drill-ground in the country. The drill of the soldier now begins and ends in the Company. . . . Each Company will stand for itself on parade, practically as independent as a battery of artillery in a brigade, etc., etc. Vide *Comments on New German Drill Regulations*, in *Pioneer*.

Scene.—*Canteen of the Tyneside Tailtwisters, in full blast. Chumer of B Company annexes the Pioneer on its arrival, by right of the strong arm, and turns it over contemptuously.*

Chumer.—'Ain't much in this 'ere. On'y Jack the Ripper and a lot about *Ci*-vilians. 'Might think the 'ole country was full of *Ci*-vilians. *Ci*-vilians an' drill. 'Strewth a' mighty! As if a man didn't get 'nuff drill outside o' his evenin' paiper. Anybody got the fill of a pipe 'ere?

Shuckbrugh *of B Company* (*passing pouch*).—Let's 'ave 'old o' that paper. Wot's on? Wot's in? No more *new* drill?

Chumer.—Drill be sugared! When *I* was at 'ome, now, buyin' my *Times* orf the Railway stall like a gentleman, *I* never read nothin' about drill. There *wasn't* no drill. Strike me blind, these Injian papers ain't got nothin' else to write about. When 'tisn't our drill, it's Rooshian or Prooshian or French. It's Prooshian now. Brrh!

Hookey (*E Company*).—All for to improve your mind, Chew. You'll get a first-class school-ticket one o' these days, if you go on.

Chumer (*whose strong point is not education*).—*You*'ll get a first-class head on top o' your shoulders, 'Ook, if you go on. You mind that I ain't no bloomin' litteratoor but . . .

Shuckbrugh.—Go on about the Prooshians an' let 'Ook alone. 'Ook 'as a—wot's its name? —fas—fas—fascilitude for impartin' instruction. 'E's down in the Captain's book as sich. Ain't you, 'Ook?

Chumer (*anxious to vindicate his education*).—Listen 'ere! 'Men instinck—stinkivly act under the excitement *of* the battle-field on'y as they 'ave been taught for to act in peace.' An' the man that wrote that sez 't ought to be printed in gold in our barricks.

Shuckbrugh (*who has been through the Afghan War*).—'Might a told 'im that, if he'd come to *me*, any time these ten years.

Hookey (*loftily*).—O I bid fair he's a bloomin' General. Wot's 'e drivin' at?

Shuckbrugh.—'E says wot you do on p'rade you do without thinkin' under fire. If you was taught to stand on your 'ed on p'rade, you'd do so in action.

Chumer.—I'd lie on my belly first for a bit, if so be there was aught to lie be'ind.

Hookey.—That's 'ow you've been taught. We're allus lyin' on our bellies be'ind every bloomin' bush—spoilin' our best clobber. Takin' advantage o' cover, they call it.

Shuckbrugh.—An' the more you lie the more you want to lie. That's human natur'.

Chumer.—It's rare good—for the henemy. I'm lyin' 'ere where this pipe is; Shukky's there by the 'baccy-paper; 'Ook is there be'ind the pewter, an' the rest of us all over the place crawlin' on our bellies an' poppin' at the smoke in front. Old Pompey, arf a mile be'ind, sez, 'The battalion will now attack.' Little Mildred squeaks out, 'Charrge!' Shukky an' me, an' you, an' 'im, picks ourselves out o' the dirt, an' charges. But 'ow the *dooce* can you charge from skirmishin' order? That's wot I want to know. There ain't no touch—there ain't no *chello*; an' the minut' the charge is over, you've got to play at bein' a bloomin' field-rat all over again.

General Chorus.—Bray-vo, Chew! Go it, Sir Garnet! Two pints and a hopper for Chew! Kernel Chew!

Hookey (*who has possessed himself of the paper*).—Well, the Prooshians ain't goin' to have any more o' that. There ain't goin' to be no more

battalion-drill—so this bloke says. On'y just the comp'ny handed over to the comp'ny orf'cer to do wot 'e likes with.

Shuckbrugh.—Gawd 'elp B Comp'ny if they do that to *us*!

Chumer (*hotly*).—You're bloomin' pious all of a sudden. Wot's wrong with Little Mildred, I'd like to know?

Shuckbrugh.—Little Mildred's all right. It's his bloomin' dandified Skipper—it's Collar an' Cuffs—it's Ho de Kolone—it's Squeaky Jim that I'm set against.

Chumer.—Well. Ho de Kolone is goin' 'Ome, an' may be we'll have Sugartongs instead. Sugartongs is a hard drill, but 'e's got no bloomin' frills about 'im.

Hookey (*of E Company*).—You ought to 'ave Hackerstone—*e*'d wheel yer into line. Our Jemima ain't much to look at, but 'e knows wot 'e wants to do an' he does it. *'E* don't club the company an' damn the Sargints, Jemima doesn't. 'E's a proper man an' no error.

Shuckbrugh.—Thank you for nothin'. Sugartongs is a vast better. Mess Sargint 'e told us that Sugartongs is goin' to be married at 'Ome. If 'e's *that*, o' course 'e won't be no good; but the Mess Sargint's a bloomin' liar mostly.

Chumer.—Sugartongs won't marry—not 'e.

'E's too fond o' the regiment. Little Mildred's like to do that first; bein' so young.

Hookey (*returning to paper*). — 'On'y the comp'ny an' the comp'ny orf'cer doin' what 'e thinks 'is men can do.' 'Strewth! Our Jemima'd make us dance down the middle an' back again. But what would they do with our Colonel? I don't catch the run o' this new trick of company officers thinkin' for themselves.

Shuckbrugh. — Give 'im a stickin' plaster to keep 'im on 'is 'orse at battalion p'rade, an' lock 'im up in ord'ly-room 'tween whiles. Me an' one or two more would see 'im now an' again. Ho! Ho!

Chumer. — A Colonel's a bloomin' Colonel anyway. 'Can't do without a Colonel.

Shuckbrugh.—'Oo said we would, you fool? Colonel 'll give his order, 'Go an' do this an' go an' do that, an' do it quick.' Sugartongs 'e salutes an' Jemima 'e salutes an' orf we goes; Little Mildred trippin' over 'is sword every other step. *We* know Sugartongs; *you* know Jemima; an' *they* know *us*. 'Come on,' sez they. 'Come on it is,' sez we; an' we don' crawl on our bellies no more, but *comes* on. Old Pompey has given 'is orders an' we does 'em. Old Pompey can't cut in too with: 'Wot the this an' that are you doin' there? Retire your men. Go to

Blazes and cart cinders,' an' such like. There's a deal in that there notion of independent commands.

Chumer.—There is. It's 'ow it comes in action anywoys, if it isn't wot it comes on p'rade. But look 'ere, wot 'appens if you don't know your bloomin' orf'cer, an' 'e don't know nor care a brass farden about you—like Squeakin' Jim?

Hookey.—Things 'appens, as a rule; an' then again they don't some'ow. There's a deal o' luck knockin' about the world, an' takin' one thing with another a fair shares o' that comes to the Army. 'Cordin' to this 'ere (*he thumps the paper*) we ain't got no weppings worth the name, an' we don't know 'ow to use 'em when we 'ave —I didn't mean your belt, Chew—we ain't got no orf'cers; we *'ave* got bloomin' swipes for liquor.

Chumer (*sotto voce*).—Yuss. 'Undred an' ten gallons beer made out of heighty-four-gallon cask an' the strength kep' up with 'baccy. Yah! Go on, 'Ook.

Hookey.—We ain't got no drill, we ain't got no men, we ain't got no kit, nor yet no bullocks to carry it if we 'ad—where in the name o' fortune do all our bloomin' victories come from? It's a tail-uppards way o' workin'; but where *do* the victories come from?

Shuckbrugh (*recovering his pipe from Hookey's mouth*). — Ask Little Mildred — 'e carries the Colours. Chew, are you goin' to the bazar?

THE OPINIONS OF GUNNER BARNABAS

A narrow-minded Legislature sets its face against that Atkins, whose Christian name is Thomas, drinking with the 'civilian.' To this prejudice I and Gunner Barnabas rise superior. Ever since the night when he, weeping, asked me whether the road was as frisky as his mule, and then fell head-first from the latter on the former, we have entertained a respect for each other. I wondered that he had not been instantly killed, and he that I had not reported him to various high Military Authorities then in sight, instead of gently rolling him down the hillside till the danger was overpast. On that occasion, it cannot be denied that Gunner Barnabas was drunk. Later on, as our intimacy grew, he explained briefly that he had been 'overtaken' for the first time in three years; and I had no reason to doubt the truth of his words.

Gunner Barnabas was a lean, heavy-browed, hollow-eyed giant, with a moustache of the same hue and texture as his mule's tail. Much had he

seen from Karachi to Bhamo, and, so his bosom friend, McGair, assured me, had once killed a man 'with 'e's naked fistes.' But it was hard to make him talk. When he was moved to speech, he roved impartially from one dialect to another, being a Devonshire man, brought up in the slums of Fratton, nearly absorbed into Portsmouth Dockyard, sent to Ireland as a blacksmith's assistant, educated imperfectly in London, and there enlisted into what he profanely called a 'jim-jam batt'ry.' 'They want big 'uns for the work we does,' quoth Gunner Barnabas, bringing down a huge hairy hand on his mule's withers. 'Big 'uns an' steady 'uns.' He flung the bridle over the mule's head, hitched the beast to a tree, and settled himself on a boulder ere lighting an unspeakably rank bazar-cheroot.

The current of conversation flowed for a while over the pebbles of triviality. Then, in answer to a remark of mine, Gunner Barnabas heaved his huge shoulders clear of the rock and rolled out his mind between puffs. We had touched tenderly and reverently on the great question of temperance in the Army. Gunner Barnabas pointed across the valley to the Commander-in-Chief's house and spoke: ''Im as lives over yonder is goin' the right way to work,' said he. 'You can make a man march by reg'lation, make a man fire

by reg'lation, make a man load up a bloomin' mule by reg'lation. You can't make him a Blue Light by reg'lation, and that's the only thing as 'ill make the Blue Lights stop grousin' and stiffin'.' It should be explained for the benefit of the uninitiated, that a 'Blue Light' is a Good Templar, that 'grousing' is sulking, and 'stiffing' is using unparliamentary language. 'An' Blue Lights, specially when the orf'cer commanding is a Blue Light too, is a won'erful fool. You never be a Blue Light, Sir, not so long as you live.' I promised faithfully that the Blue Lights should burn without me to all Eternity, and demanded of Gunner Barnabas the reasons for his dislike.

My friend formulated his indictment slowly and judicially. 'Sometimes a Blue Light's a blue shirker; very often 'e's a noosance; and more than often 'e's a lawyer, with more chin than 'e or 'is friends wants to 'ear. When a man—any man —sez to me "you're damned, and there ain't no trustin' you,"—meanin' not as you or I sittin' 'ere might say "you be damned" comfortable an' by way o' makin' talk like, but official damned—why, naturally, I ain't pleased. Now when a Blue Light ain't *sayin'* that 'e's throwin' out a forty-seven-inch chest hinside of 'isself as it was, an' letting you see 'e thinks it. I hate a Blue Light.

But there's some is good, better than ord'nary, and them I has nothing to say against. What I sez is, too much bloomin' 'oliness ain't proper, nor fit for man or beast.' He threw himself back on the ground and drove his boot-heels into the mould. Evidently, Gunner Barnabas had suffered from the 'Blue Lights' at some portion of his career. I suggested mildly that the Order to which he objected was doing good work, and quoted statistics to prove this, but the great Gunner remained unconvinced. 'Look 'ere,' said he, 'if you knows anything o' the likes o' us, you knows that the Blue Lights sez when a man drinks he drinks for the purpose of meanin' to be bloomin' drunk, and there ain't no safety 'cept in not drinking at all. Now that ain't all true. There's men as can drink their whack and be no worse for it. Them's grown men, for the boys drink for honour and glory—Lord 'elp 'em—an' *they* should be dealt with diff'rent.

'But the Blue Light 'e sez to us: "You drink mod'rate? You ain't got it in you, an' you don't come into our nice rooms no more. You go to the Canteen an' hog your liquor there." Now I put to you, Sir, *as* a friend, are that the sort of manners to projuce good feelin' in a rig'ment or anywhere else? And when 'Im that lives over yonder'—out went the black-bristled hand once

more towards Snowdon—'sez in a—in a—pamphlick which it is likely you 'ave seen'—Barnabas was talking down to my civilian intellect—'sez "come on and be mod'rate them as can, an' I'll see that your Orf'cer Commandin' 'elps you;" up gets the Blue Lights and sez: "'Strewth! the Commander-in-Chief is aidin' an' abettin' the Devil an' all 'is Angels. You *can't* be mod'rate," sez the Blue Lights, an' that's what makes 'em feel 'oly. Garrn! It's settin' 'emselves up for bein' better men than them as commands 'em, an' puttin' difficulties all round an' about. That's a bloomin' Blue Light all over, that is. What I sez is give the mod'rate lay a chance. I s'pose there's room even for Blue Lights an' men without aprins in this 'ere big Army. Let the Blue Lights take off their aprins an' 'elp the mod'rate men if they ain't too proud. I ain't above goin' out on pass with a Blue Light if 'e sez I'm a man, an' not an—untrustable Devil always a-hankerin' after lush. But *contrariwise*'—Gunner Barnabas stopped.

'Contrariwise how?' said I.

'If I was 'Im as lives over yonder, an' you was me, an' you wouldn't take the mod'rate lay, an' was a-comin' on the books and otherwise a-misconductin' of yourself, I would say: "Gunner Barnabas," I would say, an' by that I would be

understood to be addressin' everybody with a uniform, "you are a incorrigable in-tox-i-cator"' —Barnabas sat up, folded his arms, and assumed an air of ultra-judicial ferocity—'"reported to me as such by your Orf'cer Commandin'. Very good, Gunner Barnabas," I would say. "I cannot, knowin' what I do o' the likes of you, subjergate your indecent cravin' for lush; but I will edger-cate you to hold your liquor without offence to them as is your friends an' companions, an' without danger to the Army if so be you're on sentry-go. I will make your life, Gunner Barnabas, such that you will pray on your two bended knees for to be shut of it. You shall be flogged between the guns if you disgrace a Batt'ry, or in hollow square o' the rig'ment if you belong to the Fut, or from stables to barricks and back again if you are Cav'lry. I'll clink you till you forget what the sun looks like, an' I'll pack-drill you till your kit grows into your shoulder-blades like toadstools on a stump. I'll learn you to be sober when the Widow requires of your services, an' if I don't learn you I'll *kill* you. Understan' that, Gunner Barnabas; for tenderness is wasted on the likes o' you. You shall learn for to control yourself for fear o' your dirty life; an' so long as that fear is over you, Gunner Barnabas, you'll be a man worth the shootin'."'

Gunner Barnabas stopped abruptly and broke into a laugh. 'I'm as bad as the Blue Lights, only t'other way on. But 'tis a fact that, in spite o' any amount o' mod'ration and pamphlicks we've got a scatterin' o' young imps an' old devils wot you can't touch excep' through the hide o' them, and by cuttin' deep at that. Some o' the young ones wants but one leatherin' to keep the fear o' drink before their eyes for years an' years; some o' the old ones wants leatherin' now and again, for the want of drink is in their marrer. You talk, an' you talk, an' you talk o' what a fine fellow the Privit Sodger is—an' so 'e is many of him; but there's *one* med'cin' or *one* sickness that you've guv up too soon. Preach an' Blue Light an' medal and teach us, but, for some of us, keep the whipcord handy.'

Barnabas had rather startled me by the vehemence of his words. He must have seen this, for he said with a twinkle in his eye: 'I should have made a first-class Blue Light—rammin' double-charges home in this way. Well, I know I'm speakin' truth, and the Blue Light thinks he is, I s'pose; an' it's too big a business for you an' me to settle in one afternoon.'

The sound of horses' feet came from the path above our heads. Barnabas sprang up.

'Orf'cer an' 'rf'cer's lady,' said he, relapsing

into his usual speech. ''Won't do for you to be seen a-talkin' with the likes o' me. Hutup *kurcha*!'

And with a stumble, a crash, and a jingle of harness Gunner Barnabas went his way.

THE END

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