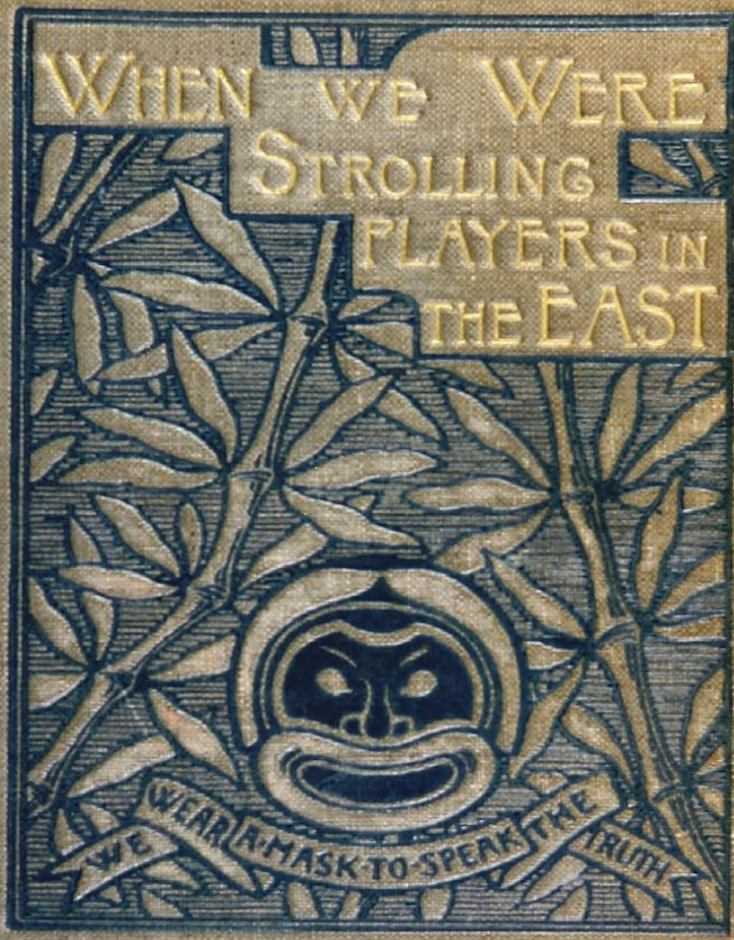
WHEN WE WERE
STROLLING
PLAYERS IN
THE EAST
WE WEAR A MASK TO SPEAK THE TRUTH

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WHEN WE WERE STROLLING PLAYERS IN THE EAST

MRS. MILN AS DESDEMONA. *Frontispiece.*

WHEN WE WERE

STROLLING PLAYERS

IN THE EAST

BY

LOUISE JORDAN MILN

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

NEW YORK:
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TO MY FATHER

WHOSE LOVE NEVER FAILED ME
AND WHO NEVER MISUNDERSTOOD ME

I dedicate this Volume

In connection with this volume I have several words of thanks to write.

My first and best thanks are due to the editors of the *Pall Mall Gazette* and of the *Pall Mall Budget*. Their kindness has enabled me to reprint here several articles that have previously appeared in one or both of their papers. And to the generosity of the editor of the *Pall Mall Budget* I owe five of the illustrations appearing here.

"Oriental Nuptials" have appeared in *The Lady*, the editor of which paper kindly allows me to here use them.

Messrs. Bourne and Shepherd of Calcutta have generously granted me permission to reproduce three of their copyrighted photographs.

Messrs. Skeen of Colombo have kindly permitted me to use two of their copyrighted views of Ceylon.

Several of the Burmese photographs have been collected for me in Burmah, and sent me by William Miller, Esq., of Rangoon. I am peculiarly obliged to Mr. Miller, because he found time in the press of grave official duties to take so much trouble for one who had not then the pleasure of his acquaintance.

L. J. M.

London, *31st May 1894*.

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CHAPTER I

MY FIRST GLIMPSE OF THE ORIENT

To travel far and wide—out of the beaten paths, and to enjoy it, is to have a great career. I know no other impersonal delight that is so endless as the delight of learning new places. To see new flora, a new type of people having new customs, and then to realise that it is Damascus or Kabul, Calcutta or Canton,—a place which has been to you all your life a meaningless dot on a map, but is now—and for ever will be to you—a vivid, vital reality,—that is an exquisite pleasure, a twofold pleasure, for while it fires your intellect, it feeds your artistic sense, your love of the picturesque.

I take it for granted that you have a love of the picturesque. If I am wrong, you would better close my little book, and try to change it for another. For you will think me a bit mad, and we shan't get on together at all.

I love the East—genuinely and intensely—I love every inch of it. There are occasional bits of the landscape that are uninteresting, but the people are always charming. They are often lovable. They are invariably quaint and interesting.

I remember saying to my husband, when we had been in the East two days, "I can never be grateful enough for having come to this wonderful Orient." Days passed into weeks. Weeks stretched into months. Months lengthened into years. With every passing hour my gratitude grew. We are back in London now, and the East is a memory; but I am grateful still, and shall be always.

For people who long to see the Eastern wonderland and can't, I have a big pity. For people who could go, but don't care to, I have a huge contempt.

My father—a delightful fellow-traveller, and the dear chum of my girlhood—my father and I had planned to see the East together. But we never did. My husband and I saw all the East together. Every day as we went farther and farther into those wonderful countries we said one to the other, "If he were only with us!"

We had been playing some time in Australia, and when we began to fear lest we had worn out our welcome, our thoughts turned to London, the actor's Mecca. But I begged that we might go to dear old England by a very roundabout way. It turned out a very roundabout way indeed. We were tempted to go from place to place. We were detained in Japan by business. We were held in India by illness. We went all over the East. And when we "came home" a year ago, my boy knew a little Chinese, a little Japanese, and very much Hindustani.

We reached Colombo at daylight. When I woke I had that strange sensation to which, become as old a traveller as one may, one never gets quite used—the sensation of being in a boat that is at anchor after weeks of incessant motion. The noise was indescribable. The *Valetta* was going on to London, and they were

already coaling. I climbed up to the port-hole and looked out. The coaling was going on farther down. As far as I could see, were native boats that would have made Venice gaudier when Venice was gay with the glory of coloured gondolas. Some of them reminded me of the birch-bark canoes that dart up and down the St. Lawrence, some were shaped like Spanish caravels, some were Egyptian in outline. But all were Oriental in colour; and all were manned by Cingalese—the first Oriental people I had ever seen *en masse*.

The stewardess knocked. "Would I come into the nursery?" (as we called our children's cabin), "the children absolutely refused to be dressed." I threw on a dressing-gown and crossed the narrow passage. My two elder babies were crowding each other from the port-hole, and the four-month-old bairn was kicking and clutching at the kind hands that were trying to dress her. Outside, beneath the port-hole, was a small native boat. It was full of fruit which the natives were reaching up to my eager-handed children. Another boat, laden with shells, was trying to push the fruit boat away. A dozen other boats were crowded about these two, and fifty Cingalese were crying—"Buy, buy, buy!" I threw out a bit of silver in payment for the bananas and oranges my infants were devouring. I took a firm clutch of their night gowns and pulled them down. The stewardess closed the port-hole, and we three women gradually persuaded the three babies into their different costumes. The children were taken on deck, where their father was. I went back to my cabin to dress. A Cingalese man had his head thrust well inside my port-hole. His fine aquiline features were covered-with a rich brown skin. His long black hair was twisted into a small but prominent knob at the back of his square head. In the knob was thrust eight inches of convex tortoise-shell, which in the bright sunshine of the early morning sparkled like a queen's coronet.

"Salaam, beautiful English lady!" he cried before my astonishment had let me speak; "I bring you many beautiful silk—much beautiful sapphire, pearls, not white as your neck, but white as the neck of another." He threw a square foot of morocco at my naked feet. I picked it up to throw it back, but it opened and I held it a moment. I had seen the Mediterranean when it was good-humoured, and the sky in Italy. I never saw blue until I looked into that leather casket of rings. Oh! those sapphires, cunningly relieved here and there by a glinting cat's-eye, or a gleaming pearl!

"Go away," I said, handing up the box, "I'm not dressed."

"Beautiful English lady, buy," he replied, ignoring his gems. I glanced into the diminutive P. and O. mirror. My nose was sunburnt; my hair was in curl papers. I have seen uglier women, but not many. That naturally annoyed me.

"Take your rubbish away," I said sharply. "I don't want. I've no money."

The first statement was untrue. I did want them. Only a blind woman could look on Ceylon sapphires without longing to wear them. With the poetic sense peculiar to the East, it was my last and true statement that he disregarded.

"Lady take one ring, two ring, six ring. I come hotel get money."

"I'm going to London," I said, lying glibly. I was anxious to get on deck. I

wanted to dress.

"Lady send me money from London. I trust. No English sir, no English madame, cheat poor native man."

I have heard English honour upheld in Westminster. I have heard it praised directly and indirectly by almost all the peoples in Europe and in America. But, to me, this was the establishment of English honour. And it was so all over the East. I was not an Englishwoman, but I was the next best thing, the wife of an Englishman, and I could buy on credit half the curios in the East, if I wished.

At last I induced my Cingalese friend to carry his sapphires to a more hopeful port-hole. I dressed and went on deck. One of my little ones crept to me. She had a huge bunch of blossom in her wee hands. Some of the flowers I had seen in famous conservatories. Half of them I had never seen. They were massed together—white, red and yellow, no half colours! They were tightly bound into a stupid graceless bunch, stiffly bordered by thick leaves, but from them rose a perfume heavy as incense, sweet as sandal-wood. One of my baby's many admirers had given them to her. He had bought them for two annas. The vendor had cheated him into paying double price.

The deck was thronged with native merchants and was vocal with hubbub. At a short distance from the *Valetta* a dozen native boys were paddling a frail little craft. "Throw away, sir; throw money, sir. I dive, sir—I dive." And dive they did, invariably bringing up the silver in their triumphant mouths. They dived and swam and rose like nimble, black flying-fish. Hundreds of coolies were bringing big baskets of coal up the ship's sides. They were as quick as monkeys and far noisier.

I sank into my steamer chair. In a moment I was surrounded. Three Cingalese men planted themselves complacently at my feet. Their attendant coolies followed with their wares. One man had photographs. One had Point de Galle lace and chicken work. One had tortoise-shell and ebony. All had sapphires, cat's-eyes, and moonstones. Every passenger on deck was surrounded by just such a brown coterie.

Colombo itself we saw but indifferently. A few houses and myriad cocoanut trees, that was all; but around us were anchored the ships of a dozen flags. If I remember, the only men-of-war were three or four funny little Japanese warships.

After a hasty breakfast, which even the children were too excited to eat, we went on shore. What a wonderland! The grass was the crisp green of eternal summer. The intense sunshine was pouring mercilessly down. But native men and women were walking leisurely along, with bare heads, and apparently cool skins. A horribly deformed boy rushed at us with a prayer for bukshish. My husband sprang between him and me. But, though I did not know it, I had, for the first time, seen a leper. I was destined to see lepers all over India, and a year or more later, in Subathu, I learned to go among them quietly if not quite calmly. As for the cry of bukshish, which was the first native word I heard in the East, it was also the last. I heard it incessantly for two years and more. The peoples among whom we went spoke Hindustani, Gujarati, Tamul, Marahti, and a dozen other tongues, but they all cried "Salaam, memsahib. Bukshish! Bukshish!"

It was only a stone's throw to the large, pleasant hotel. The manager was waiting for us; and with him was an ayah, who had been engaged as an assistant nurse, by our advance agent. What a splendidly handsome woman she was! A long, straight piece of striped silk was wrapped about her hips and fell nearly to her ankles. A short Cingalese jacket, made of white lawn and edged with lace, covered her bosom. Her arms and neck and feet were gleaming, black and bare. And between her short white jacket and her low red skirt was an interspace of four or more inches of black plumpness. Her magnificent black hair was carefully braided, and the long braids were artistically gathered together by a beautiful silver pin, which also fastened a red rose. She wore a string of big gold beads about her neck. She gave a shrewd look at my sturdy little flock. "Salaam, memsahib," she cried, showing all her large perfect teeth. "Two baba not walk!" She seized upon the smaller of the two and led the way to our rooms. That very afternoon the elder baby walked, for the first time, and after that very rarely asked to be carried. If the ayah repented her choice of babies she gave no sign, but abode by her first selection.

It was in Colombo that I first ate curry that was nearly perfect. In Colombo I ate a dozen fruits I had never eaten before. The hotel was very pleasant. The rooms were large and shady, and they were—what, alas! we were not always to find them in the East—sweetly clean. There was a wonderful garden at the back of the hotel, from which the mallie used to gather me a great bunch of strange, graceful, scarlet flowers. And yet there never seemed a flower the less. Alas! the flowers of the East

spring up, bloom, bear, and wither
In the same hour.

The quiet, respectful, ready Oriental service was delightful. And it was adequate, which Eastern service is not always, for it was under efficient European supervision.

The verandah of the hotel was a great cool place. It was pleasant to sit there when the heat of the day had broken a bit—to sit there and write chits for iced lemon drinks or claret cup, and watch the deft Indian jugglers, and barter with the persistent natives for lace and embroideries, for silks and pongées, for silver belts and for gems. Two Mahommedans had the privilege of spreading their wares on one end of the verandah. And the others were allowed to come upon the verandah with a small quantity of things. They were not allowed to over-pester you, which made shopping on the hotel verandah far pleasanter than shopping in the shops.

But the hotel, pleasant as it was, was merely a European incident,—it was no part of Colombo the native, Colombo the picturesque, though some of the native colour and bits of the native picture were necessarily included in its background.

The first thing we did in Colombo, after we had had a rest and interviewed a dhobie, was to inspect the theatre. The second was to take a long drive.

We drove some distance, indeed, to the theatre. We drove by the barracks, and the bagpipes of the Gordon Highlanders squeaked out that the Campbells were

coming. We drove by native shops, where tiger skins from the thick jungles and rich rugs from Persia were hung outside, and where delicately wrought gold and silver ware gleamed in the windows. The proprietors of these shops invariably rushed out and threw themselves in front of our steed, who was, by the way, far from fiery. The gharri wallah and the sais gave us no help. They sat and waited developments as patiently as did the horse itself. We tried abusing the over-solicitous merchants. But they were impervious to abuse. We found that there was one way and one way only of effecting our escape, namely, by committing perjury. We took their cards and vowed we would return in one hour, to their particular shop and to none other.

STREET SCENE IN COLOMBO. *Page 9.*

And so we, at last, escaped—escaped into a native street. Shall I ever forget it! Hut huddled against hut, where the streets were thick with dwellings. In the front of almost every hut was a booth—a booth piled with grains or fruits or any of a hundred other articles of diet, all equally unknown to us. Potatoes and bananas were the only things I recognised. Oh yes! and pumpkins. In each booth sat a salesman or woman. Sometimes it was a nearly naked coolie—as often it was a carefully dressed Cingalese woman. In every instance there was a pair of primitive scales, and, usually, a customer or two. Farther out, the streets grew more sylvan. There were more cocoanut trees and fewer houses. There were no more shops. Here and there a native squatted upon the ground, waiting to sell a trayful of violently coloured cakes and sweetmeats, or drinks from greasy-looking bottles that were filled with crudely-

hued liquids.

We passed a thousand-stemmed banyan tree. A pretty Tamul mother sat in its shade nursing a rolly-poly black baby. A few feet from her were two yellow-clad priests of Buddha, telling their beads.

We drove by a quiet, irregular, silver lake. We drove through a tangle of tropical undergrowth and Eastern flowers. Here and there the cocoanut trees lifted their supreme heads, and now and again the laughing faces of brown babies peeped out at us from the thick of the bamboo.

We came to the theatre all too soon, for our delight with this old world, so new to us, had quite superseded our professional anxiety. But the theatre was a pleasant surprise.

It was pretty—decidedly pretty, and new. We opened it, if I remember—at least professionally. The auditorium was a large high room, beautifully finished with teak-wood. I sat down while my husband gave some directions about scenery. At least fifty coolies were working in their slow, noisy way. They ought to have worked more quickly, for they were encumbered by an absolute minimum of clothing.

We went back to the gharri. We drove through some pretty, unkept gardens, where the air reminded me of my grandmother's best cupboard, it was so heavy with the smell of cinnamon and nutmegs, and of cloves. That is one of the disadvantages of having lived in the West. Such vulgar utilitarian comparisons suggest themselves.

Children ran after us, throwing flowers and fruit into my lap and screaming to my husband for bukshish. It was amusing at first; but it grew wearying. If they had varied it a bit, by offering him a flower or begging from me a pice. But that never occurred to them. It is a very sophisticated Cingalese indeed who ever suspects a woman of having any money. The late gloaming fell upon us, and we could no longer see the full details of the beauty that surrounded us. As the last of the colour faded with which the sunset echoed the beauty of Ceylon, we found ourselves at the door of a Buddhist temple. As my husband lifted me out of the gharri, I noticed that he was softly quoting a lovely line from *The Light of Asia*. He was interrupted by a sudden rush of humanity. Three buxom girls had dashed from an adjacent hut. They threw themselves literally upon him, with a nice Oriental disregard of my presence. My husband shook himself, but not free, and used a word that is not in the purists' lexicon. I must own I felt a little perturbed. Andrew (my husband's Cingalese boy, of whom more anon) relieved the embarrassment. "No harm, sahib—no harm," he said. "Hers want bukshish."

The Buddhist temple was novel, and weird in the dim light. The grotesque figures of Buddha were huge, crudely shaped, glaringly coloured, and shockingly disproportioned. But the priest who constituted himself our cicerone was very wonderful. He spoke only fairish English. But he explained Buddhism so clearly, so concisely, and withal so picturesquely, that we felt we had learned more of it in that one hour spent with him than we had learned before from many earnestly read

books.

We drove home through the tender starlight. The flowers were hidden, like high-caste Hindoo women, behind the purdah of the dark. But the damp night dews had distilled the tender leaves of the cinnamon trees, and the air was superlatively sweet.

We went into the hotel a little tired, but very pleased with our first day in the Orient, and very content that it was almost dinner time.

CHAPTER II

ANDREW

WE are poor sometimes, we two Nomads, but we are never without a retinue. There are two reasons for this. I am a helpless, incapable woman, with an acute need of servants. My husband, on the other hand, is phenomenally good to servants. They seem to know this instinctively. They flock to him, and install themselves in his service, and he always feels it difficult to dislodge them. We went into Colombo a party of six. I am not speaking of our company of twenty odd artists (more or less), but of our family party, in which were ourselves, our three children, and their European nurse. We left Colombo a party of eight. A Madrassi boy had attached himself to my husband, and I took the Cingalese ayah for Baby. We left Andrew weeping and wailing on the wharf, and doing it in the most approved and vigorous style. My husband was half inclined to take Andrew with him, but we did not need him; and I had rather discouraged the idea for two other reasons. I should perhaps be ashamed of them both; but this is a true history as far as it goes; so here they are:—Andrew was not good-looking. Now one must put up with ill-looking relatives, but I can never bring myself to be contented with positively plain servants. My other objection to Andrew was that he was a "Cold Water Baptist." I don't in the least know what cold water Baptists are. Were I to meet them in Europe, it is of course possible that I should like and respect them intensely; but I must own to a prejudice against native converts. Not so much because I believe that they are usually insincere, as because they are almost invariably hybrid. I believe in the suitability of all things, even in the suitability of religion. Andrew was lank and hungry-looking; he wrapped the native skirt about his legs; he pinned his long hair up with the orthodox tortoise-shell comb; but he wore a European coat over a dirty European shirt. Could anything have looked worse? I think not.

Andrew called himself a guide. He discovered my husband before we had fairly arrived, and insisted upon being engaged. We found him very useful, because he could speak English. And that was a comfort, though he never had any exact information and very rarely spoke the rigid truth. He never lost sight of his master for an instant, unless he was peremptorily sent on an errand to the other end of the town. My husband used to try to escape him. Once or twice we would really have enjoyed a short walk or a drive, alone. But we never had either. There were many exits from our hotel. We tried them all. Sometimes we would get as far as the corner. Then we would hear the plunk—plunk—plunk—of Andrew's flying feet. "Salaam, sahib," he would gasp breathlessly, "where are we going?"

He never would tell us his real name. I used to try to bribe him. His master would threaten him. He had but one reply for threat or bribe: "Andrew is my

Christian name. I am a Cold Water Baptist." He never seemed able to lessen my dense ignorance *re* the interesting subject of Cold Water Baptists. But he could talk glibly enough about the faith he had forsworn. And I observed that he seemed on intimate terms with the priests at all the native temples, and never failed to drop a copper in the temple box. I concluded that his conversion had been purely commercial. He told me that the "Padre Sahib" had given him three coats. It is easier to give a native a coat than a belief.

When we drove in the chill early morning, Andrew used to wrap his head in a Gordon tartan. If we chanced to pass the barracks, he promptly unwound his shawl, folded it up, and sat upon it. Doubtless he did not wish to embarrass me by having the sentry mistake him for the Colonel.

My husband often used, when he was too busy to go with me on my long afternoon drives, to send Andrew—partly for my convenience, as I always went into the densest native quarters, where English was not spoken, and partly, I think, to get rid of Andrew.

One afternoon I looked behind to speak to Andrew, who with the sais was perched on the back of the gharri. He was smoking a not bad cigar. I flew at him, verbally.

"No harm," he said, with insolence that was, I am sure, unconscious. "No harm. The sahib is not here. I no smoke before my master."

"You won't smoke before me!" I said with undignified warmth. "Your master would not smoke in a gharri with me. And I won't allow any other man to do so—black or white."

Andrew looked at me stupidly and smiled. Then a thought flashed from my eyes to his. He knocked the fire from his cigar, and put the stump in his pocket. I had recognised my husband's favourite Havanna, and Andrew knew it.

One day I bought some trifle from an itinerant native. We were driving, and I was wearing a pocketless dress.

"Give the man six annas for me, Andrew," I said; "I have no money."

"No," he said smoothly, "a woman wouldn't."

I had one other experience with Andrew, when driving. My husband sent me to capture a scene-painter, and bring him, if possible, to the theatre. The man was that despised unhappy thing, a Eurasian. He was poor; and he drank too much. But I had seen a fan he had painted, and some water-colour sketches of Kandy which he had done. I knew that he was—in part at least—a genius. We found him after a great deal of trouble. He came out to my gharri, and I greeted him, as I would always greet an artist, and stated my business. He took off his shabby sombrero and climbed up to the seat I indicated beside me. Andrew broke into excited vernacular. The man beside me flushed, and started to move.

"What is the matter?" I asked.

"I tell him I no let Eurasian man sit beside my master's wife. He must come back here with me and Sais."

I was in a fine rage. I made Andrew get out and walk the several miles that

stretched between us and the theatre. That night I had my husband tell him that, when he went out with me, he was, under no circumstances, to speak, unless I spoke to him.

But it was the day of our first performance that I really established myself in Andrew's mind as a person of importance. I went to the theatre about four o'clock to see if the ayah I had engaged to help me at the theatre had put my dressing-room into proper trim. As I passed in, I noticed Andrew sitting on the lowest rung of a bamboo ladder. He was looking very vicious. He muttered "Salaam" rather than said it, and didn't rise. I went into my dressing-room, and then marched on to the stage, to attack the poor stage manager.

"Am I to dress in that fearful hole?" I asked him sweetly.

Some one laughed. I turned round.

"I beg your pardon," said Jimmie M'Allister, "but do come and see the governor's quarters." Jimmie was, of all the boys in our company, my first favourite.

I followed him downstairs, and the stage manager followed me. I looked into my husband's quarters.

"Do you want to see where the other ladies dress?" asked the stage manager softly.

"I say, do come and see our palace behind the scenes," cried Jimmie triumphantly.

But I had seen quite enough. The artists' quarters at the Colombo theatre did not compare favourably with the front of the house. I went meekly back to my dressing-room, wondering what could be done to make my husband's den a little more comfortable.

"Would you mind speaking to this young imp of your husband's?" said the stage manager. "He won't let us take the governor's things into the dressing-room." My heart warmed to Andrew.

"Quite right," I said; "the room certainly must be cleaned out first."

"Oh! he doesn't in the least mind the dirt," explained Jimmie. "He's offended because your dressing-room is better than the governor's."

I had known a prominent actor in—well never mind where—who used to dress luxuriously off the stage, while his wife climbed up a flight of narrow stairs, and wandered down a dark corridor to a gruesome little closet. But that any one would ever expect my husband to be brute enough to allow me to do anything of that kind had never occurred to me. I felt vexed for the moment. Then we came upon Andrew, sitting on the ladder, doggedly guarding his master's luggage. I realised that Andrew was quite right from his point of view; and for a moment I felt tempted to gratify him by ordering my things to be put into my husband's room. Then I remembered that we were to play the *Merchant of Venice* that night. Shylock wore one dress; Portia wore five. And then too, had I changed rooms, my husband would have changed back again. I sent for some coolies; I called my ayah, and superintended the cleaning of that room myself. Jimmie M'Allister and the stage

manager helped me. Andrew stood by sullenly. His master came in. Andrew sprang to him.

"The memsahib has a more nice room," he said impressively.

"The memsahib has a beastly hole. Go and tell that Madrassi out in front that I want a carpet and a sofa and some nice chairs, here in half an hour, for the memsahib's room—mind you."

Poor Andrew gasped and went out. But his manner to me changed from that moment. An hour later Jimmie and I went to the bazaar and got the furniture for my husband's room. I think Andrew forgave me when I came back with it. I took some curtains from a property box, and told him to tack them up at his master's window. He answered me quite pleasantly.

I never had another encounter with Andrew; but I never could teach him to knock. He would walk into my dressing-room, and coolly pick up my hare's-foot, or my scissors, without vouchsafing me one poor word of explanation. If I ventured to ask "What are you doing?" he replied, "Master want," and went out. I used to beg him to knock; but I don't remember that he ever did knock. Nor did he ever beat a retreat, no matter in what state of deshabille he found me. Finally, we used to turn the key in the door, if I had an entire change to make. Then he would pound on the door and cry so loudly that the people in front heard—"Open, open; Master want your red paint."

Andrew and I grew better friends. He used to bring me some little present every morning. Three or four flowers, or a basket of cocoanuts, or a spray of cinnamon.

He said one day to my nurse—"The master like the memsahib. I want please the master—I must please the memsahib. When the memsahib grow old and her teeth drop out, the master will sell her and buy a new wife." We overheard this remark of Andrew's. My husband was delighted, and to this day often holds the threat over my silvering head. But I grew to really like Andrew, he was so unmistakably fond of his master. I believe that he grew to really like me, for the same reason.

CHAPTER III

OUR DAY OUT

Three Grecian cities strove for Homer dead
Where Homer living begged his daily bread.

AND the locale of the Garden of Eden is claimed by at least three of the Eastern islands that we have visited. The island of Penang appealed the most seductively to my credulity; but before I saw Penang, I was convinced that Ceylon was in reality the site of the Garden of Eden. Colombo impressed me; Mount Lavinia convinced me.

Mount Lavinia is the Richmond of Colombo. The Mount Lavinia Hotel is the Star and Garter of Ceylon. But 'Arry and 'Arriet never go there. The demi-monde never goes there. The world and his wife don't flock there. The European population of Colombo is so limited that it does not embrace either 'Arry or 'Arriet—it has no demi-monde, at least no palpable one; and the world and his wife are not numerous enough to flock. Mount Lavinia is a Paradise *à deux*. Nature is superlatively beautiful there. At the hotel there is an ideal *chef*.

For years we have had a habit of periodically escaping from every one and everything. Our life has been a busy one; it has been full of friction; but when the friction has threatened to make us forget each other a bit, we have usually managed to shake the dust of the high road from our tired feet, and to snatch a quiet breathing spell, alone, and together.

The second Sunday we were in Colombo we were up very early,—we were going to Mount Lavinia for the day. When we left the hotel the sun was just rising. I had a new frock on, and my husband was good enough to say that it was pretty. I tore it badly getting into the gharri, but it didn't matter—he found a pin and pinned it for me. We had a long wait at the little station. We stood outside, and tried to guess which of the hieroglyphics painted in black on the white station was "Colombo" in Tamul, and which was "Colombo" in Cingalese.

The funny little train came sizzing into the station; in five minutes we had started. We looked at each other and smiled; our little holiday had begun. Critics might rail, and actors might snarl; it was nothing to us; this was our day out.

We sped through miles of cocoanut trees. Except near the little settlements, through which we passed every ten or fifteen minutes, we saw nothing but cocoanuts. Here and there the natives were gathering the ripe nuts. Here and there agile boys were stealing them, slipping up and down the trees like squirrels. The thousands, nay tens of thousands, of tall straight trees became impressive from their very numbers. It was very Oriental, very graphic; and just before it became the least

bit monotonous, the train slackened a little. Then we passed a broken line of native huts.

Every Cingalese mother bathes her children on Sunday. Weather permitting (and in Ceylon the weather almost always does permit), every Cingalese ablution takes place out of doors, and in as conspicuous a place as possible. We must have seen some hundreds of native children drenched with soapsuds, swashed with icy water, or rubbed with oil that morning. Many of the adults bathe as publicly, but not so often. We saw one woman bathing eleven children, and they were all crying. The huts thickened, and we had reached a station. It was a pretty low brown building. It reminded me—though I don't know why—of Anne Hathaway's cottage. Brilliant flowering vines hung from the sloping roof. In the doorway was gathered a motley group. Two dirty Buddhist priests sat on the ground counting pice. A group of Cingalese women were eating cocoanuts, drinking the milk, and scraping the soft young meat out with their nails and teeth. The Cingalese women are most beautifully formed. They are upright and supple, and every beauty-line of the human figure is emphasised upon their persons. Their invariable white jackets contrast so splendidly with their dusky skin that one almost catches oneself wondering if black is not the desirable complexion-colour after all. Their brilliant lips, their tawny eyes, their gay petticoats, save the sharp black and white contrast from being too abrupt or too emphatic. A few feet from the women stood a group of Cingalese men, doing nothing. Their long hair was in every instance nicely pinned up with a big tortoise-shell comb, and their parti-coloured skirts hung in straight, listless folds.

A small detachment of the Salvation Army was singing "From Greenland's icy mountains, From India's coral strand," very badly. No one was paying the least attention to them, however. The women were dressed in the Cingalese costume, with some slight additions where the genuine Cingalese dress is rather abbreviated. I thought it rather nice of them not to disfigure the picture by the introduction of clumsy blue frocks and big pokebonnets.

We went slowly on, passing a quaint string of native carts. The oxen were necklaced with roses, and most of them were surmounted by at least one small black boy. The carts were peculiarly shaped of course, gaily painted, and more or less embellished by nondescript draperies. Each cart was incredibly full. But the oxen were crawling along and seemed very comfortable. None of the natives seemed in the least hurry.

When we reached Mount Lavinia, Andrew, whom we had thought in Colombo, opened the carriage door. We gave him a rupee and told him to go home. He looked very indignant; but he went away.

What a day of days! The air was sweet and strong—you could drink it. Indeed, breathing was drinking in this paradise place. A few steps on, and the blue water laughed at our feet. A few yards up, and we saw the rambling old hotel, where we had been told that we would get the best dinner in India.

But before dinner, we had a long lounge on the vined verandah. We didn't talk; we rested. My companion was very radiant over a cigar, and I sipped bravely at a

glass of sherry. I don't like sherry; but we had been advised to leave ourselves absolutely in the hands of the khansamah. He, I think, had spied the rent in my frock, for he eyed us rather dubiously and asked sadly, but evidently without hope, if we wanted champagne with our tiffin. We confessed that we did, and he brightened up wonderfully. He gave me a long verandah chair, and my husband another, and trotted off, without waiting for any further orders. He came back soon, with a tray of cigars, two glasses, and some milk biscuits. He gave my husband the cigars and the wee glass that held a thimbleful of something that looked deadly. Upon me he bestowed the glass of sherry and the innocent milk biscuits. I am no more devoted to milk biscuits than I am to sherry, but I nibbled and sipped obediently. It was my day out, and I meant to enjoy it, and everything it brought. My comrade was very happy with his cigar, and said that the mysterious thimbleful was very good, but he didn't think I'd better taste it. That was apparently the opinion also of the khansamah; so I abode by the united decision of two superior intellects.

I felt a soft tug at my gown. I looked down. An ayah was seated at my feet; she was calmly taking the pin from my rent skirt. Then she produced needle and cotton and mended my tatters. Verily, the khansamah had taken us in hand.

The tiffin, even as a pale memory, defies description. We had a little flower-decked table in a window; we could look across the gorgeous garden to the purple sea; sea and garden were shimmering with golden glints of sunshine.

The khansamah waited upon us himself. He apparently knew that the tiffin was perfect, for he allowed us to decline nothing. He gave us soft-shell crabs, as I had never hoped to eat them out of Boston; and the memory of the mayonnaise haunts me still. I often dream of the curry. Some day I am going all the way to Ceylon to get such another tiffin; and if the cook is dead—"I'll have a suit of sables."

When the khansamah thought that we had had enough to eat, he marched us out on to one of the terraces of the garden. There he brought us our coffee and liqueurs. He brought out three cigarettes; and my husband, who doesn't care for cigarettes, took them meekly.

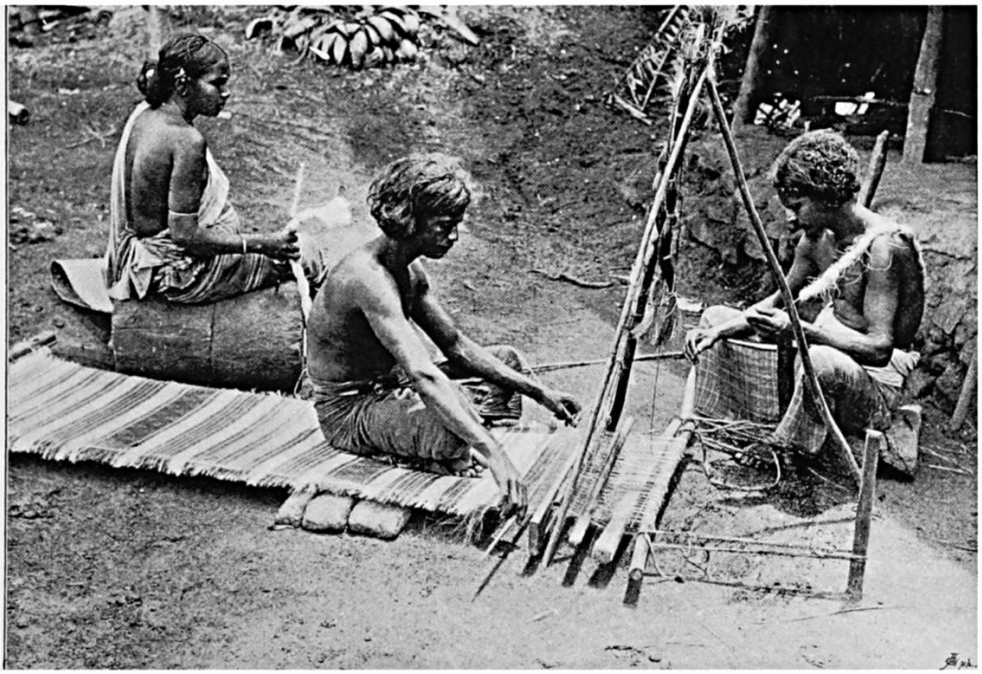
We lazed a bit, and then employed a young gentleman of about five, to roll down hill at an anna a roll. He was really very interesting. The hill was steep but grassy. He started at the top, and brought up in the surf. He swam about for a few moments, and then came back to us, and did it over again. He did not wet his garments, for he wore none. We grew satiated before he grew tired. We paid him, and he carried his dripping person off, to offer his services to some officer sahibs that were in another part of the gardens.

We went for a long, slow walk. I went into three or four native huts, while my husband smoked outside and called in to me what wild risks I was running. The huts were built of mud, of dried banana stalks, of bits of wood, and of white-washed manure. The interiors were very clean. The Cingalese are scrupulously clean. The only exceptions are the priests and the lepers. I bought a piece of coarse embroidery from one woman. I did not want it, but she had given us milk and plantains. I bought

sweetmeats from a wayside seller, and sat under a banyan tree to eat them. While we were there, an old decrepit man hobbled to us. He untied his well-worn pouch and took out a gray soapy-looking stone, about the size of a small marble. He laid it in my lap and asked for bukshish. We gave him a rupee, to get rid of him. I quite forgot about the stone until a year or more after, when I came across it one day. We were in Patiala at the time, and a famous lapidarian was there from Calcutta. I showed him the bit of stone. It was an uncut sapphire. And it turned out a very fair gem.

We concluded to be very extravagant, and drive back to Colombo through the moonlit cocoanut groves. We went back to the hotel to order a gharri and to pay our bill. Our happy holiday was nearly over; but still the best of it was to come,—the long delightful drive was to come.

That drive home was so beautiful that I almost forgot to be sorry that our pleasant jaunt was ending.



NATIVES WEAVING MATS IN CEYLON. *Page 25.*

The weird shadows of the cocoanut trees fell softly on the white road. The native huts we passed were dark and silent. The natives, one and all, had eaten their evening rice, and gone to sleep. The Cingalese have not learned that it is sometimes economy to burn night oil. In their cities, torches of splintered wood sometimes help them to lengthen their day's work; but in the country they go to bed with the birds.

I looked behind me, to impress my memory with the outlines of some unusually peculiar hut. Andrew was clinging to the back of the gharri with the sais.

As we neared Colombo, we drove through unbroken miles of pungent cinnamon groves. The moonlight was vivid. We were content and silent.

Colombo was wide awake. The officers' mess was aflame with light. Government House showed a hundred lights through the mass of surrounding shrubberies.

"What a perfect night it is!" said one of us.

"What a perfect day it has been!" sighed the other.

"We will try to go to Mount Lavinia again before we leave," said my companion.

"I wonder if the children have been good," said I, as we drew up at our hotel door.

CHAPTER IV

MY FIRST 'RICKSHAW RIDE

My husband would not ride in a jinrickshaw, nor did he wish me to do so. Of course, I was curious—very curious—to know how it felt to be rushed along, drawn by a "human horse." He thought it wrong to use men in that fashion, and would neither step into a jinrickshaw nor countenance my doing so.

The night before we left Colombo it rained furiously. I suppose every one feels caged, once in a while. I felt caged that night. I remember walking up and down our long sitting-room, up and down, until my husband laid aside his book and said, "What is the matter?"

"I want to go for a 'rickshaw ride," I cried.

"In all this rain?"

"You know I love to be out in the rain——"

"I can't let you go alone, and I will not ride in one of those cruel carts."

"I'll take Nurse with me, if you'll see that the ayah minds the children."

"All right. I don't think it's right; but if you do, I'll go and get the 'rickshaws."

I flew into the nursery, and encountered another obstacle. My nurse did not approve of 'rickshaws either. She proposed a gharri ride. I told her that I was going in a 'rickshaw, and that, if she didn't come, I'd go alone. She was incapable of letting me go alone; so she sighed and put on her things.

Does every one in England know what a 'rickshaw is? Almost every one ought by this. A 'rickshaw is not unlike a bath-chair. It is higher, lighter, more comfortable. It is not pushed; it is pulled. A jinrickshaw coolie runs between the two shafts, which he holds firmly in his hands.

We took two 'rickshaws. The manager of the hotel told the coolies that they were to run for an hour, and bring us back at the end of that time.

How it poured! but I was delighted with the motion, and never ceased to like it. They were very swift; they ran with an easy even gait. There was all the pleasure of driving behind a spirited horse and none of the responsibility. There were no reins to hold, no control to exercise. I leaned back on my cushions and enjoyed myself. They were sure of foot those brown runners; and I knew that though they ran never so swiftly they would never run away. As for their personalities, they have less personality than a horse. Their presence a few feet in front was no intrusion. They were merely the naked steaming means toward an exhilarating end of entrancing motion.

We rushed on and on, through the dark and the storm—such a soft, warm, pleasant storm. At last the coolies stopped. They had brought us into the cinnamon grove. I was glad to be there upon my last night in Ceylon. While we sat and sniffed

the sweet, languid, scented air, the coolies rubbed each other down. Each carried over his shoulder a long towel-like rag. With these they gave each other a good shampooing. They did not withdraw into the shade or the shelter of the cinnamon trees. They stayed where they were, as pet horses might have browsed by the near way-side. The night was black; but the well-trimmed 'rickshaw lamps flashed steadily upon the clearly revealed coolies, showing their brown bodies red.

The rain fell in torrents. They seemed to like it; and as they towelled off each other's sweat, they lifted their faces to the descending drench as tired horses might push their steaming flanks into a well found stream.

They halted three minutes perhaps—perhaps fifteen. I don't know. I was thinking new thoughts, and one can't measure thought with a tape measure.

They wrung the human rain and the rain of heaven from their rags, and started on their homeward run. My homeward run I should say, for they slept beside their 'rickshaws beneath the stars, or, if it chanced to rain, beneath their rickshaws. And I, who slept mostly in hotels, could hear, if I woke in the watches of the night, the peaceful breathings of my babies as they slumbered in an adjacent room.

The 'rickshaw coolies are not, I believe, blessed, or burdened, with many babies. They rarely have means justifiant of marriage. And in the Orient, marriage is more honoured in the observance than in the breach. Then too they die young as a rule, these "human horses" of the East. Consumption, in some one of its many deadly forms, cuts short their perpetual racing after the petty cash of listless-legged Europeans.

When we reached the hotel, they whined for bukshish with the usual mingling of cringing and of bullying. They were placidly oblivious of all the fine thoughts they had enkindled in my mind. They were not even curious as to what manner of woman I was, that I elected to ride through the rushing rain. I have so often seen the wonder-look upon the stupid face of a European coachman who has driven me aimlessly through the dark or the wet. But on the intelligent faces of my first 'rickshaw coolies, I saw nothing. Their feelings, their thoughts, were as locked from me as mine from them. And not one of their thoughts was of me. To them, I meant two rupees eight annas. No more, no less.

"Well?" said my husband.

"Well!" said I.

"Did you enjoy it?"

"Oh yes! so much."

"Didn't you feel wicked?"

"A little. But that will wear off, I think."

Wear off it did. I became an inveterate jinrickshawist.

Did I shorten the life of any coolie? I don't know. I provided many a coolie with an overflowing bowl of rice and curry, that made his life momentarily very endurable.

Would they better live longer and be hungrier?

Can we give them other, better work?

Ah! those are questions for statesmen, not for women.

The next day, when we left our rooms in the early morning, we found John, the Madrassi, waiting for us. We were taking him to Calcutta with us, and he was all anerve to start. John was, with one exception, the handsomest native man I ever saw. He was nearly six feet tall, and carried himself with superb dignity. He was fastidiously devoted to his own personal appearance, and we took great delight in his toilets. I remember him so well, as he stood outside our door, in the pale November dawn. He was dressed in the sheerest of white robes, or rather draperies; the upper cloth was of soft native silk; he wore a huge turban, snowy white, with one thin line of gold running through it; and in his ears he wore two hoops of flashing rubies. John never developed a desire to carry parcels, but it was his delight to carry our almost two-year-old baby. What pictures they used to make! She was a big dimpled baby, very white, with bright blue eyes and gleaming yellow curls. John was as black as a Madrassi can be, which is very black indeed; but he was always as spotless in his attire as baby Mona herself.

A man said to my husband, "You must not allow your servant to wear such turbans, nor, above all, to wear jewelry; and then at night he wraps a really valuable cashmere shawl about his miserable shoulders. It is shocking form."

"My wife would be greatly annoyed if John dressed less picturesquely—" began my husband.

"But it's most disrespectful, my dear boy, don't you know."

"My wife is very disrespectful. That I know."

I came along in time to hear the last few sentences.

"Dear Sir——," I said, "don't you know that wherever MacGregor sits is the head of the table?"

"The natives must be kept down," was all the reply vouchsafed me.

The *Kaiser-i-Hind* sailed at eleven in the morning. I had a good cry at nine o'clock—not because we were leaving Colombo, but because the dhobie had left us no underclothing but rags. It was my first experience with an Oriental washerman, and it grieved me. All the pretty, dainty things that my babies had worn during the long voyage from Adelaide to Colombo were ruined. Thorns and rocks had had more to do with that washing than had soap and water.

As we were leaving the hotel, Andrew, who had been paid in full the night before, and whom we had not expected to see again, arrived. He had begged to go with us and had been refused. Now he had made one heroic effort to carry his point. He had cut off his hair and broken his comb. Having Europeanised himself so far, he seemed to feel that we were in honour bound to take him with us. He even said to my husband that he would put on trousers when we reached Calcutta. He couldn't do so in Colombo, because his wife was coming to see him off. He was broken-hearted when he learned that we really would not take him. He wept piteously on the pier and beat his breast. But his wife (she looked about sixteen) seemed very happy that he was not to accompany us. I thought that greatly to his credit, and gave her a rupee for no reason at all, save that I had so few that one less did not matter.

The ship was very crowded,—she had just come from London. The native merchants made the deck-crowd denser, and buzzed like flies in their last frantic efforts to sell us something—anything. Each rupee that we were taking away they felt a stain upon the record of their ingenuity and salesmanship.

As Colombo faded from our sight, we planned to return there on our homeward journey. But we said it doubtfully—we had learned that the plans of nomads are uncertain and changeable; and we have not yet seen Colombo again.

The *Kaiser-i-Hind* was full of English people,—army people, civil servants, and their contingent of memsahibs.

There were three Americans aboard beside myself.

I am often called a bad American. I certainly am not a rabid American. At times I am a bitter American. When I am among a lot of nice English people, and have the misfortune to meet the worst type of travelling American, I wince.

One of the Americans on board was a man of whom all Americans are justly proud; he is a soldier (with a great record), a gentleman, and a scholar. But not all the soldiers that have ever come from West Point, not all the scholars that have ever come from Harvard, not all the gentlemen that have ever come from Virginia, could have wiped out our national disgrace upon a boat that numbered among its passengers Mr. and Mrs. Frank Hunter.

They had been married two months. Whatever inspired Americans of their type to select the Orient as the scene of their honeymoon was, is, and always will be, a dark mystery. But there they were, glittering caricatures of our national life. There they were, amid a boat-load of nice English folk.

Mr. Frank Hunter did not wear quite such loud clothes as many of the Englishmen. But he wore them far more noisily. A magnified chess-board is nothing to a certain type of English officer in "mufti." But though they make mistakes about their coats, they never blunder in their behaviour, those English officers—English and Irish, Scotch and Welsh, are they. But they are all gentlemen, in public at least.

Mr. Frank Hunter's tailors were irreproachable; but his manners were simply shocking,—and English people are so easily shocked. The English people on the *Kaiser-i-Hind* quite forgot that there was a nasty something, called *mal-de-mer*. They were as sick as sick could be from the unavoidable proximity of the Hunters. I say "sick" advisedly; no other word would convey what I mean. Mrs. Hunter, on the whole, was worse than her husband. He sometimes smoked—rather frequently, in fact. When he smoked he was silent. Mrs. Hunter did not smoke. She was never silent, or, if ever, then only in the still watches of the night, and no one had the benefit of it—no one but Mr. Frank Hunter.

Mrs. Frank Hunter wore more diamonds at breakfast than all the other women in the boat put together wore at dinner. She dressed for dinner, but she dressed very high at the neck, which I thought a great pity,—the dimples in her chin told me that her neck was sweetly pretty. She gazed with prudish horror at the well controlled *décollete* of the English women. They gazed less openly, but quite as disapprovingly, at her vulgar display of jewelry. The abuse hurled by Mr. and Mrs.

Frank Hunter upon the *Kaiser-i-Hind* Commissariat was positively indecent. I have been better fed at sea, several times. But the ceaseless comments of the Hunters were far worse than the food. There was no escape from the perpetual clatter of their tongues; but we were not forced to eat the food. "Won't I just be glad to see my nice new brown stone bungalow on Fifth Avenue!" exclaimed the bride one night at dinner. "Won't I have something to eat though! Don't your mouth water for batter cakes every morning? And aren't you half dead for butter-milk?" She was speaking to me. I felt very angry, because she had hit upon something we had in common. I am excessively fond of butter-milk; and, when we were housekeeping in Australia, every Sunday morning that was cold enough, my husband used to make me "batter cakes" if I were good. But I could not bring myself to confess that I agreed with that horrid little American in anything. So I said nothing. She persisted, "Isn't America the nicest place on earth? Don't you just love it?"

"America is very nice in some respects," I said softly; "and I should love my native land dearly, if there were fewer Americans."

Mrs. Hunter did not say much to me after that. But the relief was slight. She talked incessantly to some one—to her husband if to no one else, and her sharp little voice pierced to the utmost corner of the deck. Oh! my sisters, can't we be free without being vulgar? Can't we travel without becoming a reproach to our beautiful land?

One night I left the dinner table early. If I had stayed longer I should have thrown something at Mrs. Frank Hunter, and that would not have enhanced the women of America in the eyes of that boat-load of people. I went on deck. The gentleman of whom I have spoken—the American soldier who was the peer, at least, of any Englishman on board—was leaning sadly over the rail. "Are you ill, General?" I asked him.

"No," he said, "but I am ashamed of being an American! Did you hear that dreadful person trying to pick a quarrel with Colonel Montmorency, about the relative merits of West Point and Sandhurst? I stood it until she told him that her Uncle Silas was a major of militia and one of the best soldiers in the States. Then I left."

We sat down and tried to console each other. We planned to petition Congress to regulate the class of Americans who travel. We have not yet done so, but I do believe that it was a good idea.

Mrs. Hunter kept up her vulgar, impertinent, irritating remarks until we anchored in Diamond Harbour.

The last time I ever saw her, she and her husband were standing on Chowringhee, gazing at the maidan. She was ablaze with gems, as usual. The natives doubtless thought her the European wife of a Rajah. They are, I believe, the only class of European ladies who in India in the day overload themselves with jewels.

"Frank darling," she was saying, "it ain't a patch to Central Park, is it? And their old Government House, as they call it—it can't hold a tallow candle to the Capitol

at Washington, can it now?”

I fled down Dhurrumtollah.

CHAPTER V

IN THE BURRA BAZAAR

We all grumbled when we were put off the boat at Diamond Harbour, and were told that we must go to Calcutta by train. The treacherous Hooghly was at the moment unsafe for so large a vessel. Of course, every one blamed the Steamship Company. But the very *contretemps* at which we grumbled gave us a first view of Bengal—a view that was extremely lovely. Our little train went slowly through the peaceful Bengali country. It was early sunset. Strange scarlet flowers hung from the tall trees. Now and again a graceful bending limb almost threw the long vine trails against our window frames,—for the windows were open, and we were pressing against the ledge as eagerly as our children. Here and there, half hidden by the thick green trees and by the deepening twilight, were square white tanks. Natives were bathing in them. Their gleaming black shoulders emphasised the silver water and the marble tanks. We passed cornfields that, with a strange heart-throb, took us back to Illinois. But the corn was not high for all that, and the gaily-clad Hindoos, who were working in it, were as unlike American darkies as they were unlike western farm hands.

"Come, come quickly!" cried my husband, from the other end of the carriage. I went very quickly, for it takes wondrous much to make him "cry out." A few yards to our left lay a smooth sheet of water. It was quite a purple in the fast-fading sunset; and on its drowsy, blushing bosom lay great masses of dappled water-lily leaves, and on each leaf a great pink lily pressed. Thin lines of crimson, great patches of pale golden green, broke the purple sky. Tropical trees, heavy with white and yellow bloom, hung over the little lake; and on its white and purple surface rested the pink water-lilies, amid their green and gleaming leaves.

We passed great open spaces, and came to small huddled villages. Little mud huts were squeezed together in marvellous fashion. Men, women, and children sat outside their low doorways, and the more prosperous of the family groups included a calf. One had a long wreath of orange marigolds about his pinky-white neck; and a jet-black baby, who lay asleep a few feet off, was similarly adorned. The women were cooking the all-important evening meal; and none of them looked up to see our unimportant European selves.

What a bedlam when we reached Calcutta! It was dark now, and the station was badly lighted. Our advance agent met us, of course; and when he had assured my husband that everything was all right, that he had done everything he had been told to do, he bundled me and my babies into a gharri, the native servants clambered on to the box, the roof, or caught on behind, and we started slowly, if not decorously, for the Great Eastern Hotel.

A steady drizzling rain had begun, and I could see nothing through the misty gharri windows save indistinct masses of oddly-clad and unclad humanity and dim backgrounds of gray walls.

We stopped at a huge white building. The servants at the door took our arrival as a matter of course—if I can say that they took it at all, for they paid not the slightest attention to us. Mr. Paulding left his bearer to wrangle with our charioteer, and we followed him up to our rooms. An incredible number of coolies followed us, carrying our small luggage. I remember one great giant who groaned and wiped his brow when he unloaded himself; and yet he had only carried a cardboard box, and it was empty but for an apology for a bonnet that was made of two crape roses and half a yard of Maltese lace.

My first discovery was that our rooms were large and clean and cool. Then I made myself very comfortable in an immense cane chair, and took my bairns into it with me, all three of them.

Our native servants did not seem to do anything; but somehow I found my hat and gloves were off, slippers had replaced my shoes, baby was drinking hot milk, my boy and girl were munching spongecake, the luggage seemed rapidly to be unpacking itself, and some one had given me a glass of port wine and a plate of vanilla wafers.

"I wonder how they knew that I hate tea," I said to Mr. Paulding. "They have wonderful intuitions, haven't they?"

"John told dem," said my small son briefly, very briefly, for the spongecake was good.

I have known men more industrious than my husband's picturesque Madrassi servant, John; but I never knew any man with a more considerate memory. He was not indefatigable in doing hard work; but he was infallible in remembering what I liked to have done, and in making other people do it. I sipped my wine, and sighed. It was raining now in dense torrents; and my husband was still at the station, struggling with two of the great problems of a strolling player's life—scenery and heavy luggage. I released Mr. Paulding with the assurance that we were entirely comfortable, and he rushed off through the storm to help his chief.

John had found where the nursery was; and he marshalled the pretty procession of my babies and their household out with a great deal of dignity. I sat alone in the dim, cool room, and dreamed, and rested. Visions of wild American plains came back—memories of Australia, of Europe, and Canada; I dreamed and dozed; and then I sprang up at the welcome sound of a footstep I knew, in whatever quarter of the globe I heard it. America, Europe, Australasia—they were behind me; Asia was before me. Another phase of our fascinating nomadic life had begun. My husband came in at one door, very, very wet. John came in at another. Behind him walked a half-grown Mahommedan boy, carrying a tray of the steaming tea my husband liked as much as I loathed it.

"Salaam, sahib," exclaimed the newcomer.

John said something hastily, and the boy added:

"Burra salaam, memsahib."

In Europe I am more than indifferent to all the woman's-rights movement. We have so many more privileges than men; and I am sure that I have all my rights, for I never missed one of them. But in the East I waged a long war for the equality of the sexes. Not that I believe that women are men's equals—I don't; my observation has been to the contrary; but I wish women to be treated as men's superiors. Clever John had fathomed my vulnerable narrowness; and so he prompted the boy, and the boy cried, "Burra salaam, memsahib."

"His name is Abdul," said John, as he drew an easy chair near mine. "He will be our khitmatgar. We will pay him fifteen rupees a month. To-morrow I will find a bearer, an ayah for the other missie baba, and an ayah for memsahib."

"Haven't we enough servants?" pleaded my husband feebly. John shook his handsome turbaned head.

"No sir," he said, "we want many. One does very little here."

John, like all Madrassis, was a natural linguist. But he spoke unusual English, even for a Madrassi. He left us to the ministration of Abdul. More than half the servants we had in the East were called Abdul. This was our first Abdul. He was a frightened looking child, with long, lean, awkward legs, and great, lovely, brown eyes. Presently John came back with three or four nondescript-looking, almost garmentless coolies. They carried on their heads chattees of steaming water. In a few moments John came back again.

"The hot bath," he said. "It will be dinner in an hour."

When I went to dress I found John laying out a gown for me.

"What are you doing?" I asked him.

"Miss Wadie" (*i.e.* my nurse) "is tired," was all he said, and he began to sew a loose bow on to one of my slippers.

They gave us an excellent dinner, for which we were unfeignedly thankful. The room was crowded, and there was, of course, a babel of tongues. But the servants were fairly quiet and only fairly slow, and the gravies were distinctly good. As we left the dining-room, I saw a strangely familiar black face peering at me through the square window of a queer house-like place that was erected in the hall. I paused involuntarily. It was a glimpse of home.

"I'se right proud to see you, lady," said the dear old black.

I nodded to him and went on without speaking to him. There was a ridiculous something in my foolish throat. He had found me, and I had found him. How he knew me for one of the countrywomen of his adoption I shall never know, but to me every thread of his curly white wool was eloquent of "de ole Virginie state."

I made friends with him the next day. His name was "Uncle Peter Washington," and he had come to Calcutta, as I had, with a "trabbling show." The Ethiopian histrionic combination of which Uncle Pete had been a bright black star, had, after two brilliant performances, succumbed to the tropical heat and the non-appreciation of the public. Uncle Pete, like most Virginian darkies, was versatile, and we found him installed as a Steward at the Great Eastern. He used to send me dainties, not on

the bill of fare, and beg continually for "passes."

After dinner, although we were a little tired, we went with Mr. Paulding to see the Corinthian Theatre, where we were to play. We found it a surprisingly nice play-house—a little dirty, and rather empty of scenery; but it could be cleaned; we had brought our scenery with us; and altogether it was an encouragingly possible place. We went up the outer stairs of the adjacent house, and met the local manager—a vivacious Frenchwoman. It was late when we left her, but I coaxed for a little drive through the streets, like the spoiled woman I was. The rain had ceased; the stars were almost dancing in the sky; and so, at night, I had my first good look at Calcutta.

We had strange half glimpses of odd, weird sights; we caught snatches of plaintive native songs, sung in the monotonous Hindoo treble.

Hamlet was to be our opening bill, and we were very busy. But I, who am usually rather lucky, found time to see a great deal of Calcutta. I ran errands, or rather drove them, and that took me to a number of strange places. I found my way to the native lumber yards. I learned to bargain, in the vernacular, for timber. Moreover, I learned that the only way to ensure its delivery at the theatre, in time for the carpenters, was to see it loaded myself; to see the bullock carts start, and to follow them every inch of the way, until we passed up Dhurrumtollah, and I halted my unique procession triumphantly at the door of the Corinthian Theatre. I learned to descend into the quarters of the dhursies and to return to the theatre with a gharri load of sewing machines and tailors. I even grew so expert in the Calcutta highways and byways that I more than once pounced upon our dhobie in his lair, and wrestled with him for the proper laundrying of some treasured garment.

Best of all, I came to know the Burra Bazaar as few Europeans have ever known it. We first drove there one brilliant Sunday afternoon. A lady, who lived in Calcutta, and Jimmie M'Allister went with me. My husband refused to go to the place, which he had been told was aswarm with evil smells and more evil natives. He was rather a dilettante sight-seer was my lord and master; and he regarded my inveterate prowlings as something to be permitted on broad principles of personal liberty, but never to be countenanced, much less encouraged. I was an old *habitué* of the Burra Bazaar before I could induce him to go there with me; and he never went but once.

The Burra Bazaar fascinated me powerfully. Day after day I went there, when I should have been performing sacred social duties. The more I went to the Burra Bazaar, the more I wanted to go. It held me—called me in a thousand ways. What a drive it was from the hotel to the outskirts of the Bazaar. We started in Europe, and stopped in the heart of Asia! Through China the liberal into China the conservative, on to India the wily, into India the tolerant, into India the dense—the real! Through Bentick Street, where the Chinese shoemakers "most do congregate," into "Old China Bazaar," where Fan Man sold silks that had been made in the wonderful bamboo looms of Canton, dipped in the huge vats of Chinese colour, beflowered by the deft needles of the incomprehensible Mongolians. Fan Man was not the

proprietor of the only silk shop in "Old China Bazaar Street." He had some dozen rivals. But national consanguinity is more to a Chinaman than trade vigilance—I can say nothing more emphatic of Heathen John's love for his Heathen brother man. While I sat in one Chinese silk shop, the retainers of all the other adjacent silk shops clustered about the apparently doorless doorway; they manifested every appearance of surprise at the unprecedented bargains offered me by their fellow past grand master of the brotherhood of selling. When I shook my head, pushed aside the coveted masses of silken beauty, and returned to my gharri (with a reluctance that was disgracefully ill-disguised for an actress), they scurried back to their shops with an agility that was more rabbit-like than Chinese. A Chinaman does not unduly urge you to enter his shop. He is too dignified—too Chinese; but once in!—Ah! well, their wares were very lovely, and very cheap, compared with all my preconceived standards of price. Silk and such fabrics were not the only commodities of the Old China Bazaar. Carved ivories, painted porcelains, and bamboo everythings were in emphatic evidence. And there were lesser stores of many other articles.

After Old China Bazaar we came upon the stronghold of the nondescript Parsi merchants. What had they for sale?—What hadn't they? A few among many of their for-sale-offered commodities were second-hand American cook-stoves, tin boxes, topees, cardigan jackets, broken sewing-machines, pickles, dried-fish, hand punkahs, umbrellas, rusty music-boxes, artificial orange-blossoms, Bibles, cigars, gin, toys, lamps, portières, mildewed books in every known and unknown tongue, cod-liver oil, and a few thousand other things. I even saw a pair of skates there once, not roller skates, but really true skates.

Then the streets grew narrower; they wound and twisted in and out of each other and themselves. Great gray houses towered thinly up toward the glittering sky. Low, narrow doorways led into uninviting, windowless booths. Fat, greasy babus squatted on the filthy little verandahs, making up their books. Our gharri caught and stopped. The street was too narrow. An incredible number of natives were wedged in between our wheels and the adjacent doorways. Beyond were multitudes of black and brown humans—seemingly eternal multitudes! The gharri wallah and the sais got down, and a few dozen of the crowd helped them to extricate our equipage. The proprietors of the pitiful little shops clung desperately to the wheels, shouting the praises of their wares into my bewildered ears, and cursed the charioteers for not leaving me for ever glued where I was, or, at least, until I had emptied my purse and depleted their emporiums. We went slowly and difficultly on, through the sickening, pungent fumes of condiment shops, past great heaps of chillies that made me sneeze and sneeze again. We saw tons of buttons, miles of tinsel, crates of cheap wax beads, infinities of shawls. The saries were without number; the piece-goods shops were numberless, and the varieties of the other shops were as bewildering as the differing wares they held, and the differing castes of the tradesmen who shrieked the superiority of their merchandise with all the frenzy of mad dervishes. Now and anon we caught, through a narrow gateway, a glimpse of a dirty, spacious courtway, where liveried servants slept on empty boxes, and snored their allegiance to His

Highness the Rajah.

Pigeons, thousands and tens of thousands, fluttered over our heads, or flew down to demand the corn which was never refused them. They looked at me confidently with their clear red eyes. One fat fellow, I vow, was an old friend of mine, in the days when I spent many *sous* for corn to scatter on the Square of St. Mark. Perhaps my head was a little dizzy with the crowd, the babel, and the stench. I thought the pigeon spoke to me. This is what I thought he said: "We're both grown since we met in Venice. You have changed for the worse. You used to wear bright blue plumage and bronze feet, and you had long shiny ropes of hair down your back. Now you've black feathers, and you seem a very ordinary sort of person. But with me, everything has changed for the better. 'How did I get here?' Oh! a missionary brought me over. But the missionary's wife was too fond of pigeon-pie, so I flew from Alipore to here, the Burra Bazaar. I am sacred here; I can do what I like, and have what I like. It will be a cruel day for me when the missionaries convert all the Burra Bazaar." And then the pigeon laughed, and added, as he winged away, "But it won't be in my day—oh no!"

When I had penetrated into some two or three of the tall, empty-looking houses, and learned how packed with treasure they were, I experienced an added delight in merely driving by them, and thinking what silken, embroidered, bepearled loveliness lay in great piles within those silent buildings.

The tortuous complications of the Catacombs at Rome are nothing compared with the winding mazes of the Burra Bazaar. I believe that I have seen every corner of the Burra Bazaar. I know my way into it. But my way out of it I never knew; and I always shall regard the natives who do know their way out as exceptionally clever.

I have done a great many foolhardy things in Asia. Proper European memsahibs looked askance at me, and even my long-suffering husband remonstrated. One of the two exploits which gained me the greatest disrepute as a wild unladylike woman was going into the Burra Bazaar at night. My husband was playing *Rob Roy*. I was not quite strong, and my Scotch accent was not considered safe. Consequently I was out of the Bill. That was a rare event in my professional life. And I made much of it. We were preparing for the *Lady of Lyons*. That was a play that my husband had always declared that he would never under any circumstances play. He did play it in Calcutta, as a concession to the local management. He now meanly says that he played it to please me, but that is not accurate; and, at all events, he was in a fine rage over the whole business. Claude Melnotte was not a gentleman he admired; and he used to say some very unkind things *re* the whole play, which a more sensitive Pauline might have resented as personal.

"What are you going to wear, dear?" I asked him sweetly, at what I thought a propitious moment. My gentle husband frowned.

"Wear!" said he. "I shall wear anything John lays out,—a Roman toga, or Ingomar's furs, or Shylock's gown, or anything else. You didn't for one moment suppose I was going to *buy* anything for that fool of a part, did you?" I sighed.

"Then let us not play the piece," I ventured.

"Now look here, Jimmie," was his answer, "you know you've wanted to play Pauline for years; you know I'll never have any peace until we do play it. So don't let us say any more about it."

"But I don't want to play it unless the piece is nicely dressed. I am having such lovely things made. You must have some as nice."

"You're a very foolish girl to buy a lot of new things for that idiotic piece," he said.

I went to the other end of the room. I sat down and looked melancholy—as melancholy as a woman can who has fully determined to have her own way. My companion preserved a manly silence for at least three minutes, then he said:

"Look here, Jimmie, how much money do you want?"

"Oh! none, thank you so much," I said as sadly as I could, "all my things are paid for."

"How much money do you want to get my things with?"

"You are a dear, good boy," I said; "and I'm sure you'll make a lovely Claude."

Strangely the compliment failed to please. My lord and master stalked out. But at dinner-time he gave me a roll of rupees, on condition that I would not mention Melnotte's clothes to him until he had to try them on, and that he should only try them on once.

It was in connection with *The Lady of Lyons* finery that I went into the Burra Bazaar at night, almost at midnight. I had been searching for days for a certain piece of embroidered pine-apple cloth. One day Caloo, my head dhursie, said to me, when he went away at sunset—

"Memsahib want me finish Saturday, memsahib must give rest stuff to-morrow. I not get I cannot make finish."

I was in despair. That night I drove my husband down to the theatre.

"Are you going home? or are you coming in?"

"I am going to look once more for my pine-apple cloth," I said meekly.

"Where?"

Ah! that was the question I had hoped to avoid.

"I'll try at the edge of the Burra Bazaar," I said. My poor husband looked at me in despair.

"You must come in with me," he said. I went with him,—obedient wife that I am. But when we reached his dressing-room I began to argue with him gently. At last we compromised; which is about the best thing close friends can do when they differ. I went to the Bazaar, but a friend went with me,—a big blond fellow, who looked the soldier he was, and whom half the natives in Calcutta knew as a fierce "lal-coatie sahib." Dear friend, he is dead now! He was, a few months ago, a victim of ignoble cholera.

I had some difficulty in making the gharri wallah understand that I really wished him to drive to the Burra Bazaar. But when he did understand, he drove stolidly across Dhurrumtollah into Bentick Street. We stopped a moment while my escort bought me an immense bunch of spicy roses "to smell when we get into the

Bazaar"; and while he was paying for it, a lame boy hobbled up with a huge ridiculous cotton-wool lamb. That was bought also "for the boy, if we ever come back." Down Bentick Street, where the dexterous Chinese shoemakers plied their trade by lamplight, beyond two noisy "Sailors' Rests," then into the dark. Neither of us spoke. My friend afterwards told me that he was a little anxious as to the outcome of my mad escapade. I was expectant. Every door was barred. Every house was dark. Asia was asleep. Where thousands of chattering natives had crowded about my carriage that very morning, not even a dog was to be seen. We drove for over two hours. We passed, here and there, a turbaned, belted policeman. Each looked at us with as much amazement as a sleepy Oriental can display, and salaamed. It was brightly, weirdly light now. The moon was up, and the dusty deserted streets lay before us like snow. We knocked at many doors, oftenest without response. A few of the doors opened after a long pause. A drowsy-looking native examined my bit of cloth by the light of our gharri lamps, and shook his head. He retreated behind his heavy door, shut and barred it. We went on. Not once, but twenty times, that was our experience.

But long after I had quite relinquished all hope of getting my pine-apple cloth, I insisted upon driving on. The moonlight was so marvellous. It was so wonderful to be one of the three or four awake among myriad sleepers. One old merchant was more enterprising than the rest. He had, he said, just what I sought. He went into his house and was gone some twenty minutes. Then he came out to us again. I leaned over the gharri with anticipatory excitement. The old Hindoo drew from his sleeve a piece of pale blue satin, on which two slippers were heavily embroidered with gold and seed pearls. Very beautiful they were in the midnight moonlight. I longed to take them back to my good-natured husband, but I was too vexed with the ancient Brahmin, who had brought me gold embossed blue satin instead of cream embroidered pine-apple cloth, to deal with him. "Cedar jao," I snapped out, and the patient horses went on. I forgot my petty millinery vexation in looking upon the magic high lights and the fathomless chiaroscuro made by the white magnificence of the moonlight and the black splendour of the old gray walls.

"What—oh! what is that?" I whispered, forgetting my own vague musings and remembering my companion suddenly.

"That is a fakir chap. He has made a vow, don't you know. His arm is paralyzed; he has held it high up above his head for a vow, and now it has grown that way. It doesn't hurt him, but it looks jolly queer, doesn't it?"

An incongruously European clock struck midnight.

"Are you frightened?" I asked my friend.

"A little," said the soldier, smiling; "and I am sure your husband is more so."

"Not he," said I; "he's singing 'Roy's Wife of Aldivalloch.' " But I added to the sais, "Nautch ghât jao."

Poor sais! He was fast asleep; standing bolt upright behind us. I woke him, and sent him up to sit with the gharri wallah.

"I wonder why that fakir was the one native out at midnight," I said, as we

returned out of the unknown moonlight of Asia into the familiar gaslight of cosmopolitan Dhurrumtollah. My friend smiled involuntarily, but he said nothing.

"Oh, I know what you think," I said, with a woman's swift, safe impertinence. "You think that he was hunting pine-apple cloth to offer to a new god."

"Or something equally important—to him."

That was a mean remark; so when I saw my husband come from the Corinthian Theatre archway, I turned ungratefully upon my companion and said:

" 'Fie, my lord, fie! a soldier, and afeard!' "

"Are you all right?" said my husband.

"Oh yes," said I. "Did we have a good house?"

Once afterwards I went into the Burra Bazaar at night. It was Sunday, and my husband was dining with some men. I ordered the gharri at ten. Maggie, my pretty little Madrassi ayah, came out to see me into the carriage.

"Kither, memsahib?" said the salaaming sais.

"Burra Bazaar jao," I answered.

Maggie caught at the gharri door, "Memsahib, no, no, not go—-must not go," she cried. "No safe, much harm."

"Nonsense, Maggie," I said rather roughly; "go in to your missie baba. Cedar jao, Gharri-wallah."

We had left the hotel, and were living in a bungalow. The drive to the gate was long and winding. When the durwan swung open the gate, a woman ran out from the shrubbery. Maggie pulled the gharri door open and climbed in.

"I go please with memsahib," said the girl.

"Aren't you frightened?"

"I more frightened stay safe bungalow, know memsahib gone harm."

Maggie sat opposite me. Her hands were meekly folded upon her saried knees. When we passed into the dark, questionable streets of the native quarter, Maggie did what she had never done before—she came and sat beside me. The dark grew denser: she covered my miserable, useless little hand with her great, faithful, black hand. A pigeon cried; and a sick woman, lying inside one of the tall, mysterious houses, moaned. Maggie was trembling.

"Bungalow jao, sais," I said.

A lady, who had lived most of her life in Calcutta, said to me one night, at a rather crowded dinner table: "Is it true that you went into the Burra Bazaar with only native servants and at midnight?"

"Almost true," I replied. "It was an hour or more earlier."

"What a horrid thing for you to do!" was the frank rejoinder.

I was too sorry for my hostess to answer my gentle critic; but what tales I could have told of her in Paris! Some people do indeed believe in the forgiveness of sins, if they are conventional ones.

A friend, who knows me well, said to me recently: "How can a woman, who is so over-timid about most things, do so many foolhardy things?" As a matter of fact, I am a great physical coward. But I have never felt afraid of the natives among

whom I have gone so peculiarly; nor do I believe that I have ever been in the slightest danger. As far as the Burra Bazaar was concerned, I am sure that I was as safe as a queen surrounded by a loyal army. The Orientals are not prone to kill the geese that lay golden eggs. I spent too many rupees and too constantly for the thrifty storekeepers to have seen harm come to me. Then think of the hubbub that would have been raised if one European woman had been murdered, as I was often told I would be! A terrible punishment would have been meted out to my gharri wallah and sais. They were bound to protect me, and so was every Hindoo of their caste. I often left the gharri, and went where it could not go; but I noticed that, unless I had my ayah with me, the sais always followed me. I was inveterate and tireless in my prowlings in the Burra Bazaar. I saw strange sights there, and smelled strange smells. I never received an uncivil look, much less a rude word.

I had great fun several times in the Burra Bazaar. Where the press of humanity was most dense, I used to take a rupee from my purse, and, holding it up, ask, "What will you sell for this?" Oh! how they rushed about me! What strange bargains they offered me! And how good-natured they were. They whined and begged and prayed, they pushed and jambed each other against the gharri door. They called me "Mamma" in the most persuasive tones. But when my choice was made, they fell back and salaamed and laughed gleefully as I drove away.

My husband went with me to the Burra Bazaar once—once only. We were going to play *Our Boys*. To my horror, my husband elected to play Perkyn Middlewick. I begged him to play Talbot; but he was caught by the idea of playing a part so entirely new, in every way, as Middlewick would be to him. The rehearsals began, and he grew quite infatuated with his part. He began to plan elaborate costumes for poor old Mr. Middlewick. I pretended to not quite understand the kind of brocade that he wanted for a beautifully brilliant vest. In that way I inveigled him into going with me into the Burra Bazaar. He sniffed at Bentick Street; but he had been there before. With the Bazaar itself he was unmitigatedly disgusted. When we reached the silk shop he broke into open rebellion.

"How do you get in?" Sais pushed open a narrow door. A flight of steep, shallow, almost perpendicular steps were all that we could see, and we could only half see them. They were innocent of railing; they went through space in the simplest way; and the only concession to light-headed mortals was a questionable-looking rope that dangled from the floor above.

He caught my arm: "You are not going up there! We'll get our necks broken, or, at the very least, be robbed."

"I have been up there very often," I urged; "and there is no other shop where we are so likely to get what you want."

I went up, and he followed me gingerly. The room, into which we crawled rather than walked, was about ten feet by twelve. Four Brahmins sat upon the floor; and the glass cases that lined the walls from ceiling to floor must have contained some thousands of pounds worth of silk, of crepe, and of embroideries. There was a chair in the room; it had not been there when I paid my first visit,—I flatter myself it had

been bought for me, and doubtless out of my money. The proprietor of the shop pushed the chair an inch in our direction; he placed a mat beside it, and left us to decide how we would divide them.

We stayed a long time in the tiny room. The presence of a man inspired them to bring out their choicest treasures. What exquisitely beautiful things they showed us, —soft priceless crêpes, thick pliant satins, matchless embroideries; they tempted my companion even more than they did me. We found the very piece of pathetically ridiculous brocade that he wanted, and he was as pleased as a boy.

Getting down the stairs was more than getting up them had been; but we accomplished it with assistance. Our drive home was very slow. My comrade stopped every few moments to buy some outrageous article. “I shall never come here again in all my life,” he said; “do let me enjoy myself.” It was a quaint gharri load of merchandise we carried back to the Great Eastern. Even the stolid durwan looked amazed.

A few hours later my husband said to me, “Tell me truly, do you really, honestly like to go into that place?”

“Honestly, I love it.”

He gazed intently at me for a few moments; then he said, “You are a wonderful woman.”

Which showed that the Burra Bazaar had enriched his understanding even more than it had impoverished his purse.

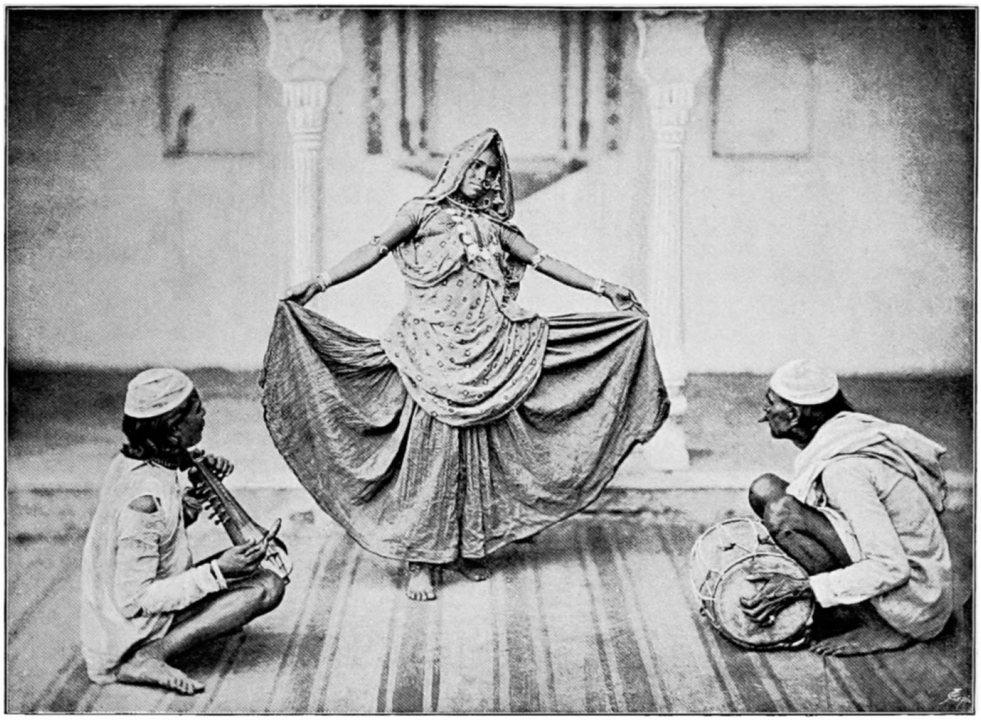
CHAPTER VI

A CHRISTMAS DINNER ON A ROOF

Is it only three years ago that we ate our Christmas dinner on the roof of an old Calcutta palace? How hot it was! The starlit sky was murky and shimmering. The air trembled and throbbed with the electrical heat. But when the plum-puddings came in we had to stop the punkah wallahs; the swing of their big hand punkahs blew the flaming brandy out. The Major had been saying nice things to me through all the courses. He was so polite and attentive that he only had one of his Bombay oysters,—the khitmatgar thought that his master did not want the others, and whipped up the plate. He was a Madrassi, was the Major's khitmatgar; he liked oysters, and he had no stupid, superstitious theories about Europeans defiling food. The Major never touched his sweetbread; and he missed most of his *biscuit glacé*. Yes; he was self-sacrificingly courteous. But when the hand punkahs stopped, he leaned back in his chair and drew his handkerchief across his brow, with the air of a man who would continue his polite attentions if he could, but really could not.

It was rather a home-sick little Christmas party. English people are very apt to be home-sick when Christmas finds them out of England. We two were not home-sick; we were the two strangers—the two newcomers; and yet we were the most content of any there. We were nomads, gipsies, strolling players. We had learned to carry our home in our hand-satchels, and in our hearts. Our wandering life had broadened and deepened our cosmopolitanism as much as it had sharpened and quickened our patriotism. We had lived so often in a tent! and we thought that palm-decked, star-canopied old roof the pleasantest possible place to eat our Christmas dinner. I was especially happy. I always love to eat in the open; and this old roof that lifted me high above the crooning Calcutta streets, and seemingly half-way to the stars, had lifted me into a warm, spicy atmosphere of high delight. It was a pretty scene. The white-clad servants moved softly; the adjacent houses were very quaint with minarets and intricate arches, strange latticed windows and droll roof-gardens; the deep perfumes of Oriental flowers came up from our host's garden. Everything was richly Oriental except the table at which we sat and feasted. That was as English as a very ingenious hostess could make it. Great satin roses were woven in the damask of the table linen; in the centre of the cloth lay a large silken Union Jack; on it crouched a bronze lion; he was resting on a bed of roses. Around the flag was a loose wreath of holly and mistletoe, and we each had a bit of mistletoe at our plates. I saw the subaltern's lip tremble a bit when he put his sprig in his button-hole,—that was very weak and babyish of him, was it not? Yet strangely enough that boy has won high military honours since then. I was greatly interested in him at the time, because he was the first subaltern I had met in India;

and I had heard so much about subalterns before I reached the East.



DELHI NAUTCH GIRL. *Page 56.*

The Major and his wife, our host and hostess, we had known well in Italy. I had been delighted to dine with them; and now, that the dinner was almost over, I was congratulating myself on having had so pleasant a time.

The plum-puddings had caught properly, and the breath of the punkahs came upon us again as a new sensation of delight. They fanned the creaming wine until the ice tinkled against our thin glasses, until the champagne frothed and bubbled in a perfect tempest of conviviality.

"Do you know the history of this old palace in which you are living?" I asked the Major.

"No," he said; "or at least very little of it. A mighty Nabob lived here once. This roof garden, where we are now, he had made very lovely for his favourite wife. She was of a higher caste than his. Her stepmother, who hated her of course, had given the girl to the Nabob in the father's absence. The girl's father had gone up to Peshawar, I believe, to buy camels. It was a year or more after the Nabob's marriage that the girl's father came back to Jullundar and found his favourite child gone. The stepmother said the girl was dead; but the servants told the old man the truth; so he killed his treacherous wife and came to Calcutta to find his daughter. Well, he found her on this very roof. Now a Hindoo girl who weds beneath her caste is degraded for

ever,—she has become a pariah, an outcast, and all her family are defiled. So the old Brahmin—he was a Brahmin, of course—took out his knife and plunged it through his daughter's sari into her heart. And she cried 'Salaam' and died; and he went away rejoicing."

"But how did he get in, and how did he get out?" demanded the subaltern. "Aren't the women's quarters in a Nabob's palace better guarded than that?"

"Sir, those are details, mere details," snapped the Major. "Were you not taught at Sandhurst that the subaltern is shot at sunrise who asks his superior officer for details?"

The subaltern saluted (with a walnut shell in his fingers) and fell into the conversational background.

"It is quite true, the story, Mr. Howard," said the Major's wife; "only my husband is telling it so badly."

The Major went on smoothly. "When Abdul came back——"

"Who was Abdul?" asked an exacting civilian.

"Abdul was the Nabob," said our host curtly.

"Oh!" said the civilian, "I thought perhaps you meant my bearer; his name is Abdul."

"When Abdullah returned," continued the Major, "and found his favourite wife dead, he tore his beard and cast his turban at her feet. Then he went into the women's quarters—the part of the palace where the other wives lived, for the dead girl-wife had had apartments of her own. Abdullah had not been in the women's quarters since his last and happiest marriage. His wives gathered about him; they fell at his feet and kissed them. He raised them up kindly. He gave them wine to drink, and in each glass of wine he put three three-grained morphia pills. When they had all fallen into the sleep from which he knew they could not wake, he rose up and went, saying, 'Allah, I had ceased to love them, but I have killed them gently, that they shall feel no pain when they burn upon my funeral pile.' He went back to his dead girl-wife. He laid a satin cushion beneath her head; he strewed sandal-wood dust upon her, then he borrowed a scimitar from a eunuch and died."

"I had no idea that the Hindoos were such good husbands," said the pretty American girl who sat on the other side of the subaltern.

"Might I be allowed to ask," said the subaltern, "as a guest, whether——"

But the Major's wife had looked at me and smiled, and as we rose, he jumped to his feet and rushed to the filmy portiere that hung across the archway which topped the garden steps. They were broad, white, marble steps, well called garden steps, for they led from the artificial roof garden into the great wild place beneath, where mangoes and roses, palms, ferns, and tuberoses crowded amongst the tangling wood-flowers of Bengal.

"Gather all you want," my hostess said, as I paused, spell-bound beside a bed of strangely sweet flowers. "Gather all you like, but don't ask me the names."

"Oh! I know what those are," said the American girl who had come down behind the rest of us. "They are mogree flowers. The nautch girls wear them in their

hair—I saw them at Amritzar. When the girls dance, the flowers perfume the air; and if a very big man—high-caste or rich I mean—comes in, they throw mogree flowers at him."

We strolled on through the shapeless grounds,—we two Americans. She pushed her pretty dimpled arm through mine. "Does it not seem very strange to you to be 'way off here in India?" she asked me.

"My life has been so strange," I said, "that nothing seems strange to me, unless I am in a very thoughtful mood, and then life seems so inexplicable that everything seems strange."

We were standing by a funny little square basin of water. Oriental moss broke the outlines of its marble sides. Strange coloured lilies slept upon its breast. Here and there a lantern of Japanese silk dotted the mangoe trees. Hattie tapped the warm marble with her little blue slipper. "Isn't it pretty!" said the girl, pointing with her big blue eyes to the roof that we had left. It certainly was very pretty. Through a break in the palm trees we could see our host and his men guests. They were smoking, all of them, but they seemed rather thoughtful. Above them, swung on invisible wires and on rope vines, were innumerable Japanese and Chinese lanterns. My eyes lingered lovingly on the soft yellows and the clear purples of the pretty illuminated paper balls. Above all glittered the matchless stars. "I think that I should like to live in India," said the girl at my side, softly; "wouldn't you?"

"I love my life almost anywhere," I said, turning from the fountain to pull a mogree flower. Then I kissed my young country-woman in the moonlight. I regard kissing women as more to be condemned than giggling girls and crowing hens. But some strange wave of tenderness welled over me for the maiden at my side.

When the men and the coffee came down, sweet tinkling music crept to us nearer and nearer from the shadow of the trees. A band of native musicians had been engaged—for our sake I fear,—they were such an old story to the Anglo-Indians there. I crept among the trees to examine their barrel-like drums and their indescribable string instruments. Mine host and mine husband followed me. We came back by the little lily pond. The subaltern and the American girl were there, looking at the lilies so intently that they did not see us.

"There is something remarkable about American women," said my English husband, with slow impertinence. "A man goes half mad until he gets an American wife, and then he'd give half the world to get rid of her."

"Yes," said the Major, "I regard the influx of American women into the British ranks as the chief danger that now threatens our forces. I do not understand their apathy at the War Office, and at Westminster."

I pelted my two tormentors with mogree flowers, and we went back to our hostess, leaving the young people by the lilies.

It was very late. The native musicians had taken their big bukshish and gone. A few faint streaks of light replaced the faded stars. It was almost morning. We heard the tramp of men; we caught the martial rhythm of a good old English carol. The privates of our host's regiment were coming (those of them who could sing) with

the bandmaster at their head—coming to serenade the major's lady.

They sang with a right good will. When they broke into "Rule Britannia," the bird-like soprano of the pretty American girl rose shyly above the strong heavy voices of the men. She had come back to the old mother country, as so many American women do, led back by love. It was morning. India seemed to have shaken off night, oppression, superstition, sorrow. And as the full, big glory of the day broke, the soldiers stood at attention and sang—with husky voices some of them, "God save the Queen." And in the distance, through the air, some one or something breathed the dear old tune of "Home, sweet Home."

CHAPTER VII

ORIENTAL OBSEQUIES

A Hindoo Burning Ghât

THE arch-devil death is so unconquerable a foe that the veriest atheist must easily find it in his heart to forgive the theist who has invented the consolatory theory of immortality.

If we believe death to be but the imaginary boundary between two lives, then death ceremonials become very inconsequential. If we believe death to be the end, the last sad rites assume a terrible significance. Strangely enough, the most elaborate funeral customs prevail among the staunchest believers in an after life. But then mankind always has been inconsistent. Man is born of woman!

In the East I learned something of the *post-mortem* customs of five races: the Chinese, the Hindoo, the Parsi, the Burmese, and the Japanese.

We are apt to think ourselves very advanced—we who are beginning to believe in cremation. The Hindoos have practised it for thousands of years.

The funeral pile of a Rajah sometimes costs lakhs of rupees. In Calcutta I have seen a body burned when three rupees covered the entire expense.

The rich Hindoo may be somewhat exclusive. The Hindoo masses do everything simply and openly. They bathe out of doors. They pray out of doors. They cook out of doors. They die out of doors, and their bodies are burned out of doors.

There are three burning ghâts in Calcutta. The first we visited was the cheapest and most primitive of the three. It was also the most interesting; for it was the most eloquent of the Hindoo populace.

It was a longish drive from our hotel to the burning ghât, but the last half, or more of it, was crowded with interest, for it was along the bank of the sacred Ganges, and thousands of devout Hindoos were worshipping.

Only a mile or two inland was Government House, upon the gates of which crouch two colossal lions—in stone. The British lion is more manageable in stone than in alien jungle flesh. The British lions of the Calcutta Government House gates are very impressive, but it is a rare thing to see them without native crows perched insolently upon their hard heads. Inside those gates all was a subdued, well-bred hubbub, for Lady Lansdowne was to hold a drawing-room that night. Anglo-Indian Calcutta was athrob,—European dressmakers and native dhursies were exceedingly busy. Here—where we were, on the banks of the Ganges—were myriad human creatures to whom Government House was but an architectural intrusion. They were enrapt in the observance of their racial customs; and, to them, our European customs were less than nothing. It was a little like a country fair—and greatly unlike. I

learned then and there that specialisation was not a nineteenth century development. The banks of the Ganges were divided into booths, not by walls, but by occupational differentiation. We stopped—our underfed horses were glad to stop—we stopped and watched a, to us, meaningless dance. I thought it more awkward than suggestive. That may have been because I was ignorant of its religious meaning. Then we saw a hundred people clustered about a naked fakir. His unbarbered hair was braided into disgustingly many plaits. His brown face was painted a ghastly white. He lay naked upon innumerable spikes (they were dull-edged spikes), and as he bled (in reality he did not bleed; he balanced himself so beautifully), the surrounding Hindoos prayed to Kâli, and praised the fakir. We saw enchanted pigs. We passed inspired fortune-tellers. We stopped to water our horses at a sacred fountain,—I can't imagine to what it was sacred, for I saw our disreputable steeds drink from it, and I saw many to-the-core afflicted lepers fill their chattees from it. A pile of common stones based the fountain. The lepers touched them reverently with their hopeless stumps. It is perhaps well for the human intellect that "Hope springs eternal in the human breast."

When the gharri wallah and the sais said we had reached the burning ghât, we found our inquiring minds intercepted by a crude brick wall. I have said that the Hindoos burn their dead in the open,—that is true; but in Calcutta the Hindoo has grown thrifty, and he hedges his burning ghât with a wall the closed door of which is sternly suggestive of bukshish.

The sais pounded upon the door with the butt of the whip, kindly loaned by the gharri wallah. An old Hindoo (he was sucking sugar-cane) opened the door, after a dignified pause. We gave him a rupee—deferentially, and passed in. I stumbled upon something, and gave a dainty little European shriek. The something sat up and rubbed its eyes; it was one of the burning ghât coolies, and it had been having a sleep. I marked the holy mud thrice with my Louis Quinze heels, and I stood beside a smouldering funeral pile. A crack—not unlike the report of a pistol—drove me back. The heat had broken through the dead man's skull. Our brain is our best servant, or our mightiest master, in Europe; in the land of the Hindoo, it or its casement is the last human part to protest against the extinguishment of death.

The funeral pile of a poor Hindoo looks very like an ordinary kitchen-yard wood pile. But if you go up to it—close up to it—you discover something very like a human form—a glowing charred mass, but proudly distinguished from every other shape, animate and inanimate. In the East I tried to look at things reasonably; not from any exaggerated sympathy with the subjugated native, but because I wished to get from the East the utmost available information and mental capital.

When I pulled myself together, after shrinking from the first funeral pile I had ever seen, a phrase flashed to my memory—"Purified as by fire."

That is just what the Hindoos do. They purify their dead by fire. The body is burned until absolutely nothing remains but a handful of ashes—ashes wholly free from any unclean or poisonous matter.

A second body was brought in. Two coolies carried it upon a rude litter, woven

from coarse grasses, and held together by outlines of bamboo. Two of the dead man's brothers followed, chatting pleasantly.

Four stout sticks of wood were driven upright into the ground at the corners of an imaginary parallelogram, about six feet by two. Between these four posts were loosely laid sticks of dry, cheap wood. When the pile was a little more than three feet high, the body was laid upon it. A dirty piece of crash, of the quality the coolies wear about their loins, partly wrapt the dead. One of the brothers stepped up and poured about four ounces of oil over the body. This ensured a quicker cremation, but was something of a luxury, and not a universal practice. The oil must have cost about three pies. The other brother paid the coolies, who shouldered their light empty litter and marched gaily out. More wood was piled upon the dead. A thin stick was lighted at the other funeral pile, which was now flaming finely; the second pile was lighted, and the cremation of the newcomer was begun. The two brothers appeared very interested in the igniting, and decidedly pleased when it was accomplished. They squatted down upon the ground, just so far from the pile that they might feel that their scant, filthy garments were fairly safe from the sparks, but near enough to watch all the changing phases of the cremation, and to see easily when it was consummated.

They untied a dirty rag from about a small bundle one had brought with him. They took out a small earthen bowl; it was clean and shining; and so was the brass chattee each lifted from his filthily-turbaned head. The chattees held water; the bowl held curry and rice. They fell to eating with gusto. And pray why not? They were eating to live. Their brother was burning to live—to live in Hindoo Paradise. From the Hindoo point of view his state was far the more blessed; and from all I saw of coolie life, I am not inclined to think their point of view wrong.

While the dead burned and the living ate, I looked about me, and thought. I must not claim to have felt much; it was all too strange to me for feeling to be less than numbed. My first observation was that my husband and the friend who was with us had withdrawn from my near vicinity, in the meanest manner. There they stood, on the very edge of the Ganges, and with their two brave backs squarely turned to the interesting rite we had come some miles to witness. When I say the Ganges, I mean of course the Hoogly, which is one of its mouths, and therefore as sacred to the Hindoos. I thought at first that they were smoking, because I have noticed that my husband usually is smoking when he escapes an appreciable distance from my side. They were not smoking; and our friend afterwards confided to me that they were discussing "the present condition of European politics," but discussing it languidly.

Then I saw that the cremation, which had been in full blast upon our arrival, was completed. There were two distinct kinds of ashes. The human ashes were carefully gathered into an old chattee. The authorities do not allow those ashes to be thrown into the river, and I understand that they never are thrown there in the presence of Europeans. The ashes of the wood were swept swiftly away. The bits of wood not quite burned, were frugally collected to be utilised in the next pile.

The two men had finished their curry and rice. They began to play some native

game of chance. They used pebbles for the game itself, and splinters from the adjacent funeral pile did nicely for counters.

The men—my European men, I mean—came back and said that they would like to go home. So we went.

Life is so hard for the poorer natives of India that it is not surprising that they take death so coolly. They have so little to live for; they live so difficultly, so miserably, so inadequately, that to them death has ceased to be a devil, and has become, instead, an angel of deliverance.

The most satisfactory acquaintance I made in Calcutta was with a physician whose father was a Scotsman and whose mother was a very high-caste Hindoo woman. Aside from my personal liking for the man, I found him satisfactory because he could, and did, explain Hindoo customs to me exhaustively, and also in terms intelligible to my Europeanly-developed mind. A few nights after we were first at the burning ghât we asked him how an attempt to introduce Western crematory arrangements would be received in Bengal. He shook his head. He personally would welcome the innovation (he, by the way, was a Christian); he felt sure that some of the better circumstanced, better informed Hindoos would also welcome it; but the Hindoo masses would resent it bitterly. The attempt would be foolish, I think. Why force upon so strongly conservative a people a reform for which they have absolutely no need? Would it serve any good purpose? I think not. It would do nothing except widen a breach which we, for many reasons, should do our utmost to heal.

To me, the system of the Hindoo burning ghâts, of which I saw every detail, was not nearly so repulsive as the system of the Parsi Towers of Silence, of which I only saw the outside, and could but too well imagine the inside. I wish the Parsis would abolish their method of disposal of the dead in favour of another method, as sanitary, but less revolting. But the Hindoo custom seems to me entirely commensurate with the Hindoo needs and the preservation of the general health of India.

I went to the burning ghât once at night. Night is the time of Hindoo leisure, as indeed it is of most native peoples. The enclosure was crowded with burning piles.

One night we sailed down the Ganges. The outlines of the attendants of the dead and of the funeral piles were sharply silhouetted, against the black background of the dark night, by the flames of the gruesome death fires; and from that part of the shore sacred to Hindoo worship came the shrieking and the songs of many thousand half-mad devotees.

In a primitive part of interior India, I once saw a Maharajah's funeral pile. It had cost a positive fortune. It was built of expensive spicy woods and saturated with costly oils. It was richly gilded; and the dead was wrapped in embroidered silken sheets. For an incredible distance the air was sweet and pungent and thick with the perfumed smoke.

I remember having thought when a child that the literally sweetest experience I ever had had was the attending of a High Mass at St. Peter's in Rome. But now I

must own that the sweetest smell I ever smelled was the burning of a Maharajah's funeral pile.

CHAPTER VIII

ORIENTAL NUPTIALS

A Hindoo Marriage

To Hindoo women, marriage is of even more importance than it is to women in general. Indeed, I know no race to whose women it is more important; for marriage is the sum total of a Hindoo woman's existence. She has no interests beyond her home, no possibility of outside compensation if her marriage is a failure.

Even conventional, conservative India is beginning to throb with nineteenth century restlessness and Occidental changeableness. There is a great deal to be said on both sides of the burning question of child-marriages. I propose to say none of it, but to confine myself to a description of a Hindoo marriage that I witnessed at Jubblepore,—confine myself without commenting upon the race theories of which it was a ceremonial expression.

Children are still married very young in India. But the custom is not clung to, save by the ultra orthodox Hindoos. I have known three sisters to be married in one month, in a high-caste family. The eldest was sixteen, the youngest was eight. A Hindoo girl is in the full bloom of womanhood at sixteen.

The marriage I saw was between Brahmins of a strict caste; and I believe that the only unorthodox detail was my presence. I went in the early morning to the bride's house. She was a slender, pretty girl of twelve. The bridegroom (who had not yet arrived) was an intelligent fellow—five years her senior. Twelve and seventeen years of age mean very much more in the East than in the West.

This marriage happened to be a love match. I should think that that is now true of nearly half the Hindoo marriages. The children of the caste play freely together, and their baby likes and dislikes develop with their quick development. Family love is very strong among the Hindoos. And the children have rather large influence with their parents. Hindoo girls are, I believe, rarely reluctant to marry. Indeed, they reminded me of a line of Byron's. They seemed more in love with the prospect of marriage than with any particular prospective husband. It was my observation—which was, I must say, not exhaustive—that few Hindoo marriages are unhappy. The same has been claimed, I understand, by some partial writers, for *les mariages de convenance* of France.

The first duty of Hindoo bride and bridegroom, on the Chief Day or wedding day, is ceremonious ablutions. It was after that duty had been fulfilled that I arrived at the bride's home. For many days ceremonies dear to the Oriental heart had been taking place. But they were fashionable rather than religious. They were self-granted indulgences of a ceremony-loving race, and in no way augmented the

validity of the marriage, which was secured entirely by the ceremonies and the oaths of the wedding day, prescribed by the Shástras.

It was some time after my humble entrance that the splendid arrival of the bridegroom occurred. He came on horseback, as a Hindoo bridegroom should, and he was surrounded by all his relatives and friends, which was the acme of Hindoo good form. By the bye,—a high-caste Hindoo is as polite as a Japanese. Courtesy is as much the religion of a Brahmin as of a Japanese. But Hindoo courtesy is less celebrated than Japanese courtesy because it is less graceful (though not less picturesque), and because it is not, as it is in Japan, common to high and low. Politeness is the sign of a Hindoo gentleman. It is the birth mark of every Japanese —from the Mikado to the humblest coolie.

I do not know which was the more gorgeous—the Hindoo bridegroom or the dark roan horse he rode. Certainly, the bridegroom looked the more important. The steed seemed bored, which showed a most ungrateful spirit, for never yet was horse more sumptuously caparisoned. Beneath his shaggy, unkempt mane he wore a red strung necklace of glittering jewelled talismans; about his neck was a triple row of native gems, and similar jewelled braids marked his face into wonderful parallelograms; upon his head was proudly placed an inverted feather duster, such as European ladies use for treasured bits of bric-a-brac, which the parlour-maid may not touch. The decoration of the unappreciative animal's tail was gorgeous and unique. The saddle-cloths were beautiful in detail, if not in shape; they were exquisite specimens of old, orthodox Hindoo embroidery. Hindoo customs are changing very gradually; Hindoo art is unchanged and unchangeable. It has developed; it has not been modified. The saddle-cloths were stiff, broad ovals, heavy with pearl-specked, gold embroidery; they were edged with red, silken fringe. Above the saddle-cloth rose a golden, swan-shaped saddle. Enthroned upon it sat the bridegroom. Over his head a servant held a wonderful red and yellow umbrella; two fan men followed close, holding the quaintest fans I ever saw; the sticks were of carved silver, and the fans, shaped like antique spear-heads, were made of odd painted glass, deftly embroidered here and there with jewels, and edged, as was the fan and all of the horse's caparisons, with elaborate fringe. The four servants were dressed as Hindoo servants should be, in Hindoo livery. The bridegroom wore wonderful brocaded clothes; his eyes were thickly ringed with khol; his lips were flaring red with betel-nut; his velvet cap was heavy with embroidery; his jewelry was abundant and glaring. In brief, it was in all ways a most correct Hindoo marriage procession. His people followed him with beaming faces, carefully arranged costumes, and foreheads smeared with the paint and ash-marks of high-caste Brahminism.

We clustered about the door to bid him welcome—the bride's mother in front, and the closely veiled red-clad bride next. The mother received with many ceremonies the dismounting bridegroom. The bride ran shyly forward and pinched his foot. That was in warning that he might find married life full of vexations. But he smiled with proud superiority as he salaamed elaborately to his girl-bride.

We followed him into the house. The bride's father, crying out to the gods that he would honour and receive well this Snátaka who had come to ask a maiden's hand, offered the young man a seat—offered it with many words of welcome and compliment. The bridegroom sat down, after calling the elder Brahmins everything that is honourable, superior, and admirable. Then they performed the peculiar worship of the "blessed and kind waters," the girl's father providing all the *impedimenta* of the ceremony. The elder man offered the younger a tray of sweets, called *madhuparka*. The bridegroom called upon the gods to partake of his noble father-in-law's bounty. The gods did not do so—that I could perceive; but no one seemed disconcerted, and the bridegroom ate a little himself. The host called to a servant to bring a cow. The bridegroom protested that the cow was an innocent and useful animal, and entreated that its life might be spared. The elder Brahmin conceded this; which ended the welcoming ceremony, which is called *madhuparka*, after the sweet which is given to the bridegroom. Many years ago it was customary, at a Hindoo wedding, to sacrifice a cow and distribute the fresh beef.

Then came the *Kanyá-dána* ceremony; the giving of the bride by her father to the bridegroom. The bride and bridegroom sat together, facing the east. Near them, but facing the north, sat her parents. The father "worshipped" the young couple; and all the guests called upon the gods for a thick shower of blessings. The priests handed the father sacred grass and water, and then they prayed with him, in Sanskrit. Then the old Brahmin rose up, and placing the girl's hand in her lover's, but with a blade of grass between them, said solemnly to the bridegroom, "She is no longer mine; she is thine." The bride's mother pronounced glad consent. Then the young Brahmin, holding his wife tightly by the hand, and looking at her, but speaking to the gods, said, "I entreat you, oh my gods, to bless and prosper the gracious man and wife who have given me this most sweet gift." A priest drew from between the clasped hands the blade of grass. The marriage was irrevocable. They were man and wife for ever.

Then the proud young husband, looking very manly and handsome, said to his bride, clearly and earnestly, words that I thought very sweet, although they were partly prescribed. "Moved by the gods, the great god Varuna has given you to me, oh my dear, that I may know ambrosial happiness. Your father in giving you to me has given me his very life. You are my life of life." He laid his slim brown hand upon her veiled right shoulder. "It is Love that gave this, Love that received it. O Love! all this is thine. My bride, enter thou the Ocean of Love; I accept thee out of Love. Thou art rain; the heavens give thee, the earth receives thee." Are not those beautiful words? They are prescribed, truly; but so are the words of our marriage service.

Then came the *Kautukágára* ceremony—the prettiest part of the marriage. I was allowed to see it, as a great concession. The young husband and wife went, with a priest and a number of Hindoo maidens, into an inner room. This room is strangely painted, and is called *Kautukágára*. The bride tied a love-knot on her husband's wrist, and he did the same to her; then he drew the veil from her dimpled brown face

and kissed her; then he replaced the veil with a soft silken sari, that he had brought as a gift to his bride, but the little glowing face was left uncovered. The priest took a bit of red string and tied together the garments of husband and wife, and placed a crown of tinsel, of gold, silver, and jewels upon her head. A prayer was made by the bridegroom—a prayer that their hearts might grow into each other; and while he prayed, he painted, with collyrium, his bride's eyes, and she painted his. Then he gave her some droll presents, which he produced from a mysterious somewhere among his own garments. I noticed a porcupine-quill and a looking-glass. Then he tied about her neck the marriage string. It is an odd necklace—a cord upon which a strange melée of trinkets are hung. It is called the tali. It is worn by all married Hindoo women. It is almost if not the only thing that I have never known a Hindoo woman to pawn. The tying of the tali ended the *Kautukágára* ceremony. We returned to the other room.

The *Viváha-hôma* or marriage sacrifice began. The young couple sat upon a primitive, flower-decked altar. Then the priests poured ghee-libations to the invisible gods. Then the bride's father anointed her head heavily with ghee, saying, "Become thou the sovereign ruler over thy father-in-law, over thy mother-in-law, over thy sister-in-law, and over thy brothers-in-law"—a very liberal invocation; but I thought I observed that, in the majority of high-caste Hindoo families, it was most frequently fulfilled. Hindoo women are very potent members of Hindoo society, and in home life they are often supreme. I know many Hindoo men who are extremely devoted to their wives, and consider them before all others.

The young husband was rash enough to confirm his father-in-law's large prophecy, and added to the bride, "I take thy hand that thou mayest live with me as thy husband, for a long time; the gods Bhaga, Aryamá, Savitá, and Purandhi have given thee to me that I may be a householder. Soma gave thee to Gandharva, Gandharva gave thee to Agni, and Agni gave thee to me with wealth and sons. As in the word *Sâma* the syllables *Sâ* and *ama* are mutually connected and interdependent, so are we; I am *ama*, thou art *Sâ*. I am the heavens, thou art the earth. As a *Sâ*ma verse is related to Rik of which it is composed, so am I to thee; then shouldst thou follow me. Like these pairs, let us marry, produce progeny, obtain sons; may they be many and may they live long."

Then they performed the ceremonies of *As'ma'rohana* and *Mangal Fe'rà*. Near the altar burned a sacred fire. About it lay a circle of stones. The bridegroom caught his wife's hand and said, "Come lady! place thy foot on this stone, and be as firm as it is. Resist whatever is evil." He stooped down and placed her right foot upon the stone. Together, but he preceding her, they went round the fire, treading carefully upon the stones. Back to their seats they went. The bride gave an oblation to the fire, her husband saying, "This woman prays that she may be pleasing and helpful to her relatives, and that her husband may live long." The little bride was looking very important, but oh! so tired. Four times they went round that flaming fire. Four times she gave an oblation, and he repeated his little speech.

Then they performed a ceremony which, when it was explained fully to me, I

thought very significant. It was called *Saptapadi*, or "taking seven steps." Seven heaps of rice were laid upon the floor, near each other, slanting toward the north-east. Again the bridegroom took his wife's little brown hand. She put her foot upon the first heap as he said, "Take the first step and become the partner of my drinks." On they went, she stepping on each little rice heap, he saying, "Take the second step and become the partner of my food." "Take the third step and become the partner of my wealth and prosperity." "Take the fourth step and become the partner of my good health." "Take the fifth step and become the partner of my cattle." "Take the sixth step and become my companion in all the seasons." "Take the seventh step and become my friend."

That ended the serious part of the long complicated ceremony. The newly married twain fed each other solemnly from a bowl of sugar; and then grave ceremonial gave way to mirth and noise. Presents were made to the priests. A feast was served; and an excellent feast it was. They gave me some, but I had to eat it apart; with them I might not sit, nor eat,—even the courtesy of a high-caste Brahmin failed before such a desecration of caste purity. All night long trumpets blared, shrill native fifes shrieked, drums and wild songs rent the air, and great fires flared up to heaven, making the big clumps of slender bamboos look red.

I fear I have been tedious; I hope I have been clear. A Hindoo marriage is an intricate performance. I have not described it entirely. The religious ceremonies were supplemented by many others that were customs, not observances of faith.

The vows of a Hindoo marriage are most beautiful. Unfortunately they are repeated in Sanskrit, and the bridal pair rarely, if ever, know Sanskrit. Let us hope that they know the meaning of the words they utter parrot-like. Certainly young children are as ignorant of the sense as of the language. I have seen a Hindoo bridegroom of five—a sweetly pretty boy he was.

But the ritual of the Hindoo marriage ceremony, whether it means much or little to the celebrants, can, at least, show us what the great founders of mighty Hindooism meant Hindoo marriage to be. And it behoves us to understand the spirit, the essence, of Hindoo life before we alter it by the right of might—I mean the might of right. Moreover it behoves us to know how Hindoo usages work. Child-marriage is revolting; but I have heard Hindoos make one or two tiny points in its favour. I saw something of Hindoo home-life, and I thought that it was, as a rule, devoted and happy; I know more than one eminent Hindoo to-day who is beautifully under his wife's little brown, be-ringed thumb.

The Hindoo women cling to their racial customs far more pertinaciously than do the men. I knew several delightful Hindoo women; they despised me, but they were very kind and courteous, and I admired them exceedingly. One of them was a woman of great intellectual strength and commensurate culture. One day she said to me, "What is this 'woman's rights,' of which so much you talk?" I disclaimed any share in the epidemic that had attacked so many of my sisters, and then I explained to her the movement as eloquently as I could, and as justly as a woman was able to do who despised that of which she spoke.

“I see,” she said, turning her great, languid eyes on mine; “they would have us renounce an immense, veiled, real power, for a little apparent power; they would make us lose our power over men, to have, of ourselves, and our lives, the little control that men do have of themselves and of their lives. In Europe, women who are not strong, think too much, talk too much. The big thought in the little brain will not go, only one part of it. And the sound of their own voices it makes them mad.”

Nothing so surprised me in the East as did the upper class Hindoo women—their content, their position, and their enormous influence. The men of Ind are comparatively easily converted to our social *modus operandi*. We underrate the strong opposition we will encounter from the Hindoo women.

CHAPTER IX

KING THEEBAW'S STATE BARGE

WE went from Calcutta to Rangoon. In Burmah the shadow of a great personal sorrow fell upon us. Our reminiscences of Burmah are too sad and too sacred to be put between the covers of a book. But there is a great deal that is interesting that I may try to tell about Burmah before I catch up my little personal narrative in China.

Burmah has almost unprecedented natural wealth. Minerals, woods, marbles, and gems are in Burmah in seemingly inexhaustible stores. Useful vegetation springs in spontaneous plenty from the pregnant soil. Nature does almost everything for the Burmans, and yet, Orientals though they are, they are exceptionally industrious. The palmyra tree leaf gives them paper. Butter, sugar, and flour, or their substitutes, grow on trees. Game, fish, fruit, and vegetables are most abundant. And yet they work—the men and women of Burmah—work with a will and to a right good purpose.

The marvellous pagodas, that are the artificial glory of the Burmese landscape, represent all that is best in Burmese art, all that is most persistent in Burmese industry. They are indescribably beautiful, with their huge, graceful, jewelled peaks and their lace-like, golden carvings. Lepers swarm at their gates. Heavy, pungent flowers are scattered before their thresholds, and often beneath their shadows lie the full cemeteries of the Europeans. They dot the Burmese landscape like huge jewels —do these matchless pagodas, and their sweet, swinging bells and singing gongs break the Burmese silence with clear, tinkling music.

Except the "monkey-slipping-tree," almost every tree in Burmah is festooned with a creeper,—such wondrous creepers! About the tree trunks glide snakes, pythons, lizards, chameleons, scorpions, and deadly centipedes. In the river wallow gruesome alligators.

KING THEEBAW'S STATE BARGE. *Page 80.*

King Theebaw is no longer in Burmah; but Burmah is foul with his memory, and the more odious memory of his chief queen, Soo-pyah-lat.

Theebaw came of a race in which insanity had found many a victim. The kindest thing that can be said of his reign is that it was the reign of a madman. But for Queen Soo-pyah-lat there is no such possible excuse; her brain was as clear as her heart was bad.

Theebaw was married to three wives; they were sisters, and were named Soo-pyah-gyee, Soo-pyah-lat, Soo-pyah-galay; but Soo-pyah-lat was the real queen, the chief queen, and she ruled her two sisters as well as Theebaw's concubines, or "under wives."

Opium, wine, and liquors were forbidden to the king's subjects, but not to the king. His potations were so deep that they will be remembered when he is forgotten.

"The King is still drinking." No one thing has ever been said oftener of any one monarch than that was said of the notorious Theebaw, King of the Burmans, Suzerain of Mandalay, King of the Rising Sun, Lord of the White Elephant, the Golden Umbrella, and Lord of Earth and Air. If one tithe of what has been during the last twenty years written about King Theebaw is true, if a fraction of what they now say in Burmah of him is true, why then a worse monarch never sat in absolute power upon a barbaric throne.

It is a strange fact that the Burmese—the pleasantest, most easy-going of all nations—were ruled for centuries by a cruel bloodthirsty dynasty. The predecessor of Theebaw, King Mengdon, seems to have been rather gifted, but he was shifty and

treacherous. King Theebaw—unless Christian literature has wronged him as it never yet wronged heathen prince—had every bad quality and no one redeeming one. His orgies, his debauches, the stories of his "posture girls," are unequalled in the chronicles of a continent of which many lurid things have been written.

Things were certainly fast and furious while Theebaw ruled Mandalay. But I doubt if King Theebaw ever did rule at Mandalay. Queen Soo-pyah-lat was the veritable potentate; she ruled Theebaw. He had an abundance of wives, but when he showed any special favour to any wife other than Soo-pyah-lat, she promptly had that other wife trampled to death by the royal elephants, or killed in some other equally pleasant way. Then she would, most probably, take King Theebaw in their state barge for a little post-dated *lune de miel*. Theebaw seems never for an instant to have resented, disputed, or resisted Soo-pyah-lat's supremacy. It was Queen Soo-pyah-lat who hated the British with an intensity beside which ordinary Asiatic hatred was nothing. It was Queen Soo-pyah-lat who forced Theebaw to hold out against the English forces, long after resistance was worse than vain. On the first of January 1886 King Theebaw, was finally and absolutely overthrown; but before that date he had caused England much anxiety and his patient subjects great misery.

How often have the eyes of all England been turned toward that wonderful palace at Mandalay; and almost invariably the wires flashed to the nations this message: "The King is still drinking." Yes, the king was still drinking. Before his gin-filmed eyes swayed the lithe forms of the flower-decked "posture girls," and the palace yard ran blood—the blood of many victims. Wonderful Burmese carvings glimmered and glinted on the palace walls, and the big gems rose and fell on the bad queen's breast.

To me there is something very pathetic about the story of King Theebaw. He was born to a great opportunity. He became the ruler of a most charming people, the absolute master of as interesting and as beautiful a country, and as productive, as any on the globe. And his manhood went down beneath a bad woman's jewelled foot—he sold his kingship for a hogshead of grog; and wherever his name was spoken, men said with disgust, "The King is still drinking."

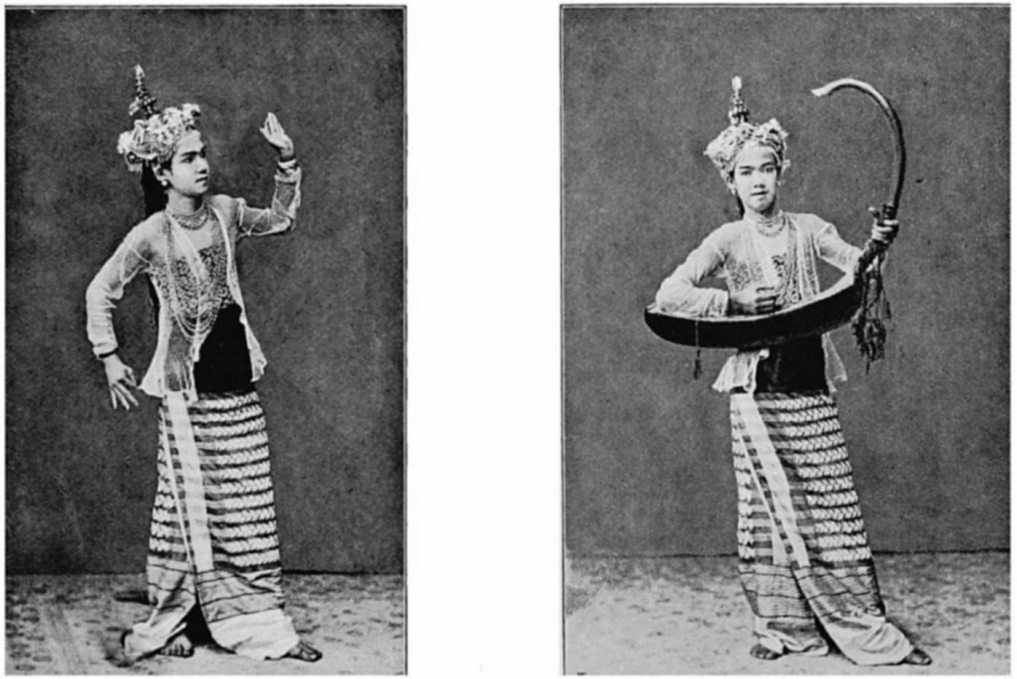
When Theebaw ascended the throne in 1878, an eminent Englishman wrote of him:—"He is little over twenty. He is a tall, well-built, personable young man. He is very fair in complexion, has a good forehead, clear steady eyes, and a firm but pleasant mouth. His chin is full and somewhat sensual-looking, but withal he is a manly frank-faced young fellow, and is said to have gained self-possession and left the early nervous awkwardness of his new position with great rapidity."

Ah, what a different appearance he presented when he was dethroned in 1886! In eight short years he had committed or countenanced atrocities that entitle his name to be bracketed with the names of Nero and Caligula.

It is happy for Burmah that Theebaw and Soo-pyah-lat are gone for ever. The industrious, happy natives eat their morning, noon, and evening rice under a gentler, if an alien, rule. But what pictures they must have made in the days and nights of all their glory—the weak bad king and his strong bad queen!

Think of them in their state barge. It was a picture in itself. Great golden gods gleamed and glowered on the segregated prow. One of these indescribable metallic majesties rode upon a grotesque golden horse; and gods and horse had for eyes jewels of incredible size. Upon the deck was a house of precious woods. It rose pagoda-like, and was crowned with a big gem which, fastened to a strong, slender wire, flashed, above the barge, like a heaven-sent star. Rare journeys they must have had up and down the lovely Burmese rivers. There are three great rivers in Burmah. They rise in the high mountains, where the snows never melt, and they take their wonderful course to the Indian Ocean. Trees crowd on their banks,—trees that are golden and red and purple with fruit, and yellow and white with blossom. The scents of mangoe and pine mingle with the fainter perfumes of the orange and papaya and plantain. Wild asparagus lifts its slim feathers everywhere. Yams and sweet potatoes grow in wild plenty. Down to the river's edge for drink come huge elephants and the fierce one-horned rhinoceros. Sleek leopards and striped tigers fight with the wild hog, and hunt the Indian roe and the axis. Wild-cock, quail, pheasant, and partridge scurry among the scented under-bush; and great peacocks spread their wonderful fans amid flowers that are brighter.

Small wonder if Theebaw and Soo-pyah-lat loved to drift up and down those wonderful rivers.



BURMESE POSTURE GIRLS. *Page 85.*

It would be difficult to exaggerate the beauty of the Burmese river banks; I

should like to slip between them on such another boat. They lay on soft crêpey cushions, did Theebaw and Soo-pyah-lat. They had dainty fare of green turtles' eggs and esculent swallows' nests; they ate strange salads made of the succulent stems of many aquatic plants and of shrubs; they dipped their jewelled fingers into big carved bowls of pickled tea; they skinned and ate odd Oriental fruits; they moored their glittering barge, and caught the big dates from off the graceful tamarind trees. Green and purple parrots whirled in the moonlight; and the blue jays winged their graceful way, haply unconscious that they must die to feather with their splendid azure the state robes of Chinese mandarins.

Perhaps they landed sometimes to wander hand in hand through the forests of priceless teak. Perhaps Soo-pyah-lat rejoiced in the immense masses of gorgeous yellow flowers, and in the huge leaves that measured twenty inches from stem to tip. Perchance they called their attendants to cut a hole in some huge oil tree, and light in it a fire, and watched the oil flow, that they might realise again how great in natural wealth Burmah was, and how spontaneously she yielded up her treasure to her sons. When the great tree—it was one hundred and eighty feet high, and its circumference was sixteen feet,—when it was emptied of its oil, it was split into long torches; and by their weird light the king and queen went back to their waiting boat.

Wherever Theebaw walked, over him was carried the great white umbrella. Umbrellas are the stars and garters of Burmah—the coats of arms—the insignia of rank. They are not carried as a protection against rain, but as a proclamation of degree. The white umbrella was sacred to Buddha and the king. Only over the head of a statue of the god and the head of the king could it be opened. To the princes of the blood-royal belonged the gold umbrella. And every class had its umbrella prescribed of shape and hue.

I do not know which is the more wonderful, the pagodas of Burmah or its creeping canes. The latter are sometimes three hundred feet long. They make splendid ropes; and out of them the deft Burmans and defter Chinese make all conceivable and many inconceivable things.

There are immensely valuable mines in Burmah whose locality was only known to Theebaw, his queen, and their few most trusted ministers. When Theebaw was conquered, just eight years ago, he did not betray the placement of those natural treasure stores. We have been hunting them ever since, but without success. It has been recently mooted that Theebaw might be induced to disclose to us their whereabouts. If the spirit of Soo-pyah-lat whispers in his ear, he will ask a big price for his knowledge.

CHAPTER X

ORIENTAL OBSEQUIES

Burmese Burials

THE Burmese are very philosophical. They have no belief in another life; but they make the most of this one. They take everything very easily—everything but death; they hate to die. That is natural on the part of a people who enjoy life so thoroughly, and who live in such a pleasant, sunny land. I have seen a Burmese funeral train in a gale of merriment, but I have never seen a Burmese man or woman who was willing to die. They are not afraid of death; but they are unutterably saddened by it. The Burmese are a tender-hearted, affectionate race, and the most affecting deathbed parting I ever saw was between a Burmese man and his dying mother.

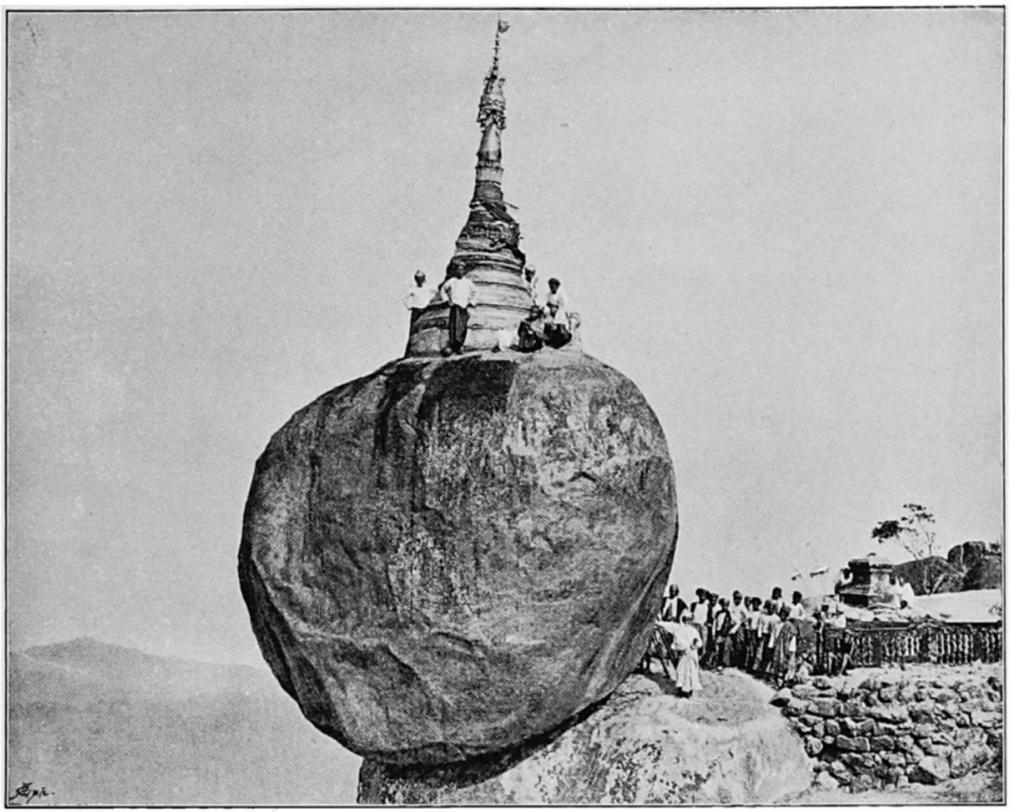
A Burmese village burns; the entire property—all the belongings of the inhabitants, are destroyed. The men set to work and build a theatre on the smouldering ruins; the women gather plantains from the nearest tree, until their silk tameins are full; the pretty Burmese children climb the trees and drop the yellow fruit down into their pretty mothers' out-held garments; the men complete the impromptu theatre while the women roast the fruit. Then they eat, and wash their meal down with brook-water, with laughter, and with song; then they bathe their hands and lips in the nearest stream, which is sure not to be far away; then they have a theatrical performance; and so console themselves for the loss of their homes and their little earthly all. But, for the loss of a relative or a close friend they are never consoled. They grieve quietly—which is very un-Eastern—but they grieve persistently.

When a Burmese dies, messengers are at once sent to all his friends, no matter how far off those friends live. And all the friends hasten to bid farewell to the body, to arrange for the funeral, and to console—as best they may—the bereaved family. All the expenses of a Burmese funeral are met by voluntary gifts.

I have often thought the Burmese the cleanest people on earth; certainly they are the cleanest people in the East. They wash their dead with great care, and several times. The last water used is scented. The Burmese do not believe in immortality, and yet, like all of us who are disbelievers, in whatever part of the world we live, they fight their own unbelief, and, when death touches their near and dear, they indulge their hurt hearts with many a little ceremony inconsistent with their scepticism. For instance, they place in the mouth of their dead a little coin called "ferry hire." They believe, or try to believe, that death is a river, and that the waterman requires pay. How the superstitions of the world repeat themselves! How

the Greek imagination dominates the imaginations of all the gentler peoples.

The body is placed on an uncovered bier, which is laid just out of the house door. There it remains for three days; but it is never left alone. Then the body is laid in the coffin. The priests, looking very like copper-coloured Capuchins, come to conduct the dead to its last resting place.



PAGODA NEAR MANDALAY. *Page 88.*

The funeral procession, unlike those of any other Eastern people, is formed largely of vehicles. The Burmese carts are very odd, and are fittingly picturesque adjuncts to the most graphically beautiful landscape in Asia. The carts are drawn by great, handsome oxen. They have two immense wheels, and an indescribable top. The back of the cart is curved. The Burmese perch themselves on the seat of their native vehicles in some mysterious way.

These carts form the first part of the funeral procession. They are decorated with queer primitive flags and flat paper umbrellas. The beautiful oxen are usually festooned with flowers; but when they are to be included in a funeral procession, the flowers are taken off them. This they often resent; for they are by no means devoid of vanity—these huge gentle oxen of the East.

After the waggons walk the priests, not less than twenty or thirty. They carry

liver-shaped palm-leaf fans, and the umbrellas peculiar to their priesthood. They carry rosaries, as do all Chinese priests. The Burmese, who have many of the Mongolian features, always seemed to me to be the Chinese grown beautiful.

After the priests walk or ride the mourners. They are dressed in white.

Then comes the funeral cart. It is shaped like a house-boat. It is covered by a softly coloured silk canopy, and it bristles with umbrellas and pennants.

The close of the funeral procession is of a nondescript character. It is a catch-all for waggons, not *en regale*, for priests and friends crowded out of the procession proper, and for stragglers. By the time the procession reaches its destination, the irregular cortége behind the funeral cart is very apt to be twice or thrice the length of the regular cortége that precedes the carriage of the dead.

When the train halts, the coffin is lifted carefully from the waggon. It is placed upon the ground, on the spot designated by the priests. Then water is poured over the coffin, while the priests chant. The Burmese set great store by water. It is almost their only beverage; and water must be an important item in the daily life of a people of such exquisite neatness. They have a yearly Water Festival. It begins on New Year's Day, and continues for nearly a week. At daybreak on New Year's Day the Burmese go to the nearest of their wonderful pagodas. They throw water upon it, and pray for a plentiful season. A jar of water is presented, with great ceremony, to the head priest of the pagoda, and with a prayer that any wickedness they may have committed during the past year may be forgiven. Then they have a splendid romp. Most of the Eastern peoples play like children; and the Burmese are the most frolicsome race in the Orient. They drench each other with water; and he who gets wettest confidently expects the most good luck for the ensuing year. The missionaries say that this is a primitive expression of the theory of the cleansing of sin by water. It reminded me of the New Year's customs of the Chinese. Every Chinaman, who possibly can, pays all his debts on New Year's Day. What a festival for the Chinese tradespeople! It reminded me even more of a German habit. On New Year's Day German friends who have quarrelled forgive each other. No Burmese feud can continue after the principals have drenched each other nicely with water at the Water Festival. The analogy would be more perfect if the Burmese were more quarrelsome or the Germans more peaceful. The Burmese very rarely quarrel among themselves.

After the pouring of water upon the coffin, alms are given to all the poor present. Then every one is given a dish of pickled tea (by the way, pickled tea is rather nice—far nicer than pickled cabbage). Other ceremonies follow—all of a quiet, dignified character. Then the body is burned—usually in the coffin. The funeral procession slowly wends its way back. The priests guard sacredly the smouldering pile. Three days later the relatives return and gather up the ashes. Very occasionally the ashes are put into urns; but as a rule they are buried.

That is a Burmese burial: the burial of human ashes.

BAND AT A BURMESE THEATRICAL PERFORMANCE. *Page 90.*

On the tenth day after the burial a great feast is held in honour of the dead, and as an attempt at cheering the bereaved relatives. A Burmese feast is a very pretty sight. The meal is usually spread on a very low table, about which the diners sit—sit on the floor of course. Sometimes the meal is eaten out of doors. Then the bowls of food are arranged on the ground. The dishes are intertwined with strings of fragrant flowers. The Burmese string the blossoms of the sweetest of their flowers on long threads, and make slender, perfumed flower-ropes, which they wear about their necks, twist among their hair, hang over their doorways, and with which they decorate their tables.

Nothing could form a prettier picture than a number of Burmese in festival dress. Their flower-twined heads, their lithe, graceful bodies, deftly wrapped in delicately-hued silks, their sleeves of embroidered net, and their jackets of flowered velvet or of brocaded silk, are enhanced here and there by milky pearls, by curiously carved gold, by quaintly wrought silver, by softly blue turquoise, and mystic moonstones.

Rice is the mainstay of Eastern life. It forms the chief ingredient of every Burmese meal. The Burmese make delicious curry, but they eat less curry than the other Eastern races. They call their three principal meals “morning rice,” “noon rice,” and “evening rice.” A Burmese feast begins with “sea-swallows’ nests soup.”

It is wonderfully nourishing. The people of Burmah are professed vegetarians. But I have eaten both fish and flesh when the guest of a Burmese lady, and I believe that both are eaten by all the people, not excepting the priests. Certainly elaborate meat and flesh dishes are conspicuous at a Burmese feast, and on every Burmese table are big jars of pickled tea. They serve an abundance of savoury yellow cakes and of fruit. They have a hot salad of cooked vegetables, including "ladies fingers," "bringel," tomatoes, and bamboo tips. There are only three courses in an ordinary funeral feast—1. Soup. 2. Meats, rice, vegetables, etc. 3. Cakes and fruit. Each viand is put on the table in one large bowl, out of which every one present eats (as you or I should have done had we lived in the time of Chaucer) with their fingers. While they eat, they drink a great deal of water. After they have washed their hands and lips they smoke. All the Burmese smoke—men, women, and children. I have seen a mother pacify a child, who cried for the breast at an inopportune moment, by giving him her cigar, and the baby made a rather successful attempt to puff it. The Burmese cigars are very large, but they are extremely mild. They are made of a large green native leaf. They are so gentle that I often wondered why the Burmese were so fond of them. Perhaps it is well that their cigars are so gentle and nicotinless, for the Burmese are the most inveterate smokers in the world.

CHAPTER XI

ORIENTAL NUPTIALS

Burmese Bridals

In Burmah, marriage is not a failure; it is a stupendous success. The Burmese women are sweetly pretty. They have dainty ways and happy faces. It would be very ungrateful of them to be less than happy, for they hold a position unique among the women of the East. I know of but one other race of women who are upon so entire an equality, socially, legally, and financially, with men as are the Burmese women, —the American woman is as free as the Burmese woman, but no more so,—the best type of the most typically American women I mean. The women who are only half American, the women in whose families old European customs are family law, are not nearly so free as the pretty women-folk of Burmah.

There is no religious ceremony connected with a Burmese marriage. The Burmese do not—in theory at least—regard marriage as a blessing; and yet I know no other country in the world in which so overwhelming a proportion of marriages are extremely happy. I never knew a Burmese husband and wife to quarrel, and Europeans who have spent many years among the Burmese tell me that such quarrels are almost unknown. This may be, in part, because the Burmese are dowered with kind, easy-going, affectionate, faithful temperaments.

The Burmese are tenderly devoted to their children. A common love of little children cements many a broken marriage, strengthens many a real love—the world over. But I believe that the reason of reasons for the universality of happy marriages in Burmah is the sensible way in which marriage is undertaken and the just way in which it is carried out. We women of Europe cry out for enfranchisement—cry with shrill, sharp voices; and I fancy that the more liberty we get the more unfeminine we grow. In America, we are sadly spoiled, I fear. We have grown fond of cushions and of sweetmeats. The Burmese women teach an invaluable lesson—if the women of America and the women of Europe would learn it. They are on as absolute an equality with men as nature will permit. All the equality that man can give woman he has given her in Burmah; the women of Europe can not well ask for more. But if the women of Europe get all the equality that they want, will they wear it as delicately and with as much dignity as do the heathen women of Burmah? I fear not. The Burmese women are as graceful as the women of Japan; as gentle, as lovable as the women of Denmark; as vivacious as the women of France; as capable as the women of America, and as feminine as the women of England at their best: the women who do not aspire to do man's work and neglect their own. The women of Burmah accept gracefully the limitations of nature,—that is the great, great lesson

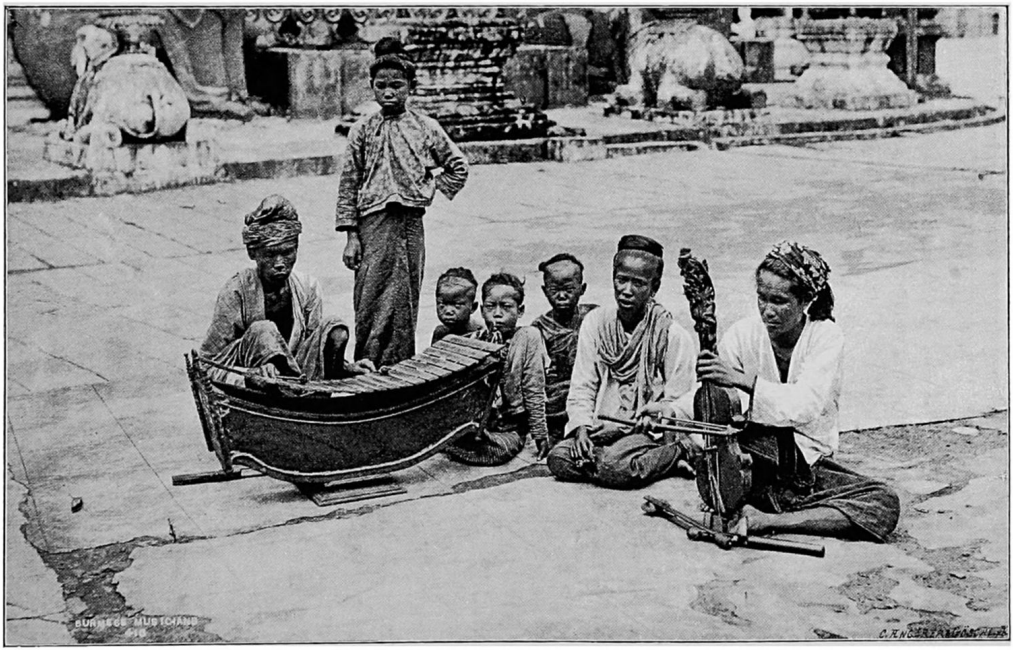
they can teach the women of England. The limitless consideration of the Burmese men for the Burmese women has not enervated the women of Burmah. The Burmese women, though they never bustle, are never loud-mouthed, are never slovenly, yet are—within reasonable, intelligent limits—the most energetic, the most industrious women in the world. Petting has not spoiled the women of Burmah. That is the great, great lesson they have for the women of America.

BURMESE MOTHER AND CHILD. *Page 94.*

The marriage yoke rests as easily upon the Burmese necks as a wreath of roses —for the man and wife pull equally, pull together. Each does his or her fair part. Each remembers always the rights of the other. Courtesy and justice are big ingredients in Burmese married life. Small wonder that in Burmah marriage is a big success.

If the position of the Burmese women is unique, the position of the Burmese children is unparalleled and almost indescribable. Filial piety is almost as much a matter of religion in Burmah as in China. On the other hand, parental coercion is more unknown in Burmah than in the United States. Burmese children never disobey, but Burmese parents almost never command; family affection is very strong in Burmah. But the law of love is the only law known in the home circle. When a girl reaches a marriageable age—when she has reached young-womanhood and feels inclined for the greater womanhood of marriage—she very simply places a light in her own particular casement; then the would-be Benedicts gather about her. Night after night they "call." Night after night she and her parents receive them. The Burmese women are always most careful in their toilets; but at this period their care becomes superlative. The Burmese women are always pretty; their taste in dress is exquisite; and when a Burmese maiden lights the invitational lamp and sits down to await her suitors, she makes a picture of pretty humanity, of which we women of Europe may well be envious.

"Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay." I wonder if that is true. It is musical, it is big with poetry. It pointed a great truth as Tennyson wrote it. It fell from his pen a truth. But take it alone, tear it from its high place in English literature; of itself, by itself, is it true? I have doubts, petty perhaps, but forcibly pertinacious. The marriage question—that El Dorado of the farthing-a-liners—Ah! there is no marriage question in Cathay. The women of the East are married, and they find their happiness in marriage—they never analyse it. They know as little of elective affinities and of natural selection as do the perfumed flowers of the Orient. Perhaps they know as much. It is a very fine thing to discuss marriage in all its imperfections, it is far finer to experience it in all its perfection. And the women of the Orient, who never talk of marriage because they are not enough advanced, experience it and seem to find it rather perfect. What has the world given women, what has civilisation, education, given them; what can life give them better than marriage? Nothing! The past gave us nothing, the present gives us nothing, and in the mysterious bosom of the future lies for us no greater benison than marriage. Sneer senseless men and unsexed women, but that is truth, Nature's greatest truth!



BURMESE MUSICIANS. *Page 97.*

The Burmese maiden who desires marriage, and tells it through her pretty lamp, is not over bold, nor does she seem so to her countrymen. The Burmese regard marriage as so much a woman's greatest right—they so entirely believe it to be her highest and best career—that the girl who announces her readiness for marriage is neither ashamed nor shamed. Let us look at her for a moment as she sits quietly within her father's doorway. Her lamp is lit. The suitors are coming. Yes, she is vastly pretty. Her long black hair is quaintly, carefully, but not grotesquely dressed; it is softly perfumed, and fresh, dewy flowers rest amid its silken coils. Every feature is pretty, but prettiest are her dainty ears and her small hands and feet. In her ears gleam twin pearls and rubies, and her little hands are heavy with the same gems. The people of the East are peculiarly fond of pearls. The fondness culminates in China. The pearls of the world are worn by the beauties of Canton and Pekin. The Burmese have all the fine tastes of the Chinese, and none of their personal ugliness. The women of Burmah wear pearls less profusely than do the women of China, but they become them more. Mah Me wears a petticoat, a graceful silken petticoat. It has been woven in a Burmese loom. The colours are bright and varied, but they are matchlessly blended, and the pattern is as exquisite as it is Oriental. An outer skirt (indeed it is a straight piece of soft silk) falls above the petticoat. It is a soft, bright pink, it is striped with dull, dark colours, and with gold and silver threads. It falls behind Mah Me in a pretty demi-train way. Under her arms is folded a broad band of red silk; it forms a pretty, simple, bodice and keeps in place the pretty, simple skirts. A sheer muslin jacket covers her shoulders and her upper arms. It is open

from her bosom. She half wears, half carries, a blue and silver shawl. Her soft brown neck is modestly covered by chains of purest gold, in which glitter the gems of Burmah—gems dug from the invaluable mines for which we are so eagerly looking.

Mah Me is smoking a big Burmese cigar. The Burmese cigars look very formidable, but in reality they are the mildest of weeds. But the Burmans are devoted to them, and only cease to smoke when they sleep. To-night is her first night "at home to suitors." A dozen or more will probably come. She will give them pickled tea, and they will chat and sing and play upon their tinkling native instruments. Every Burman is a musician, skilful and inveterate, if somewhat primitive. The Burmese, unlike the other Oriental peoples, do not drink tea, they eat it. I dislike tea as a beverage, but I liked it as a viand. The Burmese pickle it with oil and garlic. As rice is the staff of Burmese life, so is pickled tea the dish of Burmese ceremony; so Mah Me gives her suitors pickled tea. Night after night they come, until she smiles on one more than on his fellows, then their ranks thin; the favoured remains, the others go; the betrothal is accomplished; the mothers of the young couple confer; the bridegroom presents his bride with a dowry; the marriage is celebrated by a feast; the bride and bridegroom sit side by side and eat from one dish. No marriage ceremony could be simpler, none could be more significant. On the marriage night, the friends who have partaken of the marriage feast pelt the house with stones. This musicless serenade is kept up for an incredible time, but the silence and the dark come at last, and the young husband and wife drift quietly into the happiness of peaceful Burmese married life.

I have sometimes thought, when looking at the Burmese women, that perhaps one secret of the constant affection of the Burmese husbands was the constant neatness of the Burmese wives. No one, I believe, has ever seen a Burmese woman untidy; their persons and their garments are always fresh, bright, and spotless.

Some one asked me recently, "what about divorce in Burmah?" I never heard of divorce in Burmah. I am not, of course, prepared to say that there is no such thing; but certainly it is very rare. When it is necessary, I daresay they deal with it as simply and as sensibly as they do with marriage. But the only divorce of which they are very generally cognisant is the great divorce, the divorce decreed by death.

BHÂMO WOMEN. *Page 99.*

We have conquered the Burmese; true, but they have conquered the marriage question, they have solved it,—they have conquered it and solved it without knowing of its existence. They are heathens; true, but they are happy in their home lives. May they never learn the weird Western secret of marital misery. There is much for us to learn in the Orient, but none of it is more important than the beautiful

lesson of married happiness that is taught by Burmah. There is much in Burmah that is most imperfect, but in the relative positions of the sexes it is ideal.

CHAPTER XII

A JAUNT IN A HOUSE-BOAT—THROUGH THE HOME OF THE WILD WHITE ROSE

I HAVE been lying in a steamer chair, in which I have crossed half the large bodies of water in the world, and trying to recall the absolute stillness of the night I drove from the theatre in Shanghai to the canal up which we were going into China,—Chinese China, I mean; not semi-European China! Nothing moved. The crunching of our carriage wheels was the only sound we heard. The pungent Chinese flowers scented the air, and the clear moonlight brocaded the white ground with sharp black shadows of the blue wistarias.

Many weeks' hard work was over. We had been playing bravely through the hot Chinese summer; now we were going to have a rest. This was one of our delightful little vacations, all the sweeter for being stolen, as they almost invariably were; and to which I look back as the Swiss going into exile looks back to the high white peaks of his native mountains. We can recall several years very full of hard work. But we can also recall days of rest we snatched from our own busy life as it rushed by us—days when we were free and breathed new air.

China is intersected with canals, as an oak leaf is netted with veins. Every primitive people has its favourite mode of travel. The travelling Chinaman goes in a house-boat, a junk, or a sampan; and the European who would pierce beyond the outer edge of China must adopt the Chinaman's method of journeying,—there is no other way to get into China.

A delightful fellow, who lived in Shanghai, was supping with us one night. My husband spoke of my mania for seeing queer places, and told how I had gone in Hong-Kong where no European woman had been before me; of how I had gone into the Burra Bazaar in Calcutta at midnight, and told of a hundred other follies, for which I had been soundly scolded at the time, but which I had thoroughly enjoyed, and remember with considerable pleasure.

Mr. Brown said, "Would you like to go in a house-boat up one of the canals into Chinese China, where Europeans almost never go?"

I was overjoyed at the suggestion. There were two difficulties in our way, but woman-like I ignored them, and man-like they overcame them. The first difficulty was that we were playing six nights a week, and the second was that the house-boat was very small and had only one cabin. My husband agreed to give our company a short holiday. Mr. Brown suggested that they two could sleep on deck, or if it turned cold, a curtain could be stretched across the tiny cabin. We were to go, and I was happy.

It was about one in the morning when we reached the boat. It was a funny little

bark, and looked as if it had been carved from a big Chinese nut. The moonlight was so bright that we could see the faces of the scantily clad coolies who lay on the deck. They were our sailors. There were only two servants, the cook and Mr. Brown's "boy," who was to act as butler and general factotum. They stood waiting for us, their bare feet hidden by the coarse Chinese grass that grew on the banks, their long cues beautifully braided and finished with red cotton, and their long blue garments (for all the world like pinafores) new laundried.

I was asked once more if I were afraid—if I really wanted to go; then our carriage turned back, and we went on board.

The sailors undid our moorings. They took up their long poles, and we moved on through the moonlit darkness. We stood on deck a few moments before we went down to supper. We were alone with the night, and with China. I leaned over the rail and felt that I was the only European woman in China; those in Shanghai and in Hong-Kong didn't count, no, nor even those in Sha-mien. But *I* was in China, and I was going up, up into the forbidden country.

Mr. Brown made me go below. What a capital host he was; and what a funny little cabin. There was a table a little smaller than that at which I'm writing, and there were seats round the cabin's sides, a bunk at one end, and that was all. No not all: there were red curtains at the windows; there were cushions on the seats; there were satin heaps of eider down on the one bunk (my bunk); there was a vase of flowers; and Ah Loon was bringing in the supper.

We had a pigeon pie that would have done credit to the Langham; we had an omelet in which the blessed cook had stirred *pâté de foie gras*; we had anchovy sandwiches and salad. The men sipped whisky and water as men will, and I had some champagne. We had some easy talk, but not for long. Two of us were tired, so after going on deck for one more look at the moon-bathed shore and the queer sailors, I said "good-night" and went below. Ah Loon had taken away the supper and pulled down the little red curtains. He had dived into my bag and laid out my kimono. I put it on, pulled up the curtains, put out the lights, and climbed into my throne-like bed. Yes; and I was as happy as a queen!

I have found that natives and monkeys warm to one who goes among them fearlessly. And then it would have meant such bitter reckoning for those sailors if any ill thing had befallen us. The night was still, the moonlight accented everything, but no leaf moved. Two sounds broke the stillness now and again. As we passed some temple the tom-toms clashed out the brazen prayer of the priest who was spending the night in worship; then as we passed some other boat, our boatmen cried out, in Chinese, "Make way, make way for us; we have distinguished foreigners aboard." I tucked the eider down more cosily about me and sank back, drowsy with the delicious luxury of being called a "distinguished foreigner." A sweet, mild smell of tobacco came from the deck like a last good-night from my husband and our host. I dozed, then I woke to feel a faint perfume creep across my face, it was my welcome into China; it was the scent of the wild white rose.

When I woke in the morning Ah Loon was brightening the cabin with Oriental

disregard of narrow European bedchamber sanctities.

"You sleep wellie?" he said. "I bling you tea decky or you dlinky in bedie? They gone decky, they done washie."

I had my tea in bed, and then I induced him to leave the room. The cabin was sweet with yellow jasmine. One of the sailors had swam ashore to pull it. I dressed myself, but my boots were gone. I found them in the cook-house with Ah Loon. He refused to part with them. So I had to take him back to the cabin and let him button them for me. He wanted to "dlessie" my "hailie" but I postponed that.

All day we went on through panoramaed details of Chinese life. In one place big-leaved tobacco plants grew almost to the canal's edge. The coolies who were cultivating the field rested from their work to look at us. It was quite a shock to me to see tobacco untended by American darkies. A sudden shower drove us below, and made the coolies bundle into their odd rain-coats. These garments are made of long, coarse grass. They make one think of the old nursery rhyme, "The beggars are come to town," but they keep their wearers dry and they are very light.

Breakfast was ready. The French and the Chinese make the best coffee in the world. The Chinese are excellent cooks; ours had been borrowed from the "Shanghai Club," and he was, what it is a crime for a cook not to be, an artist. He had done some delightful things with fresh fish, and he had made a *suprême* of chicken breasts in which tomatoes, mushrooms, and olives were mingled with the happiest result. The Chinese fruits (of course we ended our meal with fruit) are delicious. And you can't eat them out of China. They are as pertinacious in their love of home as the Chinamen themselves. You can buy liches at Covent Garden—dried liches, but they are no more like the big pink-green fruit you eat in China than the toy pagoda you buy at the Lowther Arcade is like the great pagoda at Canton. After breakfast I went and tried to make friends with the cook. He was crouching over a little naphtha stove. The weird, blue flame made the six feet by seven kitchen look like a baby "Blue Grotto" and it threw a purple haze about yellow Yen Yang that turned him into a picturesque demon. He failed to make me over-welcome, and the sickly smell of the naphtha disgusted me; so I went back to the cabin.

The rain was over. We went on deck. We were just in time to see a dozen or more Chinamen of the better class clustered about the base of an old Pagoda. "Loong Hwa" it was called I think, and it had a long interesting history. We passed acres and acres of rice, in different stages of growth. In many of the fields men, women, and children stood knee deep in the water without which the young rice won't grow. Then we passed through a strange crowded city. The "Soochow" canal, on which we were, seemed to be the city's principal street. Shops and houses were huddled together indiscriminately. All were open to the view of passers-by, and all were swarming with life. The buildings were of brick, of mud, of wood, and of bamboo. The roofs, which were invariably peaked, were covered with anything and everything; matting, broken flower pots, grass, tiles, and fifty other materials. On half the roofs children were playing or sleeping. Outside a shop, in which a "red button mandarin" was making a purchase, waited his little body-guard of seven

soldiers; six of them carried round bamboo shields, and one bore his flag. We passed a famous Chinese temple and paused a little to study a wonderful idol on the outer wall. It was in *bas relief*, and tinted with every colour on the Chinese palette.

All that day and all the next—all that night and all the next—we went on through "that old world which was to us the new." I have not space for even passing mention of half the wonders I saw. My pen must skip much that I shall always remember. But I must not omit a passing description of our wine-cellar. Three ropes trailed behind our house-boat. They hung low in the water—one was weighted with a bottle of beer; one was heavy with a bottle of claret; and one sunk deep in the cool stream because a bottle of champagne was tied to it. It was the duty of a half-grown Chinese boy to watch those ropes, and to watch a grass bag filled with bottles of soda-water which hung over one side. When a bottle was pulled in, another replaced it; and all our drink was beautifully cool.

On the third morning we landed. I had to walk across a thick bamboo pole, which they threw from the deck to the bank. I toddled like a "small-footed" woman of the best Chinese society; and I should have fallen had not Mr. Brown on shore and my husband on the boat, held the two ends of a tightly stretched-rope. I steadied myself by holding to it with one hand. And I stood in China!

We had a long walk before us—a walk up to where Rome sat enthroned on the Chinese hills; for we were going to a cathedral presided over by an eminent Roman Catholic prelate. We had gone about a quarter of a mile, climbing over rocks, breaking through tangling flowers and shrubs, when we came upon a sea of perfumed beauty. We had reached the home of the wild white rose.

Eighteen years before, at Heidelberg, my father found and gave me a wild white rose. It was the first wild white rose we had ever seen, and, though William Black tells of wild white roses in England, my father never saw another. Now I saw a wilderness of wild white roses at my feet. They lay like unmelting snow-flakes on the breast of the Chinese summer. We went on, up the hills. We passed through three or four Chinese farmyards. No one molested us, and they scarcely looked at us, though Europeans were almost unknown there. Chinese dignity is imperturbable.

I grew tired. A woman who was hulling corn gave me a glass of milk. But when my two comrades intimated that they too were tired and thirsty, she shook her head and frowned. Who shall say that the women of the Orient are not emancipated?

Half-way up the hill we stopped and looked across China. Green—green—green! Rice—rice—rice! The food of the nation was growing on the land of the people. Every known and unknown shade of green was there. The boundaries of each farm were cleanly outlined; and in the atmosphere, as clear as that of Italy, we could see for miles and miles; far in the distance the green fields and the blue sky melted into each other—making by their mingling a lovely indescribable gray.

We had reached a little chapel. Over the doorway was a crucifix. On the hill above stood a white cathedral. It would have adorned any street in Paris or Vienna; and the great gold cross that tipped it flashed like intersecting rainbows in the noon-day sun.

We waited in the chapel while our cards were sent up to the fathers. The walls were hung with Scriptural texts (in Chinese characters) and Biblical illustrations from a Mongolian point of view. Joseph, and a greater than Joseph, wore "pigtails," and Mary had "little feet," and the ample trousers of a Chinese woman. I have noticed all over the world that the Church of Rome is very wise in her concessions to the peoples she would convert. She adapts her teachings to the language her hearers can easiest understand.

Our messenger came back. The fathers were in retreat, and of course could not see us; least of all could they see me. But the head of their order kindly sent me down his "chair," and two coolies to carry me up to the cathedral. I appreciated that courtesy, before we reached the top; for my husband and our friend found the climb very hard. The steep steps were cut in the rock in a manner typical of the Journey to the Cross. The first set of steps bore upward to the right; then a rude shrine was cut in the rocks. That represented the first station. The next set of steps bore upward to the left; then another niche represented the second station. The third set of steps bore upward to the right; the fourth bore upward to the left. There were twelve sets of steps, and at the end of each a holy lamp burned in front of a niche frescoed with the pictures that you will find in every illustrated Roman Catholic prayer-book. From the last station three broad, easy steps led into the beautiful cathedral. There were no pews; mats lay upon the mosaic floor. The huge building was empty. At the door the marble basins held holy water unrippled by devout fingers. The altar-piece was wonderfully fine, and reminded me of the admirable figure of Mary on the high altar of the cathedral in Montreal.

We lingered a long time in the cool, vacant fane, speaking in hushed tones of the vast enterprise of Rome. Her priests have made practically no converts in China; and they know it. But they persist. They spare no expense, count no cost of life; because they believe that in after generations they shall have so permeated Chinese life with Roman Catholic thought that real conversion of the Chinese may be possible. I am not a Roman Catholic; but the longer I live—the farther I travel—the more deeply I respect the Church of Rome. She sent her Sisters of Charity into the battlefields of old Europe; she has encouraged art and literature when, but for her, they must have perished; and her pioneers press always in the advance guard of civilisation.

It was sunset when we returned to our house-boat. We seized upon the dinner table. I had had a glass of milk since breakfast, and the hospitable priests had sent us a light lunch into their outer garden; but we had climbed eight miles at least; the men had walked up and down the long, steep steps leading to the cathedral; and we were very hungry.

We went on deck for coffee. We had begun our return journey. I tried to paint the sunset. How I failed! Red melted into orange, and warm violet faded to cold green, before I could fix either to my half liking. A few miles down, the canal widened into a lake. We waited there a little to watch some novel fishing. On the centre of the lake were three or four motionless sampans; in each were two or three

Chinamen; but the fishermen were huge cormorants. Each man had two birds; each bird was fastened, by one foot, to a long string, the other end of which was secured to the Chinaman's wrist; each bird had a metal ring about his throat, to prevent his swallowing the fish he caught. The birds sat on the edge of the sampans, peering intently into the water. Suddenly one would plunge into the water, coming up almost instantly, with a silver fish gleaming in its cruel beak. The cormorants never made a mistake. It was only after a fierce fight that they could be made to relinquish their prey; and the men who had them in charge had many a torn finger. When the boats were full, the men poled to the shore. The birds were carried some distance from the sampans; the rings were taken from their necks; and they were given a few of the fish they had been used to catch. I have seen few sights more weird, more distinctively odd, than the fishing cormorants of China.

An hour later—it was still bright and light—we passed through a Chinese town. A high picturesque bridge that spanned the canal was teeming with people. It was the Chinese hour of rest; the Chinese (the busiest people on the globe) were doing nothing but enjoying themselves. They were all talking—their language is never musical, but it is characteristic.

I have heard a great deal of Chinese antagonism to Europeans; I have never witnessed it. Friends have told me of hair-breadth escapes from Chinese mobs, and of loathsomely insulting language to which they have been subjected by the Chinese. My experience has been quite to the contrary. I have traversed the length and breadth of the island of Hong-Kong alone, but for my 'rickshaw coolie. I have gone down into the depths of old Shanghai; and I have stood, one of three Europeans, in the midst of ten thousand Cantonese, and I have received courteous kindness—nothing else. I have had them laugh at me. A woman in Canton crept up to me and felt the strange European texture of my dress; a woman in Shanghai begged a glove from me—giving me a ring in return. I have had presents, unsolicited and unrequited, from almost every class of Chinese. As we passed beneath the big red bridge, a girl leaned over the parapet and threw a bunch of sweet-briar into my lap. In reporting my days in China, I must report unbroken kindness; for no grown woman can be expected to count the fact that, as she sat on the deck of a house-boat, half-a-dozen Chinese urchins called out, "La-le-lung! La-le-lung!" That means a thief, a liar, and something else as complimentary. And one boy called after us, "Fankwai!" which means foreign devil. But the delightful frankness of the small boy is too world-wide to be laid at the door of China; and to me a small boy is the most delicious animal in the wide world; and I can forgive him sins much more grievous than calling me a "foreign devil."

We didn't land where we had embarked a few nights before. We kept on down through the entrance to the Soochow creek. There the native houses, with their queerly ventilated walls, clustered in indescribable confusion. The roof of every Chinese building is peaked liked the prow of an ancient ship. I have often wished for leisure to study Chinese architecture, the few theories I have heard about its peculiarities are so interesting.

We forced our way through a multitude of native boats, out into the fresh breezes of the open water,—we were in the river. We made for the harbour.

We were back in Shanghai; our happy holiday was over. I shall always hold Mr. Brown's memory very blessed; and remember as one of the most pleasant and unique experiences of my life our jaunt in a house-boat through the home of the Wild White Rose.

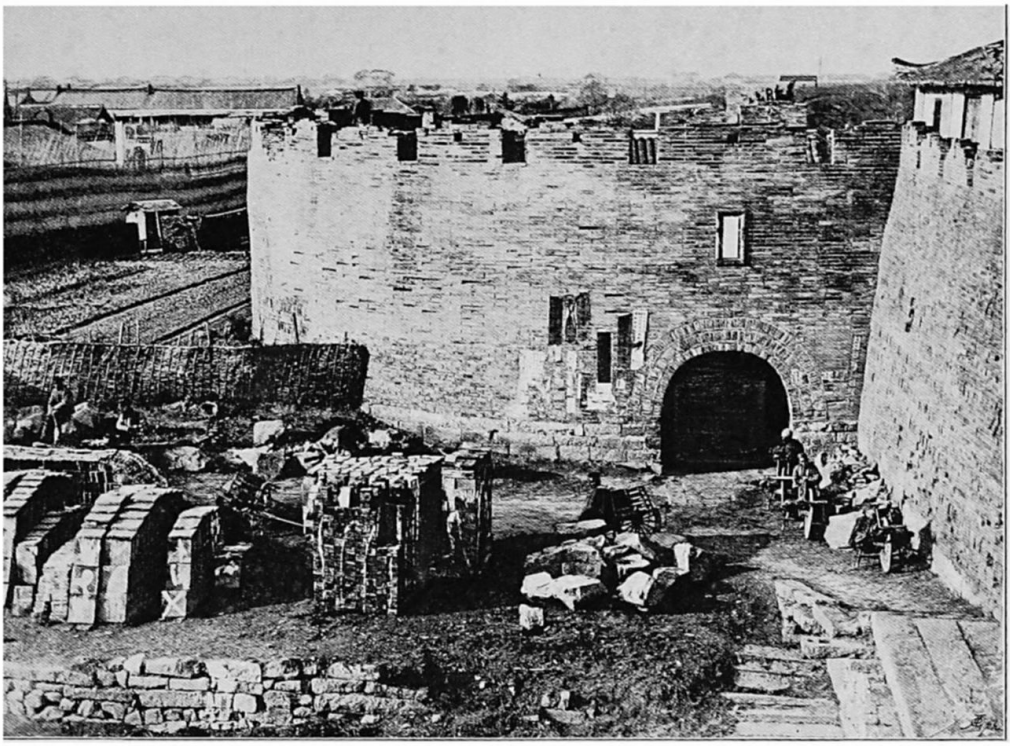
CHAPTER XIII

AN OPIUM DEN IN SHANGHAI

THERE are two Shanghais. New Shanghai is under the control of three Western powers. Over one section of it floats the French Tricolour; over another part waves the Stars and Stripes of the United States; above the third flies the Union Jack. The Chinese who live in New Shanghai are more or less Europeanised; they speak "pidgen" English or a quaint burlesque French. They adapt themselves to their pale neighbours—in many ways, I have eaten in Shanghai with a Chinaman who was deft in his use of knife and fork. The opium "joints" of New Shanghai are not typical Chinese opium houses any more than if they were in "China-town" in San Francisco or in Melbourne. They are so modified for the convenience of their European habitués that, at the most, they are but half Mongolian.

In Old Shanghai it is all very different. Drive a few miles—a very few—from the luxurious European Club; leave your carriage when you come to a bamboo bridge it may not cross; pass over that bridge; go through the gate-way of the old city wall; and you are in China!—real China!—old China, where ancient customs hold their own; where nothing changes. You pass through that gate by sufferance. Don't swagger down those dirty narrow streets. The flag that tops your consulate casts no protecting shadow here.

At night, Old Shanghai is shut to Europeans. But we went there one night, armed with especial permission, and escorted by three white-button mandarins; and, perhaps I ought to add, forbidden by our Consul.



CITY WALL, OLD SHANGHAI. *Page 112.*

We saw several opium dens. They varied in their degrees of luxury, but they were all alike in being vastly unlike anything we had seen in New Shanghai or in Occidental "China-towns."

In the humblest of the "joints" we visited in Old Shanghai, on trestles, some made of wood, some made of bamboo, lay long boards; every alternate trestle was higher than those next it; this made an incline. The smokers lay on these inclined boards, their heads at the higher ends, their feet at the lower; under their heads were hard, small, native pillows; and between each two smokers was placed a small bamboo cabinet that held the *impedimenta* of their dissipation.

Is opium smoking a dissipation? Yes—if it is smoked to excess, and at the wrong time. But I have lived too long in the East not to feel that opium has a place—an essential place—in the economy of the Orient. That we should wean Asia from the use of opium is impossible; that we are trying, is preposterous; worst of all, we are making ourselves ridiculous.

The opium den was quiet and decorous. The air was heavy with a peculiar, pleasant sweetness. The smokers were in different stages of the opium pleasure; but they were all well-behaved and inoffensive. Would they have been so had whisky been the form of their indulgence? In a few hours they would resume the heavy burdens of their poverty-stricken lives, rested but not enervated. Gin would not have

left them so unharmed!

The outer room, through which we had passed, was of course devoted to gambling. The Chinaman stimulates his intellect as much by his incessant playing of intricate games of chance as he stupefies it by his frequent use of opium.

I have been asked if Chinese women smoke. I believe that they do,—very much as European women smoke. Their smoking of opium is by no means universal, nor do they smoke it to excess, nor in its strength. When the feet of the small-footed women are being bound, I believe that they use opium rather more than at other times.

That the national use of opium has not dulled the national intellect must be the testimony of every truthful European who has ever tried to get the better, in a bargain, of a Chinese man, woman, or child. That the national use of opium has undermined the national health surely will be said by no one who has gone through China with eyes half open.

As we drove home, I felt that we had in no way been "slumming"; but rather that we had been peeping at the interesting real life of a wonderful people.

Our Consul gave us marrow-bones for supper, and said to me—"You will burrow once too often into the bowels of the Orient"; but I never did.

I know nothing of the great international issues staked upon England's ultimate answer to the Opium Question. I am too lazy (or too wise) to attempt the quick solving of a problem that has baffled many a wise man throughout a lifetime. But I know something of the human interests at stake; and humanitarianism is so much more than internationalism that I venture to speak *re* this well-worn subject.

Opium has been a great blessing to Asia, and is so now. True, it is sometimes used to excess in the East. Here, I have known Englishmen to make themselves very ill by over-consumption of roast beef and Yorkshire pudding; Italian noblemen have grown gross from repeated over-feeds of macaroni; Italian peasants have become disgustingly fat on black bread and garlic.

Some Chinamen, some Indians, use too much opium; but (we must bear in mind the enormous populations of both countries) they are the exceptions, not the rule. The people of the East are naturally moderate. They are languid, and languor does nothing to excess. In India, in the Straits Settlements, or in China, a coolie goes bravely to work, after an enormous meal of rice and curry. Curry is a positive stimulant, a non-intoxicant stimulant! After some hours the coolie feels a little less like work; but his work is not half done. He thrusts his hand into one of the many mysterious recesses of his dirty loin cloth; he draws forth a yellowish ball, about the size of a wickedly big pill. It is not opium, but it contains opium. He thrusts it beneath his tongue. He does not grow sleepy; he does not grow momentarily less intelligent; but his work grows lighter. His evening-rice does not seem so sadly far off. The opium ball (ball tinged with opium, to speak correctly rather than colloquially)—the opium ball has made his flesh as strong temporarily as his patient Oriental spirit is always willing. The effect of the opium passes away. His work is over. His curry and rice is ready. He goes home to it, and to his gentle, meek,

contented womankind, no jot the worse for his little indulgence. Had he worked on with tingling nerves, and trembling limbs, and craving stomach, he would have been in a miserable state physically.

Again, I acknowledge that the people of the East sometimes take opium in injurious and disgraceful quantities, but they are an infinitesimal proportion. Here in Europe people occasionally select the pleasantest means of committing suicide, and lull themselves into eternal slumber with chloroform. For their silly sakes (I might say brave sakes, did I care to deal with two controversies at once)—for their sakes shall we do away with chloroform, and make the operating rooms of our hospitals the hells of horrors they were sixty years ago?

It has often been in my heart to advocate the moderate use of opium for our own working classes. I have not done so for three reasons. In the first place I am an unknown woman with an unestablished pen. Who would listen to me merely because I love Asia and wish Europe well? Secondly, I am a moral coward; I shrink from the contumely of my own people. Last of all, and most of all, I doubt if our poor could be so trusted, as can the people of the Orient, with a drug which is blessing or curse as it is wisely or unwisely used. Self-denial has become by long usage second nature to the children of the East. Our Anglo-Saxon poor drain their pewter mugs to the dregs.

The other day at the British Museum, when searching for exact and reliable information on a nice point of Oriental law, I had the misfortune to come across a maudlin book written by a missionary. I condemn the book, not because of its author's calling, but because it was written in a narrow spirit, and in dense ignorance of the subject embodied in its title. Among other things calculated to rather startle one who knows the East and loves it, the writer gravely proposed that we should subjugate "wicked China" by influencing the Chinese to a much larger use of opium. In Europe the victims of nameless crimes are sometimes drugged into drunken acquiescence; but I am sure that most Christians would advocate a conversion of the heathen more intelligently voluntary on the part of the converts.

Let us speak the truth about Asia or be silent; let us be just to India at least. There are many subjects vitally important to Her Majesty's brown people, subjects intimately connected with their home lives and their physical well-being, of which most of us know nothing. If we are too indolent or too indifferent to inform ourselves on those subjects in the only adequate way—I mean by a long, studious, and sympathetic residence in India—why then, in the great name of humanity and the name of Anglo-Saxon justice, let us leave bad enough alone.

There are two classes of men who should not be allowed to write, or at all events to print. In our profession we always know that a company has fallen upon very hard times indeed when His Majesty the stage manager is cast for a part. There are analogous reasons and as strong why an editor should never dip his pen into the ink-filled well save to write, "Returned with thanks," or "Please reduce this charming article from three columns to one."

Re writing editors, I have said as much as I dare. "*Re* writing" missionaries,

please let me speak. Why are they missionaries? What do they as missionaries accomplish? I have not devoted enough time to either question, nor have I asked those questions with enough sympathy, to feel justified in answering. The nineteenth century must work out its own salvation if it can, and the overplus of Anglo-Saxon population must find relief and breathing room in many a foreign clime, and through the channel of many a debatable occupation.

I am dumb before the mass of missionaries and the missionary question. But against the missionaries who write, not narrow tracts, but unnecessary and incorrect essays on Eastern peoples and customs, I now and here wage war.

A missionary goes to Asia, perhaps to sacrifice his life, perhaps to better his condition. In one thing at least he is sincere—in his condemnation of the religions of the East. Of these religions he knows nothing; but the missionary is not perhaps quite so unreasonable as he appears, for he expects the "native" to accept Christianity as blindly and as ignorantly as he himself condemns Buddhism, Confucianism, and a hundred other creeds of which he does not even know the names. I do not blame the missionary; we all think as keenly as we can, and our thought is only limited by our circumstances and our capacity.

My quarrel with the missionary is a personal one. I protest against his ignorance of modes Oriental being perpetuated in type.

I am reading now in the British Museum,—reading to increase my knowledge of the hemisphere I love. I select from the catalogue thirteen books. I go to my seat, the books are brought; twelve are written by missionaries, and they abound in statements so preposterously inaccurate that even my partial information balks at them.

The man who devotes his life to the study of microbes does not attempt, when he retires from active practice, to crown his life's work by writing an exhaustive treatise on the Law of Evidence. A great Q.C. rarely spends his old age in the authorship of a book on hip-disease. We live in an age of specialists; but the missionary, at least the literary missionary, is a man apart,—he deals in generalities, and they don't even glitter.

I came across a book the other day, or rather it came across me. It had been written by a most estimable man, and it was a most wonderful and ingenious jumble of lapidarian lore, of geological research, and of the history of Christianity in Ceylon. It was a book supremely calculated to exasperate an enthusiastic lapidarian who was indifferent to things sacred; but then, of course, such a man requires exasperating. But it occurred to me that it might be equally calculated to embarrass and puzzle the devout reader who was more religiously minded than generally well-informed.

I am not jibing at missionaries. Some of the most charming people that I have met in India were missionaries; and though we radically differed in much that was to them of the first importance, I found every cause to respect their intelligence, their mentalities, and their lives.

I spent a good deal of time in the Leper Asylum at Subathu, and learned a vast

deal from the missionary in charge of it, and from his wife. What a book of intense interest they could write!—for I am sure that they have too much character to write about what they do not understand; I am sure that they have too much literary good taste to make a heterogeneous mixture of theology and irrelevant Orientalism. They both write well, for I have had charming letters from them both.

But the literary missionary *per se*—the man who knows superficially one thing and writes books about everything—he ought to be extinguished.

CHAPTER XIV

MEMORIES OF HONG-KONG

HONG-KONG exemplifies the national reserve of two great nations. Hong-Kong is the home of countless Chinamen, and the residence of many Englishmen, but the two know little of each other.

After having lived for some months in Hong-Kong, I have concluded that there are no two nations, one Oriental and the other Occidental, that so closely resemble each other as do the English and the Chinese. Englishmen are intensely Western; Chinamen are intensely Eastern. But those are, after all, merely matters involving local colour. Local colour affects the details of daily national life, but does not necessarily destroy or create great basic race characteristics.

Chinamen and Englishmen have, in common, indefatigable industry, indomitable courage, unswerving perseverance, reticence, pride, fidelity to a bargain, love of law and order, faith in the old, mistrust of the new. Both love horses; both were originally hunters; both indulge in games of chance—sometimes too often; both are respecters of rank; both venerate genius; both are considerate of women and children; both have produced great and enduring literatures; both have developed science; both resent the slightest encroachment upon their rights—individual or national; both are slow to anger and slower to forgive; both lack a supreme taste in dress; and in a hundred other ways they resemble each other.

The English race is painted on the canvas of life with stern reliable grays; the Chinese race is painted with dull serviceable blues. The Chinese have the advantage of the more vivid, picture-like background.

Nature is brilliant and aggressive in China. Chinese architecture is fantastic and often crude. But both are softened. The bold, bright scenery is made lovely and almost gentle by endless trails of dainty vines, great clumps and long lines of feathery bamboo, fields of wild white roses, and ragged masses of chrysanthemums. The grotesque Mongolian architecture is toned to beauty and fitness by its antiquity, and by its quaint tent-like outlines.

There is no city in the world more beautifully situated than Hong-Kong. As a matter of fact, there is no city named Hong-Kong, but there is a city called Hong-Kong. The island is named Hong-Kong, and its one city is named Victoria, but it is always called Hong-Kong. It is so much more rational to call a Chinese city by a Chinese rather than an English name—even though the English flag waves over it—that we may adopt the custom and forget the fact.

"The Peak" crowns Hong-Kong naturally and socially. The beauty of the island culminates where the huge ferns break again the lovely broken outlines of the Peak, and the blue sky backgrounds with topaz the big green fronds. The European élite of

the island lives as near the Peak as it can, and descends in its coolie-borne chair to the streets and byways of Hong-Kong. The Peak is the climatic salvation of European life in Hong-Kong. When the heat of Hong-Kong the lowly is not to be endured of European vitalities, why then the Europeans of lower Hong-Kong reverse the action of Hong-Kong's élite. The dwellers in Hong-Kong the lower ascend to the Peak, where it is always delightfully comfortable, invigoratingly cool. But they do not, as a rule, come up in chairs—the middle-class Anglo-Hong-Kongians; they come up on the cable railway, which is far quicker, and only costs, if I remember, ten sen!

But there is one more word to be said in praise of the Peak. Europeans can boast of three gastronomic achievements in Asia. The hotels in the East are, as a rule, bad; but there are a few exceptions; and of those few, three are Bonifaced by Europeans. A dear old American darky presides smilingly over a capital hotel on the Peak.

It poured when we first reached Hong-Kong. But I am always delighted to get on to firm land—even if it is rain-soaked and muddy.

The chattering coolies and a thousand sampans swarmed about our ship. The sampans seemed scrupulously clean and were indescribably quaint. Women stood in them and propelled them, using in a masterly way long bamboo poles. The women wore full blue trousers, and black sack-like long-skirted coats that shone like oilcloth. They all wore ear-rings and bracelets of jade. The men wore their droll rain-coats and conical-shaped hats that had immense brims and were made of bamboo splints. They jabbered like magpies; and the scene was infinitely more Chinese than any I had seen in the harbour at Shanghai. Soon a business-like little tug came alongside, with Mr. Paulding standing smiling in the prow. He had a nice new umbrella and a very nice new hat. I never remember arriving at a new point in our Eastern journeyings and being met by Mr. Paulding minus a new hat. It was his one mania, and a very harmless one; but I believe it more than once provoked his Madrassi boy to tears. Mr. Paulding could never be induced to part with one of his hats, nor to allow them to be roughly stowed away with the heavy luggage. Sam used to look both picturesque and pathetic when he staggered on to a boat, or boarded with difficulty a train, bearing about his patient but unwilling person some dozens of hat boxes and topees.

Much to my disappointment we were transferred to the steam launch. I had artistic yearnings toward a sampan; but we were in a hurry, so the picturesque was sacrificed to the expeditious.

After breakfast—for it was still early—we walked to the theatre. I only know of two European theatres in China; but both are excellent—bar dressing-rooms. The theatre in Hong-Kong is in the Town Hall. It was not only nice, but it was clean.

We had in Hong-Kong a, for us, long holiday. Madame Patey and an admirable company of artists had possession of the theatre. We waited—unless I forget—a week or more, before we opened. The days I spent in prowling about Hong-Kong; and each night that Madame Patey sang, we had a feast of music.

Mr. Paulding had engaged a jinrickshaw and a coolie for me before we arrived.

He had learned that wherever we were I would go—go all the time; and that the drain on the managerial exchequer was rather less if some vehicle of locomotion was bargained for, for me, before-hand. It was impossible to hire a carriage, because there were none. The Governor had a landau, if I remember, and some one else had some kind of a carriage, and there were a few dog-carts—a very few. Hong-Kong is so up and down—most of the streets are up so many flights of steps—that a trap would be comparatively useless. Indeed the 'rickshaws have often to go very much round about, where a chair "can go right up." And there are many nooks of beauty to which the jinrickshaws cannot take you at all. We were great friends—were Chung Lim, my 'rickshaw coolie, and I, although he knew no English and utterly failed to understand my Chinese. He was a little creature, but oh! how he ran. When the amah and the hotel clerk between them had made him understand that I did not care where I went, but that I wished to go everywhere, and that I was vastly more interested in the Chinese than in the European quarter, he went sturdily to work to show me Hong-Kong, and show me Hong-Kong he did. For hours he used to run me up and down the long, narrow streets. From the upper windows of the tall, slim buildings hung the newly-washed garments of the natives. They were all cut after one generous ungraceful pattern, and were all of true Chinese blue, which is not true blue at all, it is so nearly a dull gray. Red paper streamers strung about the open doors told the shop-keepers' names and the nature of their wares.

When I wished to stop the jinrickshaw I had to give a most undignified grunt, or tap Chung Lim sharply with my parasol. As I rarely carried a parasol I usually had to grunt. Grunting is one of the things a woman does not like to chronicle of herself; but it was the only sound to which my Hong-Kong coolie would pay the slightest attention. I tried screaming once or twice; but he evidently thought that I was singing, and he ran swiftly on. A grunt was something so akin to his own guttural mode of speech that he invariably recognised it as an attempt upon my part to communicate an idea or a desire.

I halted my "human horse" very often. Men passed me with great baskets of joss sticks; and though Chung Lim shook his head, I used at first to stop and buy from each vendor a few of the scented sticks; but I soon found that my coolie was right. They were a very bad quality of joss sticks indeed, those that I bought on the streets of Hong-Kong; but at the proper shops (and I soon found where they were), I bought great armfuls of the slim, fragrant incense sticks. And as I write, the long spark and the thin flame of a burning joss stick carries me back to China; and if I shut my eyes a moment, I can fancy myself back in a grotesque joss house to which Chung Lim and I very often went. It is called, if I remember, "Tin How." I always took a bunch of joss sticks with me. I used to divide them with Chung Lim, who lit his share before his joss and said "Chin-chin" to me. I think that Chung regarded me as mad, but he never refused anything I offered him; and though I persistently prowled about the native quarters of Hong-Kong, my intrusion was never resented, though it evidently caused a good deal of amazement. Sometimes I stayed in the joss house and burned incense too, and tried to sketch the wonderful types of humanity that

were gathered before the big joss. But oftener I roamed about outside, gathering flowers and trying to make friends with some workmen who were digging a few yards from the temple door. Often I sat in the 'rickshaw and studied the exterior of the joss house. I never grew tired of looking at it. Beneath the roof were depicted, in wonderful relief and bas-relief, scenes from Chinese history. They were dramatic in outline, and charming in glorious colouring.

The walls were hung with gorgeous panels, each of which was a prayer or a sermon. Upon the edge of the roof sprawled strange crustations. Beneath them was carved a fringe of conventionalised shells. Under this hung a narrow curtain of wood or stucco, on which, in bas-relief, were marvellous fruits, quaint flowers, odd figures, and impossible fish. This scant curtain was finished with an odd lace-like carving which told, as every bit of conventional decoration in China tells, the omnipotence of bamboo. Dreadful dragons and indescribable elephants supported the roof, and rested upon great graceful beams, from which hung huge lanterns made of silk, of paper, of tinsel, and of bamboo—the soft lamps of Cathay!

Near the doorway sat a personage—priest or merchant, I knew not which. He wore gold spectacles, he smoked opium through a silver pipe, and he committed upon you righteous, ecclesiastical robbery when he sold you joss sticks and prayers. I do not mean that he prayed for you; that he would, I fancy, under no circumstances do. But he sold you prayers printed upon slips of red Chinese paper. The Mongolian characters puzzled you a bit perhaps! That was insignificant—the Chinese gods could read them.

Upon the temple steps sat a stolid, motley crew. I used to buy vicious-looking yellow cakes from one fellow, and from a sour-appearanced old woman I never failed to buy my handkerchief full of the nuts of my childhood. She always rang my bit of money on the temple steps to see that I had not cheated her, and I always was a bit disappointed in her wares. Can you imagine a woman, who in her old age will not grow childish, because in her mature womanhood she has never ceased to be a child,—can you imagine her, half sitting, half reclining, in a Chinese 'rickshaw, and as the 'rickshaw is pulled through the pungent, hilly woods of Hong-Kong, saying in her wicked cosmopolitan heart, as she munches the peanuts of Cathay, "There are no peanuts but in America, and only an American darky or a naturalised Italian can roast them"?

Opposite the joss house sat a Chinese fortune-teller. His table stood in front of a big rock, about which graceful trees hung. Over the table was a cabalistic cloth, and the Mongolian wizard foretold your fate, using bamboo slips character-inscribed, and he was quite as infallible as any Occidental fortune-teller whom I ever patronised.

I often used to manufacture an excuse to go into and to linger in the courtyard of a Chinese carpenter who interested me greatly. He was one of the few accessible Chinamen I have ever known. It is very difficult to write positively of China, even after some residence there. The Chinese will tell you nothing, and, with a few exceptions, the Europeans who have spent half their lives there know nothing. But

my friend, the carpenter, did give me a few peeps into China. He was almost always sawing, and his brother was almost always smoking a slender pipe that was nearly as long as himself. Two "sew sew" women often sat upon a low bench mending the tattered garments of the carpenter and his *confrères*.

"Sew sew amahs" are one of the institutions of China. A London paper has recently advocated, as an occupation for deftly needled but impecunious gentlewomen, the going from mansion to mansion and the mending of dilapidated garments. In China, that has been, for hundreds of years, an acknowledged profession for women. The "sew sew amahs" are really very useful. They sit outside your door or in a secluded corner of your garden, and stitch, stitch, stitch, for two sen a day, until you are whole again and clothed in your right garments. The Chinese women do not sew as well as do the Chinese men. It is only in the Orient and in Paris that man realises what a superior, noble occupation dressmaking is. But the women of the East mend very adequately; and I for one congratulate them that, among all their other miseries, they are not expected to devote their lives to the designing and first sewing of loom-woven fig leaves.

Has it ever occurred to the champions of the women of the East, that the Oriental man has not only crushed the Oriental woman beneath his cruel heel, but that he has robbed her of her most effeminate privilege, since he has usurped her sharp sceptre—her needle?

Happy Valley is a lovely spot, circled by gray-green hills and feathered bamboo. It is the race-course of Hong-Kong. Here ponies are run and frocks from home are worn, sandwiches are eaten and cool wines are drunk, and, take it all in all, it is quite like a toy Derby. It is a magnification of the "Ascot" that you may buy in the Lowther Arcade for a few pounds. No, it is not. No toy maker, though he were as tenderly sympathetic as sweet Caleb Plummer, much less a maker of toys in Germany, could manufacture such a toy as nature and Anglo-residents have made Happy Valley.

Separated from the race-course by a narrow bamboo-edged road is the Happy Valley Cemetery—an acre of beauty sacred to the eternal sleep of dead Europeans. I know of no other cemetery so beautiful in all our world. I know of no place commemorative of the dead that compares in loveliness with the Happy Valley Cemetery, save only the Taj Mahal. One is the triumph of nature; one is the supreme art triumph of man: but over both Death is triumphant, and the Indian Princess and the English wanderers are at rest—asleep and oblivious.

Only an even more presumptuous pen than mine would attempt to describe the Hong-Kong Public Gardens. They are matchless. Their flora is both mighty and lace-like; and from their detailed beauty you look away to the panoramaed beauty of Hong-Kong.

As I write on from page to page, the little story of our Eastern wanderings, I grow a bit frightened at my own temerity. I do so want to describe the wonderland through which we wandered, and I am so unable to describe it. China baffles me most. The country is so intricate with a thousand beauties, the people so

unapproachable, their customs so puzzling, so almost inexplicable. But my excuse for trying to do what I am not fit to do, must be the old excuse, the great excuse, the excuse of love. I love the Orient; I prattle about it like a child perhaps; but if I could inspire one tired European to go East for a little to rest his eyes, his feet, and his heart, in the great, kind Oriental wonderland, then I should be, for once at least, a benefactor.

My boy and I spent many a happy half-day, being carried up and down the Hong-Kong hills—he in one chair, I in another. It was in Hong-Kong that he was promoted from dresses to trousers, and he used to sit in his high-swung chair, quite fearlessly, and chatter to his bearers. I was a little frightened at first lest they should drop him, but I soon learned how foot-sure they were and how careful of their light little burden. They never encouraged my advances towards good-fellowship; but they were ready enough to teach him the name of a flower or a bird, to run or to walk, as he wished. And often and often they spared one of their scanty coins to buy him a sweetmeat.

The heat in Hong-Kong was not excessive when we were first there, but it was warm enough to make the Peak a luxury. And it was a charming change to go to a friend's bungalow not far from the Bowen Road and drink afternoon tea. And what dinners we used to have in some of those cool, white bungalows; and how we sang softly as we went home through the starlight.

But it was "China town" that I really loved. I have been in Hong-Kong where European women do not go—where, I believe, no other European woman has been. I have gone through dark arcades where hundreds of natives struggled with life and with each other. I have begged a mouthful of rice from a sampan woman. I have wandered alone until I was completely lost, and had to ask my way back to the world of hotels and Europeans. I never met with the slightest incivility. I found the Chinese everything that I had been told they were not.

At night, when I was not working, I used to get into my 'rickshaw and let Chung Lim pull me along the beautiful harbour until the beauty of the night had reconciled me to everything and every one, myself included.

I do not know where Chung Lim slept, nor where he ate. He was always at the hotel door when I went down, day or night; always smiling and ready to run with me to the island's end. I paid him one yen per day. When we finally left Hong-Kong, I gave him five yen more than I owed him; and a sacrilegious English boy who lives in Hong-Kong, and to whose patronage I recommended Chung Lim, wrote me the other day, "Chung Lim still burns joss sticks to your memory."

CHAPTER XV

A GLIMPSE OF CANTON

WHAT can I write of Canton? If Hong-Kong was wonderful, if Shanghai was interesting, if Burmah was picturesque, what was Canton? It was superlative!

I know that Europeans go into Canton and come out of it with stolid faces, and sneer languidly as they speak of it. I know a woman who preferred poor little, colourless, on-sufferance Sha-mien, to great, mysterious, unfathomable, lurid Canton. Ah, well! it takes all sorts to make a world—and I dare say I revolted her as much as she disgusted me. "Would you rather live in Canton than in Sha-mien?" some one asks me. Certainly not—at least not permanently. But I, nevertheless, regard Sha-mien as utterly insignificant as compared with Canton. The only significant thing about Sha-mien is its courage in being there at all. No; I should not prefer Canton to Sha-mien as a place of residence for myself. I should be sorry to spend twenty unbroken years in Canton, and I should be displeased to spend twenty unbroken years on the most magnificent iceberg that ever floated on the Polar Seas. But for all that I think the iceberg vastly more interesting, more fascinating, grander, more beautiful, than the snow-flakes that are feebly smudging my window-pane.

Let me introduce you for a moment to my London back-yard, as I see it at this moment. It is a grim conglomeration of rubble, dilapidated ivy, of thin snow blotches, and of burst water-pipes. Nothing could be less picturesque. No earthly eye could think it beautiful, save the eye of a plumber. Yet I would rather live here than in Canton, where a million pictures are yours for the looking. In all Canton I never saw one unpicturesque bit. And once I almost felt like tearing up my sketch-book—not because of my own incompetence, for to that I am accustomed, but because for every sketch I tried to make I must leave ten thousand unattempted. That made selection very difficult.

We sent Mr. Paulding from Hong-Kong to Canton, to see if we could give a performance at Sha-mien. He wrote back, "There are not a hundred Europeans in the place, and there is no theatre. It is expensive getting here. But if the 'burra memsahib' is determined to come, I think we might clear our X.'s. Leave the company in Hong-Kong, and you two give a Shakespearian recital in the hotel dining-room. What do you say?" Perhaps I should explain that "X.'s" means expenses. It is not theatrical slang, it is dramatic abbreviation. That letter entailed upon me a mental struggle. I was anxious to see Canton, and my husband insisted that if I went I must "help him out" with the recital. In all my wicked life I had never given a recitation—or at least not since I was a nice little girl with a nice pink sash. Moreover, I had said that I never would give a recitation. I did not approve of them; for that matter, I do not approve of them now; but Canton tempted me, and I

was weak.

We made out a programme and mailed it to Mr. Paulding. Mine friend was prepared with any number of recitations, but the only one I knew was "Bingen on the Rhine," and my associate feared that the audience might have heard that before. Finally, I was put down for two recitations, but it was not specified what they were to be. My husband selected his three recitations, and we added to the list four scenes from Shakespeare.

Early one morning, before our babies were awake, we steamed slowly up the Canton River. I put the thought of the horrid recital out of my mind; and settled into my cosy steamer chair and said to myself, "If there be an Elysium on earth it is this—it is this." The day was perfect. Ah! how many perfect days this old world has seen, and yet how she throbs and smiles and blushes into beauty, and looks quite like a bride, the disreputable weather-beaten old jade, and welcomes the kisses of each new perfect day, and beneath those kisses assumes the virtue of loveliness, even though she have it not!

We were carrying some hundreds of coolies, and some thousands of fish to Canton. The coolies were tightly packed behind a secure grating. The fish were poured by hundreds into holes, purposely made in the side of the boat. How they sprang for their freedom, the scaly, silvery, speckled things, and with what splendid splutter and splash they fell back into the water-filled hole!

There were four cabin passengers on the delightful little bark. I was the only woman on the boat—fore or aft. When I am the only woman among a boat-load of men, and the weather behaves itself, I always say to myself, "If there be an Elysium on earth it is this—it is this!" The three gentlemen were—the Editor of a Hong-Kong paper, a charming fellow and a good friend of ours; an interesting German who spoke French fluently and told me a great deal about Canton; and last, but if you please, not least, that extremely fortunate individual who is my husband.

What a pleasant fellow the captain was! He will, most probably, never see these lines, and I feel it my duty to describe him. He was my fellow countryman—and the kind of man who causes you to hold up your head and say, "It's a good thing to be an American." I am supposed to be a bad American. I don't quite plead guilty to the accusation; but I certainly do not fill Sir Walter Scott's ideal of patriotism. I fear he would even consider my soul dead. My cosmopolitanism is far more than my patriotism. But it always gives me a deep thrill of real pleasure to meet in a foreign land—delightful Americans. I think of my compatriots as some one thought of a little girl whom they immortalised in the lines,

> When she was good, she was very, very good.
> But when she was bad, she was horrid.

No one is more charming, more admirable, than a charming American. I know Americans whom the children of no other nation can excel. If patriotism consists in praising the shrilly cackling, over-diamonded women, and the ill-educated, shallow,

opinionated men of our *hoi polloi*—why then I am not patriotic. They, beyond everything else human, set my teeth on edge, do Americans the vulgar. But because I cry out at them with genuine American acrimony, it does not follow that I am stupid enough to think them the only Americans. There is another type of American of whom I would far rather think, and I wish that he travelled more. I mean the man who stands hat in hand to welcome you on to the porch of his Virginia home. I mean the man who is superlatively a gentleman even when he carries our flag through the wigwams of the wild west. I mean—oh! well, I mean all that ilk!

Our captain was a courtly, cultivated gentleman. He was highly educated, and had lived in China intelligently. He was quite a perfect host.

Everything combined to make our little trip enjoyable. The Chinese butler not only understood his duty but did it. Dinner was eminently successful. But it was on deck that we were happiest.

China! China! For all your great antiquity, how new and fresh and fascinating you were to me!

Fortresses and pagodas dotted the banks, with here and there a scattered collection of squalid huts. The sky was royal, and the perfumed air swayed the branches of a dozen, to us unknown, trees.

Just before we reached Canton we passed the leper boats. The population of Canton is too dense for the most truly paternal Government on earth to risk the presence of lepers in the midst of the Cantonese myriads. The miserable lepers looked out at us from the windows of their boat-prisons. Had we been nearer they would have cried to us for food and cash. The sufferings of the Asiatic lepers are not exaggerated. I never went amongst them (and in India I went amongst them often) without thinking, "How long, O Lord! how long?"

Nothing impressed me as more unique in unique China than the perseverance of the Roman Catholic Church in her desperate attempt to convert the unconvertible Chinese.

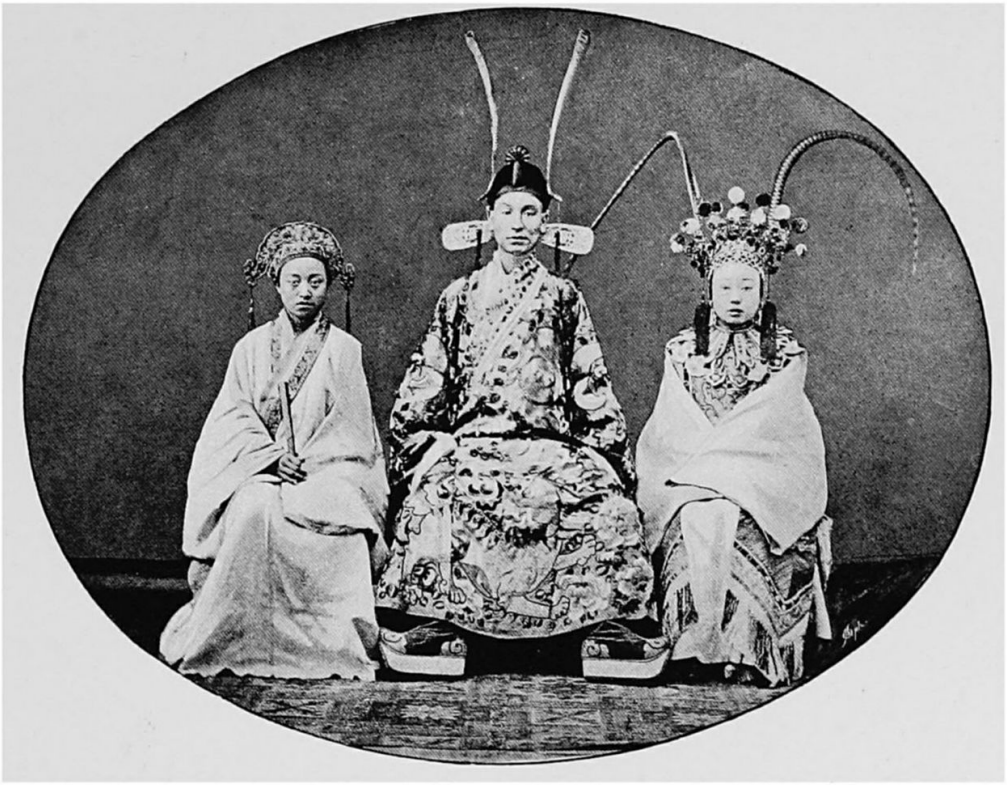
The following telegram was recently sent from Shanghai:—"The Roman Catholic Mission at Lichuen, near the Szechuen border of the province of Hu-Peli, has been attacked by a mob. The priests escaped into the neighbouring provinces."—*Reuter.* Similar messages have been flashed to us before; similar messages will be flashed to us again. So long as Europe overstrains the forbearance of Asia, the blood of a few Europeans must dampen the ire of the Asiatic populace.

I met in Canton a venerable churchman who has been for many years eminent in Roman Catholicism in China. Like all men eminent in the Church of Rome, he was a man of the world, open-minded, cultivated, and charmingly companionable. I ventured to ask him, "How many Chinamen have you converted during your long residence here—converted in the fullest, most absolute significance of the word?"

The old man looked across the Canton river, upon which we were at the time. To our left lay the floating prisons of the Cantonese lepers. To our right, floated the "flower boats" of the Cantonese frail. Then he answered me: "Daughter, none! But"—pointing with his thin white hand to the left—"we have alleviated suffering,

and"—pointing to the right, "we have checked sin. There is yet great sin and great suffering calling out to us for help; and we are paving the way for the spiritual success of the priests unborn. Rome of the seven hills was not built in a day. Rome, the spiritual, will not be made perfect and entire in a generation. Little by little we are gaining ground here. A Chinaman pretends a conversion he does not experience —for the sake of benefits we confer on him. His children grow accustomed to our blessed symbols and our holy rites. It is our great hope that his grandchildren, or perhaps his great-grandchildren, may become truly and entirely sons of the true Church. In the meantime, we hope and pray and work, and do what good we may." This then is the hope of Rome concerning China—to make possible the conversion of the Chinese of the future.

For this possible future accomplishment Rome spends vast sums of money—erects superb edifices—risks many noble lives. The Chinese accept the comforts bought with the money. They take shelter—when it suits their convenience—in the buildings that they demolish when it pleases their enraged whim; and they destroy the lives dedicated wisely, or unwisely, to their service.



CHINESE ACTORS. *Page 136.*

Rome fails, and I believe will fail. The religion and the life of the Chinese are

one. It is the same with all Eastern peoples except the Japanese. In the East, religion stands for social sanctities, for hygienic regulations. Above all, it is the national expression of patriotism. Moreover, the religions of the East suit the peoples of the East. The Christian religion does not. The Church of Rome, with her fine Machiavelian wisdom, does her utmost to make her belief appropriate to the Mongolian temperament and mentality. Rome fails—because she attempts the impossible. The religion of China (although in one sense little respected) is the poetry of China, the art of China, the tradition of China. It will make way, as the religion of the North American Indians has made way, when the Chinese are exterminated and ground in their native dust, as the North American Indians have been crushed and spiritually exterminated.

Can we blame the Chinese for their allegiance to a form of religion which has satisfied their extremest ethical need for thousands of years? I, for one, cannot unqualifiedly condemn them for their cruel inhospitality, when I recall scenes I have seen in the Chinese quarters of San Francisco and of Melbourne. I have seen a joss house demolished by the hands of civilised Anglo-Saxons; but I deplore that China's not unnatural retaliation should fall upon a self-sacrificing body of men who only seek the good of China and the glory of the God in whom they earnestly believe.

Three years ago, almost to a day, I visited the Roman Catholic Mission which recently was destroyed by the infuriated Chinese. What a waste of art and life!

Every Englishman living in China, who is not blinded by an overplus of religious enthusiasm, will, I think, bear me out that the Chinese cannot be converted. An Anglican clergyman lived and preached for twenty odd years in Shanghai; he failed to make many converts. But he consoled himself inasmuch as he had snatched one brand from the burning. His "boy," to whom he paid unusual wages, was a most devout Christian. When the divine left China he reluctantly parted with "Foo Sing," bestowing upon him several Bibles and many yen. Half an hour after the English mail had sailed, a friend of the churchman's met "Foo Sing."

"Well, Foo Sing," said the European, "what are you going to do now Dr. —— has gone?"

"Me," said Foo Sing, "Me go chin chin my own joss. English joss all played out."

Rome is attempting a great thing in China. Her methods are dignified; and the Chinese deal with Rome with proportional brutality. At the American Missionaries, the men of whom wear false "pigtails" and the women modified pantaloons, the Chinese merely laugh. One of the Chinaman's chief characteristics is his sense of humour.

On the other side of our good ship (to return to our first entry into Canton), opposite to the poor leper boats, floated the famous flower boats of Canton. They were the prison palaces of the moral lepers of Canton. It was daylight now, and the small boats floated demurely on the rippled water. The matting blinds were down. The women were sleeping. When the sun had set, the little boats of sin would

sparkle with a thousand lanterns and tinkle with a hundred guitars, and shameless mandarins would smoke long opium pipes and sip small cups of hot, perfumed wine.

The unfortunate women of China are at least less scourged by public opinion than are their Occidental sisters. Nor are they sneered at by their righteous half-sisters, nor slapped in the face by Mrs. Grundy's wee white hands. They live apart.

We anchored some few yards from Canton, and then began what we thought rare fun. A world of sampans pushed about us, and the women coolies rushed on deck, demanding our luggage and begging to row us ashore. The women of the coolie class do all such work in Canton. We fell into the clutches of a good-natured old thing called "one-eyed Sarah." She was very fat, very rich, and very jolly. Our friend the Editor chaffed her roundly, but she took it all in good part, and gave as good as she took. When we had accepted her as our boatman, she screamed to two young girls, who ran lightly up and shouldered our luggage quite calmly. My box was heavy, and we had quite a collection of little things. Sarah carried nothing, but she helped us all into her boat, and I learned afterwards that she would willingly have carried me because she thought I looked little and helpless. I am at least a head taller than Sarah.

How wonderfully those women guided their boat! They are wonderful watermen, the sampan women of Canton. We were jammed among some hundreds of other boats, and our position seemed inextricable and perilous. But it was neither the one nor the other. In and out they pulled, away from the steamer, up the narrow water-way that stretches between Canton and Sha-mien, until they landed us at the steps of the Sha-mien hotel. Then Sarah did lift me out on to *terra firma*, to the great delight of my disrespectful husband. "Little girl," she said patronisingly, "but plenty heavy."

Europeans are not allowed to live in Canton. Even to go into Canton they must have a pass or permit, which must be shown to the guards at the city gate. Sha-mien is the European concession. There live all the Occidentals who have diplomatic or other business at Canton. They are only a handful—the European permanent residents at Sha-mien; eighty odd, I think, they numbered when we were there—all told I mean; men, women and children. They live with their lives in their hands. The moral force of Europe is great, but if the Cantonese become vicious enough, they will rally across that narrow bridge and massacre every European in Sha-mien. They have done it before; they will do it again, if they grow angry enough. I hope that they never may. It is to be hoped that they will be given no cause.

The hotel was a pleasant, clean, white place. It stood upon green grass among green trees. A pretty little donkey came and begged a biscuit from me. It was the pet of Europe in Sha-mien. Our bills were profusely displayed in the hotel hall. They made me shudder a bit, for our recital was to be that night.

"Do you know yet what you are going to recite to-night?" asked my husband meanly.

"I think we'll cut my recitations out," I said sweetly.

"No we won't," said my husband. He even offered to accompany me up to our rooms and try to teach me some recitations; but I refused flatly. When the night came, I would get through it in some desperate fashion. But now I was going into Canton.

Canton lay just across the canal. It was walled, as almost every Chinese city is. We could catch no glimpse of the city itself from Sha-mien. That made me the more impatient to be off.

There are at least three wonders in the East that can never be exaggerated: the Taj Mahal, sunrise on the Himalayas, and Canton.

I forget our guide's name—we could not go into Canton without a guide; but he appeared very much of a gentleman and spoke accurate English. We went into quaint box-like palanquins. There were four chairs, two for us, one for our Editor, and one for the guide. Three coolies carried each chair. Across the bridge; through the guarded gateway: We were in Canton!

If I could describe it as perfectly as I remember it! I had expected noise and crowds, new sights, new sounds, new smells, long endless streets, and tall, tall houses. But what I found was ten times more. The streets were often so narrow that, if two chairs wished to pass, one had to retreat into the nearest shop until the other had gone on. The houses were so tall that they seemed to lean toward each other and to touch at the vertical point of sight. Indeed many of them did almost meet—they were so built out with balconies. I don't know what was in the upper rooms of those houses; but certainly everything appeared to be on the balconies. What clothing a poor or middle-class Chinaman possesses beyond that on his back usually hangs on his balcony. The Chinese have more cleanliness than they are accredited with by the generality of Europeans.

We went for miles in Canton without seeing the sky. The density of the city, the swarming, seething inhabitants, the variety of shops and trades, are indescribable.

The first shop at which we stopped was the studio of painters on rice paper. And a very unstudio-like place it was. The artists (two of them were famous) sat at workman-like tables, doing their careful work. The rice paper is lovely of itself, and the painting was exquisitely done. Chinese art is a difficult subject. The Chinese execution is often very delicate; the Chinese sense of colour is very true, though with the exception of their dull predominant blue, all their colours are brilliant in the extreme. But even their characteristic blue they use rather sparingly in their painting. Chinese drawing impressed me as primitive, but not inexact; but if I were less ignorant about Chinese art, I might regard it very differently.

I have a dozen or more of the dainty "rice pictures" that were being painted in that queer unartistic Cantonese studio. Not one picture has been painted by one man. For instance, I have among them the figure of a mandarin. It is not over six inches high, but it represents the considerable work of three artists, one of them noted throughout China. He painted the mandarin's face, and told me that for thirty odd years he had painted faces, and done no other thing, save to sleep a little, eat a great deal, worship his ancestors, and chin chin his joss sometimes. He was a courtly old

gentleman, and smilingly allowed me to spoil several sheets of rice paper, and waste sundry brushfuls of colour, trying to imitate his methods. The draperies of my little figure were painted by another artist, and the hands were the work of a third man who paints nothing but hands. There were men there who painted nothing but leaves —others who painted only flowers. There were other men who spent all their lives painting one picture again and again. The picture they painted one week, they copied the next. And one artist in that room painted only caterpillars—he had painted nothing else for ten years. He painted them exquisitely. It will be readily understood that their execution was deft and exact in the extreme, but that their work lacked breadth, great atmosphere, and inspiration of design.

Next we stopped at a jeweller's. They were making queer silver things, and inlaying them with infinitesimal bits of bright blue feather. The finished ornaments were more curious than beautiful; but the wings that lay upon the workmen's trays were magnificently beautiful. Thousands of kingfishers are murdered every year to deck these foolish Chinese baubles. I believe that the meat of the birds is utilised for food; and that, of course, makes the crime nil—if we are to eat slaughtered innocents at all.

We bought ivories at one shop, and carved ebonies at another. We saw baskets full to the brim with rare pearls; we saw seed-pearls sold by the pound.

Our journalistic friend had come to Canton on business; but he was neglecting it that he might help us to see more thoroughly the city, which he probably knew as well as any Englishman in China.

We pressed in between the busy looms in a big weaving establishment. The men talked learnedly of looms and like machinery all over the world; and I gloated over the marvellous silks and satins. We went through such gorgeous collections of black furniture. My husband, who rarely longs for any creature comfort beyond a cigar, a rowing boat, and a horse, was as tempted as I—I, who am always and so easily tempted,—and wanted to buy a boat-load of the great, grotesque, carved things.

On our way back to the city gate, we stopped at a silk shop, and my husband bought me a shawl that I kissed for its sheer loveliness, and crêpes that I patted and stroked, and, when we were home, threw in great, soft, silken heaps on the bed.

Chinese and Japanese embroideries are very different. Each excels in some qualities. The Japanese are the more admirable in the use of gold and silver; the Chinese are the superior in the use of many and mingled colours.

When we reached the hotel—none too soon,—my spirits fell. We had a hurried but merry dinner, and then we went upstairs, with just an hour and a half to spare before our great "Shakesperian Recital."

"James," said my husband, severely,—he calls me James when I'm bad —"James, you're a villain."

"But you are a saint," I said in my most wheedling accents. "And you know you recite superbly. You do all the recital. Tell them I'm dead—make a speech before you begin, you know. And I will sit at the door, and take tickets, and lead the applause."

But he was uncoaxable. So I had to dress, and descend into the little ante-room off the dining-room. I took with me a book of "Fine Poetical Selections," and searched feverishly for something to read. I boast of having an exceptionally quick "study," but, of course, I could not memorise three poems in one hour and five minutes; so I had necessarily determined to read, and not to recite.

I was the unhappiest woman in China that night.

My husband was in a gale of delight. He had trapped me into a recital for once.

Well, it began at last. All the Europeans in Sha-mien—save one, I believe—were there.

Our little stage was very wonderful. While we had been palanquin riding through Canton, three or four coolies had brought into the dining-room pieces of bamboo of different lengths. These had not been nailed together; they had tied them together with wisps of bamboo until the stage was shaped. Then across the top they had laid smooth planks. Into these even they had not driven a nail, they had tied them in place. The result was a perfect little stage.

My *confrère* opened the, to me, ghastly entertainment. When he came off, I seized my book desperately, and marched to my doom. They gave me a cordial little reception. I could have shaken them. Our friend the Editor, who knew the full measure of my unpreparedness, sat in the front row, trying manfully to look respectful. Mr. Paulding stood gracefully near the door. He looked anxious and nervous, and appeared contemplative of flight.

I thought of Demosthenes, and wondered how it would do to begin by saying, "Men and women of Sha-mien." But really they looked too gentle; so I said instead, "Ladies and gentlemen." My husband giggled in the ante-room. I could hear him. I opened the book—opened it by chance at "Ostler Joe." It wasn't quite long enough, so I prefaced it with a speech. In that speech I told all I knew, and a good deal that I didn't know, about the history of the piece, the author of the piece—an American woman who had made it famous in Washington; and I remember that I contrived to say something about the Princess of Wales. At that they broke into hearty applause. Then I began to read. The print was bad, and the light was worse, but I struggled through in some sad fashion. When I had finished, it was the most astonished little audience you ever saw; and Mr. Paulding had left.

I won't chronicle my other two selections, nor record how they were received. But, I assure you, on my word of honour as an actress, that I was not a success.

However, I am, I believe, justified in saying that the second part of the programme was worse than the first. The second part comprised four scenes from Shakespeare—so the programme said. Mr. Paulding says that I wrote the programme; I say that he wrote it. My husband, who, with all his faults, is a gentle, peace-making man, says that the mistakes in the programme were made by the Chinese printer. Mr. Paulding and I are both reluctant to parent the programme when we recall how it was carried out. The details of the "Four Scenes from Shakespeare" were—

A Scene from *Romeo and Juliet*.
A Scene from *Macbeth*.
A Scene from *Antony and Cleopatra*.
A Scene from *The Fool's Revenge*.

At least so the Chinese printer said, but who could expect a Cantonese compositor ever to have heard of Tom Taylor?

I do not know which of the four tragic selections was the funniest.

Picture Romeo, Macbeth, Antony, and Bertuccio in a nice new dress suit, nice new patent-leather shoes, nice new white kid gloves; picture Juliet, Lady Macbeth, Cleopatra, and sweet, simple little Fiordelisa in a long, black, jetted, sleeveless French frock, ridiculously long tan gloves, and shoes that were monstrous Parisian burlesques of the "human foot divine!"

Need I say that there was no scenery? I tried to do my duty as a soldier of the mask should. But my husband, who is a very shameless person, was in an unseemly state of hilarity. And indeed, for all my trying, I cannot say that Juliet's impassioned words fell "trippingly from my tongue."

It was over at last, and the kind, patient audience went sadly out. Across the globe I send them my greeting. Perhaps they will forgive me the dire distress I must have inflicted upon them if they ever learn that their misspent yen enabled me to see Canton.

How good, how English they were, those patient people! They would have taught me, had I not known long before, that, whatever an English audience may think, it is incapable of showing disapprobation to a woman.

When the poor audience had escaped we had supper; our editor, Mr. Paulding, my husband, and I. The editor said that he preferred my acting to my reciting. Mr. Paulding said he had enjoyed the entertainment immensely—especially after he left. My husband laughed and laughed, and I ate my supper and suggested a midnight prowl through Canton.

But that, like much I say, was easier said than done. The Canton gate was shut. So we said good-night and retired as nice English people should. I lit a big flare of joss sticks in our chamber, for I had no mind to forget, even in my sleep, that I was in Cathay.

We sat for a few moments on our balcony and spun strange webs of fancied thought about Canton. We struck, with our mental fingers, a thousand copper gongs and weaved big fabrics of Mongolian romance. And all the while Canton was asleep.

The Chinese are a very normal people. Though their industriousness prods them to lamp-lit work, they, as a rule, sleep as soon after sunset as they can.

The next day broke in big Oriental splendour. There was to be no Shakespearian Recital that night. We were going to spend the week in Canton, and I was the happiest woman in Asia.

When we had paid to the Chinese dawn the weak obeisance of buttered toast,

fried fish, and superlatively hot coffee, we sallied forth into Canton. How shall I describe that week? I can't describe it. I can only say, "Go East—go East—go East!"

We found the same chairs awaiting us. Our guide looked brisk and ready; he had not attended our Shakespearian Recital. They carried us first to the Cantonese execution-grounds. We did not go into them. I am a curious, inquisitive, not to say a tautological female, but I did not care to penetrate into that place of slaughter.

Three or four of our boys went from Hong-Kong to Kowloon to see an execution. That was what they said; but revelations over which they had no control led me to believe that they, in part at least, went to pit the hard-earned wages of histrionic genius against the oblong gold pieces of Chinese exchange.

They, knowing what a free-lance I was, asked me to go with them to observe the extinguishment of sinful Chinese life; but my imagination is more than my courage, and I declined. My husband was (what husband would not have been?) madly angry.

I have never known whether the boys were joking or not; but I am inclined to give them and myself the benefit of the doubt and to believe that they were.

At all events, our Cantonese guide was in grim earnest, and evidently felt injured because he was prevented from showing us what he apparently thought the chief glory of his native city.

If you too, good reader, feel deprived of your sanguinary rights, I must refer you to the printed records of more strongly-minded travellers. There have been many such, and in their pages you will find your just due of gory Chinese swords and of ghastly, trunkless Chinese heads in big brown jars.

We spent several hours in a fascinating shop where old Chinese robes and marvellous antique embroideries were sold. My husband bought me a charming, magnificent cape that had belonged very many years before to a mandarin. It was coarsely designed, but superfinely executed open-work. Roses, leaves, and butterflies were the burden of its embroidered song. The points of its irregular edges were finished with queer, silky, crimson knobs and wee golden bells. Last summer I took off the balls and the bells and three of the most *prononcé* butterflies, and the former cape of the noble yellow man made an inexpressibly effective zouave on my prettiest house gown.

We were a little disappointed in the temple of the five thousand genii and in the five-storied pagoda. But the flowery pagoda was a marvel of quaint beauty; and the changing, panoramic wonder of the streets never palled upon us.

We had a Chinese lunch with a Chinese dignitary, and he let me prowl about his mansion and the ridiculous courtyard. He introduced me to his wife, and she introduced me to her husband's concubines, with whom she seemed to be on the best of terms.

In China "concubine" means something very analogous to the "handmaiden" of Biblical times. She is not a wife, but to Occidental ears the term is best understood if it is translated "underwife—lesser wife."

After lunch we visited the sanctum of a Cantonese editor, and from there we went to one of the large popular markets. Shall I describe it? Shall I try? Yes; there were—black ones and white ones and gray ones. The black ones are considered far the most choice. Isn't it horrible to think of human creatures eating cats and dogs and rats? Is it not most horrible? And yet—why? Can we allege one single sound reason against it? I think not. And yet as I stood in that Cantonese market I did feel for a moment very much as Hamlet felt when he held Yorick's earthy skull in his hands. As for my husband; he fled. I wonder why men are in so many ways daintier than women?

It was a gruesome sight, that busy market-place, with great piles of meat cut from animals we scarcely mention when we eat. Poor pussies! they looked very pathetic. And I could have cried over the massacre of the puppies. The rats hung in countless numbers upon long, stretched strings. Probably I would better not describe more minutely. It did revolt me. And yet I do not know why it should have done so.

Unless we adopt vegetarianism and abstain from eating aught that has possessed animal life and consciousness, I do not see how we can consistently condemn the Chinaman, because he is less erratic than we in his selection of food, and because he is the creature of a sterner necessity than ours. If we consider the vast numbers of Chinese that must eat to live,—if we consider the proportional density of the population,—I am sure that we shall be just enough to realise that the Chinese must utilise every available atom of wholesome food.

Emperors and heroes have supped off strange flesh in time of war. According to some historians Napoleon's larder was reduced to cat's flesh, during the retreat from Moscow.

The most elegant woman I ever knew, a French woman who went through the Commune, told me once, "Ze meat of ze horse, it iz very nasty, but ze meat of ze rat it is nice, if you know not what it iz."

"The hand of little employment hath the daintier sense."

We tip-tilt our nice European noses at a great deal, because we have had no usage of it. Sometimes we are condemned as unreasonable. Prejudice and lack of sympathy are near akin to injustice and misjudgment.

We left Canton reluctantly. As we neared Hong-Kong my comrade said to me—

"James, would anything on earth induce you to repeat that recital?"

"My friend," I said, "if I could have another long day's prowl about Canton I would stand up and recite the whole play of *Hamlet* all by myself,—and to an audience of three." And I meant it.

CHAPTER XVI

CHINESE PRISONERS

THE Chinese people are law-abiding. With those of their own number who are law-breakers they have but little sympathy, and the Government has none at all. I like China. I like the Chinese. Moreover, I respect them. But in two details of their national life they merit unqualified condemnation. Their hospitals and their prisons are unmitigated national disgraces. On second thought I withdraw the word unmitigated. The Chinese hospitals through which I went were almost everything that hospitals should not be. But the patients themselves would most strenuously have opposed, most feverishly have resented, any improvements along the line of their own comfort. The savants of China are held back by the taut ropes of public opinion, they are enchained by the general ignorance, as savants are everywhere else.

The deplorable condition of the Chinese prisons is justified in the national philosophy. To the Chinese mind a law is a thing to be obeyed. A law concerns millions, and conserves the welfare of millions. It must be held inviolate by the individual, be his whim, his personal bent, whatever it may. The Chinaman who disregards any item of the Chinese law becomes a social leper. Individual tendency, moral ill-health, inherited traits, they are not taken into account at all. This is cruel? Yes! But it renders existence possible in the over-density of Chinese population.

A Chinaman is forgiven nothing because of his ancestry; nor does he suffer for that ancestry. From the moment of his birth, each Chinaman has, theoretically and, as far as possible, practically, an equal chance with every other Chinaman. Rank is nowhere more venerated than in China. Nowhere does it secure to its possessor more benefits, more privileges; but it is not inherited. It is conferred by the Emperor —conferred for personal merit or for personal achievement. No Chinaman is "noble" except through personal fitness. There are but two exceptions to this rule—two only. The direct descendants of Confucius have a rank of their own. It is a high rank. It is respected; but it gives them no power of interference with national affairs. The descendants of an Emperor are never less than royal; but they have not necessarily any power. In brief, then, in China "every man is served according to his deserts," and it is greatly to the national credit that they who do not "'scape whipping" are so very few.

A Chinese prison is called a "kamlo." Its outer door is barred with bamboo and is guarded by petty soldiers or policemen. The kamlo contains two rooms and two yards. One room and one yard are for men; the other room and yard are for women. The space set apart for women is very much smaller than that for men; but the women's quarters and the men's quarters are alike in being entirely devoid of any

provision for personal comfort or for personal decency.

Chinese prisoners are, by the Government, provided with absolutely nothing but the space, beyond which they may not pass. If their friends thrust food to them through the bars of the prison fence the law does not interpose; otherwise the prisoners may starve; the law does not interpose.

I have seen a woman feeding her husband while her six children looked on and laughed. I have seen a boy of nine pushing his hand through the slats of the fence and dropping rice into the open mouths of his father and mother!

I used to take food to the Shanghai prison-yards: I was not jeered at. A Chinese crowd is, I believe, incapable of jeering at a woman. But I was condemned for it, and a high Chinese official remonstrated with my husband. I used to buy Chinese food at a cheap chow-chow shop, and, when I reached a prison fence, hire a coolie to feed the poor starving wretches. I did not quite care to feed them myself, and it was quite impossible for them to feed themselves. No Chinese prisoner, of the class of which I am writing—minor offenders—can reach his own mouth, for his neck is invariably locked into a board which is about three feet square. This board is called a "cangue." It is very heavy and galls the neck; it blisters or ossifies the shoulders. The "pig-tail" drags heavily over it, and pulls the poor enlocked head uncomfortably to one side. It prevents the hands from lifting rice or water to the craving mouth, and from brushing from the tingling nose one of the myriad insects that infest the prisons and prison-yards of China.

I bought a long wooden spoon, to the huge amusement of the Shanghai gamin, and I never found any difficulty in hiring a coolie to dispense my petty charity, until one day, when I took rice to the women's fence. I had been there often before, but on this day I saw a strange sight. Three women were locked into one long cangue, and the two other women in the kamlo-yard vied with the crowd in hurling abusive epithets at their united heads. They had bad faces, but they looked very hungry and exhausted. I could induce no one to feed them. My amah, who was with me, caught me by the hand and cried, "Clome holme, clome to you mallie man." I saw that there was something very much amiss; even my 'rickshaw coolies looked ashamed of me, and so I did go home to my "mallie man," as the amah called my husband. We learned that the three women were procuresses. China does not, I believe, decapitate her female criminals; but the women who assist the downfall of young Chinese womanhood are looked upon as criminals apart, and as, than all other criminals, more vile, and are given the excessive punishment of being locked together by their necks.

Divorce is as facile to a Chinaman as marriage. The concubine of a mandarin takes precedence of a coolie's wife; but the woman who is general in her immorality, is despised and shunned. As for the older women who trade in the frailty of their own sex, no one in China has the least mercy for them, except, of course, the missionaries.

The position of woman is not, in China, altogether inferior to that of man. It is true of the Chinese, as of every other polygamous people I have known (except

perhaps the wretched Mormons), that with them womanhood is in some ways guarded, protected, and reverenced as it is not with us who live in the enlightened West.

A great deal of ignorant nonsense is written about China. Can a people who are so merciless toward crime be largely immoral?

In their treatment of China itself the Chinese have been exemplary. And what proves more the virtue of a nation than the use they make of their own country?

To conserve the physical health and productiveness of China, the Chinese have exercised the most rigid self-sacrifice.

For thousands of years the Chinese have developed the many resources of their wonderful country. They have had the great wisdom of patience. The southern part of the Malay Peninsula and the island of Singapore have been nearly devastated by the mad over-production of nutmeg trees. Thousands and tens of thousands of acres of North America are barren or nearly barren to-day; because the men who owned them, a few years ago, forced from them larger and more frequent crops than Nature had capacitated them to give. The Chinese have made no such mistakes. They have asked no more from their "happy valley of the Seres" than the surplus of her productiveness. Consequently, China is as full to-day of mineral, of vegetable, of animal life as when it was virgin to the husbandry of the first ancestors of the strange yellow people who now live in and cherish China. Sleek, dappled, big-eyed deer roam as fearlessly among the pungent forests, and are as plentiful as when the old Latin writers described the men of Cathay as "great bowmen." Great silky hares scurry among the ferns. Golden pheasants nest among the wild white roses. Snipe and quail thieve fatness from the rice fields. Teal and pigeons cool their feet in the wet, paddy beds, and wee rice-birds plume themselves and swing and sway on the swinging, swaying branches of the purple-flowered wistaria.

Ah, yes, China has grown more beautiful with every passing year, as a woman grows more beautiful whose home-life is loved and loving! Her children grow up; her soft hair whitens; but the loveliness of content and happiness beautifies her features, and she can defy old age, for love and kindness have kept her young. A happy marriage has made many a plain woman pretty. China has been very happy in the race that has drawn its sustenance from her. Her civilisation is one of the oldest extant. Her architecture is antique. But she, in her own person, is verdant, fresh, and smiling. She has been loved and cared for tenderly.

CHAPTER XVII

THE CHINESE NEW YEAR

If one had a great many debtors and no creditors one might well wish on New Year's Day to be among the Chinese a Chinaman.

Every Chinaman, unless he is a very Mongolian blackleg indeed, pays his debts on New Year's Day, or on the last day of the old year, that he may start afresh with fresh books. Think what a splendid arrangement if huge sums of money were owing to one! Picture the cruel inconvenience if one were deeply in debt!

I remember one long-ago morning in old Los Angelos. I was a child. Very early I woke with a cry of terror. There certainly was a terrifying din in the town. Out of my window I saw a strange, threatening smoke, and through the window came dire, gunpowdery smells. I remember that I ran, crying, to my father, and sobbed out that the Indians or the Mexicans were coming. But I was assured that it was merely the Chinese celebrating their New Year, and that I might eat my breakfast of fresh figs and cream in the greatest security.

We had a "washee man" in Los Angelos, a long, lank Chinaman with abnormally black eyes. He was a great favourite of mine, and I taught him the alphabet (which I didn't very well know myself) and the Lord's Prayer. He always treated me with great ceremony and respect, and my baby mind was puffed out delightfully. I felt that I was quite a missionary light—a friend and an enlightener of the heathen. And I never could understand why my father laughed at me, and seemed unenthusiastic about John.

In America every Chinaman is "John," or at least it was so in those days; and we were ignorant of the man's characteristic Mongolian appellations.

He was always in our debt a few dollars. I don't know how he managed it, but he did manage it most deftly. For one thing he never had any change, and he never came for payment when my father was at home; and as of course, my mother never had any change either, John usually carried some small amount over to "all same next time."

"There are no roses like the roses of Southern California, and no noise like a Chinese noise," said my father as we sat on the verandah at breakfast.

As he spoke John came slowly up the garden path. He was dressed more like a mandarin than a washerman, but his face was very sad.

"How do. Halpie New Yeal," he said rather reluctantly. Then he laid, most reluctantly, two dollars and forty cents beside my mother's plate.

"What is it, John?" she said.

"Chlange me owey you."

"You can take it off next month's bill."

John's bright eyes brightened, but he shook his head sadly.

"Must pay. China New Yeal. Chinaman must pay all tin. Me pay plenty yen. All me owey me pay. Too me pay Joss pidgen." Then he seemed to shake off his sorrow at having yielded up the coin. He presented me with a box of fire-crackers and went away, with the peaceful air of a Chinaman who had done his duty.

Wherever Chinamen are, the Chinese New Year is observed in the same way. I have seen it in Los Angelos, in San Francisco, and in New York. In Melbourne, on the Australian diggings, in Calcutta, in Burmah, in the Straits Settlements, and in China it is the same. Millions of crackers fizz and explode; that is the most noticeable feature of the day. Friends and acquaintances call on each other. Strangers choose the day to pay visits of respect to Chinese notables. Debts are paid. Feasts are eaten and shops are closed.

No civilised nation keeps so few holidays as does the Chinese. New Year's Day is the one day of national rest. It is the only day of the year on which all the shops are shut.

The Chinese New Year is not co-occurrent with ours. The festivities begin on New Year's Eve, which falls on the 30th day of the 12th moon of the old year. All China—men, women, and children—sit up to greet the dawn of the New Year. And they do greet it with the discharge of millions and billions of crackers. I know a man in Hong-Kong who is slightly deaf. He declares that his hearing was seriously injured in Canton on one New Year's Day. I myself have been in a Chinese city when the smoke from the New Year's crackers was almost as dense and as disagreeable as the London fog in which I am writing.

From midnight on New Year's Eve every Chinese house is swept and garnished for the reception of visitors. Joss sticks are lit before the family gods. The black-carved furniture is polished. Newly-cut sugar canes are placed beside the threshold, and an incredible quantity of tea is infused. The master of the house remains at home to do the Celestial honours to whoever may call. The women of the family and all the younger men leave home at an early hour, that they may get through a long list of calls.

Each caller leaves a card. It is a long slip of red Chinese paper. On it are printed the visitors' names, titles, and addresses. Friends exchange presents of tea, sweetmeats, ornaments, and fruits. They exchange long complimentary letters, the writing of which is in China a fine art. Every guest is regaled with tea and refreshments, which range from absurd-looking sweetmeats to tinsel-decked roast pigs.

On New Year's Day the Chinese wear their dresses of ceremony and their festival dresses. It is every Chinaman's ambition to be a mandarin. On New Year's Day every Chinaman apes the dress of a mandarin as closely as the law will allow. On New Year's Day in Japan—unless we happen, as we sometimes do, to be in their bad graces—every Japanese man rushes into a frock coat and under a silk hat. But the Chinese are grandly insular always, and they borrow nothing from us in their celebration of their great national holiday. Ah Man's beau ideal of holiday

attire is a conical hat, a long silk cloak, gigantic shoes, and grotesque stockings.

Whatever the Chinese do they do thoroughly. Thoroughness is their chief characteristic. They are the most industrious people in the world and the most tireless. They rarely take a holiday, but when they do, they take it vigorously. There are no half-way measures about their merry-making. If they work, they work with a method and a muscle, a persistence and an exactness, that shames European industry. If they keep accounts, they compute the fraction of a fraction far beyond where we lose sight of it. If they drink tea, they drink it as tea elsewhere never yet was drunk. And if they have a good time, they have it in all its details. Every lantern is lit that can shed one more ray of merry light upon the festivity; every shrill instrument is played that can augment the noise and hubbub. There is only one thing that a Chinaman loves more than hubbub, and that is noise.

After noise and hubbub he adores gambling. At the New Year season he gambles excessively. Gambling is a most deplorable habit; but the Chinese gamble so well, in China gambling is such a fine art, that I must own I loved to watch them play, and could never feel, at their great national weakness, half the horror that I knew I ought to have felt. But gambling certainly is the cause of great misery in China. And the New Year tide is the gamester's carnival. Ah well, the Chinese have so few faults that I think they can afford to plead guilty to this one—grave though it is. It is a fault born of quick brains, of strong nerves, of active fingers, and of daring natures.

Are you scowling at me because I say the Chinese have few faults? I repeat it. If you go among them as I have gone, if you will win your way with them, if you will come to know them as I have known them, you will, I think, agree with me. The Chinese are not altogether prepossessing to European eyes; but they are, I believe, worthy of all European respect and of great European confidence. You have known some very bad Chinamen, perhaps? So have I. That proves nothing. Why, I have known some bad Englishmen,—I have even known one bad American. Travelling Europeans make no greater mistake than in forming their judgment of a great and peculiar people from the few members they have slightly known of that big, national body. I was recently present when an able and eloquent man said to one of England's greatest physicians: "I have proof of ten fever cases where the temperature has been reduced by the power of ——," the remedy he was advocating. "Bring me ten thousand such instances, well authenticated, and I shall think that it deserves scientific investigation," said the doctor. I thought that the acme of wise, prudent reasoning; and I wish that that eminent physician might make and record a tour of Asia. Whatever he did, he would do well—his calm exactness would make him eminent in anything. Agassiz never laid down as a truth of the swallow family what he had observed on the breast of one swallow! We make ourselves ridiculous if we judge the countless Chinese nation by a handful of inferior Chinamen whom we have known imperfectly. We might as justly say that Florence Nightingale was immoral because there are unfortunate women in London. Shall we call Tennyson illiterate because our dustman is h-less and h-ey? Shall we

believe the Lord Chief Justice a murderer because Whitechapel once had a Jack-the-Ripper?

The Chinese New Year crackers must afford occupation to a vast number of poor people. The varieties of the crackers are legion, and the number fired every New Year's Day is not to be computed by a small mind or a limited arithmetician. We were walking once in interior China. It was early in the Chinese year. We noticed at some distance a strange scarlet hillock. We went curiously toward it. Not until we were very near did we discover that it was the remnants of many thousands of crackers. The burning crackers had been thrown upon a bed of wild white roses; they had scorched the leaves and seared the stems; but that had been some weeks before. The débris of the crackers was decaying; it manured the rose roots, and the roses were pushing up among the torn scarlet-cracker bits. A thousand fragrant, waxen flowers were backgrounded against the red shreds of the fireworks.

The beauty of China and the excellence of the Chinese are vividly backgrounded by all that is grotesque or faulty in the people of China. Strangely, we seem to be blind to the flower, while we see the background only too clearly.

I have heard that the Chinese roses are scentless. That proves how much I must be the slave of my potent imagination. I thought that I had known no sweeter flower than the wild white rose of China.

There is no country that we misunderstand more grossly than we misunderstand China; but there is no country that can more afford to be indifferent to misconception.

CHAPTER XVIII

ORIENTAL OBSEQUIES

Chinese Coffins

If I may say so, without appearing over-anxious to advertise my Irish ancestry, the most important event in a Chinaman's life is his funeral.

A Chinese crowd is the culmination of human noise; and the Chinese are never so noisy as at a funeral. They have hearty appetites at all times, but they never eat so much as they do at a funeral feast. When I first lived in China I used to find it almost impossible to distinguish between a funeral procession and a marriage procession. In the centre of one the coffined corpse is borne on the shoulders of men. In the centre of the other similar men bear upon their shoulders the bride, who is in an enclosed sedan chair, and she is followed by her bridesmaids. But, to the casual observer, the two ends of the two processions are quite alike in every other respect. Tom-toms, red-clothed coolies carrying roasted pigs and other dainties, smaller coolies carrying cheap paper ornaments of a Mongolian theatrical type,—these are the invariable elements of both processions.

China, if you know it at all, is the easiest of the Oriental countries to write about; although it is very difficult to inform yourself about the Chinese, they are so bitterly exclusive. For any scrap of information you once obtain is necessarily exact. The versatile Japanese have a hundred modes of life; the conservative Chinese have one. The Indian peninsula is inhabited by a hundred distinct peoples; peoples of varying origins, speaking different languages, obeying differing laws, wearing dissimilar dress. These Indian tribes intermingle more or less; their country is so over-populated that they must. But they learn almost nothing from each other; they adopt nothing from each other. They so rarely intermarry that for the purposes of general writing I may say they never do it. The narrow prejudice or the magnificent conservatism (whichever it is) that has kept the petty Indian tribes distinctly separated from one another has kept the great unnumbered and almost numberless Chinese nation, a nation apart from all the rest of the human world. But, unlike the rigidly conservative Indians, the Chinese have taken a great many ideas from aliens. We must not think, because as a people they will not mingle with us nor admit us into their national heart, nor into their homes, nor into the bowels of their country, that they never learn anything from us. They have learned a great deal, they are learning, and they will learn. But what they adopt from us they so assimilate with their vividly characteristic national modes of thought and life, that that superficial mammal, the travelling European, never suspects that many of the conveniences of everyday Chinese life are adaptations of Aryan customs or of European tools.

The Chinese are to-day the most unique, the most ancient, and the most misunderstood people on the earth. I say the most ancient because they are the least changed from what they were long centuries ago. The least changed—they are not changed at all! The China of to-day is the China Marco Polo knew. In the thirteenth century commercial intercourse was frequent between China and Europe. A long caravan route extended from the southern provinces of China to Genoa. The men who took a year to go from their Chinese homes to the great Italian mart, taking with them their precious merchandise of silk and ivory, of tissue and of pearls, differed in almost no way from the men that of recent years have flocked to the Australian diggings and the Californian goldfields.

Europe has pierced its aggressive way into China. China, belching with its congested population, has overflowed into Europe. On the whole, we have, I think, been treated better in China than the Chinese have been treated here. We have often been very rude to Ah Foong. Nevertheless he has gained his point: he has earned enough money to return to the Celestial Empire, to live there in affluence, and to be buried there with *éclat*. And when he has left Europe he has taken with him something more than English gold. A few of us have been in China. (I am not speaking of the missionaries—I regard them as a people apart.) What have we gained in China? A strange experience (to me a pleasant one), a pound of perfumed tea and a bale of flowered crêpe, for both of which we have paid right handsomely. We have been treated in the main politely; but, sooner or later, most of us are bowed out of China, if not by the Emperor, why, then, by the climate.

The Chinese have, at least, three religions—Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism; but the funeral rites of the three sects are almost, if not quite, identical. There are several reasons for this. The three religions are much alike, and are all largely founded upon Indian Buddhism. Moreover, religion is a very second-class affair indeed in China. The priests are not at all an honoured class; they are usually treated with open contumely. There are no religious dissensions in China, it is not a matter of enough importance. The priests of two sects often live together in the chummiest way. Filial devotion is the real religion of China. All China is one huge family, and the Emperor is the "Great Father." By the way, "Great Father" is what the North American Indians call God; and the Chinese consider their Emperor a god. How we human atoms ring our petty changes on a few poor thoughts! There is one more reason why all Chinese funerals are greatly alike. China is a land of ceremonials, and the smallest details of those ceremonials are prescribed by the Leke or *Book of Rites*. To disobey the least rule of this great national manual is a crime, and a severely punished one.

In two respects only does one Chinese funeral differ from another. The first is in the amount of money spent, and the second is in the period after death at which burial takes place.

The first ambition of every Chinaman is to have a splendid coffin. A poor Chinaman will half starve himself and his family for years that he may daily hoard a few cash toward the sum needed for the purchase of the coveted casket. When the

coffin is really bought, it is brought home with great ceremony. It is given the place of honour in the house, and is regarded as the most valuable piece of furniture in the establishment. Often a pious son will sell himself into slavery that he may buy and present to his father an exceptionally handsome coffin. Such acts of filial piety rarely go unrewarded by the Government. The obedience of children to parents is so much the central idea of Chinese life, and upon it so largely depends the safety of the Chinese Government, that that Government, being one of the most astute and painstaking in the world, misses no opportunity of strengthening the idea of filial obedience in the Chinese mind, either *en masse* or singly. Among the poorer classes it is customary to buy a very thick coffin. No self-respecting Chinese family (and the Chinese are the most self-respecting of all the nations) will bury a parent until they can do so with more or less Mongolian magnificence; hence, in China, death by no means implies immediate burial. When a Chinaman dies his neighbours come in and help the women of the family to make the shroud. The body is put in its coffin, then the funeral ceremonies begin, if there is money enough. If there is not, the coffin is put back in its place of honour until the family finances look up. That is something that occasionally takes time in Europe. In China money is acquired more slowly; the coffined body often awaits adequately-ceremonied burial for twenty or thirty years. I need not, I think, dwell upon the grave necessity under such circumstances for a very thick, air-tight coffin. Often a Chinese funeral entails the additional expense of a long journey. A Chinaman will leave his father unburied rather than inter him anywhere but in the tombs of his ancestors, which may be in the most distant part of China, for Ah Foong is rather a traveller.

The day of the death or the day after, the relatives not living in the house and the friends come to pay the last duties or respect to the deceased. When the visitors arrive they are shown into a room in which are all the women and children of the establishment. These latter set up a dismal howl, in which the visitors join, or to which they listen sympathetically. When the tympanum of even a Chinese ear begins to ache, the guests are ushered into another apartment, where the men of the house give them tea and refreshment. The refreshment varies according to the means of the family. In the house of the rich it is a dinner. After the visitors have drank and eaten they are bowed out by one of the kinsmen of the dead.

FOOCHOW SINGING GIRLS. *Page 169.*

The dinner of Chinese affluence, wherever, whyever it is served, consists of five courses—

1. A very rich thick soup.
2. Salad and meat.
3. Birds' nests, sharks' fins, and other very nourishing dishes.
4. Stews.
5. Fruits and sweetmeats.

The first four courses are eaten with chop-sticks, the last course is eaten with the fingers; and is not that the way that fruit always should be eaten? Everything in the first four courses is served superlatively hot. Except a Chinaman is starving he will not eat cooked food unless it is bubbling hot. I except sweetmeats; and yet he eats the most incredible quantities of ice. Wine is served with all the courses—served hot. It is not intoxicating, and has, to my palate, a very pleasant taste. I used to dine in America with some people who were just a bit mad on the temperance question. One day they gave me unfermented wine; it was an awful moment! But the Chinese

dinner-giver knows the secret of keeping his guests free from the possible ill effects of alcohol without making himself ridiculous.

At a correct Chinese dinner the women look on from behind a trellis work. The Chinese hold that the seat of the human understanding is the stomach.

A well-conducted Chinese funeral is the most gorgeous sight in Asia. It may seem to us a little tinselly, but that is a mere matter of taste; but I, who make bold to like the Chinese, can't claim that they have in all things a superabundance of taste.

At the front of the funeral procession walk the noisy, musicless musicians; then come men (they may be friends, they may be coolies) bearing the insignia of the dignity of the dead, if he had any. Next walk more men carrying figures of animals, idols, umbrellas, and blue and white streamers. After them come men carrying pans of perfume. Just before the coffin walk bonzes—Chinese priests. Over the coffin a canopy is usually carried. The casket is borne by about a score of men. Immediately after the coffin walk the children of the deceased. The eldest son comes first. He is dressed in canvas and leans heavily upon a stout stick. He is supposed to be too exhausted by grief and fasting to walk without the aid of this staff. The other children and relatives follow this chief mourner. They are clothed in white linen garments. White is the mourning colour of the Danes and of the Chinese. The women are carried in chairs in the Chinese funeral procession. They sob and wail at intervals and in unison.

A Chinese funeral procession always has a long way to go. The burying-places are invariably some distance from the town or village. Usually they are on a high place. Pines and cypresses are planted about them if possible. The dead are supposed to be pleased at having a pleasant situation for their graves. When a Chinese family has persistent bad luck it is usual for them to shift the bones of their ancestors to a more desirable place.

When the burying-place is reached the bonzes begin chanting a mass for the dead, and the coffin is put into the tomb. When the coffin is laid in its final position, a large, oblong, white marble table is placed before the tomb. On the middle of it is set a censor and two vases and two candlesticks, all of as exquisite workmanship as possible. Then they have a paper cremation; paper figures of men and horses, garments, and a score of other things are burned. These are supposed to undergo a material resurrection and to be useful to the dead in the Chinese heaven. The tomb is sealed up or closed, and an entertainment concludes the ceremony at the grave.

The forms of Chinese tombs vary somewhat, according to the province in which they are built, and very much according to the means of the relative who undertakes the expense. With the very poor the coffin is placed upon the ground, earth and lime are packed about it, and a rude grave is formed. With the rich a vault is built, in the form of a horse-shoe. If the dead was of note or position, the decorations of the grave and of the coffin are very elaborate. There are a thousand interesting things to be said about Chinese mourning, about the ceremonies commemorative of the dead, and about the funerals of the Chinese Royal Family. But they can't be put into a paragraph, nor on to a page. So I leave them.

Chinese religion is so secondary an affair that it is inconsistent. Theoretically, some of them believe in immortality. In reality, I believe them to be the veriest materialists, quite devoid of a belief in an after-life. And yet they periodically carry food to the graves of their ancestors.

The Chinese are touchingly fanatic in their love of home. China is so over-productive of human life that a fearful number of the Chinese are uncomfortable from their birth till their death. That is the only reason that we sometimes see, as I did yesterday, a red-button mandarin on the streets of London, and the sole reason that half San Francisco's soiled linen is washed by Chinamen. But wherever they go, they carry their coffins with them. They hope to die in China, but, if by accident or misfortune, they die in Europe, in America, or in Australia, their last prayer is that they may rest in a Chinese grave.

CHAPTER XIX

ORIENTAL NUPTIALS

Chinese Espousals

THERE are no marriages in China for a hundred days following the death of an Emperor. But on all other days, marriage processions of various degrees of gorgeousness follow each other along the streets in interminable succession.

Theoretically the Emperor is the only Chinaman who sees the face of his wife before their marriage. As a matter of fact, in the poorer classes, boys and girls grow up together, play together, work together, and fall in love with each other. And even in the richer classes, where poverty does not drive the girls into public view, love matches are not so very uncommon. Chinese literature is replete with love stories. And the love poems of China are remarkable from a human point as much as from a Mongolian.

The most important marriages that ever take place in China are the marriages of the Emperor. To those marriages every daughter of every Chinese grandee aspires. When the Emperor ascends the throne, the grandees of the court bring to him all their unmarried daughters. He selects all that please him, and the chosen girls rejoice together.

The Emperor of China never allies himself, directly or indirectly, with any foreign prince. The Chinese Royal Family is purely Chinese. The daughters of the Emperor are often given in marriage to favourite mandarins. The family that can furnish his Majesty with one of his many wives—the family that can form an alliance with one of the sovereign's daughters—is sure to gain great influence and power, and to be loaded with many honours. There is no limit to the number of an Emperor's wives, except the limit placed by his own apathy. He is a very absolute monarch indeed, is the Emperor of China. There is, among the countless millions of his subjects, one person only who may dare to differ from him, to admonish him, or even to urgently advise him,—his mother. There are two things in China mightier than the Emperor of China: the mother of the Emperor and public opinion. He must heed both, if they speak emphatically enough.

But among his Majesty's many wives there is one who is chief. She is called Hrang-Hou. She is the Empress; she enjoys peculiar prerogatives; she is usually a person of vast influence. The wives of a Chinese Emperor are securely shut in a palace of their own. They hold no communication with the outer world. The outer world sees nothing of them; but they see China, very much as the people of a country village often see the world—through a cheap stereoscope. If a wife of the Emperor expresses curiosity about some famous city, a miniature representation of

that city is probably built in the palace park. Which is one way of making the mountain come to Mohammed, is it not? The wives of the Emperor are often allowed to sit behind gratings and watch ceremonies and feasts. They are lavishly supplied with everything except freedom, general society, and feet. I fancy that they are all well educated. I have never known the wife of a Chinese Emperor; but I have known Chinese women of lesser rank who were positively highly educated. And nowhere is education more valued—its power more understood—than in China. Nowhere is education more valuable, for in China a man's rank depends solely upon what he can do or has done. It is most probable that the grandees, who may aspire to bestow their daughters upon the Emperor, give those daughters—from whose influence they hope so much—every possible advantage of education.

Chinese widows re-marry, but the practice is not held in high repute. The widows of the Emperor can never re-marry. Upon his death they are removed to a building which stands within the palace precincts. It is called the Palace of Chastity. There the widows of the Emperor—with the possible exception of her who is now the Empress Mother—must live and die. But they are held in the greatest honour, treated with the greatest respect and consideration.

The favourite wife of a Chinese Emperor is a very potential lady, and she is rather apt to retain her power. She is beautiful, according to Chinese standards of beauty, or the Emperor would never have chosen her. She is most probably a woman of unusual culture and education. She is very possibly a woman of intellect; for she is a grandee's daughter, and no meagrely-minded man attains to grandeeship in China. And it goes without saying that she is the best-dressed woman in China. She has nothing to do but welcome the suzerain and to please him. She belongs to no society for the advancement of her own sex. She may not even write to the daily papers; but she is rather warmly liked by her royal master-husband for all that. And many a Chinese Emperor has been in despair at the death of his favourite wife. In the middle of the seventeenth century, the Emperor Chun-Chee, who was the founder of the present dynasty, sacrificed, at the tomb of his favourite wife, thirty odd slaves. That was a nice little *post-mortem* custom; but it has died out. Paper men are now burnt at Chinese graves, that the spirit of the dead may not lack servants in the after-life. And yet, as far as I could find out, but few Chinamen really believe in an after-life. What a strange inconsistency on the part of a people usually so consistent!

I have said that only the Emperor's mother dare cross the Emperor's will. But only the God of Marriage knows what battles are fought and won within those closely-guarded palace gardens, when the sovereign visits his wives. I have very little faith in the powerlessness of lock-and-keyed wives. In India I knew a Maharajah who was abjectly afraid of his purdahed Maharanee's sharp little tongue.

China is a huge place. Though customs are essentially the same all over China, some of them are greatly differentiated in detail. This is probably one reason that almost all English written accounts of Chinese weddings differ markedly. I fancy that a greater reason is that the almost impregnable reticence of the Chinese makes it

very difficult for an Occidental to definitely learn much concerning the fundamental customs of Chinese life.

The age is very variable at which Chinese marriages are contracted. I have seen Chinese brides of very tender years, and I have seen Chinese brides who looked positively mature.

Ordinarily a Chinaman buys his wife. He does not see her (or is supposed not to see her) until the marriage; but his women representatives have a good long look at her and report to him, or to his parents, if those are still living. If all the preliminary details are satisfactorily arranged, the bargain is concluded. The bridegroom pays the bride's parents the stipulated "wife-price." He retires to his own house and there awaits his unseen bride. She is placed in a closed palanquin, a fantastic sedan chair, which is carried at the end or in the centre of the bridal procession. This procession is as elaborate as the means of the contracting families will permit, and as grotesque as Chinese fancy can invent. In it are lanterns, musical instruments, fans, umbrellas, insignia of rank, and covered tables on which are roast pigs and a hundred and one Chinese dainties. The bearers of all these ornaments and symbols are clad in bright red, or at least wear red jackets. The musicians play, the crowd shouts, in sing-song Chinese fashion, and the two bridesmaids proudly follow the sedan chair. The chair is locked and the key is carried by a trusted servant. The bridegroom waits at his own gate, clad in his dress of ceremony. A Chinese dress of ceremony is a most remarkable collection of remarkable garments; its colours and many of its details depend entirely upon the rank of its wearer. The key of the palanquin is handed to the bridegroom. He presses forward; the crowd draws back; the bridegroom unlocks the palanquin and looks at its contents. If he is pleased, he leads his bride into his house and the marriage is celebrated. If the bridegroom is disappointed, the bride is sent back to her parents and there is no wedding. But in that case the bridegroom that was to have been, must pay the girl's parents a sum equal to the sum for which he bought her. Even after the marriage the wife can be divorced and returned to her parents upon payment of a sum identical with the "wife money" which was her first price. The causes for divorce with which the Chinese popular mind is most sympathetic are those that arise from the misrepresentation of the bride by her parents. If she is less attractive in face or figure than she was said to be—above all, if she has larger feet—every Chinaman is justified, to the popular mind, in divorcing his wife.

If the bridegroom is pleased and the bride goes in, the friends follow and a gigantic feast is offered and accepted. The marriage ceremony itself is far less important, I believe, to the Chinese mind than the marriage feast. The marriage ceremonies of almost all the Oriental peoples are strangely alike. The chief detail of the Chinese marriage ritual is, I understand, the tying together of bride and bridegroom. Scarlet strings fasten them together, waist to waist and foot to foot.

Nothing seems to me more difficult of description than the position of woman in China. As I have so often said, reliable and precise information is so hard to obtain. But more than that, the position of woman in China is so complex. As a wife she is

placed beneath her husband and is subservient to him, because the Chinese regard the female as inferior to the male. As a mother she is placed above her son, and he is subservient to her, because the Chinese regard the parent as superior to the child. But with the Chinese the superiority of parentage is far greater than any possible superiority of sex.

My observation in China was, necessarily, limited, but it was very earnest. It was my observation that the Chinese men were not unkind to the Chinese women. I spent some time among the water populations of Hong-Kong and Canton. In both of those cities incredible thousands live in the crudest native boats,—live in sampans. They seemed very happy, contented little families, despite their dire poverty. The women worked hard, but they were certainly consulted about every family matter. I never saw a race of women who struck me as being less cowed. I often used to watch them at their wretched meals; it was share and share alike, with the nicer share for the wife and the tidbits for the baby. It is true that among the poorer classes of the Chinese the women do tremendously hard work; but it is also true that they are tremendously strong. It is as true that women are forced to stupendous labour wherever poverty is more the rule than the exception. The Chinese women of the coolie class labour in the fields, they break stones on the streets of Hong-Kong, they carry heavy boxes on and off the boats that anchor in the Canton river,—but they are not ciphers in their own families. I do not believe that they are ever cuffed; I doubt if they are ever cursed.

A Chinese gentleman is superlatively polite. This may not be generally known, because the upper classes in China are so reluctant to know us or to let us know them. But it is true. We know one Chinese family of rank rather well; we have eaten with the men of the family and with the women. Truth compels me to mention that the gentleman of the house had two wives. Whether they ordinarily ate with him I do not know. I fancy that their doing so when we were there was an act of consideration for me; yet I am not sure, for they were easy and self-possessed. And this I do know, that the men of the house were most unfailingly courteous to them. I believe that, on the whole, Mongolian married life is very fairly satisfactory to the Mongolians. If they are satisfied, why, in the name of reasonableness, should they be disturbed? If the women of the upper classes are not always, or even often, supreme in their home lives, they are at least secure of deferential and courteous treatment. One of the chief proverbs of China—and I thought it a delightful one—is, “You must listen to your wife, but not believe her.”

CHAPTER XX

CHINESE SHOES

THE Chinese women have enormous feet. They are reputed "small footed," but our reputations often wrong us. No Chinese woman has a small foot. But even a Chinese woman's huge great toe looks small when in its solitary deformity it masquerades as an entire foot.

There is nothing so characteristic of the Chinese as thoroughness. The Chinese are the least beautiful of all civilised peoples; but when they undertake to be beautiful—even in the mere matter of their women's feet—they do it thoroughly. They don't put a heel in the middle of a shoe to make a foot look small, nor do they point absurdly an empty satin toe. No! They bend four of the human toes back and leave the one big toe to do apparent duty as a lovely, diminutive foot.

To us the small-footed women of China appear twofold martyrs. We think them martyrs because they suffer when the foot deformity is inflicted upon them. We think them martyrs because their deformed feet are useless, and disable them from taking exercise.

We regard exercise as a blessed privilege. The Chinese regard exercise as a dire necessity.

We, in the West, do most things because we like; they, in the East, do most things because they must.

That makes the great racial difference. It is not often justly appreciated. Ignoring it causes us to do the people of Asia innumerable injustices.

Chinese women know as little of tennis, of golf, of riding to hounds—even of dancing in its fast and furious Western sense—as we know of fish-eye soup and of birds'-nest stew. And they care less.

The majority of Chinese women whose feet are bound endure temporary pain, but they suffer no permanent deprivation. To take voluntary and unnecessary exercise—to take it as a pleasure—could never occur to a well-balanced Chinese mind. The Nirvâna of which the Brahmins dream is the idleness which the most favoured-by-fortune of the Chinese women realise.

Milton might have written of the small-footed women of China (had he known them—had he felt an interest in them), 'They also serve who only sit and wait.' They serve indeed a great racial purpose of repose as they sit and wait for an Occidental enlightenment for which they have no desire.

The Chinese are the hardest working, the most indefatigable race on earth. Consequently the *grandes dames* of old Cathay do even less material work than the leisured women of any other country.

Nature is the great giver of recompense; Nature saves us from universal insanity;

Nature whispers in the ear of the tired, overworked Chinaman, “Rest is the superlative form of happiness. To be idle is to be in paradise.”

The Chinese bind the feet of their women not out of cruelty; they do it partly out of a deformed, over-civilised, national vanity, but still more out of a tender kindness. The woman whose feet are “small” can perform no great physical labour; she cannot trudge beneath the burning sun to tend the young rice plants; nor can she pole the heavy sampans up and down the crowded Chinese rivers.

The Chinese do not incapacitate their chosen women from enjoyment but from hardship. It is often said and printed in the West that the feet of the women of the Chinese nobility are bound, and that the feet of the peasant women are left unbound. It has been said that you can learn a Chinese woman’s rank from her feet. I have even seen it recorded in good, honest-looking type that the feet of all the Chinese women are bound.

Excepting only the descendants of Confucius there is no Chinese nobility, save the momentary nobility of personal merit. A mandarin who is “noble” because he is able is most probably rich; being rich he can afford to bind the feet of his daughter. There is no necessity for her to work. He can go further; he can secure her in perpetual idleness. Her feet are bound, and her bowl of rice is placed before her; she need never earn it by the sweat of her pretty little yellow brow.

How the preposterous notion that the feet of all Chinese women are bound ever entered the most stupid Occidental head is inconceivable. I suppose that it occurred on the same intellectual principle that impelled a San Francisco friend to say to me, “You need not tell me there’s any good in any of the Chinese, for I just know there ain’t. I know two Johns; they do my washing. They’re both thieves, they both lie, and they both gamble.”

In the poorer class (we can scarcely use the word peasant of a people by all of whom the highest nobility is attainable)—in the poorer class there is apt to be one small-footed girl in each family. If they can see their combined way to support her, the feet of the prettiest girl are bound. Don’t fancy that she resents it. She is delighted. She does only light work after that. She brings a better price in the vast Mongolian marriage market. Haply, she will, in future, be able to aid and recompense her devoted family. At the worst, they have the satisfaction of feeling that they have rescued one of their own flesh and blood from the seething, sweating struggle for Chinese existence.

Chinese shoemakers are supreme. They are an economy and a delight to every European woman who lives in Asia. Their work is swift, deft, and faultless! Their bills are charmingly little. In spite of the hard times I am beautifully shod to-day, thanks to a little yellow man who lives on Bentick Street in Calcutta. I forget his name, but I send him a very hearty chin-chin. Difficulties may arise with my landlord and my coal-merchant; but I am strong on my feet. I have a box full of lovely shoes and slippers; the most expensive pair cost me six rupees. As a rule I furnished the satin and paid my cobbler one rupee. I was with a friend yesterday, when she bought herself a pair of French boots. I saw her purse bleed gold, and my

heart was full with kind thoughts of my Chinese shoemaker.

In nothing are the Chinese more thorough than in their stoicism. I only saw, well, one Chinese hospital; I never had the courage to go into another. In Hong-Kong a friend who was attached to the English Hospital took me through it and through the Tung Wah Hospital.

The English Hospital was a great cool place of succour, of comfort, and of alleviation. The Chinese Hospital was a house of horror. There was system, but I saw no comfort. The Chinese gentleman who accompanied me told me that the beds were bare boards because the patients were used to nothing else and would like nothing else. Why the insane ward was as it was he did not explain. Indeed I went into the insane "ward" alone; my two escorts waited at the door. There were several good and sufficient reasons for this.

In the pharmacy all seemed excellently ordered. We might, I believe, learn from the Chinese much of great medical value; their drugs, their instruments, and their therapeutics all deserve trained and competent study.

The Chinaman dreads the knife as he dreads nothing else; and yet of recent years China has made great strides in surgery. The Chinese pharmacopœia is, I fancy, exceptionally rich, and includes many potent, efficacious herbs of which we know nothing.

I ought, in justice, to say that the Tung Wah Hospital was clean. It was very clean,—but it was beyond words dreary. It was a cruel place. The sick and the sick-unto-death lay, I thought, absolutely without sympathy, certainly without creature comforts. But there, it is so easy for ignorance to be critical, so impossible for it to criticise justly. Possibly those poor creatures would have resented the sympathy and have refused the comforts. So, at least, I was told. I tried to be fair. But I went out of the handsome carving-decked waiting-room very troubled about the Tung Wah Hospital, and very sure that its insane ward was a disgrace to an island over which the English flag floated.

From the Tung Wah Hospital we went on and up, until we passed through the pretty lodge of the English Hospital. It was a huge house of mercy. And the pretty brown-eyed Sister who smiled me welcome to the first ward had English roses at her belt.

CHINESE MUSICIANS. *Page 184.*

The Chinese are heroically thorough in their struggle for existence. China has an enormous water population. I forget how many thousands or tens of thousands live in the sampans of Hong-Kong and Canton; but the number is gigantic. I made friends in Hong-Kong with a woman who was born on a sampan, who was married from a sampan to a sampan man, and who had, in the short sanctity of her husband's sampan, been seven times a mother. She had never spent five consecutive hours out of a sampan. Her loves and hates, her distastes and her appetites, her fears and her ambitions, were all bounded by the primitive walls of a Hong-Kong sampan.

When you think of partly English Hong-Kong in all its regal beauty, when you think of wholly Mongolian Canton in all its super-Asiatic density, think of them with an outer scum—a scum of poverty, a scum of sampans. China, the prolific, has overflowed into the yellow Chinese sea, and it is greatly to the credit of the Chinese overflow that it has found life both palatable and practicable. I saw in China nothing more wonderful than the *modus vivendi* of the sampan people. They do all that men must do on board their crude, diminutive barks. Nevertheless, they keep the boats scrupulously clean and very much at the service of any European who will exchange a few sen for a long, soft float on the swelling Chinese sea.

Nature herself is thorough in China. When it rains on Hong-Kong, the island is

drenched with a wet splendour that dwarfs into a mere mist all the rains that ever fell on Europe. The last time that we were in Hong-Kong it rained incessantly. Between the steamer and the hotel our boxes were thoroughly drenched. I was very cross when my poor trunks were opened, and my maid wept, probably because she foresaw damp, additional labour. We secured an extra room, and every effort was made to remove the stain of Anne Nevill's black velvet from Pauline Deschappelle's white bridal satin. But alas, the trailing stain of the Chinese rains was over them all, and I am still the chagrined possessor of sundry costly gowns that are not the colour they were, because they have been soaked by the unexaggeratable torrents of the Chinese storms. The rain came down, the rain came across, the rain seemed to come up from the seething earth.

My thickening manuscript cries to me, "Halt." I have left unsaid almost all that I ought to have said of China, had my information and my capacity been less meagre. And in the sheerest gratitude I should have chronicled more that one feast on the Peak, and recorded how sweetly the Argyll and Sutherlanders played *Annie Laurie*, and how potent their uniforms looked against the vivid background of the green Chinese flora.

There are sentences, or rather might be sentences, I long to write—sentences unique with Slavic words and Tartar phraseology—sentences descriptive of the Russian seamen who 'rickshawed through Hong-Kong while the Tsarevitz was peeping at Canton.

The Russian men-of-war were too bulky to slip up the narrow Canton rivers. The Tsarevitz accepted the locomotion of a smaller boat, and the Russian sailors held in Hong-Kong high holiday.

From Hong-Kong we sent back to Australia about half of our artistic corps. We were, as we thought, soon going home to England. My husband wished our departing fellows God-speed and a glad return to their Antipodean homes. I tried to wring Jimmie MacAllister's huge hand; and I wiped my eyes as the big ship carried him back to the land of the Southern Cross—carried him away from the green hills of Hong-Kong, where the red flowers of China flashed upon the gray walls of the English Barracks.

Of the amateurs who filled up our depleted ranks, I will say nothing, because nothing that I could say would be enough.

I believe that I am a wiser woman for having lived in China. Certainly I am a happier.

There is, I think, if I may say it again, no other civilised country that we misunderstand and misjudge as we do China. There is, I emphatically believe, no other nation so worthy, as are the Chinese, of our sympathy and respect.

CHAPTER XXI

JAPANESE TOUCH

WITH the Japanese art is an inspiration. They are incapable of bad taste in art. If their work is not always great, it is always fine. It sometimes lacks depth, it never lacks grace.

Lightness of touch, exactness of touch, characterise all Japanese work; but it would be grossly untrue to say that all Japanese work lacks strength, depth, and force. Much that the Japanese do, they do "from the shoulder." Their cloisonné is rich, their carvings are masterly, and on the stages of their theatres I have seen handling of group-masses that was powerful in the extreme.

But finish and delicacy are the most general characteristics of all Japanese work. Even when the Japanese are positively bold in design and execution, it is so well bred a boldness that we are apt to lose sight of it, and be absorbed in admiration of the details.

Japanese finish is so extreme that it is almost veneer. The Japanese are as polished as their own lacquers; and all their work is a reflection of themselves.

Art and Nature are at their loveliest in Japan. Nowhere else is Nature so artistic. Perhaps because nowhere else does there dwell a people so intensely sympathetic with Nature. In Japan the scenery is so perfect that we almost suspect it of being studied. And the Japanese architecture—of hut or of temple—is so appropriate to its background, so fits the landscape, that we feel that both have been arranged by the same master-hand.

No other people can boast an art that breaks into so many lines of beauty, and that smiles with such sweet wealth of colour-harmony. But there are parts of the globe where both Art and Nature seize upon us more quickly and hold us more powerfully.

In the Alps, in the Sierra Nevadas, in Tasmania, in Gippsland, in the Himalayas, Nature takes you by the shoulders and shakes you—shakes a soul into you if you never had one before.

In Japan, Nature has vines and blossoms in her hair, and wine on her lips. She smiles into your face. She stretches out to you her warm, dimpled arms. She has bewitched you. You may tear yourself away from her, but you will never forget her. She will haunt you in your London club; and when you are deer-stalking in Scotland or yachting in the Norway fiords you will close your eyes sometimes and feel once more upon your cheeks the perfume of her breath. Her beauty has mastered you. You love her, with a light love, perhaps, but then, alas, the light loves are the loves that last. You have escaped to honest English civilisation and to Regent Street, but to the day of your death you will long to go back to the gentle, scented embrace of

the blithe Nature that laughs and rollicks and lavishes her myriad beauties on Japan.

I have seen strong men weep in Dresden and in Rome, moved to a new emotion by some gigantic achievement of Occidental art,—an achievement that was great, but far from faultless. The great proportion of Japanese art is faultless, but far from great.

After all, I have no right to decide what constitutes greatness. Is a forest greater than a maple leaf? I doubt it. Art is so infinite,—all artists are so finite! The artists of Japan embroider with their pencils, and paint with their needles. They follow their own art ideal. Because it appeals to us less, it is not necessarily a smaller ideal than our own.

The very delicacy of touch and mind that makes the Japanese the most exquisite of all workmen, makes them the most sensitive of all peoples, the most petulantly resentful of criticism. I fear that it would be impossible for a European to write an article about Japan that would be inoffensive to the Japanese, unless it were an article of unqualified praise.

We reached Nagasaki in the early daylight. So should one always first see Japan. To touch the shores of Japan in the dawning, to begin a new day and a new exquisite experience, to steal with the sun into Nagasaki; that is something to remember for ever, with gratitude. As we approached Nagasaki it looked like a collection of cheerful Orientalised Swiss chalets.

Nagasaki nestles against the hilly side of fair, green Kiu-siu like a quaint burr clinging to the petal of a huge, lovely flower.

Japan in many parts is not unlike Switzerland—Switzerland grown warm and comfortable, Switzerland reduced to a minute scale, Switzerland burst into myriad bloom and softened into a new and gentle beauty. The sun lit up the island more clearly as we stepped into the clean, little, canoe-like tug that came to take us ashore.

A long line of 'rickshaws, as impatient as prancing horses, stood at the low, sandy landing-place. Hundreds of quaintly-clad, bright-eyed people, brown-skinned and buff, were moving daintily about the delicate scene.

Over a very serious, but a rather lazy-looking wooden building floated the Stars and Stripes, and the Union-Jack-adorned British Consulate looked as eminently respectable and as unpicturesque as did the official residence of the American Consul.

Our family divided into three parties when we were well ashore. I was the only adult wicked enough to ride behind a "human horse." My husband went to call at the Consulates, and to inspect the theatre, at which we intended to play on our return. And Nurse marched bravely off, leading the boy bairn, and followed by the wee girl bairn, who looked like a great human snowball in the arms of black John the Madrassi.

I made a bargain with a sturdy, cheerful-looking jinrickshaw coolie, who spoke good English and better French, and he started off into the heart of bright, busy Nagasaki.

That coolie was a genius. And, unlike many genii, he had not mistaken his avocation. He was a capital cicerone. He rang, or rather ran, the changes on the Nagasaki sights in the deftest and most admirable way. From the choicest shops to the queerest temple, from beside the jolliest little vine-hung stream into the densest coolie quarter, for seven hours he directed my travels in a masterly manner. And just when the captain (so he afterwards told me) was almost beginning to use inelegant English, the clever little native whirled me down to the shore, bowed me into a tug, clapped his hands, laughed, and cried, "Sayonara."

I do not know what delighted me most in Nagasaki I never knew what delighted me most in Japan, it was all so delightful. Nagasaki was the first bit of Japan I ever saw. I found in it a new charm. China was to me like the land of the mighty magicians; Japan was fairyland.

The Japanese islands are running over with flowers. The Japanese temples are a-tinkle with the music of bells. The soft-voiced people walk among the blossoms, and their fine faces are aglow with the love of beauty, and they themselves are innocently intoxicated with the delight of living.

Nagasaki is so sweetly clean that one cannot wonder that tourists who spend a few hours there rush back to their boats and write to the journals of Europe and America that the Japanese are the cleanest people on earth. I thought that the first day I was in Nagasaki. Alas, I learned better in a dozen other Japanese cities!

It was in Nagasaki that I first felt the full force of Japanese courtesy. My husband lunched in an elaborate fashion with friends at the hotel, but I begged off and spent all of my seven hours in investigating Nagasaki. When my coolie thought I had fasted long enough, he dropped the shafts of the 'rickshaw and ran into a droll little papier-maché looking house that was perched on the hilly highway, midway between the cemetery and the bamboo-bridged streamlet. In a few moments he came back carrying a tea-tray, and followed by a half-grown girl, who had cakes and fruit in a lacquer basket. An old woman toddled after, and spread a paper napkin on my lap. I enjoyed my *al fresco* lunch very much, as I sat in the 'rickshaw; the sunshine danced about me, but I was cool under the shade of an immense plum tree. They brought me a strange copper bowl, filled with warm water, and when I had paid the reasonable bill, we went back to the little paradise of shops.

The great works of Western art move us to awe. Upon Europeans the universal effect of Japanese works of art is a mad, insatiable desire to possess. Very good people long to buy. I am not very good; my enemies say that I am not good at all. Certainly, until my money gave out I longed to buy everything I saw in Japan. But when my money gave out, as it soon did, my one desire was to steal. I do not remember that I ever did steal anything in Japan, but I often wanted to do so. And my husband says that he mysteriously lost a hundred yen in Yokohama.

European art—if it is great art—holds us at a distance. Japanese art woos us; we long to own it—to stroke it. Japanese art is as approachable as it is fine. Occidental art keeps us in our place.

I saw Nagasaki again, when we were leaving Japan. Again our ship stopped

there for a few hours. We played *Hamlet* there; it was an ethereal experience—a fitting end of our stay in the daintiest, prettiest, most mannerly country on the globe. We walked through the moonlight to the theatre. The streets were silent, save for the plaintive whistle of the blind shampooers. It sounded doubly sad to me as I realised that possibly I should never hear it again.

I have often wondered what Ophelia would have said could she have seen half the strange flowers I have worn in her name. Cowboys have brought me the wild flowers of their wilder West (it was my wild West too). Maharanees have sent me scented roses from behind purdahed gardens. Gold kings and silver paupers have sent me soft flannel flowers, and pink colonial roses from the Australian bush,—in all the quarters of the globe I have been the recipient of the perfumed tribute paid to me because I represented, however unworthily, the sweet, meek maiden who was the genius-born daughter of Shakespeare's pen.

In Nagasaki we had a paucity of scenery; but I had a wealth of flowers for the "mad scene," and as I wreathed the wistaria and the honeysuckle with the pompom-like chrysanthemums, the Japanese lilies, and the matchless roses, I almost wept over them my farewell to Japan.

In the late starlight we went back from the theatre to the boat. Japan was almost hidden by the night. We stole into Japan in the dawning; we stole out of Japan in the midnight dusk. Fit beginning, fit end of an experience almost too exquisitely beautiful to be a reality,—an experience of which I shall always think as of a Heaven-sent dream.

But between the early morning when the beauty of Japan dawned upon us, and the night in whose deep dusk we lost sight of the incomparably lovely islands, we had many weeks of rare delight,—weeks spent in Hondo.

The little voyage up the "Inland Sea" was well-nigh marvellous. The lakes and the mountains were as intricate as a Chinese puzzle, and as beautiful as we fancy the Garden of Eden.

Kobe—the Hiogo of yore—broke the sylvan panorama of our sail and Fusiyama accented it. Fusiyama rose between the green Japanese hills and the blue Japanese sky like a white point of holy exclamation. It was dormant, but a dozen lesser volcanoes threw up tongues of flame as we passed.

In Kobe we found old friends—friends from London, from Boston, and from Nevada. We found shelter in a cosy, well-cuisined hotel, and its presiding genius had once been our Boniface in Montano. We were given great hospitality in Kobe. We made some charming Japanese friends. I revelled in the Japanese shops. And the fierce, rainy day that we sailed for Yokohama, I was given such a roll of sumptuous black satin, on which wonderfully skilled Japanese fingers had embroidered great clusters of purple *fleur-de-lis*!

CHAPTER XXII

FOUR WOMEN THAT I KNEW IN TOKIO

Mrs. Keutako

THREE of them were Japanese. One was the Anglo-Saxon wife of a Japanese gentleman. Two of them I had known in America. Two of them I met for the first time in Japan.

The two girls whom I knew at Vassar College as Stamatz Yamakawa and Shige Nagai had become the Countess Oyama and Mrs. Uriu. My new acquaintances were Mrs. Keutako and Madame Sannomiya. Mrs. Keutako was a dear bit of Japanese femininity whom I always longed to seize upon and cuddle. We were really very good friends, though our conversation was very limited. She knew two words of English. I had the advantage of her inasmuch as I knew three words of Japanese.

Madame Sannomiya was one of the most powerful personalities of the Japanese Court; she was English, but her husband was a high functionary of the Mikado's household. I called upon her with no vouchment but that of a few common acquaintances. I went to ask her kindly offices for a performance of the *Merchant of Venice* we were ambitious to give before the Emperor. The attempt upon the life of the Tsarevitz threw the Japanese Court into a trembling, mortified state of chagrin that doomed our little plan. But I gained the acquaintance of one of the most uniquely interesting women I ever met.

The four women of whom I am writing were, I believe, rather familiarly acquainted, because they were all, more or less, habitués of the Imperial palace. The differentiation of their individualities could scarcely have been sharper.

We reached Yokohama one night after dark. When I woke in the early morning I dressed quickly and went out for a ramble alone,—as I love to do in a new place. I felt as if I had fallen asleep and dreamed of a fairy land peopled by the figures off my best tea-cups and off my summer fans. Japan is perpetually blessed with an atmosphere as clear as crystal, as soft as down, and as sweet as incense. Nature loves Japan with the tender, yearning love of a mother for a favourite child. On Japan Nature lavishes her most fragrant verdure and her utmost picturesqueness of life. And, to end, she touches the picture she has made with some delicate trail of graceful vine, some matchless slope of hillside. She adds to the figures on the canvas the seductive witchery of unrivalled eyes, the grace of perfect manner; and the people of her favourite country echo her. The Japanese peasant, who sits upon the floor to suck his meal of raw eggs, has a handful of superb flowers in a graceful vase; and the floor upon which he sits is white and clean. But, as I was to learn, Yokohama is nothing to Tokio. You meet Europeans in almost every street in

Yokohama. I have been days in Tokio without seeing a European. There are, I believe, only six European ladies resident in Tokio, and proportionately few European men.

It was in Yokohama that I first met Mrs. Keutako. My husband had mailed a letter of introduction to Mr. Keutako only that morning, and had added a line, saying, "My wife and I are coming to Tokio for a few days next week, and I shall give myself the pleasure of calling upon you." The response was very prompt and very Japanese. It was this: a basket of beautiful roses was brought to my dressing-room that night, with a card on which was written in English, "With Mrs. Henrico Keutako's compliments and welcome." When the curtain rose we saw in the front row a Japanese gentleman in European evening dress; beside him sat a breathing Japanese doll, with glancing, dancing eyes, and brave with exquisite Japanese raiment.

We sent out a note begging them to have supper with us after the play. When the curtain fell Mr. Paulding brought them on to the stage. How the dear little woman bowed; then she laughed and patted my hand, put her dainty finger on her lips, and shook her head. I bore her off in triumph to my room. Mr. Keutako was a Harvard graduate, and had spent some years in England. We could hear him and my husband talking in the next room. But I don't believe they enjoyed themselves as much as we did. My guest took a wild, childish delight in everything. She tried on my rings and made me try on hers; she tried on several pairs of my slippers; she was greatly amused at my hare's foot; she pantomimed to me to "make her up"; she was in an ecstasy over my blonde wig. The only English she knew was "Thank you," but she said it over and over. While she was investigating all my little belongings, I looked at her. She was dainty and little, of course. Her skin was a few shades darker than mine; her black hair was dressed with extreme Japanese elaborateness; she was clad in robes of pale-blue and pale-pink crêpe, and an outer robe of rich brown satin dotted sparsely with pale-blue flowers and lined with pale-pink silk. Her obi was of black and silver, and was fastened in front with three or four flashing diamonds. She wore four or five more fine diamonds on her pretty hands, and a big turquoise, that must have felt very heavy on the wee finger. She wore a deep-red rose at her throat. On the shoulder of her kimono was embroidered her coat-of-arms; that is a custom with the Japanese of gentle birth on state or semi-state occasions. She had paid me the compliment of wearing one of her Court kimonos, though I didn't know it at the time. She wore segregated white-silk stockings. She had thrown off her shoes before she would come into my untidy little den. The only European detail of her attire (except the fashion of her rings) was a sheer white handkerchief edged with Valenciennes. I think it was rather an innovation, for she kept drawing it across her little scarlet lips, and every time she did so she looked at me and laughed. She was evidently very puzzled to find that I had joss sticks burning in my room. She moved like a bird; she laughed like a child. She had gleaming white teeth, and that indescribable charm of person and manner which is the great birthright of every Japanese woman.

Japanese courtesy is infectious. When we were ready to go, I took up her little shoes and tried to put them on her. She snatched them from me with a pretty little cry of affected horror; she wiped my hands with her handkerchief. She laughed and bowed, and bowed and laughed, and said “Thank you, thank you.”

When she saw where the two gentlemen stood waiting for us she skimmed across the stage like a humming-bird. Seizing her husband by the arm, she spoke rapidly in Japanese. He translated, “My wife asks, have you any children?” When he told her, “Yes, I had two,” she made him tell me that she had two. And then she danced back to me and threw her arms about me, and laughed so softly. Bless it! What a womanly little person it was! We couldn’t speak together. Considering that we were both civilised, our methods of life could scarcely have been more different. But our babies had made us friends. We went to our ’rickshaws with her arm still about me; and I felt as if I were again a schoolgirl, whom some younger child had singled out and favoured with a caress.

It is pleasant to ride at midnight in a ’rickshaw through the streets of Yokohama. We seemed to be the only living things awake. We glided almost noiselessly along the silent streets. The naked feet of the coolies who drew our quaint two-wheeled carriages fell almost without a sound upon the soft roads. Whenever Mrs. Keutako’s ’rickshaw ran near mine, she waved her hand and laughed, and laughed and waved her hand.

MRS. KEUTAKO'S DAUGHTER. *Page 242.*

Our hotel was run on European lines. It was very late, and I was unable to make any radical change in the menu of our supper. Mr. Keutako we found pleasant and intelligent. He was a prominent member of the Japanese Parliament. He was evidently familiar with all our viands, but our supper-table was palpably a *mensa incognita* to his pretty little wife. She watched her husband with shy slyness, and tried to do what he did; but I could see that she didn't like our food. I managed to get a tin of salmon, for I knew that the Japanese are as invariably fond of fish as cats are. She ate the salmon readily enough, though it was new to her, and she nibbled a

few vanilla wafers as she sipped her champagne, with which she seemed to have a dainty acquaintance. When we had left the table I asked her (through her husband) if the gentlemen might smoke. She nodded and laughed, and drew from her obi a microscopic silver pipe; she filled it with half a thimbleful of tobacco, mild as corn silk, which she carried in a silken pouch slung from her obi. She lit it, using a match with difficulty. She was accustomed to a small box filled with glowing coals. She handed her pipe to me; I found that one breath exhausted it. Among many other things typical of this interesting people, I afterwards learned that all Japanese women of fashion carry their pipe and pouch when they pay a visit. Their smoking together is an interchange of courtesy. The tobacco is almost tasteless, and one puff marks the length of the prescribed smoke. Our husbands talked, and, at her request, I showed her my baby clothes, and took her upstairs to see my sleeping children. When we came back to our sitting-room, she suggested, through her husband, that we should smoke cigarettes. I had been in the habit of smoking, semi-occasionally, one or two cigarettes in the strictest conjugal seclusion. I never had smoked before but one gentleman; but I thought the circumstances demanded any possible deviation from my usual customs. The gentlemen found a great deal to say to each other; while they talked we smoked. The next morning I had the almost unknown affliction of a headache. I learned from Mr. Keutako that his wife suffered sooner and less pleasantly. She had suggested, as *I* supposed, a Japanese custom. On *her* part, *she* thought that she was proposing a custom universal with European women. I have often wondered which of the ladies of the European Legations in Tokio was indirectly responsible for the *maladresse* from which we both suffered. I often reflect how much better it always is to be natural if one can do so without *gaucherie*.

A few days later we went to Tokio. I used often to wonder how it was that people were content to live and die in the gray Occident and never look upon the picture of the Orient. I never wondered more than when we were in Tokio. I know of no capital in Europe so comfortably and generously planned, except Vienna. The cities remind me of each other in many ways. The streets of both are broad and clean. Both are rich in parks, in drives, in trees, and in places of refreshment. Both are peopled by a pleasure-loving, pleasure-seeking race. Tokio is very beautiful, and it would be ungrateful of me not to mention that Tokio has one of the best hotels in the world.

The Imperial Palace is surrounded by three beautiful moats, all strictly guarded. It is impossible to look upon, much less to pass into, the holy of holies, the home of the Mikado, unless your presence is desired there. Even the members of the Legations know the palace very superficially, and enter even its outer rooms but rarely. I believe Madame Sannomiya to be the only European who has really seen the interior in anything like its entirety.

The architecture of Tokio varies from humble to elaborate; but it is all picturesque, and, in the heart of the city, all Japanese. Many of the nobles, who chiefly live in the suburbs, build very Western-looking houses. The width of the

principal streets is almost unequalled. In the great parks blossoming vine strives with blossoming vine, and flowering tree crowds flowering tree. Amid them stand quaint statues of quaint gods, and carved and gilded figures. The distances in Tokio are immense; but I soon grew glad that it was so,—every inch of the long way was so thick with interest. The bazaars have not been robbed of their native colour by travelling multitudes of Europeans. Around Tokio are her hundred temples; many famous, all marvellous, and not to be indicated by a few hasty lines. The air blows softly through the carved portals, and gently sways the golden bells that hang from the jewelled ceiling; and that air is unpolluted by the breath of many Europeans.

We visited the Keutakos. The father dressed as a European. The mother, the children, and the servants wore the national costume. The customs of the house were Japanese; but I was surprised to find the rooms furnished in the European mode. There was a bust of Scott in the library, and an engraving of the Coliseum in the dining-room. When I coaxed Mrs. Keutako to take me upstairs I found everything different. She seemed afraid I would not like it; and I think she never believed that I thought it infinitely prettier than the reception rooms downstairs. But it was! The floors of the long, shady rooms were covered with cool, quaint mattings. One room pleased me particularly. A long, low screen stood near one end of the room; an inviting cushion was thrown near it. At the other end of the room was a tall blue vase, filled with chrysanthemums and *fleur-de-lis*. There were not a dozen articles in the room; but each thing in it was perfect. The Japanese always give a work of art the advantage of being framed in ample space. This is one reason why a Japanese interior is so effective; another reason is that they are very loath to give house-room to anything that is not a work of art.

Mrs. Keutako was always at ease. We spent long hours together alone. We could not speak to each other, but she never let it embarrass her or me. She let me amuse myself as freely as she had amused herself in my dressing-room. She understood how glad I was to quietly watch ordinary Japanese home-life. She had a hundred ways of entertaining me. Sometimes she would beckon me into the kitchen that I might see what was being cooked, and how. She sent for her hairdresser that I might see his wonderful methods. Sometimes she would steal behind me as I sat reading, and drop a rose on to my book. Sometimes it was her soft ball of a pet kitten; often it was her soft ball of a baby. One day she made her amah undress her, and dress her again, that I might see just what a Japanese woman wore, and how it was put on. She emptied her chests of clothing for my diversion. It was a wonderful collection. She was very fond of dress, and her husband delighted in gratifying her; besides, she had many garments that had been in her family for generations. She showed me her wedding-dress, she kept it in a sandal-wood box, and touched it reverently.

She was devoted to her two little girls. They were pretty, and oh, so quaint! They were well-behaved, but not painfully so. They climbed over their parents and begged for sweets for all the world like my bairns. The elder spoke a little English.

Their mother never was guilty of the stupidity of speaking to me in Japanese; but she would take a fantastic little instrument (I forget its name) and sing sweet,

tinkling Japanese songs as she played upon it for me.

She had been brought up in luxury. She was the wife of a rich man. She had plenty of servants; still, she sewed a little, a very little. But she supervised her house perfectly; and she helped her husband a great deal in his political working. I have known her to copy notes for him, and write from his dictation, by the hour, when his secretary and he were over busy. And I know that he often consulted her about the turn of a sentence or a fact of history.

The last time I was in Tokio I was alone. I was there on business, and I was hurried. I only found time to call upon the Keutakos. She received me with the warm affection of an old friend and all the ceremony of Japanese etiquette. She gave me clear tea (no milk or sugar) in rare cups, without handles, and about the size of big thimbles. Then she gave me sweetmeats from a small lacquered chest of drawers. Each drawer contained a different kind of sweet; they were all made of sugar, tinted and shaped in imitation of some flower or leaf.

When I had to go she gave me a silver pipe she had bought for me. It was in a satin case, and the case matched a pouch which was filled with Japanese tobacco. A little white box held the whole. I made her write her name upon it, and mine. We often handle it, and speak of her and her husband, and I set great store by the excellent photographs she gave me of her two babies.

CHAPTER XXIII

FOUR WOMEN THAT I KNEW IN TOKIO

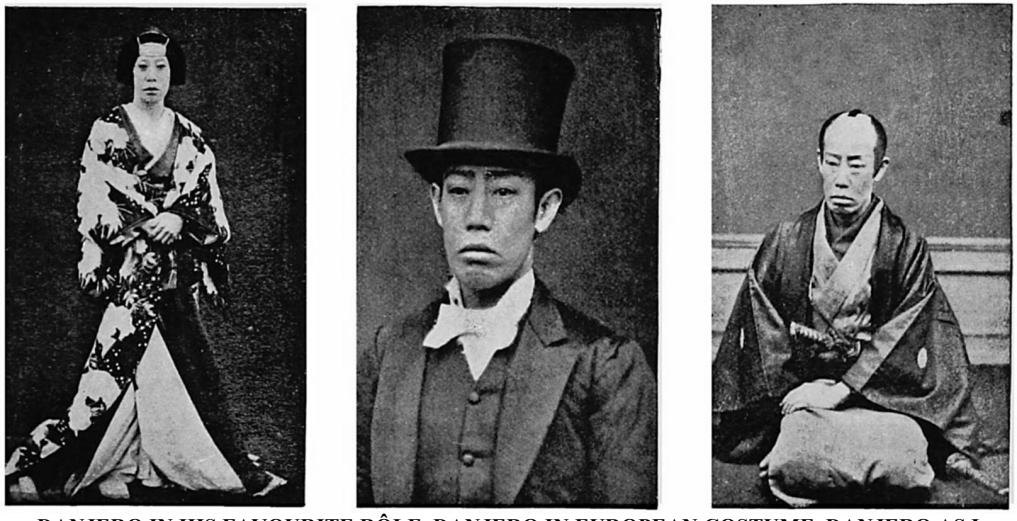
The Countess Oyama[1] and Mrs. Uriu

STAMATZ YAMAKAWA was born very near the top of the Japanese social ladder. Shige Nagai came into the world a few rungs lower down.

Assimilation is the *forte* of the Japanese. They create nothing, but they improve everything they touch. Japan was once conquered by China. The Japanese retaliated by completely mastering every detail of Chinese art, and developing from it a Japanese art system, superior to anything the Chinese artists have ever been able to accomplish. Japan successfully invaded Korea. From the spoils of that war (and they were many) Japan learned to still more enrich her arts.

When Stamatz and Shige were babies, Japan had turned covetous eyes upon Europe and the United States. Not upon the territories of these countries, but upon their modes of life, their social customs, their thought-methods even. The Japanese are complacently conscious of having the most beautiful country upon earth, and they, the wisest of them at least, quite understand that they would cut a sorry figure in battle with a great Western Power. Japan never sought to conquer Western acres; but Japan longed to acquire everything that was good in Western thought and in Western methods of life. Things European became highly fashionable in Japan,—the fashion grew and grew. In ten years it was a rage. The Japanese Government encouraged boys and young men to visit Europe and America, and to there take University degrees as far as possible. The Japanese Government did more; they sent eight or ten (I think it was eight) girls to America to be educated. All of these girls were of gentle birth; several were noble. The youngest was seven years old, the eldest was twelve. The Japanese Minister at Washington, to whom they were sent in the first instance, was instructed to divide the little band into twos, and to place each pair into separate American homes,—of course, only in the homes of men and women of exceptional culture. Stamatz and Shige were received into the home of Dr. J. S. C. Abbott, the historian. He was a man of fine attainments, and the newcomers were initiated into a simple home-life of great refinement. Five and a half of the ten years they spent in America were spent in that New England home. They met there a considerable contingent of eminent Americans. Their home-sickness was mitigated by frequent visits from the Japanese students at Harvard. They saw the purest American form of good behaviour. They learned American literature with the rare advantage, or disadvantage, of intimacy with many of the men who were making American literature. They studied English literature under a man who reverenced it. They made delightful trips through the adjacent parts of

America with the best companionship. After five years and a half they entered Vassar College at Poughkeepsie-on-the-Hudson. Stamatz Yamakawa entered the freshman class of 1882 with a high average. Shige Nagai was less capacitated to benefit by the prescribed College course than by a more elective system of education. She became an "Art Student," and devoted herself to music. She was obliged by the College regulations to pursue the lighter of the studies embraced in the ordinary College curriculum.



DANJERO IN HIS FAVOURITE RÔLE. DANJERO IN EUROPEAN COSTUME. DANJERO AS I KNEW HIM. *P. 253.*

In the fall of 1879—when they had been there a year—I went to Vassar. A daughter-in-law of Dr. Abbott's was one of my dearest friends; that gave me an added interest in my two Japanese college-mates, and it secured me their immediate acquaintance. It was easy to know Shige. Stamatz was exclusive; she was very brilliant. Shige was very sweet. They both wore European dress. Stamatz looked like a very beautiful Jewess of a poetic type; Shige was broadly and indubitably Japanese. Stamatz was president of her class in her Sophomore year. She was a member of the "Shakespeare"—a club always confined to the girls who were easily first intellectually. She took high honours in English literature. She wrote charming essays. And I noticed, when I saw her in Tokio, ten years later, the beautiful purity of her English. She spoke, as she always had spoken, with a slight accent; but her vocabulary and her use of it were flawless. Shige was never president of anything; but every one loved her. She was invaluable at our fortnightly "candy pulls." She was splendid on a sleigh ride, or when we went "coasting." She spent half her leisure in the infirmary, coddling the sick girls. She got through her examinations with eminent respectability. She wrote stiff, correct English. She spoke very broken English, and, when I saw her in Tokio, her vocabulary had shrunk to meagre dimensions; and she used it with a fine disregard of narrow propriety. But I have no

memory of an hour's indisposition at Vassar that I did not hear the click, click of Shige's funny little walk, as she came down the corridor bringing me a pitcher of lemonade and unlimited sympathy. I don't remember a headache there that her little fingers didn't soothe away. Strangely enough when she wrote to me, after I had left Tokio for Yokohama, I saw that she wrote English quite as well as she did when we were in Poughkeepsie. I never saw Stamatz excited, though two red spots always flamed on her face the days when the Japanese mails were due; and I have seen her hand shake as she thrust it through the window of our college post-office and asked for letters. I have never seen Shige when she wasn't excited. Stamatz was very beautiful from every standpoint; she was slim and tall for a Japanese woman. Shige was plain; she was dumpy and very near-sighted. She had a wee, broad nose. Stamatz was always self-possessed. Shige was easily flurried. Stamatz played a wonderful game of chess, and excelled every professor in the faculty at whist. Shige was immense at blind-man's-buff, and could dance a supremely ridiculous version of the Highland-fling. Once a day they secluded themselves in their "parlour" and spoke Japanese for an hour. Stamatz was fanatic in her observance of this, and compelled Shige to be as regular. Stamatz wrote a letter "home" every day. Shige had all a schoolgirl's horror of letter-writing. They spent four years at Vassar. Then, after a six months' tour of America, they returned to Japan.

When we were in Colombo I learned from some Japanese naval officers that Stamatz Yamakawa had made a brilliant marriage. She had married the Minister of War, Count Oyama, an elderly man of high position, great power, and immense wealth.

As we neared Japan we heard the name Oyama more and more often. The Count is very popular. He is a courteous gentleman, and is at the head of Masonry in Japan. The Countess has become a noted hostess. She speaks French and English fluently; unless I mistake, she speaks German and Italian well. She is an excellent Latin scholar. I found her very changed—the flower of her beauty was dead. The girl had been anxious to maintain for Japan a high intellectual standard in our little college world; the woman seemed to be half asleep. She had shed her Occidentalisms as she had shed her Western habiliments. She had sunk back into the drowsy ease of Oriental existence. She was four times a mother, and she had four step-children.

Long before we could see the house we knew that our 'rickshaws had crossed the boundaries of Count Oyama's Tokio dominions; for everywhere were outdoor servants. Some were binding up the gigantic rose trees. Some were training great ropes of violet-flowered wistaria around the tree trunks. Some were leisurely rolling the velvet lawn. All bore upon the backs of their kimonos a large Japanese coat-of-arms or crest—the arms of the ancient house of Oyama. In Japan the members of a noble family have a small reproduction of the crest woven in or embroidered on their garments. On the clothes of their servants it appears very much larger. On the robes of the head of the house it is about the size of a sixpence. On the back of a coolie the emblazonment is the size of a generous dinner plate. Count Oyama's

extensive grounds were beautifully cared for. The house, which was large and plain, and of Western architecture, was built of red brick. It was partly covered with vines. The interior was beautifully furnished in the best European style. A few very rare and beautiful Japanese things were scattered about each room; but I know a dozen London houses where things Japanese are more *en évidence*,—though certainly not things of such value and interest.

The Countess received me with all her old grace and graciousness. She gave us tea and spongecake. The tea service was old English silver. Her face lit up a little when she told me how she should enjoy showing me Tokio; but it grew listless when I mentioned Vassar. It was evident to me that she had spent ten years in exile, because the Mikado had thought it best. Her exile was over, and she had little pleasure in recalling it. She spoke as entertainingly as ever of the books she had read in America; but I could not learn that she had read one printed page of French or English since her return to Japan. I spoke of *The Miscellany*, a little college monthly in which she had been greatly interested, and for which she sometimes wrote. She said, she believed they sometimes sent her a copy, but she wasn't sure.

She was dressed quietly, and with but two traces of her Western residence. She wore bronze slippers of Parisian make; and her very beautiful hair was worn in the prettiest and simplest of Greek fashions.

A noted European called upon the Countess Oyama; he was accompanied by a Japanese gentleman. When Stamatz entered the room her countryman bent seven times to the floor. "Countess!" exclaimed the stranger, holding out his hand, "if I bow as often and as low as that, I shall fall down. But I am extremely glad to meet you." She smiled, and made his call very delightful; but she never forgave him. Stamatz Yamakawa was born in the purple, and she loves it.

The Countess Oyama was easily found. I hunted three days for Mrs. Uriu; and then I only found her because it occurred to my husband to ride out to Count Oyama's and ask for Shige's address.

The little woman's house was a two hours' 'rickshaw ride from the Imperial Hotel; and in Tokio there are two coolies to each 'rickshaw, and they run very rapidly. When we left the hotel we skirted the outer moat of the palace. Then we flew through miles of streets, each more interesting than the others. All were lined with booths. We had a dissolving view of quaint bronze lamps, rich ivories, unique wood carvings, and a thousand other temptations. Is it not Sir Edwin Arnold who says that, when he was in Tokio, he was tempted to sell his boots that he might buy one more curio? I did sell all my husband's old clothes one day. He seemed to feel that I had been indiscreet. And I have a very choice bit of Satsuma at which he always looks with a very queer smile. I received a "collect" parcel from Yokohama a few weeks ago; when the housemaid brought it in, my husband went into the hall, and brought me in his overcoat, his best umbrella, and his crush hat. But "he laughs best who laughs last,"—I made him pay for that parcel.

On the coolies ran. We passed the big, bare theatre where Danjero plays—Danjero, whom we were afterwards to meet, and also to see in one of Japan's classic

dramas. Next we crossed one of the great parks; and then we began twisting in and out of innumerable tortuous lanes. They found the house at last; but I don't know how they did it.

We went up a funny little path, and knocked at a funny little door. It was a minute house, purely Japanese. The door slid back. The little fat servant fell on her nose at our feet, and cried out some words of ceremonial greeting. We couldn't make her understand what we wanted. We couldn't make her get up. I tried to give her our cards: I might as well have offered her an infernal machine. Her mistress heard our voices and came out. The jolly little woman was not changed a bit. She seized me by one hand and my husband by the other. She had never seen or heard of him,—she hadn't seen me for ten years,—but she instinctively knew who he must be and adopted him with her funny little motherly way.

She had forgotten most of her imperfect English, and, just at first, we could barely understand each other; and then, somehow, the ten years seemed but as a day. She overwhelmed me with questions about every one we had known in our schooldays; but not until she had made us very welcome, and given us tea. She clapped her hands three times, and the tea came in. In reality, the servant brought it in; but she came on her hands and knees, and the tea-tray was far more conspicuous than she. Shige sent for her five little children; they bobbed us queer little curtsies, with their queer little bodies, and laughed and ran out.

The only hint of Europe I saw in Mrs. Uriu's little home were three old books and a box of cigars, which she brought out for my husband, with a gleeful laugh.

She was so sorry her husband was away with his ship, he was so nice. He was a lieutenant in the navy. She was teaching music; the Empress had founded a girls' college, and she, Shige, was professor of the piano.

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[1] The Countess Oyama is the wife of the Count (sometimes called Marshal) Oyama who has so recently distinguished himself in the Chino-Japanese war.

CHAPTER XXIV

FOUR WOMEN THAT I KNEW IN TOKIO

Madame Sannomiya

I THOUGHT her the most picturesque bit in the picture of Tokio life: a European woman living among the Japanese, speaking their language or her own indiscriminately, as occasion dictated, preserving her individuality and her national traits, and yet wielding an almost incredible influence at the conservative Court of the Mikado.

In one way my fellow-Occidentals were a great trial to me in the Orient. Their ungainly presence was always blotching some otherwise flawless picture of Eastern life. But in Tokio one so rarely saw a European that one forgot to resent it when one did, and indeed welcomed it as one more unique detail of an enchantingly novel whole.

I believe that Madame Sannomiya stands alone—the one European woman, of high character, high intellect, and charming personality, who has become a naturalised and potential individual at an Eastern Court.[2] I have seen, at the courts of native princes in India, European women who, to speak mildly, would never be received at the Court of St. James's, and who would be painfully embarrassed if they were. But this European woman is very different. She is the respected wife of an eminent man. Her position is even very unlike that of the wife of a foreign minister, who is tolerated by diplomatic policy or welcomed by international courtesy. She is one of the Japanese. They like and honour her. She likes, and is certainly happy with them.

Yoshitane Sannomiya was the handsomest Japanese man I ever saw, and by far the manliest-looking. My husband, who had much talk with Mr. Sannomiya, found him the superior of his countrymen in general information, in mental grasp, and in his command of English.

A card of his lies before me as I write. Beneath his name is engraved: "Vice Grand Maître des Cérémonies, et Maître de la Cour de S. M. l'Impératrice."

He was a first favourite of both Emperor and Empress, and I often heard his wife spoken of as the most influential person at the Court. The statement seems extreme; but when I came to see and know Madame Sannomiya, I grew to regard the expression as very conceivably exact.

Speaking broadly, the Japanese never do anything. They indicate everything. Madame Sannomiya indicated nothing. She did everything. The Japanese have two gifts pre-eminently: the gift of grace and the gift of touch. Their national gift of touch amounts to national genius. Upon a common piece of paper, with a blunt

pencil, a Japanese artist (and almost all Japanese are artists) makes four or five strokes. When he takes away his hand you see a picture; not a thoroughly elaborated picture, but a picture in which every detail is indicated with inspired fidelity. He draws three petals—but draws them so that you see the whole flower. Yes, and you can smell it too, if your soul is half as artistic as his is! Madame Sannomiya was graceful, but hers was the grace of a large woman. Her grace supplemented her dignity. The Japanese admired her dignity; it was novel. It indicated a strange force of character, and it was saved from ever grating upon them, because it was never ungraceful. Madame Sannomiya had, rather than the gift of touch, the gift of grasp. If anything interested or concerned her, she thrust her supple fingers about its roots. But her fingers were white and warm. She was superlatively a gentlewoman; and her friends at Tokio respected her thoroughness and energy of nature, which they never dreamed of imitating.

I first saw Madame Sannomiya in her own house. I went to her to ask her a favour—went without a line of introduction. I wonder if any one ever lived who liked to ask favours? I hate it so much that I have almost never done it. I believe that I can count the times, partly because they have been so few and partly because they have made such a nasty impression on me. There were a number of reasons why this particular favour should be asked of the Empress by me, through Madame Sannomiya. I suppose every woman does her duty once in a lifetime; and I did my duty.

I remember that I felt very uncomfortable as I stepped out of the Imperial Hotel into my 'rickshaw. But put me in a 'rickshaw and whirl me through the streets of Yeddo, and I defy anything, short of keen physical pain or deep personal sorrow, to keep me in discomfort over five minutes. I forgot everything in looking. We may not all paint pictures, but we may all drink them in, if we are blessed with real eyesight.

It was a long ride. I had only been in Tokio a few days, and I drank deep, intoxicating draughts of beauty. We went through streets of native shops; not shops decked out with things affectedly, exaggeratedly, or occasionally Japanese—things grouped to snare the heavy-pursed Europeans—but shops stocked with the everyday necessities of ordinary Japanese life.

There is not, I believe, a European shop in Tokio. Think of it! It is the only place of any considerable size I have ever been in that was entirely destitute of a European shopkeeper.

We went through the quarter of the frail. I noticed that the women were moving slowly, and that they were clad in soft and dainty raiment. Then I saw that their eyes were deeply ringed with khol, saw that the lips that parted about their gleaming teeth were thickly painted. I passed one woman whose lips, parting about her blackened teeth, were gilded! Then I recalled some half-forgotten page of Mitford, and knew that I was in the famous Yoshiwara quarter. I afterwards found that I had not been in the old walled Yoshiwara, but in one of the many new Yoshiwaras, or, to speak more correctly, one of the flower districts.

Sexual morality is on so un-Western a basis in Japan that only a long and careful essay could possibly give untravelled Europeans any glimmering of its real character. In one brief passing sentence, the women of whom I am writing have in Japan an acknowledged and assured position. It is not the highest or the most respected, but it is tangible and unimpugned. The courtesans of the world are unmistakable in their resemblance to each other. They may crouch in tattered tinsels on the steps of a crumbling temple in old Ferozepore; they wear furs in St. Petersburg; they drink champagne in Paris; they may huddle together from the sudden rain in a corner of Regent Street; but there is, the world over, an unmistakable sign upon the faces of the women who have taken into their own hands the highest law of life and broken it—the women who have made the great mistake! But this sign is faintest in Japan. The women in the quarter of Tokio through which we were passing looked at me quietly. They neither shrank from my eyes nor peered into them. The jewels flashed on their hands and in their hair. But the wearers did not flaunt. They walked with a deliberate indolence—these tawny lilies of the town—an indolence which said, "They toil not, neither do they spin."

My coolies ran into the Shiba Park. I was in a hurry, but I made them rest. Not that they were tired! No self-respecting 'rickshaw coolie ever owns to being tired until the journey's end. But I halted them that I might look. It was the trees! The "big trees" of California are more huge, the "Black Forest" is denser, but for majestic beauty there are no trees like to those in the Shiba Park.

Next we passed into the country. In the distance the farm coolies stood ankle deep in the wet of the yellow "paddy" fields. Here and there, where some peasant farmer had planted the young rice plants earlier, the yellow had turned to the softest, brightest green. Now and again I saw a peasant's house, with its cool, clean verandah, its quaint paper windows, and its sliding paper-door. At least I knew it was there. It was daytime, and every door was open. We passed a funny little company of Japanese soldiers. The Japanese play at war far less gravely than your boys and mine do. Frankly, they are very droll in their martial aspect; and their exquisite good taste makes them conscious of this. The land of the Hara-kiri is not the land of men who lack fortitude in death. The Japanese know how to die, but they do not know how to fight; at least, not against Occidental forces. And, if they did, the odds are so preposterously against them that they must be beaten in any conflict with a Western power. They know this; and they avoid war, and will avoid it in every way consistent with their national self-respect, of which they have plenty. The present moment seems to give me the lie. But, elated as the Japanese are over the outcome (so far) of the Chino-Japanese war, I doubt if they would be mad enough to throw down the gauntlet to a Western power.

Then we came to pretty, home-like places where liveried servants—or their Japanese analogies—were working in the ample grounds. We had reached the suburb where the Sannomiyas lived. Their house, which was a peculiarly dark red, sat far back amid graceful shady trees and profuse fragrant flowers. I sent up my card with a pencilled message; for the servant who answered the door could not

understand the most rudimentary English.

The drawing-room in which I waited was furnished very handsomely. The necessary articles of furniture had been made either in Europe or after European models. The bric-à-brac and the ornamental pieces of furniture (except the piano) were principally Japanese. It was a delightful collection. The pictures, which were very fine, were both Japanese and European.

A door opened noiselessly, and I thought of some lines of Scott's—lines I had so often had the pleasure of parsing:—

> The mistress of the mansion came,
> Mature of age, a graceful dame;
> Whose easy step and stately port
> Had well become a princely court.

I never learned who Madame Sannomiya was in Europe, nor how she came to decide upon so unusual a marriage and the consequent residence. But I knew before she spoke that she was no adventuress. She had had character and position all her life. Her every word and motion proclaimed it. She had been facile in the ways of many a Western Court before she became one of the Court circle of Japan.

She was a tall, large woman, with a plain, strong face. She had a quantity of waving fair hair which she wore elaborately dressed. Her even teeth were large and white. Her hands were over large, but surpassingly beautiful. When I first saw her she wore a soft pink cashmere house-robe; it was touched here and there with sage-green, which might have been Japanese; but I was sure it was French.

I have rarely met a better-informed woman than Madame Sannomiya, and never one who gave me more the impression of quiet force. She had just come back from Kioto, where she had been sent as the representative of the Empress to the Tsarevitch; for I am writing of a time a few days after the attempt upon the life of his Imperial Highness.

Great preparations had been made in Tokio for the reception of the Russian prince. The Japanese Court was like a nursery full of children about to give a tea-party. All the detail of the elaborate arrangements had devolved upon the master of ceremonies, Mr. Sannomiya. Everything had been so admirably planned that I shall always believe it had in reality evolved from the active, capable brain of his English wife. Then the attempt was made upon the life of the son of the "Great White Monarch" just as he was entering Japan. The Japanese Court was like a beehive turned upside down! It was a burlesque reign of terror. Every one that could went to bed. The Empress set the example; her Majesty kept her bed for weeks and spent the time crying. The entire nation seemed to expect the Russian fleet to swoop down upon their little island and sink it for ever in the deep ocean. The Mikado hastened to the Tsarevitch at Kioto, and the Empress sent Madame Sannomiya with him. It was the most sensible thing she could possibly have done. Madame Sannomiya was charmed with his Imperial Highness, and with his princely, generous way of passing

over and making light of an incident which very nearly cost him his life, and which did curtail his pleasant trip, for his Imperial mother very naturally insisted upon his immediate return home. What mother would not have done so? For weeks the Japanese Court eschewed all festivities.

A reaction against Western influence had already begun. This *contretemps* fanned it into a flame. That is not altogether to be regretted. It was a pity to see the clear, bright tints of Japanese life shrouded by the gray of our duller Western existence. It was a crime for the women of Japan to disfigure their forms (or lack of form) with inappropriate European gowns. I gloated over Japan; it feasted my eyes and my mind. I rejoice to feel that the characteristics of her people are to be preserved yet a little longer. Madame Sannomiya, who, I am sure, loved Japan and sought its welfare, felt this keenly. She was, however, ambitious for the Imperial family to have the broadest cosmopolitan culture. Nor was she a woman of passive ambitions. She told me how she had deplored the adoption of European dress by the women of Japan.

It was the second time I visited Madame Sannomiya that she took me into her dining-room. Above the wainscoting hung a remarkable collection of framed photographs. They were all of "great folk" and all were autographed. Almost every crowned head in Europe was represented there. The largest and the most handsomely framed of the photographs was of Queen Victoria. Madame Sannomiya was very proud of it, and of the letter her Majesty had sent with it. The Duke of Connaught was ill in Japan. Madame Sannomiya nursed him. When his Royal Highness had returned to England, his Queen-mother sent a note of thanks and her picture to the woman who had the good fortune to serve the Duke.

I do not know why she was called "Madame" Sannomiya. Her cards are engraved "Mrs. Yoshitane Sannomiya," but "Madame" she invariably is throughout Japan.

She always spoke of the Empress with great and almost tender affection. I can well understand that her sovereign lady has come to lean upon her, and often finds it easier to bid Madame Sannomiya decide for her than to decide for herself. Certainly "Madame" is extremely influential, and I think she enjoys her influence. No woman in Japan, not of the immediate blood-royal, is so free of her Majesty's bedchamber; yet no one seems jealous. Added to the gift of strength, she has the grace of tact.

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[2] In that I was wrong. Viscountess Aoki, the accomplished wife of the Japanese minister to the Courts of St. James's and Berlin, is also European.

CHAPTER XXV

TOM STREET

I HAD been in Yokohama about half an hour when he opened our sitting-room door and informed me in charmingly broken English that he was my jinrickshaw coolie that my husband had engaged him, and that he was ready to start as soon as I was. As it was about ten o'clock at night, as it was dark, as I was very hungry, and our dinner was just coming in, I entreated him to defer until the morning the appointment my husband had been kind enough to make.

"You did not lose much time in getting me a 'rickshaw here," I said to my comrade as we were dining.

"No;" was the answer; "a fellow waylaid me on the verandah. He seemed amazingly ambitious to go, and as you are more ambitious to go than any other person I ever met, I thought him just the steed for you, and hired him."

I was up early the next morning—very early indeed for me. I stole out, meaning to take a solitary ramble, but my "pull man" jumped at me and intercepted me with a clean, cozy 'rickshaw.

In all Yokohama there was not such another 'rickshaw coolie, I am sure. He taught me half that I know about Japan, and I am confident that what he taught me was true—he taught it so inadvertently. He insisted that his name was "Tom Street." He never would own to having any other or more Japanese appellation. When I saw that he really wished to be known, only as Tom Street, I could not, of course, question him further. I had a theory that he was a Japanese nobleman in disguise, but the theory did not merit serious investigation. In the first place he had no disguise; in the second place, I fancy that the police is the most plebeian body ever joined by a high-born Japanese.

The Japanese are very romantic; they are sensational; they are emotional to a degree. They reminded me in many ways of the French. They have more self-control than the French, but are not without a French touch of hysteria. The spirit of mad romance, of almost affected chivalry which led the rônins of old Japan to deeds of extreme, elaborate, and artistic valour, is still rife in Japan, and spurs her *jeunesse dorée* to strike strange attitudes in strange places. The Japanese would sometimes be ridiculous were they not so invariably graceful. As a matter of fact, they are never ridiculous; their grace is so great that it amounts to national dignity. We find a Japanese gentleman standing on civil guard at the street corner. He calls us a 'rickshaw, tells us the time, and is the angel of general information that a well-regulated policeman should be. We think Japanese situations amusing sometimes, but they never approach burlesque.

MRS. KEUTAKO'S BABY. *Page 224.*

The Japanese have quaint epidemics. Once they had a Chinese epidemic: everything with them was Chinese. Once they had a Corean epidemic: everything was Corean. Then they have almost hysterical reactions. Some years ago they had a European epidemic. They sent the flower of their youth to Europe to be educated. The ladies of fashion sent to Paris for their frocks, and every man in Japan who could afford it bought a pair of English boots, a frock-coat, and a stove-pipe hat. When we were in Japan a reaction had begun. Europeans were less liked than they had been. When the attempt was made upon the life of the Tsarevitch it fed the growing flame of Japanese dislike of Europeans. That dislike has, I hear, been

growing steadily ever since. It culminated a few days ago in an attack upon a venerable Anglican Archdeacon, who was brutally assaulted on the streets of Tokio. At least I hope it has culminated. I hope there is nothing worse to follow. It will decrease again as causelessly as it rose, this anti-foreign feeling, and we shall ride again upon the pretty rainbow-hued waves of Japanese popularity.

It all comes from the over-sensitiveness of the Japanese people. It never comes from their badness of heart, for they have none. Their hearts are essentially good. It is all a misunderstanding. Let us remember that, and provoke it as little as possible. Above all, we must never laugh at the Japanese. That they never forgive. I laughed at them once. It was a tender, loving laugh, that ought not to have bruised the wing of a butterfly, nor hurt the face of a baby. It was a mere smile compared to the laughter I have freely hurled at my own people and had them join in heartily. It was simply nothing compared to the uproarious laughs I constantly have at my own expense. And I indulged myself in it at a most respectful distance, away off here in London. But it gave great offence.

I once described a red house as white, a house I had seen in Tokio some years before. This caused quite an excitement, and I was condemned in eloquent, if not elegant English in the pages of a great and good paper published in Japan—but published in English.

There is no people that I admire more than I do the Japanese. But I must describe Japan as it appeared to me, even though it brings upon me an abusive editorial from far Cathay.

The Japanese are super-sensitive. If they were not, they could not be the most exquisite artists, the daintiest artisans on earth. We owe Japan so much—so much that we can perhaps never pay—that we owe it to ourselves to deal very gently with her few faults. And they are such gentle faults! Let us remember that the Japanese are the most sensitive nation on earth, and that for all their genius of assimilation they are not wholly *en rapport* with our coarser Western ways.

And yet it would be to them a distinct national gain if the Japanese could learn that the truest dignity does not search for offence, nor seize upon it too trivially,—if they could learn that no nation ever was or ever will be perfect, not even the Japanese nation, and that no criticism that is entirely laudatory is of the slightest value.

When we were in Japan the feeling against Europeans mumbled and crept. Now I hear that it is standing erect and declaiming loudly. It has been throwing stones and mud in Tokio. It will fall asleep again,—let us hope that it will sleep itself to death. Perhaps, if we are very good and prove ourselves quite worthy the steadfast friendship of Japan, we may gain it. That is to be desired; for Japan is the garden of the world—the Eden of the nineteenth century, and it is a pity that we should be shut out of it, or admitted on grudging sufferance.

Tom Street knew his Yokohama well. He knew where all the pretty views were and all the lovely bits. He used to whisk me round a corner with a dramatic, impressario sort of air, when we came upon a place of exceptional beauty. He would

often stop and say authoritatively, “You draw that.” Then he would saunter off to gather me an armful of wild flowers. Many’s the hour that I’ve sat a few yards from some lovely thatched cottage and tried to sketch it and a bit of its blossoming, perfumed hedge. Tom always told me frankly what he thought of my attempt; but he was a good-natured critic. If I had my box of water-colours with me he would always contrive to get me a dish of water, begging it from a cottage or dipping it from a brook. Often I took my little son with me, sometimes in my ’rickshaw, but oftener in another. That never prevented me from sketching. Tom would amuse the child for hours. Together they gathered flowers, and Tom wove the flowers into queer combinations. He built a house once of wild asters, and made a doll who had a blush rose for a face and a gorgeous kimono woven of wistarias. He used to teach my boy Japanese in a natural kindergarten system; and he told him quaint Japanese legends and made him marvellous Japanese puzzles. Sometimes they chased each other up and down the warm hill-slopes. Often the baby went to sleep; then Tom, looking very important, would bring him back in his arms, and put him on my lap or lay him in his own ’rickshaw.

Tom knew all the choice shops and the crazy bazaar byways where genuine curios were to be picked up, if one had industry, perseverance, enthusiasm, and discrimination. He took a keen interest in my purchases, and would often ask the amah to show him the contents of a bundle. He laughed with delight at my soft heaps of rainbow crêpe. He actually tried to buy from me a piece of bronze that I had picked up in Tokio. He knew something of bronzes did Tom; for a Yokohama curio dealer offered me just twenty-five times what I gave for my bronze vase, if I would sell it. Tom told me bluntly that I had paid too much for a piece of Satsuma; but he was in an ecstasy over a rather unusual water-colour I got in Yokohama.

Tom was a very well dressed ’rickshaw coolie. He wore strong, whole shoes, long, neat stockings, and a coat or shirt, and short trousers of strong, dark-blue stuff. He was crowned with a white straw sailor hat; it had a clean white ribbon on it, and in the ribbon Tom often stuck a rose. He was a handsome fellow, splendidly strong; and, for a Japanese, very large. He was very anxious to come to Europe, and begged us to bring him. He would do any work we liked, and would work for two years for nothing. He was intensely curious about the West. He never questioned me; but often, when he was waiting for me, he would creep near the verandah steps and ask my husband, “You do this in New York?” “You have that in London?” “One strong man earn plenty in England?” He read English rather fairly and was anxious to write it. My husband wrote his name for him in a blank book. Tom was enchanted. Almost every day he would bring the book to show how he had improved.

There were a great many Americans in Yokohama, and they were all delightful people. We had a man-of-war in the harbour, and the charming fellows who officered it came ashore continually. Admiral Belknap very kindly loaned us his band, and by doing so rescued us from an orchestral condition that was dire.

What happy days and nights we spent in the home of the American gentleman who is the editor of a breezy Yokohama paper! His wife and I had common friends

in San Francisco, and when I sat in her charming home and watched her graceful ways, and her pretty children, I almost felt that I was home once more. I should have quite thought it but for the strange flowers in the vases and the kimonoed servants. I have everywhere found newspaper people a most delightful part of the community. In Yokohama, in Shanghai, in Hong-Kong, in Singapore, in Calcutta, and in a score of other Eastern places I remember with very great pleasure our journalistic friends. Soldiers and sailors and their wives are a little nicer than other people, I think, and next to them I have found the ink-stained fraternity companionable, interesting, and likeable.

"What about actors?" some one asks. They are my brothers and sisters; I am proud of them and I love them. But it will be more becoming of me, perhaps, to let some other pen praise them. Then, too, we met very few actors in the East, save our own little contingent.

Two charming Boston women used to send me white roses from their pretty garden. What a place of delight and of restful refinement their house was! I love to think of it, and of them. In all Yokohama we did not meet one obnoxious American. There is no society more delightful than the nicest American society, and in Yokohama there was great social wealth,—American and English.

We were out in our 'rickshaw, my boy and I, on the thirtieth of May. Tom pulled aside to let a little procession pass, and my heart gave a great thump. The man-of-war's men came marching slowly on. They carried the United States flag at their head, and the band was playing, "Hail Columbia." It was Decoration Day, and the Americans in Yokohama had been through the scorching sun to lay roses on the graves of the American sailors who had died in Japan and been buried in the Yokohama European Cemetery.

Night falls upon Japan a starlit blessing. I used in Yokohama to go, between the acts, on to the landing of the theatre outer steps. They were the steps that led to the "stage door" and were nowhere near the parts of the house to which the public had egress. How strange it used to seem to me! The steps led down to a fantastic garden. The flowers were hidden beneath the gray shadows of the big-leafed trees. The band —the kindly-loaned band of our flag-ship—was playing, "Way down upon the Swannee Ribber." Then they changed into, "Massa's in the cold, cold Ground." As the sweet darky melody sobbed into silence, the pathetic music of the blind shampooer's cry came from the city, and the most plaintive song of Japan mingled with the most plaintive song of America.

I know nothing more characteristic of Japanese good taste and of Japanese kindliness than the place of profitable industry that Japan has found for her blind. In Japan massage is only a less perfect luxury, less perfectly a fine art, than it is in Hindoostan. And what could be more fit, what could speak more trumpet-mouthed of their national delicacy, than that to the blind of that nation has been given the monopoly of massage?

They walk about the streets alone—do the blind shampooers of Japan. They are as fearless as they are safe. The sad note of their whistle is an appeal to the kindness

and the protection of their people. It is an appeal that is answered with universal and invariable generosity and chivalry. I remember, in Japan, many a night that was absolutely silent save for the sorrowful sound of these poor sightless givers of rest and of sleep. I recall no night through which I did not hear their one drear note.

I long to tell how we did not play before the Mikado. But there must be limits to a chapter, even when it is written by a woman; and I must squeeze the story of nights of plotting and days of diplomacy into a page.

We were ambitious to play the *Merchant of Venice* before his Majesty and his Court. We brought to bear influence that we thought not inconsiderable, but we failed. We might, perhaps, have succeeded had it not been for the mad coolie who tried to kill the Tsarevitch. That struck a deathblow to our hope, and we missed the privilege we craved of unfurling the banner we loved, the pennant of great English drama, in the palace of the Mikado. But we tried very hard, and to our persistence I, at least, owe many of my happiest memories. "All successes rise phœnix-like from the ashes of some failure." We failed to play before the Mikado,—but to that failure I owe the two most unique experiences I had in Japan.

One was a jinrickshaw ride from Yokohama to Tokio, the other was a performance of *Julius Cæsar* that we gave in a Japanese theatre to a Japanese audience. Not an audience of cosmopolitanised Japanese, but an audience of the insular Japanese populace. That was the funnier experience; the other was the more enjoyable.

As a matter of fact, we played twice in the Japanese theatre; once in the afternoon, once in the evening. Our auditors sat on benches—very low benches—and squatted on the auditorium floor. They behaved better than we did, for we laughed when we should have been tragic. I was sorry at the time for my individual misconduct. I had not been guilty of inappropriate laughter on the stage since the first season of my professional life. But they were so irresistibly funny, those hundreds of gaping, kimonoed humans. Many of them, very many, were women. Every woman seemed to have a baby, and the yellow rolly-polies did everything that babies would naturally be expected to do at a very fine performance of *Julius Cæsar*. It was a droll experience; but we were glad the next night to return to the European theatre and our more sophisticatedly sympathetic audience.

I had great difficulty in inducing Tom Street to pull me from Yokohama to Tokio. He assured me that I could, in a fraction of the time and for far less money, go on the train. I assured him that I knew all that, but that I had often been by train, and that I was determined to go once by 'rickshaw. Tom was positively melancholy, but after I had threatened him and my husband had bribed him, he consented. I forget how far it is from Yokohama; I never remember those nice sensible useful points. But it was between fifteen and twenty miles.

We started in the early dawn, which in Japan, in June, is very early indeed. John, the Madrassi, was up betimes, and bullied some one into boiling me an egg and making me a cup of coffee. My husband drew an ulster over his kimono and came out to see me start. Amah lined the 'rickshaw with a lot of cushions and we started.

Tom had a mate, a happy looking, muscular fellow. He was called a "push man." In Tokio when there are two coolies to one 'rickshaw they both pull, running tandem; but in Yokohama when there are two, one pulls and one goes behind and pushes. One is a "pull man"; one is a "push man."

Tom and his fellow changed places several times *en route* to Tokio. They rested twice; about fifteen minutes each time. Three hours and a half after I left Yokohama, I had had a warm bath and was leisurely eating my delicious breakfast in the Tokio hotel.

Our journey had been through the country and through small villages—villages where you might search in vain for one taint of Europe.

I questioned Tom about everything I saw that morning, and about everything he told me intelligently enough, and, as I afterwards learned, accurately. He was one of the people, and he knew them and the manner of their lives.

About half-way between Yokohama and Yeddo we halted at a toll-gate. I paid the few coppers the old woman in charge demanded of me in the name of the Government. I bought a horrible liquid something that I could not drink; my coolies ate raw eggs with gusto; and then on we went. Our second and only other halt was after we had reached the outskirts of Tokio. The coolies ate snow mixed with sugar and saki, and served in long slim goblets.

I was so delighted with my ride that I gave each of my coolies a yen, and told them to rest all day, and be ready to start back at five o'clock that evening. At two o'clock, when I came in from the business calls I had been making, the proprietor of the hotel calmly informed me that Tom and his friend had returned to Yokohama, and had left word for me to come by train. I was very angry, for I had counted on that ride through the Japanese gloaming. I spent a long, busy day; and when I went back at night my anger had evaporated. Tom was at the station to meet me.

"How did you dare leave me?" I demanded. "How did you know that I had enough money to come home on the train?"

"You had plenty yen," he said; "you gave us two."

Housekeeping is delightful in Japan, but less easy than it is in China. Most of the Japanese servants were, like Tom, extremely quick and capable, but liable at times to take the domestic bit between their teeth.

When we left Yokohama I gave Tom three yen more than I owed him. He abused me roundly for not giving him more; but he gave my boy a souvenir of Japan, and waved his straw hat as we put off from the pier.

I long to see Japan again, to feel the soft breeze of her myriad fans, to see the glimmering light of her innumerable lanterns, to smell the perfumes of her blossoms and her joss sticks, and to watch the gay, gossamer flight of her countless butterflies.

CHAPTER XXVI

ORIENTAL OBSEQUIES

A Japanese Funeral

In Japan it is chiefly the middle class that has become Europeanised. The upper nobility and the poorer peasantry are the classes most tenacious of the old national customs. The upper middle class is the travelled class. The masses are too poor, the nobles are too tied by grave responsibilities, to go far from Japan. It is the son of some petty nobleman or well-to-do gentleman who goes to Oxford or Harvard for his education, and returns home a very Westernised Oriental indeed. Then, too, class prejudice is always stronger in the very high and in the very lowly than in the intermediate classes.

I went to a Japanese funeral in Tokio. But I do not for a moment pretend that it was a typical funeral. Even those who attempt to write exhaustively about Japan find little or nothing to say about the burial customs of the Japanese. There are a number of reasons why it is very difficult to say anything definite. First, all Japan, like Gaul of old, is divided into three parts: into Japan the old, the conservative, into Japan the new and iconoclastic, and into Japan the compromising. In this third Japan, nothing is anything, anything is everything. European habits and Japanese customs are jumbled together in the most unhappy way. Then, as for the second reason, if we confine our inquiries to the old conservative Japanese—the only Japanese picturesquely interesting—we find them so divided into sects and so subdivided into families that what you say, truthfully enough, about Yamamato, would be entirely false about Nozeyama. Japanese religion is a very puzzling thing to any one who comes of a race accustomed to take religion seriously. Religion in Japan is a subject by itself—a big subject. I will try to be intelligible briefly. A large proportion of the Japanese are Buddhists, free-and-easy Buddhists, lightly-worshipping Buddhists, but still Buddhists. But these Buddhists are divided into fifteen sects. The funeral customs of each sect differ from those of the other fourteen. There are also many of the funeral observances determined by the rank of the dead, still others decided by the family to which he belonged, and, again, some dependent upon his financial placement.

I went to a Japanese funeral. It was, I repeat, typical of some Japanese funerals only.

The day before the interment I went to the house in which the death had occurred. The dead man had been prominent in the upper mercantile circles. Hundreds of Japanese men and women were passing noiselessly in and out of the house. They had come to say good-bye to a man they had known well and liked

well; they were all dressed quietly. It is an insult to enter a Japanese house of death clad in anything but the plainest, simplest garments. We passed in with the others. I was with a Japanese gentleman and his wife. An old man-servant showed us into a large, handsome room. Another servant took charge of us. Both these men were dressed in the plainest dark-blue livery; both had red eyes. The room was furnished in strict Japanese style; it was full of sorrowful-looking people. Several of them hastened to extemporise a seat for me out of cushions and the broad window-seat. There were no chairs in the room, of course, only mats. Japanese courtesy never fails, never flags; it is the real, the universal religion of Japan, and from it there are no dissenters. A Japanese allows nothing to lessen the full measure of graceful politeness which he pays you, because he owes it to himself to do so. Absolutely nothing!

The condemned man about to perform hara-kiri, bows with extreme civility to his witnesses and assistants. No sorrow, no trouble, no illness, not death, not marriage, not even birth itself, in the least way frees a Japanese from the grave obligation of being very polite. I went one night in Kobe to the hut of a poor Japanese woman who had been suddenly taken very ill. When I went in, I saw that the joy of motherhood would be hers in a very few moments. But I was allowed to do nothing for her until she had spoken all the prescribed words of Japanese greeting and given me a cup of tea. No wonder that the Japanese women are more charming than those of almost any other race, when the poorest and lowliest of them are so heroic in their practice of a woman's greatest charm—courtesy!

The room in which they had so kindly contrived me a delightful seat was the ante-chamber of the room in which the dead man lay. Maid-servants were passing round trays of sweetmeats, which every one refused, pointing to the inner door and shaking their heads. Then a white-haired old man, who was evidently not a servant, brought us an exquisitely carved ivory tray. On it were thimble-sized silver cups holding saki. There are two things in this world I cannot drink—whisky and saki. They are very much alike. Saki is the Japanese whisky, and is even nastier to my thinking than Occidental whisky. The friend I was with knew my repugnance to saki, and hastened over to me as swiftly as she might, for Japanese etiquette forbids one to move except very slowly in a house of mourning. "You must drink it," she whispered, "it is a health to the dead. And his brother, who is offering it to you, will be deeply offended if you don't." I took the cup and rose, meaning to bow to the ground as every one else was doing. But the old cup-bearer motioned me gently back on to my cushions. "Try not yourself with our strange customs. My sister feels it very kind that you are here." I had known the dead man's wife rather well, years before, in Washington.

Every few moments a servant pushed back from the inside the door of the next room. When he did so, a few people passed in to the dead. Our turn came and we went in. A large white cloth was spread upon the floor. In the centre lay a low bier, on it, clad in his best robes, lay the dead man. Upon his bosom, half inside the opening of his kimono, lay a rose. The room was sweet with flowers. The servants

stood silently near the doors, and the whole room spoke of sad, loving care. My two friends bent and kissed the dead face, and we passed out by a door opposite to that through which we had entered.

We were leaving the house when word was brought me that the widow would like to see me. I went upstairs, and was shown into a room just over the one we had left. It was a typical Japanese bedroom. The bereaved woman half sat, half lay upon her sleeping mat, one elbow resting upon her peculiar little Japanese pillow. She was dressed in coarse hempen cloth, which is the prescribed Japanese mourning. It would be wrong, I think, for me to write about the five minutes I spent with her. We were friends, and the wide racial difference between us would afford me a poor excuse if I utilised her grief for a paragraph.

The next day I went to the funeral service in the temple. The body was no longer visible. It had been encased, in a sitting posture, in a square wooden box. Then the box had been filled with carmine to preserve the body from decay. This is expensive. When it cannot be afforded, carmine is put in the ears, nose, and mouth of the corpse as a partial preventative of decomposition.

In a room of the temple had been placed the white stone tablet, upon which was inscribed the new name by which the dead would enter paradise. After death, every conservative Japanese, who was a Buddhist, receives a new name; it is called okurina, or accompanying name. Into this room passed the incense burners. Each was provided with a paper packet of incense, which he burned before the tablet. Behind the tablet sat the priests of the temple. The temple itself was a gay, joyous looking place, which seemed strangely out of keeping with the grave, subdued manner of the company. Demeanour is everything at a Japanese funeral; but were it not so, it would be impossible for a people of such exquisite good taste to behave lightly on such an occasion.

The cemetery to which we went was also bright and gay. It was built upon a gently-sloping hillside, and was literally a paradise of sweet-smelling flowers. The graves were at some distance from each other, and, without exception, most carefully tended. Over many of them were built carved marble roofing, peaked in shape. From some of these roofs hung one of the tiny chimes of bells of which the Japanese are so fond, and which they invariably have in their temples or prayer-houses. The coffin was placed in a grave that was half-full of honeysuckle and roses. More flowers were thrown above the coffin, or rather coffins, for the inner box had been put in several others. Again incense was burned, until the air grew very peculiar with the mingling of the fresh perfumes of the growing flowers and the heavy odour of the preserved spices. Then we left the dead in the least depressing cemetery I have ever seen. A tuneful brook ran through that burial ground, and in it were several squat pagodas or prayer-houses—miniature temples. Everything was clean, quiet, and in order, except the flowering vines—they ran mad riot everywhere.

Cremation used to be practised in Japan, but never, I believe, very generally. Certainly it has long been confined to the lower and poorer classes, and even they

employ it less and less every year.

The custom of burying the dead in a sitting position is general but not universal, and is decreasing. In many Japanese families, children are still trained explicitly in the offices of respect they may at any time be called upon to perform at the obsequies of a relative. One quaint old custom still holds in Japan. Upon slips of paper are written the names of all persons present at a funeral. The slips are bound together, sometimes very elegantly, and handed down from generation to generation as heirlooms. Curiously, the writing of these lists is the only one exception I know to the Japanese rule of writing from the right to the left. The lists of funeral guests are written as we write from left to right.

The Japanese deal with death and the attendant ceremonies with more dignity and simplicity than any of the other Oriental peoples. They are not naturally gloomy, and they never exaggerate gloom. Their burial grounds are pretty, peaceful places, in every way fitting resting places for the dead of a superlatively graceful, artistic, pleasant people.

CHAPTER XXVII

ORIENTAL NUPTIALS

Japanese Wedlock

CONFUCIUS wrote: "The man stands in importance before the woman; it is the right of the strong over the weak. Heaven ranks before earth; the prince ranks before his minister. This law of honour is one." The Occidental reformers who would fain place the women of China and Japan on an equality with the men of those countries, must first disabuse the Chinese and the Japanese minds of their deeply-rooted reverence for Confucius. That will be very difficult. Confucius said so much that has held true for thousands of years, so very much that has stood the test of ages—he so satisfies the good and the intellectual—that it will be a very able "foreign devil" who convinces Chung-Fan and Uzeyama that Confucius was not infallible. And the chief difficulty will again be with the women. A heathen man sometimes deserts the heathen gods,—a heathen woman does so, almost never. Upon these especial words, then, of Confucius, and upon many similar words of his, and upon words in literature held almost as sacred, are based the relative positions of the sexes in China and Japan. It is no mistake to suppose that the men of China and Japan regard women as their own inferiors. But the great mistake,—and a common and stupid mistake it is,—the great mistake is made by those who suppose that in China and Japan man is necessarily unkind, or even ungentle to woman. A great many of us hold that our children are our inferiors intellectually and physically, and that we have a right to their obedience. But we do not, as a matter of consequence, beat or bully the little creatures who cluster about our knees. If (with the one exception of the Burmans) the men of Asia regard themselves as superior to their women, they nevertheless, as a rule, treat those women with extreme tenderness. There is usually something prettily paternal in the bearing of an Oriental husband to his wife.

Another point is unnoted by the women who sip four o'clock tea in Europe and America, and mourn over their sisters in benighted Cathay. They forget the power of love, and how it "raises the lowly and humbles the great." If the *fin-de-siècle* women of Europe have discarded love as a silly luxury and a useless ally, the women of Asia have not. It is their mainstay. And when we wring our emancipated hands over the deplorable condition of the women of Asia we forget that the woman who is loved is all-powerful.

The women of Japan are, I think, supreme in their own homes. They exercise, as a rule, little or no influence on public affairs, but I fancy that their own indifference is the chief cause of this. The Japanese women are not generally industrious nor

keenly intellectual. They are as dainty, as beautiful, as fine, as the ivory carvings of Kioto; they are as exquisite, as lovely in tint, as the embroideries of Tokio. Yet they have few or none of the qualities of statesmen, but they are to the men of Japan what Japan is to the world,—they are models of beauty, exemplifications of grace, flowers of courtesy, acmes of hospitality; they are sweet refuges of rest, something to be looked upon with delight and to be loved.

Japan is often an open book to the foreigner who can read its quaint, graceful characters. The moment you put your foot on Japanese soil you are the guest of all Japan; every Japanese feels himself your host—in duty bound to welcome you and to humour you. Hence it ought to be the easiest thing to learn about their national customs and their home-life. And so it would be, if both were for long the same. The Japanese are as variable as their own rainbow-crêpes. They are as illusive as the colours of the prism. To say, "This is done in Japan, this is thought in Japan, this is felt in Japan, this is liked in Japan," is as impossible as to sharply separate the reds from the pinks, the whites from the creams, on the petals of a blush rose. And also, there are times when Japan is a very closed book to Europeans—times when the national cry is, "Japan for the Japanese." At such times it is difficult to penetrate into the heart of Japan, and impossible to learn anything of Japanese home-life.

There are a few families in Japan who cling rigidly to the customs of old Japan, and they are far more interesting in their marriage-observances than the subscribers to Japan the new. Japanese marriages spring from convenience or inclination. But this is so true of almost all countries that it can scarcely be recorded as vitally characteristic of Japan. The terms of the marriage are arranged through a common friend who is called a "middle man." When the marriage is finally agreed upon, and the terms settled, a present is sent from the bridegroom, by the "middle man," to the bride. This is called the "complimentary present." If it is accepted, the family of the bride are in honour bound not to retract their consent. Then follows a deluge of presents. Everybody gives everybody gifts in bewildering varieties and quantities. The bride's presents, sent by the bridegroom, include seven varieties of condiments, and seven barrels of wine. These, I believe, she often bestows upon her parents. For herself she retains the major part of the presents, which consist of silk, of gold embroideries, and robes. There is always gold embroidery for a girdle, and a piece of white silk stuff, which must be woven with a lozenge pattern, a white silk robe, and other pieces of white silk stuff. The manner in which these silks are folded is of importance, as is also the way in which they are carried. The bridegroom sends his prospective father-in-law a sword and scabbard and a list of all the presents. He sends to his future mother-in-law a silk robe and wine and condiments. To the bridegroom is sent, from the bride's father, a present equal in value to those sent by the bridegroom to the bride's parents. But the bride does not reciprocate the bridegroom's gifts. On the marriage night two silk robes are sent to the bride from the bridegroom, and neither these nor the one sent before, may, under any circumstances, be folded.

The long ceremonies of the marriage night begin with the passing of the bride

from her girl-home to her wife-home. Before the door of each house is placed a strip of matting. Before the bride's door is placed the bridal litter.

She comes! She stands in her father's doorway, for the last time, as a child. The blue wistarias hang in thick, hopeful clusters above her elaborately-coiffured head. A warm, sweet perfume steals from the rose garden and mingles with the perfume of her warm, sweet lips. The faint, clean smell of cherry and of apple blossoms comes with the gentle breeze that stirs the long white veil which the bride wears with the incomparable grace of a Japanese woman. In the West there is a last faint glow of sunset. The maiden's face is warm with a gentle, well-controlled flush. From behind the rose garden and the honeysuckle vines steals the new moonlight. In the girl's eyes shines a great, pure glory. The bride's mother gives a little sob. The girl's dimpled face quivers for an instant, then she steps into her litter. The bearers lift it up, and she is off to her new home and her new life. Ring every golden bell! Bloom every scented blossom of Japan's great wild-flower luxuriance! The bride is coming! She is robed in white. On her outer robe of silk is woven the bridal lozenge. Behind her walk the bearers of many gifts. That is a person of much importance, he who carries so importantly the picturesque bamboo and lacquer bucket. Do you know what is in it? Clams! They are to make the bridal broth; and in all Massachusetts there are none who can convert clams into pottage so delicious as can the cooks of Japan. Behind the clams come the presents which the bride will offer to her husband. They are carried carefully, on a tray of rare old lacquer. Among those presents are seven pocket-books, a sword of fine workmanship, a fan, two girdles, two silken robes sewn together, and a dress of ceremony,—a dress with wings of hempen cloth. Dresses of ceremony are very important items in the wardrobe of every Chinese or Japanese noble. It would be greatly interesting, had one the time, to investigate the why and wherefore, the significance, of the prescribed garments worn, upon important occasions, by the Chinese and Japanese. In passing, I may say that there is no part of a Japanese dress of ceremony more important than the big sleeves of hempen cloth. They are worn by the dignitary who performs hara-kiri, and they must, by all means, be taken to the bridegroom by his bride.

Before the bridegroom's door burn the big "garden torches." The "garden torches" are two fires lit, one on either side of the bridegroom's portal. Beside each fire sit a man and woman pounding rice. Between the fires lies a length of matting, on which the bride's litter is deposited. When the bride passes, the rice from the left is mingled with the rice at the right. This is called the "blending of the rice-meal," and is analogous to a detail of the old Latin marriage customs. As the bride passes in, the wicks of two candles are united. This represents the union of souls and of bodies. The two wicks are allowed to burn together for a few moments and are then extinguished. This symbolises, I believe, the hope that the bride and bridegroom may live and die together.

The marriage celebration is ceremonial, and there is a characteristic feast, but, in it, there is no religious element. Japanese religion is very unobtrusive. There is no priest at the hara-kiri ceremonial; there is no priest at the marriage ceremony. The

feast is very Japanese; it is peculiar (from our point of view), but it is delicate and artistic. A great many cups of wine are drunk; but each cup is ridiculously small, and holds but a pigmy thimbleful. The wine is brought in in kettles, to which are fastened paper butterflies, each a work of art almost as beautiful as the butterflies of Nature. In the menu are condiments, soups—of fishes' fins and of clams, and of carp. Rice is there of course, but prepared and served with Japanese originality and daintiness. After the feast, both bride and bridegroom change their outer garments—he for the dress of ceremony brought by her—she for the dress given by him. Then the bride goes to the apartments of her parents-in-law. She takes with her presents for her husband's parents, and there is more drinking of wine drops, and dropping of quaint, pretty, Japanese curtseys. If the bridegroom's parents are dead he leads the bride to the tablets on which are inscribed those parents' names, and there she makes obeisance, often and deep.

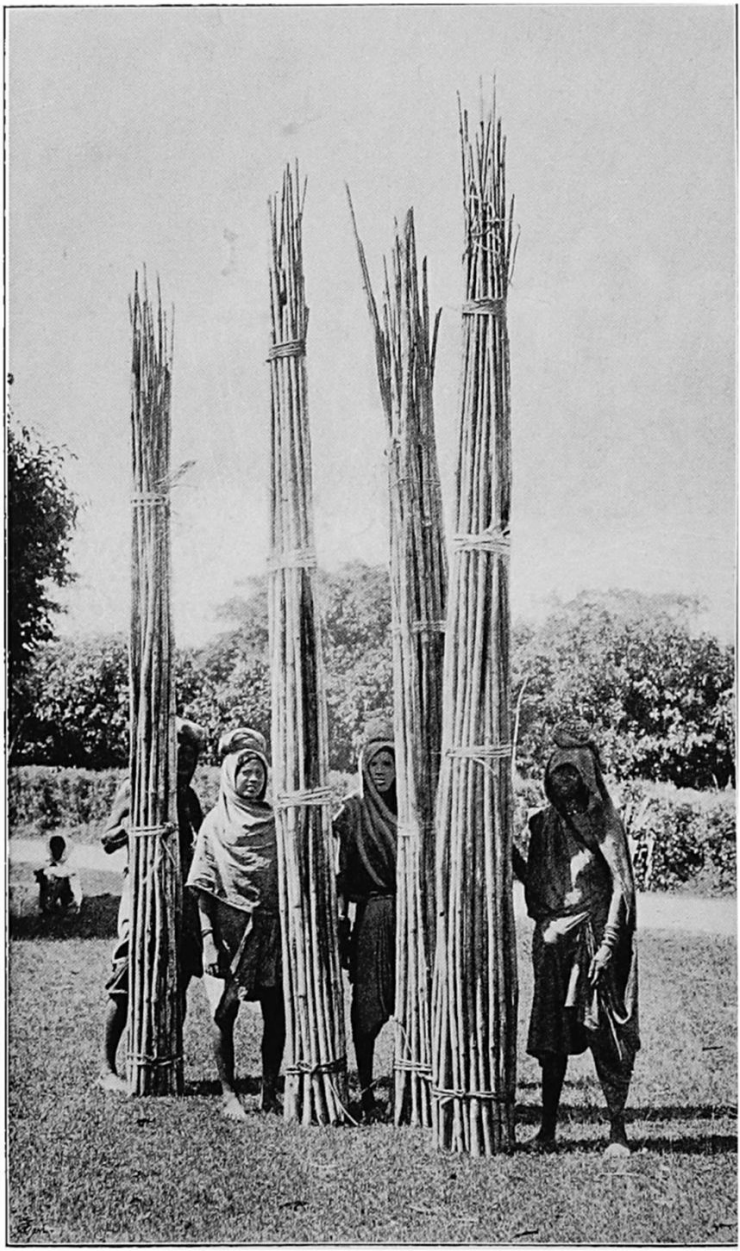
The bridal apartments are arranged with great nicety by the female friends of the husband and wife. Japanese married life always has the great advantage of beginning amid pleasant surroundings.

Very many years ago every Japanese bride blackened her teeth and shaved her eyebrows, but these practices are now confined to the lower classes. The Japanese people are too finely artistic to perpetuate any custom that disfigures their persons. The Japanese wives of to-day are beauties in all ways enhanced, in no ways disfigured. And in their pretty, flower-scented homes they sit among big carved vases and tinkling music, and when the silken lanterns are lit, the soft, coloured light drifts on to the prettiest, daintiest, most winsome women in the world.

The Japanese women are lovable, and all their lives they are loved. For what more can woman wish? They lead no armies; they preside over no legislatures, but they reign and rule at home. They are kissed tenderly and admired exceedingly.

I have tried to describe an old Japanese marriage. Most of the details are still retained, I believe, in the marriages of the most orthodox people. But orthodoxy is on the wane the wide world over. Even in China (its stronghold), it has shrunk, if ever so little. In Japan—where manner is more than matter, where seriousness is never very deep—in Japan orthodoxy itself is a chameleon-like, shifting, uncertain thing. And even the phantom of orthodoxy holds but limited sway in Japan the *fin de siècle*.

The marriage ceremony among Westernised, modernised Japanese would differ in many details from the wedding I have described. It would be less Japanesque, less elaborate, and, I had almost written, less picturesque; but nothing can lack in picturesqueness—nothing in which Japanese women play the principal parts.



HINDOO COOLIE WOMEN WITH LOADS OF BAMBOO. *Page 249.*

CHAPTER XXVIII

BAMBOO

THE Orient is wreathed with bamboo. A considerable proportion of the houses in the East are built of bamboo. And at one season of the year many thousands of natives are fed on bamboo.

There is nothing else that I should find so impossible to wipe from my memoried picture of the East as bamboo. It is the one characteristic common to all the East. Indigo, rice, opium, tea, coffee, cochineal, gems, spices—they all mean the East, but no one of them means the entire East. Bamboo is symbolic of all the East. It lifts its graceful, feathery heads among the cocoanut trees and cinnamon groves of Ceylon. It touches with rare beauty every few yards of the Chinese landscape. It breaks up into lovely bits the fields of India. It grows at the base of the Himalayas. It softens again the soft, fair face of Japan. It thrives in Singapore, it runs riot in Penang. And wonderfully deft are the natives in their use of the bamboo. The Chinamen excel in its manipulation. I have come home, after a sojourn in the East of some years, with an idea that the Chinamen excel in almost everything mechanical in which they have an entirely fair chance. There are few things that a Chinaman cannot make out of bamboo; houses, boxes, and baskets, furniture, palanquins, 'rickshaws, hats, shields, carriages, scaffolding, fences, mats, portières, —those are a few of the simplest uses to which Chin-Yang puts bamboo.

There is nothing else in the vegetable kingdom at once so pliable and so strong as bamboo. The fingers of Chinese children weave it; the hands of Indian women pluck it. Yet from it is made scaffolding, upon which stand a multitude of Chinese workmen.

Once, in Hong-Kong, I saw the Chinese prepare for their Soul Festival. The Soul Festival is a unique expression of the artistic yearnings of this peculiar people. It occurs once in every four years. A temporary house is built of bamboo, it is lined with shelves of bamboo; on those shelves are placed pictures, vases, flowers—in brief, anything and everything that marks Chinese progress in the fine arts. The Soul Festival is the Chinese World's Fair—but a World's Fair from which all the world is rigorously excluded except China. There was a great deal about the Soul Festival I saw that was incomprehensible to me; and a Chinese mystery is apt to remain a Chinese mystery to the most inquiring European. One thing, however, was clear to me at the Soul Festival. That one thing was the preponderance of bamboo. Not only was bamboo an important ingredient in the building, and of half the semi-useful articles displayed, but it was in evidence on the majority of the pottery, and in many of the pictures. It was the saving grace of the most hideous carvings. It gave the utmost touch of beauty to the finest ivories.

Bamboo is as light as it is strong. That makes it invaluable for receptacles that must be carried. I used often to stop in the streets of Shanghai to buy Chinese sweetmeats from a chow-chow seller, who had a portable booth or cabinet. I wondered at the ease with which he carried it, until one day I lifted it myself. It was inexpressibly light,—it was made of bamboo. The minor Chinese bridges are made of bamboo; very quaint and effective they are.

The Foundlings Home at Shanghai was the prettiest sight (humanly speaking) I saw in China. It was a Roman Catholic Institution. The Sisters were Chinese. They wore the full, dark-blue trousers and the light-blue smock, the hideous head-dress, and the green, jade earrings of the ordinary amah; but each wore upon her bosom a large cross. The poor little Chinese waifs lay asleep in queer, tall, bamboo cradles. Some of the elder children sat in sturdy little bamboo chairs, and the celestial romps of the institution capered beneath the shade of the bamboo trees.

I went to a court of Chinese justice. The judges sat upon bamboo chairs, about a bamboo table. The doors of a Chinese prison are barred with bamboo lattice work. The shields of the Chinese soldiers are made of bamboo. Of bamboo are made the flutes of the Chinese musicians. The Chinese poulterer carries across his shoulder a straight bamboo rod, and on it are hung his feathery wares. The captive song birds of China chirp their sad music behind the bars of bamboo cages. The Chinese woman who toddles from her window to see your strange, pale, European face leans over a bamboo balcony. I had some boxes made in Singapore (Singapore is full of Chinese) and in Hong-Kong. I used to spend hours watching their manufacture from the almost green bamboo. The Chinese are unrivalled in thoroughness and in exactness. I drew a plan of a rather intricate box for a Chinaman in Singapore. I got a tape measure and showed him the dimensions I wished. We bargained, as to price, on our fingers. The day on which it should be completed was determined in the same way. On the day agreed upon, John arrived with my box. He had padded and lined with silk, as I had shown him, the compartment for my wigs; he had lined the little place for “make-up” with tin; my armour fitted into its place to a nicety. In brief, he had done everything exactly as I had indicated. Not from one of my many instructions had he deviated by a hair’s-breadth; and yet I had only shown them on a piece of paper. I had told him nothing. We were equally ignorant each of the other’s language. I paid him the exact sum agreed upon, and he said, “Chin-chin,” and went away very contentedly. That is characteristic of the Chinese: the quality of fidelity to a bargain. In that they differ from the Japanese. If a Chinaman agrees to make you a pair of boots for three yen, and to deliver them on Monday, why then, as sure as Monday comes, come the boots, made as they were ordered. The bootmaker takes his three yen, and says, “Thank you.” Make an identical arrangement with a Japanese. On Monday you never see him. On Tuesday he calls to say that he will bring the boots on Wednesday. On Thursday he actually brings them. He is very polite, far more polite than the Chinese cobbler. He demands four yen, because the boots have taken twice the leather he thought they would. Nine to one they are not just what you ordered; but there will be about them that indefinable something that

will stamp them works of art; and the boots the Chinaman made you, though just as you ordered, will be, at the utmost, masterpieces of mechanical workmanship.

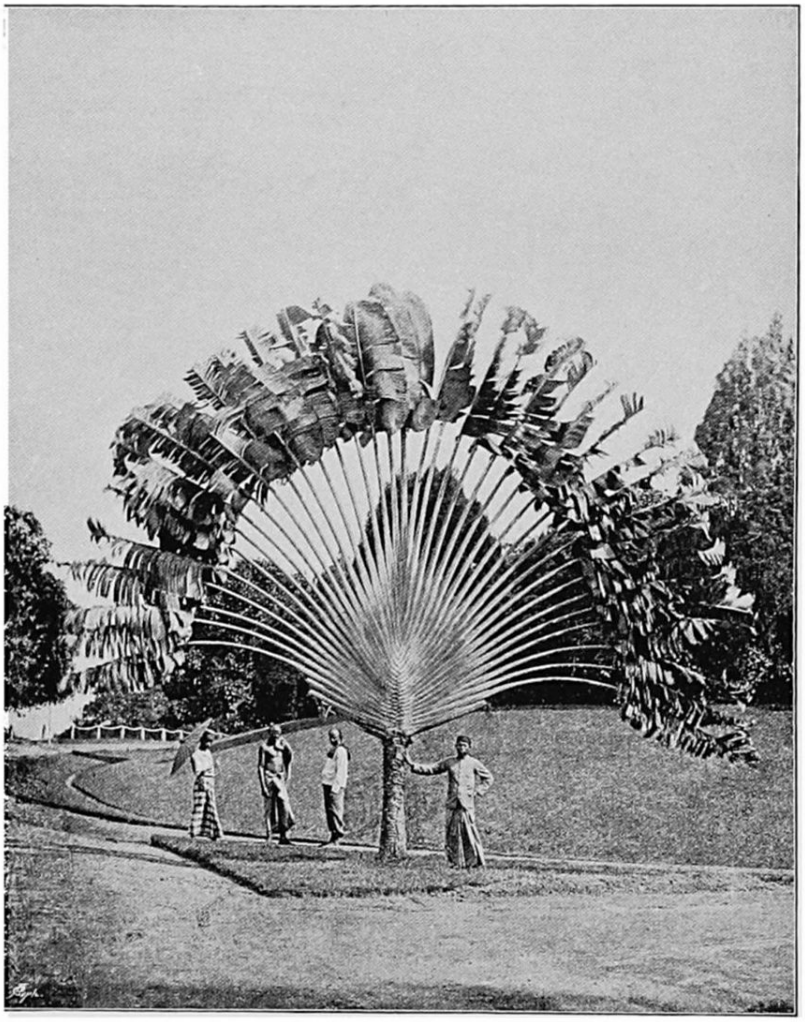
In Bengal I have seen women carrying bundles of bamboo three times their own height and quite their own circumference. They cut it, the women of the coolie class, and carry it for miles on their heads. They have a little pad of rags between their skulls and their tremendous burdens. They bring the bamboo to the nearest village and sell it to some bamboo shop.

The Mohurrum is the thriving time for one branch of the bamboo trade, for at the celebration of the Mohurrum festivals, thousands of tâzias are carried about the streets before they are thrown, as sacrifices to the native gods, into the Ganges or its nearest substitute. The tâzias are marvellous concoctions of paper and tinsel, more or less typical of Indian religious history or myth. They are carried upon carts or upon the shoulders of religious enthusiasts. Almost all the Indians, for that matter, are religious enthusiasts. But whether the tâzias are carried on carts, or by men, they rest upon bamboo scaffoldings; and most of them are built upon bamboo framework. The Mohurrum is one of the two great Mohammedan festivals; it is often provocative of riot and bloodshed, and it is at such times, when native fanaticism rides its high hobby-horse, that European interests are most endangered.

Bamboo is a delightful vegetable. Only the young, tender shoots can be eaten, but they are very palatable. They are dressed with a cream sauce, such as Americans serve with asparagus points. The natives use them in an insipid broth. They are a toothsome accompaniment to any game curry. They are often used in all the nicest curries. I claim to have invented bamboo salad, and I assure you it is very nice. You boil the young, tender tips, but not too thoroughly. Then put them in the ice-chest. When they are thoroughly cold, serve them with a French dressing or with a rich *mayonnaise*. You can serve them with or without lettuce, cucumber, etc., but serve a little celery with them, if possible; and, whether you use the French dressing or the *mayonnaise*, season it with cayenne until it is quite piquant. The bamboo tips are also very nice served as a *confiture* with preserved ginger and candied mangoes. I was looking, the other day, over the price-list of an Eastern condiment house here in London; but no Eastern *délicatesse* was there. The fruits, the queer combinations, that give the Eastern flavour to your food and make every mouthful more delicious and pungent than the last, they are not to be had here; but it is a happiness to remember them.

It is the picturesque aspect of the growing bamboo that I would emphasise. Except in Japan, almost all the beauties of the East are positive—aggressive in colour and in line. Bamboo is soft of hue, graceful, indefinite of outline. It softens and modifies many a mile of Indian scenery which without it would be crude. I remember, with genuine gratitude, one glorious clump of bamboo in Jubbulpore. It was so delicate in tint and shape that it toned to tender half-colours the rough dyes of the garments of the natives who clustered about it. I always made a point of including it in my afternoon drive; and many a starlit night I have walked some considerable distance to see it outlined, like wonderful gray-green lace, against the

opalescent sky, from which the sunset had not quite gone.



FAN PALM AT SINGAPORE. *Page 255.*

CHAPTER XXIX

ON THE HIMALAYAS

FROM Tokio we turned back. Again we stayed in Yokohama, in Kobe, and stopped just long enough to play once in Nagasaki. We spent some time at Hong-Kong. At Penang our boat waited a day, and our English friends came aboard to wish us God-speed. The man we had known best and liked most was not among them. I had named him "Saint of the Camera." He was a capital amateur photographer, and had tramped about Penang most generously for me when we had been there before, and had fed with innumerable pretty photographs my insatiable craving for "views." I asked where he was. Alas! he was in the English Hospital, fighting a desperate fight with the fever-fiend.

"I wish that you were as rich as Monte Christo," I had said to my husband the first evening that we were in Penang.

"Why?" he said, as in duty bound.

"Because then you could buy me this island, and we would stay here for ever."

"Oh, would we? Well, then, I'm glad that I'm considerably less well off than Monte Christo," said mine lord, who decidedly prefers Europe to Asia.

Penang is said by some authorities to be the site of the Garden of Eden. Certainly no paradise could be lovelier. Nature laughs and revels in Penang; and there, too, is native life most varied, most picturesque. A dozen different races live in Penang. Their places of worship, their houses, their garments, are insistently differentiated. Penang is one big garden of exotics; among them, we found one sweet home-rose—the rose of English hospitality. From Penang we went to Singapore.

I have no pleasanter memories than my memories of Singapore. No place could be more beautiful, nor more interesting; and I thought that nowhere in the East was there such pleasant European society. And surely no other spot on earth is such a paradise of fruit.

Singapore is a place of splendid varieties. It is the island of a great future.

The Malays are perhaps the least vivid feature of Singapore. They are an inoffensive people, but not, I thought, as interesting as the other Oriental peoples. Chinese industry and European intelligence were the great motive powers at Singapore.

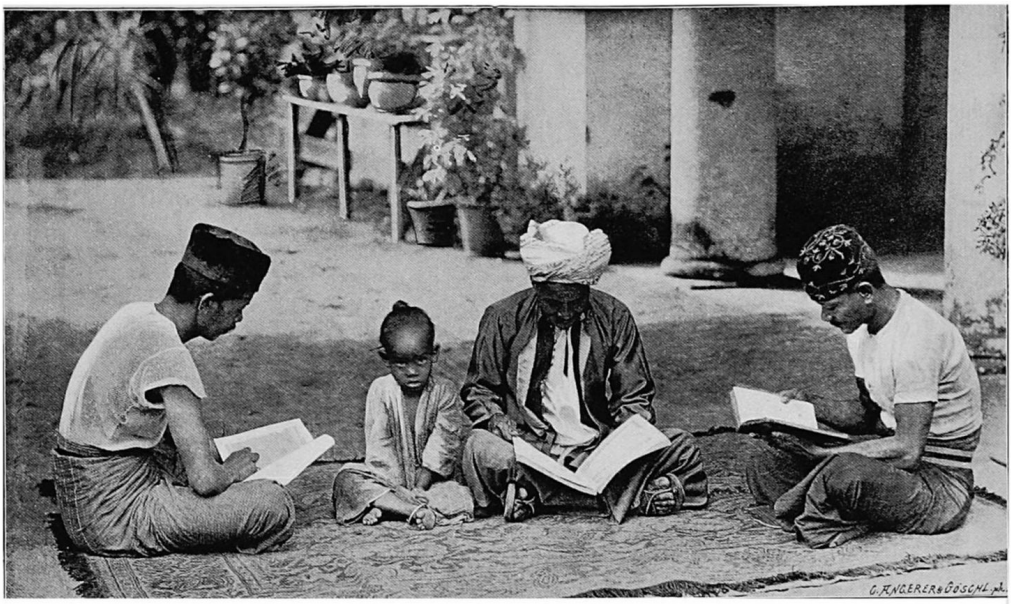
Tanglin, outside the town of Singapore, is an ideal barrack. It was a soldier's paradise I thought.

Singapore, with its wonderful mixture of races, was strangely fascinating, even to people who had been through the East rather exhaustively; but I doubt if we should remember Singapore half so pleasantly, did we not remember it as the

residence of Sir Charles Warren.

If I felt free to glide into purely personal reminiscences, I should record of Singapore that there we greatly liked a man, and greatly thanked a host.

On our way to China we had spent a month or more in Singapore. Now we passed a few more pleasant weeks there. Then came a few sad days in Rangoon and a memorable passage back to Calcutta. It was late in July and the elements were in indescribable confusion. Only an expert could tell which was sky and which was sea. And neither sea nor sky could have been uglier.



NATIVES READING AT PENANG. *Page 256.*

We lost a great number of sheep overboard in the storm; and I, too, very nearly went overboard. I should have deserved my fate; but the poor innocent sheep did not deserve theirs. Yet perhaps it is pleasanter to die by drowning than by slaughter. I love the deck of a boat, but I hate the "down below." I never go below more than is absolutely necessary. But on this trip I had my own way once too often. I don't know how I had inveigled the Captain, but I had. My steamer chair was lashed to the hatch. I was snug and dry under my rugs. The ship rolled and pitched splendidly, the rain rushed down in nasty torrents, and the salt spray curled and split into a hundred whipcords, before it struck my face.

The Captain and my captain came up every few moments to reason with me and to invite me down, but I shook my wilful head at them. The night, the storm, and the fresh, angry air, seemed to me far more pleasant than the close, warm, sociable saloon would have been.

About ten o'clock John came up and made, with difficulty, his frightened way to my side.

"Master say you want something? Please he like come bring you down. It is very late."

"All right, I'll come down with you, John," I said.

"Oh no, memsahib, please not," cried John, "Master be very angry. It want two gentlemen help you this bad night."

Some imp of contrariness possessed me. I was cross at having to go down at all; and I answered John roughly. "Bring the rugs," I said, "and I'll come by myself, if you are afraid to help me." Poor John, he was afraid to help himself; and, in sooth, we had a very staggery time of it between the steamer chair and the gangway. But we grasped the brass rod at last and went slowly, and, as I thought, surely down. How often we are most in danger when we think that danger is over! I was on the last step when a lurch more tremendous than all the tremendous others tore the brass rod from my hand, and I lay across the saloon doorway, a rather mangled mass of wilful woman.

I had interrupted a game of whist. I was rather badly hurt, but they were all very good to me; even the Captain and the long-suffering husband, both of whom I had defied by staying on deck, through the storm, and both of whom I had disobeyed by coming below without their help.

There was a young army surgeon on board; I forget his name, but I shall always remember him. He had been invalided home from Mandalay. He was seriously ill; but he left his state-room and came to mine. I shall never forget how very ill he looked as he bent over my rather badly cut eye. I am sure that he was far worse than I was, but he saved me from the full consequences of my folly; and he looked so very white and spent that I forgot to moan, and let my fancy wander to a score of battlefields where unselfish medicos have won their Victoria Crosses; and before my mind had quite come back my eye was mended.

Our second season in Calcutta was delightful, but warm. "Cinch, cinch," was our constant cry; which meant that we wanted the punkah-wallahs to pull harder.

Punkahs are the puissant antidotes of the Indian climate. They are not always needed, nor everywhere; but when they are needed, they are needed badly! There are two kinds of punkahs—hand punkahs, and the long canvas punkahs that hang from the ceiling and are pulled by the coolies, who sit in the hall or in an outer room. The hand punkahs are huge fans, made of palm leaves, and swung near your face, by the tireless arms of indefatigable punkah-wallahs.

Some of the hand punkahs are very beautiful. In Calcutta, at the theatre, I was kept cool by the breath of a big Egyptian-shaped thing that was inlaid with bits of brilliantly-hued glass. In Rawal Pindi I was cooled by the breeze of a square of scented grass. In Patiala the servants of the Maharajah fanned me with wire-outlined, leaf-fringed, sandalwood-sprinkled ovals of crimson silk.

In every part of India I bought, for a few pies, in the native bazaars, the common fans of the people. I don't suppose that my entire collection cost me ten pounds. But to me they are full of interest and of story, those crude fans of the Asiatic populace. That plaited, vivid one means Allahabad to me. That little, useless-looking,

spangled one I bought almost at the base of Mount Everest. There was small need for fans there; but fans are a matter of course in Asia, and custom is greater than necessity. For every Oriental city or town in which I have slept I have a fan.

The genii of this world are limited in number. I knew one of them in Calcutta; he was an old, poor Hindoo. He had his price (as most of us have); and it was two annas from sunrise to sunrise. I gave him three annas, and only claimed his services from 8 P.M. till 12 P.M. I think he loved me. He could only do one thing, but he did it perfectly. Our second season in Calcutta was, beyond expression, hot. It was indecently hot. But, whatever the rest of the world suffered, from 8 P.M. until midnight I was cool and happy. To write more correctly, I was cooled and kept happy. The one thing that my meagrely-clad brown genius could do, was fan; and he did it. From the moment I stepped from the gharri into the stage doorway of the Theatre Royal, Calcutta, I was surrounded by the perfection of breeze.

There were moments incidental to my changes of costume when I had to temporarily banish him from my dressing-room. He always resented this; he seemed to feel it a reflection upon his fanning. To tell the truth, I often felt rather supercilious; for, though he never ceased to fan me, he was more often asleep than awake. I usually had to waken him before I ejected him.

We played *The Lights o' London* in terrible weather. My third dress was a warm gray gown, and over it I wore a warmer gray cloak and hood. I don't know how the old man managed it, but he did manage always to crawl behind the canvas rocks; and while I sat, a melting mass of cross feminality, he fanned and fanned me. When I moved, he moved; wherever I stood, he stood behind me; and whether the audience appreciated or underrated my genius, he never ceased to fan me. A friend, a dear friend, was kind enough to tell me that in Bombay I played Bess Marks very much worse than I had in Calcutta. I attributed it entirely to the absence of my punkah-wallah.

I have never had a more devoted servant. When he could not by any possible contrivance fan me, he used to go and fan my husband. I wonder if he had read a book entitled, *Love me, Love my Husband*.

When we went into the Punjab, the punkahs—the big punkahs swung from the ceiling—that had been a luxury became a necessity. Not a necessity to comfort, but to life. But before we went into the Punjab we went up on the Himalayas.

My lines of life have crossed and recrossed the globe, up and down. I shall always think of the Himalayas as Nature's masterpiece. I shall not try to describe them: my failure would be too great.

We crept to the Himalayas from Calcutta—crept through pleasant, native places, across the Ganges, up the most wonderful of railways. It seems profane to speak of man's achievement and of the Himalayas at the same time; but the difficulties that Nature has thrown in the way of the Darjeeling railway make its accomplishment a thing sublime. Engineering may have had greater triumphs, but it has had none that are more greatly displayed.

Our train turned upon itself and crossed its own tracks like a mad, hunted thing.

It seemed to take most desperate chances; but still it went on and up; and man's mind triumphed over Nature's matter.

Alas that three score years and ten should mark the average limit of so stupendous a triumph! And yet if, as some of us think, man's mind is but a form of Nature's matter, it is only meet that our active, nervous personalities should be reabsorbed into the great, quiet, placid, potent whole of Nature.

The colour-rich pen of William Shakespeare would, I think, have found itself inadequate to paint the scenery through which we passed from the banks of the Ganges to the base of Mount Everest. All I can say of that scenery is: It is there; go and see it!

We passed groups of hill people. They were to us a new type of Asiatic humanity. They reminded us strangely and strongly of our own North American Indians. They set us thinking. We tried to recall all we had ever read about the cradle of the Aryan race. We tried to remember the great racial divisions of humanity. And when we found ourselves in a fine mental tangle we gave it up, saying, "What a great and undeniable fact is the brotherhood of all humanity!" and then we ceased to think and only looked—at Nature. We passed through tea plantations, and through miles of cochineal and indigo; that relieved our tension and told us once more that ours was the most practical race in the world; for the plantations were, almost without exception, owned and managed by Anglo-Saxons.

Before we reached Darjeeling we had several sunlit views of the far, snow-covered heights of the great mountains. From Darjeeling we saw them every day—for at Darjeeling we had only sunshine and good fortune. We saw Mount Kinchinjunga at sunrise, at sunflood, and at sunset. We could not see Mount Everest from Darjeeling, but before daylight one morning we went together on horseback and crept to the base of Mount Everest; we lifted our faces reverently and looked upon it.

Darjeeling fascinated me as much because of the hill tribes we found there as for its own wonderful beauty. My husband says that I ruined him in furs and phulkaris, but he has accused me of ruining him in every bazaar in the Orient; and now that we are at home in London, he has quite constituted himself the curator of my curios.

At Darjeeling is one of the lovely homes of those very interesting people, the Maharajah and Maharanee of Cooch Behar.

The Maharajah of Cooch Behar was the handsomest man I ever saw. But I did not discover it the first time I saw him. The Maharanee was with him, and I had no eyes for any one else. The Maharanee of Cooch Behar is indescribably lovely. No intense poem of old Oriental literature contains a description of woman's loveliness, that would be an exaggeration if it had been written about her Highness. In Calcutta and in Darjeeling she and her husband came to see us play very often. Whenever they came, I used to scurry through my changes that I might stand at the peep-hole and look upon the exquisite Eastern beauty of the Maharanee. The Maharajah I first saw, without his wife, at the Calcutta Races; then I realised what a handsome husband his handsome wife had. Naturally enough, the Cooch Behar children are

exceptionally pretty. It was in Darjeeling that I used to see them. The Maharajah of Cooch Behar and his wife stand for all that is best and wisest in Indian life. Their culture is broadly cosmopolitan, their loyalty to their own people is deep and tireless, but not pedantic nor narrow. They adore and adorn the country of their birth. They greatly credit the country of their allegiance.

We went from Darjeeling back to Calcutta. Then we went to Bombay, stopping a week or more at Allahabad and Jubblepore. I revelled again in the native quarters; we were made very happy at night in the theatres, and in the cantonments we met a lot of charming English people. I often wonder how many thousands of charming English people there are in India. There are very many, I know.

Bombay I always associate with Tokio and Vienna. They are the three most lavish cities I have ever seen. And yet, Bombay lacked to me something of the charm of Calcutta. Bombay is undoubtedly the more beautiful of the two cities, but it is far the less dense. Humanity fascinates me more than Nature. I boast of being cosmopolitan. I love several countries as much as, or more than, my own, and yet, the cosmopolitanism of Bombay oppressed me. The cosmos seemed to me objectionably conglomerate. But Bombay was delightful; its shortcomings were very few, its charms were very, very many. Must I leave Bombay—the Queen of the Eastern seas—with a sentence? Perhaps as well leave it that way as another, since I cannot devote the pages of a volume to its praise. The swarming, native quarters, the beautifully-built European section, the pretty Parsi women, the changeable silks and the inch-thick rugs of the borri wallahs, the bright-blue, glistening, dancing bay, the dank recesses of the Elephanta caves, the vultures on the Parsi Towers of Silence, call out to me for recognition. But there is a nineteenth century full to overflowing of tourists to recall them all, better, perhaps, than I could, but not more lovingly than I should—had I the space and the power to more than mention them.

If I filled one page with each golden memory I have of the Orient, those pages would, though they were printed on tissue, make a rather thick volume.

HILL PEOPLE—BHOOTEAS AND NEPAULESE. *Page 264.*

CHAPTER XXX

MY AYAH

A THORNLESS, black blossom grew upon the hills that stretch between Poona and Bombay. When I was domiciled in a bungalow on those hills, I had the good luck to gather that black blossom into the garland of my personal retinue. By birth she was a Hindoo, a high-caste Hindoo; by profession and necessity she was an ayah. I never knew a sweeter-natured woman. Unlike most of her people, she had learned very little from the Europeans. Her mental horizon had scarcely widened through her contact with us. She hadn't a big mind, but she had a huge heart; I never met so impersonal a member of my own sex. All she thought or wished for herself was to bathe at sunrise, and, when she was very hungry, to eat a little. The only dissipation she ever craved was to sit some moments in the sun. The only necessity of her nature was to love something.

I broke down at the end of a hard, hot season in Bombay. My husband said that it was an attack of fever, caught from spending too much time in the native city. I feared that it was an attack of conscience, brought on by spending too much money in the native bazaars. But I never told him so; I never can bring myself to contradict my husband. At all events, I broke down very thoroughly, and was peremptorily forbidden the trip to Calcutta, which my husband and our company were about to take. To remain in Bombay was out of the question. We found a Hindoo gentleman who had a bungalow at Khandalah, a bungalow he wished to let. Khandalah is a railway station mid-way between Poona and Bombay. There is a sanitarium, not far from there, for sick soldiers. Save for their occasional presence, when convalescent, the place is destitute of Europeans. We went to look at the bungalow. I must not stop to describe the wonderful journey up to the top of the high hills, or I shall never reach Khandalah. I must not stop to tell you of Khandalah (a clump of many native huts and a few native bungalows, sprinkled like eccentric fungi on the aromatic hillsides), or I shall never reach the bungalow. I must not stop to tell you of the bungalow, with all its glory of fruit and flowers, and all its wealth of dilapidation, or I shall never reach my ayah. To be brief, I fell in love with Khandalah and with Mr. Bhaishankar's bungalow. You would have done the same if you had been there. We rented the bungalow. In three days we took possession. The order of our procession when we left Bombay was:

1. My husband and I.
2. Our two children.
3. Our European nurse and housekeeper.

4. My little daughter's ayah.
5. John, my husband's Madrassi boy.
6. Mettu, my Mohammedan boy.
7. Abdul, my little son's chokera.
8. A mistree.
9. A dhursi, who brought his wife, their five children and his sister (I think the sister was another wife, called a sister out of deference to my narrow views of matrimony).
10. Three dogs.
11. Twelve boxes (chiefly filled with provisions, for I had stored most of my chests of raiment at Bombay).

The next day my husband had to leave us. He had an appointment to again unfurl the Shakespearian banner over the black hole of Calcutta.

Three days after, the ayah we had grew homesick, said she was dying and wanted to die in Bombay. I sent her back. I grew very ill and another ayah was a necessity. We took one of the only two who applied. I studied her for weeks,—I studied a good many things that hot weather. I read a quantity of English literature that ought to lift me into conversational pre-eminence for years. I had abundant leisure. For over four months I saw only five European faces—my two children, the European woman who has been for years our faithful servant and friend, a doctor (from Lanauli, the nearest European settlement), and the nurse who came to help him fight my illness.

Ayah (I have had many ayahs, but only one is enthroned in my memory)—Ayah was very stupid, I thought, when she first came. She knew very little English and she didn't learn a dozen new words all the time she was with me. But she had the gift of divination. If you were half kind to her she knew all your wants instinctively, and she had the grace of giving joyful service.

I have been served more or less—usually less—all over the world, and I believe that there are only two perfect servant-races left: the Southern darkies of the United states and the natives of India. The Japanese servants are deft, but they never love you. And there is no perfection in service in which there is no affection. If you speak a kind, familiar word to a Japanese servant he regards you with frigid contempt. Do it to any other servant in the world and he presumes upon it—unless he is a native of India or an American darkie. Those two understand it, rejoice in it, and become your staunch friends, but no whit the less your humble servants. Even here, in England, the race of servants is dying out; they have ceased to respect themselves and their work. Consequently they are ill at ease and make you so.

I never knew Ayah's history nor learned to pronounce her name,—though I used often to see her family and knew all their circumstances. Her most vivid

characteristic was an intense terror of all British soldiers. But she was with me a long time before I found it out. We were playing in Mhow; I had taken Ayah to the regimental theatre, as I had no other maid with me. My husband's boy called her from my dressing-room when I was changing. She came back with the first frown I ever saw on her dear, old, black face. To my utter amazement she spoke sulkily. "Our sahib is drinking with the Colonel sahib," she said bitterly, "and the Colonel sahib say will memsahib have some coffee burruf, or some wine burruf?" She was openly disappointed with me when I did not decline both. She went out without a word, and came back with the mess-corporal. When she had taken the tray from him she closed the door with rude abruptness.

"What is the matter, Ayah?" I asked. (I knew that she never did anything without a reason.)

She turned to me quickly and I saw that there were tears in her eyes. Homer says that Athene was cow-eyed. My ayah's beautiful eyes, too, were bovine.

"Oh, memsahib, I so sorry our sahib drink with a lal coatie sahib! I so cross you let Colonel sahib send my memsahib some thing."

"Why, Ayah?"

"Our sahib is good; my memsahib is good. All lal coatie sahib is bad."

The next night, as we drove to the theatre, Ayah carried four cubic feet of something wrapped in a bit of blanket. My husband noticed it, and asked her—

"In the name of all the native wonders, what have you got there, Ayah?"

"Me got burruf and beer and chickeny for my memsahib. My memsahib not want drink or eat from Colonel lal coatie!"

Poor Ayah! the longer she stayed with me the more I grieved her, for I never went into an Indian cantonment without learning to like the redcoat soldiers more and more. But she never ceased to strive for my reformation. It was in Allahabad that an officer in the South Wales Borderers foolishly persisted in becoming very chummy with my small son. The result was that one day, while we were drinking tea, our four-year-old contrived to cut a slit, about two inches long, in the military trousers. Our hotel was a long way from our friend's quarters and he looked very miserable. I called to Ayah for needle and thread. There was a gleam of triumph on her black face when she saw why they were needed. But, when I moved to repair the damage my baby had done, she snatched the thimble from my finger almost roughly.

"Don't touch, memsahib," she whispered hoarsely, and then, speaking with the downcast eyes of Oriental humility, "Ayah will serve the sahib."

And so she took from me what she thought a degradation. But she did the mending very badly, and my children's clothes could have told how really well she could sew.

Ayah was generosity incarnated, and in my moments of hospitality was always my proud assistant. But if any soldier friend broke bread with us, she had a horrid habit of keeping tally of all he ate and drank. In Muttra, a friend of my husband's, a captain in the 7th Dragoons, knowing that we must be almost starving at the Dâk

Bungalow, drove up, after our first performance, and sent in to know if he might bring in some supper. I said, "He might indeed." The supper was in three baskets, the first filled with cold jellied meats and dainty supper sundries; the second held beer, and in the third and largest basket there was more "Perier Jouet" than we used in our week's stay. Captain —— shared with us the supper his kind thoughtfulness had provided. When I said good-night and left the men free to smoke till daylight, Ayah rose from her post of vantage on the verandah and followed me into my room. When she had done all I needed, and I told her to put out the light and go, she paused to mutter—

"The Captain sahib drink two bottle beer, and eat three piece sanwish."

That so amused me that I told my husband in the morning. It vexed him, and he took Ayah to task.

"Your memsahib would have had no supper if Captain —— had not put himself out to bring it," he said.

"He is a mean sahib," was the answer; "he bring my memsahib wine, and then he drink it. And too he smoke plenty cigarette when memsahib go. I smell him."

I never could find out that Ayah had any cause for her dislike of the military. The disproportion between European men and women in India has not been without unpleasant results, but I am convinced that none of those results had ever touched Ayah. I believe that her feeling was the result of a fierce, protoplasmic hatred that was engermed in the nature of her ancestors, before the Mutiny. But nothing ever softened it. The history of my life in India is the history of kindness heaped upon me by soldier hands. Ayah never let that kindness move her. In Campbellpore the Colonel's bungalow was given up to us. We were fed from the officers' mess, the Elephants (the Elephant Battery was at Campbellpore) saluted us, and the regimental drag rushed us up and down the one sandy street. Ayah took it grimly. All over India, after we had reduced our company of twenty-seven to four, the officers, and often officers' wives, played with us, enabling us to play *Caste*, *Our Boys*, etc., to good business, and to tarry in the pleasant cantonments. And the men —they used to make my dressing-rooms so cozy, and wait upon me hand and foot. I could fill a volume with grateful memories of the regiments in India. Ayah never wavered in her hate, and yet she was so grateful to any civilian who gave me a rose or my baby a rattle. Only one soldier ever won her liking or approval. When we went from Calcutta to Rangoon there was on board a tall, stern man with a fine face and the bearing of a chief. He was ceaselessly good to our babies, and Ayah always spoke to me of him as the "big, good sahib." When we reached Singapore, this gentleman came one night to my husband's dressing-room door, to offer us the first of many kind hospitalities. He was dressed in uniform, but Ayah, whom I had sent to reclaim my cold cream, knew him. She rushed back to me—

"Memsahib, memsahib, Warren sahib is a lal coatie."

"Yes," I said, "Sir Charles Warren is the Commander-in-Chief here. The burra lal coatie sahib, Ayah."

She almost wept. But her intuitive recognition of a great and noble man

triumphed over her prejudice. A month later, when we were leaving Singapore, I heard her tell John, the Madrassi—

"In England the Rajah make some sahibs be lal coaties. English Rajah make Warren sahib be lal coatie. Warren sahib very sorry. Warren sahib very good sahib."

I meant to tell his Excellency, when I saw him next, but I forgot to do so. That's a pity, for he would have had such a splendid laugh.

Ayah was not a great respecter of rank *per se*. The presence of a Rajah threw our other native servants into great excitement. Ayah took it very calmly.

She broke her caste repeatedly. She ate whatever I gave her to eat. She literally feasted on bread I had broken. My dhursi would have died first. But the Hindoo loathing of pork never left Ayah. When we went to Khandalah we took too much bacon. The population was entirely native and we couldn't give it away. Finally, I told Ayah to put it in a basket and take it down to one of the gullies, and throw it away. She flatly refused to touch it, directly or indirectly. It was the only time she ever demurred at any order of mine.

When we were travelling she lay or sat at my feet. On the seat she would not sit, unless to hold one of the children. We always gave her what was left from our lunch when we ate in the train. Nothing would induce her to eat one crumb until we had entirely finished. As my children ate most of the time, she often suffered a long self-inflicted fast.

Her favourite drink was the liquor of tinned asparagus. She learned to make a French salad dressing, as I like it. I have never been able to teach a white servant that!

She would fan me for unbroken hours. How often I have fallen asleep under the wonderful soothing of her touch! She would make the fortune of a Turkish bath.

Her love for children and animals never failed. There was a really passionate attachment between her and my monkey, "Ned." I think that both their hearts answered to the throb of some distant kinship.

A THORNLESS BLACK BLOSSOM. *Page 273.*

She grew to be very deft in my dressing-room. Her wonderful anticipation of my slightest wish made her invaluable in the excitement of a “first night.” She never spoke in the theatre unnecessarily. I used often to let her stand in the wings and watch the play. She liked that, but she always looked on with an expression of

disapproval until I came on to the stage. Then she appeared delighted. No matter how badly I did my work, no matter what the audience thought, Ayah thought me splendid and ignored the other actors. I have often thought what a dramatic critic she would make.

We sent her to the circus in Bombay. She had never seen anything of the kind before. She was so moved by fright and delight that she lost her way and was brought home to the hotel, very late, by two policemen. She was ill with terror, and for weeks didn't get over her shame, which I fear was added to by my husband's teasing.

I took her to see the Taj Mahal, when we were in Agra,—a monument of human love and accomplishment of human art so supreme that I would scarcely dare to write about it. I showed Ayah all over it, and she said, "It's a big bungalow!"

She was genuinely and deeply grateful. She was strictly honest. She took the greatest pleasure in all my baby's pretty clothes. I hoped never to part with her. Her children were married, and she would have gone anywhere with me. But her poor old mother, to whom she was devoted, was ill, and I was obliged to say, "Go to her, Ayah, if you think you ought." My husband took her from Karachi to Bombay in August of 1892, and I never saw her again.

A friend, who was our guest in Karachi, and who had come from Mooltan to spend with us our last days in India, went with me to see them off. He was very angry because I took my ayah in my arms and kissed her when we parted. Dear soldier boy! I liked him immensely, but I loved my ayah better than any living thing I left in India. I had proved her worth, and I knew it. She loved me and I loved her. We had stood together beside a baby's cradle and fought a long fight with the Angel of Death. I shall never forget her; and I never remember her without feeling in my heart what Rudyard Kipling had the genius to say—

> By the living God that made you,
> You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din!

CHAPTER XXXI

SAMBO

He had but one shirt and it was very ragged. He washed it every few nights after dark. He was too young for a coolie, and too old for a chokera. When I was cross with him I called him "coolie," and he hung his head. When I was pleased with him I called him "chokera," and he looked up and smiled. We never could pronounce his name. It is not the custom in India to call your native servants by name, but we quarrelled with the custom. Failing to gain the mastery over his proper appellation, my children called him "Sambo"—perhaps partly because that was something like his name, and partly because they had some inherited memory of darkie servants on their great-great-grandfather's plantation.

I paid him three annas a day. His duties were various. He did errands with a fair degree of precision, but never with celerity. He fed the pets and the chickens. He helped the other servants a very little. He played with and waited on the children. In that he excelled.

We were keeping house on the hills. We were within a stone's throw of a railway station; but we were miles from the nearest European. At first there were four of us; my two children and I, and their nurse, who was also my housekeeper and rock of defence. We needed an additional servant to do indefinite scraps of work. The Hindoo stationmaster recommended Sambo, and Sambo was engaged.

He had less knowledge of English than any one else I ever met who attempted to speak it. When he was frightened he forgot the little English he did know. And he almost always was frightened—at least, when he first came to us. He developed and improved amazingly under kindness, as almost all natives do.

When he had been with us a few days, he ran to me crying bitterly that the "chota sahib" had struck him. My small boy and he had been playing horse, and my son had been either so careless or so naughty as to strike Sambo too hard. I made the child give Sambo an anna of his pocket-money, for indemnity. Sambo was delighted. A few days after, I caught him trying to induce his young master to repeat the blow for which he had, on a former occasion, been so handsomely recompensed. I informed them both that when the next blow was struck I should "cut" Sambo's pay and my youngster's pocket-money, one half-anna each, and present the anna to the mallie's children. I hope that my little one never again struck Sambo; if he did, Sambo never told on him.

I was giving Sambo a severe scolding one afternoon about his appearance. One shoulder was out of his shirt, one arm was half bare, and the skirt of his shirt hung about his bare brown legs like a coarse fringe. In India one grows accustomed to the nude, as one does in the Pitti Palace or in the Vatican itself. But one likes to draw

the line somewhere with one's personal attendants. I had often spoken to Sambo about his rapidly-diminishing garment, and thought his disregard of what I had said impertinent. So now I spoke very sharply, and he slunk away. The dhursies, who were sitting on one end of the verandah, looked after him and laughed. They were both sleek and fat and amply clad. My ayah was at the other end of the verandah building brick houses for my baby. She rose quietly and came to me. "Memsahib," she said softly, but with the confidence of a conscious favourite, "no scold Sambo, no be angry. He got one shirt—no more. Not Sambo fault. He so poor. His grandmother so old—so poor. Sambo no father—no mother." Then she went back to her "missie baba." When my ayah told me anything I knew that it was true. It is not "correct" in India to let your conscience prick you about anything in connection with the natives. But I have never been correct, and I hope I never shall be. I looked from the dhursies, who were making my boy a dozen new white suits, to the other end of the verandah. We were on the hills, living quite out of the world, but my baby's little white frock had pale-blue shoulder-knots. She had whole blue socks on her little pink feet. And the dainty frock itself was the second she had worn that day. I went inside. Sambo was sitting on the ground, outside the nursery door, trying to mend his tatters. He had borrowed a needle and thread from my housekeeper. I called her to me, and we put our heads together. We found some Roman shirts and togas in one of our boxes. They had originally been worn by gentlemen of artistic temperament, residing in Melbourne, who had impersonated Roman senators for the nominal honorarium of two shillings a night. The shirts and togas were made of unbleached calico, and were bordered with red, or blue, or yellow. They were all too large for Sambo. Our Victorian "captain of the supers" had been particular as to height, and Sambo was only fourteen. I made the dhursies put away their work and alter the six best shirts for Sambo. I meant it kindly, but I almost killed him. The night they were finished, he lay awake until morning, crying for joy, crying himself almost into a fever. I gave him the togas to match the shirts and he was very proud. I gave him two huge tartans that had done duty in *Rob Roy*. The natives came for miles to see the memsahib who had given her chokera "six shirt, six sari, and two shawl." Dear old Ayah was as delighted as Sambo, though she had children of her own to whom I had usually given all our discarded garments.

Sambo was slowly emerging from a frightened, almost useless encumbrance, into a cheerful, moderately useful servant, when he met with a shocking misfortune. It completely unnerved him, and threatened to set him back three months in his development. We were living at Khandalah. Most of our provisions came from Bombay. We sent, however, to Lanaulie—a distance of four miles—for soda, lemonade, butter, and anything of which we ran short. Sometimes we took Lanaulie in in our afternoon drive. Sometimes we sent Sambo. He would take an empty box three feet by two by three on his head, and march off cheerfully enough, returning a few hours later with the things I wanted. We always gave him a list and the money. One Saturday we discovered as late as three o'clock that we were out of sugar, butter, tea, and some other articles which were, to our pampered European palates,

necessities. “We must send Sambo on the train,” I said, “else he’ll be too late.” The little general store at which we dealt closed at six. Because the boy was to go luxuriously on the train, I made out rather a long order. I gave him six annas and a ten-rupee note, saying, “Tie the ten rupees up tight, and buy your ticket out of the six annas.” Sambo went,—but he failed to return. I had told him he might come back by train. Travelling in India is not expensive. When it is done third-class it is decidedly cheap. We were living on the line between Poona and Bombay, and the trains were frequent. He should have been back at five. At six we wondered. At seven we were a little anxious. At eight I had my dinner, minus sugar, butter, and a few other incidentals. Ayah sat on the floor sewing buttons on to the children’s clothes; her face was drawn and stern. Just when dinner was over, Sambo rushed in. “Memsahib! Memsahib!” he cried, and fell at my feet. He had thrown his box down at the door. It was empty. My bearer and the khitmatgar dragged him to his feet. His big thick lips were quite white, and they were trembling piteously. Every vein on his body showed white and rigid against his black skin. It was a long time before we could get him to speak a word. When at last he did speak, it was in Hindustani. Ayah translated, and with unconcealed anger, though she scarcely lifted her eyes from her work. “He say man no give tings memsahib want. He no have money. He lose ten rupee. He say he pray memsahib not beat hard.” Ayah evidently repeated the last sentence reluctantly.

“Tell him that European women do not strike servants,” I said grandly.

The unwonted occurrence had drawn all the servants to the door. At my remark they burst into concerted laughter. It is not Anglo-Indian etiquette for a servant to laugh at a memsahib; yet my servants, who were fairly well bred, laughed now; even my own “boy,” who was usually a model of propriety. The cook, a dignified old Goanese, who took many liberties because he knew he was the best *chef* between Poona and Bombay, took a step forward. “Memsahib,” said the old fellow, “vera much memsahib, European beat plenty—plenty hard.”—“Then tell him that I don’t,” I said rather shortly, and went out. To do myself justice I was very angry. It was too late to send anywhere for what I required. Moreover, that ten-rupee note had been my last one; and my next letter from my husband in Calcutta was not due until Tuesday. And in Khandalah there were neither banks nor pawnshops.

Sambo came to me at five every morning, and went home at eight or nine at night. That night Ayah said to me, “Sambo not come back morning morrow. He thief. He too frightened.” I had a long talk with the European woman who has for years shared all my ups and downs, nursing my babies, keeping my accounts, mending my gowns, and doing me a hundred other loving services. We didn’t know what to think. The ten rupees were gone, and at an inconvenient moment. But we were in doubt whether Sambo had lost or stolen them.

When I woke in the morning Sambo was stealing about the house doing his work with trembling hands. His big, soft eyes were very red. When I saw that he had come back I was sure that he was innocent of any worse fault than carelessness. My housekeeper went to the stationmaster, from whom Sambo had bought his

ticket, and to the storekeeper in Lanaulie. Neither could give any conclusive testimony. He had bought his ticket out of the six-anna piece. He had handed in my order at the little store; it was then that he had discovered, or seemed to discover, his loss. He had cried and seemed very terrified. He had spent hours hunting for the note. I thought it greatly to his credit that he had come back to me; he could so easily have disappeared. But he had been careless, and I more than half suspected him of having shown the note on the train, in a moment of boyish braggadocio. I told him that night that I should cut his pay an anna a day until he had paid back the ten rupees. He seemed to think my decision a kind one. The next morning he came to the bungalow a little late, and he had an ugly scar upon his back. I ascertained with some difficulty that the scar was his grandmother's autograph. It was the only one she knew how to write, and she had inscribed it upon her grandson's back with a stick, because he had brought home two annas instead of three. I sent the bearer for a gharri. When it came I took Ayah with me, and went in search of the grandmother. We passed through the native bazaar, and found her in a miserable little native hut. It was a chill, cool day. She lay half asleep upon the mud floor of her "home." She was as ragged and far filthier than Sambo had been when I first saw him. The skin hung in thick wrinkles, half clinging to, half falling from, her bent bones. Her dark-red gums were toothless. In one palsied hand she grasped a stout stick. On her narrow forehead, beneath her scant gray hair, a circle of white paper and a daub of red paint denoted I know not what length of performed prayer and caste altitude. A brightly-burnished chattee stood in one corner. The woman and the chattee were all the room contained; and it was the only room in the house. I had come with big wrath in my heart. It was gone. Her poverty, her misery, had scarred Sambo's back—not she. "Why does she sleep?" I asked Ayah. "Because she has no rice to eat," was the answer. We went back to the bazaar. I bought fifteen pounds of rice for a rupee, and a big bag of gram for three annas, a bottle of milk for one anna, a packet of curry ingredients for two annas, six eggs, a few plantains, a loaf of bread, some firewood, a box of matches, a few simple cooking utensils, a bar of soap, a pair of cheap blankets, and a chicken. A chicken sounds rather lavish, but it only cost two annas. I have bought them in India for less. When we went back, Ayah lit a fire, and then we woke the old woman. She ate ravenously, though she seemed scarcely to have strength to eat at all. And I wondered what moment of distress had given her the sudden power to deal her grandson so cruel a blow. She had, however, the strength to thank me abundantly. I left a few small coins with her; bade Ayah tell her that if she never beat Sambo again she should be helped, and drove home through the soft, sweet twilight. Please don't think that I am a philanthropist. I am not. I am a woman, and, like most women, very selfish. But I had tinned asparagus and a glass of very good claret for my dinner that night; and I should have lost half the flavour of the one and the bouquet of the latter had I not known that one old bag of Hindoo bones was no longer cold and famished. After dinner, out amid my little paradise of Indian flowers, I enjoyed the perfumed Indian night and the cup of coffee that Sambo brought me far more because I had arranged

that, while he was in my service, his back should not again ache so cruelly. I gained among the simple natives the reputation of great generosity. And any European who fails to buy that reputation at the cost of a few wisely-spent rupees foregoes one of the greatest charms of an Indian sojourn.

A few days before Christmas my husband came home from Calcutta. The day of his arrival I saw Ayah and Sambo consulting together anxiously. I asked Ayah what the matter was. I thought her answer very naïve and droll: "We say is your sahib nice sahib? Will us like your sahib?"—"I hope so," I said cheerfully. Ayah shook her head sadly and replied, "Me like no sahib." I noticed, however, that all the other servants and even the mallie's family, who lived in a hut near by, seemed greatly elated. It appears that they thought it far more of a social distinction to be the servants of a sahib than to be those of a memsahib. But Ayah did not like men, and poor Sambo had had so uncomfortable a life that he dreaded any new development.

My husband came at twilight. He was followed by six or seven coolies; for he had brought every one in my little establishment something. Sambo was very amazed. He had never dreamed of such a home-coming. After dinner all hands were called in to help to undo the parcels. Sambo sat on the floor, a useless heap of round-eyed boy. For my four-year-old son there was a big, ventilated wooden house. When it was opened a pair of beautiful little monkeys were disclosed. Sambo uttered a quick little cry of joy, and said something in excited Hindustani. Ayah was always my interpreter, perhaps because, after Sambo, she knew less English than any servant I had. She translated now: "Sambo say he feed monkeys, he wash monkeys, he be very good to monkeys." And he kept his word. He was a most devoted valet to our mischievous pets. A few days ago, the monkey, whom I still have, seemed a little ill. I sent for the monkey-keeper at the Zoo. He remarked upon the beautiful condition of "Ned's" coat and skin. "It's had fine care when it was little, mum;" and he was quite right. Sambo had given it the best care.

A great big doll was in the next parcel. It had a fine satin frock, and could open and close its eyes in a most seductive way. Ayah's heart warmed to the sahib at the sight, and she gathered baby and doll into one delighted embrace. When she realised that the sahib had brought her a silver bangle, she crept over and kissed my dress. My husband made Ayah many a little gift after that. She would always say, "Salaam, sahib," and then seize upon and kiss some part of my raiment. I used to tease her by telling her that she ought to kiss her master's coat sleeve instead of mine; but though she grew really fond of him, she was always horrified at my suggestion.

When Sambo saw the fine red and gold turban that had been brought to him from Calcutta, he wiped his eyes. When the last parcel was undone, the newly-arrived master made the servants stand in a line against the wall. There were fourteen of them; they were all smilingly anticipant of something pleasant; all except Sambo—he was horribly frightened. Each servant was asked in a stern tone if he or she had been good and served the memsahib well. They all said they had, except poor Sambo. He was one of those people who, Mr. Middlewick tells us,

always "wept when they was spoke to harsh." Then into each expectant hand was put a rupee. Sambo had never had an entire rupee before. I think it dawned upon him, as he stood looking at it, that his new sahib was a jolly, fun-loving fellow, and the kindest master in the world.

It was our fourth consecutive Christmas far from home; but we kept high holiday. That is an easy, inexpensive thing to do in India. There was a rocking-horse —such a rocking-horse! and a splendid doll's house. There was a little gift for each servant, and a small coin, which they liked even better. After breakfast I called Sambo to me, and gave him ten rupees. I expected him to cry, but he did not. He looked up with bright smiling eyes and said, "Sambo love memsahib. Sambo be good. Memsahib jao, Sambo die."

We had a grand dinner, and every servant who would take it had all they could eat and a bottle of beer. Only two refused to break their caste. The dhursie and the mallie were true to their faith. The next day they were the only two natives on the place who seemed quite well. The obvious moral is, that strict religious observance is accepted of the gods.

I have yet some of the little gifts that our servants gave me and the children that Christmas. Each of them spent very little, but not one of them could afford that little. I have never spent a Christmas in the East, no, nor a birthday, without receiving many tokens of my native servants' good-will.

Sambo had strictly Eastern ideas of the relative positions of man and woman. One day, in the midst of a great romp with the children, my husband broke a cup belonging to a rare set of old china that had been given me in Tokio. I shook him. Sambo, who was in the room, covered his face with his hands and fled, crying, "The sahib will kill the memsahib!" I think he was relieved when he found that I was permitted to live yet a little longer. But I fear that he never again felt for his master entire respect. He said to my nurse, "Hindoo woman shake Hindoo man, Hindoo man kill Hindoo woman. Little European woman shake big European man, he laugh. Crab! Crab!" As for me, I had disgraced myself in his eyes for ever; I should have felt honoured and delighted to have my best china broken at the dear hand of my lord and master.

In India no "up-to-date" European feeds his servants. You give them from two annas to eleven annas a day; and you know that two annas a day is a fortune to a native. You know it, because every European that has lived in India longer than you tells you so. When we lived on the hills we kept chickens. A chicken is a luxury in England. In India it is a drug; but a drug we swallow, because meat is so bad and so scarce. Sambo had a genius for chickens—I mean an intense sympathy with chickens. It's the same thing. He always fed our chickens; we looked on and admired. The garden about the bungalow looked empty, but when Sambo stepped on to the verandah with a dish of scraps, and cried, "*Ah! Ah! Ah!*" the garden swarmed with feathered denizens. One day I threw a crust to a chicken. We had been lunching, as we often did, on the verandah. When I had gone to my own room I looked out, and thought I saw Sambo pick up and eat the crust the fowl had

disdained. That gave me a painful thought. I went to the larder—oh yes, we had one even there—and gathered on to a plate bits of meat and hunks of et ceteras. I called Sambo and told him to take the plate of food to the dogs and monkeys. I watched him, and saw him steal a piece of stale bread from the dish. I called Ayah and questioned her. She said, "Sambo very hungry, memsahib. He no eat two days but little I give him. His grandmother very sick. Send no food."— "But," I said, "he has three annas a day."—"Yes, but two go to man they debt. One feed grandmother." They had borrowed, as almost all Indians do, from a usurer more pitiless than those who, through the columns of the London dailies, proffer pecuniary accommodation to younger sons and M.P.'s. Sambo, though well-incomed, from the Anglo-Indian point of view, was almost starving. The poor old woman, of whom I had thought as being very comfortable, also was very hungry. After that I fed Sambo, which I shall always feel was very good of me. He ate so unlimitedly! He ate a loaf of bread as we eat an apple, and found it an appetiser. He romped with my children like another child, but watched over them like another mother.

I noticed one morning that he was trembling. I found that he and the mistree had been sleeping in the open without a film of cover. I had thought that I had been very good to all my servants; and two of them had been shivering with the cold! I gave them two miserable blankets, and permission to sleep in the henhouse. They thought me kind, and repaid me a hundredfold, as I have always found that "natives" will.

It is the custom in India to abuse your Indian servants. The dear black faces of American darkies clustered about my cradle. Perhaps, for that reason, I found myself very much *en rapport* with my native servants in India. I liked them, and I thought I understood them. They seemed to like and understand me.

Let me crown Sambo! I found out, through the most peculiarly revealed chain of circumstances, that he had lost, not stolen, the ten-rupee note; and it made me devoutly thankful that I had not been too hard upon the black innocent, nor soiled my nice European lips by calling him a thief.

CHAPTER XXXII

HOW WE KEPT HOUSE ON THE HILLS

We lived for six months absolutely among the natives. Half of that time my husband was not with us at all, but in Calcutta. The latter half he was at home occasionally, but only occasionally, for he was working in Bombay.

Nothing ordinary could have been more complete than our isolation from Europeans. For months we saw no white faces but our own. It was not a thrilling experience, because we were in no danger, we suffered no inconvenience, and we could telegraph to Bombay at any moment. But it was an interesting experience and a pleasant one. It was an experience that taught one the value of books and the value of one's self—if one had any. It gave one calm and repose—calm and repose one could never afterwards quite lose. For up there on the Indian hills one learned how infinite Nature was, how irrevocable time and fate were, and how finite self was!

The hills about Khandalah were more beautiful than grand. The jungles were inexhaustible mazes of sweetness and beauty. Our own bungalow was a delightful place. But it was not Nature that most satisfied and entertained me. It was the people. The brown people—the common people of Ind.

A woman—a woman whose mind and whose personality were on a larger scale than mine—wrote to me from America, "What a privilege to be alone with the mountains!" I held it more a privilege to be alone with the natives, to study them, and to learn them, as I hope I did a little.

My stay in Khandalah increased wonderfully my already large respect for the natives. My servants behaved beautifully. Each little duty was as exactly performed as if we had been living *en régale* in Calcutta or Bombay. Every petty little Eastern ceremony was punctiliously performed.

Every meal was as formally served and as carefully prepared as if we had been in Calcutta, and a dozen people coming to dinner. Each morning my favourite flowers were freshly gathered into the vases. None of my likes and dislikes were ever forgotten by my faithful brown friends. Ayah I loved best of all. I used to abuse the dhursies, and fly into a weekly fury with the dhobie. She was a wretch! The cook and I had sundry squabbles, but I adored his dishes, and that made him adore me. Methu, my own boy, was a perfect servant, save for a habit he had of stealing beverage, and the mallie was a perfect mother to me.

I believe that I was once or twice unkind to the dhute wallah, but he was always unkind to me; so I forgive myself.

Sambo crept slowly into my good graces; and I wish I had them, one and all, here in London. I hope they are all hale and hearty in their pretty hillside huts, and I send them my salaams.

We had incredibly little furniture in our bungalow, but we had a wealth of pretty, filmy draperies. We had precious things from China and Japan,—had them in cabinets well above the children's heads. And our garden was an Oriental paradise —a perfumed dream of plenty and of matchless loveliness. I used to lie for hours in a hammock, watching the stars, listening to the jackals, smelling the fresh ottar of the rose trees, dreaming my woman's dreams and perhaps companioning myself with a cigarette, or perhaps my pet monkeys lay asleep in my arms. Sometimes my hammock swung low with the added weight of my bairns; but not often at night. They used to fall asleep with the sun; for from sunrise till sunset they chased and rolled through the scented tangles of our wonderful garden. They were always entirely safe, though great green snakes and jackals were common, and panthers and tigers not over rare. Our great dog never left them,—nor did Ayah nor Sambo. All those three were faithful unto death, and Nizam, the dog, was decidedly clever.

I learned to read in Khandalah. I spent a great deal of my childhood in my father's library. I grew up among books, the spoiled child, the companion of a booky man. But it was in Khandalah—alone on the Indian hills, at the edge of the Indian jungle, that I learned how great is the privilege of reading—that I learned to reverence books and to handle them with devout fingers. I had many books with me. Some were old friends; some had been selected for me by the best read man and the most comprehensively minded I ever knew. But in Khandalah I learned even a greater joy than the joy of reading. I learned the joy of living: I learned what a privilege it is to live.

Yes, I who have always loved life, I across whose life an everlasting shadow had fallen—the shadow of a little grave—learned in my hill solitude what a good thing it was to be alive. I should not have liked it for ever; but for six months it was ideal. "Could you have endured it alone?" a friend has asked me. Ah! I don't know. I had my babies, and their nurse who is my dear friend, and sometimes I had my husband. I fear that I could endure but little alone. I am not self-reliant. A few nights ago I read in a London paper, "There is nothing on earth so lonely as a lonely woman." I think that I have never read anything truer. I would rather be a confirmed invalid—yes, and a bedridden one—than a lone woman. But if I were a lone woman (which, to be frank, I can't for a moment imagine myself) I would rather face my loneliness alone, in just such an Indian bungalow—alone, but for native servants and books and flowers and pet animals. I was not alone in Khandalah; but society in every ordinary sense I had none. Yet I was never once lonely. And when I ought to have gone to Bombay, I sent my nurse, and curled myself up in my hammock.

It is a privilege to be alone with Nature. Yes, and it is also a privilege, a great privilege, sometimes to be alone with one's self.

Yes, it was a charming existence—ours at Khandalah. We were as free, as untrammelled by artificialities, as out of the world, as if we had been gipsies living in a tent. And yet we were as comfortable, our little *ménage* was as well ordered, as if we had been domiciled in the best of hotels. Our omelets were always perfect; our gravies were never insipid; our *pièce de résistance* was always done to a turn; our

entrées were always pretty, as well as toothsome; and our table was invariably a thing of beauty.

If I raised my voice and said, "Boy," some one answered, "Memsahib," and in a moment stood before me ready to obey. That was the acme of civilisation, was it not? And yet all day I might lie on the grass if I liked, and burrow in the sweet-scented ferns, and romp and roll with my babies and our dog and our monkeys, forgetting that I was a matron and ought to behave.

Oh, those days and those nights! We had no social obligations, no duties save to satisfy our own natures and to love and cuddle and cherish two babies. No care, save the care of trying to forget sorrow. No pain, but the sweet pain, the pain sweeter than joy—the pain of remembering.

It was a selfish life—the life I led there. Sometimes my conscience, which is usually the least troublesome friend I have, pricked me; then I tumbled out of my hammock and trudged off, on charity intent, to the little bazaar. In Khandalah, you can be a great philanthropist for half-a-crown.

That is one of the chief joys of living in Asia. You can be so very good at such a small cost.

We left our Khandalah bungalow even more suddenly than we had gone into it. I lost my temper because the landlord sent a servant from Bombay to strip one of the lemon trees, and omitted to say, "By your leave." I believe that the landlord was legally right; but the garden-wealth of flower and fruit had been one of the great inducements to us when we took the place, and the landlord broke his moral if not his legal bond when he helped himself to his own lemons. At the time I was as nearly an invalid as so aggressive a woman can be, and I had an invalid's selfish liking for those lemons. We had the only lemon trees in fruit for miles. Limes are the common tart fruit in that part of the world. But limes are one of the very few things tropical that I have never learned to love. I detest them; and I heartily grudged my landlord his lemons. Our month was almost "up." "We'll move," I said.

"Where to?" asked my housekeeper.

"Anywhere," I said. "But we'll move to-morrow."

And move we did. She, not I, accomplished it. I shall never know how she did it. At daylight she left in a gharri. At noon she returned triumphant. She had rented a bungalow at Lanaulie.

We packed in three hours; at least, every one but I packed. Packing is a useful occupation, and I never, by any chance, do anything useful. It was a wonderful day. My lucky husband was in Bombay. Three big bullock carts were loaded with our goods and chattels. When the last blanket load of et ceteras had been more or less securely fastened on to the cart, when our last chicken had been caught and placed a crowing crown upon the apex of the highest load, we started amid the wailings of the mallie and the metrani, who were the only servants who were not to accompany us. The mallie belonged body and soul to the landlord, and the metrani was not a favourite of mine. I led the procession. I was in a rather inelegant barouche, and my four-year-old son accompanied me. "Wadie" and baby and Ayah brought up the rear

in another and more inelegant barouche. They were guarding the luggage—or thought they were. The men servants walked beside the bullock carts and were supposed also to protect my belongings.

Our new domicile was about three miles from our old. We arrived at our destination about six. The others arrived about eight. My son and I spent the interim in gazing upon our new domain, in being fairly decent to the extremely civil Goanese house-agent, and in getting preposterously hungry.

At eight o'clock the train drew near the bungalow gate. Ned and Cissy, my pet monkeys, were screaming wrathfully, my baby was asleep, and my aforesaid goods and chattels looked very dilapidated and shaken. We extemporised a bed for baby, and found a loaf of bread for the monkeys. The coolies hurled my ignominious parcels ignominiously to the ground; and the patient oxen stood placidly in the flood of swiftly come moonlight, which magnified and silvered their big, white beauty.

Our new abode was far more elegant—far less picturesque—than our old. Our new garden was a young, methodical thing. Our bungalow was systematically divided into proportional rooms, and over every door were panoramas of coloured glass. They were sectioned into monotonous squares, but the cruel reds, the crude greens, the impossible purples, and the magnificent yellows, would have told us that we were in Asia, had we not already known it.

It was nearly ten o'clock when the last cart had been unloaded and driven away. Then we discovered that we had almost nothing to eat. The hampers that had been hastily filled from our Khandalah larder had disappeared. It was too late to send to the bazaar. Fortunately one of the gharries was still waiting, as the gharri wallah and I had had a slight difference of opinion *re* remuneration. When I found that we stood upon the verge of midnight and famine, I yielded to the charioteer, on condition that he should drive, and drive quickly, with the house-agent, who had volunteered to see what he could gather together for us in the way of food. He came back in about three-quarters of an hour with several loaves of bread, two dozen eggs, and seven or eight seers of rice. In the meantime, the mistree had borrowed "curry stuff" from the mallie, and had killed a chicken. We had put the babies to bed, after giving them a huge supper of bread and milk and bananas. It was almost midnight when they called me to dinner. "I'm almost starved, Wadie," I said, "and so thirsty. I hope they have cooled the beer." Alas, they had not—for the very good reason that there was no beer to cool! It had been stolen with the baskets of food. I had to drink water with my curry, and water does not go well with curry. I was very angry that night, and vowed European vengeance upon the coolies who had stolen all our fresh vegetables, a cask of oysters, a pigeon pie, a dozen other viands, and, worse than all, my beer. But in the morning, when we found that they had taken nothing but food and drink, I forgave them. To confess the whole depth of my moral obliquity, I have never been able to regard the stealing of food as wrong. Good people have often told me that my moral sense is diseased. Perhaps it is, for I am far more apt to regard the man who goes hungry a fool, than to regard the man who steals bread a thief. So I laughed in the morning, and wired to my husband, who was in Bombay, "Have

moved to Lanaulie. All food has been stolen. Send everything on next train."

The night of our arrival, when we had finished our midnight dinner, I told the servants that they could have all the food in the house. They ate until daylight—caste or no caste. Sambo told me the next morning—told me with tears in his eyes—that he had never before had three eggs at once. I remember how much rice and how many plantains they ate, for it was really phenomenal. But I will not tell you, for you might not credit it. I venture to mention the little item of bread. The five ate eight loaves of bread!

Lanaulie was not so pretty a place as Khandalah, but it was very lovely. There were a few Europeans in Lanaulie, but we lived some distance from any one. My nearest European neighbour and my only European friend was my physician—a charming man.

We had been in Lanaulie only a few days when my landlord came from Bombay to see me. He was a high-caste Hindoo gentleman, and will always remain my beau ideal of a landlord. I thought that he had come for his rent when the boy brought me his card, but he had not. He had come to ask if we were comfortable, and to bring up a car-load of things that would, he thought, make the bungalow more home-like to Europeans. Wasn't that nice of him? I believe that the place we had rented was his chief pride. We were only able to get it, because the death of a prominent member of his family having occurred in Bombay, Hindoo etiquette obliged the entire family to remain in Bombay through a long period of mourning. My landlord was a most interesting man and a large-minded one. His wife, whom I never met, was a strict observer of caste. She felt rather badly that Europeans were in their country house. Her dining-room was not in the house; but, in the Hindoo fashion, in an outer house. This room was locked from us by the mistress's order, and in this dining-room were stored her Lares and Penates, namely, their cooking utensils and their chattees and their silk robes. Rigid high-caste Hindoos put on a silk garment before they eat. My landlord was far less conservative than his wife. He often had afternoon tea with us, and was kindly ready to explain to me any of their puzzling customs.

No strict Brahmin eats meat. I know a prominent Hindoo gentleman who used, with his son, to steal into the Lanaulie Hotel or even to the Dâk Bungalow, and in a private room have a hearty meal of meat. Father and son did it slyly, not because of public opinion, which they valued at about its real worth, but to save the feelings of the Hindoo wife and mother, who would have been in despair had she known that they ever ate meat.

I often shut my eyes and dream that I am back on my verandah at Lanaulie. I see the bhistie and his bullock come through the flowers to beg. The bhistie wants pice and the pretty bullock wants bread and fruit. They get both. The bhistie salaams—the bullock rubs his nose against my shoulder, and they go slowly, patiently back to their never-ending work. I see the sun set behind the splendid hills, I smell the world of roses that stretches about my door. A thousand fire-flies glitter in the grass. The big stars come out, the jackals call in the jungle, and now and then they scurry across our garden. I am holding a baby in my arms—a little baby that was born in

Lanaulie.

CHAPTER XXXIII

ORIENTAL OBSEQUIES

The Parsi Towers of Silence

OUR company had divided and respectively gone where all bad actors and where all good actors go,—to Australia and to London.

We lingered on in India for a few months. We were going through the cantonments of the Punjab before we sailed for home. We had engaged two other professionals and had made out programmes that reminded me of our Canton Recital. My husband had me down for a recitation in almost every programme; but when the time came I very rarely did recite.

We were in Bombay for some weeks before we started on our little final tour.

It was in Bombay, on a bright Sabbath day, that I first saw a Tower of Silence. We drove from the sunny Apollo Bundar, through the cool, green park, past the statue of the Queen—the most beautiful statue of Queen Victoria that has ever been executed.

I must own that I felt a little frightened. I had heard so much from Anglo-Indians about the horrors of the Parsi method of entombment that, in spite of my, perhaps, morbid desire to see and understand all the characteristic phases of Eastern life, I was almost nervous as we drove to the outer gate of the beautiful gardens that enclose the last resting-place of the Parsis who die in Bombay.

The dokhma—to give the correct name to the round Parsi sepulchres, that we, in our easy Anglo-Indian fashion call Towers of Silence—the dokhma is always placed on high ground. The sanitary reasons for this are obvious. In Bombay there are three Towers. They were built at different periods and mark the increase in Bombay of Parsi affluence, and of Parsi numbers. The oldest and smallest was built soon after the followers of Zoroaster had fled from Persia to Ind.

These Parsi mortuaries were in every way different from what I had imagined them; but, after seeing what they really are, my utmost philosophy revolts and sickens at the thought of the poor dead body, torn, as it is, by the claws and beaks of the human-flesh-fed vultures. But that the Parsi disposition of the dead is anything but healthy, I dispute; and the surroundings and situation of the Bombay dokhmas are dignified and beautiful in the extreme. When our carriage stopped we walked up a gradual rise, gravel-paved and tree edged, to a vine-covered lodge. Here we were eagerly seized upon by one of the half-dozen gatekeepers, who are glad to act as guides to curious strangers. We went on and up, passing groups of graceful, luxuriant trees, and beds of brilliant, ill-assorted flowers. Our guide took us into a little house, in which is kept a model of the dokhma. From this you learn what the

inner construction of every Parsi dokhma is; for into no dokhma are you allowed to look. On the bottom of the Tower is a thick flooring of lime. A few feet above is the grating upon which the bodies are laid. This grating is divided into three tiers; not above each other, but inside each other. Each tier is divided into the same number of sections. These sections are formed by iron rays that spring from the centre of the Tower to its outer circumference or wall; hence, the compartments of the inner tier are smaller than those of the centre tier, those of the centre tier smaller than those of the outer. The outer tier is reserved for the bodies of men, the inner tier for the bodies of children, and on the centre tier the swooping vultures find the bodies of the Parsi women.

Only the attendants of the dokhma are allowed to enter it with the dead. They pass quickly up a narrow aisle that runs from the doorway, and place the dead upon the appointed place; they tear the sheets rapidly from the body; for the vultures are waiting, and they do not wait tamely. Only one article is left upon the corpse: the kusti. The attendants hurry away, and the vultures, with horrid cries, rush down upon their prey.

The kusti is one of the two badges of the followers of Zoroaster. It is a woollen cord, and is hollow. Only the women of the priest caste are allowed to weave it. It must be woven of seventy-two threads and be about a sixteenth of an inch in diameter. It is first woven as a continuous cord, and has, of course, no ends. About a foot of the warp is left unwoven; then it is passed on to a priest. He cuts the unwoven bit in the centre. This makes two ends of loose threads. These he braids to within an inch of their extremities; then he divides each braid into three little braids. All the time he repeats prescribed prayers in Zend, not one word of which he understands. The Parsi prayers are handed down from generation to generation, learned mechanically, and it is very exceptional for even a high priest to understand them.

The kusti is tied loosely about the waist, early in the Parsi life—at or before puberty, I believe. It denotes chastity, which is the chief requirement of the Parsi religion. The kusti is the last garment to leave the Parsi's body. It is torn off by the devouring vultures.

The vultures are kept and bred, by the attendants of the dokhmas, for the purpose of cleaning the flesh from off the bones of the Parsi dead. They are only a few hours, at the longest, in executing their gruesome task. The dokhma is roofless. When the rain falls, it washes the dust of the crumbling bones down to the lime flooring. From there it gradually drains away, and is absorbed again into the economy of nature, in a way absolutely harmless to the living.

A few yards from the Tower of Silence is a white stone. It is kept clean, and shines up from the green grass. Nearer the dokhma than this stone no one may go, save the dead and the professional attendants. It is the Stone of Parting, the Stone of Good-bye, of Everlasting Farewell. Beyond it, the dead must go from those who have loved him, those he has loved; go alone, into the place of death, and into the something after death, which, in Parsi usage, seems to us worse than death itself.

I stood by that white stone one day, with one of the most remarkable men in the East—a Parsi. The birds shrieked angrily as they sat upon the towers. The old attendant said stoically, "We have had no funeral since early yesterday, they are getting——" I drew back that I might not hear the horrid end of his sentence. Then I said to my companion—a liberal-minded man, with whom we had often discussed involved social issues—"Do you not dislike it?"—"No," was his reply, "my wife was laid there twenty years ago; and I shall lie there in a few years. It is our Parsi custom."

When a Parsi dies, the body is at once washed, clothed in garments that are clean, white, and old, carried into a room on the lowest floor of the house, and laid on slabs of stone. An iron bier is brought in. The Parsi women sit on carpets, near the dead. The Parsi men sit, in long rows, on benches, outside the house. The priests recite prayers. After they have recited the first seven chapters of the Izashne (a Parsi religious book) the dead is placed upon the bier. Then a dog is brought in and made to look at the body! Then the prayers are continued. The body is carried from the house amid gesticulations of deep respect. A procession is formed and the remains are followed to the dokhma by relatives, friends, and professional attendants, all dressed in old, clean, white clothes. Prayers are again recited at the "Good-bye Stone," and while the body is being placed in the Tower.

On the third day after the death, all the friends of the dead gather, in the afternoon, at the house of the nearest surviving relative. From thence they go to the Fire Temple, where a commemorative service is held. These services recur at stated intervals; and at the end of the Parsi year are several holidays, sacred to the dead.

I have mentioned the Fire Temple; but the Parsis are not fire worshippers, though it is a common error to call them so.

One of the most eminent of modern Parsis has explained so well the exact attitude concerning the introduction of fire in the religious observances of the devout Parsi, that I quote from him.

"The Parsis are called by others 'Fire Worshippers,' and they defend themselves by saying that they do not worship the fire, but regard it and other great natural phenomena and objects as emblems of the divine power. To me it appears that the imputation, on the one hand, is wrong; and the defence, on the other hand, a little over-shot. Though the Parsi 'remembers, praises, loves, or regards holy' whatever is beautiful, or wonderful, or harmless, or useful in Nature, he never asks from an unintelligent material object assistance or benefit; he is, therefore, no idolater or worshipper of matter. On the other hand, when the Parsi addresses his prayers to Hormuzd, or God, he never thinks it at all necessary that he should turn his face to any particular object. He would say, and does say, his 'Hormuzd yasht' (prayer to Hormuzd) anywhere whatever, without the slightest misgiving. Again, when he addresses the angel of water, or any other but that of fire, he does not stand before the fire. It is only when he addresses the angel of fire that he turns his face to the fire. In short, in addressing any particular angel, he turns his face to the object of that angel's guardianship as his emblem; but, in his prayers to Hormuzd, he

recognises or uses, or turns his face to, no emblems whatever. Since fire only could be brought within the limits of the temple—any of the grand objects of nature (as the sea, the sun, etc.) being unavailable for this purpose—the temples naturally became the sanctuaries of fire alone, and hence has arisen the mistake of the Parsis being regarded as 'Fire Worshippers.' "

This is precisely what I was told by every intelligent Parsi with whom I spoke on the subject; but very few of them expressed it so clearly and ably.

I was asked, in Bombay, to follow a little Parsi baby to the dokhma. I intended doing so—not out of curiosity—but out of sympathy and liking for its mother. I even started; but before we were half-way there I turned back. I thought of that little white stone where the white-robed procession must stop, beyond which the mother might not go. The vultures sometimes scream when the halt is made at the "Farewell Stone." I could not go. I could not see that little baby's body carried to the hungry birds, in the presence of the pale, pretty, little Parsi woman, upon whose breast I had seen it the week before.

God help any mother when she parts with her dead child! But I think the glad shrieks of those swooping beast-birds must be even harder to bear than the first fall of the earth on the coffin lid.

Asia is the graveyard of countless millions. Asia is the home of many, many distinct races, all of which have different burial customs. All are more or less interesting.

The Parsis, who rank above most of the Oriental peoples in civilisation, dispose of their dead in the most repulsive manner of any race in Asia. But they break no sanitary law when they throw their dead to the merciless vultures.

The Hindoo disposal of the dead is, more than that of any other Eastern people, save the Burmese, in entire consonance with the health of Asia's living millions.

The Burmese also practise cremation, and are, therefore, as much as the Hindoos, the guardians of public health. It is the Burmese who most hate death, and who mourn longest for their dead.

The Chinese are, in their funeral rites, the most fantastic, the noisiest, and the most callous. Their custom of keeping the dead unburied for long years, and their mode of interment, which is usually above ground, are a positive menace, not alone to their own health and the health of the stranger within their gates, but also to the health of all Asia.

The Japanese, who are Past Masters of the difficult art of living gracefully, pleasantly, satisfactorily, and with dignity, meet death with more self-control than any of their fellow Asiatics. There is nothing in their funeral customs to offend the most fastidious European or the most prejudiced American. Their cemeteries, if we are to have cemeteries at all, might well be models for the civilised world—models of peaceful, quiet beauty, ideal resting-places surrounded by the everlasting hills, which lift their high, hopeful heads as if in promise of immortality—places full of flowers that live so brightly and die so sweetly that they whisper with their gentle, perfumed lips the only one consolation for death—if death be eternal.

The Cingalese, the Sikhs, the Mohammedans, deserve mention in this little series; but then so do a score of others. May they all rest in peace, the simple native folk, and know no trouble, feel no pain, in that strange land from which is sent us no Book of Travels, and not even a newspaper letter—"The undiscover'd country from whose bourn no traveller returns!"

CHAPTER XXXIV

ORIENTAL NUPTIALS

A Parsi Wedding

THE Parsi gentlemen are charming. The Parsi women are delicate in appearance, refined and womanly, and, I thought, rather stupid; but very possibly what I was rude enough to think stupidity was reserve. I found it quite impossible to get acquainted with them, or at least to pass beyond the barriers of slight acquaintance. I "made friends" with but one Parsi woman. She was dainty in all her ways, gracious and hospitable to a degree, an ideal housekeeper, from a Parsi point of view, a loved and loving wife, a devoted and happy mother; but she was rather uneducated, and had, I thought, no great mental capacity.

When we were first living in Bombay, I found the Parsi men rather difficult. My husband would tell me that this one was decidedly clever, and the other one highly educated; yet, if I entered the room where he was sitting with both of them, they invariably froze conversationally. One condoled with me about the weather, and the other asked me if I did not find the Bombay shops superior to those in Calcutta. I replied that I never went shopping, that if I really had to have anything, my nurse bought it for me. One of them laughed heartily and evidently thought that I was joking; the other cast down his eyes and looked embarrassed. He went home an hour later and told his wife that I was not quite right in my head, and that my husband had to carry about a nurse for me, who dressed me and undressed me, and that I was not allowed to go into a shop alone.

It was some weeks before I could make those two Parsi men—of whom we saw a great deal—understand that they could discuss in my presence anything of serious importance, not to mention the doings of the French Academy or the writings of Herbert Spencer, without being guilty of a rudeness analogous to that of speaking before me in a language with which I was unacquainted. We became good friends, and they were angels of patience in telling me all I longed to know about the history of their race, its manners and customs, and its belief. But I suspect that they would have liked me better had I thought—as did the wife of a prominent Parsi at Poona—that St. Petersburg was the capital of Italy! I believe that there are no men in the world more kind to their women than the Parsi men; but they do not regard those women as their intellectual fellows; nor do the women aspire to be so regarded. This simplifies the Parsi marriage question amazingly—simplifies it to the loss of the men and to the gain of the women.

The Parsis are in a transition state. The customs that they all rigidly observed fifty years ago are now observed by less than half their number, and rarely with

entire rigidity. The Parsi wedding I saw a little over two years ago in Bombay was not the Parsi wedding of the last century; but it was picturesque in the extreme. It was un-European and merits description, I think; for, were I to return to Bombay in 1950, I should expect to find almost all the old Parsi customs quite discarded.

The father of the bridegroom came a few days before the marriage to invite us to the ceremony and to the feast, which was very polite of him, as invitations are usually given by priests, and only when an especial compliment is intended does the father of one of the contracting parties go in person to bid the guest. In this instance it was a love match, which always makes it a bit more interesting to a woman; and the bride was exquisitely pretty, which always makes it more interesting to a man. Both bride and bridegroom belonged to very wealthy and prominent Parsi families. All the Bombay Parsi *élite* were there.

Child marriages are still, I believe, a part of the Parsi code, but not of the Parsi custom. Children are still betrothed very young, but not often. The bridegroom of whom I am writing was about twenty-seven, and the bride looked about twenty.

At four in the afternoon, the bridegroom and his friends marched to the house of the bride. The men were all dressed in white, and very striking they looked. Almost every well-to-do (*i.e.* well-fed) Parsi man is handsome. A band of music was with the procession, and played unceasingly. Formerly the Parsi women formed a considerable part of every Parsi marriage procession; but on this occasion there were only men. The bridegroom's mother had preceded him, inconspicuously, to the house of the bride, bearing with her the prescribed gift of a dress. At the end of the procession walked a score or more of coolies carrying on their heads shallow baskets, heaped with cocoanuts. At every turn of the street, a cocoanut was waved about the bridegroom's head, then broken and thrown away. Some time before the bride's house was reached, her only sister met the procession, carrying three silver chattees. Into the upper one the bridegroom dropped a rupee. That was, I believe, symbolical of his determination never to fail to befriend his wife's family. At the threshold of the house, an aunt of the bride threw rice and water and an uncooked egg beneath the feet of the bridegroom; then she welcomed him in; and he was careful to put his right foot in before his left.

We women—about two hundred Parsis and three Europeans—were waiting in a large, handsomely-furnished room. The bride's father had spent some time in France when a young man, and Louis XV. cabinets were crowded between black, carved Indian tables, and creamy Chinese ivories. The Parsi ladies sat on small silk carpets that had been placed for them on the floor. I and my two compatriots (whom I did not know) sat in solemn elegance upon a solitary satin sofa. The men all sat about the walls, on low, narrow, backless benches, and I noticed that the European men, of whom there were about twenty, looked neither graceful nor comfortable. The father of the bride and the father of the groom sat down side by side, and the chief priest blessed them. In the centre of the room a low platform of stone had been built; this is called the "wedding booth." Sometimes a complete booth is erected and richly decorated, but not invariably. The stone foundation, however, must be laid. It

denotes purity and chastity. Chastity in the best and broadest sense is the beginning and end of the Parsi religion. Two chairs were placed, side by side, upon the stone foundation. Then the bride came in with her mother.

I caught my breath, she was so pretty! Her skin was fairer than mine, but with a lovely olive tinge in it. Her scarlet lips were trembling with a shy, half smile. She was dressed, or rather wrapped, in a pale-blue satin sari; it was edged with a delicate embroidery of pink and gold. Her little hands were heavy with gems. Her slender throat was hidden by a string of big pearls, and a string of bigger diamonds. There were diamonds at her girdle, and diamonds caught here and there her satin draperies. As she moved slowly forward, her graceful garment half hid, half revealed, the delicate outlines of her *svelte* figure. She lifted her big brown eyes for a half instant to the face of the man who was waiting for her, and I thought of Byron's Zadie.

The contracting couple were seated upon the chairs that were on the stone. They were facing each other. Then the ceremony proper began. A priest tied their right hands together with a soft, silken, bright-red thread. Two younger priests stepped forward, carrying a large piece of yellow cloth. This they held between the bride and bridegroom. The chief priest stood near them, holding in one hand a lit censer and in the other a dish of benjamin. Another priest gave a handful of rice to both the bridegroom and his bride. The chief priest began a long prayer. At a certain word, for which the young couple listened intently, he threw the incense into the fire. At that moment the couple threw their handfuls of rice each into the other's face. Then their position was changed, and they were placed side by side. Two of the priests stood before them, and two witnesses stood beside them, holding brass plates heaped with rice. The priests began the marriage blessing. This they recited in Zend and Sanscrit, and at every sentence they pelted the couple with rice.

Then the priest put the two questions, "Have you espoused her?" and "Have you espoused him?" He was answered, "Yes, I have espoused her," and "Yes, I have espoused him." The questions and the answers were in Persian, of which, I believe, the contracting parties, the priests, and the guests, were equally ignorant.

During the long prayers I looked at the assembled company as often as I could tear my eyes from the bride's pretty, flushing face. I saw a royal banquet once. It was in Munich, in celebration of the marriage of the King's brother with the Emperor of Austria's daughter. I have always remembered it as a gigantic display of diamonds. But it was insignificant beside the display of diamonds at that Parsi wedding. Many of the Parsis in Bombay are very rich. All the Parsis are extravagantly fond of gems; and the Parsi men dearly delight in decking their women to the utmost. A European man, who was more bored than interested with the strange marriage service, told me afterwards that he had tried to compute how many lakhs of rupees were represented there by diamonds,—"But I had to give it up after half an hour," he said; "the things flashed and danced so, that they made my head ache." All the women were exquisitely dressed. The Parsis have an almost French abundance of good taste. Indeed they are like the French in many ways. The

bride's mother wore more diamonds than any lady present, excepting only the bridegroom's mother. It was hard to say which of those two was the most bejewelled, and harder still to understand how they held their heads up, and moved their arms.

After the marriage benediction there were other ceremonies, more fanciful and less interesting. The husband and wife (which they now were) ate out of one dish, and each found in it a ring.

The marriage feast followed in an adjacent room. This was a very European innovation. Among strictly conservative Parsis the marriage feasts are all held at the house of the bridegroom's father.

Upon the floor of the "dining-room" were laid long silken carpets. They were about a foot and a half wide, and about fifty feet long. Upon them the Parsi guests seated themselves. We Europeans were shown to an elaborately-laid table, in an adjacent room. I asked permission to sit and eat with the Parsis. They made me very welcome, and I ate all sorts of good things, with my fingers. I do not know whether my intrusion was felt a pollution, as it would have been at an orthodox Hindoo feast. My hosts (which they all seemed to feel themselves) were too well bred to let me feel that I was *de trop*, and I believe they were far too sensible to resent my respectful curiosity. Indeed the presence of the Parsi ladies was so very improper that they could well afford to wink at the greater enormity of eating with one European woman.

When we were living at Khandalah our nearest neighbours were Parsis. I never grew to know them well. We had very little in common, the graceful feminine women and I, but my bairns became very much at home in their bungalow. My boy used to come home with bulging pockets, and I very often took a surreptitious nibble of the Parsi sweetmeats that had been given him—they were so very good. But I had tasted nothing in Khandalah so nice as many of the dishes given me at this Parsi wedding in Bombay. I had a plantain leaf for a plate, and, as I have said, my fingers for forks. The other Europeans laughed at me, and told me they had oysters and champagne and a score of other conventional dainties at their nicely damasked table. I returned their laugh with something very like a sneer. I had eaten of a hundred unknown delicacies, and I could have oysters and champagne galore any time at the hotel.

Except in the matter of hats and caps, many Parsi men, on ordinary occasions, dress quite like Europeans; but I have never seen a Parsi woman in European dress. In this respect, at least, they are wiser than the Japanese women, whom they are like in being fragile, pretty, and dainty.

Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji said, in a paper read before the Liverpool Philomathic Society in 1861: "There is neither bigamy nor polygamy amongst the Parsis. They are simple monogamists." When Mr. Naoroji wrote that, it was undoubtedly true. In the strict, narrow sense it is true now, but in the broadest and most beautiful sense, it is, I think, no longer wholly true. Chastity is the great law of Parsi life, and the Parsi women have, I believe, been guarded, not only from any possible infringement of

that law, but even from the knowledge that the law is ever broken. But I am disinclined to believe that the Parsi men obey the chief command of their ancestral faith as staunchly as they used to do. Perhaps, alas, when the Parsi women have learned to mingle as freely with the Europeans, and to adopt their ways as fully as the Parsi men do now, they may gain the sad knowledge that there is one law for man and another for woman—that right is of one sex and wrong of another.

Periodically there is an Occidental agitation for the advancement and the emancipation of the women of the Orient. As far as that agitation aims at giving the women of the East medical succour in their hours of pain, as far as it seeks to teach them the best possibilities and the best care of their own bodies and of their children's, it has my warmest sympathy; but when it attempts their disturbance, mental and moral, I deplore it. Intellectuality, education, enfranchisement, are all very fine, but happiness is far finer. Over-educate, abnormally develop woman's intellect, create in her a longing for freedom which will gall her, and you destroy half her happiness. We are very learned, you and I who live in the West; we understand quadratic equations and we read Greek; we are man's equal, or think we are. Let us be satisfied with our own big mental attainments, and let us leave the Marthas of the East their placid content, their sweet, unsophisticated happiness.

CHAPTER XXXV

AT SUBATHU, WHERE THE BAGPIPES PLAY AND THE LEPERS HIDE

WE went from Bombay to Mhow,—such a desolate cantonment!—such a dâk bungalow! But we had a charming audience for our first funny little performance. The last time I had played—some months before in Bombay—the bill had been the *Merchant of Venice*, and we had had ample accessories of scenery and supernumeraries. This was very different; there were only four of us. When we were not on the stage we were rushing madly into another costume and another character; and the less said about the regimental scenery the better. But the regimental audience was ideal. *Uncle's Will*, scenes from *Hamlet*, scenes from *Othello*, and sprinklings of recitations—they received them all with the greatest good-nature, and beamed upon us with hearty kindness.

Our next halt was at Allahabad, where we felt almost at home. We divided our nights between the Railroad Theatre and the Regimental Theatre, and our days went all too swiftly in the bazaars and in the barracks.

Then we went to Cawnpore. We played there, but for once in my life I felt that acting was a very secondary consideration. One could not think of one's self, nor even of one's work, when one stood for the first time upon that sadly sacred ground. I should, in time, no doubt, have grown used to being in Cawnpore, and have taken up right merrily the petty thread of my personal existence; but we were in Cawnpore but a few days, and all the time I seemed to hear the cries of women and children, and see the red-handed natives drunk with butchery.

An army friend went to Cawnpore with us, so that for the nonce our little "troupe" was augmented to five—quite a regiment. In Cawnpore I went through the bazaars very little, but we wandered back each day to the little graveyard that clusters about the Well, and to the Memorial Church. An uncle of my husband's was killed at the Cawnpore massacre,—that saddened him and saddened me.

Lucknow and Agra were very beautiful, and greatly interesting; and through the streets of both marched the soldiers—our soldiers!

The Residency at Lucknow is a tomb commemorating the fidelity and devotion of English women. At Agra is the Tomb of Tombs—the most beautiful of all tombs. It tells the story of a man's love and grief—love for a wife, and grief for her death.

On through Meerut and Muttra—through regiments of new friends and companies of old. How pleasant those days were, and how hot! Umballa was a place of horror.

We went to Patiala for a week or two. We were lodged at the State Dâk Bungalow; we were the Maharajah's guests—and certainly our host was very princely. He is the owner of innumerable horses. We were met at the station by a

state carriage—such a state carriage!—and it and another were at our disposal while we remained in Patiala.

Though the Maharajah was surrounded by quite a little coterie of Europeans, Patiala is the most genuinely native place, of any considerable size, that I know in India. The bazaars were absolutely guiltless of European taint. I could have spent years in Patiala, not because of the treasure-rich palace, not because of the wonderful games of Polo, not for the pretty little river, nor for the huge caparisoned elephants, but for the quaint, genuine flavour of native life.

The Sikhs are a splendid race of men. To look into the eyes of the best manner of Sikh is to feel that you can trust him.

We played at Patiala—I forget how many nights. We played merely for the Maharajah and his guests. We played at whatever hour pleased him, and we were paid whether we played or not. We had heard of the Maharajah as a pleasure-loving young fellow, and we expected to please him most with our comediettas and farces, but it was the scenes that we did from Shakespeare that his Highness demanded, over and over. We found him an inveterate and appreciative theatre-goer, and my husband, who came to know the Maharajah much better than I did, was often surprised by a long and correctly quoted passage from Shakespeare. The theatre at Patiala was charming and comfortable.

The Maharajah of Patiala has one of the best bands to which I ever listened. The parks and public grounds are beautifully kept, and Patiala—with its rose gardens and its purdah-hidden harems—is thriving in the heart of modernised Asia.

We met in Patiala, and afterwards in Simla, the European lady who has recently married the Maharajah of Patiala. Such a marriage may, of course, change many old time-honoured Patiala customs.

We went back to Umballa, and then we journeyed up into the Himalayas. Into cantonments where there was not so much as a Dâk Bungalow, and we had to eat and sleep as best we might. We left the railway and civilisation at Kalka. We went up to Dagshai in doolies, and on horseback. Ayah sat with our little luggage on an ekka, and she said she didn't like it. I could see no earthly reason why she should like it. But I thought that she was beautifully clever to stick on; any ordinary mortal would have tumbled in fragments on the ground.

It was a marvellous ride. Every few hours we stopped and lit a fire by the mountain roadside—a fire of twigs. We made tea, and warmed milk, and ate a little cold lunch, and washed our hands and faces while the coolies lay resting in the shade and smoking their hookahs.

Our road went from beauty into beauty that was greater. At Darjeeling we had seen the Himalayas covered with snow. Now we saw the Himalayas aglow with bloom, perfumed with fruit and athrob with life—the life of bird and of beast.

It is strange how confident you grow in the coolies who carry you up and down the steep mountain paths of Asia. I have had my bearers go on their hands and knees to manage some peculiarly difficult bit of road. But I have never had them stumble or even shake me roughly—save once, which didn't count.

Ayah seemed more fearful than I—and she always insisted upon carrying Baby over the rough parts. That gave her a great deal to do, for most of the paths over the Himalayas were very rough.

Up—up—up we went, until we reached high Dagshai. That was no place for European civilians. It was wholly and solely for British soldiers and bazaar natives. But they were all glad enough to see us. We meant money to the natives and entertainment to the warriors. We were given an officer's empty bungalow. Some one sent us afternoon tea. It was about six o'clock. By midnight our bungalow was furnished, our larder was filled, and we had half a dozen servants pottering about as industriously as if they had been in our employ for years. That could only happen in India, I think. But it happened in India very easily—quite as a matter of course. The natives take things as they come, and they are accustomed to making shift. Their own lives are often one long make-shift. That makes them very useful in our little domestic emergencies.

The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, and a detachment of the Derbyshires were in Dagshai. The Derbyshires were old friends of ours. They had welcomed us to Jubblepore and to Umballa. The Highlanders, too, we had known in Hong-Kong. It used to give one quite a feeling of having come home, to go into a strange cantonment and see a familiar uniform or a well-known tartan.

In the 93rd there were boys whose surnames had been by their fathers written gloriously upon the history of the Mutiny.

It was some hours' journey from Dagshai to Subathu. We got into our chairs in the early morning; it was not far from sunset when we came in sight of the Subathu barracks. The bagpipes called us a quaint Scotch welcome, and as we rounded the last khud and passed by the parade ground, the windy music sounded very sweet to me. And I could have cried with all my heart, "Bring on the Tartan!"

And again we had come to friends, for we had known the regiment in Colombo. There is no regiment in the service that we have had cause to like—yes, to love, more than the Gordon Highlanders. No wonder that every man in the regiment is proud to be in it.

Again we were domiciled in an empty bungalow. But our housekeeping was very simple. Our bungalow was near the officers' mess, and from there our meals were sent us.

We had expected to be in Subathu some days, but we stayed much longer. Baby was ill and we dared not travel. But we went on playing, and night after night we did our work with hopeful hearts and a full house, because of a regiment's hospitality. When we had exhausted our own little repertoire, the regimental amateurs played with us, and that enabled us to play *Caste* and several other pieces that are dear to the heart of Tommy Atkins.

One subaltern played Eccles for us on threes hours' notice, and played it splendidly. But Captain Macready was the histrionic genius of the corps. I have never seen an amateur who compared with him for finish, artistic breadth, and actor-like exactness. Captain Macready inherits his dramatic gift, probably, for he is the

son of one of the greatest actors who ever played upon our English stage. There are other names in the regiment that come back to me warmly. But if I told of them all, it would read too much like a leaf out of the Army List.

It was at Subathu that I first went freely among the lepers. The wife of the regimental chaplain gave me a letter to the superintendent of the leper asylum. I was a little frightened at first, when I passed into the place of pain, but the terror of the place was too great for petty feeling to last.

H.H. THE MAHARAJAH OF PATIALA ON HIS FAVOURITE RACER. *Page 320.*

I have always believed that charity should begin at home. And I believe it still. But the lepers are a people apart. Their misery cries out above all other human misery. Science and love should unite their utmost strength to wipe this great and antique curse off the face of our earth. If you think I exaggerate, when I say that there is no human misery that compares with the misery of leprosy, go among the lepers and see.

And what shall I say of the man and woman who are devoting their lives to those Subathu lepers? They were people of unusual culture—people who would have been first among almost any of their fellows, and they, who were not fanatics, but healthy, wholesome human creatures had elected to live with and for the lepers. I felt, when I saw them last, on the steps of their bungalow, that I could cover their hands with kisses and bless them. I feel so still.

There are no words that would even partly describe the agonies of those lepers. Some of them moaned, some prayed, some wept, some only crouched on their beds

and waited for death.

One poor fellow I shall never forget. He belonged to the highest Brahmin caste. He would no more have eaten with me, nor have let me touch his chattee, than he would have jumped into a river of fire. But his Brahmin courtesy he never laid aside for a moment. When I came to the door of his hut, he invariably struggled on to his feetless legs and cried me a smiling “salaam.”

One morning we journeyed on to Kausali. It is a wonderful place, high, high on the hills. We were there a week or more, and then we came sadly back to Subathu, for we had left our little baby in the cantonment cemetery at Kausali.

CHAPTER XXXVI

IN THE OFFICERS' MESS

PEOPLE who have seen both tell me that my performance of Polly Eccles is inferior to that of Mrs. Bancroft. But I have, I fancy, excelled Mrs. Bancroft in one particular: I have doubled Polly and the Marquise. I did it in Simla—did it with *éclat*.

The generous friend who was coming from Subathu to play the Marquise was detained at the last moment. We were in despair. The house was beautifully sold for that, our first night in Simla, and we could ill afford to return the money; we could still less afford to postpone our opening and break faith with our public.

"I will double the part with Polly," I said as we sat mournfully on the stage at two in the afternoon.

"It's an impossible double," said Sam Gerridge.

"It's a very ugly double," I said. "But if you like, I'll try it."

We took the prompt-book and we did some remarkable things to it. But I am sure that Robertson himself would have forgiven us—under all the circumstances—had he been there.

Then we had a flying rehearsal of the changes, and I went back to the hotel to face the grave difficulty of dresses for Madame la Marquise. I had frocks enough that would do for the part at a pinch. But the great desideratum was to contrive something into which and out of which I could get with very great rapidity. I think that we did well, Ayah and I. She didn't in the least know what it was all about, but she did what she was told—and did it exactly. Dear old black treasure! How calm, how helpful she was!

Fortunately there had been no question of studying for me. I had played so many times in *Caste*, I had rehearsed so many Marquises, and my "study," as we play-folks call the memory of words, has always been a blessed and useful one. It never fails or betrays me.

The first act went as well as I had ever known it to do. We were all just enough nervous to be rather brilliant. There were three Gordon Highlanders in the caste, and well as they had played their parts in their own regimental theatre, they excelled themselves at Simla.

Captain Macready's "George D'Alroy" was a masterly performance. Surgeon-Captain Barratt's "Hawtree" was really fine.

The second act came. I went on, more pins than anything else. When the Marquise was announced I cried, "Oh, let me see her!" D'Alroy picked me up and carried me through the folding doors at the back. I pulled out pins as we went. Ayah was there at her post. Screens had been arranged for me and, while I made a change,

I called out that I greatly desired to see a "real live Marchioness." Ayah never spoke, but she worked like the heroine she was, and I went back on to the stage, as La Marquise de St. Maur, in less than one minute after I left it as Polly.

How they cheered me! I had heard that Simla audiences were cold, and that they looked unkindly upon professionals, whom they regarded as intruders in Simla. But we must speak of people as we find them, even if we find them in Simla. And I found that audience kind to a fault. My professional experience has been very varied, and it was no great thing for me to change frock and wig inside of a minute. But I suppose they thought it quick work, and they applauded and commended as if I had done something very plucky. I made seven "changes" that night, and they greeted each in the heartiest way. It was brisk work, but on the whole it was rather good fun and left one no time to think. Poor Ayah was rather puzzled. But the next night it all dawned upon her and she exclaimed, "I now see, lal coatie memsahib no come. My memsahib do two piece—her proper piece, and lal coatie memsahib's piece. Now lal coatie memsahib yes come, my memsahib do one piece, her proper piece."

Strangely enough I have since then doubled Polly and the Marquise not once but thrice: once at Murree, twice at Rawal Pindi.

There is no spot in India lovelier than Simla. We went on "off nights" to play at the regimental theatre at Jutogh, a tiny cantonment a few miles from Simla. Several companies of different regiments were stationed there for rifle practice. We went and came in 'rickshaws. I often dream of those rides. Simla seemed very near heaven when the stars came up over the big trees and the moon hung low over the mountains. And the birds thought it was day, and called to their mates. The ride was long—but to me it never seemed half long enough. I could have leaned back in my 'rickshaw and let the coolies pull me on into eternity, up to the infinite. One felt very near Nature up there in the hills. I often thought of home as we went slowly on through the night and the great silence. But I never was home-sick, save for the past, and I knew in my heart that I should feel it bitterly when we came to say a last good-bye to India. And I did feel it, very bitterly indeed.

But it was the grandest of grandeur when the storms broke up there in the mountains. Then one could hold one's breath and think what an atom one was, and how little anything mattered.

I shall never cease to regret India. The country itself appealed to me; the people delighted me. But, above all, it was India that taught me how staunch, how kind, how true, how generous, how altogether noble our race is,—I learned that in the cantonments of India.

There are a hundred little midnight hospitalities that I wish I might chronicle. Perhaps some day I may. One I remember with especial gratitude, because it was offered us by men whom we did not know. I have had many a cosy little after-the-play supper in an Officers' Mess, and many a hamper of goodies sent from the same bountiful quarter, but one night, when the rain poured down as if it would wash Simla away, we were urged into the mess at Jutogh by hosts who were to us entire

strangers. Even now I don't remember their names, though they all, if I remember, exchanged cards with my husband. But I remember the kind hands that pulled us in out of the rain, into the warmth and good cheer. We had just finished playing at the desolate little cantonment theatre, and were facing, with what grace we could, the long ride back to Simla. When they came for us, we were abominably dishevelled, but the invitation into comfort and good cheer was irresistibly pleasant. It was a charmingly pretty place. But I believe that the interiors of all officers' messes are that,—all have been that I have ever seen. I was vulgarly hungry, and would have been delighted with a sandwich and a mug of milk; but with a great courage which is the birthright of men—

"from Severn and from Clyde
And from the banks of the Shannon—"

they had aroused not only the khansamah but the mess cook; and the cook and the khansamah submitting, as poor natives must to tyrannous Englishmen, gave us a hot supper that made the rain sound like music.

It was always a wonder to me where all the good things came from that found their way into regimental larders. I suppose that, as a matter of fact, they came from all the four quarters of the globe. I know that they had, in that out-of-the-way place, viands that I could by no means have bought in the big bazaars of Simla.

People talk of the good old times. Veterans tell of the great old battles. I believe in the British army as it stands, man to man and shoulder to shoulder. I believe that it would come triumphant through any test. Opportunity makes heroes. Given the opportunity (which I pray they never may be) I for one am sure that the men in the ranks and the men who officer England's forces would to-day prove themselves, one and all, heroes.

Above all I have faith in the subaltern. I think he is a very undervalued person. The Major-General regards him as of less importance than a private; and the private regards him as of no importance at all. He is in great demand for private theatricals. He is made useful as an orderly officer and about the stables. He distinguishes himself at polo; and is splendidly *en evidence* on the regimental drag and at gymkanas. I have been told that he writes eloquent love letters. But he does more than that. He takes life and its vicissitudes like a man. Whatever he does, he does like a man, and when his hour comes, he takes his life in his hand, and if he falls—he falls with his face to the foe and with never a murmur. Perhaps his heart cries out sometimes, in the thick of battle or the loneliness of the cantonments, cries out for home and for mother. But he keeps a smiling face to the world; and, take him all in all, he is as true to himself as the sun is to its orbit. If he takes you out in his "tum-tum" (and he will if you are not too very old and ugly) he will come very near breaking your neck, but he probably won't do it. In the first place, his pony is sagacious and not over mettled; in the second, his sais knows his business; and in the third, he himself is not half so reckless as he pretends to be.

“Do you ever run over a native?” I asked a subaltern in Allahabad.

He was simply rushing through the densest part of the native quarter, and I wondered if our drive wouldn’t end at the police court.

“Not often,” he said, “they are very clever about getting out of the way. And it is ridiculously expensive to run over a native. It costs fifty rupees the first time, and a hundred the second.”

Dear lad! he wouldn’t have hurt a fly. Every dog in the cantonment loved and trusted him. But I believe that a heartless magistrate did once fine him twenty rupees for shaking his bearer.

Yes; I most cordially like the subaltern. Make him your friend if you can, and count yourself lucky. He will be staunch and true as long as he lives, and he will do any earthly thing for you.

CHAPTER XXXVII

AT THE MOUTH OF THE KHYBER PASS

THE two names in India most fascinating to me were Kashmir and Afghanistan. I longed to see Afghanistan even more than I longed to see Kashmir. I knew hosts of men who had been in Kashmir; I knew four or five women who had lived there. I knew two or three men who had been in Afghanistan, but no woman, and the men had not stayed there long, nor had they seen much. One of them was a fairly high official. He had ridden out every morning in Kabul. He was attended by a subservient retinue, provided by the Ameer. When he mounted they salaamed until their foreheads touched their saddle-cloths. If he rode to the right he was followed humbly; if he rode to the left he was stopped humbly, but effectually. "There was cholera in that part of the town. Their master, the Ameer, would command their death did they allow his English brother to catch infection."

AFREDEEDS AT THE KHYBER PASS. *Page 329.*

All this fired my desire to see Afghanistan. The journey from Rawal Pindi to Peshawar was extremely trying. The weather was vivid, the topography of the country was flat, and it was unrelieved by architecture of any interest. We stopped a few days at Campbellpore, the most uninteresting cantonment in India, in spite of the elephants who salute and salaam, and in spite of the splendid regimental drag. I shall remember the kindness of the "Elephant Battery" when I have forgotten Campbellpore; but at the time Campbellpore was a geographical horror—mitigated by the regiment—but still a horror.

After we left Campbellpore we crossed the Attock Bridge. We tried to think it picturesque, because it was so famous. It was not picturesque, unless the sightseer was endowed with an imagination that saw beauty in any spot superlatively arid.

It never rains at Peshawar; so all the officers of the Scots Fusiliers say; but it was raining when our train crawled into the station, and it rained most of the time we were there. I had a petty triumph at Peshawar, and a bitter disappointment. I had been told—worse than that, my husband had been told—that I could not go into the native city without the protecting presence of numerous Englishmen. Nevertheless, every day for two weeks I spent several hours in Old Peshawar with only my ayah, our chokera, and our gharri wallah and sais. I did not suffer the least inconvenience from my foolhardiness.

To a woman there is nothing more delightful in being in India than the delight of buying, for a few pence, a something that she feels sure will be to her an artistic delight, for many years of colourless Western residence. The Indian artisans, or the Indian artists (for in India the highest art is highly mechanical) lack the fine exactitude and the superlative grace of the Japanese amateurs. But no art is so characteristic as the Indian art. They have inherited everything, they have invented nothing, nor do they appropriate anything. The very rigidity of the Indian caste lines has kept the Indian art lines pure, if it has also kept them crude. When you are in Peshawar you are so near the borderland, across which the bravest British soldier goes with more or less trepidation, that the most callous European tourist is justified in feeling himself dangerously near the interesting cradle of Indian art. You can buy a great many things in Peshawar; you can buy two things there that you can buy nowhere else in perfection—waxwork and the skins of snow-leopards.

We associate leopards with torrid jungles, but, on the principle that the greatest heat is cold and the extremest cold hot, the Indian leopards sometimes find their way up to the snows of the Himalayas. The baby leopards that are born there are gray and white, not brown and yellow. They are rare, and still more rarely caught. They are called "snow-leopards"; they look as if they were thickly powdered with snow, and they smell of the high, cold hills. I bought the skin of one in Peshawar for forty rupees—about three pounds. It was beautifully marked; the claws were perfect, and the teeth impressive. A few days ago, I was asked ten pounds for the skin of a clawless, toothless snow-leopard—a manufactured, European-looking fellow—and I was inclined to doubt if he had seen as much of the Himalayas as I had.

"Waxwork" is more difficult of description. I am too ignorant of Oriental mythology to appreciate the peculiarities of Oriental anatomy as portrayed on Indian purdahs; and the Peshawar waxwork is very anatomical. Three-legged cows follow five-legged cows in the wake of a mightily-turbaned Rajah, who sits astride a very peculiarly constructed peacock. I have often had my fragile heart broken by seeing displayed in a London shop the duplicate of some article I had bought in the East—some article I had thought unobtainable in Europe. But I believe I am quite secure in my sole possession of some very fine specimens of Peshawar waxwork. You can buy waxwork in almost every Indian bazaar and in half a dozen London shops, but only the cheaper sorts. The wonderful curtains, teeming with wax representations of Indian life and Indian history; purdahs, over which expert Indian artists spend months and even years, can only be bought, I believe, in two or three shops in Old Peshawar. I bought some wonderful bits of metal work in Peshawar. I have one quaint vessel, so characteristic in its shape that, though it has never been used, I always fancy it smells of coffee. I bought a marvellous little table of fine Kashmir work, and a ridiculous native chair constructed in the coarsest way. The two are typical of the most careful extreme and of the most careless extreme of Indian workmanship.

One day I spent some hours in a shop where I had discovered a fascinating collection of Bokhara work, of skins, and of Afghan weapons. The shop was far back in a dark, barn-like building; it was more like an empty granary than anything else. The proprietor rolled up half a dozen skins for me to sit on; then he sent his servants climbing up bamboo ladders into the garret. They brought down huge rolls of temptation. When I came to pay for what I had bought, my purse was gone. A great excitement ensued, initiated by Ayah and my chokera, both of whom I had taken in with me. We hastened to the gharri, followed by the merchant and all his assistants. Both the gharri wallah and the sais were fast asleep, lying across the road some yards from the gharri. About fifty natives, men, women, and children, were crowded about the carriage. They were examining my wrap and a Maltese lace scarf I had carelessly left on the seat. They made way for me good-humouredly; and on the front seat lay my purse. Nothing had gone from it. That was the nearest to being mobbed I ever came in the East. Yet I was told by European women, who had lived for two years or more in Peshawar, that nothing would tempt them to venture into the native city, without half a company of soldiers.

You enter Old Peshawar through one of the picturesque, dilapidated gates, to which you become so used in the Orient. As you go on, the streets grow narrower and the natives thicker. There were streets where I saw nothing but pottery, most of it blue and green, all of it very common. It looked very rich and effective a few yards off, but when I went to the booths, in which it was displayed, it was unmitigatedly ugly. I bought one dish, because I thought it was the ugliest piece of pottery I had ever seen. It is made of mud and is very breakable. Strangely enough I managed to bring it safely home, and it even escaped the destructive fingers of the Custom House officers at Liverpool. There were streets, miles long, where I saw

nothing but shoes and shoemakers. Most of the shoes were bright red or green, thickly embroidered with tinsel and mock pearls.

A queer zig-zag canal runs through Old Peshawar; it is crossed by bamboo bridges. On the banks, under the blazing sun, sat the sellers of mettie and other Indian sweets. There were piles of countless melons, some of them bursting with their own lusciousness, there were mountains of cocoanuts, and huge heaps of curry stuffs. I stopped to buy a bag of gram, of which I am as fond as an Indian. A high-caste woman came up, and bargained with the old man who had the stall, for a few pie worth of gram. She wore the graceful red trousers of her caste, and was hidden in the full folds of her white bourkha. A naked black baby toddled at her side. He had thick silver bangles on his ankles and a string of blue beads about his fat waist.

My husband and an officer friend arranged to take me to the Khyber Pass. By the way, the correct spelling of that is Kaibar, I think, but I haven't the courage of my knowledge; I fear not every one would recognise the word. The "tum-tum" was packed full of ice, a hamper of provisions was slung beneath. The escort was ready; we were to start at midnight; to avoid, as far as possible, the fearful heat of the torrid place into which we were going. At ten o'clock we were having a wonderfully nice little supper with some officers who were going with us on horseback. I remember that I had an oyster on my fork when an orderly came in with a note saying that the commanding officer was extremely sorry, but he could not allow me to go. Only that day Afredeeds had fired upon a non-commissioned officer who was escorting a gun from near the Pass to Peshawar. I sent a return message, pleading very hard for permission to go; but it was refused. My husband might go, if he chose, but the commanding officer was a Queen's servant, and he would not risk, in the slightest way, the life of a woman. I was so disappointed at missing the excursion that the men all gave it up and remained with me in Peshawar. We lingered on in Peshawar for two weeks hoping that the Pass would become safer; but it did not. The war cloud thickened, and I was forced to leave without getting even a passing glimpse of the land of the Ameer. One morning early I rode out with a young officer. We went as near the mouth of the Pass as I could induce my friend to take me. As it was, he said he would be cashiered if we were caught. I had one glimpse of a group of Afredeeds, however, and a fine, manly-looking lot they were, despite their cruel faces.

Peshawar—Peshawar of the cantonments—is dull and vapid. It is reiterated drifts of sand, and since I might not journey into Afghanistan I was glad to leave Peshawar.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

AN IMPROMPTU DINNER-PARTY IN THE PUNJAB

WE had finished the last of several brief but delightful theatrical engagements in Rawal Pindi—if one may use the phrase "theatrical engagement," in connection with so small a band of strolling players as we had been. The afternoon train was carrying the last of our little company to Bombay. In twenty-four hours we two were going on—by a pleasantly broken route—to Karachi. But, in the meantime, we are going to give a dinner-party. How it all comes back! We had played *Caste* the night before, with the kind help of regimental amateurs. Such a funny performance of *Caste*! (But that's a story by itself.) At the close of the performance we had asked "Hawtree," "George D'Alroy," and the prompter to risk a dinner (so called) with us the next night. "Hawtree" was a popular subaltern in the 60th Rifles; his real name is a grand old English name. The prompter (also in the 60th) was no less a person than the son of his Excellency Lord Roberts. "George D'Alroy" was a young Irishman; his blood and his eyes were very blue, but they were the only blue thing about him. He was a Gordon Highlander, doing special duty at Rawal Pindi. Besides playing "D'Alroy" he had danced and sung "Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay" between the acts, arrayed in my "Polly" wig, all my jewellery (real and otherwise), and a specially-constructed costume.

India is, *par excellence*, the land of bad hotels. We were living in Rawal Pindi at one of India's few not bad hotels. They gave us fruit,—they knew how to cook tomatoes, and (test of tests!) their ice never gave out. But the capable European manager, who had another hostelry at one of the hill stations, was away, and I felt that it behoved my hostess-ship to aid, though not abet, the khansamah.

At five o'clock, when the early Indian sun called softly all men to rise and pay Sabbath worship to lavish Nature, my ayah brought me my chota haziri. Chota haziri means little breakfast. Translated by an unsupervised khansamah or a mean European boarding-house memsahib, it means two small slices of cold toast and one cup of vile tea. But a well-trained ayah translates it: "one cup of good tea, one bunch of black grapes, one Bombay mango, red heart of one melon, and an egg just come." Indian fruit in the early Indian morning! It is something even to remember it. I had my bath; there are three kinds of baths that can only be properly enjoyed in the Punjab: sun baths, mud baths, and water baths. I got into my gharri—a barouche, if you please, but a very shabby one; with a rather black, rather naked coachman, and a very black, very naked footman; and I was driven to the "bazaar": driven through green picture bits of landscape, canopied by the marvellous blue of perfect sky, and clothed with the indepreciable silver of Indian lakes, where the pink water-lilies floated: driven through the native streets, with their fascinating panorama that was

teeming with life primitive after many centuries,—streets dense with Oriental architecture, some rich, mostly squalid, all graceful—and all having matchless accessories: driven to a "bazaar" that beggars my description, and would, unless you have seen it, overtax your imagination.

It was easy enough to provide myself with the materials for a capital dinner, only, unfortunately, in India at that time of the year the variety was so limited, that, whatever I selected, I might be sure that my guests had eaten of it very recently, and cooked far better than I could offer it to them. For the 60th Rifles have a famous mess, and I can testify that the mess of the Gordon Highlanders is excellent.

I was back at the hotel at eight, and after breakfast I had a confab with the khansamah. I gave him my little menu, and told him what I would cook and what he was to cook. I think that I can write out the menu now, it was one I so often fell back upon in the East:—

Sandwiches of caviare and hard-boiled eggs. Olives.
Tomato soup.
Salmon (tinned, of course). Cucumbers.
Beef-steak. Mushrooms (tinned). Grilled potatoes.
Fricassee of chicken livers and sweetbreads.
Roast pigeons with bread sauce and limes. Baked tomatoes.
Asparagus (tinned, but delicious).
Chicken curry.
Mayonnaise salad. (No mess cook can make that as well as I can.)
Ices. Creams. Sweets. (The Indians excel at making them.)
Fruit.
Coffee.

But two items I hadn't selected were provided us—one by the khansamah, one by that fickle purveyor, Fate. The khansamah enlivened us with the worst champagne I have ever tasted. We couldn't drink it, but it gave us a theme for small-talk. And we pretended to prefer claret. Fate's contribution was a nastier one; for like the Egyptians of old we had a death's head at our feast. About an hour before we expected our friends, I heard the rapid canter of a horse, and my ayah, who was sitting on the verandah, exclaimed, "Lal coatie sahib!" The natives have only this one term for all British soldiers. No matter what their uniforms, they are all "red coats." We were the only guests in the hotel, so I ran out. Yes, the rider was one of the boys we were expecting later. I had always seen him so jolly; but now he looked very worn and white. "I have come to ask you to excuse me to-night," he said. "I have been all the afternoon with a poor chap—a private—who has just died. Cholera! It was very tough. I feel a bit done." But I vetoed that. It was the time of all times when an English boy needed a little cheering.

It was a very grave little dinner-party when we sat down; the spirit of cholera was with us. Oh! what precautions you would all take, here in London, if you knew

of cholera half that I know! How I wish that I could voice some sharp word of warning that the mothers of England would heed! My servants think me a bit mad and very troublesome. But I know what I know. I have paid a terrible price for my knowledge. And so I insist, and see that they obey. All our garbage is burned. Our drinking water is boiled. We smell of carbolic from cellar to attic. And in the nursery there is a bottle of chlorodyne, a flask of brandy, and mustard and linen ready for plasters. Cholera is very quick. It must be fought quickly or in vain.

Yes, we began our meal very gravely. But English soldiers are taught the courage of cheerfulness, and we were not gloomy, though my husband and I were leaving on the morrow, perhaps never again to see the three soldier boys we liked so much; and for them that morrow held the dreaded possibility of "cholera camp." The champagne helped us to be almost merry, though not in a conventional way. It is remarkable what vile champagne is sold in the East and with the very best labels! The khansamah was very quaint as bottle after bottle was opened, amid an expectant silence that was not broken by a pop or a fizz. "It was always the way with the best champagne," he assured us. "The very best champagne never jumped about like a nautch-girl. It was all good wine, not half of it bad gas. Such champagne the 'sahibs' did not often see." He was in despair when the "sahibs" would not drink it; he was in downright distress the next morning when my husband declined to pay for it. "He must pay—indeed he had paid the Parsi from whom he had procured it, and he could not get back his many rupees. He had procured it with great difficulty. It had been wanted for the Maharajah of Kapurthala. He was a most poor man, and he had sold the memsahib a priceless dog for so few rupees. He wept at our feet." We were really rather fond of the khansamah, and we knew that we had only paid treble for a huge half-bred bull-dog that I had fancied for my children; so the bill was paid less the price of one of the half-dozen bottles that had been opened.

The following letter reached us a few days before we sailed from Karachi. It is one of the most valued things in my cabinet of curios:—

Hakin Raig, Mannigar Imperial Hotel,
Rpindi, 14/8/1892.

Mr —— Noble sur and gentlamen.
Karachi city.

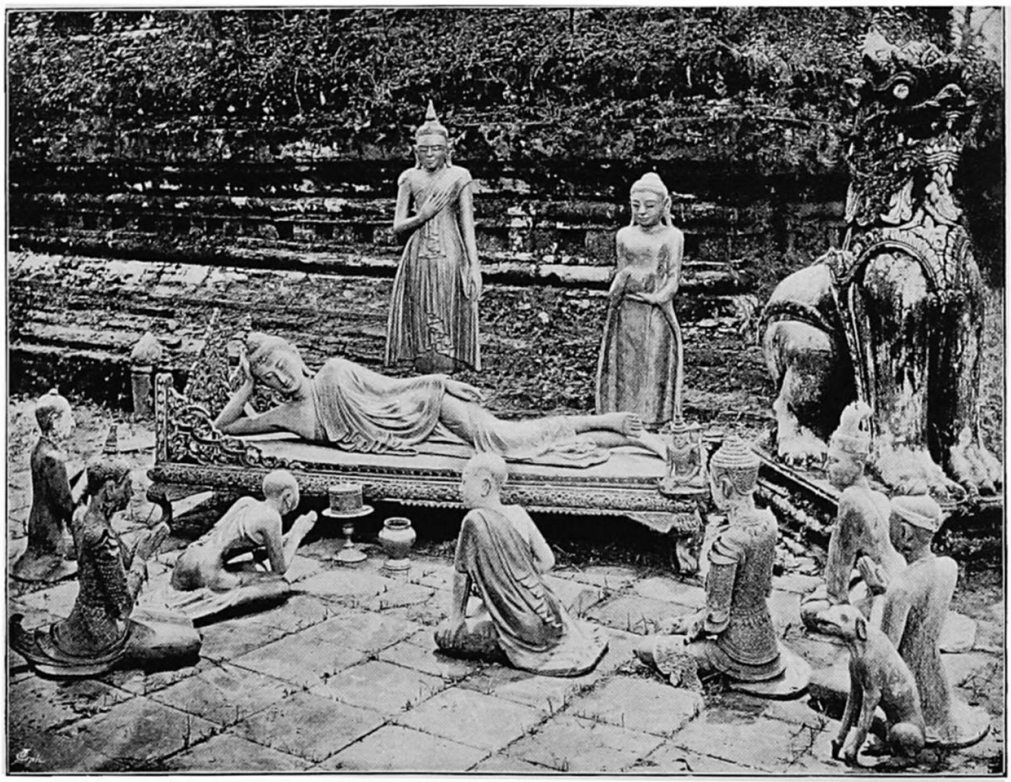
Sir,—You cutted the hotel Bille 15 Rupees. And you tolded to me I must say to Jamasji he sold me crab wine—and what remark you make of it. I done all arrangements with Jamasji. He said i don't care. I am not making here myself wine. This fault of the shampain maker. Please hear my prayer—you write noble sur to shampain maker. He live in france his name is Mr. Cliquot. You tell him he sell Jamasji bad wine. And you send me money by m.o. what you like. I pray for twenty rupees. Fifteen you cutted the hotel bill. Five make me present. She is poor man. She will pray for your long life and procespairity.

Yours faithfully
HAKIN RAIG.

Please tell my salam to your noble lady wife with yourself, and say if the dog is well.

We sent him a small money-order, but we haven't yet written to "Mr. Cliquot, Shampain Maker, France."

I have just been looking in the last Army List. Neither of the three young soldiers who dined with us a year ago are missing from the noble roll. I am so glad; so many whom we knew and liked in India a year ago are gone. I am personally thankful for every one of those brave lives spared. For if it were not for the never-to-be-for-a-moment forgotten memories of personal sorrows, I should count as the pleasantest days of my life those when we were strolling players in the cantonments of the Punjab. I wonder how many European women there are in London to-day home-sick for India? I know one. And they do say that the Duchess of Connaught knows another. Dear old Punjabi cantonments! Shall I ever see them again?



IDOLS IN A SIAMESE PAGODA. *Page 341.*

CHAPTER XXXIX

SALAAM!

How shall I say good-bye to India and to all that I left there? I can't say it. I say instead, "Salaam, burra salaam."

Hopes are impotent things often; but I hope that some day I may go back to the East. I wish that I could have written more adequately of the Orient—I wish it very much.

There are many places to which my heart goes back eagerly, but of which I have not found time to write a sentence.

We passed some dreadful but delightful months in the cantonments of the Punjab, when the Punjab was hottest.

Murree was to me the most delightful spot in India. It is a hill place—a resting spot and a breathing station for soldiers who are worn out, or blessed with indulgent Colonels. The pleasantest friends that we made in India, we made in Murree. They were indefatigable amateurs in Murree. Ah, what performances we gave! Major Frere, the Commandant, played Hawtree faultlessly; and Major Chancellor (alas! he is dead now) gave a performance of Sir George Carlyon in *In Honour Bound*, that would have greatly credited any professional. We had a Talbot Champneys there who played the part better than I ever saw it played, and a Belinda who made me look to my laurels in my favourite part of Mary Melrose.

And the bazaars down the hill! What rugs! What skins! What phulkaris! Murree is up towards Kashmir; and the bazaar teemed with Afghans, and with ten thousand things that were lovely.

How we roamed at night over the mountain paths, and sang songs of home, and regretted that we were going away!

From Rawal Pindi we went on alone, my husband and I. We left our two children in Murree that they might stay in the cool, healthy place until we were ready to sail.

I felt very blue when we left for Pindi, for I knew that I was taking my last tonga ride.

Do you know what a tonga is? It is a unique vehicle that grows in India; and though it is somewhat lacking in comfort, you grow to like it, and learn to sit at your ease in it and not to fall out.

The tonga rides in India are delightful. For me no other scenery has so strong a fascination as that in the hills of India; and I recall no happier days than those when we left a cantonment at daylight, and drove over the wild hills to another—drove until dusk, perhaps into the starlight. Every few hours we drew up at a Dâk Bungalow; and when the bungalow proved good, and the curry was faultless,—

which happened more often than not,—India had nothing more to offer us.

From Rawal Pindi we went to Lahore. But we did no work there. I remember writing my candid opinion in the book that was kept by the eating-house khansamah, and that he did not like what I wrote. We prowled about Lahore quite like leisure people. Then we went on to Mooltan. We went to stay two days, but we stayed two weeks. A friend who was stationed there took possession of us at the station. He took us home to his bungalow; and I often wonder how we ever left it. We pretended to play; but we really visited our friend and the brother officer with whom he chummed.

We did play one night with the help of the officers. But the heat was inexpressible; it was fearful. We panted. A few nights later we were to have played. We went to the theatre. Ayah was in tears, and Abdul was excited. Abdul said that he thought the balcony (we were going to give, need I say what scene from Shakespeare?) would tumble down when I stood upon it; and Ayah sobbed out that the dhobie hadn't brought my gown, which she had given him to press, and that she didn't know where he lived. My husband and one host addressed themselves to solidifying the balcony; and our other host and I drove off in search of the dhobie. We found that good and great native, but not until we had had a prolonged drive and sundry adventures. My companion was not as fond of the natives as I was, and I fancy he spoke rudely to the dhobie.

We bribed the gharri wallah to drive rapidly back to the theatre. We were very late, but when we reached the play-house, we found it almost as empty as Mother Hubbard's cupboard. My husband and three officers sat out in the compound calmly smoking; Ayah was packing up; and Abdul was pulling from off the balcony the pink roses that had been procured for me with a good deal of difficulty.

"Whatever's the matter?" I said, remembering how packed we had had the theatre a few nights before.

"Cholera!" was the answer. It was answer enough. Cholera had broken out in the bazaar. The theatre had been put "out of bounds." So I gathered my roses into my arms, and we drove back to the bungalow.

We were leaving Mooltan the next night; so this night we sat up even later than our late usual. There were six of us there, for two other officers had come home with us. It was Saturday night. We sat under the great punkahs, and we played poker a little. But that we soon gave up. My husband said I was cheating; but I think he was bored, because we were only playing for matches. Perhaps we all felt that we would rather chat away our last night in Mooltan.

I shall never forget Mooltan. I can see it now. I can see the 15th Bengal Lancers at their morning parade. I can hear their grave, courteous "Salaam." Then a cloud of swift dust dashes the picture: the polo ponies are coming! The trees in Mooltan—I can see them too, and feel their grateful shadow. I can see an old ruin where the wild flowers twisted among the crumbling fragments of what was once some great Hindoo's glory. It is growing dusk. I'm miles away from the bungalow; I'm in a dark little den. A native sits on the floor. He is making me something big and blue,

something bright and beautiful. It is Mooltani ware. I've been here for hours, watching it grow beneath the skilful brown fingers. The potter is almost done now. In another moment I am driving home through the dusk with a tum-tum load of blue pottery.

I think the sais was indignant that I had refused to let a coolie bring it. And the *beau soldat* who was driving had to drive very slowly—which I am sure he had never before in all his life done. But I wanted to carry home my spoils myself, because I wished to be sure that I had the identical pieces that I had seen made; and I have them—or at least some of them now. Part of them were slaughtered by the clumsy fingers of the Custom House officers at Liverpool. But I have some left, and when I look at them I think of Mooltan and our friends there.

There is something very charming about the home lives of the officers in India. Those who are unmarried seem to have a wonderful talent for making rooms pretty and home-like. I know of nothing nicer than the pride that those young officers take in their quarters, and of nothing more gentlemanly, nor more soldierly than the way they keep up their order and beauty.

The best housekeepers I have ever known have been soldiers. And the best cook I ever knew was a poet. I really think that we women need to look after the laurels we have or are supposed to have, rather than hunt for new ones.

We left Mooltan at dusk on Sunday. Our little ones had come down from Murree, and we had Ned, the monkey (whom a bold, bad subaltern had tried to steal), and Nizam, the dog, and Abdul and Ayah—so that with "Wadie" and ourselves we were a party of nine; quite a respectable number.

"Good-bye" we cried to one friend, and "*auf wiedersehen*" to the other; for one was to join us at Sukkur, and go on with us to Karachi. The rain came down in wild fury before the train started. The wind sobbed and the window glasses shivered and chattered. And I whispered "Salaam, burra Salaam" to the cantonment where I had been so much at home,—the last cantonment of many in which I was leaving friends,—the last cantonment in India that I loved.

We spent a dreadful day and an indescribable night at Sukkur. I am enthusiastic about the East—but I except a few places; Sukkur is emphatically one of them.

I shall never forget the Dâk Bungalow there; and I feel very sure that the khansamah will never forget me.

In the evening we gave a performance. It was the second time that we ever gave an entire performance by ourselves; and I remarked at the time that it would be the last. My husband says I lost my temper; but I deny it. I was calmly and justly furious—that was all.

Our recital in Canton had been bad enough, but this was worse. In Canton we gave a recital in evening dress. In Sukkur we gave a dramatic performance in costume. In Canton it was cool. In Sukkur it was horridly hot.

We played *Sweethearts*. Yes, we did, with two characters cut out. We played *A Happy Pair*, and we gave two scenes from *Macbeth*, a scene from *Hamlet*, and a scene from *Romeo and Juliet*.

The worst of it was they liked it—they really did, and the next morning a deputation asked us to stay another night and do it again; but I refused, on the ground that there was not room in the Dâk Bungalow for myself and the khansamah. My husband says that the heat and some of the cholera regulations, notably that which forbade us ice and soda-water, had made me ugly. He is mistaken—as he so often is. I was never ugly in my life. I was indignant.

The journey to Karachi was wonderfully interesting. We succeeded in getting ice, and life seemed brighter.

Karachi I liked less than any other important place in the East. And yet we spent long happy days out fishing, and the nights surpassed all the nights of my memory. The moon was matchless. I don't know where it went to at dawn; there didn't seem room for it in the sky. When the moon shone on the sands and the ocean at Karachi, it was a marvel in white, silver, and gold that I have never seen equalled.

Perhaps I saw Karachi unfortunately. I was not pleased with the Dâk Bungalow. If I expressed myself frankly and freely *re* that Dâk Bungalow I might, I fear, find myself involved in a suit for libel. And the cholera was raging. Two of our dhobies died from it, and wherever we went, every few yards we came upon a fire—a bonfire built by the natives to burn up the poison fumes.

Everything comes to those who wait, and a great deal more comes to those who don't. The day came when we left India; I, at least, was deeply sorry. Whatever home and the future might give me—I was leaving much in India. Much that was sacred and precious. I had buried hopes in the East and lost ambitions; but I had found much that was helpful and soothing. India, I cry you "Salaam," and I throw mogree flowers at your feet!

We looked toward England with longing eyes. Yet we left the Orient with reluctant feet.

It rained viciously when we reached Liverpool. We did not care. We were home—home at last! We looked into each other's eyes and were glad. We had come, hand in hand, out of the storied East. We were going, hand in hand, into London,—the actor's Mecca.

As I glance back through my pages, I fear that I have written too personally; but it was the only way I could write.

I was born with a talent. Perhaps I will be forgiven for boasting of it, because I freely confess that it is the only talent I have ever had. I inherited it from my father, who had it to a very great degree. It is a talent that sometimes brings sorrow; but certainly no other talent brings half so much joy. And I venture to think that if a woman can have but one talent, it is the very best talent that she can have: the talent of loving. I have loved the East dearly. Unless I had written of the East as I saw it—unless I had written of my daily life there, I must have been silent. And I wanted to speak; I had something to say. I do so hope that I have said it. It is this, "Go East—go East!"

Every blemish in my little book belongs to me, and not one to my theme.

India is far from my feet, but close to my heart; and I would waft to Rangoon

and to Kausali a message—a message borne on the breath of English wood violets.

GLOSSARY

Note.—Only the utmost nicety of scholarship would justify one in feeling sure that any (English) spelling of a Hindustani word was correct. Indeed, one who is not a scholar, must, after some years' residence in India, come to the conclusion that all spellings of a Hindustani word are correct.

In this dilemma I have tried to avoid spellings that were pedantic. But I have also tried to avoid spellings that were over-English.

In the following glossary, the definitions indicate the meanings in which the words have been used in the preceding pages. Many of the words have several other meanings. And Anglo-Indian Hindustani is not always exact Hindustani.

The Japanese, Chinese, and Burmese words are indicated by parenthetical initials.

L. J. M.

Agni	A Hindoo god.
Amah (C. and J.)	A nurse, a maid, a female servant.
Anna	A small coin; a sixteenth of a rupee.
Aryama	A Hindoo god.
As'ma'rohana	A division or part of the Brahmin marriage ceremony.
Ayah	A nurse, a maid, a female servant.
Baba	Baby.
Babus	Bengali clerks, or book-keepers.
Bazaar	Native market.
Bearer	A valet, a man who partly does ordinary housemaid's work—usually a Mohammedan.
Betel-nut	The nut of the areca palm. It is very hot.
Bhaga	A Hindoo god.
Bhistie	Water-carrier.
Bonzes (C. and J.)	Priests.
Borri-wallah	A pedlar of cloth, silk, etc. and of pins, needles, and all sorts of small necessaries.
Bourkha	A wrapper used by the Mohammedan ladies of Peshawar when going through the streets.

Boy Any male servant.

Bukshish A present, a tip, anything given servants beyond their actual wages, etc., etc.

Bungalow A house, a residence.

Burra Large, great, foremost, or chief.

Burruf Ice, or iced.

Cangue (C.) A square board, on the principle of a stock, into which the neck of a Chinese prisoner is locked.

Cash (C.) A coin of very small value.

Cedar jao Go straight ahead (*cedar*, straight; *jao*, go).

Chair (C.) A bamboo chair, slung on bamboo poles that are carried on the shoulders of Chinese coolies.

Chattee An earthen or metal vessel, usually used for carrying water.

Chicken-work Coarse native embroidery, usually on white cotton cloth.

Chin-chin (C.) How do you do! good-bye; thank you.

Chit A note, a bill, a written order for goods, refreshments, etc., a written recommendation.

Chokera A small boy-servant.

Chota Small, little.

Chota-haziri Little breakfast, a light breakfast, usually served very early, in the sleeping apartment.

Chow-chow (C.) Food.

Chowringhee A street in Calcutta.

Cinch Pull.

Coolie One who does the hardest and roughest and most nondescript work and receives the smallest pay; an unskilled, low-priced, day labourer.

Crab Bad.

Cue (C.) The long braid of hair and silk or cotton worn by a Chinaman.

Dâk bungalow A resting-house for travellers. It is provided by the Government in parts of India where there are few or no hotels. The dâk bungalows of India vary as much in the character of their accommodation and their degrees

of comfort as do the hotels of Europe.

Dhobie A washerman, very occasionally a washerwoman.

Dhurrumtollah A street in Calcutta.

Dhursi A tailor, a man-dressmaker.

Dhute Milk.

Doolies Rough wooden chairs or palanquins in which you are carried by coolies on the hills of India.

Durwan A lodge-keeper, a front-door keeper, a gate-keeper.

Ekka A rude, peculiar native carriage. I have only once seen a European in an ekka. In Northern India Europeans use ekkas as carry-alls for luggage and servants.

Fakir A religious mendicant, a holy man wandering or living under an extreme religious vow.

Fankwai (C.) Foreign devil.

Gandharva A Hindoo god.

Gharri A carriage.

Gharri-wallah A coachman.

Ghât Literally, steps up to or down from a place.

Ghee Clarified butter.

Gram A leguminous seed much used by the natives. It tastes very like a pea-nut.

Gymkhana The place where sports are held. The holding of sports.

Hara-kiri (J.) Ceremony of disembowelment. An honourable method of self-slaughter formerly exacted of Japanese criminals or victims of high rank.

Hookah An Oriental pipe in which the tobacco-smoke passes through water.

Jao Go.

Jinrickshaw A two-wheeled vehicle pulled by a coolie or by coolies.

Joss (C.) A god.

Joss sticks (C. and J.) Small incense sticks.

Kali	A Hindoo goddess.
Kamlo (C.)	A prison.
Kanya-dana	A part of the Brahmin marriage ceremony.
Kautukagara	A room in which part of the Brahmin marriage ceremony is performed.
Khansamah	A butler, a man housekeeper.
Khitmatgar	A waiter, a dining-room servant, an under butler.
Khud	A valley.
Kimono (J.)	The principal or outer robe worn by both men and women.
Kither	Where, which way.
Kusti	A hollow woollen cord worn by Parsi men.
Lakh	One hundred thousand, one hundred thousand rupees.
La-la-lung (C.)	A thief, a liar, etc.
Lal-coatie sahib	A red-coat gentleman, a British soldier.
Madhuparka	A sweet mixture used at Brahmin marriages.
Maharajah	A Hindoo sovereign prince.
Maharanee	A Maharajah's wife; his chief or queen wife if he has more than one wife.
Maidan	A park, a common.
Mallie	A gardener.
Mangal Fe'ra	A portion of the Brahmin marriage ceremony.
Memsahib	Lady, mistress.
Metrani	One of the lowest, or sweeper caste. A low-caste Hindoo who removes slops and débris, and who does work which Hindoos of no other caste will do.
Missie Baba	A girl baby, young lady.
Mistree	A carpenter, a cook.
Mohurrum	The chief of the Mohammedan festivals.
Nautch	A professional dance, an Oriental music-hall, a theatrical performance. A word so eastern that it cannot be translated into English.
Nautch ghât	A theatre, the place where a nautch is held.

Obi (J.) A narrow belt worn above the broad sash. A girdle. It fastens in front.

Okurina (J.) A new name given to the dead.

Padre sahib Clergyman, chaplain.

Phulkaris Draperies embroidered, and with small, circular, slightly convex mirrors sewn in the pattern.

Pice A small coin equal in value to one-fourth of an anna.

Pie A very small coin worth a fraction of a pice.

Potsoe (B.) Skirt cloth worn by a man.

Punkah A fan, also a large fan made of cloth and hung from the ceiling.

Punkah-wallah A man who pulls or swings a punkah.

Purandhi A Hindoo god.

Purdah A curtain.

Rajah An Indian prince of a lower rank than a Maharajah.

'Rickshaw An abbreviation of jinrickshaw.

Rupee An Indian silver coin, originally worth two shillings. It is now worth one shilling and threepence.

Sahib A gentleman, master, sir.

Sais A groom, a footman.

Saki (J.) A liquor made of rice.

Salaam This word has more meanings than any other word I know. It is used to express ceremonious and complimentary greeting. It means "thank you." It means acquiescence.

Sampan (C.) A small, rude, native boat.

Saptapadi "Seven steps," part of the Brahmin marriage ceremony.

Sari A cloth or garment worn by women. One end is wrapped about the hips, and, hanging to the ground, forms a skirt. The other end is brought up and worn over the head.

Satsuma (J.) A peculiarly beautiful and valuable pottery. It is especially noted for its high glaze, the exquisite painting with

	which it is decorated, and for its interesting history.
Savitá	A Hindoo god.
Sayonara (J.)	Good-bye. But it is also used by Europeans and to Europeans as a greeting or salutation.
Sen (C. and J.)	A cent, one hundredth of a yen.
Sew-sew amahs (C.)	Women who go from door to door and do mending.
Shástras	A sacred book, considered to be of divine authority.
Snátaka	A Brahmin who has finished his studies.
Soma	A Hindoo god.
Tali	A cord or necklace on which talismans are strung. It is worn by all Hindoo married women.
Tamein (B.)	Skirt cloth worn by a woman.
Tâzia	A concoction of paper, tinsel, etc., carried in Mohammedan processions.
Tiffin	Lunch.
Tom-tom (C.)	A brass musical instrument, or rather instrument of noise.
Tonga	A vehicle used on the hills. It will hold four, including the driver.
Topee	A pith sun-hat or helmet.
Tum-tum	A dogcart.
Viváha-hôma	The marriage sacrifice. Part of the Brahmin marriage ceremonial.
Wallah	A man.
Yen (C. and J.)	A dollar. It is worth a little more than three shillings.

THE END

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Transcriber's Notes:

Archaic spellings and hyphenation have been retained. Punctuation and obvious typesetting errors have been corrected without note. Some illustrations have been moved slightly from their original positions to keep paragraphs intact. Glossary was added to the Contents for reader convenience.

[The end of *When We Were Strolling Players in the East* by Louise Jordan Miln]