ALL OVER THE WORLD

by

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THE AUTHOR

TO THE MEMORY

OF

COLONEL JOHANN COLENBRANDER

AND

KITCHENER'S FIGHTING SCOUTS

Preface

THIS is a record of the personal and adventurous side of a story extending all over the world. It is not a novel, a scientific or literary effort, nor a description of expeditions to unknown corners. It is an endeavour to give an accurate conception of some of the countries I have visited, and tells, *inter alia*, of lands, with varying types of people whom I met, from the highest to the lowest.

Much of my trail ran remote from modern comfort and environment, far from civilization, where I saw and tried to understand the people and the wild life that I came in contact with. We travel for a variety of reasons; for the joy of it, the call of the wild and adventure, and for a change of scene.

I once met a man who travelled widely and said that his peripatetic pleasure was in writing letters home to his wife, whom he left there, for the sight of the sea made her ill; another went round the world primarily to test the accuracy of his watch.

I travel because I love it, and I sometimes wonder if the age of speed and mechanical expansion will not rob us of the joys of wandering over the world's wide spaces. Has travel lost by this increase, this delimiting of boundaries, and the general widening of prospects? I have often asked myself this question without getting a satisfactory answer, even to myself, except that travel has now become almost limitless.

I have thought about it when crossing the great deserts, sledging across Siberia, hunting in the heart of Asia, flying over the Andes and back, motoring through the Balkans, and when high up in the Zeppelin over the Atlantic.

The story reveals the exceptional opportunities I frequently had for close observation, from many angles, of queer and primitive people, of warlike and aggressive people, races of varying character, men of mark, famous and infamous, of pioneers and tried companions of South African war fame, whose forbears planted the flag of Empire and unrolled the map of the world.

In the telling I have attempted to bring out apparently unimportant details, the light and the shade, so to speak, that go so far to complete the picture.

For permission to use material that has appeared in their columns I acknowledge with gratitude the kind and courteous permission of the Editors of the *Sunday Express*, *Evening News*, *People*, *Sunday Graphic* and *Daily Sketch*. In the matter of photographs I am also glad to record the help and consideration received from the Agents-General for Western Australia and British Columbia, the South African Railways, and the Canadian Pacific Railway.

Finally, Pliny once said that no book was so bad but that some good might not be got out of it. I hope, in my case, that his assertion will be justified.

P. T. ETHERTON.

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CHAPTER ONE

My boyhood—A famous duke—An unsolved mystery—To Western Australia—Perim and Prester John—The Pearl Island—Where five hundred millions disagree—The Promised Land.

I OWE my initial acquaintance with travel and the urge for it to having been born in Sussex, where my people and their ancestors before them had lived. Our home was at Uckfield, and here the four brothers and a sister grew up and I had my first adventures, which were afterwards to develop so thrillingly. Of the five, I was the youngest. Those were great days. We often led a Tom Sawyer life and learnt field sports and pastimes, mainly under the direction of my father, who was a keen fox-hunting man, and when he crossed the Great Divide could say that he had hunted for seventy-seven years.

The cradle of English history is along the Sussex coast, where Danish marauders came from across the North Sea and sailed down the Channel to fight the Saxons in Sussex, where the Romans before them conquered the ancient Britons, and the Normans landed to set up a new dynasty.

The motor-car, wireless and the aeroplane have come, but behind the coastline are villages much the same as ours was, where folks talked of going to London, fifty or sixty miles away, as an outstanding event, and were seen off at the station with as great a commotion as though they were leaving for the New World. This countryside still preserves, after its own fashion, a solid pedigree of the past, where church and cottage are stamped with the hall-mark of Britain, and the cowslip-freckled Downs keep watch over the sea.

Nestled up under the Downs lie sleepy villages dozing in their orchards of cider apples, which lead up on to the heights, characterized by Gilbert White in his immortal *Natural History of Selborne* as a 'majestic chain of mountains'.

Often my wanderings led me on to these hills where I loved to follow the old Roman tracks, much as a legionary might have tramped under the banner of Caesar or Hadrian two thousand years ago. The Romans, the most persevering and practical hikers of their age, built up earthworks, which we used to explore, commanding the strategic points along the road; following the Romans came the Saxons, who left behind them more human and personal relics than straight roads and mounds, in the shape of the Sussex dialect as spoken by the peasants, and in many of the village churches which illustrate the beauty and solidity of flint and stone.

How well I remember those rambles; quaint old villages like Steyning which brought the Conqueror over from Normandy. Edward the Confessor in a moment of piety gave a lot of the land round Steyning to the Abbey of Fécamp in France. When Harold came to the throne he took it back and thereby incurred the wrath of William Duke of Normandy. It was to assert his rights to these lands that the Duke set out on his conquering career, and so

Steyning shares the fame of having brought him over to shape a new dynasty for England.

I was always thrilled to learn something in history that had happened near where I lived, and so it was when I heard Alfred the Great had lived at Steyning and that, besides burning the cakes, he founded the British Navy.

Our county was formerly the Black Country of Britain; here, until the middle of the seventeenth century, the ironworks of Britain lived and grew, cannon were cast for the wars in France and the Low Countries, and fleets were equipped that sailed round the world doing battle with Spaniards, Dutch and Frenchmen, seeking out new empires beyond uncharted seas. The iron was of excellent quality, and the best cannon used, either by sea or land, came from the vicinity of Uckfield. The iron industry flourished because of the supply of timber which was turned into charcoal for the furnace fires; in the reign of Edward II the ironmasters of Buxted and Uckfield were directed to supply three thousand horseshoes and thirty thousand nails for the army, and all the material used was home-made by the nail kings and iron magnates of their day.

A favourite walk was to Buxted, two or three miles away, where there was a park full of deer and a house belonging to people whose ancestors, a couple of hundred years before, had bought most of the West End of London, little dreaming at the time of the fortune they were postdating. The deer were always friendly; they had that lovely dapple colour to be seen in Rivière paintings, and would come to the door of the church, at the end of the park, and greet the worshippers as they went in and out.

In this little village I found a house one day with a hog in bas-relief on its front. That old house should rank high in the list of famous dwellings, for in 1543 it was the home of Ralph Hogge.

Who was Ralph Hogge? Well, who was Napoleon or Wellington? Who was Nelson or Edison? The answer is almost always connected with big guns. Hogge in the days of bluff King Hal was the first man to cast a cannon in one solid piece, and specimens of his banded guns can be seen in the Tower of London. The quality of Hogge's artillery attracted the attention of Europe, and it figured prominently in the wars with Scotland and France. Hogge's discovery caused such a commotion, and the orders poured in so fast, that a sixteenth-century Parliament found it necessary to pass an Act forbidding the hewing of Sussex timber within fourteen miles of the coast. England's navy was then in the making, ships were setting out east and west, conquering the storm, crossing tempestuous seas, steering their cockleshell boats into new hemispheres, revealing new wonders of which only the imagination had existed. The supplies of oak to build all these ships came from our district, and the King and his council were alarmed lest the demands of the iron industry should jeopardize the shipbuilding.

Gradually the ironmasters learnt the value of economy in wood, and they carried on with profit until the Civil War. When disaster overtook them the iron industry faded away, never to return, and the fires that had done so much to supply the medieval armies, besides those of the Royalists in their struggle with the Commonwealth, ceased to glow.

Such was our environment, one that stirred my imagination and gave rise

to all sorts of plans that we conjure up in youth. Sometimes we would go far afield in the dogcart, staying the night with friends or relations, and journeying back by another route, for my father encouraged this spirit of quest and adventure. I remember one day going to the home of the Dowager Duchess of Norfolk, the mother of the late Duke, who was a frequent visitor there. He was a character, who, despite the wealth of his estates, dressed as he pleased. Head of the English Catholics, Earl Marshal and Premier Duke of England, Chief Butler of England, and lord of the historic castle of Arundel, he wore clothes that were an infallible disguise for his dignities.

The old Duke had a great sense of humour and enjoyed telling stories against himself. One day in Arundel, which he practically owned, he was coming up the main street when a boy curtly asked the shabby man to hold his bicycle whilst he mended a puncture . . . and the Duke did.

He once went into a shop in a nearby town, and the shopkeeper, thinking he was an applicant for a job, told him the place was filled . . . and gave England's premier Duke sixpence out of pity! I think this great-hearted man quite enjoyed it when he visited a Sussex monastery and the monk on duty at the imposing gateway directed him to the mendicants' door.

He told my father that he was once ordered off the lawns in his own castle by some women visitors, and a woman outside the railway station at Arundel told him not to loaf around but to go to it and fetch her a cab! She, like the shopkeeper, gave him sixpence, and he said it was the only money he had ever earned; afterwards he wore the sixpence on his watchchain.

When he had to attend a levée or a privy council he would appear alone in the streets walking along in his usual clothes and carrying his gorgeous uniform in a brown-paper parcel under his arm. At the funeral of Gladstone they mistook him for the verger . . . and how he enjoyed it! "I'm a duke, so I can dress as I like," he said; such was his psychology of life.

My father was a regular follower of the Southdown Foxhounds; the kennels were at Ringmer, about six miles away, and a visit there was looked forward to for weeks ahead. Ringmer prided itself on having provided William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania, with a wife, the daughter of Sir William Springett, a Puritan, whose bust is in the little church at Ringmer.

Rural Sussex is mostly Protestant, and in the days of Mary and Elizabeth the people learned that hatred of popery and that all-pervading sense of an unseen power protecting them and their faith and land which was always foremost in their thoughts. So strong was the anti-Catholic feeling that it survives to this day, though in a modified form. Every year on November 5th we celebrated in our little town the foiling of the Gunpowder Plot to blow up Parliament in 1605. The celebration was probably also a survival from the sixteenth-century persecutions, when in one day at Lewes, eight miles away, ten men and a woman were burned at the stake for their faith.

Uckfield was quiet and homely, with no hurry or bustle except on market day, but on November 5th it took on an entirely different aspect and emerged as a bacchante robed in fire and flame. At nightfall, after weeks of preparation, the procession formed, headed by the town band; the figures to be executed were arrayed with great ceremony, this being carried out in a little workshop hard by our home. The procession marched down the street to an open space

right opposite our house, where there was a huge bonfire, with tar barrels and fireworks galore, so we had a grandstand view. A 'Lord Bishop' had been appointed, who delivered his sermon with eloquence and force, the sentences were passed and the effigies duly sacrificed.

Guy Fawkes and the Pope were carried in the procession high up on a stand fixed at the end of a long pole and borne on the shoulders of the sturdiest members of the bonfire society. With them came the effigy of anyone who was in the public eye at the moment as a miscreant. Jack the Ripper, President Kruger, and the Kaiser, each in his time, has been thrown into the fire amid tremendous cheers and loud detonations from the Lewes 'rousers', a firework peculiar to that town of which we laid in a stock for our own show. The 'rouser' was the principal item in the carnival. It flew through the air by the force of its escaping sparks, bursting with a terrific report, and to safeguard ourselves from its ravages the windows of houses were covered with planking, and wet straw was laid over gratings.

I dare say our schooldays were much the same as those of Tom Brown; at any rate, we did the things that boys have done for centuries and will continue to do as long as there is an England. One night it was decided to crown a boy who was not on the popularity list, and so a certain article of bedroom furniture was placed upon his head; it slipped down so far that it concealed his eyes and they were unable to get it off, so it had to be removed by the school carpenter, who tapped steadily with a hammer until the chamber cracked and released the prisoner.

One day my eldest brother fell down a well in the courtyard behind the house. He was playing round the well and must have toppled over the coping, falling sixty-three feet to the water below. My father was in his office at the time and heard the shouting, so dashed out and seized a long rope that happened to be in the stables. Fastening this round him, he was lowered into the depths and brought my brother up, who, although scared, was none the worse for this amazing adventure.

Falling down a well or bottomless pit is a recognized form of nightmare, but very few people can have experienced the actuality in their waking hours . . . and lived to tell the tale. A deep moment of oblivion is the way the incident can perhaps best be described.

We were all more or less good at games, and an early love of cricket was inspired by frequent visits to Sheffield Park, where Lord Sheffield always entertained the Australian cricketers when they arrived in England. They opened the season with a match in the park, which was then one of the best private grounds in the country, but the old custom has long since lapsed. Edward Gibbon, the historian, lived at Fletching close by, and it was in the woods there that Simon de Montfort encamped the night before he fought and won the Battle of Lewes in 1264.

* * * * *

Christmas was another festival with us, and for weeks before the day we used to mark down certain holly trees that would give us a good yield of branches and berries. I was never happy about the holly until we had actually

gathered it in, for my mother had told us a story that filled my mind with alarm and apprehension.

It appeared that at her home in Hartfield on Ashdown Forest a particularly fine holly tree flourished almost against the front of the house; it was my mother's special pride, and one winter, about the time of the Crimean War, its berries were more profuse than ever. During the late autumn the tree had become a scarlet grenadier, and, to the little girl of fourteen, a sight to behold.

No one was allowed to take any of the branches until Christmas week, and my mother watched the tree, which was her real Christmas tree, with fond and ever-growing attention. One morning when she looked out of the window to see that the birds had not carried out any depredations, she could not believe her eyes. There was no scarlet berry tree there! There was no decoration for Christmas! The entire tree had vanished overnight, root and branch, like an object in a fairy tale; only a little loose earth and a quantity of sawdust remained to tell what had happened and to provide the grave of her hopes.

* * * * *

The years of childhood are the years of imagination, when facts, and certainly unpleasant ones, are usually relegated to the limbo of forgetfulness.

Although I was never an emotional child, at the age of eighteen months I spent a good deal of time whimpering, until my mother's alarm was seriously aroused. Every form of cure was tried upon me in vain; the neighbours were consulted and all came in with their skill and their advice, and even the local doctor was baffled. The medico evidently felt that he was up against it; and so, my mother told me long afterwards, he carried out an exhaustive overhaul . . . and discovered the cause.

It was a needle, which had worked right through my left arm, above the elbow, from one side to the other; the two ends were just faintly visible; how it had got there none could tell.

* * * * *

When I was nine years old we moved to another part of the county, buying a house that had formerly belonged to the United States President, Garfield, author of *From Canal Boy to President.* The house was said to be haunted, but although always on the look-out we never saw the ghost. Apart from the ghost, it was a fine old house, with many trees in the garden in which I and one of my brothers used to build houses. We would lay plans for all sorts of escapades, and had our fortress in chestnuts and oaks where we could take refuge.

An old servant tried to keep us in order and would discourse on the necessity of sometimes behaving 'like a gentleman'. In those days the word 'gentleman' meant a good deal and the title was only sparingly given by the country folk, who, incidentally, always referred to the local squire's home as the 'great house'. Compared with that time the word 'gentleman' is not often heard nowadays. Perhaps it has gone out of fashion, whether gentlemen have or not. We often wondered what old Peters meant, and he would tell us that conduct made the gentleman, and that it was another word for intense humanity, but

that hardly seemed comprehensive enough for us, and, in any case, the description would be resented by most people today as indicating a well-meaning soul who was not the real goods.

Long after, in the First World War, the late Admiral Lord Fisher told us of a German officer who said to one of our officers, "You will always be fools . . . we shall never be gentlemen." And I thought how right the Boche was!

Old Peters belonged to the Salvation Army, and, in accordance with the precepts and traditions of that splendid organization, had certain lofty ideals and would tell us about the Ten Commandments. In the light of what he told us, could we say that a gentleman is one who obeyed the whole of them? Perhaps that would be as near a correct definition as possible.

Long afterwards I heard of a rough-and-ready cowboy in the Far West of America who was talking to a missionary for the first time. When the Commandments were mentioned the cowboy said he had never heard of them; whereupon the missionary recited them.

The cowboy listened intently, then thought for some time.

"What do you think of them?" asked the missionary.

"Well," said the other, "I've been obeying them all my life, but I haven't used so many words. I've boiled it all down to two words—'Go straight.'"

Not a bad conception that, for all of us.

* * * * *

The years rolled on; I left school, and finally we came to London, really for the boys to complete their education and prepare for business careers. I served some time in the offices of a famous moneylender, where all sorts and conditions of people came to raise the wind. It was illuminating to see the procession in and out of the various strata of society, some profligate, some anticipating wills and reversions, others genuinely in need of financial assistance . . . but all regarded by the moneylender as fair game. Here realism could be studied to effect.

Among the frequent callers was a notorious character called Monson, with whom I often talked; a well-dressed man with shifty eyes in a clean-shaven face, and a cold and sinister look that destroyed confidence. He would bring in young fellows with reversionary and other interests under the wills of parents and relations, negotiating loans for them at exorbitant rates . . . and with the cold-blooded, calculating employer there was always a good rake-off.

Some years before, Monson had stood trial in the Ardlamont case for the murder of Hambrough, an army student, to whom Monson was tutor. Hambrough had insured his life and deeded the policies over to Monson's wife. Monson was a bankrupt and in straitened circumstances at the time.

The solution of the mystery aroused world-wide interest, the like of which has never been surpassed in criminal trials, the case being rendered still more incomprehensible in the identity and disappearance of Scott, an alleged accomplice of Monson, who appeared on the stage at the most critical moment of the drama; whence he came none knows, and he vanished beyond the ken of men.

Never before had such a case occurred, and the evidence, for and against, is of profound interest to the student of criminology.

KALGOORLIE IN THE DAYS OF '98

"DRY-BLOWING" ON THE KALGOORLIE GOLDFIELDS

Briefly the story is this. One night Monson and Hambrough went out in a boat, which, later on, sank, and Hambrough, who could not swim, was saved by clinging to a rock. Afterwards it was found that a hole had been cut in the bottom of the boat, by which it foundered. The next morning Monson, Hambrough and Scott went out shooting; the three men were last seen in a line entering a wood, Scott, the man who had no gun, being in the centre. Thereafter they were not seen again until Monson came back to the house and said Hambrough had been killed. A medical certificate declared it to be accidental. Hambrough was buried and no suspicions were aroused as to how he had met his death, until the insurance company appeared on the scene regarding an application for the payment of the policies. The results of their enquiries were unsatisfactory, and then the law was set in motion and Monson was arrested. Thereafter the case is a compelling drama. Was Hambrough's death accidental, and, if not, who fired the fatal shot? The Ardlamont case is still a mystery and will remain so for all time.

A good deal of my leisure hours were taken up with reading books on Asia and the Far East; China, Mongolia and Siberia had a fascination for me, and it was on these countries I centred my attention, determining sooner or later to follow in the footsteps of Marco Polo, Huc and Gabet, and others who had gone before.

* * * * *

The real story begins in July 1898, the opening chapter having its impetus from the South Downs, high up on one of the commanding points of that range, where, as already remarked, I often explored, tramping over the velvety turf, sometimes idly seated on the grass, turning my eyes far out at the horizon line beyond the wide blue space of the Channel. The summer days were warm, calm and beautiful days, the time when one conjures up visions of romance beyond the seas. Sea-gulls flew lazily overhead, the bees hummed amongst the grass and clover, and in that quiet atmosphere I used to think of the various parts of the world I would like to see. There was Australia at the far end of the earth, with its goldfields, and its dense bush country where dangers threatened the bold man who would explore it. Then there was South America, where by far the largest unknown regions on earth still remain open to geographical Alexanders, a territory larger than the United States, rivers going two thousand miles into the interior, and the Amazon with a mouth two hundred miles wide.

Canada loomed largely in my picture; I had read the books by Butler and other writers on the great lone land, but the ice and snow and cold, as depicted in those works, rather put me off, for I am essentially a lover of the sun. Finally, Western Australia won the day, and all my thoughts and efforts were concentrated on this promised land.

The wise men we are assured came from the east; where they went to has never, so far as I know, been told, but presumably they carried on towards the west, although they may have have gone north or south. Anyway, the evolution of going out to lands beyond the horizon at varying points of the compass has been in vogue from the earliest times, and men and women have set out, as I

was about to do, across tempestuous seas to places of which neither they nor I had any real conception, but might be characterized in the words of a famous archbishop as 'bounded on the east by the Atlantic Ocean, on the west by the setting sun, on the north by the Aurora Borealis, and on the south by the Day of Judgment'. This seems to me to sum it up fairly well, and explains why I determined, like old-time adventurers, to sail for Australia. I had no plans —we rarely have at that age—but as my soul was distinctly unfettered to an office stool, and other openings seemed to be 'Full Inside', I looked upon a voyage overseas as my one hope . . . and Australia provided the necessary attraction.

My mother favoured entry into the army through Sandhurst, but the fascination of the Colonies proved very strong for me. That explains the why and the wherefore.

My father saw me off at Tilbury, by the R.M.S. *Orizaba* of the Orient Line, and how well I remember that embarkation for my voyage to dreamland. This unsentimental benumbing spot known as Tilbury, immortalized by Queen Elizabeth and her visit there to enthuse her army for the coming operations against the Spanish Armada; whatever attractions it may have had in the past have long since disappeared, and only the dreariness, the mud and the murky river remain.

We reached the dock, alongside which the ship was berthed, by a railway in keeping with the rest of the background; then came the ship itself and the struggling passengers forcing their way on board. They were of all sorts and conditions, a dense and somewhat disorderly crowd, carrying their goods and bundles, hurrying along with what seemed to be unaccountable haste, whilst around us cranes rattled and roared as they swung the cargo into the hatches, where grimy men were waiting to receive it and stow it away in the dark recesses of the hold.

It was not the quiet, dignified embarkation that one imagines must have been that of the fifteenth-century voyager. Surely, I thought, Columbus never went aboard like this, or Magellan, or Vasco de Gama, or others of my dreams. I comforted myself with the reflection that Columbus and his contemporaries were not so well off as I was in getting to journey's end. This was, at any rate, a reliable liner of twelve thousand tons, whilst the *Santa Maria* was a cockleshell of but a hundred tons, with a disreputable crew of outcasts that had to be bribed to go, and navigating instruments were crude—so crude that it must have been the very devil holding the clumsy great astrolabe when it came to taking the sun's position at midday in a heavy sea.

On board the *Orizaba* we had at least a competent crew, who knew their job, and, despite the motley array of passengers who seemed to be taking the ship by storm, they sorted things out, the hawsers were cast off, and the ship, assisted by powerful tugs, turned slowly from the dock into the Thames; words of command rang out, the screws churned in the muddy waters of the river, and we were heading downstream. Everything went its wonted way. . . I was outward bound.

Night closed over the moving scene, the steamer was carried swiftly on by the current, a light breeze sprang up with a tang of ozone in it, a quiet and kindly night, after the turmoil of the day, with the stars overhead and the

lights of towns on either bank. The passengers were settling down, making acquaintance with each other, and probably wondering how those who were assigned to the same cabin would hit it off on the six weeks' voyage to the east. There were four people in my cabin, and I certainly wondered what our attitude to each other would be in those compelling circumstances of life at sea, especially if you are not a good sailor and lie in your bunk and groan and gurgle and retch . . . and wish you had never joined the throng that go down to the sea in ships and occupy their business in great waters. Personally I have never suffered from sea-sickness, but being fully aware of all its implications I spent most of my time during the first few days on deck . . . until conditions below had improved and my cabin companions had got their sea legs.

Dover, Folkestone, Eastbourne, Brighton, each in their turn showed up in twinkling lights, with every few seconds the sweeping flash of the lighthouse from Gris Nez across the Channel. It was like being in a fairy fireland as we viewed it all from the deck of the *Orizaba*, ploughing along through the sea and the night. To me it was so new, something I had never yet experienced, an uplift of great exaltation and a sense of joyousness in this glorious sea air.

I hated going below, with its chronic smells and foul atmosphere, for as we made our way further down channel the sea became rough and choppy, and so the cabin portholes were screwed up, which meant a stuffy foetid air that would give anyone a dreadful headache and just the thing to bring on sea-sickness. The effect of the foul atmosphere down below is largely responsible for *mal de mer*; to be on deck in the sunlight and the breeze is the rapid cure.

Late the following morning we dropped the pilot and opened out down channel, entering the Bay of Biscay on the third day, where the sea was calm and the Bay failed to live up to its established reputation. And so to Gibraltar, where I went ashore and rambled about the place and amongst the rock galleries which are a monument to the conception and genius of a nation. Here time and the elements have shaped Gibraltar to the emblems of the power of Britain. A great fortress . . . commanding the entrance to the Mediterranean, controlling the commerce of Europe with the Middle and Far East, its situation more singular and curious than that of any fortress in the world. As you approach it the Rock looks sullen and tremendous, even though the sky above it is clear and blue. It gives the impression of a lion guarding a great sea.

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The morning of the tenth day brought us to Port Said, the highlight in vice and iniquity of a voyage to the East. Its only redeeming feature is that it guards the entrance to de Lesseps' masterpiece, the Suez Canal, the controlling interest in which was bought by the far-sighted Disraeli to the consternation and dismay of his fellows, who saw the four million odd pounds he invested going west. They lacked the vision of their Jewish leader, and had no conception of the benefit this canal was going to confer on our Indian, Australasian and Far Eastern possessions, nor the renewed lease of life it would give to the Middle East and the countries adjacent to the Red Sea.

This was not the first attempt to link the Mediterranean with the Red Sea,

for a canal was constructed in the time of the Pharaohs, and traces of it still remain. Centuries later it was cleared of sand and reopened by the Persians, then the rulers of Egypt. This was four hundred years before the Christian era, and after them came the Moslem conquerors of Egypt, who took a hand in shaping the waterway. When the modern canal was projected almost all trace of former activities had vanished.

In 1850 Ferdinand de Lesseps had a vision; he dreamed of a canal linking East with West, and struggled hard to raise the capital necessary for such an ambitious project. Finally he succeeded in convincing the Khedive of Egypt, then under Turkish dominance, that here was a good thing, and so in 1856 the Suez Canal Company was formed, the requisite capital being raised on a fifty-fifty basis by France and the Khedive, the latter providing the labour for the excavation. It took nearly eleven years to finish the job and was opened with great *éclat* by the Empress Eugénie in 1869. Six years later Disraeli bought the Khedive's shares, which today are valued at £42,000,000.

Before the coming of the Suez Canal there was a Moslem monopoly of maritime trade; for centuries ports on the west coast of India and elsewhere had shipped the spices that were in constant demand in every capital of Europe. It was the spices that drew the adventurer to the East; they beckoned Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch and English to daring voyages and great discoveries. The spices were costly . . . a pound's weight of cloves in Europe fetched as much as forty golden sovereigns. It took ships many weeks to reach Suez, for they were dependent on the wind. On the way through the Red Sea they were forced to pay sundry extortions to chieftains whose dhows overhauled them. At Suez they paid more duties, and then the goods were loaded on camels for a ten-day journey to Cairo, where again toll was taken and the goods passed on to Alexandria or Rosetta, and after another levy they were stacked in the warehouses to await shipment to southern European ports.

So the game went on until the goods finally got through, after more taxes and tariffs, to the ultimate buyers in Europe. Never had merchants such difficulties to contend with, but it was worth it, and it became the most lucrative trade in the Middle Ages, for the bulk of the spices was so small and the margin of profit so large. A fifteenth-century writer tells us that these spices passed through twelve or fourteen hands before reaching the actual consumer.

These long-drawn-out exactions filled the coffers of Eastern kings, and helped build the gorgeous palaces and paint the pictures which attract the tourist to Italy today.

In normal times a large number of ships pass through the Canal flying the flags of all nations, and doubtless the wants of this cosmopolitan marine have to be catered for in many ways, but particularly in vice, an art at which the Egyptian seems to be an expert. Port Said is quite a small town; you could get the whole of it into a five-acre field, a good deal of the available space being taken up with the dwellings of houris and harlots of every nationality; indeed, it would be hard to conceive of a place where so much vice, in all its stages, is packed into such a small area.

The moment you land at the quay you are assailed by men and boys who undertake to introduce you to fairies of every age, colour and hue, and they hang on to you like leeches, being impervious to threats or any form of

intolerance you may show. The streets are full of jugglers who produce chickens from your eyes and ears as you pass along, whilst the pestering crowd of men, women, children, rogues and rascals of every description calls you by the most lordly terms. You may be Mr. Chamberlain, Winston Churchill, Bernard Shaw, or the Archbishop of Canterbury; it is all one to the Egyptian tout so long as he can, in the end, extract something from you. In the First World War I spent two months at Port Said and on the Canal, when we had the town under martial law, with the Egyptians well in hand, but once the place had reverted to them it went back to its former self.

As is well known, it is a dreary passage through the Canal; Port Said and its waterway are not inspiring for a first acquaintance with the East. The eighty-seven miles to Suez are through a desert, and a landscape that one might expect to find in the moon, or when the earth was still in the process of formation and devoid of animal or vegetable life. Perhaps in the days of Noah the world was like what it appears to be on the Suez Canal today, and it may be that I was looking out over the land as it was when the sun first rose above the horizon.

It takes three days to run down the Red Sea to Aden in a temperature like a Turkish bath, and the adjacent shores of Arabia, Eritrea and the Yemen are sand and rocks, with stunted bush scattered sparsely here and there and an occasional oasis of date palms and a well of brackish water. It is a land of sand, sin and sorrow, where the sun beats down on the immense stretching barrenness of the desert.

Years later I spent three months in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, charged with the mission of negotiating an oil concession for Britain from the Arab ruler, Ibn Saud. This astute monarch and typical Bedouin of the desert has been married more than one hundred and seventy times, and travels over the land in a motor-car with a gigantic Nubian, holding a drawn scimitar, on each of the near and off-side running-boards. . . . My stay in this land of the new Arabian Nights was both weird and unique, and I tell the story of it later on in this book.

Just before reaching Aden we passed Perim, guarding the southern entrance of the Red Sea, an Indian Army station in the old days, a place that was only inspected once a year. It was the ideal spot if you wanted isolation and to get away from routine and red tape. Here you were shelved for twelve months with nothing to fall back upon but your own resources; there are stories handed down of commandants who spent their time shooting elephants and lions on the African mainland, and of one sportsman who did his tour of Perim in Pall Mall.

Rumours are current to this day of the stir Abyssinia must have caused, with its princesses and captivating houris, in the minds of romantic captains and subalterns stationed in Perim. The golden thread of history ran through the conception of Abyssinia; round every corner came some gilded memory of the past . . . and there was always the story of the Ark of the Covenant and how it rested in the country. Legend says that it was a former emperor who brought the Ark with the Tables of the Law into the land, who, when the opportunity offered, substituted them by new copies. But he was found out, and he and his army pursued to the frontiers of Abyssinia, being saved from

massacre only by the wondrous opening of the ground in front of them, revealing a subterranean passage that brought them out at Axum, in the north, in which city you will hear solemn confirmation to this day. But they were not permitted to bring the Ark with them, for when they attempted to carry it out of the ground an immense stone fell across the opening, burying the Ark and its tablets.

As a further incentive to the exiles at Perim, there were the traces and splendour of Prester John, his retinue of seventy-two kings, fourteen hundred odd nobles, his bishops, and company of ten thousand knights. It was there, in Abyssinia, that Prester John ruled with a Christian wisdom and guided an empire to victory over the Medes and Persians. They marched under crosses of gold and precious stones, and we are told that Prester John gazed all day into a mirror that reflected the happenings in every corner of his dominion before his very eyes.

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It was the tail end of the monsoon when we left Aden for Colombo, where you at once have the impression of coming to a land of intense green, of palms and waving coconut trees, which come right down to the shore, for the coconut is only happy when within sound and sight of the sea.

Ceylon is the pearl of the Indian Ocean; it is noted for the city of Kandy, seventy miles up in the hills, with its Temple of the Tooth, the most sacred place in the world for three hundred and fifty million Buddhists. Within a shrine, entered by doors of ivory and gold and copper, is the tooth of the Buddha, who flourished five centuries before the birth of Christ.

To Kandy come Buddhists from all over the world to get a glimpse of the tooth which lies within a cask covered with rubies, pearls and diamonds and resting on a lotus leaf of pure gold. The tooth was brought to Ceylon nearly seventeen hundred years ago by a woman, who concealed it in the folds of her hair. A thousand years later it was captured and brought back to India, where, in 1560, it came into the hands of the Portuguese, who burnt it at Goa, one of the last bits of Portuguese sovereignty in India. They seem to have done the deed very thoroughly, reducing the tooth to powder and ashes before an audience headed by the Viceroy.

But the Buddhists were not to be outdone; another tooth was produced, which looks like a giant molar two inches long and an inch in diameter, and this is what you now see on the gold lotus leaf with its attendant little model shrines of priceless value.

Some fifty miles from Colombo is Adam's Peak, the highest mountain in the pearl island, commanding a magnificent prospect and with a claim to renown, for on the summit is a rock with a depression, five and a half feet long and two and a half feet broad, the subject of dispute between the followers of three religions. The Buddhists claim it to be the footprint of the Buddha, and the margin is studded with precious stones, covered with a wooden canopy to protect it from the weather, and guarded with loving care by Buddhist priests. The Moslems, however, say it was made by Adam when he stood there for a thousand years to atone for his sin in the Garden of Eden. The Hindus declare

it to be the footmark of Siva, an active god who could traverse the heavens in three strides. When five hundred and sixty-nine million people differ, who shall decide?

On quitting Ceylon the course lay southward into a more temperate clime; the tropical heat of the Red Sea and the pearl island was trailing away astern, the southern winds were gradually lessening the enervating effects of the equator. The dolphins, the flying-fish and the phosphoresence, so brilliant a feature of tropical ocean night life, had gone, and in their place as we surged onwards towards the Southern Cross came rough seas and chilly blasts, for this was winter in the Antipodes.

The *Orizaba* was nearing the end of the voyage; at midday tomorrow we should be off Albany . . . the end of the journey and the opening of a new chapter.

We landed at this port of Albany, a restful and beflowered spot, at the southern extremity of Western Australia, famed for the number and variety of its flowers, where the air is full of the scent of a thousand different plants, birds flit overhead in flocks, and above all towers the jarrah tree, the wood from which has paved many a London street. Farther north and east was the land of gold . . . a land of plenty . . . my introduction to it was both pleasing and attractive. I little dreamed, however, of what was ahead of me, and all I was destined to go through.

CHAPTER TWO

The Land of Gold—A famous mining camp—Sidelights on men and women in a gold rush—A hoax that fooled a continent—Tragedy of the sceneshifter—Off to America and the Great Lone Land.

WHEN the first settlers came to Western Australia they chose Perth on the Swan River as the seat of government. It was called the Swan River Settlement, from the black swans found there. Curiously enough, the Perth people say there are more black swans on the Thames than on the river of their fame, probably due to lessened care of the birds. If they could institute in Perth the swan voyage and checking that has survived on the Thames since the ancient Britons rowed in coracles and painted themselves with woad, and give the same care to the swans, their numbers would increase.

In Perth I met my eldest brother, who had come out here three years before and was in business on the Murchison fields in the north. He put me wise on various things connected with colonial life, to keep a tight hold on my money, and to beware of strangers who might want to give me a friendly hand. Though young in years I was resolved to be old in experience and not be caught by any transparent devices.

From Perth to Kalgoorlie is four hundred and fifteen miles, and the train took about twenty hours to do the journey, a monotonous one, mostly through scrub jungle and bush country relieved by patches of cultivation, where sheep- and wheat-farming are carried on. Nowadays the sheep number many millions and there are possibilities of further expansion, for settlers realize the value of the natural pastures that carry sheep through the long, dry summer.

We passed Southern Cross in the early morning, a spotlight in Westralian history, for it was here that Bayley, the discoverer of Coolgardie, first appeared. It was in 1892 when Bayley and his friend came along; they had been in a gold rush in Queensland, and now the wheel of fortune brought them to Western Australia; men were flocking to the new fields and Bayley struck a good patch. He had a reputation for hitting on the right spot, and parties of prospectors would follow him in the hope of picking up some of the crumbs from the rich man's table. As it happened, one such party shadowed Bayley and made quite a find, but they failed to peg out their claim, and so Bayley and Co. walked in and took it over, which by mining laws they were entitled to do. The crowd followed the astute miner and another spasm seized the community; everyone caught the infection and set out for the area of the new find, on horses, carts, bicycles, and on foot. The gold fever upset the domestic arrangements of society, clerks left their offices, servants their employers and hotels, all were busy in preparations for a departure for the mines.

A thousand or more people were brought together in a space where the water supply was sufficient only for a score or so; it had to be carried in by horse teams or camels and rose to a shilling a gallon. In the main they were a

disreputable crew, of all ages and all ranks, some of them steeped to the eyebrows in crime. A mushroom city sprang up overnight, white tents and bivouacs, where storekeepers sold things from their rostrums, tea, sugar, flour, and the bare necessities of life all going for fabulous prices, restaurants, taverns and gaming-houses doing a roaring trade.

Each day added to the population, intent on making a fortune in a fortnight and then leaving the country; some were there on speculation quests, selling claims and property sites, thieves and swindlers mixed up with those who had come with honest intentions.

Some of these miners had done everything from pitch and toss to manslaughter, and rows and robberies were the order of the day. This was the Southern Cross a year or two before I came there, but the diggings had been overrated and gradually the crowd melted away and went elsewhere to seek a fortune.

This frantic search for gold and the excitement that ensued when reports, however unreliable, spread abroad, were common to the whole country. Men were moving about turning over stones, scratching the soil, going about 'specking' as it was called. Finds were made in fantastic ways; in the north a boy herding some cows picked up a stone to throw at one of them and discovered that half the stone was gold.

The search was being carried on over a wide area . . . near Roebourne, which I afterwards visited, a man looking after some horses spotted a bird and picked up a stone to throw at it; the stone had specks of gold, and the man took it to the government agent in Roebourne, who, in his excitement and haste to transmit the news to his chief, sent this telegram: *Withnell looking for horses picked up a stone to throw at a crow.* Back came the reply, *What happened to the crow?*

From Southern Cross to Kalgoorlie is flat and uninteresting bush country with a few trees, exposed to the full force of the sun and at this time of year getting very hot, the prospector making what resistance he could to the heat of the day, till partially relieved at the coming of winter. So I reached the Golden Mile—Kalgoorlie—one of the richest gold districts in the world. This was the famous township in the initial stage of its career, full of a mixture of all classes and nationalities, from the gold-miner and speculator to the 'new chum' and the greenhorn.

There was one main street called after the founder of Kalgoorlie, Hannan; it was similar to most streets in a mining camp, very wide and with shops and stores on either side, built up of corrugated iron, or mere canvas shelters supported by flimsy wooden battens. In these shops all the local business and trade were done, most of the edible goods being in tins, such food being the main item in the goldfield's larder. It was known as 'tinned dog', and formed the staple diet of everyone; indeed, out back, in the bush country, there were men who had not tasted fresh meat for a year or more.

Buggies and carts filled the street, with teams of camels, led by Afghans, giving an Eastern touch to the scene. The camel thrives in Australia and is largely used for transport over the desolate bush country where water is scarce and fodder limited.

Building operations on a rough-and-ready scale were in full swing, and the

mushroom city was growing apace with arrivals attracted by the report of new finds which were constantly coming in.

Like the majority of those on the fields I went into camp on the outskirts of the town; this was a simple matter, for I had only to choose a vacant spot and put up a shelter of sacks and gunny-bags, about eight long and wide, and high enough to stand up inside. Our food was cooked outside, and for beds I and a companion drove stakes into the ground, with side and end pieces, over which sacking was fastened, and thereby evolved a good shakedown. This was my 'home' on the goldfields, free of rates and rent, and at times a meeting-place for many rough and hearty personalities who could find the gold and make the money, but were morally and physically unable to keep it.

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It was a weird crowd that made up the population of this mining camp; the discovery of gold had brought a tremendous influx of people, the majority being adventurous men animated by totally different aims and ideas from those of the ordinary run of settlers. The pastoral element was the one the government wanted to encourage, especially in the eastern states, where the fact that the land was auriferous was kept secret for fear that people would be diverted from their regular employment and so tell heavily against the progress of the state.

The discoverer of Kalgoorlie was, as already stated, Pat Hannan. He was the typical gold-miner, always looking for a new find, and always full of the hope that buoys up the gold-seeker. Late in 1892 he came to Kalgoorlie and, within a biscuit-throw of where I had my camp, bivouacked one night. That bivouac was to lead to mighty things. Hannan wanted stones to build up a fireplace, as I had often done, and cast around for suitable ones; the first he unearthed revealed signs of gold, but Pat Hannan told me he was not unduly impressed as it was then getting dark, so he waited till the morning and had a further search. Within an hour he had discovered signs of wealth . . . and during the day they went on increasing. He kept the discovery to himself, and that night over his home-made damper, or bread, his bully-beef and tea, he felt that here was a fortune, perhaps beyond the dreams of avarice.

Hannan was right in his conjecture, and the following morning went to the registrar and lodged his claim. Within a day or two the report of his find leaked out . . . and the rush set in. Well might he have judged it a 'great find', for the area in which it was made has since yielded more than eight hundred million pounds' worth of gold.

But Hannan was not the principal winner; far from it. He sold his claim for a comparatively nominal sum, and when I arrived in Kalgoorlie the cash received had dwindled away and he was back at the old game of dry-blowing, the primitive method by which gold is extracted by the wandering miner.

I, too, joined the throng looking for new finds and staked out my claim; a simple process in which you apply to the local registrar, state the site and area of your claim, and pay a pound for the licence. You can then begin prospecting and no one can jump your claim. There were always all sorts of scallywags living on their wits, who kept a watch on the unwary and would try and filch their claim by some alleged breach of the gold-mining laws.

The prospecting and testing were done in a hand-made machine furnished with sieves which sifted the soil, the earth passing through to the bottom sieve, the gold particles remaining on top. There was also winnowing, pans being filled with dirt and then gradually emptied against the wind on to a sheet on the ground, the separation of the wheat from the chaff as in olden days.

It was pathetic to see these dry-blowers; in some cases they had been at the game for years, patiently plodding on, living on the scantiest and roughest of food, always hopeful that the next lot of earth and dirt shot through the sieves, or lifted high in the pans, would bring them the long-hoped-for luck . . . but how seldom it materialized!

In those early days the men who went 'specking', walking about with their eyes glued on the ground, picking up stones and scratching the earth, often found small nuggets. In fact, many thousands of ounces of gold were found in this simple way.

Water was always the difficulty in this prospecting game; it dictated every move and was the element controlling the luck of the miner. It was found to some extent in so-called lakes, which were really depressions in the ground, full after the winter rains, but dry as a bone in the summer, and always impregnated with brine. This made it usually undrinkable, so recourse was had to condensing by machinery brought in from the coast four hundred miles away. The consequence was the price of water rose with the demand, and personally at Kalgoorlie I never paid less than twopence a gallon for this tasteless liquid.

If, however, there was at times a lack of water there was never a shortage of beer, the saloons saw to that and did a roaring trade, especially in the hot weather, when everyone developed a phenomenal thirst with a fast rising thermometer. Although I can lay no claim to hard, or even moderate, drinking, I found it necessary on the Kalgoorlie goldfields to get away with ten to twelve pints of the delicious cool beer during the day . . . and all the time the temperature never sank below one hundred and twelve in the shade, and correspondingly higher in the sun. Ben Carter, a jovial miner who had prospected all over Australia, greeted me one evening, remarking, full of enthusiasm, and steady as a rock, that he had 'drunk enough beer that day to float the British Navy' . . . a slight exaggeration, but nevertheless indicative of the climatic conditions that brooded over us.

Some of the saloons paid talented miners and others to act as entertainers in the evening, either with song or by performance on the piano or violin, or whatever instrument they were expert at. One such was Jim Arnott, a broken-down gentleman, with a voice like Caruso, and a draw at the 'Shamrock' where he performed. He was invariably accompanied by Jack Tobias, an accomplished pianist, but a hard drinker. The amount of beer Jack consumed in the course of the evening was colossal, but Paddy Whelan, the proprietor, never complained, for Jack and Jim between them drew big crowds and justified their pay and free drinks.

Both were clever exponents and should have commanded a place in the musical and theatrical world . . . but drink was the besetting sin. Jack would sit down at the piano and open the proceedings with an overture, a sound of

dreamy music which gradually rose from a soft pianissimo to the crashing tones of a barbaric march. Yes, Jack could draw the crowd!

Most of the miners, and they constituted the majority of the population, produced and cooked their own food in camp, but there were also restaurants where good meals could be had at reasonable prices. One such was Parer's, where I myself worked as a waiter when dry-blowing returns were meagre. You could get a good three-course meal there for one shilling, and it was always full, the main attraction and star turn of the place being Alec Grey, an Englishman who had come out to make his fortune, like many more, and could carry fourteen cups of tea at a time; eleven in the right hand, poised on top of each other, and three in the left. I never saw him capsize a cup, and it was strange how the feat caught on and ran up the custom, until the waiting crowd assumed the proportions of a queue at a London store in 1945.

It may well be imagined that with the motley and undisciplined crowd that centred on Kalgoorlie occasional trouble arose, but there were primitive and original ways of combating this. If the offender had robbed a neighbour's camp, or committed some theft, the one who had suffered beat loudly on a tin pannikin, whereupon all within hearing gathered round him to ascertain what had happened. If the man were caught outright the drumming was followed by a rough-and-ready court set up on the spot, a presiding justice appointed, and the case tried and disposed of forthwith, either by the man being turned out of the town, or, in extreme cases which involved attempted or actual murder, by stringing him up to the branches of a gum tree. These tough and hearty miners sometimes took the law into their own hands, until gradually the police asserted the right to deal with criminals.

Considering the cosmopolitan crowd, and the passions that animated them in the greed of gold, there was remarkably little crime; the well-organized police force always had the situation well in hand, and were able to cope with any emergency that might have arisen. The toughs, or spielers, as they were called, were shadowed by the police, who knew all about them as if the suspects had lived all their lives in Kalgoorlie and the Golden West.

No account of Kalgoorlie in those days would be complete without a reference to the night life of the place as seen in a gold-mining camp. The days of old and the days of gold and the days of 'ninety-eight were a record of adventure and romance, and side by side with it came the more sordid aspect, enlivened by those who had secured a monopoly in vice. One of the streets in the town was devoted to women of all ages and varied allure, who were there to exploit their physical attractions, to entertain the men, and no mining camp was, apparently, considered complete without them.

The street in question was long and wide; it had tin bungalows and shanties along either side where lived ladies of easy virtue from a dozen different nations, all of them devoting a considerable amount of time and attention to their personal adornment which formed an important part of their stock-in-trade. Their lives were spent in an atmosphere where gold and banknotes dominated the situation, and to display their charms to the best advantage they took to chairs and sofas in the verandahs of their shanties, dressed in as much costume as would go into a matchbox, and lounging like languorous odalisques. Some of them leaned over the railings, smiling at the passer-by; such cheap,

flashy jewellery as they possessed sparkled and glowed like a tropical moonlight. These vacuous beauties reclined in the night heat, anticipating another haul from bemused and fuddled miners. Whatever the age of the clients, or potential clients, these houris greeted one and all alike as they passed down the street of love, extending shapely arms and wreathed in bewitching smiles. To the dusty grime-covered miner, his head throbbing wildly from the effects of beer drunk at one of the many saloons, and the heavy perfume of the ladies, this must have been very trying. It deprived him of what self-control and decorum remained, and he would yield to the eyes beaming with such radiance.

Most of these dens had men of the lowest type attached to them, known as 'bludgers', who took care of any client who protested at being fleeced; as a general rule he was too far gone when this happened, a crack over the head would give him the requisite quietus, and next morning he would wake up some distance away from the shanty with a racking headache and a confused vision of flimsy drapery, flowers of dreamy fragrance, and eyes like those which of old lured the beholder into the realm of the Lorelei and the Mist-maiden.

The bludger's solicitude for the guest was such that when the client was passed out of the den of iniquity and taken to the quiet, open space, to be there cast down as some undesirable rubbish, he was in no condition to dispute with his hosts, and with the coming of daylight and his awakening, his mind, so far as the events of the previous night were concerned, was as colourless as the snows that enshroud Mount Everest.

At that time we had in Kalgoorlie a fire brigade which did wonders despite their primitive apparatus and the all-absorbing difficulty of the water supply. Fires were frequent, and sometimes had their origin in brawls and rows in the saloons. An argument would arise, a crowd gather, hot words were the prelude to a fight, and then lamps would be knocked over, and the flimsy shanty would catch fire. It went up like a sheet of flame, and little could be done to stay its course. A bell in the fire station at the upper end of the main street clanged out, its tocsin note telling of the fire, and the engine would dash down to the scene. All things considered, and viewed in the light of their inadequate equipment, these firemen did wonderfully well; they were always 'on tap', as the diggers put it, and would compare favourably with the famous force which has its headquarters by Lambeth Bridge in London.

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A highlight of travel in the bush is the native, or aborigine, of whose origin there is no definite record; they are reputed to be the oldest race of mankind, and to have come from India when that country was probably connected by water with Australia. Living like wild animals of the jungle, they build no houses, but put up a lean-to of branches as a protection against the wind; they wander over the country and have laws and customs of which the Mosaic rules are the foundation.

It was Dampier, the English explorer and navigator, who in 1688 first met with the aborigines of Western Australia. Dampier always kept a journal; they were the best-sellers of his time and noted for clarity and the information given, from winds and tides to plants and natives. Incidentally, Dampier

remarks that the aborigine's eyes are always half closed to keep out the flies. At the same time they are the only people I have ever come across who can look straight into the full glare of a burning sun without flinching—not even my friends the Blackfeet Indians of North America could equal them at that.

Clothing is scanty, in fact almost negative; they indulge in painting the body, and what they wear is ornament rather than clothing.

It is said that there is nothing new under the sun, but I have attended dinners that for me had a certain novelty, especially in the Australian bush. Lizards roasted on the point of a spear are a delicacy, wild honey, grubs that are skinned like a prawn, and rats with the fur picked off and the rat roasted on the red-hot ashes, with an entrée of kangaroo steak, a meal that is a novelty but not a gastronomic delight.

Wasps, caterpillars, and ants also figure on the menu, and a peculiar white clay found in the north is esteemed a delicacy. We sometimes look with horror, perhaps disgust, on gourmets in other parts of the world, yet what the aborigine prefers is not more fantastic than the frogs or snails of France, or shark's fins at a Chinese dinner.

The marriage customs of the aborigines are clear cut and dictated by the vital consideration of food. The young folks know, from immemorial custom, with whom they may consort and whom they are to avoid; the old men of each tribe see to it that these laws are observed and maintain discipline with a firm hand.

I have heard that mother-in-law is sometimes a fearsome creature; on the other hand, she may be charm and affability personified. It is all a question of luck, but amongst the bush tribes you have what is called a 'special mother-in-law'; often she is appointed before your birth, so until you reach the age of discernment you never know what is in store for you. However, if the mother-in-law has several daughters a selection can, at any rate, be made, or, if preferred, the man may marry them all, one after another, as they attain marriageable age.

It is a curious fact that though the aborigines share with Eastern people the age-old tendency to despise women, they have a custom by which one elderly lady is appointed the mother of the tribe or clan, who settles quarrels, adjudicates on points in dispute, and gives the command to go on the war-path.

The Australian aborigine has no knowledge of the art of cultivation, has never tilled the soil, and depends for his food supply upon the prevalence of game, exercising certain restrictions in the use of supplies which are liable to exhaustion. He is constantly on the move; the real nomad, his house is merely a lean-to of branches, because it is highly improbable that he will be in the same place more than a day or two. He is an accomplished hunter and first-rate tracker; the police in Kalgoorlie always had attached to the station one or two of these men, who were able to pick up a trail like a bloodhound. We had evidence of their ability in a murder case; it baffled the police, there was no clue on which they could work; the murderer had got away . . . but where had he gone?

It was assumed he would not attempt to leave by the railway; to break away through the bush and later on work round to the railway seemed best. At any rate, it proved his undoing. The black tracker was called in, and on the

perimeter of the town, where it abruptly ended and the bush commenced, the tracker demonstrated his art. Now this perimeter, on its western and northern sides, which, it was thought, the criminal would take, was about nine hundred yards in actual length. There was very little traffic outside this perimeter, for no one had occasion to go into the bush beyond, so the tracker had good ground to work on. He was the wizard of the piece; within a few minutes he had picked up the tracks of a man heading north, and thereafter followed them with unerring instinct. Personally they conveyed nothing to me . . . but to that native tracker they were an open book . . . and the criminal was duly brought in to pay the penalty of his crime.

These simple people, clothed in about as much as you could easily place in your pocket, have no wicked practices, such as head-hunting, or the devil-worship of Tibet; they are not idolaters, they pray to no God, but offer simple oblations and worship to the spirits they believe rule the elements and the sources of sustenance.

Their gradual decline is similar to that of the North American Indians. As the white man advanced, so their hunting grounds diminished and the white man's cattle and sheep came there to graze. This angered them and they retaliated, by spearing a settler or getting him with a well-aimed boomerang when he wasn't looking . . . and so the vendetta went on.

Now the aborigine has retired to the bush country, where, apart from those who have become partially civilized and work on farms and runs, he can still follow the old life as his ancestors did thousands of years before. In this spirit world, as I saw it with them, they propitiate the spirit agencies which regulate the comings and goings, the food supplies, sickness and health, and settle the general well-being on earth. There, in the bush country far from the white man's influence, they could practise the primitive methods of their progenitors.

* * * * *

Pottery and cooking utensils are unknown to them, they take water where it is found, and roast their meat over an open fire, or on the ashes. Maggots and grubs from the trees, and even rotten eggs, they eat with avidity, and are experts at finding wild honey; they patiently stalk and catch a bee, attach a tiny gummed feather or grass to it, and then follow the bee in its flight to the honeycomb. Skill and patience have their reward.

The natives live on the country, and hunting, the principal profession and pastime, is mostly done with a curved, wooden weapon, the boomerang, which when thrown skims through the air and returns in an ellipse to within a yard or two of the thrower. They can give the boomerang any desired direction, and can throw it so that it hits the ground on its flat side and ricochets off to a height of thirty or forty feet. They can knock over a bird or animal at two hundred yards, and the boomerang is altogether an uncanny weapon of war, for, like the flying bomb, you cannot tell where it will go or where it will come down.

As already remarked, the land is covered for hundreds of miles by bush and scrub, with here and there trees rising out of them; it has no distinctive appear-

ance and you always seem to be in the same place. This is the cause of men getting 'bushed', and a sound piece of advice given me was never to go beyond camp without an experienced bushman or tracker. A native will find his way with unerring accuracy, and since water is the most precious possession in this land of drought, he has reduced spring-finding to a fine art.

Their chief amusement is the corroboree, a dance held at night, with music and singing, the dancers coming on with spears and firebrands in their hands, working themselves up into a wild, fantastic rushing and jumping, going round in circles, striking spears and shields together and dashing their torches on the ground amidst showers of sparks.

* * * * *

Whenever a new find was reported, or even the slightest rumour of it, the whole place was in a state of excitement and sent a thrill through the camp. Without waiting to check up on the information, or ascertain more or less the exact whereabouts of the find, an enthusiastic crowd would set out carrying their goods on their backs. It might be two or three hundred miles away, but distance was immaterial, it was enough that the lure of gold was beckoning them on, and so away they would go, in that happy-go-lucky spirit characteristic of the miner and prospector.

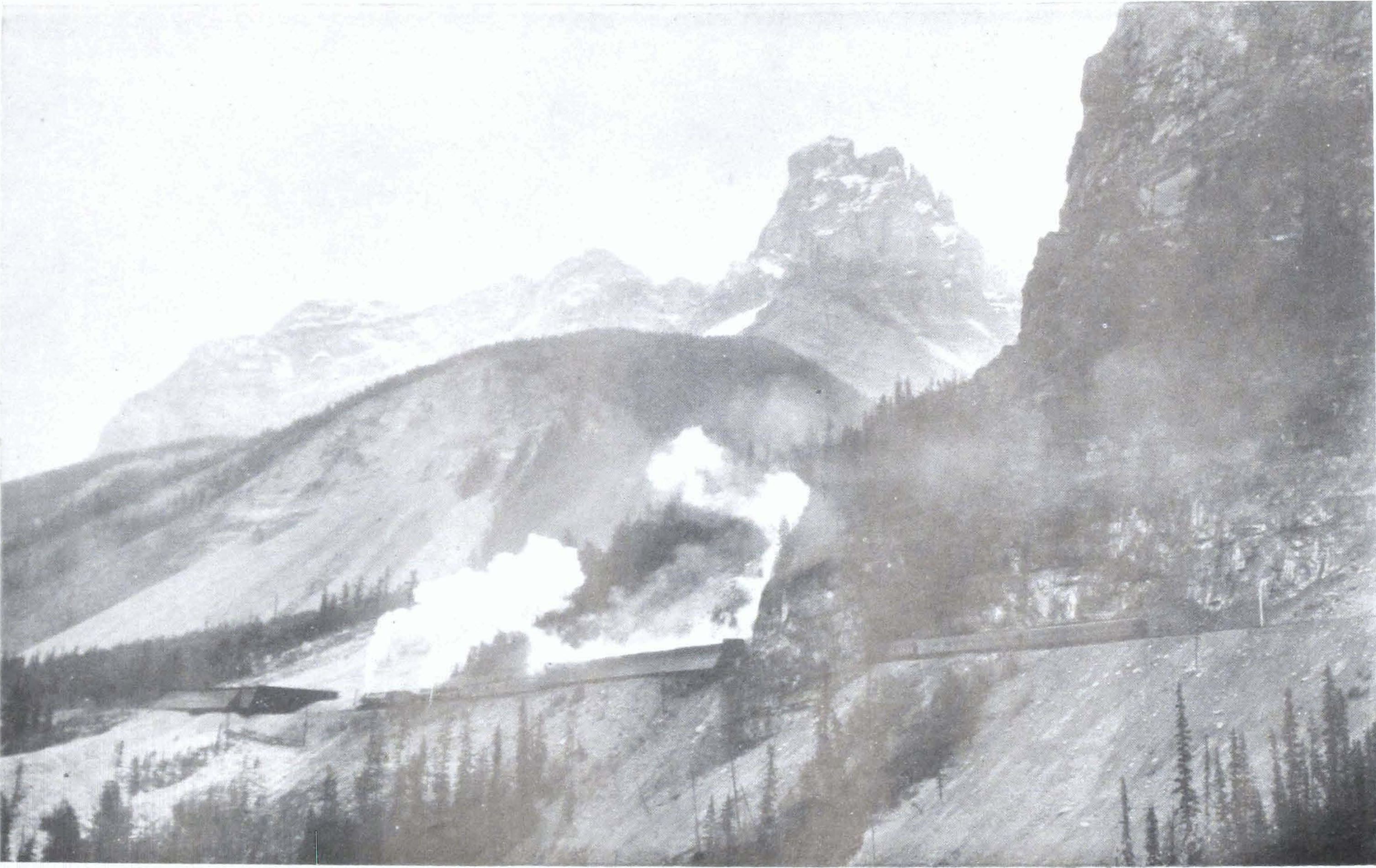
Sometimes they were sadly taken in; rumours were spread about of a phenomenal discovery, but the location remained a mystery and the eager crowd did not know in which direction to turn. Gradually the story increased in magnitude and men went out to various points of the compass to try and gather news. A singular case occurred whilst I was in Kalgoorlie, and it happened in this wise.

A certain priest, Father Long, had dropped a hint that he had seen a nugget of gold . . . a nugget worth seeing . . . adding that it was in the form of a sickle. Henceforth it became known as the 'Golden Sickle', and its very name, the secrecy with which it was invested, and the air of mystery with which the cleric clothed it, only tended to increase the interest and excitement that arose.

Clearly this was a nugget in a class by itself and the ground whence it came must be rich . . . the excitement grew, the wicked father had all sorts of approaches made to him . . . no stone was left unturned to get him to reveal the place and origin of this incarnation of size and worth. The most persuasive of men tried their art upon him, but he would say nothing beyond that it was a nugget surpassing in size anything he had hitherto heard of or imagined.

At last, yielding to the importunities of so large a number, and, presumably, having prepared the ground for the hoax he had in mind, he announced that at three o'clock on the afternoon of a certain day, from the balcony of a hotel in Kanowna, he would reveal the place where it had been found; he would impart the information to a waiting world.

The news spread like wildfire; it was no longer necessary to speculate upon a mystery, for it would be made clear to all that fateful afternoon. Everyone resolved to be in at the death, and, in the meantime, completed their preparations; the whole countryside was exercised as to where the location might be, some thought it might be near . . . some far . . . but, at any rate, wherever it



THROUGH THE ROCKIES AND THE SELKIRKS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

THROUGH HELL'S GATE IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

was, it was a genuine case, for the holy man himself had vouched for it. The mere idea that such a man would lead them up the garden was too wildly improbable to be generally accepted.

As for myself, I determined to be a looker-on and to take no active part in the mad rush that I was sure would ensue once the news had been given out. The crowd would begin to gather from early morning; it would be a strange crowd, illustrative of the complex power of humanity, a tough, hard crowd such as only the goldfields can produce.

So the days wore on, the excitement increased in proportion, and nothing else but this wonderful nugget was talked about; it constituted the sole topic of conversation and all else was relegated to the background.

In the saloons, far and wide, parties would gather round one of the more forceful and knowing in the camp, who gave his opinion on this mysterious affair which had been distracting the goldfields for so long. No one could make anything of it. The wiseacres assumed an air of importance with their audience, they discussed the question, marshalled their proofs, analysed theories . . . and arrived at no conclusion. The crowd listened, thrilled by that eager and insatiable craving for gold which haunted their minds and tortured them like the pangs of hunger.

Then the element of uncertainty as to where the nugget had been found gave added interest to the occasion which it could not otherwise have attained.

At last the appointed day arrived. From far and near the miners and the prospectors, the good and the bad, gathered and thronged the space in front of the hotel. They were massed in a semi-circle outside its flimsy walls . . . no one dreamt of going inside, although the heat of the day dictated such a move to the bar and cool beer . . . but then they would have missed the vital information and be in the rear of the rush instead of the front. Everyone was manœuvring for the inside place, a place on the outer edge of the crowd whence they could get away with a flying start.

But it would not have done to get too far away on the edge, for in those days there were no loud-speakers—the father's voice might not carry, and so the object for which they had come so far and endured so much would be defeated.

All was ready . . . three o'clock struck, the signal was given, a door leading on to the balcony opened, and the man in whom reposed the secret of the 'Golden Sickle' came out. Instinctively the crowd did not cheer . . . it would drown his voice . . . some might hear him . . . others would be left in ignorance. There was not even the expectant hum of admiration which usually welcomes the speaker on such an occasion. The crowd was too awed to indulge in any such demonstration.

The spurious father came to the balcony railing and surveyed the eager, pent-up mass of greedy humanity. Most of them were hard cases of many nationalities, with the tough seared look of men who have experienced the ups and downs of life in all their stark reality, and some of them, too, had the look of men who ought to have been in gaol or on the gallows.

Here was the man from whom the lure of gold, the blandishments and flattery of his fellow men, or the power of a woman's will and subtlety could not wrest the secret.

From the moment that the news about this nugget had gone forth the seekers after gold had thought of nothing else, night or day, but this impending event and all that was connected with it.

Every eye was turned on the balcony, I might almost say that every heart stopped beating, certainly every breath was held as they gazed immovably upon the man.

He surveyed the crowd with a quick and anxious glance, then raised his right hand . . . this was the crucial moment . . . not a sound disturbed that extraordinary gathering, even the horses and the buggies stood immobile, but all were ready to swing round and make a supreme dash for it.

The father wasted no time in preliminaries; he said . . . "The nugget was found a quarter of a mile outside the town on the Kurnalpi road" . . . it was enough. Like some machine that hums into activity by the turn of a screw, the crowd swept round and went all out. Men on horses, on bicycles, in buggies, men on foot and men trying to hang on to the buggies . . . all in one mad rush went crashing on, heading for the magic spot. Within half a minute the race had tailed out . . . the horsemen and buggies well in the van, the foot-sloggers bringing up the rear. Above, the sun shone down from a cloudless sky, volumes of red dust quickly enveloped the fortune-hunters as they fled onward to peg out their claims, to share in the untold millions of which the reverend father had given them an indication.

What was the sequel to this sordid scene? Did the gold-hungry crowd come into their own, or did they draw a blank? Did any of them, after such an ordeal, feel the joys of recovered life and reap the reward of their long wait and the days and nights of anticipation?

Vain were all their preparations; vain their belief in this self-styled father; disastrous had been the atmosphere of misfortune diffused by this deceiver of men. Not a speck of gold was found, not a sign or trace. Long was conscious of his dark deed; he fled from the town that night and made his way to the coast, where he afterwards died discredited.

The dreams of avarice, as envisaged by so many who had gone before, did not materialize in my case. I tried out several claims, dry-blowing with great energy and working from dawn to sunset on what appeared to be favourable ground. Despite the toil and labour, I never averaged more than four to five pounds per week, for the likely ground within fifty-five miles of Kalgoorlie had been gone over and dry-blown until not a stone remained to be unturned, and so with a depleted exchequer I gave up the quest. The piles of earth marking the many places where I and others had laboured served to mark the grave of our hopes. This dry-blowing business had not yielded the fortune I anticipated, and one night when I came back to my camp I sat down and dispassionately reviewed the situation. I must secure employment and with additional funds move on elsewhere.

Fate plays strange tricks. The next night when down town I met a fellow dry-blower who remarked that if I was tired of gold-hunting he could put me in the way of a billet.

"What sort of a job is it?" I said.

"All I know is that it's a job in the theatre," he replied.

This did not convey much to me, but I promised I would go down in the

morning to the miners' theatre and ascertain what it was. The miners' theatre was a building of corrugated iron and wood, with a stage at one end made from beams and roughly hewn planks, and in it the local talent displayed its merits. There was no luxury about this theatre, no tip-up seats, no softly padded gangways and passages, nor a foyer or chairs, and the place was always blanketed with a thick curtain of smoke from the pipes of the patrons.

The next morning I found the caretaker, a miner with a beard like a bush, who explained that they wanted a man to take charge of the scenery and be principal sceneshifter. "Right in my line," I said.

So the bargain was settled and we adjourned for a drink of cool, foaming beer, which put the seal on the contract.

I had had no previous experience of sceneshifting, although it was the sort of job that every lad would exult in, if he had the chance.

Lest you may think I was connected with stage sets, wings, and drop scenes of the Drury Lane and Haymarket distinction, I would say that so far from being Hay it was bush . . . and very wild and prickly at that. In fact, the stage props under my care were ready-made trees, bushes and greenery, strung together in a remarkable manner, without thought for the morrow, even if topical or tropical today. Beneath these trees the actors and actresses gambolled and frolicked in a kind of pastoral Christmas show of incredible ineptitude . . . so green in every respect that it had to be seen to be believed.

The play was our old Lyceum friend *The Babes in the Wood*, complete with all necessary adjuncts. The part of the worst wicked uncle was turned into a minor part, taken by a digger who had no need to hide behind a bush, since his whiskers made him one without question of make-believe. The babes were two women who might have been children once, and the feminine parts in the Christmas drama were taken by the toughest bunch of actresses I have seen anywhere on land or sea. I think some of them must have worn their wigs in everyday life, and not only when disporting themselves in this goldfield's stage Arcadia.

A great deal depended not so much on the play-acting of the performers, which would there have called for applause if good, bad, or indifferent, but on the performance put up by the sceneshifter at moments when it became vital for the villain to be carried off rather than the scenery. I worked strenuously . . . all seemed to be going well . . . and then, whatever I did, the scenery insisted on taking over the show. A calamity occurred. At the wrong moment trees, branches, and the whole network of festoonery collapsed in a heap. United they stood, but together they fell. The entire company, including the sceneshifter, were overwhelmed in the scenic crash and had to be salvaged. The audience were struck dumb . . . whilst the actors were struck to the stage. It was a real complete show-down.

The result was pure pantomime, which the play would never have succeeded in being before. The roars of laughter from the delighted audience drowned the fiery imprecations of the cast, who had become real babes netted in a phoney wood. The audience yelled for an encore . . . they counted us out and began calling for Humpty Dumpty!

The drama was that the sceneshifter did not live happily ever afterwards . . . he was given the sack by the enraged promoter.

* * * * *

As there seemed to be no scope for me on the goldfields, I took a decision, for a move such as I now had in mind is best done on the spur of the moment . . . besides which the wanderlust was getting the upper hand. So I took train to Fremantle on the coast, strolled along the wharf, found a steamer, curiously enough called the *Kalgoorlie*, and joined her as the chief cook's assistant.

It sounds rather like comic opera, but despite that and the stormy weather, a minor edition of the Pacific, I survived the voyage . . . and my new duties . . . and came to the 'other side', as eastern Australia is called.

To get there was a period of frantic labour. From dawn until long after nightfall we worked in the galley, with the pots and pans taking charge and careering all over the stoves and the floor, for the ship lurched and rolled so much that at times we were hanging on to the floor to keep our balance. Despite the fact that of the sixty-odd passengers not half a dozen managed to struggle up for lunch or dinner, meals of six and eight courses for the full number were always prepared, and the waste of food would have kept two or three hundred people daily in plenty. At night we turned into our bunks dog-tired, and next morning awoke again for the fierce toil.

Off Cape Leeuin, where the Indian Ocean hits the icy seas that come rolling up from the Antarctic, the air was bitterly cold and raw, the weather became worse, and the hatches had to be battened down fore and aft, at which we gave a hand, working like amphibians half the time under water. Heavier and more frequent grew the squalls as we crossed the Great Australian Bight, long green waves surged over the sides filling the decks with angry, rushing waters. The *Kalgoorlie* rarely showed herself complete above the seas; she nose-dived and plunged her way onwards until, off Adelaide, the storm moderated and thereafter the going was good.

We called at Melbourne, and then on to Sydney and its great harbour, in the fullness of time to become a focal point in the Pacific War. I have dealt with its importance, and of Australasia generally, elsewhere, the book having had the luck to be quoted as an authority in the Commonwealth Parliament some years before the war broke out.

Australia and New Zealand—how magnificently they have played the game and won immortal renown for a steadfastness and courage in thought, word, and action, and in deeds that have made, and will continue to preserve, the Empire.

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It was a glorious July morning when we sailed up the Thames to the familiar docks whence I had embarked a year before. I had come back to London on the *Moravian* on my way to the New World.

On leaving Western Australia I had decided to try Canada, and so remained a few days in England before joining the *Iona*, a cattle steamer returning

empty from London to Montreal. We went by way of the north of Scotland, the weather being fair and the seas subdued. This was the track of the defeated Spanish Armada when hunted and haunted by Drake and his men. Harassed by the fireships at Calais, singed and burned by the relentless English, the Spaniards fled northwards, to leave their wooden bones on the rocky coastline from John o' Groat's to Galway.

We went down part of the west coast of Scotland, where, shrouded in Hebridean mist, green breakers crash ceaselessly on rocks upholstered with yellow seaweed, and the men of Aran have entered the limelight of the films.

Although the sea was calm we rolled heavily, for the ship was as empty as a drum, with nothing in the holds to keep her steady . . . except for a horde of rats. They haunted the space below decks with their flitting forms and nocturnal squeaking, and we waged constant warfare against them, even in the daylight hours.

By lantern light we came face to face with the main rat concentrations. Never have I seen so many rats gathered together in so small a space; the crew had one half of the ship and the rats the other. When night fell the rats took over the whole ship.

Those rats! Those hundreds upon hundreds of scaly, squealing and stinking rats . . . those hobgoblin throwbacks of the reptile age. At times they treated the voyage like a pleasure cruise, and held curious gymkhanas of their own, chasing each other round and round, skylarking over our bunks and indulging in organized races to keep up their speed of movement. At night the ship was rat-ridden and rat-haunted beyond description; life became a nightmare, and fear and foulness crept around on four legs. One night we caught seventy-three of them in a huge wire trap built on the lines of a lobster-pot, with an aniseed trail leading up and into it; but nothing we could do really helped to reduce their numbers.

Off the coast of Labrador we dodged huge icebergs and then entered the St. Lawrence, sailing up the majestic river past Rimouski and Quebec to Montreal. There I stayed a day or two, and set out to see the Niagara Falls, travelling up-river and across Lake Ontario. Afterwards I went on to Buffalo, where I joined the *Northland*, a lake steamer going up the Great Lakes to the western shore of Lake Superior.

The *Northland* was a palace in boats, carrying a large number of passengers on this pleasure cruise, and with an enormous variety of dishes at the meals; you could partake of them all if you wished . . . and were young enough to do so. I remember there were twenty-two different kinds of salads, more than thirty baked, boiled, grilled, fried and roast meats, and a colossal choice in fish, eggs, soups, entrées, stews, sweets, savouries, and fruit. The amount those passengers got away with staggered me . . . and I ought to know . . . for I had engaged as a steward on this gargantuan jolly-boat.

CHAPTER THREE

Across America without a ticket—Some perilous rides—Thrown from a train—My friend's disappearance—A desperate hiding-place—On a flax farm in Minnesota—I join the cowboys.

I MET him in Duluth, on the western shore of Lake Superior; we had been thrown together by circumstances, like human drift that floats into a common eddy. We were both young, with that resilience of youth which overcomes obstacles and hardships and pays scant attention to the pressing problems of the moment, or where the next meal is coming from.

Both of us were bound for the Far West, with little money on which to get there and the possibility of being hauled up as vagrants; we might even be shot at as worthless vagrants. The world demands that vagrancy shall be sanctified by the possession of money.

So there we were, without money or friends, in a hard-bitten town of the Middle West, where tramps were always coming and going—going out into the desert and the unknown, moving along without any definite plans into the mysterious distance ahead. This unsettled existence oppressed us not at all, for it had its light and darkness and there was the promise of wild adventure. When the sun came up in the morning we rose in an elation of body and spirit, without an effort and with scarce a yawn. There were few more delightful moments in the day than this, when we would kindle a fire, such as all good tramps have, and make the early coffee preparatory to another start. Then sipping our drink we would watch the shadows on hill and plain take form, perspective, and brilliant colouring, heralding another day full of chance and interest and free from that care which assails us all in normal times, but has little significance when you may have crossed the Great Divide before night.

What matters it, then, that this or that is for or against us, that our best-laid schemes in life have gone agley, and that difficulties confront us in our aspirations? Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof; with us in those days life was at its best and bravest. What will the day bring forth? Let us see and in that anticipation put all else aside—possibly for ever. Life is never so enjoyable and so thrilling as when it is subject to hazard.

We had visions of easily-won fortunes in the Far West, but how to get there!

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Night was falling as we tramped onwards; the hot scorching sun had beaten down on us during the day; it came out of a hard blue sky as we trudged steadily forward, following the railway track that was our guide; this steel track which led on into the distance, hundreds of miles, was a friend beckoning us on. It ran over the sunlit plains of Minnesota, a great wheat land, with here and there stretches of flax, for this is the flax-producing country of America.

All day we had been going along, and now at last towards sunset we stopped and sat down on the railway track to rest before the serious work of the night commenced. The softening rays of the sun shone brilliantly over the wheat-covered land, a scene of calmness and beauty, but at the moment it meant little to us, for these rolling lands were lands to pass over quickly; besides, we had other and more material things to think of. We must get something to eat . . . over the long road from Duluth we had passed several section huts where the railway labourers live, but food was limited to the wants of those men . . . and besides, tramps were not encouraged, they were shooed off, and when one is hungry contempt is a hard thing to face. It would be better to steal, for theft is easier than begging, but the section huts were well watched and so a tramp had little opportunity to steal.

Food now became the all-absorbing problem . . . to get something to eat . . . there was nothing here but wheat and flax and the gravel-strewn path along the railway.

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And then we met a section leader . . . a kindly man and one who did not merely regard tramps as people to be bumped off. He took us to a section hut and we sat down and tasted the good fare that the section men get in the States. Yes, it was good; that meal had a wonderfully satisfying taste . . . what a grand thing it was to eat. The wide open plains had served us after all, we had eaten our fill and now we were ready to move on again.

Many hundreds of miles lay before us, all sorts of things might happen in the meantime, but we cared little for that . . . the spirit of adventure was on us and the fascination of it grew. We were in the right mood for adventure . . . going into the unknown . . . the shining steel rails leading us on.

Night had closed over us when we reached a water tank that stood out sharp and clear against the moonlit sky, a steel tank on lofty trestlework. It stood a yard or so from the rails, with a hosepipe hanging down from which the water slowly dripped. Trains stopped at the tank to take in water; here, under cover of darkness and the adjacent fields, we were going to wait for the next train that passed going west. It would have to stop at the tank for water and then we would steal a ride on it. If it were a freight train it would not be a matter of any great difficulty if we could dodge the brakesmen, who were down on tramps and hoboes and were careful to put, or throw, them off the train. They forced them to get off at the next stopping-place if they could not do it before . . . some brakesmen had respect for the law which required that no one was to be put off a train until it stopped. But not all of them had that respect, as will presently be seen. If you were thrown off and killed it mattered little; there was none to say how it had happened, and where the dead man came from . . . and, after all, he was only a tramp.

Our plans were ready . . . we would wait until a train came along and clamber on board as it stopped at the tank. These freight trains are made up of box cars about thirty-five feet long and eight feet high inside. There are sliding doors at each side and a small sliding wooden window at each end. As a rule the crew of a freight train consists of the driver, fireman, conductor, and two or

three brakesmen. Along the top of the cars runs a narrow platform over which the men pass to apply the brakes and when making up their trains.

The train-beaters and hoboes who roam America know all there is to know about riding free on freight or passenger trains; they are old hands at the game and secrete themselves inside the cars, underneath along the steel supports and bars, and even on the cow-catcher in front of the engine.

After a time we found we were not alone in our hiding-place; out of the darkness appeared ghostly figures who proved to be on a similar errand to our own, and so a bond of common sympathy held us. The hours of waiting passed quickly, the night was still and the moon shone down, giving almost the clearness of daylight. Then, too, the stories told by the new arrivals were enthralling; they were of the typical hobo breed; faces tanned with exposure to all weathers and voices that were a curious mixture of the wheedling, half-threatening and bouncing quality, the voice of the born beggar. They scorned the idea of work . . . they knew the road and the good houses, all the places that would yield what they wanted, and they knew how to live without doing a stroke of work. One of them had travelled from New York to San Francisco in thirteen days; he had fought with a brakesman and thrown him overboard, and looking at him and his weight I quite believed all he told us. He certainly saw through us. "You'se guys," he remarked scornfully, "you ain't reglar hoboes; you're going to work . . . you'se guys is real green."

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Suddenly I jumped up; the motion I made was so quick and sudden that it startled my comrades. It was as though I had seen an apparition; the others jumped up too; their faces white and expectant. "What is it?" they said. "I heard a noise in the distance," I replied . . . "the train!" It galvanized the others into tremendous life; the lassitude and weariness were gone from them. "The train!" they repeated, here was the train that would carry them from the plains and the almost deserted country that surrounded them.

"Shall we make it?" they asked each other.

"Yes, here it comes . . . and we'll make it all right!"

"We can't all jump her in the same place," I said; "we must split up. Let's settle what we're going to do about it before she pulls up."

"Yes," they said, "that's right." And so we divided up and spread out along the track, waiting for the supreme moment.

"If she's a passenger train," said my fellow-Englishman, "you'd better take the blind baggage, as you haven't been at this game before. Wait just by the tank, but keep low down in the grass, and then take the blind baggage car."

The 'blind' baggage was the car next to the tender that carried the coal for the engine; in this car were stacked the mail and luggage, as well as the gold and specie, and it was called blind because there was no door at the front end of it. The railway companies had done this to foil train-robbers, for it made it difficult for them to hold up and rob the train. In front of the car, and on either side, steps ran up to a small platform on which three or four men could seat themselves fairly comfortably, and protected from the wind by the coal-tender just in front.

"Don't get on till the last second," said my companion, "otherwise they'll throw you off for a dead certainty and then you'll be done. If she's a freight, get up on to the buffers and find an open window; don't try the rails underneath," he said, "they're too dangerous."

We lay down again to await the coming of the train. It would be a few minutes, for in that still air and over the plains sound could be heard a long way off.

This waiting here for the train was a great ordeal; my mind refused to contemplate what would happen to me if the train went off without us. The anxiety of waiting and the realization that I was quite new to this game made me nervous; coolness and self-possession had gone and I seemed to be trembling in every limb. What if the train should go on without us?

Far away on the horizon appeared a tiny fiery cloud; it was the flame coming from the engine . . . gradually it increased . . . a flaming beacon that brought the feeling of life into the stillness and immensity around us. It meant hope to us . . . and possibly deliverance.

The strong glow of fire shooting upwards was now comparatively close; it gave the sky a luminous look and the train from which it came was rushing towards us in full view. It was belching fire and sparks and smoke, tearing along and conquering the solitude. On it came, and as it neared the tank the engine let out an ear-splitting whistle, and the next moment dozens of cars swept past in a thunderous rattle, followed almost immediately by another train which pulled up at the tank.

The water was flowing from the tank into the engine, the fireman was going round the tender and the nearest cars oiling the bearings, putting his hand to them to see if they were running hot. This great mechanical thing had life and it was temperamental, like human beings . . . it must be carefully attended to. Then I awoke as it were from a dream. "Come on," said my companion, "we must get a move on." Mechanically I obeyed; he led the way and we stole along the cars without being seen; twice we climbed up on to the buffers and tried the end window of a car, but they were locked. At last what seemed an age to me, we found one with the end window open and climbed in, and as we did so the engine gave a whistle and was off again into the night.

We lay down . . . it was then past midnight . . . the train was gathering speed . . . taking us out of the solitude and the desolation. I got up and peered through the slits in the side doorway; the thunder of the train, the rushing of the wind brought out the effect of the calmness and stillness of the plains. All around and above them was the magical quiet of the sky, the shining stars and the light of the moon. We were rushing through space . . . and then I lay down and dozed fitfully.

It must have been about three o'clock in the morning when all of a sudden the speed of the train began to slacken and we could feel the jarring pressure of the brakes . . . then a dead stop. Then more movement; I looked out and saw we had been side-tracked—the engine had vanished. Some hours passed . . . day was breaking over the plain and soon the sun came up over the edge of the horizon. The light of life filled the air, the rays of the sun held the magic and secret of life and it brought us back to a sense of ourselves, and we lay down in the long grass and felt that it was good to be alive.

The hours wore on, until people began moving about in the train yard . . .

they were coming to work . . . and we, too, must get busy and find something to eat. So we went into the settlement, for it was only a railway camp and outpost for the neighbouring farms; men would come in from forty and fifty miles away with their produce and to take whatever the train may have brought them. It was their one link with the outside world. Between us we had about a dollar all told; it was not much, but it would provide enough to keep us going for a day or two if we were careful. We were both in the same boat, we knew each other's circumstances and so could be just to each other. I suppose at other times I should not have been so trusting and familiar to a complete stranger, whom I had only known for less than forty-eight hours, but it was hard to be alone, and harder still when one is hungry and without friends. But you feel happier and more at home when you meet another man battling with the same circumstances as yourself.

We walked slowly into the town and bought some bread and butter and cold meat at a store, returning again to our hiding-place out on the railway track to await the coming of another train.

All day long we waited there, listening for the warning whistle, until towards dusk a train loomed up on the horizon; we crouched and shuddered as it roared past us to pull up in the station yard. In a moment we were up and running down the offside, looking anxiously for a car, but could not find an empty one anywhere. They were all sealed, and to break the seal of a car meant a long term of imprisonment if caught. Most tramps were firm believers in the philosophy of taking risks, but this was too much for us; the brakesmen were careful to glance up at the end of each car and if they saw a seal was broken we would be caught red-handed. No, we must look again . . . fortune would certainly favour us . . . and it did! But the discovery came late . . . the train had begun to move and in sheer desperation I boarded it with infinite difficulty, dodging death between the buffers on which I slipped and blundered from the swaying and rocking of the train.

With a superhuman effort I gained the buffers, swung back the sliding door and crawled through the opening to lie down on the floor completely exhausted. How this train moved! It must have been one of the fast freights that do the distance from ocean to ocean in about six days. It was going with the speed of a magical chariot—a chariot carried along by a thousand flying horses to the tune of thumping pistons and the grinding whirr of the wheels. It was grand to be carried along like that, the long train eating up the miles, annihilating distance and time, flying through space.

This was a ride, and a feeling of triumph and exultation came over me. It took us on for nearly a hundred miles, as far as I could judge, until we left it at a junction to get our bearings and find out where we were. We slept through the rest of the night in a box car on a side line; it was cold and draughty, for a storm had come up, and outside the thunder pealed in a continuous roll like the crash of artillery. Rain came down in sheets and the flashes of lightning lit up our hiding-place.

Towards morning the storm abated and we went into the nearby town in search of breakfast, making discreet enquiries as to when a train might be coming in, but were told that none would be in before nightfall and even then it was not a certainty.

The urge to push on was strong, and so we walked fourteen miles to the next junction, crossing the Mississippi on the way, then covered with huge logs floating down from the logging camps upstream. It was a long bridge of trestle and steelwork, and on the other side we would look out for another train, perhaps get work for a day or two to put us in funds, and then on to the Far West.

How strange are the workings of Fate! A friendly brakesman we spoke to quite by chance, a young fellow of about twenty-five, with a quick and intelligent face, told us something. . . . "Hello, pards, what ken I do for ye?" It was a gesture, there was a kindly inflection in the voice that had an effect on us, and I felt that here was a friend; indeed, I was quite prepared to champion the cause of the American brakesmen should ever the occasion arise! Perhaps he had summed us up; perhaps to his way of thinking we were not the ordinary run of hobo, probably we were down and out and looking for a chance to recover. It was a kindly voice, a voice that will always remain in my memory when I think of those days long ago . . . a new voice.

He told us of a stock train that had just arrived and was bound for the west . . . it was music to our ears and we lost no time in laying our plans.

Sure enough, on going into the junction yards we found a stock train; we said good-bye to the kindly Samaritan, who left us to go out once more into the unknown. He was looking after us. "Good-bye," he said, "good-bye."

This cattle train was on the point of starting; the engine was coupled up and a brakesman was running along the platform on top of the cars. It was still broad daylight, and when I look back on it all I marvel at the coolness with which we did it, for we walked boldly into the station yard, past railway men, and whether they looked at us I never knew as we didn't turn our heads to see.

The first obstacle had been surmounted; here was the train, and all we had to do was to get aboard. This was not so easy as the first approach had given us reason to believe, for the sides of all the cars were of open framework and gave no chance of close concealment. However, the hay-racks round the inside offered a hiding-place, and in one car I found a barrel, which, fortunately for me, was placed in a corner, so we quickly made up our minds that I should take this car and divide my time between the barrel and the hay-rack . . . and so the distance was gradually compassed.

The hay-rack was full of hay and on top of it I lay down, squeezing as far as its width and depth would allow. There were no cattle in the car, possibly they were going to pick them up on the way; anyhow, there I was on this hard and aching couch.

Outside there was shouting and bustling, brakesmen were calling to each other and I heard the conductor give the signal to start. The train gathered speed and the air began to cut into me like a knife through the open lattice-work of the car. To ride in such a place was a strange sensation, the wind rushing and roaring; it came on with a steady thrust and it was all I could do to fight against the sharp piercing stabs of this all-pervading wind.

I dozed . . . the train still roared on . . . and then it stopped at a wayside station, and I had the shock of my life when the side doors were swung back and two railwaymen came into the car and stood right under my perch, little dreaming they were so close to a train-beater. Would they see me? Should I be thrown off, perhaps hauled up before the sheriff and sent to the local

gaol? "We can get forty cattle in here," said one of the men. "Yes, and about the same for the others," said his companion . . . and then they went out, the doors swung to and the train went on to the west.

Late that night we pulled into Fargo, the centre of the wheat and flax country. I shall always remember Fargo, for when the stock train pulled in and I got safely away from my hay-rack I could discover no trace of my companion. Whether they had put him off at one of the stations, or whether he had fallen from the buffers, or what had happened I never knew. He was a great character; he taught me, in the brief spell of our friendship, how to jump trains, initiated me into a peculiar art, and had been the real friend in need. I can see him now, the short and powerful frame, the blue eyes and the strong and kindly face, the sort of man who went forth in the old days and made England great. Long years have passed since we wandered and battled together, but his memory is still fresh in my mind. Where is he now, and has he gone from the land of the living?

Once more I was alone, but, thanks to my lost friend, with vital experience of beating one's way. How good he had been to me, and the stories he had told! I could not help thinking, as I listened to them as told by this cool and calculating young hero, and by other men whom we met on the road, whose lives were spent in desperate deeds, some of them thinking only in terms of murder and sudden death, that in early life they must have had some gentle upbringing, some influence that in the end failed to direct them into the right path. Perhaps I had forgotten that they were like meteors wandering through space, here one moment and gone the next, seeking whom they might devour and heedless of the consequences. O Spirit of Unrest, that cutteth off sons from their parents and their native land, causing them to regard home ties and affections with apathy, setting them aflame with an inordinate and unquenchable desire for something new, something precarious, something exciting —what a deal thou hast to account for!

* * * * *

At Fargo I joined a flax farm in the height of the threshing season at two dollars a day and board. It was heavy work stacking the sheaves, hurling them into waggons, and driving a grain tank drawn by two ponderous horses, who every now and again taxed my driving skill to the utmost when they took charge and careered across the prairies, scattering the workers right and left and bringing an element of excitement into an otherwise placid existence.

I stayed a fortnight on the flax farm and then, with money in hand, decided to move on. So with my wad of notes, and the good wishes of my fellow workers, I went out to a small junction beyond Fargo to await a train. Late that afternoon one came in . . . one of the longest trains I had seen. It carried threshing machines loaded up on flat cars, on which I counted eighty men rising, bound for harvest fields further west. It was an amazing sight, this motley crowd of workers, cowboys, and hoboes, which I now joined, being received with loud cheers as I clambered on board one of the cars with its huge threshing machine. The train staff were unable to cope with such a display of force, so bowed to the inevitable, and for over a hundred miles we were in full possession.

Conductor and brakesmen muttered and cursed, but did no more; it was easy to club and throw off a defenceless man, but there was no sense in tackling this truculent force. They knew when they were in real danger, and could see that these toughs might even kill them if they pushed things too far. So they came to the conclusion that matters might with advantage be left where they were.

The days wore on . . . sometimes I walked for miles when trains were not available or their speed prevented my getting on board. One night I hid near a level crossing, seeing in the distance the lights of a train as it drew near. Soon the rattle developed into a roar and then the dark outline was before me; the engine thundered past, the driver silhouetted against the glow of the furnace, the fireman looking out into the night.

The train slowed up, it was going over a trestle bridge just ahead, and as it did so I crouched low. I threw myself at the nearest box car, clutched at an imaginary something in the darkness . . . and missed . . . blundered heavily along the track, but, recovering my balance, clutched again and grasped the iron ladder running down the side of the car. My feet bumped on the track, striking the sleepers in terrible succession, and once or twice I felt I must let go. But I clung on desperately, the danger of the whole situation was passing before my mind like a film . . . I was wedged in between two cars, with the certainty that if I relaxed my hold nothing could save me from being thrown on to the track and crushed to death.

All this was passing through my mind, it compelled resistance, and with a supreme effort I swung clear of the line and on to the couplings of the car. I crawled in through the end window and threw myself on the floor, exhausted with the struggle, but thankful to a benign Providence that I had escaped again. Once inside the adventure and excitement evaporated, and a chilling reaction set in. I was alone and battling with adversity.

Nevertheless I slept; the train continued on into the night and I reviewed the chances that lay against me, huddled up on a couch of grain bags, waiting for the dawn and the next act in the drama.

It came the following night, for the train on which I was then travelling went no farther than the next junction. I was again side-tracked, there must be fresh plans for the onward move, and as it could only be by the same method the prospect was not a cheery one. Food I had secured in the meantime, with draughts of cold water from a tank, and these combined effects restored the moral and physical standards, and I felt ready for the curtain to be rung up with whatever consequences it might have behind it.

That night another freight came in; I boarded it with even greater difficulty than that of the previous night, for it was passing slowly over an embankment that gave little hold and scope for swinging on whilst in motion. However, I did it, but must have been sighted by the brakesmen, for presently three of them came into the car and demanded money as the price of their acquiescence in my passage, but their demands were beyond me. The brutality in their voices brought me instantly to a sense of realities. Here was a difficulty that could not be surmounted; I saw at once that it was no use appealing to these men.

Suddenly and without warning I was seized, the door of the car was pushed

open and I was flung out into the night as the train was traversing the steepest part of the embankment. Luckily the contour of the ground was such that it enabled me to roll clear of the line and to bring up in the ditch below . . . frightened but alive and unhurt. I had escaped yet again by that providential help which often asserts itself in the sequence of cause and effect.

Still undaunted, I waited that night in the hope of catching another train, but none came. It rained heavily, the skies were black and forbidding and the Fates seemed to turn against me. So I walked on, and finally lay down near the line to sleep, feeling almost at the end of my tether. However, I refused to recognize defeat, and although nothing came during the following day, a freight appeared at night which I was able to board and so succeeded in gaining more mileage, spending the hours of darkness in a car loaded with iron piping.

I dozed fitfully, and then awoke to find a sinister figure bending over me with a lantern which he held up to scan my face. I opened up the conversation by telling him that if it was money he wanted I was financially unable to comply; perhaps the honesty and truth of the statement impressed him; at any rate he left me to doze on in peace, until the train came to its destination some sixty miles away.

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So through several days I carried on; once I hid in a barrel again, another time in a threshing machine on a flat car from which it was only with the utmost difficulty that I extricated myself through a maze of knives and saws.

At one wayside station a freight train slowed up at the crossing when I was lying hidden in some adjacent bushes. As it did so I left my shelter, crashed into a disused pit, clambered out on the opposite side, and gained the track, making a frantic effort to seize one of the handles on the side of a car as it flashed past me. The attempt was beyond the power of any man, however skilled at this game, and I was thrown heavily, rolling over and over like a shot rabbit; but the Fates were kind, and though cannoning against the wheels I escaped with merely a shaking.

As there were no more trains that day I went on down the line afoot, to fall in with a gang who were headed by a genial spirit known as 'Red', the colour of his hair certainly qualifying him for that title. What tales they told that night as we sat on the sleepers waiting . . . what characters these men were for Fenimore Cooper, or the dramatic writers of today! 'Red' and others had held up a train in the Far West, they had combed out the passengers and terrorized the women, threatened the driver with the fate of his engine's coal, and had forced a Hebrew traveller to eat pork and dance on a carpet of his own banknotes. Such events were not uncommon then, when the Wild West was still very much in the danger zone.

Then there was another—Barfield, a desperado with a long light beard down to the second button of his waistcoat, and a tenor voice that would have commanded him a place in the best musical quartettes. Months afterwards I heard he had been lynched for shooting five men in a canyon in the Rockies; he was a man whom everybody seemed to fear from his calm, decisive manner and the hypnotic light in his eyes.

Incidents followed one another with bewildering rapidity; gradually I became accustomed to this mode of life. I was, indeed, seeing it from a remarkable angle and learning much that was indirectly to be of use to me in later years.

Days and nights of travel, in which life and death were constantly in the balance, brought me to North Dakota, where I joined hands with a cowboy outfit that was to take six hundred horses across the Canadian border to Calgary, a thousand miles away.

Here, in Dakota, was the last stronghold of the Red Indians. What stories my fellow cowboys told of those days, of the tragic fall of the red man, of his terrible vengeance wreaked at times on the ever-pushing white, and the constant atmosphere of battle, murder and sudden death!

CHAPTER FOUR

With the Blackfeet Indians—Fearsome customs—The Last Stand of the Red Man—Life with a cowboy outfit—Across the Rockies—A militant fireman—The menace of the six-shooter —Queer characters in a miners' theatre—On foot across the unknown.

ON our way up from Dakota to the Canadian North-West, we passed by the reservation of the Blackfeet Indians; they were notorious in the old days and I loved to listen to the stories of them told by cowboy and Indian. The Blackfeet were grand riders, but destructive hunters of the bison, and one of their ways of bagging them was to build a V-shaped barrier of logs and stones on the prairie near the edge of a cliff. Indians on horseback, disguised with buffalo robes spread over them, decoyed the bison towards the trap; as they came near it the hunters stepped up the pace and soon the herd was in headlong rush, stampeding and plunging over the cliff to their death. Those that were not killed by the fall were badly crippled, and the Indians waiting below soon finished them off with their bows and arrows.

Queer customs they had. The stars and planets were looked upon as deities, and their leading gods were the morning and evening stars, which represented man and woman; indeed, they were the parents of the first human beings. Often a sacrifice would be made to the morning star, so a beautiful girl had to be captured from another tribe who was to be the bride of the morning star. On the auspicious day the girl was led out completely naked and her body painted red; outside the village of wigwams was a scaffold and the procession was timed to arrive there so that it coincided with the rising of the star.

The moment the star came over the horizon a band of warriors rushed out from a concealed point as if to attack an enemy, the men who had captured the girl shooting her with an arrow through the heart, the other members of the tribe shooting arrows into her body. It must have been a horrible sight... but not so to the Indians, who fêted and danced and held high jinks for three days, since the girl represented the evening star and the ceremony meant that there was a renewal of life on earth.

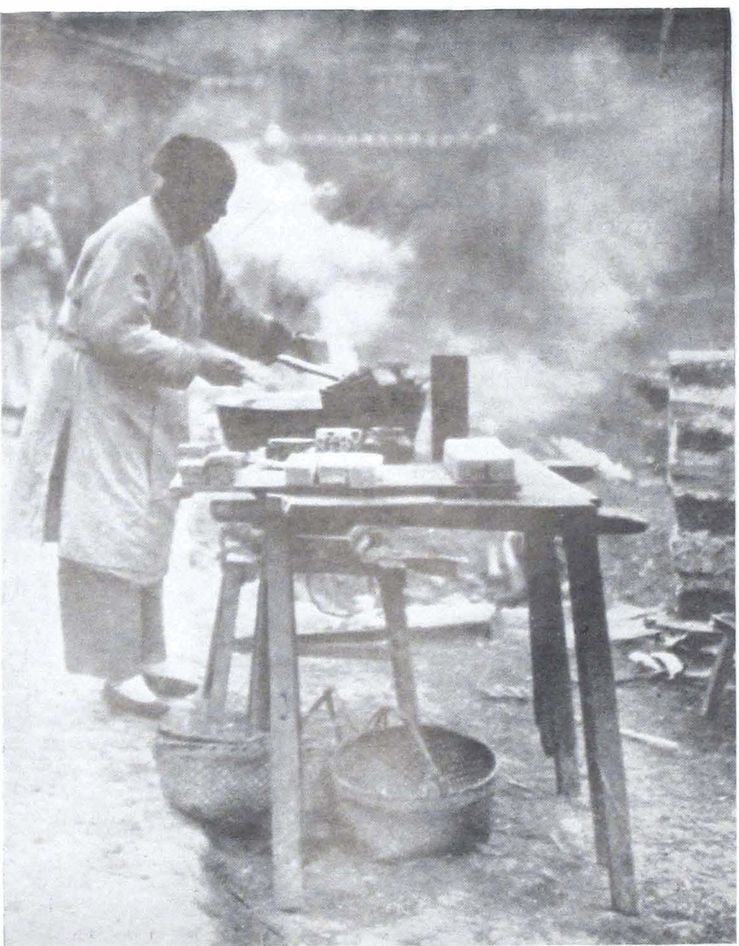
At our various camps we moved along with the freedom and directness of campaigners. One day I came across a marshal—the local policeman, whose knowledge of, and contact with, the Indians went back over forty years.

They were tough guys, he said, and lived up to their ideals.

"Did ye ever hear how a man became a brave? No? Then I'll tell ye," . . . and this in effect is what he told me. . . .

Before a young man could become a warrior he had to submit to a terrible ordeal to prove his fitness for the rank. He would be fastened to a stake set in the ground, slashes were then made in the muscles on both sides of the chest, beneath which rawhide thongs were passed and secured to the stake. The aspirant for knightly honours was then left to work himself free by bursting the

THE CHINESE GENERAL WHO SERVED
A STARTLING DISH



A WAYSIDE RESTAURANT IN CHINA

ON THE WATERWAYS OF CHINA

thongs that bound him, which he could only do by putting all his weight on them and tearing through the muscles, or by a slower process of suppuration which would ensue within a day or so, when the consequent weakening of the flesh would enable the end to be achieved. All this time the men and women of the camp would be near and around him, carrying on the daily work; a cup of water to quench his raging thirst could be had for the asking; if he felt the self-imposed task beyond him he could be released. Such a course was, however, unthinkable, for it meant social ostracism; he could never be permitted to hunt nor to take part in any games or sport, much less war, and, moreover, would be compelled to don feminine garb and abandon all hope of even a glance from a woman. I was told the braves never failed in this examination; they passed out with flying colours.

"And their weddings," said the marshal thoughtfully.

"I haven't had one yet," I said, "but I know they're the occasion all over the world for hilarity and expense."

This jovial marshal spoke of the quaint customs touching the question of marriage amongst the Blackfeet. "They made grand brides," he said, and I knew he was right, for I had seen one or two with their raven tresses, soft brown eyes, the graceful carriage and the sex appeal . . . a picture that would have stirred the admiration of Gainsborough.

Despite their reputation for stealth and cunning, when it came to winning the fair lady the Blackfoot warrior certainly gave her a run for her money. The spirit of chivalry shone in the game, and they allowed the girl ample scope for her choice. The young men would wait outside her father's wigwam until she appeared; one of them would then throw a blanket over her; if she liked him she said so, if not she was forthright . . . and the aspirant 'had to quit and make way for the next', as the marshal put it. And so in the end the marriage bells, if they had any amongst the Blackfeet, rang out merrily.

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Through the rolling hills we went; one day to the west they opened out, and a gap there revealed where the Little Big Horn River flowed on to the south.

The dense and deeper green of the forest showed its course down the distant hillslopes. Beyond them again, and cloudlike in texture, rose more hills and above them the sky blazed in its spring glare. All four of us stopped to admire the view, but, apart from that, we were looking at historical ground.

This is where the Red Indian fought his last great fight; the contest between white and red which had begun hundreds of years before when we came to America was, in the fullness of time, to end in a distant corner of the United States, bounded on the west by the Rockies and on the north by Canada, an unexplored territory inhabited only by Indians.

The immediate cause of the trouble which led to the annihilation of the American General Custer and his men was the refusal of the Indians to settle down on reservations allotted to them; their nomadic instincts were against this, for during hundreds of years they had roamed the prairies at will, fighting the white man and neighbouring Indian tribes, or on the trail of the herds of buffalo with which the country then swarmed. Through all this long period

restrictions were unknown to the Indian, until one day the vanguard of the whites appeared on the edge of the prairie, the home of the buffalo and the Indian. Then came the waggons, the prairie schooners, drawn by oxen, trailing slowly westwards through the grass. The Indian saw that his age-old fastness had been invaded.

The long fight began, and culminated on the Little Big Horn River, a mountainous tract then unknown to the United States soldiers. Into this region marched General Custer with his seven hundred cavalrymen in the summer of 1876. He seems to have under-estimated the strength of the enemy, believing he would be able to cope with any number of them. Sinister omens marked Custer's advance; at his first camp in the hostile area his flag was blown down and fell to the rear; it was put up again, but again was blown down, still to the rear. The Indian scouts said, "The Evil Spirit is with us . . . it's going to be a big fight."

In the plan of operations Custer crossed a hill, and there beneath him saw thousands of mounted Indians, galloping about and working themselves into a frenzy. When he looked down on them, Custer, old Indian fighter that he was, must have realized that he was in for his last bout.

But it was too late to turn back or make new plans. Custer and his men went over the brow and disappeared for ever. What happened is only a matter for conjecture, for not a man of the hundreds who followed the General lived to tell the tale. They were wiped out of existence. It was a dark day in the history of the United States, for 1876 was their first centennial year; it was also the last great victory the red man won over the white in the fight for the continent.

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Life with a cowboy outfit is always exciting; for one thing there is the branding, which takes place in an enclosure surrounded by a high-railed fence, a fire burning in one corner and the branding-irons ready. The calves and young cattle are rounded up and shepherded into this enclosure, where the cowboys take them and throw them down, while the cow-punchers stamp the brand with red-hot irons on flank or side. It is a savage picture of pandemonium bellowing and roaring of cattle, the strong smell of singeing hair, the choking clouds of dust, and the yells and curses of cowboys.

Then there is the breaking-in of broncos, horses that have never been ridden, wild-eyed, snorting creatures that bunch together and make a mad rush to dodge the lassoo. Very often they charge the closed gate, or cannon against the fence itself, and when you have the weight of half a hundred horses it just flies into splinters, and away the horses go, with the cowboys in full cry after them . . . and it may take hours of galloping here and there to cut the herd off and bring them back into the corral. The one we had for our horses was of great strength, a palisade that would have defied a herd of elephants.

When this breaking-in business takes place, one of the cowboys stands at the gate on the inside of the enclosure, rope in hand, to keep the mob from rushing it by main force, for the lassoos swinging about all over the place, mainly on the horses, sends the herd crazy. I hated to be the man at the gate; it was a nerve-

racking job, and the general picture you have before you is that of a lot of wild, staring eyes, extended, puffing nostrils, flying manes, heels lashing into mid-air and a simply indescribable noise and rush of hoofs bearing straight down on you.

The descent of the mad mustangs galvanizes you into activity; you yell, and whirl your lassoo, and get terribly hot and bothered and feel how very little and helpless you are, thinking all the time with a strange and unaccountable awe how big and nightmarey those mustangs have become. As you scare them away, and they thunder off to right or left, the rush and display of hooves feels far, far too near.

Often you get a swipe over the face with those long tails, and it stings, and you get half a pound of sand and grit down your throat and more in your shirt and eyes and ears. You wait for a lull in this living nightmare and then make a dash for a pail of lukewarm alkali water . . . drink about a quart of it, and it tastes better than champagne. But it is a great life if you don't weaken!

* * * * *

I left the cowboy outfit in Calgary; they were going north to Edmonton with the horses, I to British Columbia, the fairy province of the Dominion. It was most unlikely that I should ever see my cowboy friends again; we had met and parted as men meet and part under similar circumstances. I liked those cowboys, for they were a law unto themselves, members of a romantic clan that has been immortalized by Wild West writers.

This city of Calgary, how different it must be now from the log huts and buildings of the late 'nineties, the capital of Alberta and a focal point in the cattle-ranching country, with a soil that looks as though it would grow anything.

These prairies are the wheatfields of the world; they roll away to the horizon for hundreds of miles and are the source of the agricultural wealth of Canada. There is no fear that the British Empire will ever go hungry while such plenty exists.

This part of the North-West territories marks the limit of the genuine hobo; he does not go beyond the mountains which rise like a wall in the west; he shuns them, and though they are of a calm and wonderful beauty, for the hobo it is the beauty of negation and death; they mean nothing to him but suffering and hardship, a place to pass through quickly if circumstances compel him to take them on.

My destination was the Kootenay goldfields, lying between the Rockies and the Selkirks. Forty miles beyond Calgary the Rocky Mountains rise like a rampart from the plain. I well recall the grandeur of the scene, which was all the more striking from the many days' preparation of flatness I had undergone to reach the wall. I left Calgary in the morning and all day had been going along, facing the clearness of the mountains like a halo in the distance. I was moving slowly towards them; overhead was a cloudless sky, on my right flowed the cool clear waters of the Bow River; they came rushing down from the mountains right alongside the track, for the line follows the river until it leads into a region of glaciers and ravines.

The railway climbs all the time, rising more than a thousand feet in eighty miles in the run from Calgary to Banff. Once outside Calgary the stretches of level prairie ceased, the rolling, grassy foothills took their place, rising tier upon tier to the base of the Rockies, to which they are the outpost.

As I passed some of the lower valleys I saw many ranches, for this, too, is a stock-raising country, with herds of cattle and sheep. The long transverse valleys of the foothills are the old grooves down which came the spent glaciers from the higher mountains.

I was happy in this ampitheatre, the scent of the pine forests, the glancing and splashing of the waters of the Bow River, and the glory of the setting sun. This was the way to enjoy an earthly paradise . . . afoot. The train conquers time and space, but misses the sense of freedom, the exhilarating atmosphere that you get when walking, the air that is like champagne.

The railway was the highway which ran between the prairies and the gold lands in the mountain valleys; men going into the promised land passed along it; the railway was their guide, as it was now mine, an open track winding up through the mountains.

The sun had set behind the Rockies when I stopped in a clearing and sat down on the big wooden sleepers of the track. I was close up under the mountains from which a chilly breeze came down; during the day the foothills threw up a great heat, but at night it would be cold. Close to the clearing was a log hut where the owner sold canned goods and from him I bought a tin of pork and beans. A bright fire was soon started in the forest glade; it crackled merrily as forest fires do, and how bright and cheerful were the flames and the deep red of the inside glow of the fire; on the edge of it I had the little canteen with the contents of the tin in them, and from it came a delicious smell.

Yes, the pork and beans were good; they had a satisfying taste and now I was ready for night operations. Time passed and the moon came up. How beautiful and majestic the mountains looked under the full light of the moon! I sat down by the track to await the coming of a train. It was weird sitting there in the moonlight; the trees stood out like giants seeming to sleep, the air was filled with the smell of the pines, night birds sailed past me every now and again, the wind sighed gently through the trees; my waiting-place had a magic allure, full of mystery and enchantment, with a brilliant moon shining down.

It was a wondrous scene; my thoughts went back to the time of primeval man and how good it was to be amongst these mountains; I was influenced by the quiet scene, and sitting there in the shadow of the forest wondered how there could be such things as war and internal strife. Why could not life go on like this . . . always . . . in calm beatitude!

It must have been towards midnight when I heard the distant rumble of a train; I went over to the rail and knelt down beside it, bending my head down until my ear touched the rail. Yes, the train was coming. . . . I hastened to a nearby tank, for I knew it would stop there to take in water. Then, far away down the valley, I saw the headlights appearing like two stars in the darkness . . . the rumble increased until it developed into a roar, and there swung before me a long freight train bound for the Pacific coast. The engine pulled up by the water-tank; hidden in the shade of the forest no one saw me. I had about three minutes in which to find an open car, and a frantic search, as I dashed

along the off-side of the train, showed every one to be locked . . . the whistle sounded . . . the train was moving on into the mountains and the night.

This search for a place was a terrible ordeal; I tried to keep calm and collected and refused to think of what might happen if the train went on without me. The moment the brakes had been released there was a grinding crash as the couplings of successive cars tightened up and the train was set in motion. My previous experience of train-beating now stood me in good stead . . . rather than lose it I swung on to the buffers between two cars, standing with one foot on each buffer, hanging on by the brake iron that ran down the side. It was no place for a nervous man, the darkness between the two cars, the constant give and take as the buffers closed and parted according to the gradient, and the roar of the train.

Once or twice we stopped at wayside halts or a water-tank to take in more water; when we did so I jumped down from my perch and hid in the deep black shadows of the pines bordering the track, swinging on to the buffers when the train started to move again. To ride on the buffers was a strange sensation, the wind between the cars was at times so strong that I had to turn my head to one side so that I could breathe. Rushing with a great noise brought out into strong effect the calm and stillness of the forest; the light of the moon, the soft glistening stars . . . and the thunder of the train . . . it was all rather startling.

The sharpness of the night air increased . . . it was cold, but I must stand it . . . this cold steady thrust of the wind. And so the hours wore on, until at dawn we entered Canmore, which lies in a level valley surrounded by high mountains. I got off like a man in a dream, here I would rest awhile . . . get something to eat and then sleep before taking on the next train.

Day was breaking over Canmore, and very soon the sun came up over the mountain-tops and a flood of light bore down on the valley. The warm rays of the sun instilled new life; the weariness, the cold, and the vacancy began to leave me and brought me back to a sense of myself and where I was.

* * * * *

Late that evening the trans-continental express—Imperial Limited—came in westbound; a good meal and a sleep in the forest had put me right and here I was crouched like a panther close by the track where I calculated the front of the train would pull up. Luck was with me in this initial stage and the blind baggage came right opposite to my hiding-place. The train had stopped, and the fireman was going round oiling the bearings and seeing if any of the wheels were running hot. Then he climbed up on to the engine; the conductor gave the signal to start and the express pulled slowly out of the station. I sprang from my hiding-place, ran quickly over to the blind baggage and settled down in front and just behind the tender. It looked as though I was done for, since the fireman had seen me and I felt sure he would make me get off at the next stopping-place, which would be some fifty miles farther on.

Perhaps he would leave me alone, or, on the other hand, he might be rough on train-beaters, and so I prepared myself for a difficulty that would have to be met and surmounted. But as it turned out the fireman had his own ideas of dealing with train-jumpers! The first intimation I had of his line of tactics

was a large lump of coal which landed just at my side . . . evidently he was all out for attacking me by indirect laying, and from Canmore to Stephen I spent the time dodging the lumps of coal which came over at irregular intervals like flying bombs. In time I got quite experienced and agile at dodging the coal bombardment. Then he turned on a jet of water from a hose which compelled a radical change in my manœuvres; to avoid the combination of coal bombs and water I got on to the buffers between the blind baggage and the tender, where I escaped the shelling from water and coal.

Everything comes to an end . . . in time . . . and so did this novel game of fireman *versus* tramp, and at the next stopping-place—Banff—I jumped clear of the train before it pulled up and dashed off into the forest, there to await another and more congenial ride.

Banff has a situation embowered in forests and lawns with the glacial, green Bow River running through it. Here the C.P.R. have an hotel which I looked at rather longingly; it was like a baronial castle and a more lovely position could not be found anywhere. The surrounding country has been turned into a national park, where the Government preserve the buffalo, mountain sheep, moose, and other kindred of the wild, and here they can wander at will through the forested pasturage. Yet, in the old days, the buffalo roamed in their millions on the prairies until constant raids by Indians and other hunters brought them to the verge of extinction. One 'sportsman' shot sixty of them in a day for a wager of two hundred dollars!

The next train was not long in appearing, for some two hours after the departure of the express and its militant fireman a freight came in on which I travelled past Lake Louise, a gem of scenic beauty that has attracted more attention than any other lake in the world.

The train toiled upwards until at last we reached a tiny lake, the waters of which flow east and west into the Atlantic and Pacific. This was Stephen, 5,290 feet above sea level, at the entrance to the Kicking Horse Pass. Never have I seen a finer panorama than unfolded itself here; lofty mountains on either side, firs going up two and three hundred feet, tree, bush, and flower more luxuriant than any I had seen farther east, and the river tumbling down east and west. If all this could be compensation for much physical discomfort and danger then I could consider myself domiciled in luxury.

The Kicking Horse Pass was discovered about 1860, by one Palliser, who at the time was so little impressed with the country to the east and west of him that he reported it to be worthless, and the Government might as well make a present of it to the United States! Years after the C.P.R. put up an hotel at Calgary which they named after Palliser—an act of poetic justice and revenge.

It was all enchanting . . . so much so that I went on foot through the pass, spending the night in a box car at Palliser, twenty miles down the line. I shall always remember that box car; it was full of sand and the coldest bed one could imagine. After having cooked a meal alongside the track I went off in search of all the bits of paper I could find, for there is nothing better to keep out the cold than to wrap yourself round with sheets of paper, and this is what I did, spending a fairly comfortable night, all things considered.

The weather was ideal, the views magnificent, the mountain slopes covered with trees and foliage, a natural rock garden, with dozens of little streams

tumbling down, and far below the Kicking Horse River rolling along in a twisting and rocky channel. It was inspiring, and how I enjoyed it all!

During the morning a freight train came into Palliser which I jumped to Revelstoke on the Upper Arrow River. On the way we went through the Rogers Pass, crossing the highest trestle bridge in the world, just under three hundred feet in height, so I was told, but I did not stop to measure it as I was in rather a hurry to get off. These trestle bridges, the curvature of the line, and the many snow sheds, are a monument to the genius and skill of the railwaymen. We tore round the curves, hurtling through the snow sheds, wooden structures with a slanting lean-to roof so that they can shoot the avalanches off into the river below.

From Revelstoke I walked thirty miles southwards to the Arrow Lake. Arrowhead is, as the name implies, at the head of the lakes, the upper one being about thirty-five miles long and three miles wide, the lower somewhat longer. Forests of all kinds of trees, flowering shrub, fern and flower, clothe the mountain sides, with here and there patches of cultivation, mostly orchards, for the settlers had cleared the tracts fringing the river and planted apple, pear, plum, and cherry. The results have justified their enterprise and this part of British Columbia is one of the fruit centres of the world. The scenery is very fine, and a run over these lakes is an unending source of delight, and all made pleasing and comfortable by the river steamers that are operated so efficiently by the Canadian Pacific Railway.

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One of the lake steamers happening to be in Arrowhead when I arrived there, I went on board and talked to the chief officer; he wanted extra hands and so I engaged as one of the crew. The pay was a dollar and a half a day and board, with a good bunk to sleep in, and I moved in straightaway. The food was excellent, fish from the lakes, the best of beef and mutton, and for breakfast, amongst other things, we had hot cakes, a peculiarity of America, and very tasty with fresh butter spread over them, of which there was an unlimited quantity. The work was easy, tying up and casting off at the lakeside halts, and loading and off-loading the cargoes of fruit and fish. There was plenty of time to admire the scenery *en route* and I found this idyllic life a revolutionary change after the hazards and anxieties of the train journey. My fellow members of the crew were a genial, happy lot; these sturdy workers were at home with, and always kindly disposed to, each other as men usually are when their interests are in common. Some were Americans from the Far West, others were sailors who had found their way into British Columbia and took to the peaceful and placid life on these steamers, which must have been a revelation to them after the rough-and-tumble days on board most ocean-going ships. One or two had come up from the Pacific coast at Vancouver, for it was a habit of sailors to leave their ship in the coast ports and go to work on the fruit farms, or the river steamers, an easy and interesting way of making a stake which they could spend down on the coast before getting the next ship.

After supper we would sit out on the deck and take in the views; or discuss the philosophy and angle of life as we had each found it, whether as a hobo, a

sailor, or whatever it might be. Should I stay here long? I thought. I decided to remain a month and then go on to Rossland, which was then coming into prominence as a new goldfield with possibilities. I did not like the idea of losing this genial crew; we had got along so well together; they were so helpful to the young stranger within the gates, and I had grown to like one or two of them very much. There was a certain sadness about parting from these men and probably never seeing them again.

One afternoon, when we arrived at Nelson at the southern end of the Arrow Lakes, I packed my simple kit, took my discharge and said good-bye to my fellow-sailors. There was not a ripple on the quiet waters of the lake, the valley was filled with a flood of light with many soft and brilliant colourings; the sun was going down and the day's work on the river steamer, as far as I was concerned, had come to an end.

I would have to leave good friends here. We were all at one with each other, not even the diversity of race made any difference to the common feeling of having been workers together . . . and so I went ashore.

What shall I do, I thought, now that I have left the river steamer! I had no one with whom to talk things over, nor to discuss what might happen to me in the future. I knew I wanted to go to Rossland but I had no definite plans, for there was nothing on which I could base any plan. Something will turn up, I said to myself . . . a man never knows, but I did not want to think about that now. I put it aside and comforted myself with the reflection that, at any rate, I would see it through. And thus it was I came to Rossland.

This was the largest mining camp in Southern British Columbia, and had acquired a notoriety which attracted miners even from Klondike, where there had been a rush the year before. They came, indeed, from all over the world and were just the same devil-may-care crowd that characterized all such places. Rossland came into prominence in this way. A prospector had been out in the hills searching here and there for signs of gold, when one afternoon he struck a rock-bearing quartz; a more detailed examination showed that here was a find of note, and he took in specimens of the gold-bearing ore to the nearest camp. The news spread like wildfire, the rush started, and before many weeks Rossland had become a name to conjure with.

When I was there it was just the ordinary mining-camp, with huts and hotels of sorts, roughly-built log cabins on a big scale, the leading feature of which was the bar, a dining-room, a kitchen, and some tiny bedrooms with very little space, but any amount of draughts. The cooking was good but plain, and you could have all you wanted; the visitor certainly got his money's worth, and in the light of 1940–45 war days I often think of those meals and how you could get your fill, if you gave your mind to it, regardless of the consequences.

The bar was the popular place in all these 'hotels'; there were always crowds of miners standing round the bar and business was brisk. They were a fascinating crowd, their faces stamped with the knowledge that comes from constant acquaintance with men and life and things; they were tough, hard-bitten men, some of them with the look of the criminal and those who ought to have been doing time. Others with faces and outline showing a gentler bringing-up, who were making the best of a bad job and grappling with a hard fate and life in such a place as this.

It was a strange crowd, carousing and cursing, telling of the finds they had made, what they would do when they reached somewhere beyond the mountains where they could have a good time, and reap the fruits of their toils, as they saw it. A rough and assorted crowd that gave opportunities for the study of complex human nature and the power of humanity. They were drawn there by the common bond of sympathy and the instinct of man to be sociable with man, especially when thrown together in the manifold dangers and discomforts of a far-western mining camp.

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After a fortnight in Rossland I decided to go on to Grand Forks, a newly exploited camp in the Boundary Creek country, fifty miles away across the mountains. Once more going into the unknown had its light and darkness and the promise of adventure. To reach Grand Forks meant crossing on foot three ranges of mountains, up through the pine forests, into the mysterious depth of that great timber land. I was told that wolves haunted the trail, that I should run into bears, and a generally gloomy picture was painted of what was ahead. But I did not fear the unknown, nor had death any terrors for me.

The secret of life and liberty and happiness are found in boldness. If we all had to face the unknown, to go out into the world, we should soon get rid of the timid ones and be left with the real fighters. The man who can face the unknown, and battle with hardship and discomfort, is the man who knows how to live.

The old-time navigators who ventured across uncharted seas, who were bent on seeing, as the Japanese put it, what was on the other side of the lantern, were the ones who brought back knowledge and wisdom, and paved the way for those who followed them and built up empires.

Shouldering my one blanket, and with the few articles I deemed essential for these expeditions, I left for Grand Forks one sunny morning and stepped out on to the trail. The first thirty-five miles were the ones that I was a little apprehensive of; they would lead through trackless forest, up and down, passing over the crest line and down into the valleys again. Nothing was to be got on the way; and so I carried rough provisions that would last me until I reached Cascade City. The name had a fine ring about it and, indeed, it turned out to be a fine place—so much so that had it been finer I should not have seen it at all. Cascade City, for all its grandiloquent title, was merely a log hut in the forest, where the owner took in passing travellers and gave them a meal and a shakedown for the night.

All day I toiled through these mountains, pausing every now and again for a drink of cool water from streams that came down from the heights above; there was stillness in the air and the forest was composed of lofty trees, many of which I judged to be fully two hundred and fifty feet in height, all awe-inspiring to my young and impressionable mind. The trail was blazed—that is, trees at intervals had a piece of the bark cut out about four feet above ground level to mark the pathway. This is the custom in these mountain lands, but sometimes the blazes give out and the trail becomes a thing of naught.

Late in the evening I gained the summit of the second range, beyond

which the trail became very bad. Evidently storms had swept the area here, for trees lay across the path in dozens and I had to work round, or over, them to find the blazed trail. Then the sun went down, night came on, and I looked about for a place to lie up in until dawn. I chose a hole made by the roots of a tree that had been blown down in a gale; the roots were encrusted with earth and stones and created a wall against the cold wind which sprang up with sundown. Beyond the call of wolves and the occasional grunt of a bear I slept almost undisturbed, and with the first morning light was away once more down through the forest and the ever-varying beauties which, at each turn of the trail, were presented to me.

Towards noon I reached Cascade City and never was place more welcome. The proprietor of this one-man and one-cabin town was a pioneer of the sort that have gone out over the world and done things. He was full of reminiscences of former days, a kindly man of the type one reads of in the coaching days of England.

Mine host lived in a lovely land; the hills around him were timbered like a park, with clearings here and there that were lush and green. Down in the valleys the ground was fringed and starred with flowers of vari-coloured blossoms, a land calling for settlement; herds of cattle and sheep could find pasturage here. At the moment it was an empty land, known only to those who, like myself, wandered over it, or occasional bands of local Indians and trappers who came to trap and shoot. It is not with the Indians that the land can be made one of plenty; they are nomads and hunters who love the open air life, have never built a house more solid than a wigwam or a lean-to, and have rarely sown a blade of corn or possessed more cattle than is essential to their needs.

I stayed the night at this hotel on the hills and next morning went on into the valley where lay Grand Forks. The town was a recent construction, now being opened up by the railway which ran through it. I had been walking for some hours when I reached the place, and just as I arrived a man came up to me. He was a fine-looking fellow about forty, with a decided but friendly manner. He asked me if I wanted a job. "Yes," I said, looking at him. "Well, come along then and have a bit of grub and I'll show you what there is going." He took me over to a railway siding where a number of box cars were side-tracked against a wall of mountains that ran up behind them. These cars were the quarters of a fencing outfit that was engaged on the construction of a wire fence alongside the railway, and my newly-found friend the overseer wanted extra hands for the job.

"What do you pay?" I asked.

"Two and a quarter dollars a day and board."

"All right," I said, "I'll take it on."

And so began a three months' tour of service with a fencing gang on the Canadian Pacific Railway. The work was easy; all we had to do was to dig holes three feet deep on either side of the track for the posts which were planted there, and then the wire netting was fastened on to them. We would leave every morning about seven o'clock, come in at midday for a meal, and then out again, travelling to and fro on little self-propelled flat cars, until the evening.

One of the box cars was where we had our meals, three or four others were the sleeping quarters; they were fitted up with bunks set in two tiers, like the cabin of a ship. There were straw mattresses, but you had to find your own bedding.

The cook was the principal man in the outfit; a big, hearty Canadian, whom everyone liked, and who could produce good hashes. From the first day I got friendly with him and he made one feel so much at home. The overseer and the various members of the gang were a kind and paternal crowd, and the cars were a comfortable and snug place to sleep in. This with the good food, and the fellowship of my co-workers, made me almost feel that I would like to go on indefinitely at this job.

At the end of the three months the fencing work was finished, and once more shouldering my pack I went up to Greenwood in the Boundary Creek country, a settlement composed entirely of log huts with a single street and a rough-and-ready theatre, where later on I witnessed a play staged by the local talent, with three murders, two hangings and a street fight. The memory of that play haunted me for weeks afterwards.

The township was a lawless sort of place and I soon came to the conclusion that, so far as I was concerned, it was decidedly unhealthy, and to get away from the boisterous brawlings I rented a small shack under the lee of a hill outside the town. It was the tiniest house I have ever been in, only seven feet high and six feet wide and long; but I made my microscopic home quite comfortable, with a bunk at one end filled with bracken for a mattress, and a tiny stove by the door made out of a kerosine tin. There was ample wood in the forest all round me, and a king in his castle could not have been happier than I was in my shack.

The destinies of the town were presided over by a man whose position was similar to that of the mayor of an English town. He was responsible for law and order and administered a justice of sorts. He was trader, trapper, policeman, and judge, an essential qualification for the task being a practical sympathy for all classes; he had to look at things from a purely human standpoint, to take situations as he found them, and not as he would have liked them to be, to treat with the motley crowd round him on a man-to-man basis.

Sometimes I went down and looked in at one of the saloons which were the leading feature of these mushroom settlements. I knew most of the men who formed the population of this one-horse town; there was Steve M'Gann, a tough from the Middle West, who could always be relied upon to provide excitement when the atmosphere was dull. Occasionally Steve had spasms of generosity when he would want to treat all and sundry. The crowd sensed this instinctively and gathered around. "What is it to be?" called Steve, and the almost universal answer was "Whiskies". Whereupon the barman pushed over the bottles and glasses and the guests helped themselves. Steve's stock rose sharply and both barkeeper and tender smiled benignly on him; they approved of Steve, for a man who treated the whole house was a man indeed. Things went with a swing in the saloon and the general air of camaraderie and companionship, with the added stimulus of the rye whisky, made everyone happy, although some of the company may not have had a cent to bless themselves with.

Steve was an outstanding character; once he called on the barman to produce the bottles, Steve would open them. This he did with his six-shooter, necking the bottles as cleanly as though they had been done with a diamond-cutter. I never saw anyone argue with Steve; he was jovial and merry and at peace with the world, but the crowd knew what volcanic elements lay behind that smiling face; when it came to an argument Steve could be dangerous with his six-shooter . . . and the rest of the township realized it.

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The winter passed and I began to formulate plans for the ensuing year. There were one or two things that attracted me; the Boer War had started and all eyes were turned towards South Africa; a gold rush was on at Nome in Alaska, in the far north, that bid fair to rival Klondike, and more visions of adventure rose up before me. During the winter in Greenwood I had met an American and a Canadian who were going to try their luck at Nome, and we resolved to set out on the journey over the mountains to Vancouver, four hundred miles away. It meant tramping across the Gold Range and Cascade Mountains, to a point called Spence's Bridge, distant two hundred and ninety-five miles, by a trail that was unknown to us, and but little known to the few trappers and hill Indians in the territory.

On the morning of March 13th, 1900, the three of us left Greenwood for the Pacific Slope, as the coastline is called. The air was sharp and frosty, fresh snow had fallen overnight, but now there was a cloudless sky as we set out with our faces to the west, upwards and onwards, over the Gold Range. Farther north the C.P.R. pierced this range through the Eagle Pass, which acquired its name from the pioneers of the railway. Baffled and dismayed, they were at their wits' end to find a way when an eagle appeared on the scene, flying low; they followed it and it led them through a defile along which the line was surveyed and constructed. The eagle had rendered a service to science.

At this time of year travelling was comparatively easy, apart from the cold and snow, and for crossing the mountains of British Columbia on foot it is the best season, for in the late spring, summer and autumn mosquitoes make life in the hills almost unbearable. There are veritable clouds of them, you kick up fresh mosquitoes at every step, and at times the swarms hamper both sight and breathing. Our winter march saved us from the mosquito.

The first night out we camped high up on the crest line, having made about twenty miles. We lighted a fire with cedar and pinewood. What a grand fire it was in that arctic atmosphere, and how it crackled! How good it was to sit round it preparing the evening meal of fried bacon and beans, the crisp crackling glow, the warmth, and delicious scent! Hard by was a little stream, the ripples of its waters sounding in our ears, and what succulent fish that river held! A fallen tree sheltered us from the cold night wind and when we turned in only the yells of the coyotes and wolves howling at the moon—or us—disturbed the stillness of the night.

The following day's camp was in a small canyon the sides of which were carpeted with the finest ferns I have ever seen. Perhaps the dampness of the place is the secret of their size and beauty; their colour was that of faint silvery

green and round and above them were cedars, straight and lofty trees with seamy bark and exquisite foliage.

This was a place in which to bake bread, for we ate large quantities of the staff of life, and the supply had to be replenished. The Canadians are experts at the art of bread-making and from them I learnt the secret. It is to mix the dough with baking powder in the ordinary way, for yeast is too much of a bother when you are on the move.

We then greased and floured the bottom of a frying-pan, put the loaf in it and arranged the fire so that the flames and heat would fall on the loaf, constantly turning it in the pan, and then propping the loaf up against the fire with sticks, until sufficiently baked. This may not seem very good bread, but the result was the best in its line, and Canadians are fastidious where bread is concerned. Our menu on the march could be further supplemented by charr from the streams, which can be caught in any quantity and make a good fish meal when fried. We had not a gun with us, otherwise there was grouse, pheasant, partridge, and an alpine hare found on the mountain tops that makes jugged hare at which Lucullus would beam approval.

That walk of two hundred and seventy-five miles over the mountains is a glorious memory, with every night a bivouac in an amphitheatre of peaks and pines, the dark green of the fir-clad slopes set off by golden tamarisk, heather and ferns. To me those days were an unending treat, not the least part of them being the trees for which British Columbia stands unrivalled. There is every variety, the Douglas fir, one of the tallest trees in the world, silver fir, spruce, black, white and yellow pine, cedars and birches.

At the end of the day's march, and when we had cooked and eaten our supper, how delightful it was to stretch out on the soft, mossy ground and look up at the star-spangled sky, listening to curious noises in the forest, the gentle stirring of the night breeze amongst the trees.

Sometimes a nightjar would flit over our camp, an owl moaned dismally from a neighbouring tree, and anon came up from the depths of the valley the call of a coyote, on his prowl for supper.

The solitude which surrounded us, the mystery of this all-pervading forest, gave an element of disquietude. How easily anyone could disappear there; a stroll into the woods all round our camp . . . the sudden rush of a bear, the lightning attack of a wolf pack . . . and you would be seen no more. Such thoughts did not often trouble us, although they add to the fascination which all forests exercise over the human mind. Then gradually dreams of the morrow's march and speculation as to what the day would bring forth trailed gentle sleep in their wake.

CHAPTER FIVE

Over the Gold Mountains—Through the canyons—A hazardous journey—Before the mast across the Pacific—The battle with the sea and the icebergs—Hauling out a dead Chinese—In Japan—The Son of Heaven—The menace of Japan.

WE took it in turns to light the morning fire and get the kettle boiling for the coffee; it was delightful to know that it was not my turn to do it, that I could peep out from my one blanket and hear the noise of the water boiling in the kettle. Half awake, I would sit up, a trifle stiff after a night on the ground, and stretch myself towards the rising life of the fire . . . and then the hot, delicious draughts of coffee. There was a frost and bite in the air, but the fire and the coffee instilled life and vigour, and soon we were up and away over the mountain trail.

Twelve days of steady marching brought us to Spence's Bridge; twelve days and nights inspired by the road, the glory of the mountains, the tang of the cold, and the scent of the pines.

Spence's Bridge is on the Canadian Pacific Railway, and beyond, towards Vancouver, are the Fraser Canyons, with a reputation for scenery. Here we were again in touch with civilization and the comparative comforts of life.

We were lucky with our trains, for early in the afternoon a freight came in that took us to Fraser, where it side-tracked, and we had to bivouac until another one arrived that night. On the way we had passed through the canyons which are second only to the Rockies in spectacular wonder.

This, then, was the setting and the background for our onward journey; here in these canyons were marvels of Nature which the Canadian Pacific Railway has revealed to the world. Despite the hazards and dangers to which we were exposed at every minute of our journey through this wonderland I still was able to take in most of the view and get the impressions and reactions that arise from it. The line winds in and out of the canyons, along ledges hewn with incredible labour out of the cliff-side; tunnels penetrate the headlands and trestle bridges span the narrow ravines. It was an experience beyond adequate description, this journey, in and out of tunnels, along ledges, round corners, with the Fraser river flowing hundreds of feet below.

Looking down I could see nothing but dense clouds of spray, and now and then a glimpse of rushing waters which raced round corners and became lost to view. Then the track would suddenly narrow and the river became compressed into a space of a dozen yards or so. The marvel was that we kept the rails at all... how she was going, this train through the canyons—going, it seemed to us, all out, and yet how grand was that ride! Though we were thrown from side to side of the box car an exultation came over us; we laughed and joked at our efforts to keep a footing; life had become motion and we were fused into activity—in spite of ourselves.

On the way we passed Hell's Gate, the culmination of a series of canyons

where the water boils through and the rock markings plainly show to what heights the river rises during flood periods. Everywhere we saw signs, even in our headlong rush, of the age-old fight of water against rock as the Fraser batters its way seaward. At Lytton another river, the Thompson, joins the Fraser where they begin their united course to the sea through the Fraser Canyon, the mountains crowding in on the river and seeming to offer no way out.

Farther down we came to Yale on the Fraser, where the salmon-canning industry is the principal livelihood of the people; preparations for the season's fishing were in full swing and the many canneries were ready to take on anyone who cared to net salmon at a flat rate of a cent per pound. At Yale we were asked if we would like to become salmon netters, but I declined the offers made, being bent on reaching the Pacific coast. So we went on jumping freight trains until arrival at Mission Junction, where our condition was so battered and bruised that we almost gave it up. Patience and dogged determination, however, won in the end.

That night we had a long conversation with an Englishman there, bivouacked like ourselves in the woods hard by the track, who was bound for Montreal where he would take a ship to England. He had three thousand miles of train-beating ahead of him; it was not an alluring prospect and I sometimes wonder if he ever made it. I can see him now as a freight came in eastbound . . . we waved him good-bye as he swung on to the buffers, the train disappeared round a corner, and our friend had started his long trek.

An hour passed and then a train came in going our way; but it was not an easy proposition, for every car was sealed and only two flat cars a little way from the engine offered us any chances. At first we had thoughts of breaking into one of the cars as by this time we were firm believers in the philosophy of taking risks . . . and then wiser counsels from the Canadian prevailed. Breaking into a sealed car meant a long term of imprisonment . . . we had come so far and endured so much . . . why jeopardize our safety when we were close to the goal? The car remained unbroken and we took the flat cars instead. What a night it was! No sooner had the train got under way than she tore through the night. The engine belched fire and smoke and sparks; we were lost in a chaos of wind and smoke, of burning, scorching sparks, and on the flat car were crouched three figures with blanched faces and fear in their eyes.

It was all we could do to hang on, for beyond the slightly raised edges round the sides and ends of the car, just enough to prevent goods sliding off, there was nothing we could hang on to. This surely must be the climax, I thought; if we survive this, if we live through this hell-for-leather pace, with our blackened faces, clothes full of burnt holes, and hands seared by flying sparks . . . could we but stay the course, then we should merit the victory.

"She's going at a hell of a pace," the Canadian said as he clung on by my side. "I guess it'll blow the life out of us."

"Never mind, we'll stick," I said, as a hot ash caught me full in the face.

Would we? I wondered. I wouldn't care to do another night on that flat car; the hot cinders, the swaying from side to side, the wind, the rocking of the train which seemed as though it would jump the rails and dive-bomb into the

river a thousand feet below. Yes, it shook horribly, seeming to lose all sense of smoothness in its lightning motion. It was a confused flood of rocks and corners, of trees and trestle bridges flying in all directions, of darkness and belching smoke . . . and red-hot cinders.

How glad we were to reach New Westminster! I just tumbled off the car, for the grime, and dust and cinders, to say nothing of the mad motion of the train, had eaten into me and taken the life out of me, momentarily at any rate. I must have looked as though I had come out of the Great Fire of London, my hands were burnt and the skin puffing up, eyebrows singed, and all over me the marks of the cinders. We had a wash with invisible soap at a tank in the station yard and then rummaged amongst our bundles and found something to eat. Never was meal more welcome, although it was only bread baked some days ago, and the remains of a fowl we had found on the way.

Luck was still with us, for just over an hour after our advent in New Westminster another freight came in and as all the cars were sealed we took the buffers into Vancouver, our progress into the city being more in consonance with what a train journey should be in our own particular circumstances. It was an eighteen-mile ride, traversing one of the finest parts of British Columbia, from the point of view of the settler. Thus we reached Vancouver, Canada's gateway to the Orient, the South Seas, and the North, with an ever-growing stream of commerce passing through its sheltered harbour.

Here also was the terminus of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and the end of my journey across the United States and Canada without a ticket. We went into the town and talked of what we would do in the immediate future. My two companions were resolved on Nome and Alaska; South Africa, thousands of miles away across trackless oceans, was calling me. We talked of these things like the adventurers of old probably talked of them. If we had not forgotten the many hardships and dangers we had been through, at least we didn't dwell on or ponder over them; sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof; the thrills and the dangers were past and gone, that was enough.

A little *dolce far niente* was indicated after all one had gone through; a week or so of complete leisure would be a rest and a revelation, and the next morning I walked through the town and found a comfortable boarding-house kept by an old negro woman and her daughter, where I engaged a room and settled down. It was a relief to wander about this town of Vancouver, that was filled with an entrancing beauty, with its National Park where grows the Douglas fir, and the changing colours and tints of the foliage shimmering in the sunlight. The shops, too, were a delight to behold after such a long apprenticeship to log huts and cabins; the restfulness of it all was welcome to the wanderer in space. Here was food and rest and comfort; for the time being, at any rate, there was no question of how I could get something to eat; I had not to worry about sand and desert and prairie, of rocks and snow and blundering trails, or of rough and ruthless brakesmen; here was peace and quiet. . . . I could feel that it was good to be alive.

Looking back on it all during this restful period I could sum up this beautiful land of British Columbia, where everything is on the grand and generous scale—the sea coast, the mountains and the rivers. So with the natural wealth and the forests, the orchards of the Okanagan Valley that alone produce five

THE LIMPOPO RIVER WHICH WE CROSSED AT FLOOD-TIME

A KLOOF IN THE NORTHERN TRANSVAAL WELL KNOWN TO THE FIGHTING SCOUTS

million boxes of apples every year, the salmon canneries that turn out half a million cases annually.

The climate, too, is about the most equable I have ever been in, especially on the Pacific slope, where the winters are mild and the summers suave and cool.

Scenic beauty and industrial activity are the keynotes of British Columbia, a wonderful place for the settler and those looking for a home and a chance to do well in farming, fruit-growing, fishing, cattle-raising and other things. Rudyard Kipling assessed it when he recorded his impressions twenty-five years ago.

> "Lumber, coal, minerals, fisheries, fit soil for fruit, dairy and poultry farms, are all there in a superb climate. The natural beauty of earth and sky match these lavish gifts. . . . For the people's pleasure and good disport salmon, trout, quail, and pheasant play in front of and through the suburbs of her capitals. A little axe-work and road-metalling gives a city one of the loveliest water-girt parks that we have outside the tropics. Another town is presented with a hundred islands, knolls, wooded coves, stretches of beach, and dingles, laid down as expressly for camp life, picnics and boating parties, beneath skies never too hot and rarely too cold. If they are to lift up their eyes from their almost sub-tropical gardens, they can behold snowy peaks across blue bays which must be good for the soul. Though they face a sea out of which any portent may arise, they are not forced to protect or even to police its waters. They are as ignorant of drought, murrain, pestilence, locusts, and blight as they are of the true meaning of want and fear. Were I an intending emigrant I would risk a good deal of discomfort to get on to the land in British Columbia; and were I rich, with no attachments outside England, I would swiftly buy a farm or a house in that country for the mere joy of it!"

* * * * *

At Vancouver I left my two friends; this was the parting of the ways, as we raised our glasses and drank affectionately to that next meeting which—alas!—we have been fated never to realize. These good companions of the road . . . they faded out to the north, to Nome in Alaska, where a gold rush was in full swing. Fine, sturdy fellows, loyal to each other, steadfast in times of danger, fond of the road, the open air, and with the instinct to wander, which created the affinity between us. What has become of them? Did they make a fortune, or did they find a nameless grave in the wilds of Alaska?

* * * * *

Whilst in Vancouver my money petered out; in fact, it faded into nothingness and I had to do something about it. Nothing would induce me to have recourse to a pawnshop to get out of this awkward fix and so I hit upon another idea for raising the wind. I would go to the proprietor of the restaurant where I had my meals. He was a good-hearted Canadian and always greeted me cheerily when I came in; he made one feel at home, the sort of man who would

not give his sympathy and help at the end of a long pair of tongs. I tackled him one day after my evening meal and produced what I wanted him to take as security for the next week's meals . . . a watch I had bought in London for three pounds ten. I displayed its merits . . . it worked like a charm and he agreed to the proposal . . . and so I would have something to eat . . . for a week.

I had been living with the freedom and directness of careless travellers, and now I must get work and put myself in funds.

Although I had a week's respite, the position was not exactly cheerful, but I had experienced it before and had always come out of it without any great degree of personal embarrassment. I set to at once, getting work on the wharf trundling freight into a Pacific liner at two and a half dollars a day. The liner was the *Empress of Japan*, and I determined to ship aboard her for the first stage of the sea journey to South Africa. One day, during an off-hour, I went and had a talk with the boatswain, a herculean man, with a voice like a fog-horn, a driver of men, who seldom smiled, and when he did it was hard and cheerless like his own exterior. However, I had to bring matters to a climax, and as the boatswain was willing to take me I engaged as an ordinary seaman. The ship was sailing for Hong Kong . . . where I intended to leave her.

On sailing day I joined the ship's company, being assigned to the port watch of thirty-five men. Now I was before the mast, to encounter life at sea with all its dangers and hardships . . . here in the North Pacific . . . four hours on and four hours off . . . at the mercy of the boatswain and his satellites and the seas which raged over the Pacific at this time of year.

* * * * *

The crew settled down in their quarters in the fo'c'sle, where at night the lights burnt dim and small in the gloom. We passed Victoria on Vancouver Island in the evening and next day were well out in the Pacific borne along by the engines and a tremendous wind. The seas were already hitting the ship broadside on; the watch on deck, which happened to be mine, stood by, for of the elements no man can be sure. They hold secrets from him.

At eight bells—midnight—we were able to go below and get a pitiful short four hours' rest in a narrow bunk, ready to spring out at the sound of the boatswain's voice, to come on deck should danger threaten. I fell into my bunk and was soon in a fitful sleep; the rest of the watch had also turned in and now we would have four hours before having to turn out again . . . at four in the morning, in an icy blast and a plunging sea. It was watch and watch . . . the way of a ship.

I seemed to have been only a few minutes asleep, when four o'clock came and the boatswain's mate roared down into the fo'c'sle, "All hands on deck; get a move on!" We tumbled out of our bunks, fumbling round for trousers and jackets and boots . . . and the rapidity with which my companions did it was a lesson in celerity.

Again the boatswain's voice thundered out, "Come on, ye God-damn' loafers!" The ship pitched and rolled and we fell over each other in our anxiety to obey the command; something must be happening for these two martinets to be after us. Adjusting coat, trousers, and boots I blundered and

clambered up the ladderway and out on to the well-deck, where the storm was smashing down. The impact of the cold wind almost took me off my feet, the deck was a seething maelstrom of water as it came over the sides, waves with foam on their crests and looking as though they would swallow up the ship and ourselves.

We had to close watertight doors, clear away various things that had broken loose on the decks, relash some of the boats, and all in a roaring, hissing cauldron with the main-deck out of sight, obliterated by the sea; the impact of hundreds of tons of water seemed as though it would smash the ship to pieces. Up on the bridge the captain and first officer were straining their eyes in the darkness, watching the scene and the danger of the waves as they came on, the cavalry of the sea, charging us, sweeping the main-deck from end to end with a flood of ice-cold water. These waves . . . they were like great beasts of prey, they wanted to tear the ship to pieces, they rose higher and higher, curling along their tops before falling over the whole length of the ship; it reeled and staggered under the weight of water. "If she gets any more like this," I thought, "she'll go under."

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So the days wore on, until we were in the vicinity of the Kurile Islands to the north. Here another and greater danger menaced us: the all-destroying icebergs floating down from the Arctic regions, deep in the water and usually of the same colour, so that it was almost impossible to see them in the dark in time enough to battle clear of them if dead ahead. These bergs are small continents in themselves, some of them a thousand feet in height, whilst one is recorded as being more than thirty miles long.

These bergs were in our path, rolling on with awe-inspiring deliberation. What if we crashed into one of them during the night . . . sometimes as the ship drove on in the darkness and I lay in my bunk trying to sleep, I had this picture of the liner hitting an iceberg . . . the grinding, sickening crash, the roar of commands, the foundering of the ship . . . if I closed my eyes I still saw the picture . . . only when tired nature asserted itself could I get rid of it.

In ordinary, everyday danger I had no fear; we can control ourselves when in the presence of danger that is definite, but this was something quite different. Here it was vague and indefinite . . . nothing to see . . . a danger that might suddenly appear out of the darkness and the raging seas, with no hope of escape.

Quite early in the voyage I fell foul of the boatswain; perhaps it happened because I resented the antagonism and cursing of this autocrat of the high seas, who may have loved his fellow creatures, but not amateur seamen.

Yet, unattractive and plebeian as he was, he had probably not his equal on the Pacific Ocean; his was a life dedicated to the sea, the crew feared him as though he were some Satan incarnate. He was an accomplished slave-driver, of limited vision, and such a man is hard to bear with in any sphere in which he has full power, especially at sea. Once or twice he came down upon me . . . I resented it . . . an enormity beyond his power of comprehension.

I was given all sorts of objectionable jobs by this high-seas martinet. As I have said, hatches were battened down and passengers never came on deck;

they were banished from the scene of battling elements. Down in the steerage we had a large number of Chinese passengers, a below-deck concentration, living in an atmosphere that could only be described as sickening. Never have I seen human beings appear so unattractive and completely prostrate, many of them far more dead than alive, indifferent even to death as a means of putting an end to their misery.

The steerage was another nightmare of the seas, where these hundreds of herded Celestials rendered the deck slippery beyond recovery and narration. I doubt if a German concentration camp could have had much worse to display than that steerage inferno of the storm-sick Pacific, where almost every human value and decency had been swept overboard, and where things left behind were somewhat revolting.

Nothing would have drawn me of my own free will down to the steerage. But, with another ordinary seaman, I was ordered to descend to recover the dead body of a Chinese, who had passed out from sheer inanition. We descended into the depths, and when we had penetrated to what seemed the bowels of the earth we reached a deck on which were bunks built up in two tiers. Faces like ghosts, haunted by themselves, lay all about us, and but for the stench and the death-like stupor of some of the Chinese there, I should have been inclined to imagine it all as part of a dreadful dream. The place was wrapt in semi-darkness, but by dint of searching round we found the corpse we were in search of . . . and removed the poor unfortunate from his bunk, bearing him up and aft to the lazarette, there to be coffined and landed at Shanghai for burial, for every Chinese hopes to lie at rest in his native land, and not in a foreign one.

When we were passing through the Inland Sea of Japan the boatswain evidently thought it a good idea to paint the funnels of the ship . . . and sent me up to do it. I went . . . and to do the top part had to balance myself precariously on the rims, a 'cutting' and also a fearsome place. Looking down into the dark, abysmal depths of a forty-foot funnel is an experience no one would seek in their waking hours, however strong the head they may have. A wish may lurk at the bottom of a well, sulphur and brimstone in the bowels of a volcano, but the depths of a ship's funnel are as negative and dreary as suicide. Painting the funnel was as dreary to me as painting a funeral, and looking into nothing very nearly ended in getting me down there. You cannot glimpse the furnace or any sparks of life in the interior of a funnel; it is a dead thing—a mere conduit of waste matter. Painting a ship's smokestacks provides the worst possible sort of fatigue . . . and the boatswain knew it.

How they roared at us . . . this boatswain and his mate . . . with voices mellowed by stale gin. But I and my less hardened companions were resolved to see it through . . . we would triumph over the cold, the want of sleep, the indifferent food, the sting of the sea . . . and the curses of those in charge of us. Yet the climax had by no means been reached, as you shall presently hear.

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The *Empress of Japan* went battling on through the days and nights in the icy grip of this north Pacific gale; the seas came over the fo'c'sle head, wave after

wave of them, the ship staggering with each successive impact. Day and night the decks were buried beneath the water, only the masts and superstructure showed above those foam-crested waves. Then the ship would lift heavily, quiver and shake herself like some gigantic dog, and plough on.

The rain and the spray splashed down on us, knifing our faces, but the older men, the hard-bitten sailormen, treated it with the calm indifference of their craft; it was all in the day's work, difficulties to be met and overcome with the skill and fortitude characteristic of them.

On most days and nights I had to do a turn aloft in the crow's nest on the foremast, a barrel with a trap-door at the bottom through which you squeezed after a perilous ascent by the iron ladder running up the mast. From this eyrie, this look-out at the mast-head, you had a box seat view; below was the fo'c'sle dimly outlined in the black darkness; it appeared and disappeared through the seas in all sorts of angles, now pitching heavily and nose-diving into a wave perhaps a mile wide and fifty or sixty feet high, now rolling to port or starboard as cross seas hit us on those quarters.

All around was black on the water, except where the waves showed their crested tops; overhead all was blacker still, no moon or stars could be seen, only the storm, the spray, and the waves tearing at the ship.

Behind me I could see the dark outline of the bridge-deck where the captain and the officer on duty watched the labouring of the ship, gauging the extent and possibilities of the storm and of the wild winds whose might and power they understood and feared. In the wheel-house just behind them was the quartermaster at the helm, watching the compass, keeping the ship head on to the seas in this heaving immensity. How small one seemed, man and all his works, I thought, as the seas came over the well-deck, burying the ship again and again, from which she would recover herself only to be caught by another amidships. By a miracle no one was washed overboard; if they had they would have been done for. No boat could be launched, it would be swallowed up in the sea and the darkness, the head seas and the cross seas that were sweeping in all directions.

Looking down on it from my perch in the crow's nest I thought of all these things; dismal thoughts some of them, brought on by the fury around me . . . then I would gather renewed courage as I told myself that this fine, strong ship would weather the storm, she would fight it down, the days and nights would soon pass and we should heave and roll and nose-dive towards Japan and come out of the darkness into the light and the quiet of tropical waters.

The officers and crew knew their job; up on the bridge-deck the navigating officers had good instruments. On any night, especially on ones like these, they could have unswerving faith in their instruments. With them the sailor knows that even if the barometer of his senses doubts their accuracy, they were right and his senses wrong. Safety has been reduced to something approaching certainty. And so the nights wore on. . . .

During the crossing of the north Pacific, which took us fourteen days, three days over the usual time, I never saw a passenger. Nothing could have lived on deck in such an inferno, only the seamen who watched their opportunity and made their way along the decks, clutching ropes and taffrails, measuring the distances, and moving slantwise in their successive dashes for safety.

At the end of each spell of four hours on we would have a meal, or coffee and biscuits, and then turn in to meditate on the storm and stress around us, for sleep was scarcely possible with the roar and racket going on.

In these moments I would turn back to the simple things which lie at the back of normal human life. They were individual things, such as the ties of affection for our family and our friends—for they make a charmed circle within which the hearth fire glows and into which neither fear nor hatred can penetrate.

Through all this turmoil, this battling with the elements, I saw then during the silent watches of the night in that crowded fo'c'sle the beauty and meaning of life, the wonder of daily work and play, the coming and going of the seasons, the glory of sunlight over forests and fields as I had seen it in the Far West. With all our hardships and tribulations I thought of the life ashore, of the towns with their manifold activities, of people going home from work after a hard day's toil, of the boys and girls walking together in the sunset talking the usual sweet nothings, of the smell of the camp fire, and of good cooking, the friendly face smiling at us out of the crowd, the beauty of great buildings . . . love and work, sacrifice and play . . . these are the things that matter. In these reflections I, the ordinary seaman, found comfort. . . . Then there would be the end of the voyage. . . . I was always sad at leaving my friends, those friendships forged in the fire of want and despondency. Gradually it came over me that I should probably never again hear the merry quip and jest, the ever-ready token of help and encouragement. Nothing could replace the good companions I had made; helpful friends in time of trouble cannot be created out of hand. When all was over and the fearsome voyage had come to an end, I felt there was no match for the treasure of common memories, of trials and hardships endured together . . . I could not resuscitate them, for they had faded away. Like the old-world saying, it was idle to plant the acorn in the morning and expect to sit under the shade of the oak in the afternoon.

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At last, on the morning of the fourteenth day, we came within sight of the Japanese coast; the sun shone brightly, the wind had dropped and all was as quiet as the previous days had been thunderous and tempestuous. We had come out of the darkness into the light; the clouds and the high seas had gone and there was a Neapolitan softness in the air.

An hour or two later we were off the entrance to Yokohama harbour; the ship sailed on majestically, churning the placid waters of the bay . . . it made me feel as if no storms had ever come and gone. The events of the past fortnight came up before me . . . I was in the crow's nest, watching the way ahead . . . my faith in the ship during the crossing of the north Pacific had given me courage and strength and hope; life has its trials . . . but in that moment I loved the sea and all that was of it.

Nearing the entrance to the harbour a British battleship was coming out, H.M.S. *Barfleur*, her guns and decks gleaming in the sunlight, symbol of the might of Britain . . . the Lion going out to sea.

So I came to Japan . . . this land of cherry blossom, hara-kiri, and geisha

girls. I knew it had never been invented by Gilbert and Sullivan, although, quite naturally, that is how a number of people think of it even today . . . and yet that is how I thought of it when I first went there.

As we entered the bay my relief came up and I descended to the world below. After our majestic approach towards Japan, what happened a few moments after my descent from aloft showed how we can pass from the sublime to the ridiculous.

I shall never forget my arrival in Japan. . . . I was all agog to see this land of paper houses, of polite people bowing to each other among beautiful avenues of cherry trees. I was keen to see Mount Fujiyama, the cities and shrines of Japan, perhaps the Mikado himself, and the geisha girls.

Possibly I was dreaming of geisha girls at the very moment when I should have been attending to the business of helping to lower away a boat. Anyhow, I made a mess of it, seized the wrong rope, let it go, and the end of the boat fell with a crash into the sea; the next thing that happened was the advent of the first officer, who descended on me like a whirlwind to plant a terrific boot on the place where I sit down. I can almost feel it now! "You ain't a sailor!" he said. "You're a bloody farmer!" My arrival in Japan certainly made a deep impression on me!

As all the world knows, Japan consists of a large group of islands, though there are four main ones which have all been in the news during the recent war. The largest of these islands is about the size of England; on the other hand, size being strictly relative, it is worth mentioning that the whole of Japan is smaller than New South Wales, for example, or South Australia.

The European and American conception of Japan was a land of fine scenery, of bright and lovely flowers, the people with gentle, charming manners, imbued with artistic taste and an aptitude for imitating the West, often with amusing and grotesque results. To us, as a whole, Japan was a mixture of the fine and the comical handed down to us by those who have travelled in the Land of the Rising Sun. But beneath all this veneer was a terrible insincerity, a cynical indifference to the rights of men and nations where they conflicted with Japanese interests, and a proficiency in the art of double-dealing.

My first impression of Japan was that it simply teemed with Japanese. This is evident at Yokohama and still more so at Tokio, twenty miles farther up the bay, the third largest city in the world, with a population almost equalling that of New York.

The Japanese had no contact with the world of white men until the arrival of Commodore Perry from the United States in 1853; it was he who brought them out of their seclusion, this ancient land that had for centuries hidden itself from the rest of the world. Perry appeared and knocked at the gates of Japan, which were thereafter swung open to the Western world.

Perry had the first taste of Japanese duplicity and evasion, for when he presented a letter from the President of the United States to the ruler of Japan it was taken over by two menials who represented themselves as Princes of the Royal House, and the State chair used for Perry was afterwards found to have been brought in from a nearby cottage.

Perry imagined he was addressing the Emperor, whereas in reality it was the Shogun, and a brief account of the administrative rule and governmental

system in Japan at that time will give a clear idea of how the country was run.

For two thousand six hundred years the government had been invested in the Emperor, who was of divine origin, and claimed descent from the sun. He took no active part in the government but exercised religious influence, a Shogun being appointed to govern in his name. The Shogun acquired great power, doing things on behalf of the Emperor, until his authority overshadowed that of the imperial ruler himself. Matters reached such a pitch that at the restoration in 1867 the Shogunate was abolished and the Emperor came into his own, becoming the ruler in fact as well as in name. Later on I give some sidelights on this remarkable personality.

The Shogun, then, was the individual Perry dealt with, and from that date the history of modern Japan commences. Perry came back the following year to find the Japanese moving slowly but surely along the road of modern progress, the pace being quickened as the years went on.

The Japanese have never freely admitted foreigners to their midst, especially in their family life, and even Lafcadio Hearn, who wrote books about Japan, married a Japanese, and lived the life of the people, confessed that he never got to know them.

They assimilated all that could be had from America and the West, without allowing any familiarity; there was always a barrier beyond which we could not go. As imitators the Japanese are unrivalled; once they had started out they moulded a political organization on European lines, with an army modelled on the German pattern and a navy on that of Great Britain.

In 1894 came the war with China, an easy affair, for the Chinese were incapable of putting up a show; this facile victory gave the Japanese a false sense of their own power, and when, ten years later, they defeated Russia they took a much larger size in hats . . . and the size went on increasing. The Anglo-Japanese Alliance in 1902 largely contributed to this attitude, but when it was abrogated in 1921 there was a reaction, for Japan had been preparing for certain moves in China and the Far East generally; it was quite clear to anyone who studied the trend of Japanese policy that she was getting ready for more wars, more victories, and an even larger size in hats.

In the matter of imitation, this at first appeared harmless until its boldness and flagrancy were past praying for. Perhaps we were amused at the mistakes they made, how shoes were left on the platform when boarding a train, for they regarded it as a house and shoes must be left outside when entering. They bumped into windows, not realizing they were glass and never having met such things before; to avoid this constant smashing of windows a sign, like strips of black-out, was pasted across the windows; and in shops, which had begun to grow up on western lines, a notice was pasted, 'This is glass'.

The telegraph line was a never-ending source of wonder to them; they thought by intense gazing at it they could see the message passing along; nothing happening, the people broke up the lines and equipment, condemning it all as the work of the devil.

Attempts at donning Western clothes led to grotesque situations. They would appear with a short coat, and the shirt underneath hanging down over the trousers; sometimes only the underpants were worn, but the coat was there

with a billycock hat and a pair of sandals. I have seen a Jap with an old white Ascot top-hat, a pair of riding-breeches, carpet slippers and a tattered shirt hanging down below his knees. Yet none of the Jap passers-by thought anything ridiculous in the idea.

Japanese experiments with steam shipping were both amusing and alarming; they acquired some Western models which sometimes went aground or capsized; the captain and his officers weren't used to such things, and not infrequently the boilers blew up . . . and they wondered why. The Japanese were traversing the path of progress, they were stumbling by the way . . . but they were going to get there in due time.

Agents were sent out all over the world and gradually the nimble acquisitive Japanese nature asserted itself; from Lancashire came the art of spinning cotton, and looms were taken to Japan, from which they evolved a better machine, producing cotton that found a market everywhere and was even sold in Manchester itself at a lower figure than Lancashire could do it. The Japanese were out to swamp the cotton market, and cotton centres were inundated with Japanese goods at a fifth of the price that we could supply them, and soon the cotton capital of the world shifted from Lancashire to Japan. Our cotton spinners then went to Japan, saw the latest model loom and paid one hundred thousand pounds for the right to use it in Britain.

The same thing happened with the rayon industry; the Japanese realized at once that here was a grave potential danger to the silk industry, and so they put up rayon plants and soon were exporting more artificial silk than any other country.

Where they could not invent or improve they took to piracy and imitation. Both as a British official and a private individual, I came across flagrant examples, done with unblushing candour and cool effrontery, for which the Japanese moral code gave them ample scope. They produced Pilsener beer, complete with labels but brewed in Japan, and, I must admit, was much like the genuine article. They advertised 'Genuine Old Scotch Whisky', took the names of the distillers, and no one, under Japanese law, could do anything about it; matches labelled 'Made in Sweden' were put on the market, and a brand of well-known English jams was hawked around the country, made, bottled, and labelled in this land of deceit and make-believe.

Where the foreigner is concerned the Japanese have no scruples; their moral code is framed entirely to suit Japanese interests, 'whatever is good for Japan is right', a vicious and immoral belief evolved from the fiction that the Emperor and the Constitution were divine and above all standards of right and wrong.

In copy and imitation the Japanese have no equals; at the same time their inventive genius has come into play and they can place to their credit a number of outstanding creations. Prior to the war about eighteen thousand patent applications passed through the Patents Bureau in Tokio, many of them of uncommon merit, such as a magnet steel that created a stir in the electrical world and was bought by the Bosch Magneto Company in Germany. A non-dazzling electric light bulb was another of their inventions, an electric battery for which an American company paid two hundred thousand pounds, a non-peeling paint, and an electric organ that you could play without touching the keys, just by passing your hand through the air in front of it.

The observer in Japan is impressed with the utter disregard for human life; factory conditions are appalling; a one-hundred-hour week was quite common, for it is the work that matters, not the individual. Trade unions do not exist in Japan, and so low wages, long hours, and barbaric living conditions exercise full sway.

Now, this same disregard for the individual was exemplified in the fighting services, evolved from the fixed belief, handed down from time immemorial, in the divinity of the Emperor, the imperial heaven-descended house, as the highest embodiment of authority and will. The philosophy of dying for the Emperor and the nation was, and probably still is, the highlight of the Japanese moral code, or *bushido,* a code that has certain good qualities, for it requires its followers to live with Spartan simplicity, luxury is deprecated, and the life of the man, as such, is mere dross. Followed to its noble and logical conclusion, *bushido* would embody the best ideals of old-time chivalry, simplicity, Spartan living, loyalty, honesty, and the many qualities that go to make up the perfect life. But the Japanese and *bushido* have gone agley, and the ideals it would inspire react only to the advantage of Japan, and he who signs a treaty with the Japanese, or concludes a commercial arrangement, must realize that its terms would not be kept where they conflict with home interests.

Arising out of this moral standard is the loss of dignity and prestige, or 'face' as it is known in the East. Some examples of how this works on the individual, as well as on the nation as a whole, throw sidelights on Japanese character.

After the Sino-Japanese War of 1894, the Japanese took over the Liao-Tung peninsula on the Chinese mainland, a strategic point that gave them the requisite grip on Korea and Manchuria; but Russia thought otherwise, and, in company with Germany and France, notified Japan that the occupation of Port Arthur constituted a menace to China and rendered the independence of Korea illusory. The Japanese submitted to this formidable combine, for no other decision was possible at this stage. Western reputation for square dealing would not have sustained a shock but for the fact that Russia herself occupied Port Arthur two years later!

The Japanese Emperor's rescript relinquishing Port Arthur sheds a ray of light on Japanese reaction. They had lost 'face', and a number of officers and officials committed suicide; a young girl did the same in front of the shrine where the Emperor comes to bow before the spirits of those who have died on service, and similar acts occurred all over Japan.

This loss of 'face' is a form of mental de-bagging to which the Japanese people are peculiarly liable. Still another curious example of it came to my notice: a certain merchant went to the equivalent of his local borough council and put in a tender for a contract to supply goods. He failed to get the contract . . . so what did he do? You or I would probably have gone home and thought no more about it. But not so my friend; he had lost 'face' to such an extent, or so he thought, that he committed hara-kiri. That sort of thing does not always happen, but it did on this occasion.

If a loss of 'face' depresses a Japanese, even to the extent of committing hara-kiri, success has an even greater effect in the opposite direction. After each victory over China and Russia and scoring in other ways over the West, the Japanese took a much larger size in hats, and until the recent war the size

went on increasing. Our alliance with Japan and her participation in the First World War added greatly to this effect. As a matter of fact, they only consented to send a few torpedo-boats for convoy duties in the Mediterranean after some hard bargaining with the Allies.

From this inferiority complex and conceit I will turn to the people themselves, their home life and environment. Apart from its fairy-like beauty, Japan is a poor country; its wealth is its industry, and industry is bound up with Patriotism and fanatical allegiance to the emperor.

Life in a Japanese house makes for resistance and fortitude for it lacks all the comforts and modern amenities of the European dwelling. Paper walls and flimsy wooden partitions divide the rooms, the house is usually built on wooden piles and draughts howl up through the cracks and crevices, whilst there are no stoves or fireplaces to give out heat, only braziers of charcoal, which, if you close the doors and wooden shutters to the windows, might easily result in your death by asphyxiation. There are no armchairs or sofas, you squat on the floor with your heels doubled up behind, and meals, delicate and tasty though they are, come in on tiny tables six inches high, and it is a dinner without tablecloths, knives, forks or spoons. The meal in the Japanese house of quality, is served by waiting maids who kneel on the floor and hand the guest the various dishes, which comprise, tea, raw fish, soups, lotus buds, lobster, meats fried, stewed or roasted, cakes of several degrees of sweetness, and fruit. During the course of the meal and at the end of it you cannot get rid of the impression that it is a doll's party, and the presence of geisha girls, who come in to most dinner-parties, enhances that idea.

This simplicity of home life, meals, and Spartan living leads to endurance, and the people are far more able to put up with hardship and rough-and-ready living than Western races. As a nation, ninety-five per cent of the Japanese people are physically fit and capable of withstanding almost any hardship they may be up against. The soldier is tough, and a story told me by an American officer illustrates this. The commanding officer of a Japanese regiment took his unit on a twenty-nine-hour march, without rest. It led them up hill and down dale, with just the five-minute hourly halts, and called for stamina to stay the course. At the close of the twenty-nine hours, the American thought it was time for a little rest and refreshment, and mildly protested when the Japanese colonel casually remarked that the regiment was going on outpost. "You see," he said, "my men already know how to sleep; I'm training them to keep awake!"

I think that some, at any rate, of the faults and failings of the Japanese can be traced to the lack of any real religion. The prevalent belief is Shinto and it belongs only to Japan. It has neither books nor any code of ethics and is built up on two elements—reveration for the imperial throne and ancestor worship, with adoration for Nature. It teaches mainly obedience, but is devoid of the ethical teachings of Christianity, the Moslem faith or Buddhism, with the result that the Japanese philosophy of life is shallow and unstable.

Taking them by and large the Japanese people have glaring vices and defects that can never be removed so as to make them fit to play a trusted part in the East and the world in general.

The above leads me to talk of the Emperor and all that the ruler means and

implies in Japan. He is the pivot on which the life of the nation turns and a personality without equal in the world.

Behind the Japanese war machine which they moulded to perfection since the war with Russia in 1904–5, and the fanatical self-sacrifice of the armed forces; behind, and also above, the whole strange structure of the island empire and its robber war lords, is this one man. Holding, until the Japanese collapse, more power than anyone else in the world, he was commander-in-chief and god, a despot without limits, for, as already remarked, he was, and is, considered to be divine.

The Japanese Emperor is more enigmatic than the rulers of Russia and Germany ever were, more totalitarian than either of them, a supreme being and, in many ways, the most extraordinary ruler of modern times. What are the secrets of the status of this Emperor of the Sunrise? What exactly does he stand for, even now that the Japanese have been defeated and overwhelmed by the Allies?

In the first place, the Emperor, who chose his own name, meaning 'Brilliant Peace', belongs to an imperial dynasty which has reigned in unbroken line for two thousand six hundred years; he is the one hundred and twenty-fourth Emperor claiming descent from Amaerasu, Goddess of the Sun. Hirohito owns about forty-five palaces in the country, the largest of them in Tokio. He must be the greatest landowner on earth, since, in theory at any rate, he owns the whole of Japan. He is fabulously rich, so much so that it would be impossible to compute his personal wealth.

Until the defeat of Japan, Hirohito could lay claim to being the richest man in the world. His yearly income, on which tax was never levied, exceeded twenty million pounds; included in his real estate was most of the commercial area of Tokio and other large cities, whilst he held blocks of shares in industrial and trading companies. When a new one came into being a substantial part of the share capital went to the Emperor, as an act of loyalty and grace, and as portent of good luck. With it all, Hirohito's personal habits were simple and inexpensive. With approximately two million pounds a month coming in, his clothes were few, he had no liking for jewellery, and his home-made wrist-watch was worth less than a sovereign.

His status is so holy and inviolable that many of his subjects never saw him. Any who were admitted to audience must keep the eyes lowered and converse in so low a tone as to resemble a whisper, and the breath of the visitor must be kept drawn in. When this fantastic creature went out no one must look down upon him, all upper windows were lowered and blinds drawn. When any of the imperial family stayed on the mainland of Asia, in Korea or Manchuria, the top floors of the hotel were automatically taken over so that none might be above and nearer to heaven.

Such was the power of this sun-emperor legend, and the respect engendered through barbaric centuries, that an official who unwittingly caught sight of the Emperor committed suicide; an airman who inadvertently flew over the palace in Tokio did likewise, and the chauffeur who took the wrong turning in a country village put an end to his life . . . he had lost 'face', and the crime could only be expiated at the altar, as it were, of the national divinity.

Actually Hirohito, who is forty-six, is quite a simple, friendly man, who rises early, neither drinks nor smokes, and has no expensive tastes.

Like so many of his subjects, he is short-sighted and wears large goggles, is a great reader, fond of swimming, and his hobby is the collection of rare seaweeds and marine specimens, whilst he annually inaugurates a poetry competition in which, naturally, a member of the imperial family ranks above all others.

Hirohito has once spoken on the radio, to announce the surrender of Japan in the recent war; hitherto he had been far too holy for such utterances. He was not allowed the telephone, the maroon colour reserved for his car was sacred, and during the war only he and his family could use the superlative air-raid shelter.

Emperor-worship is a real and potent factor in Japan, and the national cult of Shinto, 'The Way of the Gods', picturesque in times of peace but in war something that distorts and colours the entire national outlook. It holds most of the meaning of morale, it puts much of the fanaticism into fighters dedicated to death rather than capture, it has all the strength of a religion. This belief in their divine right, as represented by the Emperor, is in practice a more slavishly totalitarian cult than Nazism or Fascism. To give an example of how the 'Way of the Gods' can work out, when the earthquake of 1923 occurred in Japan and did to Tokio what Super-Fortresses did later on, the Japanese said the Koreans were responsible and promptly massacred eight thousand of them. The Emperor could have intervened, but did not. At the same time it is doubtful if he knew anything about it; he was hedged round with restrictions of every kind, and was cognisant of what went on only through the reports of his ministers.

I have seen the Japanese from various angles and know the fairy-tale palace of Hirohito, with its steep, green slopes and turreted walls, a city within a city, but now unlike its old imperial self.

Here lived, and perhaps still lives, aloof and detached, but under the eye of the Allied Command, an ordinary, quiet, bespectacled, married man, divine by right, and diabolical in the influence he can still wield over the lives of one hundred and two million Japanese. Here is a man still so reverenced that his underclothes are worn only once and then presented to the favoured few; still a divinity-dictator who is a mixture of king, pope, and president rolled into one.

Despite the profound and widespread Emperor-worship, as it still is in 1946, were Hirohito to be properly de-bunked, brought out into the open, and forced to do the Allied bidding; had he, from the termination of hostilities, been compelled to sign the surrender, it would have had a profound effect upon the Japanese people . . . it would have meant the real sunset of Japan.

CHAPTER SIX

A wonderful bean—The Willow Pattern porcelain land—I quit the *Empress of Japan*—A flying leap to liberty—In Hong Kong and Canton—Sidelights on the Chinese—Amazing surgery—The walking restaurant—Solomon and Chinese judges—White mice on the menu—Chinese humour; grim and gay—To Singapore; and on to South Africa—A record one-man breakfast.

WHILST in Yokohama the Japanese carried out a medical inspection of the ship; five little Jap officers, three of them doctors, came into the crew's quarters, looking like mechanical toys dressed up in tight-fitting uniforms which gave the impression of having been 'made in Germany'. They were pompous little people, and the brand of Jap army discipline, imported from Germany, had left its mark upon them. They took notes in pocket-books as diminutive as themselves, and then solemnly filed out of the fo'c'sle . . . leaving behind them the shadow of the coming Japan.

From Yokohama and Tokio we pursued a leisurely course through the Inland Sea, calling at various ports on the way, Kobe and Nagasaki amongst others.

At some of them we took on a quantity of soya beans in bags. I first saw them being swung on board at Nagasaki, little realizing that in after years, as a Consul-General in China, I should make close acquaintance with this amazing vegetable. Forty per cent consists of protein, an essential element in our diet; a further twenty per cent is composed of fat from which oils of various kinds are taken. What with the oils and the diet, eighty per cent of the annual crop of soya bean is used up in foodstuffs. All this I was unaware of at the time, as I stood there on deck in the quiet waters of the Sea of Japan, watching an ordinary common bean being swung on board—a bean that was to revolutionize the world. And I only discovered that it was the soya bean by asking one of my fellow seamen!

Now, this wonderful bean does all kinds of things; it is used in the mass production of motor-cars, which are stamped from plastic material made from it. Emergency rations, cigarette-cases, fountain pens, oilcake for cattle, synthetic rubber, soaps, paints, enamels, lubricating oils, and a score of other things that figure in our everyday life, are made cheaply from this miracle bean. The Chinese have always called it the 'Bean of Life'; they have known it for more than three thousand years, but its introduction into Europe was slow and clogged by scepticism and incredulity. Then later Henry Ford came on the scene, established a fifty-thousand acre ranch and spent millions of dollars in research into the uses of this bean . . . and handsomely has he and the world been repaid.

Surely Jack when he climbed the beanstalk in the fairy story never got the riches that could compare with those which the soya bean has given.

From the scenic angle the voyage after leaving Japan is not an inspiring

one. Yet in days gone by the ports of Macao, Foochow, Amoy, and others we were now leaving on the starboard bow were the starting point of the tea clippers which sped away to different parts of the world. These races took place in the days when the sailing ship was supreme, and of the many none was more thrilling than one in 1866, when five tea ships, carrying the first of the season's crop, left Amoy for Britain within three days of each other. With all sail set and under a cloud of canvas they ran a neck-and-neck race until, ninety days out, two of them entered the English Channel together. They both docked within fifteen minutes of each other; the rest of the party all arrived within forty-eight hours.

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The sailing ships have gone and in their place along the Chinese coast are gangs of pirates who infest the coves and inlets, and prey on the fishing craft and light steamers running between the ports where fish, fireworks, pirates and opium are now the chief stock in trade. More than three thousand junks form the fishing fleet, and they fill the harbours which, in the fifteenth century, were journey's end for the caravels and galleons coming for silk and tea.

It is an empty and uninspiring landscape, nothing to indicate that this is China as we see it depicted on tapestries, Eastern drawings and water-colours, with the quaint roofs, the elegant bridges, and the fantastic trees and foliage. Yet this land, that looks like a landscape in the moon, is the country of the Willow Pattern porcelain.

So I came to Shanghai and the Yangtse Valley, which is said to contain every raw material essential to the economic life of a nation. Japan had long determined to get hold of this valley, and eventually the whole of China, the aim being the regeneration of that country by Japanese agency. The idea started in 1895, when, after the too-easy war with China, the Japanese guns boomed out a salute to announce the birth of the new Far East . . . and a dawn of conquest. They were eager to seize the vast latent power in this Yangtse Valley; the riches and potentialities of which I have dealt with elsewhere.*

From Shanghai we headed for Hong Kong along the coastline that was the lodestar attracting the early explorers. It was here that the Portuguese traders in the sixteenth century opened commercial relations with China. At Macao they founded the first settlement of the Far East and held the Chinese trade monopoly until the eighteenth century. These old-world adventurers sought the riches of China and commenced the network of sea trade and land concessions that Western nations have woven along this coast.

It is a twenty-hour run from Shanghai to Hong Kong, where late in the afternoon we anchored in the majestic and mountain-girt harbour; here, in this monument to British commercial enterprise in the Far East, I was to break away from the *Empress of Japan* . . . and go down through the China Sea to Singapore.

Although I had been only a month with the ship I had gone through such a series of adventures and excitements during that hectic period as would have been enough for Don Quixote himself.

* *China—The Facts.* (Benn.)

The harbour was full of ships from the Seven Seas bringing wealth and trade to the commercial centre of southern China, where a hundred years ago dwelt only a few fishermen amid a nest of pirates. Hong Kong, astride the highway of world trade, harbours ships of all nations, and as liners cannot go up the Canton River to Canton and other ports, it is the shipping point for the trade of all that area with the world.

We remained some days in Hong Kong, but I would not leave the ship on arrival; I determined to do so the night before she left on the return voyage to Vancouver. After much reflection and careful watching on successive days and nights I found out that the gangway leading down to the water was guarded by a quartermaster and that none could get past him without scrutiny. I should have a small bundle with my worldly effects, and the sight of that would create suspicion and lead to awkward questions. It was therefore necessary to strike the right moment when he would be temporarily absent.

How to get to the gangway, evade the vigilant quartermaster, and board a sampan down below were vague and uncertain . . . but by observation I discovered that he went aft for coffee about 9 p.m. and would be absent a few minutes. So the night before she was due to sail I chose an air shaft on the fo'c'sle which commanded a view of the gangway. Behind it I would hide, and watch for the quartermaster to go aft for his coffee.

When darkness fell I took up my position there, and as I crouched behind the air shaft I thought what a quiet night it was, after the tremendous nights we had passed in the north Pacific gales. Then all was the booming of hundreds of tons of water as they cannoned into the ship; now the order was reversed, the ship was anchored in sight of shore, and the sea lapped the sides with a musical murmur which came pleasantly to my ears. Around me lights twinkled from ships in the harbour, whilst from the shoreline to the summit of Victoria Peak shone a myriad other lights, telling of clubs and houses and hotels, clustering on the slopes. It looked a kindly world; what might be awaiting me there I knew not, but the morrow would tell.

Anxiously I watched the gangway, but the quartermaster remained stolid and obstructive. The minutes went on and anxiety was crystallizing more and more into desperation. At last, when I felt that anything was better than further suspense, the quartermaster turned and walked aft.

Now was the golden opportunity. I dashed down the iron ladder on to the well-deck, crossed it in a bound or two through the steel doorway into the alley and so to the gangway where the quartermaster kept watch. Taking the gangway ladder in a flying leap of three and four steps at a time I gained the bottom; there were sampans moored alongside, and on to the first one I leapt, jumping in and out of them, to the amazement of the sampan owners, until I gained the one on the outer edge. The Chinese boatmen were wondering what it was all about . . . this flying descent upon them in the quiet of the night . . . and their reaction to it was a tremendous chattering at the lightning figure that passed over their craft.

It was now or never; I had reached the sampan moored on the shore side of the crowd, and flinging myself into his boat held up a silver dollar and told the owner to make for the shore. The dollar did it, and he bent to with a will. In the meantime what had happened on board the *Empress of Japan*? The

THE "GHAZI" WHO WAS OUT TO KILL

THE FORT AT CHITRAL

WILD BOARS CASADE OUT OF THE JUNGLE AT UDAIPUR

A FOURTEEN-FOOT CROCODILE

quartermaster had returned to his post, obviously called back by the hullabaloo and commotion going on, and apprised, no doubt, that someone had left the ship unauthorized. I heard orders being shouted and this galvanized me into still greater activity, and between my sampan man and myself we lowered all previous records. Ghostlike in the moonlight, we glided across the bay, and in a few minutes pulled alongside the landing-stage leading up to the Hong Kong Club, the big banks, and imposing buildings that seemed to have been put there to emphasize the gulf that lay between us.

I paid off the sampan, ran lightly up the stone steps; there was no one about, but once beyond the quayside I quickened my walk, for I had to find a hiding-place until the morning, when I would go over to Kowloon, on the mainland of China, and wait there for the ship to clear from Hong Kong. I knew that a hue-and-cry would be raised, the shore police would be warned, anything might happen. . . . I must get away until it had died down.

I made my way up into the town and walked along one of the lower streets, where I found a small Chinese hotel and restaurant frequented by sailors and shoremen who wanted something cheap and good. It was run by a couple of Chinese, in spotless white jackets and trousers and with the pleasant smile common to the Celestial. Could I get a bed here! Why, certainly. And so I paid in advance for a good spring bed, with clean sheets and blankets, in a large room where there were three other beds. The price was a dollar and a half for the seven days, and meals could be had downstairs at anything from sixpence to a shilling, according to what you had.

It was a relief to settle down; here I was alive and well, with twenty dollars in my pocket, and a good place to eat and sleep in. And, once the danger of apprehension was past, I could formulate plans for the next move.

From the windows of this little hotel I could glimpse the sea; there in the distance and the clear moonlight I saw the harbour, like a calm sheet of silver, in which lay the reflection of the moon and the twinkling stars overhead.

So far I had solved the difficulty; all I had to do now was to go over to Kowloon at daylight and stay there until nightfall, by which time the ship would have left. I slept soundly that night; how luxurious it was to stretch oneself in a soft and springy bed and to realize that, so far, all was well.

At daybreak I jumped out of bed, and even at that early hour was soon sitting down to a substantial meal of eggs and fried pork, with toasted bread and butter, and such tea as you only find in China. This, my first meal in Hong Kong, made up for the hardship and the rough and scanty fare on the ship; it was the first good meal I had had for three weeks and I felt it was worth while going through the rough times and tempestuous seas just for the sake of enjoying it. I told the Chinese proprietor that I felt all right after such a meal . . . he beamed with delight . . . and became my friend.

I made my way down to the waterfront and stepped on board a Chinese ferryboat. I mingled with the throng, and the fact that I was a stranger and in semi-sailor dress did not attract any undue attention, for there were people of all sorts and descriptions passing to and from Kowloon directly the ferry service was opened at daylight.

I spent the day in Kowloon, in the streets and amongst the shops, and at sundown came to the water's edge, to find the *Empress of Japan* was no longer in

the harbour; there in the distance was the empty buoy to which she had been moored. I could go back to Hong Kong with the danger of being hurried off to prison substantially reduced; the anxiety and tension lifted like a cloud.

I went back to my little hotel, where the proprietor welcomed me with another of his cheery smiles . . . and, what was more to the point, served up a tasty dinner in the dining-room bar downstairs on the ground floor. All the time men kept coming into the place and going out; it was ten o'clock at night and still things were busy; the two Chinese were always glad to see friends and everyone greeted them with a cheery word and gesture. I talked to some of the customers; they were of all sorts, foremen and overseers working in the local factories under British control, soldiers of the British garrison, sailors from the ships in harbour, business was brisk amongst this quiet and well-ordered crowd. No one wanted to disturb the peace and tranquillity of the place, sitting round the little tables or leaning up against the bar.

Several times I was asked where I had come from and whither bound; was I working in Hong Kong?—a sympathetic interest displayed by one man when he meets another for the first time under such circumstances as we were in. I said I was ashore for a few days preparatory to going down to Singapore, and then adroitly turned the subject.

For the first time since I left the ship I began to feel at ease; I had, it seemed, got clear away and the thing was done with and over; the hospitable air of my new surroundings, the bright lights and the companionship of all these men made me feel myself again. I felt jovial and merry, and last night I was not sure whether I would get away or not; moreover, I had money, and the world is not a bad place when you have money in your pocket.

A soldier of the Welch Fusiliers came in for a nightcap; his regiment was stationed in Hong Kong and he had been buying some Chinese silks in the shops which he spread out on the table. He surveyed them lovingly as he sipped his drink and we got into conversation. He was the typical old-time British soldier, full of the pride of regiment, of the 23rd Foot, and their record. "Our colours aren't large enough," he said, "to contain all our battle honours . . . we have sixty-three of them . . . no other regiment has as many as mine."

Sometimes I took my meals in the streets of the Chinese quarter, for in Hong Kong and Canton you have the perambulating restaurant; a coolie carries a huge wickerwork table on his back, filled with a collection of stale fish, shark's fins, liver, meats boiled, baked and roast, with spices of every kind to tempt the appetite. The restaurateur puts his basket table down in the roadway, the customer chooses the dishes, pays the price, and the restaurant goes on its way again. There is a varied choice: grilled rats, or baked or boiled if preferred; they are invaluable in cases of baldness a Chinese friend told me, while a stewed black cat, he said, will ward off a fever.

It was all-absorbing getting to know these Chinese people, the different trades and professions, probing their innermost lives and seeing how Western knowledge in many things is a child compared to the ancient wisdom of the East. I came into contact with doctors, who have their own ideas on medicine and its application. Today in the West modern medicine and surgery can accomplish results which would have amazed our forefathers. In hospitals and houses wonderful operations are being carried out almost daily, rebuilding

maimed bodies for the job of living. A hundred years or so ago some of these transformations would have been called 'black magic'.

Here in China I met an old Chinese, spectacled, wrinkled, dentist as well as doctor, who became my friend. "Our doctors are very wise," he told me one day. "They have found that the body consist of three hundred and sixty-seven squares, each square corresponding to a particular working part of the human machine." In searching for a disease the Chinese doctor punctures a square with a needle, examining the blood, and if he happens to pick the wrong one he goes on to the next.

One day I visited my friend and found a patient in his room suffering from acute toothache. I saw no sign of any dental instruments. His methods were extraordinary. First of all he took a tiny quantity of white powder, the smell of which reminded me of a mixture of cedarwood and camphor, between finger and thumb and applied it over and round the tooth, rubbing it into the gum. This part of the operation continued for about three minutes, after which the dentist waited for his magical powder to take effect. At the end of another ten minutes he applied finger and thumb to the tooth, working it gently backwards and forwards. "The tooth is a bad and wicked one," he said to me, "but I will get it out, for knowledge is stronger than force." Almost while he spoke, and within a space of thirty seconds, the tooth was removed as cleanly as a cork from a bottle, but with far less effort than is sometimes called for with recalcitrant corks. I was amazed at the simplicity of the operation.

"Can you do that in your country?" the old dentist asked me.

"There is nothing as far as I know," I replied, my mind filled with painful pictures of drills and gas and forceps.

He was a jolly old doctor, with a working knowledge of English acquired in a missionary school in Shanghai. One day I went with him to a house where a man lay groaning with a swollen thigh, the result of a fall from his horse. At the invitation of my friend I examined the sufferer; the leg from knee to thigh was black and red, and swollen to quite an alarming size.

My old friend merely grunted. He took from his little bag a yellow bottle containing a yellowish substance that reminded me of butter. He proceeded to anoint the leg with this unguent, whatever it was, and then fastened a bandage lightly across the affected part. After about twenty minutes the bandage was removed and the ointment again applied, the doctor kneading the leg skilfully as though he were an expert masseur. By all ordinary laws of buffets and bruises these treatments should have been extremely painful; yet the patient appeared to be suffering not at all, and his face never relaxed one wrinkle from the ordinary stoical mask of the East. Apparently the application had a deadening effect which enabled the leg to be manipulated with an absence of discomfort.

At the end of twenty minutes the doctor stood back and clapped his hands. The bandage was removed . . . and hey presto! . . . the man stood up, a movement which prior to this amazing operation he was quite incapable of doing. He stood before me apparently as fit as I was myself.

Out of curiosity I went to see him the following morning. The swelling had subsided, the discoloration had practically gone, and the man walked up the street as though nothing had happened.

I could never induce my doctor friend to disclose the secret of his magic ointment, with which he turned maimed limbs into fit ones. Like most Celestials, he was as inscrutable as the Sphinx and I could get nothing out of him.

* * * * *

After a long day wandering about Hong Kong, and elsewhere, making all sorts of discoveries, I would return to my little hotel, have a square meal and turn into my comfortable bed to sleep soundly until broad daylight and the sunshine came streaming into the room. Outside the crows were cawing, the street was already alive with early-morning workers, the sunlight played amongst the hangings, and the booming of a gun told that daylight had officially commenced. Then a wash and brush-up in the communal lavatory, a tasty breakfast, and I was off again to study life and make fresh discoveries.

Ten or twelve hours by water from Hong Kong is Canton, which lies at the mouth of the third largest river in China—the Pearl, a misnomer, for its waters are thick and muddy, and quite unlike the jewel. I found it a place where three-quarters of a million people live on the water; they are born on the water, and leave it only at intervals to dispose of their catches of fish, or to make purchases in the city.

The sampan is the predominant craft, partly covered in with matting. Living-room is limited, and it is astonishing how a family of six to a dozen or more can exist in so cramped a space. I have seen a sampan housing a husband and wife, five or six children, the two mothers-in-law, three aged relatives, a couple of dogs, a cat, a dozen fowls, household goods and boxes, and a tiny altar on which joss-sticks were burnt to propitiate the gods.

The women are the cooks, crew, and helmsmen; indeed, on that and all the other sampans woman was the dominant note. She worked the tiller, lighted the fire and prepared the meals, mended the sails and scrubbed the decks, washed the clothes and rocked the cradle. Her dress was simple; it was just a loose jacket of blue or black cloth, with a pair of baggy trousers. Shoes she dispensed with, and ornaments were unusual, but she devoted a lot of time and attention to her hair; she combed and oiled her tresses and adorned them with coloured pins and ribands. She was the mother, the housekeeper, the sailor, and the master of the ship, and looked the part.

Whether it be in Canton or elsewhere it is a never-ending source of delight to roam at will amongst this strange population, and especially in Hong Kong, with its three hundred thousand Chinese who live and keep shop in the narrow intersecting streets which are stair-stepped, or slope down so sharply that they are only possible to those on foot or in sedan chairs.

The fact that I was a foreigner and a Christian made no difference whatever; China is tolerant of peoples and countries, and the Chinese see something worth having in every race and faith in the world. They have no objection to missionaries provided they keep to their work, so that Buddhism and Islam, Protestantism and Catholicism, flourish side by side.

After having travelled in more than fifty countries and come into contact with innumerable races, religions, castes and creeds, I consider the Chinese are the most far-seeing and sagacious people on earth. Years after, when an

Assistant Judge of the Supreme Court for China at Shanghai, I recalled those early days in Hong Kong, and the neighbouring ports, where Chinese realism can be seen, especially in the Mixed Court. Here you might sometimes have four or five interpreters, the most important people in court. There are scores of dialects spoken in China. For instance, a man from Peking cannot understand a word said by a man from Canton, and one from western China is lost with an inhabitant from Shanghai. In the province of Fukien alone there are as many as eighty dialects. All this means that often every word has to be translated in and out of half a dozen languages before everyone concerned can understand.

Women witnesses are even more difficult in China than in England; they are afraid to give any but favourable evidence, for they live always under the shadow of the knife. However badly a Chinese woman's husband treats her, she would never dream of giving evidence against him. Even when he goes out with another lady it is her duty to sit up for him all night if need be, and, on his return, to bow before him to the earth and provide him with a good supper.

Chinese witnesses are often unreliable. In the Chinese courts no man is sworn, since Chinese judges wisely hold that if a man intends to lie no oath will stop him. In the European courts the oath is administered according to the man's faith, a library of sacred books being kept for the purpose. In a Chinese court no man can be convicted until he has confessed, and he is expected to do so when the evidence is clearly against him.

I found that Chinese judges work very much like Solomon. Whilst I was Consul-General in Chinese Turkistan three men suspected of theft were shut up by a Chinese judge in a temple. He directed them to kneel with their hands placed on the wall, and said that when the door was opened the thief would have a black brand on his forehead. At the appointed time, as he had proclaimed, one man did bear a sooty mark. Each had placed his hands on the temple wall, previously covered with soot, but only the thief had put his fingers to his forehead, thinking to remove the tell-tale sign.

The Chinese philosophy of life is comforting and peaceful; they like to be happy in their homes, to have children who will revere their memory and minister to their wants in the next world. They are not ambitious and pushing as we understand the terms; they are not keen on exploration or development, they worry very little over public matters, and, unlike the European, are not keen on looking for something new. As merchants the Chinese are unrivalled, but they don't go in for corners, booms, and 'bears'. Conservatism is the hall-mark of their nature, yet they can adapt themselves to any circumstances and are quick at acquiring knowledge. I always found Chinese workmen first rate at any job given them; they might burn joss sticks at their favourite temple or in the quiet of their own home, but they would drive a car and take down the engine with the best European mechanics.

Their general get-up may be a strange and unfamiliar one, and even though they eat weird food with chopsticks, which defy most Western people to handle, they can overhaul a wireless set or play a concertina with the best.

There is a strange and indefinable beauty about China which you meet at every turn. It may be a wonderful stone bridge thrown over a narrow stream

in exactly the right place to fit in with the surrounding landscape, its piles carved with large stone dragons and its slender arch framing the distant hills. Or it may be a curved line of pattern running round a coolie's rice bowl, or a piece of carving in front of a shop. In some form or another this beauty is present everywhere in China, and he who does not understand or love it will never know anything of the Chinese people.

The Chinese are companionable, and in the evening, when business is ended, they sit out in front of their shop with wife and family, sipping tea and eating dried fish and rice. It was all very homely, and I got to know the Chinese in their natural surroundings and as they really are.

Essentially a homely people, they love the family life and are always a little concerned with those who fail to take unto themselves a wife . . . and live happily ever afterwards, sure in the knowledge that they will have someone to look after their needs in the hereafter. The gay bachelor, flitting from flower to flower, kissing the honey sweet from red lips as he goes along, is unknown to them, for a maxim of Chinese social life decrees marriage as a duty, although it is a purely commercial transaction. No love-making marks its inception, no letters protest undying affection, with all the sweet nothings which you and I have all written, and will continue to write until the crack of doom. There is no love match about it, for it is not run on those lines, the affair being one of adjustment between families and the go-between who is deputed to arrange suitable matches.

Once a girl leaves her home she passes into another world, a new sphere of which she has no previous knowledge, where she meets her mother-in-law, who may be the devil incarnate, as I believe they sometimes are in the West. The girl also meets, for the first time, the man to whom she has been given. He, likewise, has misgivings, since he is uncertain of joy or sorrow, tranquillity or strife, in the future, so that it is all very much on the knees of the gods.

In Hong Kong, Canton and other towns everyone seems to live in the street, for a Chinese makes of it his club, his meeting-place for friends and relations, and his lounge. All the shops are open to the world; they have neither doors nor windows, and the shopkeeper displays his name and what he sells by means of long coloured boards hanging down in front, some of them lacquered and of great artistic beauty.

They are sympathetic and considerate towards their own people. In Britain and most other countries an employer, in times of slump, gets rid of his least desirable men. Not so in China . . . the best men are discharged before all others, for it is easy for them to find another job, but the inefficient one will have a hard task in placing himself again. Consideration for the man, and sympathy with him in his struggle, are the Chinese aim. Not a bad idea for some employers in Britain and elsewhere.

Another fascinating trait in the Chinese character is the reverence and fondness for trees. A war lord once told me he had planted one hundred thousand of them in the extensive grounds of his home.

"As for me," I said modestly, "I've just put in twelve hundred in my consulate grounds."

"You have, indeed, a wonderful passport to Heaven," he replied, shaking me cordially by the hand. "We shall undoubtedly meet there."

The general left this world much sooner than he expected, and the sword, which ever hangs over the head of those who rule by fear and violence, descended upon him one day. His ambition overreached itself, the central authorities were stirred to action, and the body of the would-be dictator was spread-eagled on the city gates for all men to see . . . and take warning from.

Chinese mentality is always amusing and not infrequently of value, although at times it may be a little disconcerting with its intimate questions as to one's family life and history. This inclination is common to every Oriental, for he wants to know all about the person he is meeting, and exhibits no reserve in probing matters of intimacy, which in the West are considered to mark only the closest stage of friendship.

As an example of this, I was one day visiting a 'tuchun', or military governor, who had ambitions towards the purple and was virtually king over a large part of western China. My host took an interest in me, he enquired about my domestic existence, when I had arrived in the world, and sundry details as to my present circumstances, adding, with some significance, that I must certainly be married! On my denying the soft impeachment he asked me, nevertheless, if I had any children, and when I told him that here again I was a defaulter, he said, "Then what in the world have you been doing all this time?"

Despite their interrogation, the Chinese never lack a sense of humour . . . and sometimes it is unconscious humour.

I had a curious example of it years later when British representative in Central Asia. The Chinese army possessed no regular medical service, neither in the outlying provinces are there limitations to those aspiring to become doctors, and anyone may set up as a healer. I had occasion to discharge for inefficiency a groom, who shortly afterwards joined the provincial army and posed as a medical man amongst the soldiery. One day I went out to call on the war lord, and when near his headquarters noticed my erstwhile groom presiding over a large stall well stocked with herbs and potions. A crowd of soldiers, civilians and women was assembled at this open-air consulting room and dispensary.

Before dealing out the medicine he examined the patient's wrist and tongue, which he had often seen my assistant surgeon do. Then he glanced through a book in his hand, following this up with a selection of medicine, as if in accordance with the book of the words.

I was curious to see that book, and had it brought to me, when it turned out to be one of Guy Boothby's novels stolen from my library!

Another time I was invited to a banquet with a Chinese governor who, in accordance with diplomatic custom, received me on the outskirts of his capital and personally conducted me to the place prepared for my accommodation. Carriages are scarce in Central Asia, but the governor produced a Russian landau, drawn by three horses abreast, a wheezy vehicle that had probably begun life at a respectable livery stables in Petrograd. Into this state coach we climbed and proceeded at a hand gallop through streets lined with troops and police.

Suddenly and without warning, our equipage parted in twain, and I found myself, after turning a complete somersault, sitting on the recumbent governor, while the front part of the carriage on its two wheels, with driver and footman

still on the box, was carrying on down the street. My host was greatly upset at this ignoble entry, but he soon saw the humour of it and enjoyed the joke.

A few days later I dined in state with the commander-in-chief, who was not on good terms with the governor, and when I related the incident and explained that, unfortunately, I had landed on top of his colleague, he remarked, "And quite the right place for Your Excellency to occupy."

His sense of humour went further, which one day, in my case, took an original form. This Chinese soldier was a character and, amongst other things, he always celebrated the last day of the old year with a banquet, when he would review the past as a Prime Minister discourses on the future at a Lord Mayor's inaugural dinner. I had often remarked on the excellence of Chinese cooking, for my friend knew how to look after his guests and invariably put on a good table. These complimentary remarks of mine were, in due dourse, to react upon me, and my partiality for new dishes was destined to take a startling form.

New Year's Eve came and I was invited to the feast that took place in a vast dining-room filled with quasi-Chinese furniture, lacquerwork, beautiful silk scrolls, and slabs of green jade, filched by forced labour from the jade mines of Khotan in southern Turkistan, and a galaxy of *objets d'art*. With it all there was that curious and indefinable mixture of splendour and squalor so often seen in the Orient; the windows were broken, floors matted with dirt and holes in the ceiling through which you could have passed a bucket.

The dinner was up to the standard of my friend's hospitality and he had evidently gone all out to make the occasion one to be remembered. I lost all count of this repast after the twentieth dish, but being in good fettle, and having starved for a couple of days prior to it, I felt able to stay the course. There were sharks' fins, bamboo roots, stags' tendons, *bêche-de-mer*—a form of sea-slug with as many legs as a centipede—eggs preserved in chalk—the older the egg the greater its edible value—birds' nest soup, roast pork crackling, and a score of other things.

He had given careful thought to the wine, and knowing that champagne was my favourite tipple, had thoughtfully laid in a stock . . . but assured me the wine that really mattered was a brand of his own concoction, containing the ingredients of seventy-four different herbs . . . and as a connoisseur I would know a good thing when I tasted it. He was too genial and sporting a character to let down, so I drank and praised the wine . . . but inwardly decided that the taste for it must be an acquired one.

There was a startling and fearsome addition to come. A large salver of exquisite workmanship was brought in and placed with much ceremony in front of the host, who rose with all the dignity of one about to make a historical pronouncement. He smiled benignly at me . . . recalled my love of the good things of this world, and added that he had something worthy of my taste and steel. With that he passed the salver to me . . . on it were a number of newly-born white mice, which were to be dipped in treacle and swallowed whole like a prairie oyster.

My reputation as the British representative, as a reputed gourmet, and man of the world was at stake . . . but I could do nothing about it . . . and the squirming dish remained untouched.

Despite my lamentable failure, the host enjoyed the joke hugely, so what

with the mice, the wine, and the other shocks, I shall always look upon that New Year's Eve dinner as something I would not try again.

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With these Celestials fascinating sidelights were thrown on various aspects of Chinese life and being, especially on the principles and precepts of ancestor worship, a widespread form of filial piety that is the basis of Chinese morality. There are curious customs linked with ancestor worship; the spirits passing from this world to the next must be ministered to, their wants supplied, and their descendants are responsible that they do not lack creature comforts. Clothing, food, and money are to be provided for their use. There are striking instances of this.

A Chinese acquaintance of mine, who closely observed the tenets of ancestor worship in anticipation of his demise, left directions that his expensive car, complete with dummy chauffeur and footman, should be burnt at his funeral so that he might step into it on the other side. Neither he nor the chauffeur, who knew all about magnetos and big ends, could see anything ridiculous in the idea.

Yet another I came across, who was something of an epicure, ordered that a kitchen, equipped with modern cookers, should be sent up in smoke, so that it might be reincarnated ready for his first meal in the next world.

The evil spirits, too, have to be guarded against. I once knew a Chinese who had no living relatives. Something happened to upset his mentality and he hanged himself from a tree. This created a serious situation, for demoniacal spirits would take up their residence in the tree . . . so it was removed root and branch by the local authority . . . and the spirit of the lost wandering up and down in the still hours of the night had to go elsewhere.

These stories show that whilst China is prepared to accept the purely mechanical gifts of the West, when it comes to ideas she prefers her own.

On a first visit to China, British people as a rule are so surprised to find cities and factories and motor-cars that they sigh, "Ah, China has become modernized and European and ordinary." Nothing could be further from the truth. All that Western people mean by civilization sits as uneasily on a Chinese as a coster's feather hat on a Mayfair dowager. China has taken certain articles from the West, but they make no real difference to her; they are just tacked on.

In many parts of China today even the mechanical gifts of civilization are scorned. People insist that if wide highways were built, motor and cart traffic would throw the coolie porters out of work. Those, like myself, who have seen strings of these skeleton-thin men, with dark scars on their shoulders where innumerable packropes have cut into the flesh, might feel inclined to welcome the abolition of their toil, but the Chinese sees nothing degrading in it. He has no objection to using his countryman as a beast of burden, and steps into a rickshaw, or piles his luggage on a coolie's back, as cheerfully as if the man were a mule.

I soon found that a good many things were the opposite in China, just as in Looking-glass Land. The saucer is placed on top of the cup of tea and not under it. White is the colour for mourning. The chief guest sits opposite his host,

never beside him, and every polite Chinese is careful to keep his hat on in the house, and on Chinese maps the south is marked instead of the north. These are superficial differences, perhaps, but they are symbols of the great 'differentness' of China.

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A Chinese never seems to be embarrassed, or at a loss what to do when in a position that might upset a European.

When on a special mission to western China a military officer dined with me one night, and on taking his seat at the table gave his richly bedecked and furred hat to an attendant. The man was encumbered with a carbine and a sword, and cast round for a peg on which to hang his master's headgear, but not perceiving anything suitable promptly put it on his own head, and there it remained until the general left.

The Chinese, too, have original ways of dealing with other peculiar situations, of which the braying donkey is one. Donkeys are used for riding and transport in China, and at night their braying is sometimes past praying for. But the Chinese have a remedy; it is said that a donkey can only bray when lifting and swinging his tail . . . it is the pivot on which his vocal efforts turn; so the sagacious Chinaman ties a stone at the end of it, and, so far as donkeys are concerned, the night passes quietly.

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I had been happy in Hong Kong, but it was time to move on towards South Africa, which was now my definite goal. Moreover, I had come to my last dollar and was reduced to one frugal meal a day. This I took at noon and so spread the pangs of hunger over the twenty-four hours.

I began to try my luck amongst the ships, and have real food, for without it life is sapped out of one and the strength and desire to do hard work fade away. I tried several ships in the harbour, but there were no openings, they all had regular crews, men who did the voyage out and home. I must get a ship somehow, and one morning luck came my way. A sailor, with whom I had struck up an acquaintance, met me in the street, and told me of a cargo boat going down to Singapore. I marked her down . . . this time I would not run the risk of enquiring if hands were wanted . . . I would go aboard at night and stow away, heedless of the consequences.

The first thing was to get on board and hit off the right moment when I could carry out my plans, which were to take a sampan, row out to the *Patroclus*, for that was the name of the ship, and time my arrival there with the crew's evening meal, to which I banked on getting an invitation.

An admirable trait in the character of the sailor is his practical and kindly sympathy for those who are up against it; his attitude is one of hope and he gives his help on a human basis. To get on to the ship, evade the ship's officers, and stay on board, were the dominating questions. The afternoon of my attempt dragged on, until it began to get dark. Now was the time. I jumped on board a sampan and rowed out to the ship. The lights were already going

up in the officers' cabins and the fo'c'sle and I could see figures moving about the deck. The sampan drew alongside the gangway. . . . I paid the sampan man, ran quickly up the steps . . . there was no one on duty at the top . . . the first stage had been won. I went quickly aft, for the crew's quarters, I had ascertained, were under the poop. I walked straight in and before I could realize what was happening they had invited me to join them. So far things had worked out well, I was on board, and now came the second phase of my plan.

We chatted on, enjoying the stew, the vegetables, and the plum-duff, until it was quite dark. Then, and not till then, must I make the next move. Whilst coming along the well-deck from the gangway I had spotted a coil of hawser on the deck above the crew's quarters; after supper I would say good-night to my sailor friends, walk out as though going ashore, and make for the coil of rope, over which a tarpaulin was stretched. Within the coil I would hide . . . and emerge when the ship was well out in the China Sea.

Strange to say, it all went according to plan . . . I found myself ensconced in the coil, an uncomfortable hiding-place, for I had to sit down with my knees huddled up against my face. Luck was in, and a feeling of exhilaration possessed me . . . at any rate, I was on board, and that was something. I dozed fitfully . . . the ship's bell clanged the hours, until at last I was wakened from troubled dreams by the noise of footsteps round my hiding-place. This had a depressing effect upon my nerves, and once when the tarpaulin above me shook I was ready to jump up with fright. I say this because I don't wish to pose as any more courageous than the next man; I had faced all sorts of danger hitherto, but feel bound to confess that on that morning I was a bit nervous. There was a clamour on deck, with the shouting of commands and the tramping of feet. "The ship is off," I said to myself.

In a few moments I heard the screw churning in the water and then the unmistakable move which indicated that the ship was under way.

I determined to keep quiet until late in the day; then I would come up and beard the captain himself in his den. So the hours wore on, the crew were busy cleaning up and once they actually scrubbed the top of my tarpaulin. I thought what a fright they would have had if I had suddenly popped out.

Once or twice, when I thought the coast was clear, I cautiously raised the edge of the tarpaulin and looked out; the sun was going down, the fascination of this adventure grew and I abandoned all further caution. I climbed out of my coil, ran down the steps on to the well-deck and climbed those at the for'ard end. No one saw me . . . until I came to the door of an open cabin on the amidships deck . . . a man was seated at a writing-table who looked at me in amazement . . . and thereafter everything smiled. He was the chief officer, who, when he had recovered from his astonishment, listened to my tale of woe and took me still further for'ard to see the captain, who was having tea in his cabin under the bridge-deck.

The captain listened to all I had to say; his manner was kind and paternal. I could see that behind his steady gaze there was a good heart and sympathetic disposition, and he looked like a man who had himself seen the ups and downs of life. "Well," he said, "you can get to work, but you'll have to leave the ship in Singapore."

So off I went aft with the chief officer to the crew's quarters, and was handed

over to the boatswain, who allotted me a bunk and said I must turn-to in the morning. My fears left me; I was not to be passed on to the shore police . . . I had struck the right ship after all.

I slept well that night and at daybreak started on my new job—chipping paint from the iron decks amidships, the hours being from four in the morning until six in the evening, with intervals for meals. We were passing through the China Sea, past the Celebe Islands and the Dutch East Indies, where the old-time explorers had come in their caravels on the quest for spices.

Early in June, after a calm and pleasant five days' voyage, the ship approached the island of Singapore, the harbour itself being large and picturesque, with gardens and groves, chines and clefts in the hills looking fresh and green, and above us a canopy of sunshine.

Here was Singapore, great bastion of British power in the Far East, a strategic point in defence, and the pivot on which the Empire turns in the Far East. A great *place d'armes* controlling seas on a perimeter where lie India, Australia, and New Zealand—territories representing three-quarters of the Empire and three-quarters of its population. Every year the seas round Singapore carried £1,000,000,000 worth of cargo to Britain. No others could compare with them in that respect. They carried the jute, wood, rubber, zinc, hemp, and many commodities which are the first essential to our industrial life and mainstay of our manufacturing districts. At any day in the year there were afloat upon the seas adjacent to Singapore over £150,000,000 worth of ships and cargoes belonging to Britain. Singapore . . . the Clapham Junction of the Pacific, with a volume of shipping greater than any other Eastern harbour, the key between East and West, the 'Portsmouth of the East'. Little did I think that in after years it would fall so easily to the greedy Jap, that we should lose 'face' here, from which it would take generations to recover, if ever.

This, like Gibraltar, Panama and Port Said, was one of the gateways of the world and soon to become our principal naval and military base in Asia. As the *Patroclus* steamed into the harbour to take up a berth at the jetty, I saw the flags of many nations flying from ships in port; it was a strange mixture of shipping—modern liners, grimy coal and cargo boats, sampans, Chinese junks, and small Malay sailing craft of the same cut and build as when the Portuguese first came to this goal of high adventure and established a Western outpost in the East.

Singapore has a romantic history; in 1850 it was a jungle infested with wild beasts, a malarial region inhabited by tribes whose business was war and who spent their time exterminating their fellow men. From that beginning Singapore rose to its high estate. Sir Stamford Raffles, a merchant-adventurer in the service of the East India Company, saw that our interests in Malaya would be eclipsed by the Dutch unless we took action. He found a strategic centre commanding the way to China; this, he said, would be the gateway to the East and the cross-roads between India, China, Australia and Japan. It was an island twenty-six miles long and belonged to the Sultan of Johore, from whom it was purchased in 1819. The foundation on which the safety of India and Australasia depended had been laid, and Singapore was put on the map for all time. When I came there it was already a city with a population of more than half a million.

On the wharf as we tied up all was hurry and bustle; steamers were taking on cargoes of tin and rubber, for this is the port that handles the majority of the world's supply in those raw materials.

I went ashore in brilliant sunshine, after a good midday meal on the ship. When you have eaten you feel a changed man; the stimulus of a good meal makes you see things in a different light, you no longer feel worse off than the rest of mankind, but able to enjoy life.

It was the hot weather in Singapore and so to economize I decided to sleep on the beach, until I could look round and choose my temporary home. So at night I retired to the beach under the stars with the sea booming in my ears. The shore was the rendezvous of beachcombers . . . and a legion of brown rats attracted by the wreckage and refuse thrown up by the waves. At night the shore was alive with these rats, advancing with little squeaks in almost military formation. They came from their holes in the earth, from ships, and from adjacent warehouses and sheds. We threw wreckage at them in a bombardment; the rats would scatter . . . but only for a time. Soon they resumed their formation and returned to the attack . . . scavengers, robbers, and bandits of the foreshore.

On the whole the beachcombers congregated together, deriving strength from company, so as to present a united front to the other underground army —the rats.

One old beachcomber was a character. He had evidently been a British seaman, perhaps put ashore from some ship as an incorrigible. He told tales of the Chinese coast and of pirates, of vessels he knew that had been hailed by innocent-looking fishing junks, only to reveal themselves as robbers who killed the crew, looted the ship, and then set it adrift.

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With the instinct of the born traveller I started to take in the various phases and aspects of Singapore, finding it a curious blend of the old and the picturesque, of the modern and the businesslike. The Singapore river, running through the settlement, separates the old from the new, the north from the south. Chinese and Malayan craft came up into the heart of the city, with cargoes from coasting steamers, most of it rubber, which was weighed and carefully checked over by officials, who used as their office and checking centre tiny houses on wheels which they ran from wharf to wharf.

To get about the city you took a rickshaw, if well off, for the heat did not encourage walking, and the quaint old horse-trams were left to the native population. Singapore being only a degree and a half from the equator the glare of the sun is constant, and at times you feel as though the life will be scorched out of you. The heat persists the whole year round; here are no varying seasons, and the thermometer only changes a degree or two from January to December.

Singapore resembles India with its diversity of races, creeds and languages. Of this cosmopolitan crowd more than half a million are Chinese; as the clearing house of the East its attractions are irresistible to the Chinese, who are first-rate traders and merchants, and can undercut even a Japanese. What is

more, they require very little to eat and drink; indeed, as a British trader put it, 'they can live on the smell of an oil rag'.

The Malay is a different type; he hates the strenuous life, work bores him, and he prefers the sunshine and quiet of the creeks, where he leads an idyllic life hampered by few needs. He has a charm of his own, and I used to contact him in his home, a house of grass mats on piles over the water, surrounded by coconut trees, with a wife who weaves his clothes and cooks his food, and for excitement he has cock-fighting. Life in this rustic Venice is simple and the Malay makes the most of it.

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At last came the time to leave Singapore and take the road leading to South Africa. Luck was with me, for one afternoon the agent of a shipping line came my way. I met him at the Sailors' Home, and, as though he had guessed what was going on in my mind, asked if I were looking for a ship. He was right in his surmise, and said he would give me a letter to the captain of a coasting steamer then in port, but leaving in a day or two for Port Darwin in Northern Australia. He suggested I should go and see the skipper at noon the next day, and with the punctuality born of impatience I found myself on the steamer some twenty minutes before the time. As I came aboard I flourished the letter and a seaman directed me to the captain's cabin, where I found the great man and presented the note.

He was quite different from the captains of ships I had hitherto encountered. . . . I stood there whilst he read the letter, and then, dispensing with formalities, he said, "Well, I think I can find you a job." He looked straight at me, there was no sternness or austerity in his gaze; I felt he was out to help, and in that assurance gathered courage. He asked me if I could paint! I sensed at once that this meant painting a ship and not a canvas . . . I visualized slapping paint on to walls of cabins and alleyways where the salt sea-water played hav and quickly turned them into rust.

I answered, "Certainly," without thinking of the catastrophic effect my efforts might later on produce. I had answered, and, at the same time, was startled at my own precipitancy; yet men, like women, react at once to emotions and possible illusions.

Thus I was installed on board the ship, with a berth in the second class, and a free hand to paint the names over officers' cabins, on the boats, and wherever white, red, or any other colour, was required. In fact, as the first officer remarked, I was beginning to cut a dash in the painting world.

We meandered leisurely along the coast, calling at Port Darwin and various ports which we either entered ourselves on our own responsibility,or a pilot came off and the ship would be surrendered to him . . . yet, as is the pilot regulation, if anything happened to the ship the captain was responsible and not the pilot!

It was an enchanting sea, dotted with islands, coconut trees lining the shore and secluded coves with beaches of pearl-grey pebbles where I met junks and pearling craft. Here were pearlers, men who went down for priceless pearls, clad only in a loincloth, winding their way to the bottom in that clear still

water, so clear that you can see forty feet down. Some of these divers could stay under water for three minutes; the strain on their lungs must have been tremendous and they deserved their shilling or so a day, especially when they had brought up a pearl worth perhaps a thousand pounds . . . or more.

The ports on the Australian coast gave access to the country known as the Kimberleys, for the colonization and development of which a committee was recently formed in London, on which I had the pleasure to serve with many distinguished men of mark and Empire.

The area of the Kimberleys, sixty million acres, is at present an undeveloped portion of the Empire, with immense potentialities, able to produce raw materials and foodstuffs for which we are now wholly, or in part, dependent on foreign countries.

Australia, in maintaining her white Australia policy, regards herself as the trustee of her empty lands for the white races of the world. Australia has before her the vision of becoming a great nation, predominantly British in stock, and this question of developing Australian tropical and sub-tropical regions is engaging the attention of the Commonwealth Government. The Australian Medical Congress have found that there is no inherent or insuperable obstacle in the way of permanent occupation of those areas of Australia by a healthy, indigenous white race.

Japan has always cast covetous eyes towards northern and north-western Australia, and should she rise again the old menace will return in more sinister form.

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It was an ideal sea we were passing through, a sort of dreamland, where the people know how to live; it seemed a perpetually sunny land, these islands, and the coastline which opens on to the wonderland of north-western Australia.

The days were always fine, crisp and clear; at night we would lounge on the deck and discuss impending events in far-away South Africa. There was much to see and much to talk about; always something enchanting on view and things to wonder at.

The rats on this ship were a nightly diversion, whilst some of the passengers were a source of wonder. One of them was a curious outsize in men, a gigantic Queenslander, who seemed to loom up like a memorial on the boat. The portentous part about him, however, was not his size or his Falstaffian appearance—it was his appetite, which was truly on the level of Gargantua. It filled him with an unpredictable amount of food and me with admiring amazement. One morning he casually ordered a dozen eggs, as though the request were an everyday affair of meal-time in mid-ocean. Believe it or not, the following morning he lowered his own record by finishing off eighteen eggs for breakfast! For a one-man show this performance must have taken some digesting.

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In and out of large and well-sheltered harbours, tarrying at many ports which are part of the rich farm and pastoral lands of the Kimberleys, where I

was able to see for myself the possibilities of development and colonization, we came to Fremantle.

Here I said good-bye to the captain and crew of the good ship on which I had painted my way from Singapore, and a few days later was lucky enough to join the *Cloncurry* bound for Melbourne, whence I would go to South Africa.

The *Cloncurry* was taking coal down the coast, shedding it here and there, but part of it was for her own engines, and it had to be shovelled and shot down into the stokehold. This was my job, and the work went on under the brilliant sunlight of the tropics until nightfall, when having sent down sufficient to satisfy the engine fires until the next morning, I left the gritty dust and roar of falling coal and retired for the night.

We rounded Cape Leeuin at the southern end of Western Australia and rolled our way across the Great Australian Bight to Adelaide and so to Melbourne. There, on leaving the *Cloncurry*, I heard quite by chance from a sailor whom I met on the wharf one morning, as men do meet others and get into conversation, that the skipper of the tramp steamer *Port Victoria*, then in dock, was trying an experiment. He intended taking a number of sheep of a special breed to Durban in Natal, on the chance of selling them there and making a profit on the deal.

This appeared to be just the opening for me, and I forthwith went down to the ship. She was like other tramp steamers that roam the Seven Seas looking for a cargo, her sides covered with rusty splashes, her iron decks sadly in need of a coat of paint, her general air being one of neglect... but if she took me to South Africa it was all I need worry about.

I learnt that the *Port Victoria* was homeward bound after a long spell of tramping and that the skipper was convinced there was money in the idea of the sheep, if it could be worked out. He was a heavy, dull sort of man who stared at me stupidly and did very little of the talking. I told him there was money in his idea and I could help him to that end . . . and so I was installed as shepherd on board a tramp steamer in the Indian Ocean, committed to a task of which I had no previous knowledge. Fortune, however, favours the brave, and in the fullness of time we came to Durban with the sheep in good fettle, only one having died on the thirty-six-day voyage—from old age as I diagnosed it.

THE PRESIDENT OF ANDORRA (CENTRE) WAS A JOVIAL HOST

THROUGH THE VALLEYS OF ANDORRA

A HOME IN LAPLAND

CHAPTER SEVEN

Through the Indian Ocean—Arrival at Durban—The flame of war—I join Kitchener's Fighting Scouts—The Buffalo Bill of South Africa—The Fighting Scouts; and some of their deeds—Stalking a witch-doctor—A hazardous mission—Haranguing four thousand warriors—The train-wrecker's fate—To England again.

ON the way we called at Reunion Island and Port Louis, Mauritius, where I caught a shark nearly twelve feet long.

Durban is one of the most pleasant and English towns in South Africa, but in those days to reach the port you had to cross the bar, and ocean-going ships had no choice but to anchor outside and await the arrival of a small and heaving tug, which hoisted not a flag of welcome but a basket of entry. Into this basket you stowed yourself and were then borne aloft to be dumped on the tug's deck with a bump. During this landing operation I swung in mid-air and spun round; for swing transport there was nothing to beat it.

As a means of entry into South Africa this landing was an original and primitive pastime. I believe only once had a passenger been dumped into the sea and pulled out again before the sharks had taken too intimate an interest in the proceedings. Once aboard, the tug sped safely over the bar to the quay-side. So had I arrived on the borders of the Boer domain.

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All talk was of the war; the flame of it had encircled South Africa, Natal was invaded by the enemy and the first battles had been fought on its soil. The people of Natal are more British, in some ways, than the Britisher of old England: their land is one of beauty and of plenty, a kindly land with its gardens and secluded kloofs, its sunshine, and the air of welcome and peace that it gives, and I felt instinctively at home in this counterpart of England. But there was little time for soliloquy and reflection. I was here to take part in the war on which the attention of the world was focused, the war that was the culminating point in the long sequence of events in South Africa and its chequered history, and so I will briefly narrate how it came about.

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In 1652, when Cromwell had reached the peak of his power and was running his Commonwealth with a clear majority over all other parties, a significant thing happened in the opening history of South Africa. The Dutch came to the Cape for the first time, headed by Jan Riebeck, a doctor in the Dutch East India Company. The big idea was to start a garden and, by growing vegetables, supply passing ships, and so combat the evils of scurvy which were decimating the crews of sailing ships making the voyage to India and the fabulous

Orient. For more than a hundred years before that British, Dutch and Portuguese ships had called at the Cape of Storms, to take in water and bargain with the natives for fresh meat; now came the vegetable garden which the methodical Dutch said was the antidote to scurvy.

The vegetable garden eventually led to a host of complications; this cabbage patch that the settlers from Holland planted at the foot of Table Mountain is now the centre of Cape Town. The Dutch gardeners prospered, and in the fullness of time spread over what afterwards became Cape Colony, being followed thirty years later by a party of Huguenots who had been driven out of France after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685.

Gradually these farmers, or Boers as they were called, expanded their area; as they increased so they pushed north, as well as east and west, showing that rugged warrior spirit and desire for complete independence from all control which became their leading characteristics.

The circling years again rolled on and in 1814 Cape Colony was added to the British Empire by right of conquest and of purchase since we paid Holland £6,000,000, buying a pig in a poke, for, at that time, the riches of South Africa were undreamed of, the country in general being looked upon as unprofitable and a desert land.

If only future British Prime Ministers and governments could have seen the list of things we were buying for the £6,000,000! It was a mixed bag, then and in the thereafter, of good and evil—nine wars with the natives to establish our, and the Boer, rights, diamond and gold mines, and wars also with the Boers themselves, the last of which resulted in giving them what they wanted, and a South Africa with equal rights and obligations for all.

During 1820 about five thousand British emigrants came in and started the first English-speaking colony. All went comparatively well until the Emancipation of the Slaves throughout the British Empire Act in 1834. This noble and national action hit the Dutch with a punch; they had a large number of slaves whom they treated roughly, and the mere idea of their freedom was anathema to them. It started the first friction between Boer and Briton and subsequent history can be traced back to it.

The adjustment of this slave emancipation question bristled with difficulties, and it culminated two years later in the Boers packing up and setting out for the country north of the Vaal River, the great trek of 1836. History has a parallel to the magnitude of this celebrated journey—the migration of the Kalmuks from Russia in 1771, who had become dissatisfied with Russian rule, to Western China, a journey immortalized by De Quincey in his *Flight of a Tartar Tribe*, and involving the move of a nation half a million strong across two thousand miles of Asia.

The trek by the Boers, if not on the same scale, was none the less formidable and picturesque; men, women and children, ox waggons, the herds and the flocks, all headed for the north, where they hoped to find the promised land. Amongst the small boys who herded the cattle and helped drive the ox waggons was Paul Kruger, ten years old at that time, and destined to become the dominating figure in Boer rule.

North of the Vaal River they founded the Transvaal, and, subsequently, the Orange Free State, the British Government recognizing Boer independence,

stipulating only that there should be no slavery. For twenty-five years the Boers pursued the uneven tenor of their way, internal strife arose, constant wars with native tribes, an empty treasury in which at the climax only twelve shillings and sixpence remained, and the burghers refusing to pay taxes. Further ,the warlike Matabele faced them in the north, the still fiercer Zulus on the east, both tribes watching for an opportunity to wipe the Boers out.

In 1877 came the annexation of these South African republics by the British Government, as, apparently, the sole solution to a number of potential dangers to Boers and British alike.

No sordid motives prompted us in this move; at that time the wealth of the Rand was unknown, and all we took over was a bankrupt and disorganized country, a legacy of Kaffir wars, a State morally and physically unable to govern itself, and fast becoming a prey to outsiders. A crisis was in the making which threatened to involve all South Africa; a dozen or more remonstrances had been sent from London to Pretoria—all to no effect. Finally, we called on the Boers to carry out certain reforms, but they would have none of them, and so came the proclamation formally annexing the Transvaal to the British Empire.

The Boers accepted it in sullen silence; possibly they were waiting to see what would happen with the Gladstone Government when it assumed power in 1880. In this they were disappointed, and so began the disastrous Boer War of 1880, which ended with independence being restored subject to a vague sort of suzerainty which was never clearly defined and gave rise to more difficulties and misunderstandings.

We now leave the larger question and come to the internal affairs of the Transvaal and the train of events that led directly to the South African War of 1899. Thirteen years before, a gold discovery in the Transvaal had brought an influx from all over the world, mainly British, until the foreign population was far in excess of the entire Boer community. This outside element, or Uitlanders, had many grievances; they paid ninety-one per cent of the taxes, and through their industry and initiative revenue had increased in 1899 to twenty-six times what it was in 1886. The Transvaal had changed from one of the poorest to the richest. Yet the Uitlander had no say in the government or municipal elections, no control over education, no choice in the selection of officials set over him, many of whom were corrupt and venal to an extent that would have made an old-time Chinese mandarin blush.

Life and work and industry were constantly tormented by harsh and vicious legislation, and petitions signed by more Uitlanders than the entire Boer population were treated with scorn. The condition of the Uitlander went from bad to worse.

In 1895 came the abortive, ill-advised, and disastrous Jameson Raid which aimed at enforcing the Uitlander demands on the Kruger Government. The foolish raid passed into history, but the grievances remained; everything was done to bring Kruger and his cabinet to a sense of justice and responsibility, but each proposal was turned down.

In the meantime, warlike preparations on the Boer side proceeded apace; boxes and huge cases galore were passing through Cape Town labelled with all

sorts of innocent titles . . . the hour was fast approaching, but the preparations on our side were correspondingly lax and inadequate. It was estimated that the Boers could put in the field some 46,000 mounted men, with a corps of first-rate artillery manned with guns heavier than any that had hitherto appeared on a battlefield.

The Boers were very confident; they fancied they could push us into the sea, and early in October 1899 issued an ultimatum in which our demands and suggestions were rejected, the document being couched in such impossible terms that it left no alternative but war.

The call to arms began a new phase in South African history of far-reaching effect to the British Empire, destined to work momentous changes and evolve a Union of South Africa in the British Commonwealth of Nations.

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The first shock of war had fallen on Natal, where, incidentally, the Boers so completely outranged our artillery that we had to resort to direct assault on enemy positions. In July 1900 the campaign had entered on the guerilla stage, and a number of irregular corps were enlisting men of a special type, units that could operate over the vast tracts of country where difficulties of ground and the mobility of the Boer forces enabled the enemy to carry out many lightning coups and to concentrate and disperse with a celerity and suddenness that were uncanny.

The ignorance displayed by the War Office on South African conditions and the exceptionally mobile enemy they were up against was posivitely crass. They turned down offers from the Colonies, and later on, when compelled to seek their assistance, cabled 'unmounted men preferred'. The ignorant brass-hats should have looked up General Gordon's dictum on the subject of a campaign we were about to undertake which he gave to the world in 1881, at the time of the disastrous first Boer War. 'Regulars should act as a reserve; the real fighting should be done by special irregular corps, commanded by special men, who would be untrammelled by regulations.' From what I saw, and the rapidity with which the irregulars rounded up the Boers and beat them at their own game, I often thought how quickly the war could have been finished had men like Colenbrander been running it, with their priceless knowledge, freedom from routine and red tape, and incomparable ability to get on with the job.

The day of my arrival, attracted by the posters inviting service in this and that irregular corps, I walked into the Town Hall, then the recruiting centre, and joined the Imperial Light Infantry, a regiment originally recruited from the Rand, and winning fame on Spion Kop, where a desperate encounter had taken place earlier in the year. It had attracted world-wide attention from the events that took place on the summit—Winston Churchill, Thorneycroft, other heroes, and from the fact that the position was abandoned when victory and the road to Ladysmith were within our grasp.

When I joined them the Imperial Light Infantry were on the Natal-Transvaal border, guarding the lines of communication; the roar of battle was up in the north, and thither I finally won my way by transferring to Kitchener's

Fighting Scouts, then in the public eye as much from their deeds as their uncommon name. They were raised by Colonel Johann Colenbrander, a personality in South Africa, friend and fellow-pioneer of Cecil Rhodes, who possessed the confidence of the native tribes, particularly the Zulus, Matabele, and Swazis. He had rendered invaluable service during the Matabele campaign of 1893 and was regarded by the native tribes with respect and admiration.

When it became a question of raising a special regiment for service in the Northern and Western Transvaal, the dense and difficult bush country to which the Boer commandos were retiring, and where they hoped to fight us to a standstill in that little-known land, Lord Kitchener sent for Colenbrander.

The great scout, the 'Buffalo Bill of South Africa', went to Pretoria, and in the course of conversation remarked to Kitchener that the name of 'Scouts' was rather hackneyed and was not, in his opinion, sufficiently indicative of the type of man he intended enlisting. "Well," said Lord Kitchener, "then call them 'Fighting Scouts' ", and that is how they acquired their name and went out to win fame in the war.

Colenbrander was born in Natal, and when I joined was thirty-nine years old.

He had great faith in his men; they were tried and seasoned, and I am sure that if he had directed any of them to do anything, however dangerous the job, they would instantly have obeyed him. His reputation, amongst white men and natives alike, accounted for this hero-worship; when he spoke to you he did so quietly and convincingly, he inspired confidence and you instinctively felt that your answer must be plain and straightforward; anything in the way of evasion was unsuited to the man. His personality was such that you felt he was entitled to your finest service . . . and he invariably got it.

Like the late Lord Curzon, Colenbrander was intolerant of stupidity, and in our raids and forays he expected every man to use his wits to the utmost and not run a single unnecessary risk. We were carrying our lives in our hands and one little precaution neglected might mean disaster and death.

A highlight in the personality of our chief was his fondness for music. He had with him an orchestra, three or four Kaffir performers with stringed instruments. One night there suddenly came floating through the bush the faint, far-off strains of music, a lively dance tune. . . . whence came this music, so eerie here in the bush . . . a popular air wafted to me as if by a magic wand? I went off to reconnoitre . . . it must be somewhere near for the night breeze carried the melodious notes to me. At last I located it right by the Colonel's Cape carts; he was sitting with some of his officers round the camp fire listening to the music he loved so well. I hid in the bush and became an unseen spectator of that simple orchestra that gave out such free, rapturous and silvery music. And I came again on other nights, feeling buoyant and carefree; the intensive enjoyment of the present made me forget the hardships of the past.

When I was accepted the regiment was at Nylstroom in the Northern Transvaal, where I and thirteen other recruits were to report. We went up on cattle trucks; it took three days to accomplish the journey, and on the way I took stock of my brothers-in-arms, a wild and woolly crowd if ever there was one. Williams, a Welshman, was the star turn; he had been in Thorneycroft's

Mounted Infantry in the fighting along the Tugela, a born rider and scout, and who saved the day for me at the test for entry into the Fighting Scouts a week later. Another was Paddy, a wild Irishman with a heart of gold, who spent all his time at halts along the railway in searching for beer; his thirst was unquenchable and his generosity unlimited, for he insisted on standing treat to everyone, not only in our party but to others, paying for it from a purse that was like the widow's cruse.

Others were New Zealanders, a lad from Poplar and the Isle of Dogs, the third mate of a sailing ship who, having quarrelled with his skipper, had left the ship and joined the regiment, and Percival, an old public-school boy, with fourteen years in South Africa, and an expert hand at making Yorkshire pudding.

On our way to join the Fighting Scouts we stopped off at Pretoria, where old President Kruger had reigned as head of the Boers. I went to see his former home, with its stoep, or verandah, where he received the burghers with complete informality. A chair on the verandah was his favourite spot, guarded by the two lion statues presented to him by Barney Barnato, who afterwards threw himself overboard from a homeward-bound Cape liner.

What a character Kruger was, and a law unto himself! He had the fixed idea that the world was flat; anyone who dared to suggest that it was round incurred the old President's wrath. "You don't mean *round* the world . . . you mean in the world! Impossible," he would say, "because the world is flat." And you either had to take it at that or be a life enemy of Paul Kruger.

As is well known, he was never friendly disposed towards us; some of his sayings are typical of the man and his time. "The English," he once said, "why, they took first my coat and then my trousers. . . . I'm wondering what they're going to take next."

When a friend of mine went to see him and said it was merely a courtesy call, the old man remarked, "That's the first damned *rooinek* I've ever met who didn't want something."

Those who knew the President, and we had many such in the regiment, spoke of his unconventional ways. Mrs. Kruger serving the coffee to the visitor, her husband smoking his huge pipe and handing out tobacco.

Had Kruger been more amenable over matters affecting both Boer and British interests, and looked on the other side of the picture as well as his own, the war with Britain would never have happened. As already remarked it arose out of the Uitlanders, who were paying practically all the taxes and keeping the country from going into bankruptcy, demanding a vote and some share in the government; this Kruger bitterly opposed. He was quite ready to take their money and their labour . . . but not to let them have any say as to how they should be ruled. There were solid grounds for complaint, but the President declined to yield an inch.

He was very religious and used to preach regularly in the Boer church he had built across the road; he usually wore a top-hat, and when a statue of him was set up in Pretoria, his wife, who was fond of feathered life, suggested that the top-hat should be hollowed out as a drinking-bowl for the birds.

His end was pathetic and undignified, for when the British forces entered Pretoria he had already cleared out with all the money he could collect and

made for Portuguese territory at Delagoa Bay, whence he left on a Dutch warship for Holland, and died in Switzerland in 1904.

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Nylstroom is eighty miles north of Pretoria and there we arrived one afternoon after our long train journey, going out to the Scouts, who were bivouacked in open spaces amongst the bush half a mile west of the line. The regiment was three hundred strong, divided into five squadrons of sixty men each under chosen leaders. Pending final acceptance I was posted to 'A' Squadron, commanded by Captain Thackeray, a descendant of the great novelist, and whose father had won the Victoria Cross at the siege of Delhi in the Indian Mutiny. Thackeray had lived most of his life in South Africa and was the ideal leader of irregular troops.

A day or two after our arrival came the test for entry into the Fighting Scouts. It was both exacting and original; there was no written examination and no searching test of character. The K.F.S. required men who could ride hard and shoot straight . . . and who were true men. All other considerations were of secondary importance. It was a tournament test to which each recruit had to submit himself.

This is what happened. The fourteen hopefuls were lined up, mounted on fiery mustangs, with a rifle and five rounds of ammunition. At a given signal we were to ride, hull down, for about five hundred yards, dismount, and fire the five rounds at paraffin tins covered with white paper some four hundred yards away . . . but we were not sure of the actual distance . . . this we had to estimate, for it brought in our ability, or otherwise, to judge distance. Then remount, gallop back to the starting point . . . and make the best possible impression on the judges.

My horse was a strange and restive one; at the signal he went off like a rocket, and I became fearful lest I should not pull him up in time, but I managed it. In a flash I had dismounted, flung the reins over my arm, took five pot-shots at the home-made target . . . three of them actually found the mark. Then with the help of Williams, who backed his horse against mine to stop it going round in circles, I remounted with rodeo haste and went off at full speed . . . finishing third on the list. Thus did I enter the regiment.

The life of the Fighting Scouts was often crude, they lived hard and took no account of trifles; a triumph of essentials over luxuries. It was a life adapted to the stern necessities of guerilla warfare; they did everything with a business-like air, setting to work coolly and methodically to tackle whatever there was on hand. Camp life with these men was never dull; they were accomplished freebooters, and when on the move their foraging expeditions into the side valleys and kloofs usually produced good things for the pot. We divided up into messes of threes and fours, to whom rations were served out, which we pooled as well as what we had in the way of cooking utensils.

One of our number would act as cook by the week and see to it that we drew rations. These were served out weekly, and consisted of fresh meat, which we carried along with us on the hoof, or took on loan from the countryside, with hard ship's biscuits, and, when near the railway line, bread. This, with an

occasional allowance of tea, coffee and sugar, made up the staple articles of diet.

The horse rations were drawn in the same way; the troop sergeant knew the number of men in his troop and would send a party to take over the required sacks of grain. The first time I went on this fatigue will remain in my memory.

We were bivouacked on the outskirts of Nylstroom and with half a dozen others I went over to carry the grain sacks; they were lying on top of a waggon, and as we came up each man stood with his back to the side and a sack was tilted on to his shoulders. In front of me was a hefty trooper who had served twelve years in the Horse Artillery; he just walked off with his sack as though it were a bag of nuts. I followed, not realizing that they weighed one hundred and eighty pounds! I turned my back to the waggon, the sack was dropped on to it and I sank quickly to earth. It caused roars of laughter amongst my fellow troopers, but for me it was a tragedy, for I hated to be done by a sack of grain.

On the march our commissariat arrangements were practical; we collected biltong (dried beef) and mealies from farms and hurriedly abandoned laagers, and although the diet was Spartan it sufficed for our needs; only on occasions when in touch with the railway did we get such luxuries as sugar, coffee and tea. The Boers were even worse off, except when they managed to raid a convoy down south, when they fared better than we did.

There were no unnecessary drills or parades; if a man could ride and shoot well, carry out the ordinary evolutions of cavalry drill, and be ready when wanted, no matter what hour of the day or night, that was all that was required. Everything was subordinated to the needs of war; we lived up to a hard and ruthless standard, and if in the course of our operations we got ourselves into a fix or had to retire, it was only until such a time as would enable us to hit back with redoubled energy. The war was partly one of attrition, it demanded guerrilla tactics of a high order, and this is where the British and Boer forces differed fundamentally.

The British soldier was held by a rigid discipline, accustomed to acting under set orders, with little or no scope for initiative, a system that dominated his life from the day of enlistment. On the other hand, the Boer was a free agent, he came and went as he liked, and although one cannot run an army on such lines, it suited his temperament, and as a body the Boer farmers worked well together.

On the whole this campaign was a gentleman's war compared with the two World Wars that followed. Both sides fought fairly and squarely, with courtesy to prisoners, and honouring the rough rules of warfare as developed through the centuries.

Like the Boers, the Scouts had their own ideas on discipline. They were a fighting force on their own, fire-eaters for fighting, with rough-and-ready methods of justice and getting things done. Corporal Smith, the erstwhile third mate of a sailing ship, one day had to deal with Hobbs from London, who, for some reason, objected to going on guard. Smith looked at Hobbs . . . and wasted no time in further words. The oar he put in was a decisive one; he advanced on Hobbs and with a straight right laid him out. There was no resistance movement left in him . . . and no further argument. Hobbs rose,

adjusted his hat . . . and went on guard duty. Discipline had triumphed . . . at the end of a fist. It was typical of the hard-bitten, hard-hitting efficiency of the Scouts.

At the nightly bivouac how we enjoyed the dinner, and when it was finished we sat round the fire smoking and talking, the flames lighting up the trees and bush, and the stars winking down at us from overhead. The nights were usually still; save for the movement of the horses, the crackling of the fire, or the call of a night bird as it flitted past, scarcely a sound was to be heard once we had wrapped ourselves in our blanket and lay down for sleep. Then, next morning, just after daylight, we broke camp, mounted and set off again.

Our routine was straightforward and simple; we rose at dawn with the first gleam of daylight, waking in an elation of body and spirit, lighting our bivouac fires for the coffee which we took with the hard ship's biscuit served out in lieu of bread. The sun would be hardly above the horizon before our little meal was despatched and we were in the saddle. South Africa is a country where a man feels glad to be alive, ready to spring to life with the morning, encouraged to leap for joy, as in Bible days, a fact that is epitomized for all time by the bounding springbok.

Our horses did not present a picturesque outward appearance, and for looks would not have compared with those you could see any day in Hyde Park, but those well-groomed, stately animals could not have equalled ours in pluck and endurance. In action most of them were steady and showed no fear.

When we had to clear a kopje, or turn the enemy out of their position, one man from every four held the horses of his companions, retiring with them under cover. The country-bred horses were trained to stand still as soon as the reins were dropped over their heads, so all the men could fight instead of the three. This was not possible with the rough, untamed broncos we had from the Argentine and elsewhere.

There were some original characters in the regiment. One of them was known as 'Sancho Panza', and he deserved his name.

'Sancho Panza' was an incomparable story-teller, although some of his yarns may have been a trifle far-fetched; but he was good company and kept us all amused. In the Zulu War he had carried the news of the battle of Ulundi, the final defeat of the Zulus, to Durban, riding there in record time, and dodging innumerable enemy traps on the way.

The stories I heard would have filled a volume; one such concerned the rumours and beliefs that were rife when our campaign started and strangely prognostic of the devastating aerial warfare to come. The Boers had the idea that we should drop bombs and shells on the capital by means of balloons, and postmasters in both States were warned to notify Pretoria should anything suspicious be seen.

To these wild and woolly postmasters everything in the air took on the form of balloons, with the result that the G.P.O. was deluged with frantic and hysterical messages of balloons in the air and making for all points of the compass.

One of our sergeants had served for many years in a British cavalry regiment, and on discharge joined the Fighting Scouts. It appears that at Elandslaagte, in the first month of the war, the 5th Lancers did good work with their

lances, but at another engagement the swords of a Hussar regiment were so blunt that they would not even cut through the Boer coats and jackets; all they did was to stun a man if he received a clout over the head.

A highlight in my squadron was Trooper Hopkins, a tough who should have lived in the days of Drake and Hawkins. Nothing baulked or daunted him. One day Hopkins rounded up some fowls at a Boer farm, plucked and trussed them, and then issued an invitation to a few of us to dinner. But there was no pot or pan in which to cook the fowls. The host looked around for a solution to this problem . . . and found it. When we arrived, the smell in itself was a delicious invitation to the feast.

"How did you manage about a saucepan?" I asked.

" 'Twas quite easy," said Hopkins. "I found one in the farm . . ." and then we saw the utensil. It was a bedroom one . . . "one of the Bojer's oldest and best," said Hopkins, with a grim laugh.

That was the end of the dinner as far as I was concerned . . . it ended before it had begun. The guests departed, leaving Hopkins alone with his dinner . . . and his 'saucepan'.

During the latter part of 1901 we operated in the bush veldt country of the Northern Transvaal and got to know the Magaliesberg, a mountain range stretching east and west and forming the line of demarcation between the high veldt of the Transvaal and the bush veldt. It was full of kloofs and small canyons where the Boers could lay hidden and it was part of our job to clean these out, for they were usually prolific in supplies of food and ammunition. Towards the end of the struggle the Boers resorted to various means to replenish their ammunition; they would systematically clean up camps left by British troops, who were much too indifferent to the loss of cartridges, knowing that there were plenty more to be had; much was lost from bandoliers or left lying in camp and the Boers picked up quite a lot in this way.

Early in August we set out on another clean-up in our area; Beyers had collected about eight or nine hundred men and was operating in the southern part of the bushveld with the Magaliesberg as a supporting point, whither he could retire if hard pressed and split up his force, relying on the difficulty we should have in rounding him up in that dense country. Beyers, a temperamental, narrow-minded man who had been a lawyer before the war, had a reputation for biblical severity and would preach to the commando on the march; he held constant prayer meetings. Although he always managed to elude us, he lost many men killed and captured, but himself lived to fight another day . . . in tragic circumstances. It was 1914, and Beyers was Commandant-General of the Union Forces, but resigned as a protest against South Africa joining in the European War. He led a rebel party against the Government and was shot whilst trying to get away across the Vaal River, in the Western Transvaal.

Our task was to scour the country, which only men skilled in bushcraft and finding their way about, and up to all the wiles and stratagems of the enemy, were capable of doing. Much of the ground was covered with thorn bush, and baobab trees, which have a girth of eighty and ninety feet, whilst wild animals such as the giraffe, the lion and antelope of various kinds made it their home, having been driven here from the cultivated areas further south. Part of the

Watersberg was waterless, and both men and horses suffered a good deal from the lack of water, which in some cases we had to dig for. Locating it was second nature to some of the Scouts, and we certainly required all the knowledge they possessed to keep us supplied, although it frequently only amounted to a gallon or so per day—for man and horse.

The Boer commandos in the Northern and Western Transvaal were the most redoubtable and mobile of the Republican forces, commanded by men of ability, with a first-rate knowledge of bush warfare, and fanatically wedded to the Boer cause. I have already spoken of Beyers; there was also De La Rey, who exercised religious and political influence, with a genius for planning, devising, and bringing to a successful conclusion combined movements and sudden surprises. Before the war De La Rey was in favour of a peaceful settlement and used his influence with President Kruger on the side of reason, but without any effect. Once, however, the Boers had weighed in, he went all out and was our most formidable opponent in the north and west.

Like Beyers, De La Rey came to a tragic end. In 1914 he was persuaded to join Beyers' party and the two were on their way through Johannesburg to address a meeting . . . and here inscrutable Fate came in. It just happened that a gang of desperadoes was holding up cars and defying the police, so all cars were directed to stop on police signal. The driver of De La Rey's car failed to hear the signal, a shot was fired . . . which killed De La Rey.

Then there was Kemp, a sort of freebooter of the sixteenth-century type, whom years afterwards I met when he was a minister at Cape Town; he, too, had ability in the field, and coupled it with a ruthless daring, of which we were later on to have a vivid example.

The commandos of these two leaders were mainly composed of the old 'Dopper' school, men of ancient piety with an unshakeable belief in their simple, rugged faith, convinced that they had a definite mission to perform in ousting the British from South Africa as the Children of Israel had ousted the Amalekites. These, and such as these, were the foes we had to deal with.

Beyers worked in collaboration with De La Rey who had the western Transvaal as his special care; he was popular with the Boers, a man of ceaseless activity, constantly springing surprises on the slow-moving British columns as they wended their ponderous way over the Free State and the Transvaal of the south. Like the rest of the Boer commandants his rule was elastic and adaptable to any occasion or emergency. The men were expected to rely upon themselves; each one was, in a sense, his own commanding officer and knowing the rules of guerrilla warfare could apply them. They had, too, the knack of co-operating closely with each other; if a leader was put out of action another was instantly found to take his place and the rest worked with him.

Ability to live on, and move rapidly about, the country were their greatest assets; like ourselves, they did not need waggons and tents and the luxuries that went with a British movable column; they carried their rations of mealie meal and biltong, supplemented it on the way, and if they did not find it . . . well, they would the next day! It was a hard life, but like the Fighting Scouts, they were accustomed to it, taking it as all in the day's work. This scouting for one's provender was really an enjoyable part of our life; when we saw a farm on the horizon, or sighted one in the Kloofs of the Magaliesberg, we never knew

what it might contain. Life is never so interesting as when dominated by uncertainty.

Sometimes when not too exhausted we would hold a sing-song and in these Sergeant Westland was our camp-fire Caruso, with a remarkable voice. He was a South African, and when he sang to the mysterious African night a bivouac fire became a beacon around which the regiment sat enthralled. Certainly had the B.B.C. existed then, had talent scouts, Sergeant Westland would have been one of their first captures. Thank goodness he would never have been a camp-fire crooner.

When he sang in his rich, thrilling voice the night was transfixed and the stars seemed to shine the brighter. One of his favourites was an old Dutch drinking song which he produced with telling effect, the deep velvet of his voice slowly dying into the crackling of the camp fire:

> "*And when at last grim death shall come*
> *And his arm with mine is linking,*
> *I'll raise my glass and proudly die*
> *While drinking, drinking . . . drin . . . king.*"

* * * * *

One day after a long ride we came across a party of yeomanry moving westwards; we threw out outposts and halted to have a meal with them. In their lumbering waggons they had everything from cigarettes to tinned peaches and seemed aghast at our lack of creature comforts. . . . I imagine they looked upon us as a survival of the old buccaneers. One of them could not restrain his curiosity and astonishment at this want of the good things of life and asked my friend Smith, the corporal already referred to, how we fared and what we did when there was a shortage of rations. "You bloody well scout for 'em, mate," replied Smith, helping himself to another spoonful of peaches.

It was always inspiring to see the Fighting Scouts at work; they knew all the tricks of the trade and every manœuvre in the art of guerrilla warfare, and a great deal more besides. The Tommies had a variety of names for them—the 'Fasting Scouts' and the 'Flying Scouts'—and when we met other columns on the march those off duty used to come over and look at us, just as though we were a circus troupe.

Throughout 1901 the Army Command was putting into operation its system of drives by more or less mobile columns, working like a net over the country, with the idea of cleaning it up and denuding it of supplies, apart from the men it was expected to yield. Concurrently with this scheme was the destruction of farms and crops, and bringing the women and children into concentration camps, where they would be well looked after, and, at the same time, unable to give the widespread assistance which had hitherto been their rôle among the Boer commandos.

Whether this policy of destruction and establishment of the camps was a wise one has long been a subject for controversy and I would not care to legislate on so debatable a matter.

Later on the order to burn farms was rescinded, but by then most of the

damage had been done, the pillars of fire and smoke that marked the movement of a column had done their work. Personally, I think the thing that really shortened the war, without bringing hardship on the women and children, was the establishment by Lord Kitchener of the blockhouse system. These blockhouses were erected along the railways and across country, splitting it into sections and making it difficult, if not impossible in places, for the Boers to act with any degree of freedom. With these blockhouses came the barbed wire fences and entanglements which hemmed in the railway and divided up the land in a network; it was the beginning of the end, and two hundred and fifty thousand miles of barbed wire were used in this way.

The blockhouse life suited the British regular soldier, who was weary of the long and tiring marches over the veldt, chasing an ever-elusive enemy, and when this had to be done on foot it must have been very boring . . . but the Tommy stuck it manfully.

The area in which we were now operating was the Waterberg of the Northern Transvaal, a little-known district marked on the maps as 'unsurveyed' and one, although it is as large as England, not hitherto penetrated by British troops. In this remote bush country Boer commandos took refuge, finding shelter in the deep kloofs and valleys, where they had a large amount of ammunition and supplies buried, which formed depots for the commandos that were difficult to discover.

The bushveldt had a reputation for unhealthiness; unseasoned men sickened in it and horses died of a mysterious horse-sickness. Here in this dense thorn and mimosa country snakes were common, and one morning we came on a large black mamba, Africa's most deadly snake. I was riding behind one of the special scouts when this nine-feet creeping murderer appeared right in our path. With its head raised about four feet from the ground it was stabbing with its ghastly fangs in our direction, but the fearless Harries rode straight at it, and gave it a blow over the head from his carbine from which the snake recoiled . . . and we galloped on.

I had yet another thrill a few days later with a snake. We had cooked and eaten our supper, and in the darkness I leaned back to take it easy against my propped-up saddle. Suddenly I became aware of something heavy slithering across my legs; petrified with horror, I remained perfectly still whilst Africa's deadly snake, the most lethal serpent on earth, passed on his course like an evil dream. Had I moved and so aroused its enmity I should have been a dead man.

We had with us rations for two or three days, but lived mostly on the country and what could be captured from the enemy. We pushed on during the daytime, which meant a good deal, for our days were anything from twelve to eighteen hours, especially when on a hot scent. In this pursuit of Beyers we came each day on abandoned camps, and found frequent signs of his retreat before our relentless chase. We forced our way through the thick bush and across rivers and creeks, occasionally capturing cattle from his commando. The Boers were too hustled to make a stand, they were perpetually harassed by our advance, whilst the special scouts kept them still more on the run by spreading out, hovering on their flanks and giving an indication of strength far in excess of what it actually was. These and other pursuits were rendered

comparatively simple by our mobility and the ease with which the regiment moved about the country with a minimum of baggage and impedimenta. We took what we needed either on our horses or in fast travelling Cape carts, living on what could be gathered by the way, and always ready to move at a few minutes' notice.

By contrast Painter, a sergeant in my troop, used to tell me stories of the movements of British forces in the Zulu War in which he had taken part. Encumbered with a vast quantity of baggage, a column after a laborious march would reach its destination where the camp would be pitched, a picturesque sight in the glow of the African sunset. The heavy bell-tents, the marquees of the general and staff, the waggons, carts and buggies, filled with good things for the man and his meals, and ample bedding for his night's rest. "And . . . don't forget the bands," said Painter with a chuckle.

It all seemed so unreal to me . . . when I thought of our one threadbare blanket, and the wash in the morning with invisible soap! . . . if we were lucky enough to find the water.

In this bush-covered, arid belt water was rare and widely spaced. Our special scouts who managed mysteriously to sense the presence of water when no one else could, almost like a long-range divining rod, had to admit that for the first time they were beaten.

Once we rode for twenty-eight thirsty hours before discovering a sight of anything liquid—a few shallow waterholes among the rocks, yet infinitely precious. No glass of champagne ever went down with greater effect than did that half-warm, wholly muddy water of Africa. After twenty-eight hours in the heat and dust we had almost arrived at the final, gasping stage, whilst the horses were staggering into even worse plight. On reaching the waterholes they whinnied; in dumb show they did all the begging and cajoling possible, and when their turn came for a drink of this muddy cocktail a stampede of schoolchildren was mild compared with their rush for liquid refreshment.

We were in a dense thornbush country where the going was difficult and added precautions were vital to avoid being caught in a trap. A wide fan-shaped screen of scouts was thrown out and the rest of the three hundred went in single file picking their way through the bush. Every hour the country was growing more and more dense, and by nightfall it was decided to bivouac by squadrons in such open spaces as we could find. It was obvious when we started that the Boers were unaware of our strength, or they would not have retired in such haste before us; if they had by now found out the relative numbers they would probably try and outwit us and might put in an appearance at any moment. The sun sank lower and lower behind the hills to our left and long shadows fell across our camping-place; the night wind came up and in another hour it would be too dark to see.

About eight hundred yards from where we camped the ground rose in a slight undulation and this our advanced outposts occupied, the security line running round it at a sufficient distance to give us time to get ready should the enemy attempt an attack.

Just before two o'clock in the morning I was roused by the corporal of the inner guard to go out with another man and relieve the outposts. But for the darkness it was a perfect night, the sort of night common enough in the Trans-

vaal at that time of the year; the stars shone down so brilliantly that we almost seemed to hear them winking at us. We made our way to where the outpost awaited us . . . I knew the spot for we had reconnoitred it before off-saddling the previous night. At last we found the post, a corporal and two men, alert and on the *qui vive*, for none knew what might happen with so wily an enemy. My companion relieved the man on duty at the outpost H.Q. and I went off to take over from the other, who was about three hundred yards to our right.

I can see it all now; the moon shining down on the little group, the outpost behind some thick bushes which commanded a view to the front, the whispered orders of the corporal, the silent taking over . . . and then my search for the man I was to relieve.

Cautiously I made my way through the bush, estimating the distance until I came to the place where the sentry should have been. But no, there was no one . . . where was he . . . what had become of him . . . had he been silently attacked and killed and the body dragged away? I moved forward again in the gloom and next instant sprang back, wide-eyed, uttering an affrighted "Oh!" A man was lying face downwards, his left arm gathered up under his head, his rifle lying loose at his side. I was nonplussed and bent down to examine him . . . but for stertorous breathing he might have been thought to be dead. He was asleep on his post . . . if detected, as he was, he should be dead that morning, that being the penalty of his crime.

The place in which the man lay was on a slight rise and commanded the ground round him; it was a strategic and tactical point guarding an approach to the sleeping regiment in rear. For the three previous days they had been riding hard, skirmishing with the enemy and fighting a rearguard action. At nightfall they were resting near to the place where their unfaithful sentry now slept . . . this sentry who had been put there in a vital position at the extreme outpost line. Should the enemy break through without our being warned and given time to spring to arms, our position would be perilous in the extreme; we might be overwhelmed should a lack of vigilance not apprise us of the hostile movement.

Fatigue must have overcome him and he had fallen asleep . . . and now a comrade came along to rouse him from his slumbers and his state of crime. I touched him on the shoulder . . . he looked up in amazement . . . his first feeling was one of fright and anxiety. He shook in every limb; I could see even in the moonlight he looked deathly pale . . . his rifle was still lying on the ground . . . he looked as though he would faint from intensity of emotion. In a flash he realized the awfulness of his situation; the fate that was overhanging him, a court martial convened at dawn would send him to his last account. It was a strange and moving scene, the sleeping camp, the sentry, the moon now shining at intervals through gathering clouds, the darkening shadows over the bush, the earnest, terror-stricken eyes of the guilty man, his appeals to me. . . .

He went back to the main post . . . I said nothing . . . he knew not whether I would give him away or guard his guilt as an inviolable secret. He was young, with all life before him, an excellent soldier in every other way, a bold rider, and always 'on deck', as the sailor would say.

Now the point of this story is this. Should I have given him away or, in view of all the points in his favour, have said nothing about it? The more I

reflected on the matter the harder it was to answer. It involved a question of comradeship, of dangers shared together, but above all, a study of the human heart which leads us through a maze of passion, of love and regard for one with whom I was shoulder to shoulder every day . . . the decision as to what to do or what not to do was like a maze out of which it was difficult to find a way. Think of it, my friends, not as if the answer depended upon yourself, but upon me. Would it be better for him to die straightaway and pay the just penalty of his crime . . . and yet, the firing party, the dead man in the full bloom of youth . . . the darkened scene, the years that for me would come perhaps in plenitude and all that life has to give . . . the question of this decision is not one to be lightly considered and I don't set myself up as the one man able to answer it . . . but I said nothing of what I had seen.

* * * * *

The next day we and the sun were up together. Just after starting we captured a Boer scout with a led horse; he had no connection with Beyers' commando but happened to cross our path and we gathered him in. He was on his way to join De La Rey with a despatch from a Boer commando in the far south-east, and told us he had covered four hundred miles in six days. This was not unusual, and we checked up on his statement, which revealed that he had come from Swaziland, fully four hundred miles, and had left five days previously. He told us that Schalk Burger, who was acting as President, Kruger having gone off, as our fellows put it, 'with the swag', and many of the Transvaalers were ready to make peace, but the Free State commandos under De Wet nailed the colours of liberty to the masthead.

De Wet in particular was irreconcilable; he shot anyone who tried to surrender, and swore like a trooper at any man who talked of coming to terms with us. Our prisoner said he knew their case was hopeless, and they ought to give in whilst the going was good, feeling that the British would be just in their dealings, especially after what Kitchener had told the Boers in a proclamation. Most of them admired this masterly soldier, whose powers of diplomacy were taxed to the utmost, but whose wisdom and patience never failed. With the exception of De Wet the majority of the Boers really wanted peace if only it could be served out to them in a form that would save their self-respect and give definite hope for the future. This in the end Kitchener succeeded in doing.

The morning of the sixth day brought us within measurable distance of Beyers and his men; the country was less enclosed, the bush had given way to more or less open country sparsely dotted with scrub and trees. I shall always remember that morning, for the advanced scouts had exchanged shots with Beyers' rearguard, and so we pressed on, being afraid he would slip on into Bechuanaland, where it might take months to run him down in that boundless area.

On the sixth night we bivouacked at sundown, men and horses almost overcome with exhaustion. The pursuit was to be resumed at daybreak, for from this resting-place the birds had only just flown, and if our horses had been able to do another four or five miles we should have caught them. During the night's rest men and horses would be able to pull themselves together.

After our prolonged dash the anodyne needed by everyone was rest; to get the sentries out and supper cooked were now the only things to do. Once the troopers had thrown themselves on the ground the night seemed immense and lonely to Sentry Number One on horse-guard . . . drowsy, and requiring all his energy and determination to keep awake. Indistinct and faint noises came from the dark, surrounding bush . . . but the sentry scarcely heeded them . . . reality and unreality were merging into oblivion, and, gripped by fatigue and with heavy-lidded eyes, he crumpled up . . . sank slowly to earth. . . .

It was one of those moments in life, small in themselves, yet so harnessed with explosive possibilities of destiny and disaster, life and death. How did that sentry sleep? Would he awaken? Would he revive before the sergeant of the guard as ruthless as any Nazi, came on the scene with the sentry's relief? There is a swinging melody tune, 'How deep is the night', known to most of us. That night was as deep in drama for the sentry as anything well could be; it was as black as a firing squad, as decisive as a rifle-bullet, and irrevocable as eternity.

Daylight was breaking and the unmistakable chill of dawn was in the air; it was certain that the sentry could awake none too soon! He did . . . twenty minutes before discovery . . . twenty minutes before the relief was due . . . but on looking round he saw that the horses were in a disorderly array; they were bunched together in a complete circle . . . in a way that had been specifically forbidden!

What was to be done, since a change of guard was imminent, and for one man to sort out the horses and get them into a straight line was a hopeless job! The sentry put in some agonized thinking; realizing the desperate situation, he thought of one solution . . . the old one of a friend in need. It was Williams, whom he quickly found. Williams got up and took in the situation at a glance; hurried and anxious explanations were unnecessary, for, although waking out of a sound sleep, he took charge silently . . . and at once. This veteran of Spion Kop and the Tugela, whose home was in the heather-girt valleys of North Wales, gave quiet incisive directions . . . no one was awakened . . . the horses were in proper line . . . and less than three minutes later the guard sergeant came out, like a chrysalis, from his blanket, to do his duty.

I shall never forget that particular soldier on guard, or the situation he had to face . . . for that sentry happened to be myself.

* * * * *

About this time the Boers were active in wrecking British trains whenever a safe opportunity occurred, and some of them wore British uniforms in the process.

The wearing of British uniforms was far too common a practice amongst the Boers and we had every justification for the shooting of men taken *in flagrante delicto*. The excuse that they had not heard of Lord Kitchener's proclamation on the subject, or wore our uniforms out of sheer necessity for lack of other clothes, cut no ice whatever with us. They and their leaders knew perfectly well that it was a violation of the rules of war.

As in modern warfare, and carried to a fine art by Lawrence of Arabia and

his explosive 'tulips', the wrecking of trains by the Boers and the wearing of British uniforms in doing it, was a grim feature of the war. The usual method was to dynamite the railway in a deep cutting. During the pursuit we captured one of these train-wreckers, who turned out to be a German-American. He was caught red-handed, and the thing that sealed his fate was the fact that he wore the uniform of the West Riding Regiment, of which Wellington had once been the Colonel.

A drumhead court martial sentenced him in a fraction of the time wasted on German war criminals. The execution was carried out at sundown, the regiment being paraded in a hollow square, the prisoner forming the fourth side, solitary and blindfolded. Twenty men were in the firing party, and as the sun dipped beneath the horizon a volley rang out . . . and the train-wrecker had paid the penalty of his crimes. Seventeen shots had taken effect . . . three went wide of the mark. Were those three bad shots . . . or did the riflemen wish to miss? The reader's guess is as good as mine!

The man died game; he did not want to be blindfolded, he said, and asked that a message should be sent to his mother, far away in the Southern States of America, that he had died bravely.

* * * * *

Throughout, the Boer had his own code of the rules of war and adapted them to suit the circumstances. For instance, cases occurred where women left on the farms would appear quite cheerfully at the door and invite a British patrol in for refreshment. If they were unsuspecting enough to signal to their comrades that all was well and came up to the doorway, instead of the coffee they were treated to a hail of rifle-fire. Our men had once been caught in this way . . . but only once! And thanks to bad—and guilty—shooting, not a man was hit.

One morning news came of another train-wrecking affair. At that moment we were some distance west of Pietersburg—a train had been wrecked in a cutting not far from the town, Colonel Vandeleur and sixteen men being killed. The deed had been planned and carried out by Hindon, a deserter from the British Army, who had organized a train-wrecking detachment forming part of Beyers' commando.

We made great efforts to capture the renegade Hindon, but he bore a charmed life and always just managed to elude us. It was early on the previous morning that the attack took place, but the moment reports came in an avenging party started on the trail, reaching the scene of action, fifty-two miles away, that evening. There the trail was picked up, and riding hard, pausing only now and again to examine places where the wreckers had passed, the party pressed on, early next morning reaching a kloof where we came on the camp of the flying commando. A lone Boer hovering near was seen and immediately shot, and in the camp itself the ground was littered with clothing, books, paper, empty tins, and whisky bottles.

All day the chase continued, until far into the night, and at dawn the avengers reached Wagon Drift, a wide crossing held by the enemy in force, since they had now been joined by another commando. In the ensuing fight

four of the Boers were killed; although outnumbering us, they had the worst of the fight and withdrew to the north-east, in difficult country, where it was inadvisable, with such small numbers and in face of the ever-growing hostile force, to follow them, although in the running fight which followed most of the Boer cattle were captured as well as five waggons. The horses, too, were done up: with more led horses we might have pulled it off and captured Hindon . . . but it was not to be. A satanic guardian seemed to take care of him . . . and this calculating murderer, who had personally shot both men and women, survived the war, and at the end, under the amnesty terms, was allowed to go scot free.

At this time a number of commandos were endeavouring to break away to the north to escape the sweeping movements farther south, so that we had, in addition to Beyers and De La Rey, two others, Badenhorst and Ben Viljoen, the latter a great talker and in oratory the Horatio Bottomley of the Boers. He originated the Boer motto, 'God and the Mauser', as the slogan for the war. Like others of his class he was guilty of war crimes . . . until in January 1902 Nemesis overtook him. Information came that he was in a certain farmhouse, and the scouts who brought the news reported the notorious Hindon to be with him. So a night march was made, the farm surrounded with the utmost stealth, and then rushed. Viljoen, his adjutant, and three other men made a bolt for it . . . but it was too late; the adjutant was shot dead and the rest threw up their arms.

Once more we were to march through another part of the wild and difficult Waterberg country, which had never been traversed by our troops. We were then at Warm Baths, on the Pretoria-Pietersburg railway, leaving there on October 6th. Colenbrander was on the look-out for our old enemy Beyers, but it turned out that he was farther north, digging up ammunition and supplies buried there earlier in the year. Our scouts reported that very few men were with Beyers, but that in front of us, and only some fifty miles away, was Badenhorst with approximately five hundred men. They were an aggressive lot and suited our men admirably, for they liked and appreciated an energetic enemy who gave them a good run for their money. Offensively Badenhorst could not compare with the great Scout; his attacks on us lacked push and vigour, and by the time we reached Zandriverspoort a number of Boers had been killed and forty-five brought in as prisoners, without the Scouts losing a single man.

We bivouacked the night at Zandriverspoort and next day started to clean out the Donkerbrook valley; several farms were located, a quiet and otherwise peaceful spot far from the madding crowd. All the time we had accurate information from our special scouts, who moved about by day and night, and kept us *au courant* of what was going on amongst the Boers.

We were now close to the Mafeking-Bulawayo railway, which we reached at Mahalapse, fording the Crocodile River on the way. Here Colenbrander left for his home at Bulawayo, and so we bivouacked in the bush beyond the settlement to await his return. There was a saloon of sorts there, packed with fiery gin, whisky, and beer of doubtful origin. The Scouts, released for the moment from the rigours of fighting and man-hunting, took possession of the saloon, and pandemonium soon raged, since the Scouts had not celebrated for many months, and they took full value out of every bottle.

Fights, coupled with scenes of jollity, were taking place all over the camp; men gathered in groups and shouted for a song, upon which the roysterers would burst into various ditties in every scale and key and semitone of music! The general effect was like the voice of Gehenna and at the end of each verse or song the singers, yelling wildly, took another draught of the fiery liquid from tins, canteens and wooden bowls.

When the uproar was at its height a squad of the Scouts, hastily converted into military police, arrived on the scene under command of a powerful sergeant, once the strong man in a circus! But Samson was as bad as his fellows, for he, too, had uncorked the occasion to the best advantage.

On his heels came the second-in-command, to try and restore order out of complete riot and inebriated chaos. He was doing his best against the current of uproar and hilarity when he was confronted with the massive form of Samson, already too far gone to see right or reason. Doing his duty, according to the hopelessly misty lights of the moment, he arrested the second-in-command, victory going to the physically stronger side. He marched his very superior officer to the guard tent, solemnly handed him over, and then lurched back to look for more recalcitrants.

That night brain and body, already strained beyond endurance, whirled like a catherine wheel and Samson passed into unconsciousness, whereupon he, too, was arrested and carried to the guard tent. Nemesis moved swiftly and to good purpose, for he was later court-martialled and reduced to the ranks. What a circus . . . and what a strong man! The regiment never forgot his distinctive achievements.

The orgy reached its height the night before the colonel returned . . . and then came the reckoning . . . the regiment would move shortly after dawn the next morning. A strange thing happened . . . everyone came to his senses, the 'booze' was forgotten and all thoughts of it dissipated . . . every man pulled himself together and the regiment moved out . . . according to plan . . . seeking whom it might devour.

Leaving the scene of our pandourade, we moved along the Malapye River to its junction with the Crocodile, following it for ninety miles until finding a ford at Palala. Now came what an official description characterized as 'one of the most brilliant achievements of the guerrilla war'.

The move had a duel object in the plans of our leader; he wished to give the Boers the impression that we intended to go into Bechuanaland and not to return, of which the flooded state of the Crocodile appeared convincing proof. Here the Boers were lulled into a sense of false security.

Our intelligence service revealed that Badenhorst was awaiting the arrival of Beyers from the north, so that with their combined commandos they would have close on a thousand men . . . three and a half times our strength. Such an array would give them an overwhelming advantage. As it was, Badenhorst, alone, outnumbered us by twenty-five per cent . . . but he hesitated . . . and he who hesitates is lost! By swift movement, and switching on to our only line of retreat, he could have cut off and surrounded us . . . it would have been a fight to a finish and the Boers might have pulled it off if they could have brought in Beyers at the psychological moment, which was well within the field of practical politics, but that hesitancy cramped Badenhorst's style.

As already remarked, the commandos of Beyers and Badenhorst, tough and mobile fighters, were in the scale against us; they lay between us and Warm Baths far beyond the Crocodile; the prize was a tempting one, but the risk might well have appalled a less resolute leader than ours. Once across the Crocodile we should be entirely committed, given that we were able to do so undisturbed, no help was available in the venture, and, looked at from the cautious standpoint, our force was manifestly incapable of carrying through its task with the desirable vigour and completeness should the enemy display the slightest knowledge of war.

Fortune favours the brave; early on November 16th we went out to attack the enemy and drove him for nineteen miles through the hills.

Colenbrander never hesitated; he had laid studied and far-reaching plans, realizing that battles and campaigns are won by previous careful organization, dash and vigour, and confidence in your men, rather than by the actual fighting.

The move was Napoleonic in its audacity and conception . . . this plan to attack the Boers before still further reinforcements could arrive. Chance is a willing accomplice of the man who is ready to venture all!

The crossing of the Crocodile was effected with the water bank high, but the regiment, with its Cape carts and pom-poms, was got over the rushing river with the loss of only one man. Of narrow escapes there were many; the river was about one hundred and fifty feet wide; being the flood season it was rolling on like a millrace, and personally, in the crossing, I found it was all I could do to hang on to my horse and gain the opposite bank.

The Fighting Scouts were experts at river-crossings, but the Crocodile was no easy matter; it was twenty to thirty feet deep, full of undercurrents and whirlpools which constituted the real danger, and when my squadron led off I could see at once that the whole force of the current was against us. The stream bore us farther and farther down; with incredible swiftness the water seemed to take charge of us, carrying us this way and that, but all the time, with the aid of the old hands at this nerve-racking game, bringing us closer to the opposite bank . . . where at last we landed . . . and I was thankful that we had escaped being swept into eternity.

A delicate part of the movement had thus taken place without molestation; but the Boer superiority was overwhelming and with energy and 'go' they could have annihilated the force opposed to them. They did nothing; they seemed paralysed, like the rabbit before the snake.

The descent upon the commandos was both sudden and unexpected; the Boer leaders first became aware that they were being threatened when their contact men came into collision with our pickets. They then stood fast, hoping, no doubt, that we would prefer to remain stationary rather than come out into the open, so that with the combined commandos they would have us in a trap. They little realized the quality of their opponents!

Once the Boers were on the run they were not given time to plan a stand, and in this, seeing that Colenbrander had but a bare three hundred men, the move was wise. Moreover, delay would have been fatal, for it would have disclosed the hollowness of our position, and so our commander did what the Boer thought would be the very last thing he would do—attacked forthwith and furiously.

For mile after mile they were harried, parties of the enemy turned round and attempted to check the pursuit, but the scouts daringly outflanked and pressed them close so that their fire became uncertain and wild, and none of our men was hit. We lost not a single man, but many horses fell by the way from sheer exhaustion.

The booty was considerable, thousands of bags of grain, herds of cattle, a large number of prisoners, and more who had fallen in this audacious move.

We arrived at Warm Baths on November 19th for a brief rest and to refit, but were there only a day or two before setting out again for the Rooiberg, another little-known district of the bush-veld, where Badenhorst, with almost incredible celerity, had gathered another force of Boers together, several hundred strong, being evidently determined on 'getting his own back'. This time we co-operated with a column under Dawkins, and moving day and night, came into Haartebeestenfontein on November 27th. Obviously Badenhorst, despite his strength, did not like the look of things, his intelligence service must have been at fault, or they would have told him that his opponent was barely half his own number and that an all-out attack might crumple him up. Badenhorst fell back . . . Colenbrander pursued, with a tenacity and vigour that surpassed all his previous efforts . . . and the story of that pursuit merits telling.

For days and nights, pushing on relentlessly, never halting except for the briefest night's rest, we ran the quarry to ground. To me it was like a fox hunt, one of those runs in which I had often participated with my father, with Badenhorst as the fox who gave us a wonderful run for our money, but when we swept into his camp and took all his waggons and fifteen men he again managed to give us the slip. In four days we had accounted for eighty Boers killed and prisoners. The end was in sight . . . the sands were already running out . . . ten days later, by a combination of moves of a masterly nature in that well-nigh impenetrable bush-veld, Colenbrander rounded up Badenhorst and twenty-eight of his leading men and drove them right into the arms of Dawkins' column, on the other side of a ridge. A wonderful feat.

Records for mobility were set up in this Boer War; once we covered one hundred and seventeen miles in three days, with running fights the whole time, the prize being thousands of head of cattle, many prisoners, waggons, rifles, and other equipment. Had those directing our destinies realized before the war started what it involved, and the best way to tackle it, it could have been ended within a year.

Horse-sickness was now coming on and so we moved south to a more congenial area round Rustenberg in the Western Transvaal. Then also some of the captured cattle had died of that mysterious malady rinderpest, the scourge of Africa, with its deadly attacks on cattle. Often has it swept over the land like a destroying angel, exterminating herds of buffalo and antelope, apart from domestic animals, so we hastened through this rinderpest area in an effort to get away from its ravages.

It was Christmas time and we were to open the New Year with operations against De La Rey. Before, however, these were in full swing a momentous thing happened, the outcome of which might have altered the whole trend of events in South Africa.

The Boer commandant Kemp suddenly descended upon the Bechuana

chief Linchwe and rode off with six thousand head of his cattle. Linchwe and his warriors were furious and Kemp's action nearly precipitated a crisis; the native population of South Africa, who between them could muster approximately three hundred thousand fighting men, were watching the struggle between Boer and Briton with ever-growing interest, and the stand taken by Linchwe's men was an ominous portent of what might happen. The mass rising of the blacks might begin in this small way, but the spark that set it going would spread into a wide flame embracing a vast area and sweep onwards in a blaze. The situation therefore required handling with consummate skill and by a man who understood the native mind, could talk to them fluently in their own language, and with the gift of judgment, tact, and determination, for the ability to handle the African is born of knowledge and experience of his own peculiar mentality.

Lord Kitchener sent for Colenbrander, who hastened to Pretoria, where he discussed with the Commander-in-Chief the pros and cons of a critical situation. As already remarked, it required handling with care and circumspection; due recognition of the Bechuana claims for restitution, and their desire for vengeance against the aggressor, had to be taken into consideration; the dire results of a native rising loomed like a spectre in the background.

Colenbrander was entrusted with the task of arranging a mutually satisfactory settlement; the general idea and the momentous issues at stake were indicated, and he was to do the necessary. Colenbrander selected Lieutenant Armstrong for the task.

Armstrong had gained notoriety a few years before in the Matabele rising in the stalking of the witch-doctor M'Limo, the high priest of the Matabele, who exercised immense influence over them and whose word was law. He lived in a cave high up on a boulder-strewn hill in the Matoppos, and the plan evolved by Armstrong, in conjunction with Burnham, the American scout, was to enter the cave and there await the advent of the witch-doctor, who, it was ascertained, would be returning there late on the afternoon of a certain day. The plan was fantastic in its audacity and danger. To reach the cave they had to pass through hostile country, strewn with rocks and boulders and covered with scrub and long grass; then, once inside the cave, they would be on the rack of suspense, not knowing if the M'Limo would return alone or accompanied by Matabele warriors. If that happened their chances of getting away alive were at zero. There was, too, another anxiety; if they killed the witch-doctor in the cave they might have to run the gauntlet of the hundreds outside, and what would happen then?

Luck, however, was with them; they reached the base of the hill and, tethering their horses in the long grass, made the perilous ascent, and entered the cave. Once or twice they peered out . . . at last they saw the witch-doctor coming up the hill . . . alone! Within reach of their rifles came the dreaded M'Limo. Crouching in a dark recess of the cave were these two desperate men . . . the witch-doctor came in . . . and the next moment a single shot rang out, a bullet clean through the heart from Burnham's rifle. The roar of the shot reverberated through the cave and was interpreted by hundreds of warriors in a nearby village as the voice of the god.

Springing over the dead body, Armstrong and his companion dashed outside

and bounded down the hill . . . but they had been spotted by the warriors, who, amazed at the sight of two white men emerging from the cave-temple, gave instant pursuit, but the horses were fresh, the men bold riders, and they got away. Of such a calibre were the leaders of the Fighting Scouts composed.

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Armstrong was a fluent native linguist, who had lived amongst the native tribes and had their confidence, whilst his personal bravery and prowess were well known. This was the man chosen for the mission.

It was adventure fraught with danger; we were thirty-one all told against four thousand armed warriors. One of my companions asked me what I thought the chances were of our getting through alive. I knew from history that these natives were adepts at treachery and I remembered reading of instances of it that had happened in the early days. The highlight of treachery was when the Boer leader, Piet Retief, many years before, had come to the Zulu chief Dingaan, to conclude a treaty with him. The party, about one hundred strong, were well received, as we were, but Dingaan was one of the blackest savages who has ever darkened an African throne. After the signing of the treaty he invited the party into his compound, unarmed, as was the native custom, a large enclosure surrounded by a paling, where several hundred warriors, fully armed, were drawn up for a display in honour of the Dutch party. Kaffir beer and refreshments were served and all seemed well.

Suddenly, and without warning, a signal was given, and the whole party overwhelmed and killed to a man. The mills of God grind slowly, but they grind exceeding small! Many months after this affair an avenging commando came to Dingaan's territory and after a terrific fight killed Dingaan and hundreds of his followers. They found the skeleton of Piet Retief, and with it a belt and wallet in which lay the blood-stained treaty.

I thought of the passing of Piet Retief and his men, and said to my companion, "We'll have to take a chance."

The meeting took place outside Linchwe's capital; the site was well chosen, for if the natives intended foul play the ground was suitable for using our horses to the best advantage. Nevertheless our position was not an enviable one, and in the event of trouble arising we should have found it difficult to put up a fight against that four thousand, let alone to get away. My comrades were old hands at this sort of thing; they sat firm on their horses, never moving a muscle or showing sign of embarrassment. It was a great test of courage; we had confidence in each other and left the rest to Fate. The luck that had been with us hitherto, I thought, must surely carry us on to the end. At the same time I was not very happy about it all . . . I had been in more cheerful places than that vast parade ground.

It was about eleven o'clock in the morning when Armstrong with his bodyguard rode on to the ground; he went up to the front ranks of the mass of warriors; as already remarked, there were four thousand of them, all armed, some with modern breech-loaders and rifles, with spears, assegais, and old Tower muskets, whilst a few carried large battle-axes. The assembly were squatting on their haunches, intoning a war chant.

As the warriors sat there with their weapons flashing in the sunlight they presented a spectacle that the eye of man but seldom rests on. Each one grasped his gun or assegai or whatever weapon he had; a dead silence fell upon the assembly as they waited for us to open the proceedings, the only sound audible being the movement of our horses as we fell into line behind Armstrong.

Armstrong now moved closer to the assembled warriors, whilst we formed a single rank behind him. Not a word was said until we had taken up our positions and then Armstrong signed to the chiefs and gave a salutation in Bechuana, asking if it were peace, to which they replied that it was. This impressive prelude being over, Armstrong raised his voice and every word rang across the crowd. He spoke for several minutes and I wondered what the upshot of it all would be. I was watching Armstrong and his fluent delivery, and listening to the murmurs that every now and then rose from the crowd as some point in the harangue appealed to or disappointed them. Every eye in that large crowd was riveted on him and even in the most distant ranks I could see the warriors craning forward so that they might not lose a word.

He said that the loss of their cattle should be compensated for, gave the reasons why the Great White Chief (King Edward VII) did not wish them to take up arms against the enemy, and concluded by asking if they submitted to the Great Chief's will! Yes, it would be peace and they would leave all to the wisdom of the mighty chief.

So ended this remarkable meeting, one of those occasions which make life worth living, and another brick in the cornerstone of Empire. That night we held high jinks in camp with the eggs, the chickens, and supplies that were showered on us by the Bechuanas. As the sun went down we built up our camp fires, the flames throwing strange shadows on men and horses, but conducive to our cheerfulness. I sat down with my messmates to a dinner of roast chicken with a greater feeling of relief, and a greater amount of satisfaction at the outcome of the day's work than I had felt at the time when we started out on this adventurous journey. When we rode out that morning to the appointed place I could not help wondering what the Fates had in store for us; for all I knew to the contrary, we might be suddenly set upon and massacred; had they turned on us, not a man would have lived to tell the tale. They were not cheering thoughts that morning, and I had tried to forget them as we came to the scene of action. Now it was all over . . . and a real victory won. We had not only averted the danger, but had improved the British position into the bargain.

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Our journey back was by night through a torrential downpour of rain which forced us to off-saddle until daybreak. Just after, we crossed the Eland's River, camping that night at Piet Kruger's farm, where the following morning Colenbrander joined us with a force of fifty of our men. Great was the welcome and stirring the report Armstrong had to give our chief: how disaster had been averted and the object gained without the expenditure of a single cartridge. We had ridden nearly two hundred miles within the past three days. 'Excelsior!' had been the word, we were mounted on good horses, and this accounted for the way in which we kept up the pace. We rode into the regimental bivouac just

before dark on the third day, the horses holding out well and the men as hard as dervishes.

We were now after De La Rey, who was heading for the Free State to link up with De Wet, so the next day we tried to cut him off, but the wily Boer had a good start and escaped us. The special scouts, ever on the *qui vive*, kept us *au courant* of the Boer movements and had quite a lot to tell when we rejoined the regiment at Oliphant's Nek.

There was no time, however, for rest and refreshment; twelve hours later we had started again, carrying four days' rations on our fast travelling Cape carts to play a part in the encircling moves against De Wet and De La Rey. They were wide, sweeping movements covering a large area of country, and it meant being in the saddle all day and most of the night.

It was the beginning of the end of this long-drawn-out war and the Boers were already on the brink of collapse. They were, however, still hanging on by the slack, and one or two of their leaders, by the force of their own personality, kept the commandos in the field. That last lap, so far as I was concerned, was in keeping with the rest of the story.

The nights were dark and stormy, and we could hardly distinguish what was going on, but we knew that the Boers were in a desperate state and that before long we should have them all rounded up. The defeat of De Wet and De La Rey would mean a general cave-in throughout the Transvaal and the Free State.

Life for me in the Fighting Scouts was nearing its dramatic close. It was now the end of January 1902, and one night as we were resting, off-saddled, near Nauwpoort, a sergeant came down the line with the news that time-expired men could, if they so wished, take their discharge and leave the following morning for Durban or Cape Town. This was the anti-climax to many long and strenuous months. I was almost bewildered at the news . . . in fact, it affected me so deeply that the sergeant might have been announcing complete ruin instead of opening up a vision of ease and comfort.

I thought it over for an hour or two . . . and then made up my mind. This was the parting of the ways. I had been nearly eighteen months in the field, day and night without a break, and the call of England, home and beauty was overwhelming. I hated leaving my comrades-in-arms, those wonderful men with whom I had fought, with whom I had endured every sort of hardship . . . I feel I could pay them no greater compliment when I say that I could have wished for no better companions, or stauncher friends.

The die was cast, and at four o'clock the next morning I set out with others, travelling via Krugersdorp, passing over the scene of the ill-fated and abortive Jameson Raid, and so to Pretoria. There we entrained for Durban, where I received the official discharge. Life with the Fighting Scouts had come to an end.

There is little more to tell. I stayed in Durban two or three weeks, taking it easy, and one morning signed on before the mast of the Natal liner *Inyati*, and at the end of February was once again in London.

CHAPTER EIGHT

India; and its complex problems—Snapshots of a Hindu Pope—A costly setting—To Chitral, where three empires meet—The Pathans; wild tribesmen of the frontier—Two Ghazis and the little dog—A providential escape—Afghan humour—Where whistling is a crime.

MY journey to India and subsequent service in the Indian Army were primarily due to Field-Marshal Earl Roberts, who, when I returned from South Africa, was Commander-in-Chief at home. I now entered the regular army by the aristocratic back door—the Militia—Roberts of Kandahar, Lord George Hamilton, then Secretary of State for India, and other good family friends had facilitated my passage, and in the summer of 1903 I sailed for India as a second-lieutenant in the Northamptonshire Regiment, the old 48th Foot.

On arrival in Bombay I was posted to the Leicestershire Regiment, at Bellary, in the Madras Presidency, for a year's service to qualify for the Indian Army. There were other attachés and together we made a cheery crowd. There was one subaltern, however, they did not like; he was a self-satisfied, priggish fellow, with an unfortunate manner. One Sunday, when he was out for the day, they played a practical joke on him. When he returned to his bungalow late at night and went into his room to light the oil lamp he bumped into something large . . . something that moved away, and grunted and snorted, and was a high kicker. When he struck a match his amazement increased, for there, standing by his bed, was one of the largest cows he had ever seen. To judge from the room, and the state of things in general, the cow had been in occupation for quite a while, and, at any rate, it made me feel glad that cows can't fly!

Through Colonel W. R. Birdwood, afterwards Field-Marshal Lord Birdwood, Military Secretary to Lord Kitchener, I was lucky enough to be posted to the 39th Garhwal Rifles, now the 18th Royal Garhwal Rifles, a regiment recruited from Garhwal in the Himalayas. During the First World War it had the distinction of being the only regiment of the Indian Army with both its battalions in France.

Garhwal is the second most mountainous country in the world, and contains the highest mountain in the British Empire—Nanda Devi, 25,660 feet. It is a collection of mountain ranges separated by valleys and ravines, and with the exception of a narrow strip of dense jungle along the foothills of the Himalayas, there is no level land there.

The Garhwalis are short of stature but sturdy build, capable of undergoing great fatigue and travelling long distances on a minimum of sustenance. They make fine soldiers and our permanent station was at Lansdowne, at an elevation of 6,000 feet, and about 130 miles north-east of Bareilly.

Garhwal has other claims to fame, for the Ganges rises there; it is the birthplace of the Hindu religion, and the realm of the gods. Hindu history tells us how the deities with their following of sages and ascetics made it their home, and the Pandavs, at the conclusion of their pilgrimage on earth, passed from it to the heaven of Indra. Below the snow-capped summits of Kedarnath and Badrinath are the sacred Hindu shrines, and at Badrinath, which I once visited, lives the raoul, a sort of Pope of Hinduism, and a Brahmin of the highest caste.

All the higher peaks of the Himalayas are dedicated to special beliefs; they are the homes of the gods and the beings who control the destiny of the world, and it is fitting that the holiest of Hindu temples at Badrinath should have a Himalayan setting. It was there the god Krishna descended in one of his flights and made it a holy place. Towering above and around it are a dozen peaks, not one of which is less than 24,000 feet.

I saw the temple from the outside, for no European has ever set foot within it. The entrance is a study in doorways: the outer one is of burnished copper, beyond, and leading into a second room, is another, of silver; the third is of gold. There, brooding and static, reposes the idol of black marble, covered with gold and silver ornaments and vestments, a tiara of gold upon its head, and a massive diamond shining in its forehead.

None but the raoul is allowed to touch the idol, and every day he and the god have an array of dishes prepared for them by the Brahmin cooks, fifty or sixty being a not uncommon number. The food has rancid butter in all the dishes, but I was told the raoul's favourite item is pickles!

At night the god has a bed prepared by attendants and everything used in its service is of gold and silver.

The raoul, arbiter in a mighty religion, living up amongst the peaks and glaciers, is chosen from a special sect far down in the torrid and steamy heat of the Madras plains. He leaves that Turkish bath atmosphere for a stone shelter in the icy realm of the gods, the smoke of whose kitchen is the clouds appearing above the summit of the world's highest mountains.

For the amusement and service of the god a staff of men and girls is maintained, the latter as the wives of the god, and, incidentally, the mistresses of the priests. When these selected beauties are no longer attractive the god divorces them and sends them out to a charitable public.

Farther down, in the less elevated parts of the Himalayas, are the devil-dancers who frighten away evil spirits, and the orchestras that tune in and perform to the glory of the peaks, with trombones eight feet in length, on which they play shrieking notes with long weird calls that echo down the passes. Some of the monasteries, where this music shocks the silence of the snows, lie in a fantastic setting of pinnacles and glaciers that extend for more than fifty miles. In the moonlight they glint, in the sunshine they shimmer; they are the lamps of the gods who hold suzerainty over the Himalayas.

The people whom they hold in subjection wear homespun garments of the thickest wool, being looped up above the knee for ordinary folk, and worn ankle deep by monks and priests. They are worn until they drop off or let in the cold so much that the wearer is compelled to renovate them. A woollen garment that lasts a lifetime is held in high esteem, and the wearer admired for

preserving this museum exhibit upon his person. A Himalayan tailor could announce with pride that he makes suits which will live.

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Shortly after I joined the regiment we left for a year's service in Chitral, fourteen marches beyond Nowshera on the North-West Frontier on the road to Central Asia. We trained to Nowshera, marching thence via Mardan—the home of the famous Guides—by the Malakand and through the Swat and Dir valleys.

Chitral is an outpost of India, with Afghanistan along its western border and Gilgit and Hunza on the east. The people of Hunza, by the way, claim to be descendants of Alexander the Great and his army, and they acknowledge as their spiritual head that well-known figure the Aga Khan.

It is curious to think that this wild and remote tribe, with whom in later years I spent many happy days, whose customs have scarcely changed in fifteen hundred years, and have as near neighbours more than thirty peaks exceeding a height of 25,000 feet, and glaciers that would stretch from London to Dover, should have as their spiritual chief this genial sportsman. The people of Hunza regard a pilgrimage to the Aga's home in Bombay, where he has a receiving office for contributions constantly pouring in, from his followers, as more important than a journey to Mecca.

The northern border of Chitral touches a narrow strip of Afghan territory about fifteen miles wide, beyond which is Soviet Russia. We occupied Chitral in 1895, to forestall the Russians, who were always moving south across Asia. They had eyes on Chitral, but we came in before they could lay hands on it and so get a stepping-stone right into India.

On the way up we camped the night at Mardan, where the Guides have a wonderful mess, with a gauze contraption which they had rigged up as a dining-room in the open to escape the legion of flies by day and mosquitoes by night. Several of us dined with the Guides, and after dinner in the ante-room a battle royal took place between two opposing factions, the Guides on one side and the Garhwalis on the other. Our opponents were commanded by Coape Smith of the 11th Bengal Lancers. Had he lived in Elizabethan days Coape Smith would have been the hero of the hour. He was just the type to go out into the unknown without money or resources and come back with the makings of an empire. He spent money like a sixteenth-century gallant, and once gave a dinner to celebrate his second lakh of debts (£6,333).

The opposing sides were five in number, mounted on the shoulders of five others, each armed with a formidable roll of weekly papers done up as a sword. So the battle engaged, until the ante-room was like a shambles, and Coape Smith and his gallant men had been vanquished.

Sad to relate, he was killed a couple of years later in a frontier skirmish by a spent bullet at very long range. Strange are the workings of Fate!

In our march to Chitral it was an inspiration to meet the Pathan, that genial, fighting tribesman of the North-West Frontier. I came in contact with him quite a lot as a magistrate, and also as the British representative in Central Asia, so it will be appropriate at this stage to say something about him.

A great deal of my magisterial business was transacted in the open, and an

audience gathered that for appearance and solemnity bore a Biblical aspect. I took my seat at a table and the court and audience disposed themselves round me in a semi-circle, cross-legged, on the ground. The proceedings then opened. One day a question up for settlement concerned a Pathan who had been let out on bail pending the arrival of the court, but had absconded, with the result that the bailees must either produce the felon or be mulcted in the loss of their money. Notwithstanding the fact that they had been let down by their co-religionist, their leanings were towards the delinquent, who was regarded as a clever performer. Had he been captured in his second effort sympathy would be alienated from him and, condemned as a bungler, he would have been given over to the law. On the other hand, there was the financial side, and the Pathan, like a good many other people, does not like to part.

All sorts of arguments were advanced to show cause why the sum should not be forfeited. The bailees were all talking at once, after the manner of the Oriental litigant, but the court selected one to present the case . . . and it was then that sidelights on Eastern character were presented. Grief and indignation at the conduct of their relative, pathetic emotion, an air of resignation, interspersed with false humility—all were unavailing to affect the British magistrate in the summing-up and the separation of the wheat from the chaff. Still loath to relinquish all hope, an effort was made to secure a reduction in the amount at stake, for the pain of parting is intolerable, as is usually so all over the world . . . peradventure, in this case, the worst may be avoided, but the matter is too flagrant to admit of any such leniency, and so the verdict is given and the crowd murmurs, "Allah akbar" (God is great).

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Chitral seemed to me to be a happy land, one of rugged and smiling valleys where all sorts of fruit grow to perfection and the people live an idyllic life basking in the sunlight, with pretty, rosy-cheeked women for wives and sweethearts, and mountain views like those in the Dolomites or the Bernese Oberland . . . but on the super-grand scale. They were ruled by a cross-eyed chieftain who was indulgent towards his subjects, but with an eye for a pretty girl, and when he came across a particularly attractive specimen she was made a member of the harem. His schooling in that way had been an instructive one, and his father had scattered his Maker's image up and down the land and left eighty-odd children.

The big and small game shooting in Chitral is another outstanding advantage of life beyond the frontiers of India. There are markhor, oorial, and ibex, with chikor, the hill partridge, and in the late autumn geese and duck would come honking down from the far north on their way to spend the winter on the rivers and lakes of India.

During the summer months it is a shade hotter than the warmest day or night in England, and as the fort at Chitral was hot and stuffy I often slept out in the cooler and greener embrace of the orchard. This matter of an outside sleeping chamber was just one of those seemingly meaningless actions one is sometimes prompted to take almost instinctively, yet the result may be to play a vital part in life and its preservations . . . as it did in mine.

It is an extraordinary story, in which a little mongrel dog took a leading part. He was smaller than a Cairn terrier, and in the previous week, for some reason or other, had attached himself to me. I am not over-partial to dogs, especially in a house, but this one insisted on being in close attendance on me. He was just a little brown, woolly dog, with nothing at all to commend him beyond a dog-like devotion to me. On what was very nearly the fatal night in question, he took up a position beneath my bed in the orchard.

During the night I was awakened by his barking; he was a real disturber of the peace in the cool of that Chitral garden. I was too sleepy to get up and chase him away, and although he seemed to regard my bed as a heaven-sent kennel, I, in turn, growled angrily at him, but it produced no effect whatever. That dog's bark was definitely worse than his bite; it went on for several minutes and nothing I could do served to quell the interrupter of the night's serenity. "Shut up!" I shouted at last, in English, Persian, Urdu, and Pushtu, but I might as well have tried to cleave the Pillar of Asoka. The little dog had evidently constituted himself my guardian and was determined to justify the trust.

At last, tired out with the day's work and this canine cacophony, which, after a quarter of an hour or so, died down, I fell asleep again.

Two days later, whilst we were at breakfast in the fort, a report came through that two Hindu ambulance-bearers had been murdered during the night at Drosh, thirty miles down the road. The alarm had been instantly sounded, the tracks and trails leading up to the passes into Afghanistan were closed, and as a result two marauding Afghans, trying to get out of the Chitral valley, were apprehended. They turned out to be two Ghazis, religious fanatics, who had come over from Afghan territory intent on murdering two Britishers, for to kill two infidels would mean a passport to Heaven and no questions asked.

They spoke only Pushtu, and I acted as interpreter at the trial when these two hopefuls, one was seventeen and the other twenty-eight, readily admitted they had been after much bigger game. They had gone up to Chitral, and hearing from local gossip that two British officers occasionally slept in the orchard outside the fort, their spirits rose to a high level and Paradise appeared within their grasp. So they marked those two men down—myself and a brother officer—and about two o'clock in the morning, when they imagined we would be sound asleep, entered the orchard. The younger one, a strapping youth, with a dagger ten inches long, was to take care of me, the other of my companion.

But there's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip . . . a dog, they said, barked loudly, one of the intended victims was awakened . . . and they feared for the guard which might come out at any moment, and our men were quick on the trigger. Prowlers in the orchard would have been caught out. So fear took possession of the Ghazis. . . . "We feared for the guard and went our way."

They walked thirty miles down the road to Kila Drosh, and there found the two Hindu bearers, whom they savagely did to death, one of them receiving eighteen separate dagger-thrusts.

So I owed my life to the little dog . . . alone he did it . . . and thereafter became my faithful friend.

The two murderers were condemned to death by hanging . . . and as no one seemed to know how to make a hangman's noose, I demonstrated the way of it . . . and it was done.

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There was an irregular corps composed of Chitralis known as the Chitral Scouts who came up in groups for periodical training. Good shots and splendid cragsmen, they were commanded by Captain Sawyer, a jovial fellow of the pioneer type, who had a penchant for correct language. I remember he once drew attention to the misuse of a certain verb by one of us, and, to back it up, quoted Dr. Johnson, who was likewise intolerant of misplaced verbs. The Doctor was once sitting in a coach next to a small man who, detecting an odour, said to the learned, but perhaps not over-clean, Doctor:

"Sir, you smell."

"No," quoth the Doctor, "pardon me, sir: *you* smell, *I* stink." And that is the grammatical way of putting it.

It was a happy and enjoyable year we spent in Chitral, where I first became acquainted with real big game shooting, that afterwards led to the holding of two world's records.

On the return march to India we were accompanied through the Dir and Swat valley by a Pathan regiment, splendid fighting men of the North-West Frontier, jovial and devil-may-care Mahommedans, who prefer to be under British rule, for the fighting qualities of the two races fit in well together. They love our sense of humour and unflinching rectitude in all matters of justice, and realize they will get a square deal. At the same time they recognize the Amir of Afghanistan as the overlord, but in a vague and indeterminate sense; they always seemed to look upon him as an Amir and a top-notch follower of the Prophet, and left it at that.

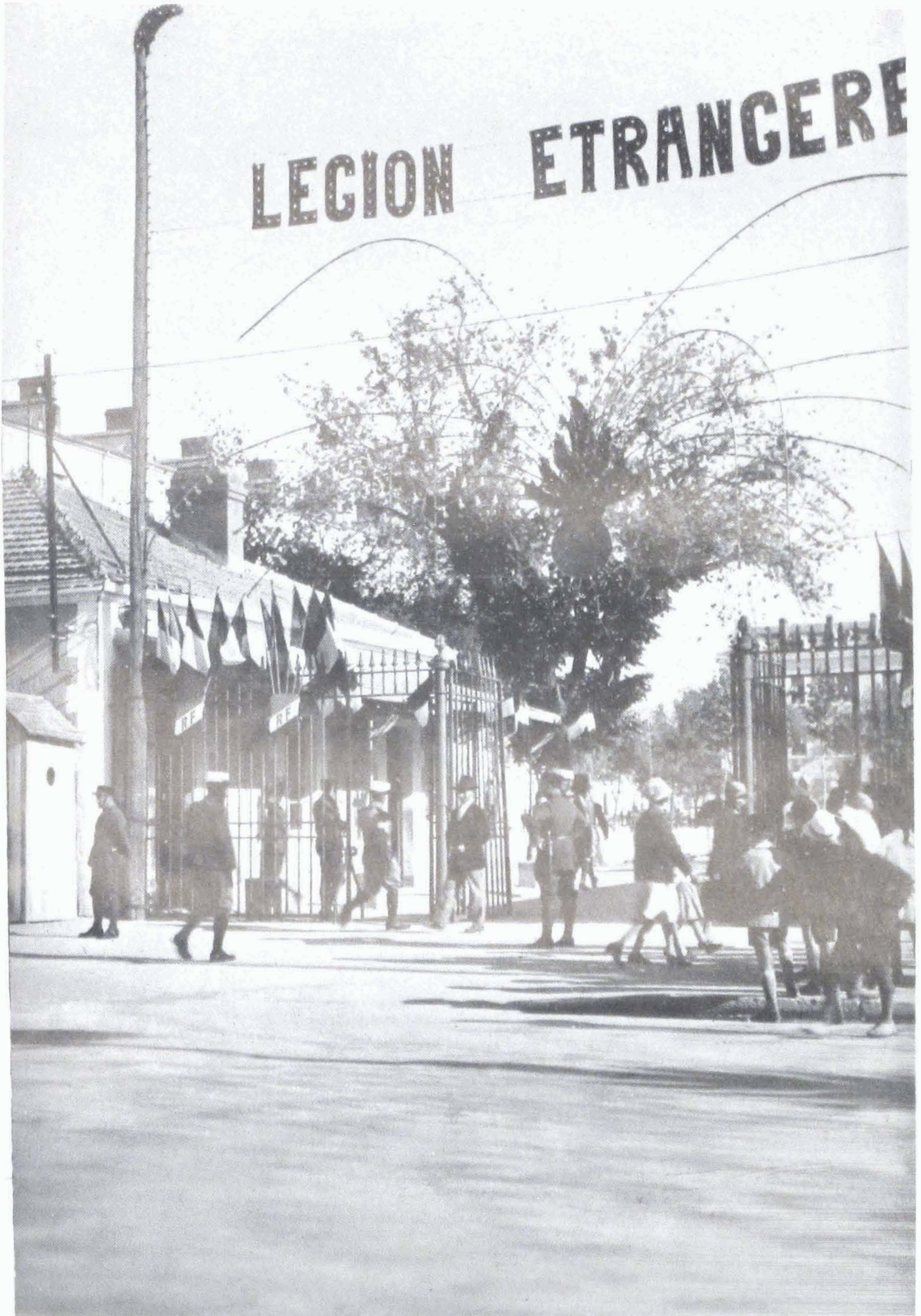
The Amir Habibullah of Afghanistan, who was murdered in 1919, happened to come down to India on an official visit, his advent coinciding with our return. He was a genial, astute, and sagacious ruler, just the type of man to control his turbulent subjects, and with a sense of humour. Whilst in Peshawar he took a drive round the cantonments and residential quarters, during which his host, the British Commissioner, remarked that here the ladies went unveiled and were free from the restriction and seclusion obtaining in Moslem countries.

"Yes," remarked the Amir, "you keep your pretty women at home . . . so do we."

One night he was entertained to dinner by the Commissioner, and in accordance with their ancient custom the pipers of a Highland regiment marched round the mess-room when the coffee had been served, making the most infernal din.

Now, it is a strange fact that this formidable instrument is common to most mountain peoples, and the Amir's host commented on the fact, adding that he was sure the Amir enjoyed the skirl. "Yes," replied the wily Afghan, "it was splendid . . . but one would have been enough."

Some years later, whilst I was in Central Asia, a neighbour of the Amir's came to seek refuge in Afghanistan; the Bolsheviks had descended upon him,



GENERATIONS OF "LEGIONNAIRES" HAVE PASSED THROUGH THIS GATEWAY TO "JOIN UP"

AN ARAB CARAVAN IN A DEFILE OF THE SAHARA

taken all his worldly goods, and chased him out of his country. His prime minister came to ask me if anything could be done for his master, but the whole situation bristled with difficulties and we could do nothing for him. His followers were full of stories of the Bokharan Amir. One of his predecessors was Nasrullah Khan, probably the most vicious savage who has ever darkened an Eastern throne. His entry to power was marked by the execution of his three brothers and twenty-eight other relatives, to obviate possible interference with his reign.

Nasrullah, like my friend from Kabul, had a sense of humour . . . but it was grim. For the accommodation of his political prisoners he had two dungeons constructed. The first was several feet below ground level and about forty feet square, this being reserved for the least obnoxious of political opponents . . . but beneath it, still further down in the bowels of the earth, was a second dungeon, about twenty feet square, plunged in perpetual darkness. This was the chosen spot for his most recalcitrant objectors, and into it they were lowered by means of ropes. It must have been a ghastly hell-hole, for apart from the constant darkness, it was full of rats, small snakes, ticks, and other vermin, which, when the dungeon was empty, were fed upon raw meat to keep them in condition.

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On the way down from Chitral we had great difficulty in crossing the Lowarai Pass, early snows and blizzards having blocked the path through the ravine and up to the summit.

These mountain people have their own ideas on snowstorms and avalanches, and one of the things they do not like is whistling . . . and thereby hangs another tale. Both here, in Garhwal, and elsewhere I came to know the Himalayas, the Hindu Koosh, and the Kuen Lun along the northern edge of Tibet where monks pass their lives in living tombs.

Some time afterwards, when going up into Central Asia, I learnt that whistling in these remote fastnesses is a crime. A brother officer had this brought forcibly home to him. He had been on a secret mission to a fanatical state beyond the Indian frontier. In a moment of forgetfulness, he whistled to the tune played by a native orchestra. He was disguised as a Moslem hawker and the act nearly cost him his life.

In the valleys and ravines that led up on to the Roof of the World the coolies who carry your kit, if you are crossing in the winter or early spring, will tell you on no account to whistle. Not only will it bring down avalanches and snow-slides, but will arouse the anger of the gods, and in my case I said nothing was further from my thoughts than to disturb the heavenly bodies.

This whistling had ramifications, for when crossing the Gobi Desert in Mongolia, which stretches for hundreds of miles across northern Asia, I once whistled during a halt at a Mongol camp. The Mongol chief was seriously alarmed; disaster, he said, would descend upon the camp . . . and what was I going to do about it! I did not want to upset these people, for they were very helpful and I had to depend upon them for the rest of my journey in that largely unexplored land. On these occasions one has to think quickly, and so I did act with rapidity, and more by good luck than instinct hit upon the one

weak spot in my host's armoury . . . and what I had with me helped me to make the most of it.

I knew the Mongol penchant for strong drink, and realizing that this would be the key to reopen the door to peace and friendship produced a bottle of cherry brandy. The effect was magical; I handed it to my host, he ran his fingers over the label and smelt the contents. His demeanour changed entirely, he bowed low, and thereafter got gloriously drunk, and when I left the next morning insisted on my being made a life member of the tribe, so I felt that whistling had its compensations.

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From our permanent home in the Himalayan foothills I occasionally took leave to go higher up into the mountains where there is still room for exploratory enterprise, for this massive chain of mountains holds many curious secrets, where all sorts of queer people and things are to be met with.

No Caesar of India could ever cross these super-Alps; they act as one of Nature's mightiest irrigation reservoirs, storing masses of ice and snow, that ultimately become the streams providing the water and carrying the silt which give life to millions of people in India's northern plains.

These are the mountains hard with rock, fierce with tempests, serene in summer, jubilant in spring, terrible in winter, yet always holding man in a thraldom of spirit that must be experienced and cannot be expressed.

On the Indian side, and running almost the entire length, is a belt of jungle dividing the mountains from the plains; beyond are thickets of spruce and fir perched high up on the mountain side, tracts of forest that are unmatched for variety of contrast and climate. They range through all the shades that separate snow zones from tropics, and embody most types of coverts, trees and dells.

In these Himalayan forests and valleys life is full of the simple delight of living, bringing a sense of freedom and happy possession. It must resemble the spirit of Switzerland before the time of trippers, hotels, or even inns, only with a more abounding life.

A sense of mystery and novelty clings to forests that turn corners and climb hills, and flow down precipices as if they themselves wish for fresh beginnings.

Then again, many and strange are the secrets of these forests, where man and beast live by their wits, where men have headgear made from the feathers of rare birds, and the weird, the primitive, and the original greet each other at every turn.

Many of the people are nomads, here today and gone tomorrow; some of them live in camps of bark and branches, sheltered on the side from which the wind blows. Queer folk they are, physically and mentally incapable of agricultural or industrial effort, neither do they possess draught animals or the ability to domesticate them. But they know all about jungle lore and life, exactly how and when to catch the bears breakfasting in the mulberry trees, for hunting is at once their primary and only need, and it has developed their faculty of observation to an extraordinary degree.

Apart from these primitive tribesmen, we find many creatures of the wild,

an immense growth of plant life, with trees that came from seed before the Norman Conquest, and whose leaves struggled for life and air when the Crusaders were starting out. These jungles send up trees two hundred feet and more into the air; generations of monkeys have gambolled amongst their branches, elephants have fought for the mastery of the herd beneath their shade, pythons have coiled round their branches waiting for the unsuspecting deer, and tiger and panther have stalked their prey under the light of a tropic moon.

Studies in home life can be had among the tribes of the Himalayas; their houses are of reeds, thatch and grass, all perfectly woven. The floors are of beaten mud and everything is neat and clean. One such tribe I visited, within the shadow of Kinchinjunga, had a jazz band, composed chiefly of flutes, dulcimers, and violins, in which the players were men, but the dancers were women. Warmed by wine of their own decoction, they staged a dance; not the sensuous movements of Hindu nautch maidens, who beckon and whisper of the dark mysteries of hidden gods and sacred temples, where the moonlight whitens Jumna River; rather it was the spontaneous, carefree self-expression of primitive bodies eager and happy to be alive.

I was as a watcher translated back into the dim unrecorded past, seeing once again the sons and daughters of cave men come out of their cramped homes and dance round the watch-fires at night, discovering movement and finding that it was good.

After the dance came the archery; the men pulled long bows to their ears, much, I suppose, as in the days of Merrie England, and they shot with accuracy up to a distance of about eighty yards. I asked the Robin Hood of this band of merry archers if he would give me a special demonstration of his shooting. In a twinkling he had fitted an arrow to his bow and tumbled a pigeon out of a distant tree.

Another of the secrets held by these tribesmen of the inner Himalayas is serpent worship. It is one of the oldest cults known to men, and its bizarre influence can be traced back to the earliest race consciousness. The sun and the serpent were, and are, the chief deities of the first inhabitants of India, and of those who still live remote from civilization within the shadow of the higher peaks.

CHAPTER NINE

The riddle of India—Brahmins and the terrible incubus of caste—The 'Untouchables'—Life in the harem—The world's biggest fair—The mad rush to the holy river—The princes and their fabulous background—A picturesque summary—Hindu versus Moslem.

A WELL-KNOWN party leader dined with me one night; he was alert, quick on the uptake, and anxious for information on all topics concerning India, expressing surprise at the lack of general knowledge relating to that country.

When anyone asks me about India I think of the three hundred and eighty-nine millions of its population, of its two hundred and twenty-two languages and dialects, its innumerable castes and creeds, most of them bitterly opposed to each other, the inherent and age-old diversities of view, of the immensity of India and the mysteries which surround it. At the same time I marvel at what has been accomplished under British rule and the bricks that have been fashioned from this uninviting straw.

The government of India is a mighty thing to contemplate; wonderful to reflect on the small number by which it is done. All told there are only 155,000 Britishers in India, of whom 62,000 are soldiers and 37,000 women. The rest is made up by the ruling and commercial classes. The late Nizam of Hyderabad, India's premier prince, summed up British rule when he urged Moslems to support Britain: "There is no Moslem power, or non-Moslem power, in the world under which India enjoys such personal and religious liberty as they do in India."

Here in Britain we talk of India as though it were an entity, as a single nation, instead of a mixed and cosmopolitan mass of races, tribes, religions and sects, at variance with each other, lacking all sense of cohesion or anything approaching national or communal unity.

The two main elements in the problem are the ninety-two million Mahommedans and the two hundred and forty million Hindus, of two utterly different cultures, professing faiths which are poles apart, Hinduism with its two thousand four hundred castes and sub-castes, its hundreds of gods, and Mohammedanism, the severe and simple faith, professing one God and one prophet, with every son of Islam his own priest and soldier, and with all the essentials of democracy.

Politicians and others with no knowledge of India beyond what they have gained from school and travel books frequently ask as to one's first impressions of India, and could I give them an idea of the riddle which is India.

When you land in the country your first impression is that of teeming life, of the countless numbers of people of every degree of social status who are absorbed in pursuing the traditional course of their daily lives. The population of India is mainly rural; there are more than 500,000 villages, where the people live in mud and thatched huts, depending upon the crops for a livelihood, knowing nothing of politicians and not wishing to know, and most of

them ruled in their daily lives and actions by an ancient social system which grips them as in a vice from which there is no deviation, and which still preserves, as it did four thousand years ago, an unchanged outlook on life.

Your second impression is that of the melancholy which permeates the land, the air of resignation, one might almost say of despair, clouding India and its varied people. This may partly be accounted for by the general monotony of the country; you can travel for sixteen hundred miles north or south and the face of the land remains practically the same.

Long years of residence in India and along its frontiers have, however, convinced me that this melancholy is due to the terrible incubus of caste, the root and branch of the Hindu social fabric, which affects two-thirds of the population. No matter how talented or wealthy you may be, how gifted or energetic, you remain in the caste in which you were born. You cannot marry outside that caste, you cannot eat or drink from the utensils of one belonging to a higher caste, since that would bring pollution, and for most offences against the caste system you run the risk of 60,000 years in hell.

Your caste is known to your next-door neighbour, and it keeps the man of low degree from rising in the social scale and effectually stamps out the fire of ambition. Born a grocer, an ironmonger, or a potter, you shall remain such for all time.

At the head of the caste system are the Brahmins, or twice-born, the priestly caste, far more exalted than the Levites in the days of their greatest power—the Brahmins who spend their lives as mediators between men and the gods, all-powerful, occupying the paramount position, with an absolute monopoly as priests and a claim to knowledge and authority out of all proportion to their numbers. The Brahmins alone may perform sacrifices and all priestly duties and expound the Vedas, or ancient Hindu laws. The power of the Brahmins and the grip they have upon the people through caste are the inimical forces hostile to British rule. This stranglehold, founded solely on caste, is autocratic beyond measure; every act in the life of the Hindu is controlled by the Brahmins, his birth, marriage, death, domestic and economic events, all are subject to tribute and payment, and the resultant income to the Brahmins is beyond computation. The education and enlightenment of the people and dissemination of British and foreign public opinion would remove this easy source of income, the one great asset in the inexorable Brahmin revenue. To paraphrase Mr. Churchill, 'Never in the whole history of the world has so much tyranny and domination been exercised for so long over so many by so few.'

The province of Madras is the stronghold of the Brahmins; the holiest and most exclusive castes come from the west coast and there they can lead a life of indolence and ease, especially in the state of Travancore where the maharajah feeds 5,000 of them twice daily, and they make the most of it.

Some castes are so holy that a fixed price is charged for their favours; you may kiss their feet for eighteen rupees (about twenty-four shillings) and get a trifle of their reflected glory, take a long drink of their bath-water for fifteen rupees, or a lick at the betel nut one of them has been chewing for ten. All or any of these privileges will ensure a better seat in the Hindu heaven.

The principal Hindu gods inhabit mountain peaks, and the mist which hangs over the summits is ascribed to the smoke of their kitchen chimney.

As previously narrated, I once ascended to the residence of the highest caste Brahmin, a sort of Hindu Pope, who spends his life guarding the mountain temples and maintaining inviolate the rules and obligations of Hinduism.

Throughout his life the terrible millstone of caste hangs like the sword of Damocles over the Hindu. Every time one of them loses caste by coming into contact with an inferior, or breaks one of the religious laws, he has to buy back his status, and only a Brahmin can readmit him. Some years ago I brought a Hindu soldier to England; as a result of the journey he was 'de-casted', but the matter could be adjusted—and was—by a short ceremony and the payment of fifteen rupees . . . to the Brahmin.

The Brahmins are the protectors of cows and monkeys, the sacred animals of Hinduism. Cows wander the streets, causing the taxi-men to brake hard or swerve reverently. They must be moderate in hooting, for it is sacrilege to hustle the sacred animals. These holy cows will saunter up to a greengrocer's stall and munch their fill, for such 'custom' is a guarantee of joys in the world to come. On the other hand, if a cow falls ill it is left to die in the burning heat of the streets, for no one is so impious as to put an end to its pain.

The whole of Hindu life is based on the caste system. Hindus not only share the Victorian belief that it behoved a man to be content with the station to which he has been called, but they forbid for ever any ambition on the part of his children. The offspring of grooms, grocers, ironmongers, cooks or sweepers must be such to the end of the chapter. There is no loophole by which merit can rise. Caste restricts the work a man may do more rigidly than any trade union. The man who sweeps out your room must not take a glass from your hand, the groom who looks after your pony will not cut grass for it—that is the job of a lower caste. The coolie who carries anything from a sack of coal to a piano, may not lift a man on pain of losing his caste. Whatever belongs to an inferior debases, and no workman will touch the tools of another unless he belongs to the same caste. This millstone of caste keeps the Hindu down—no wonder he is melancholy.

Leaving the two thousand four hundred-odd castes in the Hindu social fabric we come to the 'Untouchables', of whom there are fifty-five millions. They are outside all caste, impure and defiled, and afford the most glaring instance of the Hindu's inhumanity to man.

"With all my education I am still an 'Untouchable,' " bitterly exclaimed one of the delegates at a round-table conference convened to straighten out this problem of Hindu *versus* Mahommedan and the rest. Here in Britain, it is easy to transcend the barriers of caste, but in India they form a towering wall.

According to the Hindu belief, the 'untouchable' is suffering for the sins of a former existence and it is the duty of the Brahmin to see that his life is made a purgatory. The most menial tasks, such as sweeping the streets and carrying refuse to the burning dumps, are reserved for him. When on the road, and half the population of India spends its time tramping along in the dust, no innkeeper would dream of admitting one of them. To open the door to an 'Untouchable' would pollute the inn for good and all, and the landlord would have to expend his fortune in propitiation money to the Brahmins.

An 'Untouchable' is forbidden to read the Vedas, the sacred scriptures, and Brahmin will minister to him. His very shadow is pollution, and if it fall on

a dish of food, or a sweetmeat stall, everything must be thrown away. He has no rights of citizenship; he may not take water from the public wells, and in the frequent times of drought this means great suffering. In some towns he may not enter the shops, or even pass through the streets, and he can only buy food and necessaries through the good offices of some higher caste Hindu. The lowest 'Untouchables' are not even allowed to work; all they may do is to stand begging at a safe distance, ready to catch the alms that are hurled at them like balls at a coconut shy.

On the west coast of Madras are the Puliahs, whose standing, even for 'Untouchables', is so low that they are forbidden to build huts and must live in shelters of boughs. Once it was death for them to come within twenty yards of a Brahmin, until a benign British Government succeeded in modifying that, but even today such sacrilege would have painful consequences. When I was in their district some of the bolder of them began to resent their treatment. A band of 'Untouchables' seized a Brahmin, and, with a grim sense of humour, forced him into the arms of a sweeper woman and then shut him up with her for a night.

I saw the humour of the situation, but to the Brahmin it was blackness and despair. So terrible was the pollution that he could only get back his caste by ordering a cow of solid gold, just large enough for him to crawl in at one end and out at the other. Having wriggled through the sacred animal he presented it to the temple, and by this means was pure once more. An expensive business, but better than the 60,000 years in hell that would otherwise have been his lot!

I never wondered at the exasperation of the 'Untouchable'; even their children could not go to school, for if they did all the higher caste ones would leave.

Often postmen will not deliver letters to these people, and no matter how the British try to adjust things and give the 'Untouchable' a chance, they must move more than cautiously in any attempt to help them, otherwise the entire Hindu community would be up in arms.

It is true that many 'Untouchables' are filthy and degraded; few people could lead their life without becoming so, but some are already making efforts to shake off the curse under which they were born.

Undoubtedly part of the depression overhanging the Hindus is due to the degrading position women hold in India, to say nothing of the customs and age-old traditions which deny to them all possibility of advancement or participation in the life and well-being of the community. This is a mighty obstacle to overcome, and however much we may assert that the standard of enjoyment and, for the matter of that, the touchstone of a nation's spirit, is mainly dependent upon the women, an Indian will never concede it.

Pictures, such as appear from time to time of Indian women working and playing like those of the West, mean very little. Their subjects are mostly women of humble caste, who, as far as example goes, cut no ice whatever. Women have no 'official' position in either the Hindu or Moslem religion, and are regarded, in theory at least, as mere drudges. Occasionally a strong-minded wife or mother-in-law governs her family from behind the purdah curtains, but in the world outside the home the age-long devices of harem

intrigue have failed the Indian woman and she has not yet found a new technique. Several women are members of the legislative councils, and in big cities a few have been elected to the local municipal councils. Nevertheless, the caste-bound men decline to take a woman's advice in public, whatever they may do in private.

Even when they are allowed to go to school and mix in the world for a few years, Hindu and Moslem girls retire into purdah at an early age, seeing no man except near relations, and only going out in a closed carriage or clothed in a veil. Purdah presses very harshly upon the poorer women, who are often shut up in small windowless rooms with only an opening high up in the wall for ventilation. In Rajputana a woman may not leave the house to fetch water, even if the well is adjacent to and surrounded by bushes and trees. As a result of this rigid life many Indian girls are stunted in growth and suffer from tubercular disease. As with the imprisoned nuns of Europe, the system comes before the individual, and just as a nun may not leave her convent, even if it is essential for her health, so a woman of India may not cast off her purdah to see and consult a doctor, whatever her suffering. All she can do is to thrust a tiny model figure of herself through the bed curtains and explain by its aid where the pain is.

This purdah system leads to amusing scenes. When I was a magistrate in India a woman had to give evidence in a family land dispute. First of all, a palanquin, heavily veiled, was placed in the hall of her home and into this she popped when the coast was clear. Then the bearers came in, took her up and bore her to the court. There the Brahmin barristers and disputants were asked if they were satisfied that she was the woman required and not some other person. At this they advanced to the litter, muttered a few words through the curtain, and then assured me the case might proceed.

Women in Indian harems are as carefully protected from light and gaze as though they were so many photographic films. They live in their special quarters in charge of a junior or senior mother-in-law. One of them attends a wife or a concubine whenever she goes out in a screened car or a carriage, but one of them must remain on duty at the palace or house. Many of the women only see their husbands occasionally; where there are a couple of hundred of them, interviews and intimacy must be few and far between. Some, as the result of intrigue, may never see him at all!

Life in the harem is a page out of an Eastern story-book; the women enjoy silks and satins, the latest forms of beauty culture are available, their apartments are well lighted and with room to move about in. Nevertheless, there is a dark and sinister side to the picture.

The lovely houris flitting about laughing and smiling, reminiscent of Mr. Cochrane's young ladies, are mere Cinderellas of a night, playthings of the moment, resembling thistledown that any contrary wind can blow away in a moment. With them life, livelihood and safety depend upon the whims and caprice of their master.

Whilst I was in North Africa the son of the Moroccan Emperor was married, over £600,000 being spent on the wedding. The presents were numerous and costly, and as he would, in due course, assume office, important officials were tumbling over each other to buy favour from the heir to the throne.

Among the gifts was one of twelve slave girls, drawn from North Africa and elsewhere, visions of voluptuous beauty. I wondered whether the bride would be as appreciative of them as the bridegroom!

What is the future of these women of the harem? They live in the strictest privacy; their apartments are closely guarded and there is no home life in our meaning of the term. The husband eats alone, they don't go out together, and the wives devote a deal of time to the ever-present task of retaining the man's affection amid the maze of conspiracy and intrigue going on to secure each other's downfall.

In discussing that strange mixture of contradictions, the Indian woman, it must be remembered that education has never been denied her. It is a sacred tradition that Hindu women should receive an education, as far as practicable, on a level with that of their men folk, and one of the most notable of ancient Indian poets was a woman. Most Indian women are content with their life; deeply conservative, they prefer to exercise their influence on public affairs through their husbands rather than through a ballot-box. We cannot do anything drastic about the emancipation of the women of India; that is a matter for the people themselves, and until they take action the women will remain, as they are at present, in the dark and unenlightened background.

Stories of the bright houris of the East, who hold sway by reason of their sex appeal, are untrue. The Indian woman is a model of propriety, and never dresses to attract men; her garments are in striking contrast to the silk stockings and attractive frocks of the West. The lowest dancing girl never exposes more than a minimum of her anatomy. There is an innate modesty and shyness born in the lowest castes which is quite foreign to the West.

* * * * *

Down in the plains below our permanent home was Hardwar, where the sacred river Ganges emerges from the hills into the plains. It is a very holy place, almost on a par with Benares, the Mecca of the Hindu and the scene of the biggest fair in the world, when approximately two million Hindus will assemble from all parts of India and each one hopes to be the first to enter the waters of the 'Gunga' at the moment judged propitious by the Brahmin priesthood. There is nothing on earth to compare with this mad race to the holy river, and it requires police and other precautions which the local British officials carry out with consummate skill and tact.

The fair in question is the Kumbh Mela and takes place every twelfth year when the planet Jupiter is in the sign Aquarius (Kumbh), an occasion regarded by Hindus as one of the utmost sanctity.

The main object of attraction is the bathing ghat, or stairway, a flight of stone steps about one hundred feet in width leading down to the Ganges. This is the starting point and everyone manœuvres to get the inside place in readiness to move off at the psychological moment. For days, and even weeks, before the auspicious time the eager multitude has been pouring into Hardwar. They come from all parts of India; some die by the way in the heat and the dust, but the survivors struggle on with the picture of the holy Ganges emerging

from the Himalayas ever before them, filled with a great longing to throw themselves into it and be blessed for ever by its divine waters.

Hardwar itself is an unattractive paradise with its narrow streets and unholy smells, but it is precious beyond words to the Hindu. As already remarked, the most elaborate precautions and preparations are necessary to cope with so immense a crowd. Provisions and supplies have to be brought in, water laid on under the direction of the Brahmins, space cleared for the multitude to find a camping place, sanitary and medical services arranged, and a host of other things attended to, all of which fall on the patient and competent shoulders of the British and Indian local authority.

At last the great day arrives; it may be in the burning heat of a summer morning, the ground crackling under a vertical sun, the stairway quivering in the heat haze, but this is Mother Gunga; let the sun do his fiercest, the time of promise is at hand, the long-cherished ambition is about to be realized, when the pilgrim can plunge into the holy river at this all-compelling spot, be cleansed from unrighteousness, and materially assisted in gaining Valhalla.

It is a moving scene, the jabbering and chattering of the crowd, the clanging of temple bells, the shouting of commands and the shuffling of a couple of million or more feet. Every moment the noise becomes louder, and the clamour reaches its climax at the drop of the flag, as it were. The top of the stairway with its narrow frontage is the 'inside place', this magic spot with the imprint of the foot of the god Vishnu, the redeemer and preserver of all that exists, and one who in his capacity of preserver assumes several different forms, such as a horse, a pig, half-lion and half-man, a monster, and other incarnations.

That mad rush to the river! Why hundreds weren't killed and trampled to death was more than I could make out.

Europeans are not welcome on these occasions, but there is no hostility if proper respect is shown and no attempt made to take photographs. I have never heard of a 'movie' picture of this astounding scene, and it would make a striking one.

In and around the town and the vast camp are numberless fakirs, or religious beggars, who practise every form of penance and self-torture to obtain salvation. There are those who strip and expose themselves to the sun, surrounded by blazing fires, others who for years have held one arm aloft until by prolonged tension it is unable to resume the normal position. Some of these fakirs recline on boards studded with huge nails; many lie at full length on the ground, and with nothing on but a loincloth roll completely round the temples. It is religious frenzy carried to extremes, and chapters might be written on the psychology of these people. They are ascetics with a genuine belief in the efficacy of their actions, regarded externally, perhaps, as cranks. Indeed, the fakirs might well be taken for eccentric people, but their kind is quite impersonal; they follow an eccentric system that has been in vogue for centuries, without necessarily being eccentric themselves, for the individual note is wanting.

Like other Hindu holy places there are a number of girls attached to the temples, dedicated to the service of the god and consecrated in a special manner to the worship of the Hindu divinities, but really the concubines of the priests. If at any time their services are dispensed with they have little difficulty in

finding husbands, temporarily at any rate, who thus acquire some of the reflected glory, with a certain amount of jewellery and money, even though the girls themselves may be unattractive.

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Next in order of numerical strength come the Mahommedans, far less than the Hindus, but head and shoulders above them in virility and martial ardour. India is so divided that both the two leading factions occupy different areas. It is in the north and north-west that we find the bulk of the Mahommedans, the Punjab, Sind, Baluchistan, the native states and political districts adjacent to the frontier. From all these areas the bulk of the Indian Army comes, a fine, fighting lot of men who look with contempt on the general run of Hindus, and especially the Bengalis.

These are the people, the inhabitants of Bengal, who do most of the talking and claim to speak for Mother India. They are a poor crowd, with no fighting instincts. During the First World War we tried to make something of the forty-eight millions of Bengal, and with difficulty raised a battalion . . . but they never covered themselves with glory!

Macaulay wrote in 1841 that 'the physical organization of the Bengali is feeble even to effeminacy. His pursuits are sedentary, his limbs delicate, his movements languid. During many ages he has been trampled upon by men of bolder and more hardy breeds. Courage, independence, veracity, are qualities to which his constitution and his situation are equally unfavourable. His mind bears a singular analogy to his body. It is weak even to helplessness for purposes of manly resistance, but its suppleness and its tact move the children of sterner climates to admiration not unmingled with contempt.' Politicians have a habit of losing sight of history, and this impels many of them to believe that because British rule has protected the Bengali for a hundred years and more he has been miraculously transformed from a cunning, cowardly, and vituperous windbag into a man. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Now, caste does not trouble the Mahommedan. He, like the Christian, owes his religion to Judaism and shares its stress on the essential qualities of all men. His religion commands him to abstain from wine, although he doesn't always do it, to pray five times a day, and to fast in the month of Ramazan, when the Quran came down from heaven, but these commands in no way interfere with his participation in modern life. Indeed, it makes him a better citizen, not a worse one.

As already remarked, the Mahommedans form ninety-two millions of the population of India as against the clear Hindu majority of two hundred and forty millions. I am certain that all influential Mahommedans would like to see a *rapprochement* between themselves and the Hindus, but the caste laws of the latter form a stumbling-block, and although both have lived side by side for hundreds of years there has been no fusion whatever of blood or ideas.

As the one-time conquerors of India, the Mahommedans regard themselves as the superior race and the virtual masters of the Hindu majority whenever a conference to adjust conflicting ideas takes place. The whole situation bristles with difficulties; for instance, many Mahommedan customs are repugnant to

Hindus, such as the slaughter of animals for sacrifice, for to many Hindu sects life is sacred. Not long ago there was an outbreak of religious hatred in Malabar in southern India in which the Mahommedans killed hundreds of Hindus and desecrated their temples. They skinned Hindus alive and hung the skins over the idols; it was religious frenzy run riot. This disaster is still talked of, and put back the clock of Hindu-Moslem progress for many years.

A born fighter is perhaps the best description of the northern Mahommedan; ever since the days when the Prophet preached conversion by the sword he has been apt to regard force as the best of arguments. Today there are the fighting races of northern India who long to sweep down on the fat plains of the Ganges and elsewhere, 'convert' the inhabitants, and take their goods in return for enlightenment. And these tough and hearty warriors have such a justified opinion of themselves, and a contempt for the races farther south.

There is another and vital element that looms largely in the Indian picture, the native states, of which there are 563. They are a power to be reckoned with in this complex problem—unequalled in gravity—and always an outstanding feature of any conference. These states vary in size, yet all of them with manners and customs peculiar to themselves, dating back for hundreds of years and ruled on age-old conservative lines.

The future government of India cannot be determined without bearing in mind their influence and the obligations of the British Government towards them. The majority of the ruling chiefs are men of intellectual and administrative ability, anxious to do all they can to advance the welfare of their people, working to that end, but conscious, nevertheless, of the obstacles confronting them in the caste system, the status of the women on both sides, and the inherent conservatism of the masses.

I have visited many native states and seen the high degree of administrative efficiency reached by some of them.

What particularly impressed me was that none of them is desirous of seeing the British leave India. This is doubtless largely due to the security which British rule gives them, apart from the risk of losing their states and being absorbed by a more powerful neighbour in the general fight and scramble that would ensue on our departure. As things are, each state manages its own affairs, administers its own laws, and runs its own taxation, all under the supervision of the British Crown, who have the right to depose a chief for any flagrant delinquency. They realize they are very well off, and none of them would enter into any scheme unless the Crown were dominant and each were a fully recognized part of a new India from the start.

Of course not all of these chiefs are paragons of virtue. There are enough of them to fill a book of fairy tales, and I once sat down to dinner at the Viceroy's House with fifty-four of them.

There was the late Maharajah of Bikanir, an example of how English an Indian ruler can be. This polished man, with his perfect command of English, lived much like our own royal family. He was in personal touch with his state, treated the people justly and had hobbies that read like a page of *Who's Who*.

On another occasion I stayed with the Maharana of Udaipur, who claims

descent from the sun, an enlightened ruler who lodged me in a guest palace with an experienced chef, and a cellar that provided everything from champagne to soda-water.

Yet neither of these chiefs represents the bulk of Indian rulers; some are content to live on the toil of their peasants, giving nothing in exchange, and they regard racehorses, motor-cars, and casinos as the best gifts of the West. The income they enjoy may be anything up to two million pounds, in addition to wealth in the shape of quantities of jewels and gold in underground treasure houses. The utmost limits of Eastern and Western luxury are combined in their lives. In London they stay at the most expensive hotels, and at home maintain harems more costly than Solomon dreamed of. All the same, the watchful Government of India is ever on the look-out for bad cases that require their intervention.

A personality in India, as well as England, is that well-known character the Aga Khan. He is not a ruling prince, for he has no territory, but is one of the exceptional figures left in a world of uniformity and mass production. He is the head of the Khojas, a Moslem sect with a following of about two millions scattered over Asia and Africa, and his power is not connected with frontiers or armaments, but with the sanctity of birth and prestige of hereditary leadership, which turn him from a man into a sort of deity.

He receives a vast amount of tribute; one day a follower left eighty-three one-thousand-rupee notes as a thank-offering for an audience. This works out at roughly five thousand guineas, no mean windfall. When the Aga returned to India after the First World War his followers presented him with a throne of gold . . . in fact, he is in the happy position of a man with a perpetual Christmas stocking . . . which people insist on filling.

As I have shown, many of these princes are fabulously wealthy; I stayed with one whose jewels had been valued by a London firm at two and a half million pounds, another had over four hundred riding horses and two hundred and ten motor-cars, whilst the palace at Jaipur is reputed to have two thousand women servants.

With a plethora of staff they can entertain on the grand scale, and at most functions there is dancing to the tune of the local jazz band and in the heavy, uninspiring methods of the Oriental dancer. The dancing one reads of in the story-books exists only in the imagination. To see the real thing you must come to Europe.

The orthodox Hindu princes never eat with Europeans or anyone outside their own caste. The late Maharajah of Mysore was in this category, and when he visited London brought his own cooks, food and drink, and had part of the suite at his hotel set up as a Hindu temple. Yet this highly efficient Hindu state, with all its prejudices, has a Moslem prime minister.

Other states present similar curious anomalies; for instance, Hyderabad has an area of 83,000 square miles, ruled by the Nizam, India's leading Moslem, but the population is ninety-three per cent Hindu. The order is reversed in Kashmir, where the ruler is a Hindu, with an area of 84,000 square miles, and a population that is ninety per cent Moslem.

Every one of these chiefs, if he be a Hindu, is under the thumb of the Brahmins, who look upon him as rich game, and if the chief opposes them they

can inflict that dire punishment of 60,000 years in hell. The chiefs are very careful not to offend the priestly caste, and fall into line with their commands and injunctions. When the late Maharajah of Kashmir came to England for the Coronation of King George V, he chartered a ship for himself and his party of four hundred followers, taking enough water from the holy Ganges to last for the period of their absence. On his return to his state he and the whole party had to remain several days outside the city, as the Brahmin astrologers declared the omens were not propitious. Against such a ban the Maharajah was powerless.

The Maharajah Scindia of Gwalior provides another example of the power of the Brahmins. One day his car chanced to bump into and knock over a cow. The Brahmins were up in arms at this crime against the sacred animal and the Maharajah was only able to regain his caste at a price. He remarked, a little sadly, "The death of that cow cost me thousands of rupees."

When a Hindu chief falls ill he must deliver himself into the hands of a Brahmin doctor. I was staying in a native state when one of these Hindu physicians gave a court official suffering with stomach trouble powdered emeralds . . . and expressed polite surprise when the ministerial post fell vacant.

Usually a Hindu chief's day begins with 'puja', or morning prayers, and then time is set aside for consultation with the astrologers. If the omens are favourable the chief takes a light meal, receives the reports of his ministers, gives an audience or two, and then drives out somewhere. All sorts of devices are used to make these processions impressive, for princes and maharajahs love display. Some parade gorgeous gold and gilded chariots, with elephants and horses in massive and costly trappings, whilst one of the smaller fry whenever he went out invariably had a stuffed panther on a little wheeled cart trundling behind him. It is a strange world . . . and India is one of the strangest parts of it.

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We will now sum up the outstanding features of this problem of India.

First of all we have the two hundred and twenty-two languages and dialects spoken amongst a confused collection of races, tribes and peoples, living under widely differing conditions and with views and outlook poles apart. Of the languages there are sixteen main ones, which we cannot avoid taking into account in any question of self-government. To travel from one end of India to the other, a matter of 1,900 miles, trusting to Urdu, or Hindustani, the principal tongue, would be an impossibility, although it would carry one through the north and north-east. A knowledge of several languages would be required.

This conglomeration of races and tribes known as India has no public opinion, except, possibly, amongst the Moslems, and then only to a very limited extent. You cannot have a public opinion where the essentials for it do not exist. How can a heterogeneous mass of people, speaking two hundred odd languages, be expected to have a public opinion?

Nor does the Press of India help in that direction. It is a negligible factor,

there being, it is true, approximately 3,750 papers throughout the country, but their total circulation does not exceed four millions! The majority are of widely divergent opinions, very contradictory, and of no balanced views. Moreover, the Indian Press is notorious for its glaring inaccuracy and for the corruption and dishonesty of its procedure, which is testified to by men of wide experience in the Press world of Europe and the Americas.

Amongst the bewildering array of races, we must remember the 500,000 villages, that the population is ninety-one per cent rural, and agriculture is the principal occupation. It is admitted that we have not done much to promote agriculure, to introduce new methods, or inculcate new ideas for its betterment, but we have always been, and still are, up against local archaic ideas, religious and communal difficulties, the age-old conservatism of the peasant, and studied obstruction of the nationalists. Perhaps we should have overcome these obstacles by forthright methods, but that is far easier said than done.

There is, however, one thing in agriculture we have accomplished; in a periodically rainless country like India the British have created the largest irrigation system in the world and brought under cultivation from the desert and waste fifty-four million acres. It is to the curse of the Hindu religion, the social evils, and the above-mentioned facts, that we can fairly attribute the blame, and this is especially so in regard to cattle.

India has thirty-five per cent of the world's cattle, of which well over half are useless for milk and dairy purposes. The Hindu religion—ever that stark and grim reality—bars the way, forbids the killing of cattle; in consequence there are large numbers of diseased cows, and should foot-and-mouth disease occur the cattle *must* be left to die naturally. We can draw our own conclusions from this fantastic attitude.

In the matter of education we have to consider the ninety per cent who live in the 500,000 villages and remote hamlets, to the studied dislike of the Indian teacher to go amongst them, the religious, social, and communal prejudices, those stumbling-blocks which have appalled so many men of Britain in the past and present, who have earnestly desired to apply a speedy and efficient remedy.

To turn to industry; comparatively little progress has been made, but here again the Indian capitalists, and there are vast numbers of them, from the 'bunniah' of the village, who battens on the villager and the townsman, lending him money at astronomical rates of interest, to the wealthy one and the landed classes, have a dislike to investment in India. This is evidenced in the Indian railways, for which ninety-one per cent of the money could only be found in England! The Indian, of all grades and as a class, buries his money and it goes on accumulating. He is not partial to investment, and if financial enterprise, reconstruction, and advancement had been left to India, the result would have been a blank sheet.

As I have said, a vital element is the question of the five hundred and sixty-three native states, many of them quite small, some of them as large as France. They comprise nearly one quarter of the population, and their rulers direct their own affairs under British supervision and have their own armies. We are under treaty obligations to them, dating back in some instances to the eighteenth

century. As a whole these states are well and wisely governed, those like Mysore, Kashmir, Hyderabad, Bikanir, Jaipur, Jodhpur, and many others, being a monument to the ability, creative genius, and solicitude of their rulers for the people. They are against the so-called Indian Congress, which loses no opportunity of reviling the states, yet few of its many assertions can be backed up by facts or the acid test of reality. Lord Curzon, one of the ablest and most impartial Viceroys India has ever had, who knew the country far better than many 'Congress' leaders, summed up this question of the native states:

"The princes of India," he said, "sustain the virility and save from extinction the picturesqueness of ancient and noble races. They show in their persons that illustrious lineage has not ceased to implant noble and chivalrous ideas, fine standards of public spirit, and private courtesy. With the loss of these, if ever they be allowed to disappear, Indian society would go to pieces like a dismasted vessel in a storm."

I have often been asked what would happen if the British left India! It is a question that can be answered with a clarity admitting of no denial.

India would at once lapse into civil strife, the war-like and virile Moslems would make short work of the less martial Hindus, each class would endeavour to assert its rights and authority, interclass and interstate warfare would break out, anarchy and bloodshed would be rife and rampant to an extent that no man can foretell, the Congress and the windbags would be swept aside. . . . India would become the prey of whatever power cared to land there, and one of them, at any rate, would like to do so; indeed, would never let such a golden opportunity slip by!

I have discussed this question of our quitting India with maharajahs, prime ministers of native states, and intelligent men amongst the masses . . . and with the backbone of India . . . the agricultural classes. They admitted, quite openly and frankly, that anything could happen in such an eventuality. Some of the more knowledgeable and practical ones said we might even have to return, to restore order out of certain chaos and stay the slaughter of millions amongst the horde of contestants. That might well be, but by that time we might not be in a position to return. There are watchers on the horizon, like vultures in the desert, waiting for an opportunity to come down on the carcase. We might be too late to save India from still greater disaster, and a ruthless suppression and control beside which the British rule of leniency, toleration and considerate treatment of the masses would pale into insignificance.

Whatever faults have been committed, Britain's services to India have been immeasurable. India has been given law, preserved from invasion, developed economically, and safeguarded from civil war and internecine strife.

There can be no doubt that India has had a very good bargain with Britain, a truism backed up by the network of railways, roads, and most fruitful irrigation waterways. All these things have been done by British engineers and capital; generation after generation these men, most of whose names are unknown to their fellow-countrymen, have worked steadily and wholeheartedly and given life and wealth and virility to India which Indians on their own initiative could never have done. Will Indian independence survive? Can this heterogeneous and bitterly divided mass pull together and hold its own? Time will tell.

THE AUTHOR TALKING TO THE MAHARAJAH OF NEPAL

BUILDINGS ARE ORNATE IN EXCLUSIVE KHATMANDU

CHAPTER TEN

A disastrous campaign—An army of fifteen thousand; and one survivor—Stories of the Koh-i-noor —Momentous absent-mindedness—The Thugs—Dodging practised murderers—My greatest adventure—Staring out a tiger.

IN 1916, as the result of a lecture I had given to Army Headquarters in Simla on trench warfare on the Western Front, I came to Lahore as second-in-command of a bombing and trench warfare school which we were to organize and run there.

Lahore, capital of northern India, former stronghold of the Sikhs, with a long and stirring history, in which the Koh-i-noor diamond, worn today in the Queen's crown, figured so prominently

The history of this diamond, with its thrills, narrow escapes, and love stories, lends itself to a film of outstanding character. Indeed, Royalty, apart from India and some of the princes, was taken with the idea, which I have long cherished, and perhaps in the near future this wonder film will eventuate.

After Delhi and Agra, with its book of kings, there was no place in India that I approached with greater expectancy; the Koh-i-noor and its long and chequered career had always interested me, for the story of India from the days before the Mogul conquest is bound up with it. Never was there such a cycle of romance as clings to the Koh-i-noor; here in Lahore it reached the culminating point of its colourful story.

In 1839 began the first of our troubles with Afghanistan which rapidly became a serious menace. Shah Shuja, the puppet we wanted to put on the Afghan throne, now comes into the picture. At that time our idea was to create, with the aid of the Sikhs, a buffer state out of Afghanistan, against the Russians, whose frontiers were then approaching India. The plan of operations had several drawbacks, not the least of which was the problem of how we were to maintain Shah Shuja on the Afghan throne when we had put him there.

So began the disastrous Afghan War of 1839; the British troops marched through the country to Kabul; Dost Mahommed, the reigning monarch, fled and Shah Shuja was duly enthroned, but it was a most unpopular move. No one wanted the wretched Shah Shuja, and it at once became clear that as British bayonets had set him up so they must maintain him on his rickety throne.

The weeks and months went on, the dislike of the Afghans increased, their implacable hatred growing like a fire fanned by a strong wind. It all culminated in a rising, the British garrison at Kabul was practically annihilated, and, if the remnants were to escape, retreat was the only course open to them. So, on January 6th, 1842, in a blinding snowstorm, began the ever-memorable retreat from Kabul, the army of 5,000 men, of whom, be it noted, only some 800 were British, filed out of the city, encumbered with an immense quantity of baggage and 11,000 camp-followers.

All the world knows the story of that dreadful retreat; of how they were

attacked by the Afghans on the heights above the road they were struggling along, of the thousands who perished from the cold and by sword and bullet. The survivors battled on, until at Gundamuk, still a long way from the Indian frontier, they numbered only sixty-five officers and men. From there to Jellalabad all but one perished—Surgeon Brydon, who has been immortalized in the picture 'The Last of an Army', for he rode in there on January 13th, sole survivor of an original army of 15,000.

The Koh-i-noor had come on to the stage in this way. Dost Mahommed had, prior to the war, ousted his rival Shah Shuja, who took to his heels, carrying with him the diamond, and on arrival in Lahore craved the indulgence and hospitality of Runjeet Singh, head of the Sikhs and Lion of the Punjab. Runjeet agreed to harbour the fugitive, but at a price. There was the Koh-i-noor . . . hand it over. Shah Shuja wilted at the idea . . . but nothing would move the Sikh chieftain . . . and so it came into his possession. Once more the diamond did not carry good luck with it; Runjeet died and in 1848 the great military state he had built up in the north of India ceased to exist and was annexed to the British Empire. With it came the Koh-i-noor, which now entered upon another phase of its adventures.

After the conquest of the Punjab and the defeat of the Sikh forces the question arose as to the disposal of the diamond, and the decision was that it should be presented to Queen Victoria. In the interval it had to be safeguarded, and so was entrusted to the care of Sir John Lawrence, Chief Commissioner at Lahore, pending transfer to England.

Apart from being absent-minded, Sir John had numerous weighty matters on hand, so, putting the diamond in his waistcoat pocket, he thought no more about it. Several days later, when the subject of the diamond again became before the executive, Sir John remembered that he had left it in the pocket of an old drill waistcoat, which, in the meantime, his servant had sent to the laundry. In a flash he realized that the priceless gem for which a king might have risked his empire was gone! In fear and trembling he called for his servant and enquired with a sinking heart what had become of the old waistcoat. The man told him he had sent it to the wash, first, however, taking out a piece of glass he found there, for fear it should cut a hole in master's 'west'.

Sir John got the piece of glass back, for the servant had put it in a dirty old tin box filled with needles, buttons and cotton, and brought it to the trembling Commissioner in his study.

The let-off gave old John such a fright that he obtained the Governor-General's permission to send the stone to Bombay, and applied to the General commanding the Army of Occupation to detail an officer to take the gem down.

It was a critical enterprise owing to the dangers of the road, the immense value of the packet and the length of time taken up on the thirteen-hundred mile journey. In those days the road from Lahore to Bombay swarmed with robbers, dacoits, and the notorious strangling fraternity known as the Thugs (pronounced Tug). The route led through the heart and focus of the Thug system, dense jungles and dark caves, the road leading past the most gruesome spot known amongst the Thugs by the humorous name of 'Strangle Street', for the entire population of the district were Thugs, deeply dyed in villainies innumerable and flourishing on the proceeds of murder.

All sorts of stories concerning the transport of the diamond have been told, and how far they are true I do not pretend to know, but certainly the most romantic and thrilling was that by the immortal Colonel Bowlong, which I discovered on the spot, so let us hear part of his narrative.

Sir Hugh Gough, he says, selected me for the job of taking the diamond down and sent me to the Chief Commissioner to receive my orders. It was arranged that I was to start that day week and I was to manage the business according to my own ideas.

Sir John had told me that the road swarmed with Thugs and robbers and all the rest of them. The Thugs alone caused me anxiety, for a robber comes at you fair and straight, but a Thug has so many dodges and disguises that you never know when he is after you till the string is round your neck.

The day before I was to start my syce (groom) fell sick and died—it turned out afterwards that the Thugs had poisoned him in order that one of the fraternity might get his place. No sooner was the poor chap carried to the burning ghat than first one, then another, then a third eminently respectable person of the groom persuasion came to apply for the vacant billet. They were all unusually clean, tidy, decent-looking men, and as each was provided with a sheaf of unexceptional characters I had some difficulty in making a selection. I chose the most active of them, but, on reflecting that none had produced a reference to any person then resident in Lahore, I thought it best to secure some further guarantee of my new retainer's respectability. Accordingly I rode over to Tomlinson, who was the head of our Intelligence Department, and asked him to test the man's record. Tomlinson replied that there was an old native police-sergeant, he called him a *darogah*, living near at hand who knew every scoundrel in the Punjab, and if the policeman had nothing to say against Luxman Daas—for that was the name of my new groom—I might safely conclude that he was fairly immaculate. In half an hour the *darogah* arrived, and was ordered to interview the syce. The white-bearded veteran salaamed and withdrew, but in a moment he returned. "The man has fled," he said, and added calmly, "Three Thugs came in this morning from Jullunder, possibly he is one of them. I shall pursue, capture, examine, and report"; and again saluting, he left the room. Before nightfall I got a line from Tomlinson, which ran thus: *Your fellow is caught. He is one Drigpal, a notorious Thug.* This, I can tell you, opened my eyes pretty wide; the Thugs had evidently got scent of my mission, and it was clear that I had now to reckon with the most formidable confederation of thieves and murderers in Asia. I therefore decided upon adopting a disguise, and accordingly stained my face and hands, and assumed the dress of a Pathan cossid. The great diamond was handed to me by Sir John in the presence of two secretaries, and I left Lahore the next morning an hour before gunfire.

My journey was uneventful till I passed the fords of the Sutlej, where my adventures began.

At the close of a long day's march I had arrived at the bank of a broad river. The stream, having been swollen by heavy freshets from the hills, was in full flood, and to cross it that night was impossible; so, lighting a fire, I cooked my meal Indian fashion, and prepared to bivouac under a tree. As I was drawing

my cloak round me preparatory to bye-o, two sepoys tramped up and, after a long look at the river determined not to try the ford. Seeing me camping under the tree they asked permission to halt by my fire, and leave being given they began to cook their dinner. They were frank, cheery fellows, and one of them wore the Gwalior Star. They told me they belonged to the 170th Bengal Infantry, and having taken part in all the engagements of the late campaign were now going home on furlough. They offered me a cheroot, and some tempting-looking sweetmeats which they said they had bought that morning, but after my lesson in the hut it was my rule to accept no article of consumption from a stranger, even though he wore Her Majesty's uniform and was distinguished by a military decoration. My new companions were in no degree offended by my refusal, and, after some further friendly remarks, betook themselves to rest; they were evidently dog-tired and were soon fast asleep.

As I lay smoking beside them I thought over all that they had told me, and I suddenly remembered that the 170th Regiment had been present neither at Guzerat nor at Chillian-wallah, and these sepoys had talked fluently about the gallant conduct of their corps in each of these actions. The more I sifted their story the more I discovered it to contain statements not only inaccurate, but impossible. My suspicions were now actively aroused, and observing that in choosing their positions for the night they had placed themselves one on each side of me I adopted such measures of precaution as the circumstances allowed. I quietly exchanged coverings with the man lying nearest to me, and shifted my position so as to leave him in the centre and myself on the flank; then, cocking both my pistols, I lay watchful as a weasel awaiting the result. At about three o'clock in the morning the man who slept farthest off arose, and gliding noiselessly across to where I was lying, placed his hand gently on my head, and hissed low in Hindustani: "It is time."

"Good," I replied with a yawn and a stretch.

"Well, brother, rise and help," he rejoined.

"I am too tired, do it yourself," I grunted, and, pretending to be overpowered with fatigue, I turned heavily on my side and began to snore.

"Slothful pig," he growled, "I will report thee to the Guru."

He then left me snoring vigorously, and cautiously approached his comrade, who, covered from head to foot by my cloak, occupied my former relative position. My back was to the pair, and I did not see what was going on till I heard a horrible gurgling noise, and, turning, I beheld the man who had been speaking to me in the act of drawing a noose to the utmost stretch of tension round his unfortunate companion's neck. I need not say that I made no effort to interfere with this act of truly poetic justice. In four or five minutes the strangler slackened the strain, and finding that his prey was quite dead, he removed his knee from the victim's chest, and threw off the covering preparatory to rifling the body. The starlight, which had not been bright enough to reveal his comrade's features, was just sufficiently clear to throw a glint on the bright buttons of the uniform. Appalled at his mistake, the murderer turned towards me as though to satisfy himself as to my identity, but only to see me covering him with a long cavalry pistol.

In a second he was grovelling before me on his face, crying: "Aman, Aman!" (Mercy, Mercy!)

"Mercy to a Phansigar!" I cried. "I would as soon show mercy to a crocodile. But," I continued, "I will give you a chance—carry that body to the river, and swim across with it, or I drop you dead." You see, I knew that in the morning people would be arriving at the ford, and I did not want to be subjected to the cross-examination of the police when the body was discovered. The Thug was not slow in accepting my conditions. Springing to his feet he dragged his dead companion to the water, and precipitately committed himself and his ghastly convoy to the current. So long as he was within easy shot of the bank he towed the corpse conscientiously; but when he thought himself out of range he yelled an obscene defiance, and allowed the body to go drifting down the stream. He then struck out with might and main for the opposite bank, which, at the pace the river was flowing, I knew it to be a million to one against his ever reaching. I then felt I might indulge in a little sleep. When I awoke the sun was high, and the river having resumed its normal condition the ford was practicable. About mid-stream, a little to the right of the ford, an uprooted tree had been washed against a sand-bank; a number of crows and a vulture were busy among the branches; and a nearer view enabled me to recognize as the object of their solicitude the man who had so readily taken to the water a few hours before.

A day or two after this occurrence I again turned the tables upon one of these human serpents in a manner that he found both startling and disastrous. I was sleeping in a village serai, of which the only other occupant was a wretched-looking beggar, who lay perfectly still, wrapped up in a bundle of squalid rags. The night was intensely hot, and both of us had placed a lotah of drinking water by the side of our sleeping-mats. Although I had no reason to suspect my fellow-lodger of sinister designs, I nevertheless adopted the simple precaution of placing a thin piece of muslin on the surface of the water intended for my drinking. Waking in the middle of the night, parched with thirst, I struck a match and carefully examined the contents of my lotah. The muslin was still floating on the water, but it had intercepted a quantity of fine brown powder that most certainly was not there when I went to sleep.

I stepped across to where the beggar was lying and, having satisfied myself that he was not awake, I took the liberty of examining the contents of an old deerskin bag on which one of his lean brown arms was resting. Among a variety of nondescript articles I observed a long narrow handkerchief of faded yellow silk; it was weighted with a bullet at one end, and was stained with blood. I noticed also a folded leaf containing the remains of the preparation that had been so considerately added to my beverage while I slept. It was clear that the man before me was a Thug poisoner, and I thought it no sin therefore to return the attention that he had paid me, by transferring the powder from my lotah to his, but without the intervention of the muslin rag.

Early the next morning I was aroused by a series of shrill yelping cries, and I beheld the pseudo-mendicant staggering wildly about, grasping at the walls for support, and clutching at imaginary substances in the air. As he reeled round in drunken frenzy he at one moment laughed maniacally, nodded his head gaily, and clapped his hands, and the next he broke into loud lamentations, foamed at the mouth, and made the air round him thick with malediction. It was evident that he was under the maddening influence of datura. I never saw

a fellow so completely off the handle in my life. Bedlam was a patch upon him, but I couldn't wait to watch his vagaries, for I was afraid that his yells would rouse the village, and I should be seized as a poisoner, so I lost no time in mounting my nag, and as I cantered away the vociferations of my would-be murderer grew fainter and fainter in the distance. And so the days went on. . . .

My life was attempted in every conceivable fashion. Patriarchal old gentlemen sitting under shady trees pressed me to take shelter from the noonday sun; honest travellers entered unaffectedly into conversation with me, offered me the most beautiful sweetmeats, and in frank good-fellowship begged me to take a whiff of their hookahs; beautiful young damsels, in the direst distress, implored my assistance; wounded men rolled in agony on the road, and besought me, in the name of Vishnu, to give them a drink of water. But by this time I was proof against the whole box and dice of them. I was several times attacked by armed men, and was twice wounded, once by a bullet, and once by a spear, but I carried the Koh-i-noor in safety through it all, and exactly three months after I parted from John Lawrence at Lahore I entered Bombay, just hanging on by the slack, it is true, for I was weary beyond words, and was, moreover, badly hurt, and more than half-starved. I was also consumed by fever, but I was successful, and, I need not say, in consequence extremely happy. It was Saturday night when I reached the capital. On Sunday the Mint was closed, and by Monday morning I was prostrated with ague. So I wrote to Colonel A——, who was in charge of the Mint, asking him to come to my quarters and receive the treasure.

Within an hour of the dispatch of my note I received a bit of paper on which was scrawled the words 'Babu Bhugwan Dass, Manager of the Bombay Mint'. Having told my servant to show the gentleman in, a most respectable-looking individual entered my bedroom and told me that Colonel A——had deputed him to receive the Koh-i-noor. I, however, flatly refused to give up the diamond to anyone but the Colonel himself, and my visitor seemed much hurt at my want of faith. Finding me obdurate, he begged that I would at any rate favour him with a glimpse of the famous gem. But here again I was recalcitrant. In his eagerness to prove how baseless were my suspicions, he advanced, chattering volubly the while, to the side of my bed, and as he drew near I saw lying in his sleeve a yellow silk handkerchief, one end of which he held in his hand, 'all in the old sweet way'. The sight of this bit of silk was enough for me—he would not be warned off, so I pulled out a pistol, and blazed. The bullet struck him in the hip, and with a yell of pain he fell sprawling on the matting.

At that moment Colonel A—— arrived, accompanied by two European assistants. I knew the Colonel well, there was no doubt about *him*.

"Sorry to have spoilt your manager, Colonel," I said, "but the beggar was going to noose me."

"My manager!" exclaimed the Colonel. "Mr. Purvis here is my manager," and he indicated one of the attendant Europeans. "This fellow," continued he, looking at the wounded man, "is a perfect stranger."

"He is not a stranger to me, though," said I, regarding the self-styled babu more closely. "Why, Colonel, as I am a living sinner, he is one of the men that tried to enter my service as syce just before I left Lahore!"

There was no doubt about it; the rascal was the least respectable of the

three disguised Thugs, and was afterwards recognized by the police as one Feringeah, a well-known desperado who had poisoned my syce, and was 'wanted' also for murder in the Docab, where he was shortly afterwards tried and hanged.

So the Koh-i-noor came to London, where it was presented with becoming ceremony to Queen Victoria at the Crystal Palace, Hyde Park, in 1851. It now adorns the crown of Queen Elizabeth.

* * * * *

Let us now leave films and diamonds and turn to sport and adventure in the Indian jungle.

My greatest adventure was probably one I had with a tiger, and it came about as the result of a chance visit I paid to a forest bungalow, situated in the heart of the jungle country of the United Provinces. The reason why I went there was a romantic one and the story of it deserves telling.

In a well-known French journal I had expressed a sense of loneliness and boredom in Palestine, whither we had moved from France, and a desire to counteract the effects of static warfare by correspondence with a congenial spirit—a fairy from France, for I knew France well and spoke its language. But at that moment we received sudden orders to embark for India, preparatory to Mesopotamia, and the one hundred and seventy-four replies came to me in India. I had no sooner arrived in our permanent station in the Himalayas than I applied for ten days' leave to go tiger-shooting . . . and, incidentally, attend to my correspondence.

Like the prince in the fairy-tale, I was going to test these fair and voluptuous applicants, not with a glass slipper, but with a mental weighing gear that would reveal the moral and physical assets of the pearl of whom I was in search.

I was absorbed in the perusal of these varied epistles, picturing to myself the characteristics and general make-up of my correspondents, when one afternoon old Abdul Karim, who had been with me for many years, appeared in my sitting-room, and, salaaming profoundly, said he had news of great portent. "What is it, then?" I asked, whereupon he indicated the local headman who was waiting outside personally to convey the news of great moment. I put aside my love-letters and bade him enter. The headman appeared, bowed low, and then stood silently thoughtful, an expectant look on his face, as he gently and reflectively scratched himself. Then he spoke in a quiet voice and gave me news of the wiliest tiger that ever roamed the jungles.

Evidently the tiger he told of had acquired a great reputation. All the countryside for miles around was full of his depredations; what was more, his size and ferocity increased with the telling of the story. There was nothing this tiger could not do; medicine men from far and wide had tried their skill upon him, they had conjured the spirits and wafted incense and sacrificial fumes towards the inaccessible parts of the jungle where he had his lair—all to no purpose.

No one would venture out at night, nor run the risk of crossing the tiger's path, and the moment it was heard that he had killed in the neighbourhood, even though it were a dozen miles off, the entire countryside was agog with apprehension.

The old headman told his story with all the native emphasis; and now this

redoubtable tiger had killed the bullock about six miles away and . . . trembling with excitement . . . he asked could I do something about it!

I, too, was thrilled, on account of the tiger's reputation; his cruising range was tremendous, for he would appear at one end of a district as large as an average English county, and the next night would be heard of at the other extremity, everything indicating that he was the same one. Clearly this was a tiger worth meeting.

I decided to have a try for him, and the headman went off in high glee to warn the local hamlet and give me a certain amount of advanced publicity, which made it more than ever incumbent that I should deliver the goods. So I set out that afternoon on an elephant to the scene of the tiger's latest exploit. The elephant plodded on through dense jungle of lofty sal trees, patches of bush and tall grass, some of this grass coming well above the elephant's back. We passed little dried-up streams where there is water in the rainy season, but now these watercourses were bone dry and only at certain spots in the forest could water-holes be found where the wild game came for their nightly drink.

As we moved slowly on I thought of the chances of getting this tiger. I knew he would almost certainly return for a second feed and that the 'kill' would not be very far from water, for after his first meal the tiger goes off for a drink somewhere handy, and then lies up until the following evening, when he comes out for another repast, as is the tiger habit.

At last we reached a clearing in the jungle, with a few bushes here and there, and one or two trees. On one side the ground sloped up in a gentle undulation to a sort of plateau, about fifty feet above the clearing and covered with bush, trees, and bamboo clumps.

It was here, the tracker said, that the tiger had killed the bullock and he pointed out the 'kill', the nearness of which was apparent from the buzzing of thousands of flies which disturbed the otherwise uncanny stillness and revealed where the carcase had been hidden by the slayer. Cautiously we moved forward, for the whole place had a creepy touch and was very 'tigerish'.

I then looked round and chose the only suitable tree—about twenty yards away and some fifteen feet in height. It commanded a view of the 'kill' and on it I had a small place made so that I could shoot from the knees. On such a precarious perch I settled down to await the coming of the tiger.

There was no one with me; a king's ransom would not have induced a local inhabitant to spend the night there, and so I was to have all the glory, such as it was, to myself.

I made things as comfortable as circumstances allowed and then sent off the elephant with its driver and the tracker to a chosen spot about a mile away, whence I told them they were to come to me at once if they heard firing. They left in a hurry, only too glad to get away.

It was then about half-past four and the sun would be going down in a couple of hours, so I had that much daylight to watch and listen for the coming of the tiger who had terrorized so wide a stretch of country. There was no moon and only the twinkling stars afforded any light. I was, of course, uncertain from which direction the tiger would approach; he might come from the slope to my left, or he might move on to the 'kill' from the dense jungle behind me. I did not like the look of the ground in my rear at all; it had an open space

quite close to my tree which would serve as a good take-off if he knew I was just above him. What if this tiger were all he was reputed to be—a springing man-eater!

When night had completely fallen it was so dark that I could scarcely see a yard ahead. On such occasions the imagination plays strange tricks. After some minutes I thought I heard a rustling in the bush and grass quite close to my tree; then it appeared to be right behind me. Again it was to the left and once I could have sworn it was immediately below, so close, it seemed, that I had only to stretch out my hand and touch the thing, whatever it was. The almost black darkness, however, for there was no moon and the stars shone but fitfully through the trees, prevented my locating these weird sounds and movements. I strained my eyes in the prevailing gloom but could see nothing. The noises at first came quite faintly, then seemed to grow more distinct . . . there was a pause . . . they recurred a few moments later.

For the life of me I could not make out what it was; after a while I began to grow anxious because, apart from the darkness and the uncertainty as to what was going on around me, my perch was so unsteady that I dare not move for fear of toppling over.

The rustling ceased. There was complete silence . . . not even my neighbour the owl spoke, and the flies, too, seemed to have gone elsewhere . . . something must happen soon, I thought.

The minutes dragged on in this deathly quiet; to me they seemed hours . . . then I heard the rustling again. It was like something trying to pick up a few leaves from the ground without making any noise, just a faint crackle every now and again, as though the dried leaves had been crushed in the hand . . . then silence once more . . . and again that crackling. . . .

Now it sounded like a stealthy step, something that was trying to move without being heard. What puzzled me was that the crackling came from two different directions; one a little to my right and the other just behind me. Then, all of a sudden, there was the breaking of a twig. It sounded like a gun and I sat rigid, worked up to a pitch of suppressed excitement by these stealthy happenings. Something big and formidable had broken that twig . . . the climax was about to be reached, and here was I sitting in a frail tree twelve feet above the ground, shrouded in black darkness in the heart of the Indian jungle, and far from any material aid.

As already remarked, the tiger had the reputation of being a man-eater and an adept at springing on his quarry. At any rate, if he felt so inclined he had not far to jump. Perhaps he was manœuvring for the take-off!

I imagined it must be the tiger, but from my position in the tree I dared not turn round, and so perforce could only move my head in the direction of the sounds and try to locate them, and guess what they meant. The rustling had now entirely ceased; I thought for a moment he had spotted me and was preparing for a spring on to my perch. Turning my head ever so slowly I peered into the gloom, and by such light as filtered down from the stars through the canopy of trees I made out a huge something creeping slowly towards my tree.

It was at that moment, to my distorted imagination, as big as a bison and as long as a crocodile. What amazed me was that it made no noise; it seemed to be moving like a shadow through space. Then it came right up to my little

tree . . . and stood perfectly still. By gripping my rifle at the fore-end I could have leant down and touched it. I knew it must be something animate for I could hear it breathing. If only it would move and transform itself into life and activity it would relieve the tension, for, what with the black night, the deathly stillness, and that creeping phantom below me, I seemed to be shaking in every limb.

At last, after what seemed to be hours, it moved forward, a dark mass floating through space again . . . it was followed by another and still more massive form. The whole situation now crystallized itself in my mind. The leading one was the tigress, which invariably goes ahead to reconnoitre for her companion . . . the second was the tiger himself.

By this time I had become more accustomed to the darkness and the noise made by the tigress as she moved on to the 'kill' and started to clear away the branches and leaves with which it was covered came as a relief to my bemused mind.

But still the tiger did not join her. He was now comparatively distinct, standing motionless just beyond a tall sal tree to my left front, through which a fitful light came down from the stars above. As near as I could judge he was about fifteen yards away.

There, silhouetted against the starlight, stood the demon that had terrorized the countryside and cast gloom and despondency over many a jungle hamlet, whose range was thirty or forty miles in a single night, a practised, creeping murderer . . . it was up to me to put an end to his activities. I slowly raised my rifle, took as accurate an aim as possible with my night sight . . . and let drive!

As the sound of the shot crashed through the jungle the tiger leapt into the air, and gave one roar . . . such a roar! Then he cannoned into my tree, and it can be imagined that with ten feet of length and twenty-eight stone of weight, hurled against the trunk, I was within an ace of toppling over from the shock. Then he ricocheted off and bumped into another tree, roaring and growling to such an extent that pandemonium seemed to be let loose. After that he lay quiet for a while, but heavy breathing proved that he was hard hit.

I looked at my watch; it was eight thirty-five. I had been there just over four hours, but I seemed to have lived through a century. At the sound of the shot the tigress moved off, leaving no trace behind, and soon after this I heard the elephant approaching in the distance. The tiger's stertorous breathing and his short, snappy growls and grunts indicated quite plainly that he was in no mood to be disturbed, and so when the elephant came within a hundred yards or so I called out to the mahout to stand fast. Tigers dislike the sound of the human voice and the moment I called I heard him rise slowly and move off to my left front, up the slight rise as though seriously crippled.

I then directed the mahout, who brought the elephant right under my tree, so that I stepped from my perch on to its broad back. The tracker had a hurricane lantern with him, and taking this I leant down from the elephant, whilst we cruised round the place where the wounded tiger had been, trying to ascertain to what extent he had been hit. I afterwards realized that this was a crazy thing to do, but there are times when we do not stop to reckon the possible consequences of our acts. It was too dark to do anything in the way of

locating the tiger, nor, although we stood still and listened intently, could we hear the slightest sound which it might be supposed a wounded animal would make when on the move. Finally, I decided to go back to the forest bungalow and resume the search at dawn.

Before the night had given way to daylight, when the faintest streak of dawn appeared, I had taken some coffee and biscuits and we were under way again. It took about an hour to reach the scene of the previous night's adventure, where we picked up the trail, which I followed on foot . . . and thereafter we were conscious of the tiger's nearness.

Just ahead of me went the tracker, who was as much a part of the jungles as the wild animals themselves. Old Amir Khan was priceless at his job. To him the jungle was an open book, and I shall always remember that morning when we followed up the biggest tiger I had ever bagged.

Step by step we moved forward on the successive stages of the trail; nothing escaped this exponent of the silent approach to dangerous game, his bare feet touching the ground so lightly that they seemed to float through space, a past-master of the art, a living part of those jungles where I was so soon to have the most thrilling moments of my life.

No, nothing whatever escaped those eyes, trained by years of scouting in the jungles he loved so well. Slowly and noiselessly we crept on; here a branch had been swept aside and was in an unnatural position . . . and a spot of blood was on one of the leaves. A blade of grass had been disturbed, and then a tiny hair was spotted on the lower twig of a sal tree. I looked at it; it was of a dark, yellow colour and there was no question but that it belonged to a tiger. So the morning wore on, the senses keyed up to the highest pitch and all the time we were keeping an intensive lookout fifty yards or so ahead for any sight or sound that would give the first intimation of the tiger's actual whereabouts.

The trail was now over undulating ground and through more or less open jungle, with clumps of bamboo, and here and there bushes and grass varying in height from four to twelve feet. At first the trail was easy to follow, for at intervals of a few paces we came across leaves spattered with blood, and once or twice came right on to a place where the tiger had been lying down, the ground being pressed out, and blood smeared and congealed on the leaves and grass. Just after passing the last of these resting places the trail petered out . . . I could not imagine why. I stood still and had a look round. In front of me, about fifteen yards away, was a ditch some ten feet deep and about fifteen feet wide. It was evidently the bed of an old stream and covered with short grass and some scattered bushes . . . just the place where a wounded animal might go in quest of quiet and shelter.

Moved by a sudden inspiration for which I cannot to this day account, I partly slid and walked down into the nullah—a hazardous thing to do when I thought over it afterwards, without previously reconnoitring the place.

I went down into the nullah, and, arrived at the bottom, knelt down to examine the ground. There, sure enough, was a leaf with a drop of blood on it . . . . it was quite fresh . . . obviously the tiger had passed that way not long before.

Immediately behind me was the tracker, and as I raised my eyes from the leaf and the ground to glance round and show him the find I saw the tiger

staring fixedly at me from under the bush, which we afterwards found was fourteen paces distant!

He seemed to be looking straight through me, and was moving ever so slowly in my direction. I was electrified at the critical position we were in, hemmed in, as it were, by this deep and narrow ditch, with no chance whatever of putting up a favourable fight.

I remember passing in flashlight review what I ought to do if I wanted to live. If I fired and only wounded him again, nothing could save me from certain death. The other idea that came to me was to look at him as fixedly as the ground and the tensity of the moment would allow, retreating slowly up the bank of the ditch beyond which we had left the elephant.

I recalled what I had read or heard, perhaps many years before, that if you look fixedly at a wild animal, and do not attempt to dash away, it will be momentarily nonplussed while it is making up its mind what you are going to do and what it is going to do itself. This does not take very long; no time must be lost.

A sort of film was passing with incredible speed through my mind, urging me that unless I decided without a second's hesitation I should be the next victim of the tiger. I can see now his eyes fixed on me, with a look that was almost hypnotic; he was still coming on with just the faintest movement of the body . . . exactly like a cat when getting close to a bird it is stalking. I stared with all the intensity I could command. . . . I knew that life itself depended upon the intensity and concentration of that stare. Amazingly, it appeared to have the desired effect.

The tiger stopped . . . those huge forepaws were motionless, but the body, large, long and muscular, was flush with the ground, like all the cats when about to make a spring.

I backed slowly up the bank out of that terrifying presence, and when halfway up turned and made a dash for the top and safety. Some seventy yards away was the elephant, and signalling to the rest of my party to take cover in the trees, which they did with remarkable agility, I climbed up on to the elephant and cruised along the edge of the ditch, but no trace of the tiger could be found. The earth might have swallowed him up, so completely had he disappeared. But one must live in the Indian jungles and have knowledge of jungle lore to appreciate how a tiger, despite its size, can so easily efface itself.

It was then a quarter to seven and for another two hours we cruised round, searching the long grass and every cleft and hollow over a wide radius . . . all to no effect.

At last, when the burning May sun had climbed into a cloudless blue sky, casting shadows across the trees and beginning to make itself felt, I nudged the mahout in the back and directed him campwards.

Fate was to play another trick with us! The mahout, in turn, gave the elephant a prod, the animal started forward, and within six paces kicked up against the tiger. A tawny mass rose up, a chaos of gleaming teeth, of viciously-laid-back ears, and such a roaring as only an enraged and wounded tiger can let loose. I remember seeing it trying to climb up the elephant's trunk to get on to its head. An elephant's trunk is sensitive to the slightest

touch and it is said that it can feel the bite of an insect; the elephant knows, too, that its trunk is the main weapon in its armoury of defence, and with a tiger swarming up it its battle chances were highly reduced. At first the elephant faced the onslaught and made desperate efforts to dislodge the enemy, whilst I was trying to give the *coup de grâce*. This was no easy job, with the added difficulty of having to keep my seat on the swaying and plunging elephant.

It was such a swift and concentrated struggle, and one's mind was so much strained with the probability of the tiger getting the upper hand, that I cannot clearly recall the order of events. I only know that in the midst of it all the elephant took fright and bolted. . . . This was the crucial moment, for nothing inspires such panic in an elephant as a tiger, and it takes time and a quiet place to calm him down again.

The immense bulk crashed through the jungle, but the tiger never lost his grip; he had by now worked himself round to my side, whilst I, being almost capsized by the sudden *volte face*, was hanging on to the pad, swinging like a pendulum. So there we were . . . the tiger alongside of me, his foetid breath coming hot and strong, his nearside paw within a few inches of my face. All the time the elephant in full cry and the mahout calling on Allah to save us . . . what a picture for the movies!

I never realized until that morning how fast an elephant can travel! At last fortune favoured us, for a mighty kick from the elephant, combined with the sweeping branches of a tree, dislodged the tiger from his perch as we careered onwards. Afterwards I discovered that my shot of the previous night had hit him in the lower part of the body, which paralysed him from the hips down. It was this that prevented him from using his hind legs, which are essential for a spring to get up on to the elephant. The final lap took us through a river bed and up the opposite bank into a clearing, where the mahout managed to pull up.

I was going to get down and climb a nearby tree to see if I could spot the tiger, but the mahout begged me to stay where I was, for he said in agitated tones, "If the elephant sees you on the ground it will think you are the tiger" . . . so I remained where I was!

It was far too agitated, however, and in such a state of fury, trumpeting and pawing the ground, that nothing would induce it to return for a further search. A second elephant had to be requisitioned to round up the quarry; it was the largest tiger I have ever shot and measured ten feet two inches.

* * * * *

More than any other animal the tiger has gathered legends round its name as the synonym of ferocity, the most powerful of the killers, the striped Juggernaut, the terror by night.

There are villagers who believe that the spirit of a slaughtered man enters and possesses the tiger who killed him, and so warns the tiger of approaching danger. They tell of such spirits accompanying a tiger on a hunt and sitting on his head.

I once heard the tale of a native hunter whose relatives had been

mysteriously killed and who had sworn vengeance. Selecting a tree close to his dead kinsman, the hunter sat up in the branches with his rifle, hoping the tiger might reappear. The corpse was beneath him, lying on its back. After a long wait the grass stirred gently by the side of the track, there was a slight rustling caused by the passage of some heavy body, and the hunter knew that the killer was approaching. But at that moment the corpse on the ground raised its right hand and pointed to the tree in which the hunter was sitting. The tiger went away; climbing down, the hunter securely tied the dead man's hand to the body, and then climbed into another tree. After a further long wait the same stealthy movements recurred and the man in the tree prepared to shoot. But this time the left hand of the corpse raised itself into the air and slowly pointed to the tree. Again the tiger departed. The man descended, tied up the other hand of his relative and once more climbed a different tree to await results. This time the man-eater left the thickets and came out into the centre of the track; the corpse remained without movement . . . with infinite caution the hunter raised his rifle, fired, and the man-eater had paid the penalty of his crimes.

Man-eating tigers move long distances in a night, as though apprehensive of impending danger. The ordinary tiger is also a great walker, pacing through the jungle, head down, feet treading velvet footsteps, twenty or thirty miles in a night, without thinking anything of such exercise. You get a picture of him roaming the jungles on long, wild forays, muscles relaxed, senses on the alert, an insatiable highwayman, with a roar that awakens the sleeping world into a start of terror. The roaring is, in a sense, a form of thanksgiving for food, or serves to call up mates to the banquet. Whether there is any quality in this thundering that may sometimes paralyse game in advance, as is the case with the hypnotic eyes of snakes, has never, to my knowledge, been proved, but my experience in the Indian jungles shows that a roaring tiger in the jungle is usually a sign either that his suspicions have been aroused or else that he has made his 'kill', since noise gives him away and sets all the tree-tops ringing with warnings of his presence. This roar may be the dinner-gong of the lord of the jungle, but it is usually sounded after dinner.

Tigers have also a low, moaning note, something between a purr and a cry, that is occasionally heard in the jungle and probably a sign of intensive emotion, either of hunger or delight. When the tigress hunts in company with her mate, the two often exchange muffled growls and 'miaows' with each other as signals of instruction or warning.

In stalking or bringing down his prey a tiger does not spring; there is no sudden, steely leap into the air, no tremendous propulsion or projection like that of the panther launching itself into space. Without fuss or any advanced publicity, he arrives within striking distance of his prey, takes one or two quick balancing steps and then rushes forward; should the quarry evade the attack, unlike the wolf or the wild dog, the tiger usually abandons the chase after about fifty or sixty yards. Before actually coming to the 'kill' he surveys the scene from a distance in absolute silence, often for some time, as is customary with all the cats.

Tigers kill, approximately, every four days, and though the principles of a

Gandhi have never been popular in their clan, they can, at a pinch, fast for long periods, up to a fortnight or three weeks if driven to it.

No four-footed prowler moving along the green paths of forest has such wonderful headlights as the tiger; his eyesight is superb, and his pupils at night swell into glowing lamps. He is a first-class swimmer and his hearing is acute. He has just one failing in all his armoury of aggression; his sense of smell is practically non-existent. Had he this faculty developed to the same degree of perfection as the others, then, indeed, the tiger might menace man as well as the wilds and prove a difficult problem for the hunter.

Long years of residence in India and its jungles have revealed to me many strange things. In Central India there are the Gonds, an aboriginal tribe who are born hunters, and the Santals, an ancient pastoral race mostly found in Behar, on the borders of the Terai, who hold no oath so sacred as that taken on the skin of a tiger. With others I have also spent happy days listening to their stories of jungle life and lore when with me on my hunting expeditions.

I have come across jungle people who believe that certain animals, especially monkeys, act on occasion as valet and guardian to an old tiger. From the nature of the 'kill' they would deduce strange conclusions: if it were found lying on its left side it meant the tiger would not come again, but if on the right side he might return.

In the cool of the evening we would sit round the camp fire, a solemn conclave of guttural-voiced villagers discussing new aspects of striped wisdom. All of them were great hunters and woodsmen and lived in districts where big game abound.

Far up in the Himalayas I met rishis and hermits who, so they said, could, after long practice, effect strange transformations, talking secretly to tigers, whisker to whisker, in glades when the jungle moon is full. The superstitious believe them to derive knowledge from Nature in the raw and of the bodily meaning of such words as swiftness, strength and terror.

I remember an old native friend of mine who went to visit one of these rishis. Squatting down in front of the hermit he proceeded to explain that his affairs were in the gravest disorder, and that the wise man of his village had told him the only cure would be to possess as a charm a certain tooth of a tiger living in the neighbouring jungle.

"Would you wish me to take you down to it, or perhaps I might bring it up to you . . . if your faith is strong," suggested the hermit.

"I pray your highness is referring to the tooth and not the tiger," quavered the trembling rishi.

All sorts of superstitions cling round the tiger; whatever we may say or do he persists in remaining a myth that the bullet of reason cannot kill. There are the two tiny bones found in the shoulder of a tiger; they are about two inches long and shaped very much like the wishbone of a chicken, and they are regarded as a highly prized charm; the whiskers, too, are considered an efficient remedy against the evil eye, whilst tiger fat boiled down into an ointment is sold at high prices as a cure for rheumatism and lumbago.

With these primitive people the tiger is regarded, from all angles, as a supernatural being, and his stock rises in proportion to the credulity of those who live in the closest contact with him. But, like all beings, man and animal, the lord

of the jungle has just one foe, a small and insignificant one, but an adversary that in his very defeat and death often wins the victory—the porcupine. In such a battle between David and Goliath, the porcupine, if attacked, generally brings about the death of his giant assailant by sticking him full of spears with flail-like movements of the tail. Goliath is turned into a raging pincushion with little possibility of ever removing the pins.

The porcupine, like the Londoner, always seems to be in a hurry; it has dozens of quills on back and tail, black spears edged with white at the ends and varying in length from one to four inches. Hidden in its fur, of which they are a development, and lightly attached, these prickles have barbs tucked away in the stem, each appearing immediately on contact with flesh.

No other animal besides the porcupine can teach the tiger to mind his own business. Over all the rest of the jungle he holds undisputed sway and his appearance sounds the tocsin of alarm. The lordly sambur stag bells, the monkeys utter screeching grunts of warning, the peacock makes off in a flutter of colour. The jackal when near a tiger's kill gets into an immediate fright, as though realizing he is playing with fire. Even man grips his rifle more firmly, not wishing to provide another sacrifice for the yellow god of the Indian jungles.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Where there is no taxation—The world's oldest and smallest republic—President with a salary of £3 per annum—Through Northern Europe to Lapland—The mysterious fortress of Boden—The menace of Russia—Over the Arctic Circle to the nomads of the north—Life among the Lapps.

LONG and patiently had I been looking for a land where there is no taxation. I have no personal animosity towards those whose job it is to collect the revenue by which the country is run, but I hold their office to be one that wages constant warfare on the taxpayer's pocket. When the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced further depredations I redoubled my efforts in the search for a taxless land. One summer I found it, and not far from home.

This reproduction of Arcady lies high up in the Central Pyrenees, between France and Spain, and is called Andorra. This tiny republic, the oldest and, in population, smallest in the world, shies at new ideas and methods, and still lives in the Middle Ages. It has all the glamour of medieval days and all the charm of romance, with many claims to distinction in that it is not easily accessible to the traveller, is out of touch with the world beyond its borders, has a president who received but £3 per annum as stipend, and is devoid of newspapers, cinemas, railways, theatres, army, police, or law in the sense of a written code.

When rumours of this Utopia reached me I consulted Cook (not the then agitator) as to how I could get there; the clerk said I must be referring to Angora, where rabbits come from, or, peradventure, Angola in the heart of Africa. I persisted that it was Andorra, so other clerks came, and together we settled the difficulty by reference to the map.

Being determined to penetrate the Andorran fastnesses by motor-car, I next consulted the Automobile Association, and finally, after many vicissitudes, crossed the Pyrenees, evaded Spanish military posts, ran the gauntlet of being shot by soldiers who guarded every cross-road, for this part of Spain is the happy hunting ground of anarchists and revolutionaries, and entered Andorra.

Andorra la Vieja is the world's smallest capital, for it has only one hundred and sixty houses, and the area of the dominion is one hundred and sixty square miles, the population being 5,600.

I entered Andorra from the Spanish town of Seo de Urgel, whence it is six miles by a passable road to the border of the republic. Whether it was that I had heard much of the freedom and originality of Andorran life, or was tired of passports and illegal exactions in corrupt-governed Spain, I felt free and independent and as if I were in medieval times the moment the frontier was crossed. Here I was in a different land, amongst people with a different way of looking at life and not out to best you at every turn. It was a relief to get away from Spanish jurisdiction and to be with these freedom-loving and simple-hearted folk.

At Seo de Urgel a determined attempt had been made by the customs authorities to extort an illegal payment on the bluff that my papers were not in order, but I successfully resisted it.

The road up the valley towards Andorra is narrow and like a canyon; one could see that the Andorrans when they first came here eleven hundred years ago chose a place that could be held against an army. A couple of hundred resolute men would keep at bay almost any force. This gorge is impressive, and at open spaces along its sides are little rock-girt fields where tobacco is grown, but what becomes of that tobacco more anon. From the roofs and windows of the solid stone-built houses you could see the tobacco drying in the sun.

Soon the gorge widened out and the capital—Andorra la Vieja—was before me; not a striking place in itself but with a majesty about it. It was built up on the left bank of the river and had the stamp of age—the sort of place that had let the centuries slip by and where time never mattered. This was the world's smallest capital . . . it looked old, and just as if it had grown up with the mountains, standing on a ledge of rock commanding a view down the valley, where during the spring and summer it is green with fields of maize and tobacco. Having surmounted the physical obstacles that hem in this midget dominion I could understand that it is possible for a race of people to live for more than a thousand years behind such bulwarks without being affected by the rush and storm going on in the nations round them.

I had letters of introduction from the French authorities to the president of the republic, and so leaving the capital we pressed on to Encamp, six miles farther north, where the ruler was in residence. I was told it was the first time a car had ever come into the country, and those six miles were certainly rough and hectic. We steered our way between houses and through passages so narrow, bumpy, and rock-strewn that I marvel now how we managed it. Nothing could have passed us unless they knocked down the rough stone walls enclosing the fields on either hand, or hacked away the houses in the streets.

On the way we greeted many Andorrans, working in the fields or passing along the highway; they looked at us stolidly and with an air of surprise as though we had dropped out of the moon in our strange mechanical chariot. They had fine, serious faces, a race apart, conscious of their thousand-year-old ancestry, a straightforward, simple people who lived and flourished beyond the modern world, and did not feel that they had missed anything.

At Encamp we were received by the president's brother-in-law, who runs a hostelry and café for the peasants of the country. Mas Benito was a rare good fellow who looks after his hotel in the intervals between superintending his fields and flocks. The inn was a quaint old place, with large eaves like a Swiss chalet, and Mas Benito's wife, the president's sister, kept it clean and tidy, whilst her daughter did the waiting with celerity and charm.

President Pere Font Altimir arrived the following morning; he had been busy with his sheep and goats up in the mountains, for this medieval potentate was a peasant and cattle-owner first and a statesman afterwards.

He had a couple of hefty companions with him of quiet undemonstrative manner, without any sign of nervousness in the presence of their chief; they had

energy, intelligence and seemed to have solved the problem of how to get the best out of life.

Perhaps after all even the president did not seem so very important to people whose ancestors were still part of an ancient republic hundreds of years before the American Declaration of Independence.

Pere Font Altimir was a man of fifty-five; tall, and with a rugged but genial type of feature that revealed the strong character. He greeted us with an easy courtesy betokening pride of place and birth, for here was the head of a government still based on patriarchal lines, where there is no distinction between the grades of society, a democratic yet feudal nation, an aristocracy and yet a republic, under the joint suzerainty of France and Spain, a state that is the political curiosity of the world. His duties are comparatively light, and he is assisted by twenty-four councillors, each of whom receives the yearly grant of fifteen shillings, whilst a secretary-general, who does all the spade work, is paid ten shillings weekly.

Following the introduction, we went into the café for lunch; the president's sister had cooked the simple meal and his niece acted as waitress.

I learnt that the president is a progressive, but he must perforce move slowly amongst a people full of suspicion, who cling to the theory of splendid isolation and are distrustful of the exploiter. A few years ago some foreigners came into Andorra to seek mining concessions; at once the whole country was up in arms, and the prospectors would have been hurled into the river had they not fled precipitately, leaving behind what little baggage they had with them.

The people have in the past worked the iron deposits in their own primitive way, but the idea of machinery was too much for them, for such things could only belong to the devil, and Andorra would have none of it.

Another time, thinking that times had changed, and with it the national temperament, a syndicate put forward a cautious proposition for the building of a casino and a kursaal in the centre of this quiet land. But the scheme was more revolutionary than the mining proposition, and again the promoters fled in dismay, having had the temerity to unfold their project in the capital itself. So high did feeling run that the French Government were compelled to place a battalion in the neighbourhood of the frontier, until the anger of the Andorrans subsided and they had returned to their flocks and pastures.

There are no newspapers or journals in the state; a short time since two enterprising foreign journalists wished to start one, but, like lions disturbed from their slumbers, the Andorrans rose in their anger, literally chased the offenders from the country, and that was the end of the newspaper venture.

There is no army or police, but the state relies upon its citizens for defence and internal order, and every man from the age of eighteen is ready when called upon. The only obligation is that he must possess a gun of sorts and a few cartridges, and fire one shot annually at a target in his village.

Crime seems to be unknown, and the president told us that the last occasion on which an Andorran was executed was forty-four years ago. We were shown the garrotte by which the man was strangled; curiously enough, it was lying in the palace chapel.

Pere Font Altimir was a genial ruler, and in Britain would be characterized as a good 'mixer'. I had lunch with him at his house, a plain, two-storey

cottage, with small, quaint balconies. A narrow lane strewn with boulders led to this 'White House', crossing a small stream, whence there was a steep climb between cottages until I gained the official residence. To me the scene hardly seemed real; the entrance was just a large opening in the side of the cottage, supported by a beam above and resting on two side beams. The president's daughter met me there and I followed her up a bare wooden staircase to a landing, where a solid doorway led into the reception-drawing-sitting-room. Here the president's wife greeted me with ease and charm; I had met the wives of other rulers in various parts of the world, but none with such unaffected grace as the mistress of Andorra.

The floor was bare, a few odd prints decorated the walls, but the whole interior was clean and orderly, with an air of quiet dignity. As the family knew only Catalan Spanish, Mas Benito did the interpreting, for he spoke French. After a while Mrs. President went out and brought in wine and cakes, much as we might serve cocktails at home. "I made them myself," she said with a smile, and if all else failed I felt she would gain fame as a confectioner. After this preliminary we sat down to lunch.

There was a distinct spice of romance about that meal. They took me in hand with a simplicity which is really more alarming than the pomp of an ordinary court. Even when I arrived there were no gorgeously dressed flunkeys to waft me hither and thither, no inquisitive chamberlains to look me up and down and pass me on through innumerable corridors and staterooms. I was chaperoned by delightful people, the president at the head of the table, dignified and confident in his job and looking the part.

I complimented the hostess on her cooking, this remarkable woman who was her husband's principal asset in the state. Although my questions were numerous and perhaps a little searching, they were answered with great lucidity. Indeed, I could not help wondering how many prime ministers and heads of governments could give so concise and comprehensive an account of the systems under which they act. Between the two of them they did it uncommonly well.

After lunch we went down into the garden, where the president cleared away the washing that obstructed our path and then commended his bee-hives to my notice. Close to the garden was an ancient stone hut constructed in medieval days where the priest carries out certain incantations when a storm threatens. When this is the case no one but the priest is allowed near the hut, so what takes place inside is known only to himself. Perhaps this remarkable custom is a survival of ancient days when the Andorrans first came into the country, or it may have been their custom long before they moved up from the plains into the Pyrenees.

During my visit to the 'White House' of Andorra the president showed me a hitherto unpublished letter he had received from President Wilson, a characteristic note from the greatest to the smallest republic. It came about in this wise. An American traveller happened to be in Andorra in 1915, and took back with him to the United States 'the greetings of the little republic of five thousand to the people of the greatest republic, of which you are the head'. The letter indicated the part each state was called upon to play in the world struggle, 'although Andorra and the United States are by grace and fortune preserving

an attitude of neutrality'. On arrival of the American traveller in Washington he delivered the missive, and President Wilson at once responded as follows:

The White House
Washington, D.C.
October 27th, 1915.

Distinguished Sir,

It gave me great pleasure to receive, at the hands of Mr. Lawrence Grant yesterday, your gracious letter of greeting and goodwill of the eighth of September last.

In return I am taking the liberty of sending you an autographed photograph of myself with the request that you accept it as a token of my genuine interest and the interest of the people of the United States in the people and Government of Andorra.

With sincere regard and good wishes,

Very truly yours,
Woodrow Wilson.

M. Pere Font,
Sindic General of the Republic of Andorra.

Unfortunately the photograph was never received; it may have been stolen *en route*, or suppressed by a war censor. Andorran postal arrangements are as primitive as in the days of the Romans; there are no postage stamps or post-offices, and letters, when there are any, for a destination beyond their own frontiers are periodically carried by a courier down into Spain, or over the northern barrier into France. Within the republic delivery of letters between villages is by mutual arrangement. Whatever may have happened to the photograph of President Wilson, his colleague in Andorra was unable to return the compliment, for such a person as a photographer is unknown in this midget dominion. The letter from the American President is treasured in the archives, whence it had been extracted in order that I might see a unique document sent in somewhat remarkable times and circumstances.

On the way back from the 'White House' Benito and I stopped at an inn to have a drink with the proprietor, who was standing on the doorstep and greeted us in the quiet manner of his countrymen.

The Andorran 'posada' or inn is a law unto itself, where Falstaff would find himself at home and at his ease. The landlord and his wife often share the table with the guest in genial unconventionality, while the pigs and poultry run in and out to see all is going well.

The dining-room is part of the kitchen and the preparations for meals are open to the gaze of everyone. The cook may think well to wash herself in the midst of her pots and pans, the waitress, handmaiden to the arts of gaiety, may change her upper garments before the eyes of the world. Every phase of the art of cooking may be witnessed by the lounger in the inn kitchen, and he may also note how the Pyrenean girl washes her hair and arrays herself for the important business of serving. No effort is made to practise deception upon the guest or to make him think he is getting this instead of that, but the homely mysteries of the inn are revealed to his eyes and the resultant meal is generally above criticism.

The Andorrans are Catholics of the old and conservative type and they have many queer legends and beliefs.

Each field used by this highland people is guarded by a sprig of cypress waving in one corner; this must be blessed by the priest so that evil spirits be scared from the fields and the crops prosper.

If an Andorran girl wishes to marry richly and happily, she must repair at midnight to the church tower with an egg in her hand, which she cuts in half exactly at the correct moment, no earlier and no later. This matrimonial offering must be made on the night of June 24th. Midsummer night thus plays an important part in the Andorran feminine calendar.

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These Andorrans know how to do the thing! One day I was entertained to lunch in the capital, at a sort of palace known as the Parliament House, a massive three-storey structure surmounted by a tower, and with the Andorran coat-of-arms over the doorway; altogether a striking example of a national Capitol. When there is a council meeting the mules of the delegates are stabled in the basement, whilst sleeping accommodation is provided on the upper storey in the shape of a rough plank floor, the bed that was in vogue in medieval days, and the one most favoured by these mountaineers.

From the stone-flagged basement a solid wooden stairway leads to the first floor, where one finds a curious mixture of business and pleasure. The council chamber, in which for hundreds of years the laws of Andorra have been framed and the destinies of the state decided upon, is twenty feet long. The floor is of rough-hewn planks; there is a long pine table and straight-back chairs cut out by feudal carpenters—hard and uninviting furniture. Yet it all fits in well with the Spartan character of these people. The ceiling is dark and blackened by time and smoke from the kitchen adjoining, and supported on huge beams and rafters. Along two sides of the room are curtains behind which hang the black state robes and quaint three-cornered fur hats to be worn during the assembly. Such, in brief, is a description of the world's most remarkable parliament house, and certainly the oldest, for the Andorrans declare the foundations to be those erected when the first settlers came here twelve hundred years ago.

There is the council chamber where in a corner I was shown one of their most treasured objects, an old oak chest, clamped with iron bands mined and cast in the country many hundreds of years ago. No one knows its age, and it looks as though it might have been brought up in the days when the Moors were sweeping all before them. It has six locks, and each of the six leading councillors holds a key, so that it can only be opened when all are present.

The president remarked that a good dinner is essential to law-making, so there is a dining-room, and, leading from it, a kitchen with a huge fireplace, the chimney of which opens above the centre of the room. Beneath it are fire-dogs large enough to roast an entire ox. The kitchen has neither chef nor scullion, for the councillors themselves take their turn at the cooking, which they regard as a pleasant alternative to the cares of state.

That day the members of government and the cabinet ministers who did the cooking excelled themselves. "We have some good red wine," the president

said, and we all took turns at drinking it. Now, drinking wine in Andorra is an art not easily acquired and it takes time to become an expert at it. This is what happens. The wine is poured into a leather bottle that looks like a lady's handbag with a small spout at one end. Usually the guest leads off, but knowing that I was new to the game, the host started first. He held the bottle above his head and from the spout came a stream of red wine right into his open mouth. It requires balance, poise and judgment to ensure that the wine reaches your mouth and does not gush all over your face. It is an art, and I felt a trifle nervous as to what sort of a performance I could put up.

I would have liked to ask for a glass, but knew if I did that my stock would fall sharply and so I determined to have a try and acquit myself at this inspiring game.

So, full of all the confidence I could muster, when the host passed the bottle to me with a bow and a smile of encouragement I took it and lifted it well above my head . . . then I tilted it to what I had mentally worked out was the correct angle . . . and got a spate of red wine on my forehead. Obviously my shooting was not up to scratch . . . and so I tried again . . . with the result that this time the wine coursed over my chin and fell in a cascade on my collar and tie. The Andorrans were amused by my display, but they were too well bred to laugh outright, and when at the third attempt I put the bottle closer to my mouth and received the full taste and flavour of the wine, they were appreciative of my efforts. I think that my attempts to drink wine in the Andorran way appealed to their sense of humour and made them look upon me as a good starter.

The red wine of hospitality and friendship was passed round and the talk turned on smuggling.

"Men make war for many reasons," said the president, "but tobacco makes peace."

I learnt a lot about tobacco and smuggling and how from the age of twelve the Andorran is trained in various ways to fit himself for this ancient and honourable calling.

He accustoms himself to carrying heavy loads over devious mountain tracks, over high unfrequented passes which only the expert cragsman can tackle, and to getting the better of the wild outlets of the country; gradually he becomes trained to the strain of transport and can find his way across the high pathways of the mountains on the darkest night.

The Spanish frontier is supposed to be patrolled by vigilant guards, but their number is insufficient, and the fog is often friendly. Moreover, a Spanish soldier is not averse to having a smoke or enjoying a good cigar when it comes his way unexpectedly.

All sorts of wiles and subterfuges are adopted to run the cargoes of tobacco across the frontiers. Pretty Andorran girls have their underskirts lined with tobacco, or their hair may crackle with it; lumbering ox-carts wending their way patiently down into the valley towards sunny Spain may not be all that they seem, for who knows what those innocent-looking bundles of hay or sacks of corn may contain?

Across the border, a certain house, used as a storehouse for smuggled goods, belonged to a man whose reputation for piety and integrity rendered him beyond the suspicion of the law. He was a priest who believed in helping his flock, even illegally.

An old Andorran smuggler feigned lameness when meeting a customs officer on the wrong side of the border. He put down his load, which bore the appearance of a freshly killed sheep, but the head at the one end and the hind part of the other were all the load contained of mutton; the interior was tobacco of the best brand, a cargo of contraband that could not have been bought for many golden sovereigns. So guileful was the smuggler in the exercise of his art that the guard, quite unsuspecting, took compassion on the poor man, helping him carry his load another mile downhill until the road became more suitable for a lame man.

So comprehensive is the syllabus in this smuggling business that it demands years of patient application before the candidate has graduated and can consider himself on a par with those old-time smugglers who were such familiar figures along our own coasts one hundred and fifty years ago. The Andorran will have touched the high-water mark of wealth and standing amongst his fellows only when he has won his spurs in the smuggling ring.

Apart from the tricks of the trade, the initial stages in training of the boy are the cultivation of this tobacco, preparation of the soil, and tending the plant in various stages of its growth, until it reaches maturity and is ready for harvesting. He is then instructed in the various methods of preparing the weed in the form of pipe tobacco and cigars, how to roll it and present the finished article in the most attractive form. The method of curing is crude but none the less efficient, and during the season the railings of the quaint balconies of every house are covered with large bunches of the leaves which are hung out to be cured in the sun. The resultant article is highly creditable to the makers, and of the Andorran cigars I have smoked—they were mostly given me by the chief of the smugglers himself—I never found one that would not have earned praise in a London or New York restaurant.

* * * * *

I left Andorra with regret, this home of equality and simplicity, with its guardian mountains and spirit of an ancient state, free as the heights that enclose it and the winds that blow over them, these jovial yet stolid Andorrans, drinking their wine as the Jewish patriarchs, or their nomadic forbears did centuries before them, this land to which the vanguard of invention in some form or other tried to penetrate, to be denied by the Andorrans, who closed their eyes and pushed the intruder over one of the rocky crags. In Andorra I found the simple life; there were no agitators or politicians; you could smoke the principal product of the country at peace in your chair, and open a threatening-looking letter without a tremor. Andorra was the land of contentment . . . but I missed my morning paper.

Now its solitude and charm have been violated, for a continental wireless station has recently been set up here!

* * * * *

It is a far cry from Andorra to Lapland within the Arctic Circle. A sledge drawn by reindeer would be the most appropriate vehicle for a visit to Lapland,

that vaguely defined area stretching west from the White Sea to the Atlantic coast in the north of Scandinavia, a sort of Santa Claus land.

I went there, partly at any rate, by motor-car, travelling sixteen hundred miles from the south of Norway, through that country and Sweden to the Polar regions, and when it was no longer possible to journey by car I left it in a rough shelter at a settlement in the frozen north and thereafter went afoot.

I had been staying in Norway with the late Lord Salvesen—a noted law lord who had estates there—when I set out on my romantic journey. The roads were good, if not exactly of the arterial variety; there is, however, nothing of the country lane about them, the scenery is unrivalled, whilst the people have a charm of manner and are pleased to see you, giving the welcome gesture when you most need it.

For the first nine hundred miles you are in a more or less inhabited land; then the road becomes a track through forests that appear interminable. Trondhjem was my first port of call after an exhilirating run of a thousand miles. I shall not easily forget Trondhjem. It has wide streets, and its houses, mostly built of wood, give a pleasing air to the place. There are warehouses constructed on piles sunk in the river, but the main impression left on my mind was the all-pervading smell of fish. Everything you eat in Trondhjem seems to be tinged with the odour of fish—it is impossible to get away from it. When I opened the bedroom window at night it was there—and remained. I once mentioned this to the King of Norway in London, for he has an old wooden palace in Trondhjem, a dream in architectural beauty, and the genial monarch agreed that Trondhjem 'does smell a little'!

Herrings and fish oil are its chief exports, hence the amount of local colour to be had there. After a time you probably get used to the smell, but at first it is inclined to be overpowering. Apart from the aroma, there is another thing that remains in my memory—the cathedral, the most impressive in Norway and founded in the eleventh century.

Whilst at Trondhjem I witnessed by invitation part of the Norwegian army manœuvres in the north. I was familiar with the feats of the Italian Alpine troops, and the ease with which Swiss mountain soldiers negotiate seemingly impassable mountain ranges, but few things have afforded me such thrills as the work of these flaxen-haired descendants of the old Vikings. One usually associates the Scandinavian with the masterly control of a ship, but the feats of horsemanship, and the way in which they ascend and descend mountain slopes, filled me with admiration.

All too soon it was time to be getting on the road again, and now began a series of incidents that made me sigh for the more peaceful, if far less adventurous, trip along the Bath Road. Picture to yourself the roughest of cart tracks traversing continuous forests so similar in size and colour, and the land so flat and unbroken, that you always seem to be in the same place.

As far as the eye can reach are trees as upright as arrows, from which we obtain our telegraph poles, and which people all over the world are destined to handle in tiny pieces as the unromantic household match. Occasionally I came across rough log-hutted settlements where the inhabitants are the descendants of those old Vikings who made history, the hewers of wood and drawers of water today, as they were a thousand years ago. You hear the ring of the

woodman's axe, the only sound disturbing these solitudes, these virgin forests that have a peculiar effect upon one's nerves. I found myself growing curiously introspective.

Perhaps it is the immensity of Nature which makes one feel an interloper; at times I felt it was almost sacrilege to be making my way through these forests in anything so prosaic as a petrol-driven vehicle. But that feeling soon passed when I was faced with the problem of getting the car over roads that were certainly never intended for such methods of transport. Time and time again the car was bogged up to the axles; the wheels churned round and round with a fury that was all in vain; they could not get the requisite leverage to move us an inch. Then it was a case of all hands on deck; whenever possible we roped in near-by foresters, unpacked everything in the car to lighten it, and with the aid of saplings levered the hind wheels until we made a slipway of branches on which the wheels could bite. This was repeated a score of times in as many miles, until we were almost worn out with the physical effort of it all.

Rainstorms added to our difficulties and made the tracks a mixture of canal and by-path to delight the heart of a mudlark, but it sometimes made me regret I had not provided myself with a caterpillar tractor.

I had many instances of the good-nature of the foresters who camp in these solitudes for months on end. At one place our utmost efforts failed to move the car an inch; we levered and levered, all to no purpose, and finally, worn out, sat down by the side of the car. Then, a little ahead of us, appeared two foresters who came and examined the position, and without a word went back into the forest, to return in a few minutes with spades and axes. Working methodically, they proceeded to work round and under the submerged back wheels, then with their axes, and a speed and celerity that made us blush with our own clumsy efforts with the axe, they cut down trees, split them into neat logs and fashioned a wooden roadway beneath the wheels, so that the car rode easily out of the obstruction. They were diffident about receiving a reward, but I had my way. "We are happy to have been of use," they said, and watched us drive off with a cheery wave of the hand before returning to their work in the forest. And so by slow degrees we reached Boden.

Boden! One of the strongest fortresses in the world, barring the way from almost a mystery, and few people could find it on the map. It stands guard at the northern end of the Gulf of Bothnia, is made apparently impregnable by forts hewn out of the granite hills, and masked by pine forests.

I was hospitably received by the Swedish general commanding, who came to call on me at my hotel. Later in the day, before it could be spread abroad that I was an invited guest and not a spy, I discovered that Boden has an efficient secret police service who shadow the stranger entering the town.

I had been out to pay a call and on the way homewards I saw a man come out of a corner and follow me. A moment or two later he was joined by three others, rather ragged-looking ruffians. For some distance they remained a hundred yards or so behind me; when I slackened my pace they did the same, and if I hurried they followed suit. I wished I had taken the precaution of slipping my revolver into a side-pocket, imagining myself about to be the victim of an attack by a band of desperadoes, and not altogether comfortable in my mind.

They began to decrease the distance between us, so I put on the pace slightly, and dodged down a side street. And then a strange thing happened in this tense situation. There, by good fortune, I saw, in a figure a little ahead of me, the Chief of Police whom I had already met. I hailed him, and when I caught him up explained about the shadowy figures stalking me. By this time the pursuers had again got within shooting range. The police chief smiled grimly and motioned towards them with his hand. The effect was magical; they disappeared as silently as the owl flitting past in the night and in a moment we were alone in the deserted street.

"A few of my men," he said briefly; "they won't worry you again now that they've seen you with me." Then, as he noticed my look of surprise, he added meaningly, "We are not over-fond of strangers in Boden."

After a few days in this mystic stronghold I was off on the hundred-mile trek that would bring me to the Arctic Circle. In places the going was hard, rocks and boulders had to be worked round, and deep ruts in masses of earth and stones ploughed through. There were log bridges to be crossed at our peril; one of these had such a doubtful look that I tested it by hurling a large stone at one of the central beams. It snapped like a twig, the stone crashing through into the river sixty feet below. I decided not to try that bridge!

Once again whilst traversing the silent forests of this lone land, where wolves are seen more frequently than man, I had examples of the simple faith and honesty of the dwellers in this queer corner of Europe. One night I halted at a tiny hamlet, and there, in a log hut hewn from the surrounding forest, I talked with the owner and took some rough notes with a pencil, leaving about noon the next day for a further stage on the northern route. At midnight I was awakened by a knocking on the door of my shelter. Could it be brigands, or what? No, it was the owner of the little hut I had left that morning, and who had been running all over the country to find me so that he might restore my pencil.

Soon I crossed the Arctic Circle; there was a thrill in it, for the temperature told me we were nearing the home of Santa Claus and the Lapps, that curious little people who never see the sun through the depths of winter and live for more than half the year snowed up with no companionship but their own. The Lapps are reputed to be the last of the uncivilized races of Europe, still living as they did a thousand years ago, happy in their Arctic solitudes and shunning the world beyond their moss-covered wigwams.

When I reached the farthest point, two hundred miles north of the Arctic Circle, I left the car in a wooden lean-to. Beyond this point stretched a wintry land, roadless, empty and cold. So I and my two companions, with a Swedish forester, taking our kit on our backs, set out to penetrate farther into the northland.

Our path now lay through mountain ranges, along wide rivers and across plains, at one stage having to shoot some rapids in a boat. There was no other way round; without deliberation we took the plunge, stepped aboard the boat, and in a moment were swept out into the river.

The water was as cold as ice and running like a millrace. Every moment I expected we should capsize and be carried beyond the first rapids to a canyon where the river ran between dangerous banks. We had got over the rapids and were making valiant efforts to gain the bank, but the whole force of the

current was against us. Manfully we battled, until at last we made the bank and threw ourselves down amongst the heather and moss, overcome with our exertions.

That night we found a sheltered spot in a Lapp camp, drying our things before a pinewood fire, and having another taste of Lapp hospitality. How well I remember that night in Lapland! We were the guests of the headman, a primeval hunter, fishing, trapping and tracking down game being the sole occupations of himself and his people, who thought only in those terms.

Our host put on a dinner of reindeer meat; it was boiled in an iron pot slung over the fire, the meat being thrown in, complete with hoofs and hair, and when cooked was served in bowls fashioned from the silver birch tree, each one selecting what he fancied from the meat.

The host showed me the head and shoulders of a magnificent bear, and when I told him I had hunted big game in various parts of the world he pressed me to accept the trophy, saying it would be most useful for stalking bears when they came down into my garden at home!

I liked that Lapp; he was what we should call a good fellow, and seemed flattered at the interest shown in their queer ways. The Lapps do not take kindly to strangers, but my forester friend explained that I was a harmless individual who would not enter their wigwams as though I owned them, that I would not make eyes at the women, nor play tricks with their reindeer; in fact, taking it all round, the effect of my presence would be negligible. Thus was I accepted as one of the tribe when I took up a temporary abode among them.

Here was a self-contained people with their own code of laws and prehistoric ideas of justice, yet their lives are as orderly as those of the best suburb of London. Once established in their good graces I took stock of this short, ungainly race, with the flat faces and yellowish-white complexions. When you have seen one Lapp you seem to have seen them all; they appear to be members of one large family, with dress, walk, and habits so alike that you might easily imagine they owe their origin to the same parent.

As already remarked, fishing and trapping are their occupations and one day is like another. Withal they are happy and have acquired a strange philosophy, as well as a religion of their own. They are a race apart, and would find a civilized life so irksome th t I doubt if they could withstand it for a day.

They are the nomads of the Polar north and use the reindeer for moving about the land they inhabit. It provides the Lapp with almost everything—food, clothing, skins for tents, material for footwear, and transport.

In an English hunting county the talk is of horseflesh; in Lapland the main topic of conversation is the reindeer. I told them of many things, of wars and so on, but all they were interested in was to learn what the King of England did with his reindeer when he marched against the enemy.

The reindeer is the one representation of wealth, and when a boy is born they are set apart for him. They form the foundation of his future fortune and his status is governed by the number he possesses.

Over this lone land of moss and stunted birth a sledge is the only means ol getting about during the winter. A single reindeer will draw a load of between two and three hundred pounds, keeping up a steady ten miles an hour for eight

or nine hours at a stretch. I have driven various animals on the five continents, but the reindeer is the most difficult of them all. The sledge itself is long enough for a man to sit down in and stretch out his legs; the bottom is similar to the keel of a ship, with a sharp bow and wide stern. This makes it uncommonly difficult to balance—for all except the initiated. There is only one rein, on which it is vital to keep a tight hold, otherwise disaster is sure to follow. The reindeer seems to know by instinct when a novice is on board, and it usually resents his presence by stopping suddenly, overturning the sledge, and biting and prodding the driver with its antlers. The only thing to do when that happens is to retire beneath the sledge and wait until the storm is over.

In spring occurs the great migration of the reindeer, for instinct leads them to seek the higher ground and so escape the gnats and mosquitoes swarming in the forests. There they remain until the late autumn, when they move down into the woods again. Nature has no parallel to this migration, for the reindeer who have left their owners months before come back of their own accord, instead of taking to the more free and open life of the wilds, as their untamed brethren do. They return in an immense herd, and in one of the wide, open valleys are rounded up, and by a process of elimination each man's reindeer are restored to him. The herds are thus re-established and life follows its normal course, until the ensuing spring, when the deer disperse again and part from their owners until the end of the warm weather.

They tried to gauge my own status by the number of reindeer they imagined I possessed, and took it in the natural order of things that my herds would be on the four figure standard. So, in spite of myself, I was elevated to a pinnacle of fame. Had they assessed me at any lower quantity I should still have been regarded as eminently respectable . . . a long way ahead of those who can only count their possessions on the fingers of one hand, and are the servitors and henchmen of the mighty. They merge their herds with those of their lord, and so acquire a little of his reflected glory.

During the winter a great silence is over the land, with no sign of life, so dreary and cold that the spirit of it is that of sadness. It is ten in the morning before daylight appears, and by three in the afternoon the light has faded away and the pall of the Polar night comes down.

It is then that the prowling wolf packs take the trail, each with its recognized leader. They are the Lapp's worst enemy, hanging on to the herds of reindeer and cutting out the less agile. When the snow is soft the Lapps hunt the wolf on skis, often following them for a couple of days. The Lapps on their snowshoes can travel faster than the wolf and, when they come up with the quarry, seem to be flying over the snow. Quick as lightning they pass to one side of the wolf and then, wheeling round, fling caution to the wind. It is a brief and fierce fight, the wolf going down under the rain of blows.

The winter was just beginning when I was in Lapland, with much curing of skins for clothing, the women taking the principal part. The Arctic regions are ill-fitted for sentiment and romance; courtship and marriage are a casual affair, and the young bride spends much of her earlier wedded life chewing skins to render them soft and pliable. It is strange to think that the beautiful furs worn in London and elsewhere may have been prepared at the expense of some Lapp girl's teeth.

The Lapps have a strong dislike of the camera; they look upon it as the evil eye, something that will lead to disaster. As the days passed they became more accustomed to photography and no longer feared the camera as in the beginning. They even entered into the fun of taking pictures, once having realized that the evil eye was a myth and death did not lurk within the wonder-box.

I roamed over a large part of the country and at the end of each day we sat by the camp-fire, listening to stories of wild life in the frozen north. One Lapp, who came with me, had been caught in a wolf trap: throughout the long winter night he lay there until late the following day, when he was found and the imprisoned leg released. The vitality of these people is amazing; Nature has brought them up in a hard school, where it is a case of survival of the fittest. And so my friend had limped off to his wigwam, where the limb was set in the Lapp way. I wondered what would have happened to a more civilized man!

One day I was heading for a camp beyond the forest on the edge of a lake which we hoped to reach before nightfall. Two hours went by, and a third, long past the time when we should have gained our halt, but still there was no sign of it. Several times we lost the trail, but the guide found it again with unerring instinct, like all nomad tribesmen.

As darkness fell the cold became severe and it was with intense satisfaction that at last I saw a light gleaming some distance ahead; it was from the camp fire of a Finnish hunter, who readily gave us food and shelter for the night. It had been a long and strenuous day, and when we reached that haven of refuge I felt like sitting down and refusing by all the gods in the Pantheon to budge another inch.

A band of dogs flew at us as we neared the hut, but were driven back by the guide and then we entered. The interior was lit by an oil lamp suspended from the ceiling, whilst the bare pinewood floor was littered with wooden platters, untanned skin rugs, skis, and reindeer-skin boots. At one side of the hut was a fireplace and opposite it stretched a wooden bunk, the sleeping-place of the owner and his wife.

The host was a rough and shaggy giant; he was born of the wilds, and with an old muzzle-loader and his flint and tinder would plunge into the forest hunting his food like primitive man. Living with him was simple, and time depended only on the boundless future. His diet was frugal, and his home a circular tent of skins, with a fire in the centre and a hole in the roof to let out the smoke. Often he and his men went hungry, but then there were times when they feasted right royally, as the prevalence of food and luck of the chase dictated.

I left the Lapps with regret, these children of the snows with whom life is hard and food so often scare, at constant war with the elements and the cry of the hungry wolf ever in their ears. I parted from them late one afternoon in October; they ferried me across the wide river and then we plunged into the forest and were lost to view. It was intensely cold, the stillness oppressive, and dark spruce trees frowned at us from every side.

At nightfall I came on herds of reindeer coralled in a stockade of silver birch branches. It was a strange camp, with the air of the Holy Land about it, for the Lapp girls kept guard over the reindeer, like the shepherds of biblical renown who watched their flocks by night.

It was no easy job for those girls; it demanded constant skill and cunning to outwit the wily wolf, but through the long night they did their work remarkably well, and not only kept off the wolves, but preserved their own lives intact.

It afforded another study in realism, and as I look at those cheery girls wrapped in their rough furs, squatting in the snow, armed only with a stave, I thought what a curious and hazardous life it is for youth and beauty. Later on the finest of the reindeer skins would be taken down to the nearest port, far away on the Arctic Ocean, and there sold or bartered to whalers and other sailing craft. Eventually some would find their way to Regent Street, but what would the wearers in Britain know of the thrilling adventures their furs had been through and what a fascinating story they could tell?

So at last I came out of the Arctic north and the land of the Lapps, that strange little people who have let the centuries slip by, but are happy in their life of loneliness.

CHAPTER TWELVE

The Foreign Legion—I go to North Africa as their guest—The world's most discussed corps—The Sahara—The People of the Veil—Queerest people on earth—A colossal scheme—The Mediterranean to irrigate the Sahara.

IN May 1931 the Foreign Legion were holding high jinks at their headquarters in Sidi-bel-Abbès, eighty miles south of Oran in Algeria. It was the hundredth anniversary of this most famous and discussed corps, whose colours are not large enough to contain the battles and campaigns in which it has fought all over the world.

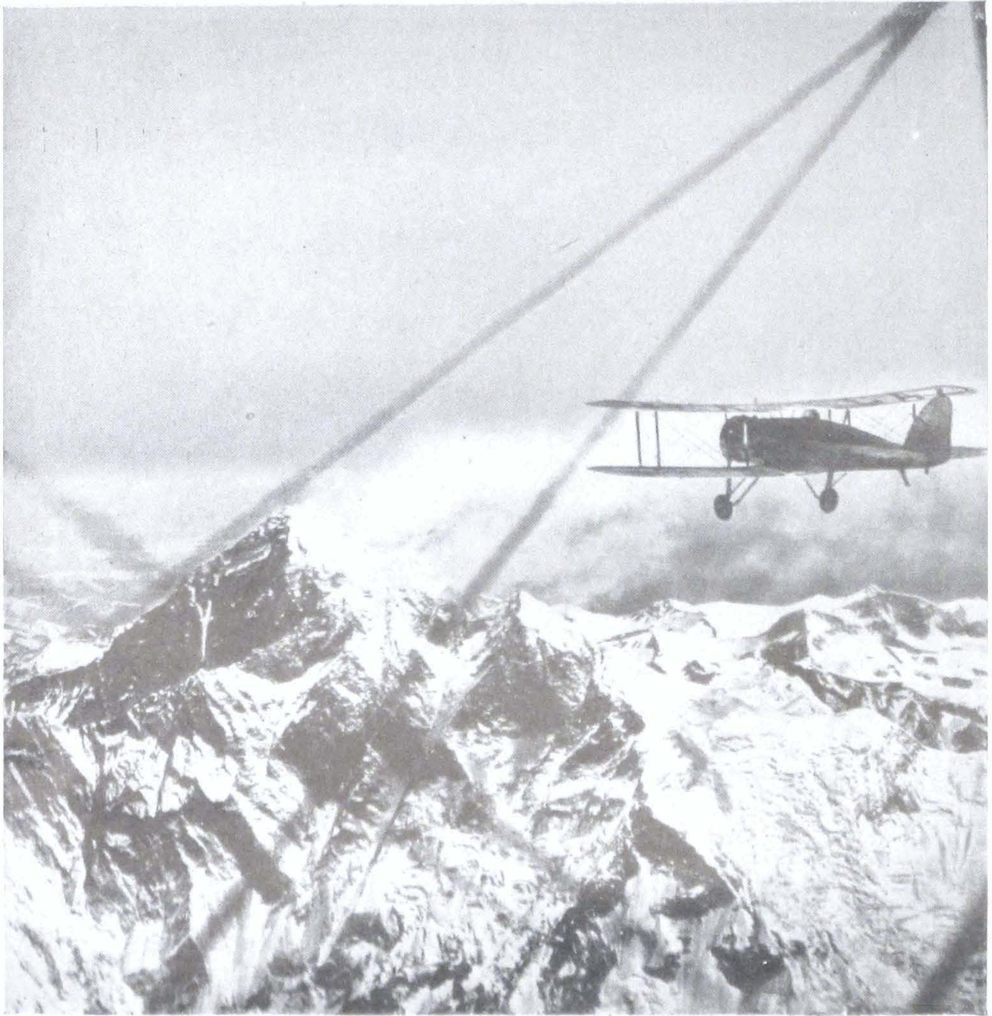
The gathering was a *beau geste* for brave men, this band of social outcasts, of adventurers, swashbucklers, and desperadoes, branded with pride, misery, and madness, a body of warriors that have become some of the finest fighting troops of all time. Foreigners who want to disappear can join up at any French recruiting station, no questions are asked, and once they have signed on the Legion becomes father, family and future, and for five years no law can touch them. Outcasts and desperate men most of them remain to the end, yet so strong is the fighting spell cast by life in the Legion that many have been known to re-enlist for second or third periods of service and to treat the desert like a parade ground.

Through my friend General Fagalde at the French Embassy in London I was lucky enough to receive an invitation to the centenary celebrations, and from the moment I arrived at Sidi-bel-Abbès it was clear there were going to be seven eventful days in the history of the Legion.

General Rollet, the Inspector-General, was the host, and he told me many stories of the Legion, after more than thirty years' service in it—stories that rang with hardihood and unheard-of daring.

It was a decree of King Louis Philippe of France in 1831 that created the Legion and placed it on a proper military basis. They were the last of the mercenaries embodying for permanent service in northern Africa the veterans of the disbanded foreign regiments which had been in the service of the French king. One of these units was originally known as the African Auxiliaries, the organizer of them being a Belgian and pseudo-baron named Boegard, who got together a collection of rogues and rascals and offered them for service in Algeria, where the French troops were having a bad time at the hands of the Algerians. This dare-devil crowd were wonderful fighters; they had nothing to lose but life and quite a lot to gain in the way of loot. Such were the predecessors of the Legion.

A great deal of nonsense and much sentimental verse have been written on the subject of the *Légion Etrangère*; this polyglot force of more than a score of nationalities who have an intense *esprit de corps*, with nothing much to look forward to. At the worst, death in the desert; at best, the consciousness of deeds well



APPROACHING MOUNT EVEREST AT 34,000 FEET

THE BOAR FIGHTS THE TIGER IN UDAIPUR

done, and perhaps the *Médaille Militaire*, or some other decoration of the French army.

In the hundred years of their existence they had lost 140,000 men on the battlefield. Diversity of language is their main feature, coupled with a bravery and mutual co-operation spirit which have made them France's most famous regiment.

Probably the workmen who tried to build the Tower of Babel were only labour battalions, men much like the Foreign Legion, and that was why when the confusion of tongues came upon them their utility ended. Nowadays they would form an admirable draft for the Legion, where difference of language is no bar to enlistment, nor to promotion as far as sergeant's rank—in very exceptional cases to that of captain. Occupancy of that and the higher ranks is reserved for officers who are selected with great care from the French army.

The Legion was all out to make the week a memorable one, and as I drove from the railway station to my quarters the streets were gay with flags and bunting, gaudy with the varied uniforms of the French army, musical with the passage of drums and trumpets—a general air of excitement hung over this hot and dusty little town on the borders of the Sahara.

Through the gay turmoil I made my way to the barracks to be welcomed by General Rollet and Colonel Maire, commanding the First Regiment. The town was swarming with men in the uniform of the Legion, a surprisingly modern town with electric light, telephones and motor-buses, the more surprising in that it was mostly built by the Legion, whose headquarters it has been for generations. It is laid out with mathematical precision. From the centre roads radiate to the four points of the compass, each being shaded by palms, olive and eucalyptus trees. They are the main streets, lined with French shops and cafés, where for reasons of economy the légionnaire is seldom seen, for you cannot do much on the pay of one halfpenny per day. Touching this question of pay, when I later broadcast from London on life in the Legion, a French officer wrote to me saying that no soldier in the French army receives any 'pay', military service is gratuitous. It would be insulting, he said, to imply that a soldier's service could be rewarded by such a minute sum, but the French authorities had been careful to render this misconception impossible in the eyes of the men themselves by calling that halfpenny '*le prêt*', loan money. Apparently it is a loan in the sense that it must be refunded in the form of thread, buttons, cleaning materials and sundry small articles too small to be regularly issued.

This statement reminded me of the strict Moslems, amongst whom silver vessels are prohibited by the Quran, but the wily Moslem bores a tiny hole in them, when, by a quibble, they are no longer vessels!

Behind the main streets of the town is a rabbit warren of small shops and bars, which cater for the men and do a roaring trade on the fortnightly pay day, known as the Legion's holiday. They can supplement their pay by doing small outside jobs in off-hours, so that with luck a légionnaire may be able to buy a bottle or two of the red wine of Algeria, selling for fourpence per bottle . . . but retailed in London in 1945 at eight shillings!

Behind the town to the south is a distant background of hills in shades of pale yellow. Here in this centre of the Foreign Legion everything seems to be

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yellow; the air is frequently yellow from the sirocco wind, the oldtime ramparts are yellow, and a dust of the same colour gets on your clothes and shoes and, as if in keeping with Nature, the people paint their houses the prevailing colour.

Passing through the central square I came to the barracks, immense yellow buildings on three sides of a courtyard. The iron gates were wide open, gates through which generations of légionnaires have passed. My driver pulled up the car to allow a company to march out; it was going to drill, moving with the long and swinging stride of the Legion.

From the guard I enquired for my host and was answered by a tall and well-set-up young American, which led to the interesting discovery that the guard comprised nine nationalities. This lad from New York, whose father had served on General Pershing's staff, was a born soldier, with a Homeric geniality that goes with the fighting temperament. He was corporal of the guard, was but twenty-two, and had already served fourteen months. I felt this was a fine introduction to the Legion, with a romantic touch, and I told General Rollet so at our cordial meeting in his offices a few moments later.

I wanted to see all I could during my stay at Sidi-bel-Abbès and so after lunch on that first day of my arrival the adjutant and I went on a tour of the barracks. He was an Italian, a friend of Mussolini, and had been twenty-two years in the Legion. Every five years or so he went on leave, but the fascination of life here drew him back again. Why he ever came to join I never knew, for etiquette demands that there shall be no cross-examination on a man's past. I would like to have had an outline of his history, but all I knew was that he just came to the Legion, perhaps with a story that might have provided material for an Edgar Allan Poe story.

As we came to the door of the first barrack-room a coal-black Somali was coming out; he had walked up from British East Africa, heaven knows how, and offered himself as a légionnaire. Just behind him was an erstwhile Cossack of the old Russian Imperial Army, both being on the way to fetch the mid-day soup for their section.

We climbed the stone stairs to the room above, where légionnaires were busy rubbing and polishing boots, cartridge-belts, bayonets, and a dozen other things that are the Legion's pride. The rooms were scrupulously neat and clean, the beds in perfect alignment, above each being the owner's name on a board. There was a distinct touch of romance about these pasteboard cards; if one could have seen a chart of each man's mind and past they would probably be astounding documents.

Everything in those barrack-rooms was practical: the folding of the kit and clothes according to a definite plan; the ability to put a mass of things into a small space tends to readiness and order. "A légionnaire can find everything in the dark," said the adjutant, "and within ten minutes of the alarm we can move off."

"How do you like it in the Legion?" I asked a hefty Negro from southern Georgia. "Sure, boss, it's hell when you begin, but not too bad when dem fust days be over." "Any more United States in this company?" I enquired of a tall, fair-haired youth, who, the adjutant indicated, was a Bostonian. "Yes," he said, "there's a guy from Saint Louis," pointing to a comrade who had come into the Legion for some reason he did not disclose. When a man joins he comes

to bury the past; if they know or suspect he is a murderer it is a strict rule that he is not to be taken, but when no questions are asked how are they to know? The man walks into the recruiting office and says his name is Smith—that is a popular name. Then he is swallowed up in the Legion and lost to the world, perhaps even his relatives will never hear of him again.

Every day there were various festivities; they followed close on each other like a queue at the theatre. To my musical mind the finest of these shows was an afternoon performance by the band of the Legion.

When the Legion celebrates it does so in a manner both hearty and exuberant, worthy of Valhalla and the northern tradition. It does it with gusto and non-stop celerity, and many empty bottles of the good wine of France testified to the party spirit.

On this centenary occasion the festivities lasted round the twenty-four hours. The vitality of the Legion is at all times astonishing, and the légionnaires after hard living and training are as untirable as a trunk of teak.

One day, after a luncheon of unusual excellence, I decided to have a couple of hours' rest in my quarters before beginning the festivities of the night. I wanted to get into trim again so that I could continue to hold my own in this kaleidoscopic whirlwind. But it was not to be.

My hosts came round to my rooms and insisted that I should get up and go with them to the theatre, an artistic building constructed by the Legion themselves. There was to be a special performance by the band.

I rose grudgingly and joined the theatre party. We had front row seats in the royal circle . . . there was the band, one hundred and twenty strong, below the footlights. What followed startled me out of my sleepiness. I knew that here in Africa, on the stretching desert carpet, was about the finest orchestra in the world, with instrumentalists worthy of the great music halls of the universe. They led off with an overture . . . a mighty effort, divinely played . . . and I was fully awake . . . lost in admiration.

The music died down, and there came upon the stage a piano, with a Hungarian as pianist, whose light and delicate fingers charmed such music out of the instrument that movement was stilled, there was not ac ough, or a sound, or a shuffling boot in all that vast theatre.

The Hungarian was followed by another légionnaire, this time a German, who sang superbly; there is no doubt he could have been another Tauber had circumstances so willed it. In Africa the sun is almost for ever in the sky, but here were two stars of the first magnitude, who would have warmed and delighted the most critical audience. I would like to have known more of them; of the strange and criminal things some of them must have done. But this is their own affair and the tradition of the Legion is that it shall belong to no one else.

An impressive memorial is the Salle d'Honneur, the museum of more than a hundred years of world-wide warfare, with its flags, pictures, relics and weapons, and all that tells the history of the Legion.

Everything in the Hall has been fashioned by the soldiers, the allegorical frescoes on the ceiling, of great beauty, were done by a German, Scandinavians did the artistic work and carving, the fretwork reminded me of Grinling Gibbons, whilst an American from the Middle West has left the record of his skill with the

brush in some excellent paintings. No one knows who he was; he just came to the Legion, fought and painted, and then passed on.

Here I saw, among many trophies of war, the hand of Captain d'Anjou, hero of the fight at Camaron in Mexico in 1863. This is one of the episodes in the Legion's heroic history. It was at the time that Archduke Maximilian accepted, with the concurrence of France, the Mexican throne. He was afterwards shot by the Mexicans.

At Camaron, d'Anjou and sixty-three men, without food or water, were surrounded by two thousand Mexicans, to whom they gave battle for a day and a night. Tortured by thirst and reduced in numbers by ceaseless gun and rifle-fire, they were six times ordered to surrender and six times they repeated their defiance. After repulsing charge after charge and slaying hundreds of their foes they were overwhelmed and annihilated in a final rush. Beside d'Anjou's body was found his severed hand.

* * * * *

There is nothing the Legion cannot do; from it could be built a ship complete with its engines; one could staff a university, run a newspaper, or equip a scientific laboratory in this corps of strangers from all over the world.

They represent every corner of the globe, every trade and profession, these men whom destiny has sent to work and wage war for a nation whose language many of them do not even understand.

The arrival of recruits at Sidi-bel-Abbès is always a great event; it never lacks attendance, for there is the alluring possibility of meeting a friend, a fellow-countryman, or at any rate someone who speaks a common language and can tell them of the land they have left.

Many of the men have money sent to them from abroad; this was the case with several Americans I met, for money makes an enormous difference when the pay is but a cent per day. As already remarked, they are paid every fifteen days, and then the cafés and bars in the town do a roaring trade, and légionnaires dip into the good cheap wine of Algeria. It is a tradition that no man is considered drunk so long as he can get to his bed—even if he has to crawl to it on all fours.

Life in the Legion has improved greatly in the past few years, but many inaccurate tales have been told. At the same time I would not say that it is perfect; the system of punishments could be modified, and the daily pay of one cent is ridiculously low, considering the value France gets out of the Legion. The légionnaire is workman as well as soldier, he builds roads and fortified posts, drains marshy areas, and lays out gardens and plantations. He is the mainspring in the expansion of French Colonial Empire, and extraordinarily good value these industrious mercenaries give their employers.

The system of training must necessarily be severe, where there are more than thirty nationalities to control, and France proceeds to mould this cosmopolitan mass into a first-rate army, owning no loyalty and no patriotism save to the Legion and the Legion traditions. There is another side to the Legion; these men are like the Roman legions of old, who were soldiers, builders, colonizers, engineers and pioneers. So with their modern prototype, and you

can do anything with them, for there are architects, engineers, masons, bricklayers, artists, painters, everyone who would be needed in constructional work.

In speaking of this versatility General Rollet remarked that all he had to do was to call for so many men of given trades and professions and they would be produced on the spot.

From the cosmopolitan and many-sided nature of his men we talked of the strange characters in the Legion—and what stories they could tell! One was the cousin of a reigning European monarch; perhaps he had a difference with his family, or had been advised to absent himself over a question of succession. Who knows! At any rate he had risen to the rank of captain and was making the best of a hard life. Another was the son of a Russian grand duke; everything had been lost in Russia when the Bolsheviks took over, there was no room for grand dukes or any of their kin, and so this one wandered on, getting out of Russia by stratagem and disguise, until like human driftage he floated into a common eddy and in the end found himself in the Foreign Legion, with nothing to look forward to in his own country. But it never troubled him; where he would be when he left the Legion did not matter; sufficient unto the day was the evil or pleasure thereof.

Another man had served his five years, taken his discharge and vanished into some far corner of the earth. He was the son of a European wartime prime minister, but my host felt no surprise at this. The man was a good soldier, he said, and that was all that mattered.

Then there was the mysterious Viennese. A wealthy man had died in Austria and bequeathed his fortune to a nephew . . . but no one could trace the nephew. Then it was suggested that the Foreign Legion should be asked if they had anyone answering to his name and description. When the letter arrived the colonel sent for the sergeant on duty and told him to find the missing man. Nothing happened . . . for there was no one of that name or description. Some months later the regiment was in action and the duty sergeant was killed . . . sewn up in his tunic were his identity papers, which revealed that he was the heir to the fortune. Why hadn't he come forward before? A mystery which will for ever be unsolved.

A cousin of the late Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany figures in the drama of the Legion. Something had gone wrong and he had enlisted under another name. Mortally wounded in battle, he revealed his identity as death was creeping over him . . . telegrams flashed across Europe . . . the story was true . . . and a German warship came to Algiers to take home the body of the common soldier . . . till then unknown.

I could not find much trace of the advertised brutality of the Legion. I talked freely during my stay in Sidi-bel-Abbès to légionnaires of eighteen different nations, of every class and creed, disgruntled men with not very convincing tales of horrors, bored men and contented men, and came perforce to the conclusion that General Rollet's words to me about hit it off, "We are hard, but we are just."

The truth about the Legion today would seem to be this. After the inevitable period of hard work for the recruit, the intelligent man, who is keen on his job, has a not unpleasant time, with promotion and endless opportunities

for seeing active service. The man who is stupid, lazy, or mutinous has a distinctly bad time, as, indeed, he would in any army in the world, but not so bad as is commonly made out. Corporal punishment, for instance, is forbidden, and the American lieutenant, who has been through the mill, assured me that men are not tied up, put in holes, and otherwise maltreated. There has been much exaggeration, he said.

The system of training is severe, but it produces fine soldiers, brilliant marchers, and troops always ready for service. These soldiers of fortune can be made use of in the most pestilential climates, for the most forlorn hopes, since there is no account to render for their life and death, and no senate or parliament to ask embarrassing questions. It may be a vicious system, but its purely military results are unsurpassed.

Seventy per cent of the Legion are Germans, with French, Swiss, Belgians, Bulgarians, Russians, Serbs, Italians, Turks, Czechs, Dutch, Cossacks, British and American.

I came across about twenty Americans, as well as a few Negroes from the southern States, but the total of Americans in the Legion does not, I was told, exceed more than a couple of hundred, distributed over the various parts of the French Colonial Empire where the Legion is in garrison.

This is not a great number considering that the strength of the Legion as it is at present totals 23,000 men in eighteen battalions.

Neither the discipline nor the life are suitable to the British and American temperament. I asked the adjutant his opinion of the Anglo-American soldiery in his charge. "They do not take to the life of the Legion like the others," he said; "they are inclined to be independent, and to resent being ordered about peremptorily, but for coolness and reliability under fire—ah! we like to have them in the front line."

I sometimes broke away from the high jinks and festivities and wandered about on my own, as the observant traveller should. It was no easy job, however, but I managed it on occasions. One day I found myself in a barrack-room of twenty-eight men, a racial mixture of twelve nationalities. Here were possibilities. I was alone . . . and it was soup time, the Legion's morning meal, and I was going to have it with them.

It was certainly the most cosmopolitan meal I have ever sat down to, but it was good, and the company in a class by itself. There was an Englishman, a Scot, a Canadian, three Americans, a Czech, a Siberian Cossack, a Finn, a Bulgar with a beard like a bush, some Germans, a Dutchman, several Frenchmen, a Belgian, a Swiss, and to wind up with, a Hungarian.

I called for the fine red wine of the country, for to provide a drink is the best way to coax a legionary. I was sitting next to the Canadian from Montreal; in that stately city of the other hemisphere—a city I knew well—he had, he told me, dreamed of the desert and the hard-fighting Legion of the story-books. He would go and join it; so he took passage to Cherbourg, handed himself over to the French military authorities, and so to Sidi-bel-Abbès. He had been there seven months . . . he was getting a taste of the life of which he had dreamed . . . a bit of the adventure that lured him from the delights of Canada to the grim realities of the Foreign Legion.

The star turns at this impromptu gathering were the Bulgar and the

Siberian Cossack. The difference in nationality seemed to arouse no dissentient feeling amongst them; probably they realized that when men are thrown together, as they were, in the clutch of poverty and hard life, national flags and the glory that goes with them would neither help them out of their troubles, nor did it mean anything to them . . . but, paradoxically enough, they concentrated on the Legion and, like the inspector-general and the prime minister's son, that was what really mattered.

Never in my wanderings up and down and round the world have I enjoyed myself more, for, apart from the company, the food was good . . . bean soup, a meat stew, with tasty bread, and the red wine for which Algeria is famous.

I have a nodding acquaintance with several languages and so we got along splendidly. The gigantic Bulgar spoke in a mixture of Russian and French; he had been far down in the Sahara, where the Legion is constantly at war with the fierce and mobile Riffs, the Berbers and Tuaregs, marching endless kilometres across the desert sands in pursuit of these elusive enemies. What enemies they are!

Battle-loving, plunder-hungry tribes, they live by raiding, and who, as predatory and untamable raiders, are as bad as you will find anywhere. For ages it has been their custom to go pillaging and killing in the lands adjacent to the Sahara and in the Soudan. These things constitute their prime occupation, their business and their sport.

Of them the Tuaregs are the most mobile raiders on earth; gigantic, silent people mounted on huge camels, which are trained to rise silently and move off at once, unlike the ordinary camel, which is a noisy beast, resenting the order to go forward.

These knights of the desert look the typical raiders when you see them in the dusk suddenly bearing down on your camp, their faces covered with a veil up to the eyes, and giving the appearance of a ghostly monk of the Inquisition. A curved sword hangs at their side, and a rifle is slung over one shoulder. They come so silently and look so huge silhouetted against the horizon, that it forms a mental picture not easily forgotten.

The Bulgar told us much of these children of the desert, of the trails that go for hundreds of miles over the wilderness of sand, with a landscape so unchanging that you always seem to be in the same place. Over all is the heat of the desert; the légionnaire is in the dominion of the sun whose rays strike down like the blast of a furnace. He lives when on the march in an atmosphere of sand, with every now and again winds that sweep it up and turn the desert into an inferno. It may blow for days on end, and in no place in the world is the wind more pitiless and penetrating, cracking the skin, blinding the eyes, and conquering everything in its path.

Then I listened to the story of a march through a Saharan sand-storm, a typical episode in the life of the Legion. All day they had toiled along, the seventy-pound packs got heavier, the muttered oaths were frequent, but still the Legion marched on—the hardest marching army on earth. The wind tore with a fury across the desert, covering the column with sand, until it became impossible to make headway against it, and so the column camped.

With the darkness came the bitter cold of the African night, and when morning dawned the storm had ceased. The company stood to arms, and then

it was found that one man was missing, a German, who had evidently lagged behind unnoticed. A sergeant and a dozen men immediately set out in the direction of the previous day's march, an icy fear gripping at their hearts, for they knew that none could expect mercy from the Berbers. "They are the children of hell," said the Bulgar.

In a couple of miles or so they came to some sandhills; just beyond they saw a figure lying out in the sand. It must be their German comrade; perhaps he was only sleeping. They went forward and shouted, but the figure did not move.

"The sergeant was in front, I came behind," said the Bulgar, as I listened spellbound to the tragic story. "If I had not seen the thing with my own eyes I could never have believed it.

"The sergeant stopped suddenly. '*Sapristi!*' he gasped. 'Murdered by the Berbers!' "

They had broken his arms and legs, his face was like a butcher's shop, and there was scarcely a part of his body that had not been hacked about.

"Yes, they are the children of hell, but the Legion will never forget," thundered the Bulgar as he brought his fist with a crash down on the table, and I thought what a part he could play in a rough house.

We talked of life in the Legion in general, and then in company with a lieutenant, an American hailing from Massachusetts, with fourteen years' service, I made the acquaintance of the Rugby football team, of the library, the recreation room, the new cinema in course of construction, and, at one end of the barracks, a sort of café with umbrella-shaded tables, strangely reminiscent of a New York summer roof-garden, but not of *Beau Geste*.

These légionnaires have no loyalty but loyalty to their regiment and no greater pride than to fulfil the command of a former leader, General de Negrier, which won them their laurels, 'March or die'. Their marches are tremendous, twenty-five and thirty miles in full kit being regarded as ordinary performances. I found the weight of their equipment was about seventy pounds, and on the march each man carried a rifle, bayonet, and one hundred and thirty-two rounds of ball cartridge, or rather its equivalent in steel wedges, for live ammunition is not issued except on active service. There was no motor transport then.

The famous Marshal Lyautey was a commander of the Legion, but when the First World War came he took no risks. The regiment that went to the Western Front contained men of the allied nations only, the Germans being retained in North Africa to keep it quiet.

Later on the Legion had another tussle with Abd-el-Karim, the turbulent Moroccan chief, whose fortitude and military virtue won the respect of his foes. Abd-el-Karim has another claim to fame. While his guns were rendering to the French attackers his own conception of the 'Marseillaise' he wrote to *The Times*. "The sword is more truthful than writings," he said; "we search for tranquillity and seek only justice. We remain steadfast to our principles, even if only one mountain-top remain to us to occupy or inhabit."

Nowadays, as civilization gradually vanquishes savagery, the légionnaire is more an emissary of civilization than a warrior. He builds roads and railways, and his service advancing with the times is not the iron tyranny it was said to

be. But for years to come he and his comrades will work with both spade and sword, safeguarding the conduits to those reservoirs of African manhood which could give France a powerful colonial army.

I liked the Legion canteens where you could get a pint of red wine for threepence; many of the men, who have money sent from home or somewhere, can buy as much as they like at these canteens, which are similar to British regimental establishments of the kind. But there were no *vivandières* or canteen waitresses and supervisors, and I fancy, from what they told me, there never were, in spite of the movies and 'Ouida' and her fascinating 'Cigarette'.

After the hectic week with the Legion I took stock of the Sahara, the world's largest desert. I had imagined the Sahara to be a veritable sea of sand, a trackless waste, waterless, treeless, with an oasis here and there, a sea of burning sand that has swallowed up men and caravans.

The reality came as a pleasing shock; the Sahara is certainly not a southern paradise, neither is it a flat and trackless desert. It is a curious mixture of desert stretches and dunes, ranges of high mountains and oases where palm and date trees can be counted by the thousand, and you can pick oranges and apricots as you might in Southern Europe.

The Sahara is a sea of immensity.

Covering an area of three-and-a-half million square miles, nearly the size of Europe, this vast ocean of sand represents a world of its own, entirely remote from ordinary standards of life—immemorial caravan routes . . . brazen skies and burning sands . . . wander fever leading man to the end of nowhere. If romance can be defined as the sudden flowering of the commonplace, the desert is the flattening and enlarging of the ordinary until it stretches to the confines of infinitum.

From the Sudan to Arabia, from Aleppo to Algiers, from Timgad to Timbuctoo, far and wide, black tents of the Bedouin beckon, and camel bells tinkle an invitation to the—what . . . ? Biskra, gate of the desert. . . . Tuat and Touggourt, with a hundred and seventy thousand palm trees. . . . Timbuctoo, lost capital of the Tuaregs. . . . Caravan towns and struggling oases all depending for life on the well, the date, and the camel. . . . And ever the far horizon beckoning, and the golden road stretching southward to those ultimate places where things common and trivial flee and fail, where man is left face to face with awe, desolation, immensity—and with himself. Divinity and destiny, heaven and hell, meet in the desert, and the tourist tries to photograph them.

The Sahara is no place for trifles.

For centuries civilization has recoiled in terror from the desert whose sands are hot enough to burn shoe-leather. It has always been inimical to men of the West.

The wind blowing from Africa out of the dried-up dusty attics of history has chilled the blood and pinched the faces of the hearty northerner, used to the enjoyment of his meat and drink and the soft glances of rivers and trees. There is something contrary, opposed to his heritage and instincts, about places where good liquor induces madness and distances can mean death—an impress overwhelming and inert that made the very eagles of Rome and Napoleon droop on their standards.

From Carthage to the Moors and the stranglehold of the Barbary corsairs,

the desert of North Africa has brooded like an evil genie over Southern Europe. The very word Islam means surrender to God, and the Latin likes chirascuro and a malleability about his fate.

In keeping with this mysterious and sometimes sinister region are its most important inhabitants—the tribe of Tuaregs, the people of the veil, the overlords of the inner Sahara, whose home is under the blue sky. They will not endure to live under a permanent roof, for they regard it as an act of ill-omen, and they shun the world in general, cultivating a dislike for other men. Whence they came no one knows, for their origin is lost in the mists of obscurity and the very veils with which they cover their faces. They are one of the most extraordinary and astonishing tribes left on the face of the earth, so elusive, so aloof, so difficult of approach, that they are called by other tribes 'The Abandoned of God'.

In their wanderings over the dominion of the sun they have unerring instinct and an enviable bump of locality. They can find their way from oasis to oasis across the desert, although to the untrained eye it is an act of faith, for no track whatever is visible.

What the Viking was to the sea and the seaboard of Europe, the Tuareg is to the desert. They live for fighting, for the rush of raid and foray, for the urge of wandering. They are nomads of the sword and the true sheik type of fiction. Moreover, they are probably the only considerable race left on earth who still capture slaves and turn them to their own uses.

The food they mostly rely on is dates; with a handful of these and a goatskin of water they will set out to cover long distances, returning with the proceeds of a raided caravan or a dozen slaves, for whom, I learnt, they can get a hundred silver pieces on the men's account, and as much as four hundred for a young and beautiful girl. The Tuareg lad undergoes strenuous training for the game of war and raiding, this schooling being by far the most important item in his education and upbringing. He must be able to go without water in a land where it is scarce (sometimes found only at intervals of two hundred miles or more) for four or five days, to exist without food for an even longer period, and still keep fit and ready for fight at the end of it.

In the desert a camel may sicken and die, but the raiders keep on; they have been known to cover three hundred miles in four days. It is this physical endurance, this ability to fulfil the functions of life without food and water, that have inspired in all tribes a superstitious dread of them. In a sense they are the last of the Spartans, living for physical fitness and for fighting.

Alone amongst Mahommedan races the world over, the Tuareg shows great respect for a woman; in fact, in many ways she is of more importance than the man. She goes about entirely unveiled, she can divorce her husband when so inclined, is allowed to propose to the man of her choice, and when she has done so may travel long distances to see her *fiancé*. No man would ever dare to play a Tuareg woman false, or attempt to work her harm. The whole desert is her trysting-ground.

In this unfamiliar corner of the globe the women, as a general rule, do no work, no matter how poor they may be, since slaves are at hand for all manner of labour—the husband sees to that, or he has failed in his work of highwayman and labour-producer.

The women never make up or use paint or powder; this is left entirely to the men, who adorn that part of the face which shows above the veil. Since a Tuareg must never fully uncover his face, the ladies, when they wish to kiss him, do so on his nose, the veil being slightly lowered for this purpose. The Tuareg girl sometimes sleeps for nights on end on the tomb of an ancestor, for this is said to give her a view of a lover absent on a distant raid, perhaps hundreds of miles away in the embraces of the all-pervading desert.

Though a Moslem, he is totally unlike any other follower of the Prophet. Religion is by no means a passion with him, and I doubt if a Tuareg has ever made the pilgrimage to Mecca.

I spoke of a scheme to turn the Sahara into a land of milk and honey by utilizing the waters of the Mediterranean, one of the most daring projects that the mind of man has ever conceived. The Tuaregs could not comprehend so immense an undertaking. The effects of it would be almost incalculable; the climate of North Africa would be changed and the old and puckered face of the Dark Continent would lift for an instant with surprise; the wilderness would begin to blossom like the rose.

"What will the Tuaregs say to that?" I remarked. "What do you think of the idea of letting the sea fight the Sahara?" They were scornful and suspicious of the moves of modern science.

It was a delicate topic and affected their overlordship of the desert. They pointed to the blazing sun. Could I alter that? They next showed me a camel. Could I change that into a horse? "A man can play with little things but not with the Universe," said the Tuaregs.

I changed the subject and talked of other things, of this world and the world beyond; of the sun, the moon, and the stars, of the earth, which they would not admit was round. "The universe is flat and has hills along its edges; is it not so?" they declared. I, who had travelled far and wide and seen mighty truths shattered by modern invention, said nothing. I could offer no evidence from the Quran that things were otherwise, and so I held my peace.

Then the conversation turned to the topic of veils. "How did the custom arise?" I asked. They stared at me in astonishment. "Why did I wear those curious trousers?" I said I hadn't the faintest idea, and then we all laughed.

The Tuaregs remounted their camels, saying that Allah in his wisdom had fortunately not made men alike, else who would there be left to raid?

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

I meet Hitler, Goering, and other Nazi leaders—Goering and his 'Karinhall' home—Remarkable attitudes and sidelights—The ex-Crown Prince ('Little Willy')—The Kaiser—and 'Look out for Japan!'—I visit Germany again after Munich—The coming storm—The leader of 324 million people—The city of the Vatican.

I FIRST came in contact with Hitler through a mutual friend in Berlin, on one of my visits to the German capital in the summer of 1932. Germany was then in a state of transition, the National Socialist Party, under the inspiring and fanatical leadership of Hitler, was rapidly coming into the ascendent, and all Europe wondered what would happen in the new Germany with so much hypnotic and sinister influence at work.

This meeting with Adolf Hitler happened one evening in a little third-floor flat where he lived, some distance beyond the Brandenburg Gate and the Tiergarten. It was not the first time I had heard of Hitler; such a strange and forceful personality as his could not go unremarked, apart from the stories that had been circulated concerning him. Though I knew the world too well to place credence in half of what I had heard, I felt a decided amount of curiosity about this dynamic upstart, who throughout Germany was already beginning to be feared, and whose reputation made me desire a closer acquaintance with him.

So late one night I and my friend drove out to Hitler's Berlin home, a momentous journey for me . . . going along to meet one who was to become the most evil of all mankind. Ten o'clock had already struck when we reached the rendezvous and the car pulled up outside the building. It was just a block of cheap flats such as one might see in a squalid part of London; as I stepped out three young Nazis received me on the pavement; one went ahead and the other two closed in behind us. They were not more than twenty-five years old . . . Nazis in the making . . . ardent followers of their chief whom they were guarding. One of them had a hand on his hip pocket . . . he must have had a gun there . . . they were taking no chances even with a casual and friendly Englishman.

We climbed to the third floor up the winding stone staircase, the guide tapped on the door, which was opened by a Nazi of similar age and mien. I was ushered into a narrow oblong room, and the door was immediately closed behind me. Apart from our two selves there was no one in the room and I was able to look round and examine it before Hitler should appear. The furniture was of the ordinary modern utility type. On the right as one entered was a door leading to another apartment, and in front against the wall extending half-way down it was a bookshelf; a worn-out carpet covered the floor and on the walls were some cheap German oleographs of country scenes. A clock ticked on the bookcase, but beyond that nothing disturbed the silence of the room.

I had been waiting there only three or four minutes when the door at the

end of the room opened and a man who could have been none other than Hitler came, I should say burst, in. He was a pallid, rather ill-dressed individual in a brown suit, a nondescript man of medium height. His description was exactly what had been given to me, and more or less what I had conjured up, especially the piercing eyes and the Charlie Chaplin moustache.

I saw at once that here was a man of intense vigour and activity; he looked a strong man and one could not fail to be electrified by his energy and fanaticism. I could see he was the vivid embodiment of his principles . . . a man endowed with Satanic attributes.

I have often tried to recapture that scene in the little, mean, third floor flat, since many people have asked me how our arch-enemy struck the ordinary sort of representative Britisher. Adolf Hitler, I remember, clicked his heels, made a stiff bow and motioned me to a chair. "Pray sit down," he said, in German, for that was the only language he spoke, seating himself beside me and regarding me, for once, with his extraordinary eyes. "You are interested in Germany," he began, "and I understand this is not your first visit to Berlin. These are great days for us," he continued. And then, as though he had sat on some hidden electric switch, a torrent of words poured from his lips and continued without intermission, almost to the end of our talk.

At that time one would have thought he could have talked sanely and reasonably to a chance-comer. There seemed to be electricity in the eyes shining out of a bloodless face, as he raved and ranted the usual claptrap about the iniquities of the Versailles Treaty. Interrupting that fanatical flow was impossible, as others found since. For most of the time he shouted as though I were on the other side of Berlin, hammering relentlessly on the arms of the chair—a characteristic gesture—but the static lock of hair that draped his forehead never moved. Save at our introduction, his eyes always avoided mine; it was as if this twisted, unbalanced soul could never look anyone in the face happily. He was the introvert with the loudspeaker utterance then, as he was later on, the loudspeaker of a nation, the sounding brass, not at all, I thought, the sort of man to trust or do business with.

"The sheet anchor of my policy," he shouted at me that night, "will be to cultivate friendship with Great Britain. I have always wanted to do this . . . it has been my dearest wish . . . Germany and England must never clash . . . the war between us was the greatest disaster in history, it shall never happen again." And I believe this idea was one of his few genuine convictions.

His thoughts and fixations had not at that time become mere scraps of paper for all the world to read.

I can see how Hitler's hand became a fist when speaking of France, whom he regarded as the root cause of all the trouble that had arisen in Europe since the war. "France is too dominant," he said to me. "I could respect France if she would only reduce her aggressive army to one hundred thousand, the limit imposed on us."

We talked on until after midnight, when he said he was leaving for Munich by car before dawn. Then he rose, we moved towards the door, and he held out his hand, saying with that gracious affability he could sometimes assume, "Good-bye, I hope we shall meet again."

After I had bidden Hitler good night I drove back to the Adlon, and fell

to ruminating on this outstanding personality, about whom there were many things to be reckoned for and against. Somehow I felt that Hitler was to figure largely in the destiny of Europe and that he would need the most careful handling, and I had an indefinable apprehension that we were up against it, that he would certainly cross our path, and that we could not leave things to take care of themselves. "I have thirteen million people behind me," he said, "and more are coming in every day."

To me some *rapprochement* seemed essential, but how to achieve it with this megalomaniac? All the world knew we had a disgruntled Germany to deal with. I had been a traveller in strange lands from my youth upwards, and was therefore accustomed to meeting strange people. This man Hitler was in a class by himself; he would go off the deep end, for it was obvious that Prudence had never sat by his bedside. I had the ugly impression that everything he said that night was within the sphere of probability.

If it came to a crisis, would we be able to trust him in moments of difficulty and danger, would he adhere to an agreement, was he a man with whom the sober-minded British diplomat could deal? All these were matters of importance, questions to which no one could give a satisfactory answer. But my impressions at that first meeting left me with the conviction that, like most Germans, Hitler would never run straight. Moreover, there was no guarantee of his mental stability.

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In 1932 he was engaged on arrangements for the universal publication of *Mein Kampf*, and during the autumn when I was again in Berlin he offered me the foreign rights, asking £50,000, a trusted agent bringing me the manuscript. I objected to the terms as being excessive, and so the agent tried to put over a deal, but, unfortunately for me, as events proved, I could not see a profitable outcome to the proposition, and so lost a good opportunity, for the subsequent sales all over the world ran into six figures. *Mein Kampf* was considered so fantastic that no one believed it, but on Hitler's accession to power everyone in the Nazi party had to buy a copy, whether they liked it or not.

What of Hitler and his human, social, and domestic side? Personally, I always found him, when we avoided politics, a different man; he would talk quite rationally, took an interest in the mundane things of life going on around him, and even more remarkable than anything else in his character was the way he got on with children. He would play with them, never tiring, and they would amuse themselves together to an extent that I had to ask myself if this man, whose sole interest in life seemed to be centred on tops and teddy bears, could be the same Hitler at the sight of whom millions of people quailed.

It was a complex nature; he had none of the accomplishments of everyday life; indeed, they never interested him. He could not drive a car, he had never learnt to ride, to shoot, or swim, or indulge in any form of sport. Nor did this evil-minded man treasure any liking for smoking or alcohol, and no one would ever have consulted him as to the merits or demerits of vintage wine. Certain it is that he could get intoxicated . . . but only on words, not on alcohol. His tastes, too, in food, were simple and austere; he would go all out on fruit juice,

milk, macaroni, vegetables, omelettes, and had a weakness for cheese soufflé. It was said that he sometimes took beer, especially brewed, but I never saw it.

Entirely wrapped up in himself, he had no time for the ordinary pleasures of life; for example, the graceful electric touch of a beautiful woman was as the nectar of the gods to me, but to Adolf Hitler it was abhorrent. It sounds odd, but he loved opera, his favourite being *Die Meistersinger*, and at the end of it he liked discussing it with good-looking women! Films were also an obsession with him, usually at a very late hour in the night. Indeed, this abnormal individual did most of his work when other people were sound asleep; he would call conferences at midnight and two or three o'clock in the morning, regardless of whether others liked it or not. It all fitted in with his hatred of living to routine; there can have been few leaders with less regard for it. He was a person to my mind who enjoyed being unusual.

In his young days he had intended to be an architect, for models of architecture always interested him; in fact, the man himself was an architectural jumble. Despite reports to the contrary, he told me he had never hung a roll of paper in his life.

He hated any form of exercise, and much preferred watching other people doing the work, deriving most of his own exercise from talking.

At the end of a fervent shouted address to a vast audience of yes-men and women he would show the same symptoms as a man suffering from a violent drinking bout, and would be literally dripping with perspiration. The main secret of his power was, of course, his unquenchable oratory, playing principally on the well-worn theme of a down-trodden Germany, coupled with the fanatical texture of his mind.

I never argued with him over fixed ideas that he had got into his head, such as the iniquities of the Versailles Treaty and other things, for when he made a statement that was by no means true, he had said it so often that he quite believed it. A former friend of his once remarked to me, "Hitler is like your George IV, who firmly believed he had been at the Battle of Waterloo, and said to the Duke of Wellington one day, 'Was I not there?' to which the Duke replied, 'Well, Your Majesty has always said so.' "

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I did not see Hitler again for some weeks; when I came back to Germany he was fast getting into his stride and was, in racing parlance, round the corner and into the straight.

Then, four days after he had been made Chancellor, we met once more. He telephoned to me in London late one night; I had just come in from dining out, and the hall porter, at that very moment, said there was a continental trunk call for me. It was one of Hitler's trusted entourage, speaking for him.

Would I come over to Berlin? The Chancellor would like to see me, we could have a talk, and he would tell me what was in his mind. So, on the evening of February 3rd, 1933, I flew to Berlin and was met at the Tempelhof aerodrome, driving at once to the Reichs Chancellerie in the Wilhelmstrasse.

Hitler had now become Chancellor of the herded German people; he came bursting into the room in the great grave Chancellerie in the true Hitler style.

This time he wore a black, not a brown, suit, but the moustache was the same second-hand Chaplin model that he trimmed every day. He stood for a moment or two, his arms full of papers, and full of himself as usual. I could see that he was thrilled to be Chancellor and in power, as he clicked his heels and recalled our last talk. I was actually the first foreigner to see him after his accession to office.

I led off by asking him what his programme was and what he proposed to do about it. "Now I'm at the wheel," he replied in his Austrian accent, "I shall be captain of the ship; Germany shall be the great power in Europe," and there and then he outlined the things he would do, and, as all the world knows, he did most of them.

This time Hitler gave me the impression of being quite a changed person; he seemed more important, strengthened by events, fired for the future. He swaggered about the room like a schoolboy who has been promoted. He was comparing himself with the great ones who had gone before. "I like your Oliver Cromwell," he said; "he was one of your greatest men." Perhaps he was thinking in terms of purges.

We spoke of France and England, of the hollowness of the League of Nations and its general irresolution and ineffectiveness. His all-consuming passion was to make Germany the greatest power on earth, and his assertions left no doubt in my mind that he envisaged a Germany stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea and to the Mediterranean—a Germany self-contained so far as was humanly possible and able to tackle anyone who might be opposed to her.

Hitler held all the trump cards in the mailed fist—the intensive and all-embracing organization of Germany, coupled with the non-stop determination to go ahead at any cost. He relied on the hesitation of the democratic powers who would naturally, he argued, do everything to avoid war. With the arrival of Hitler the German Reich began to mobilize on a scale of which none could see the limits.

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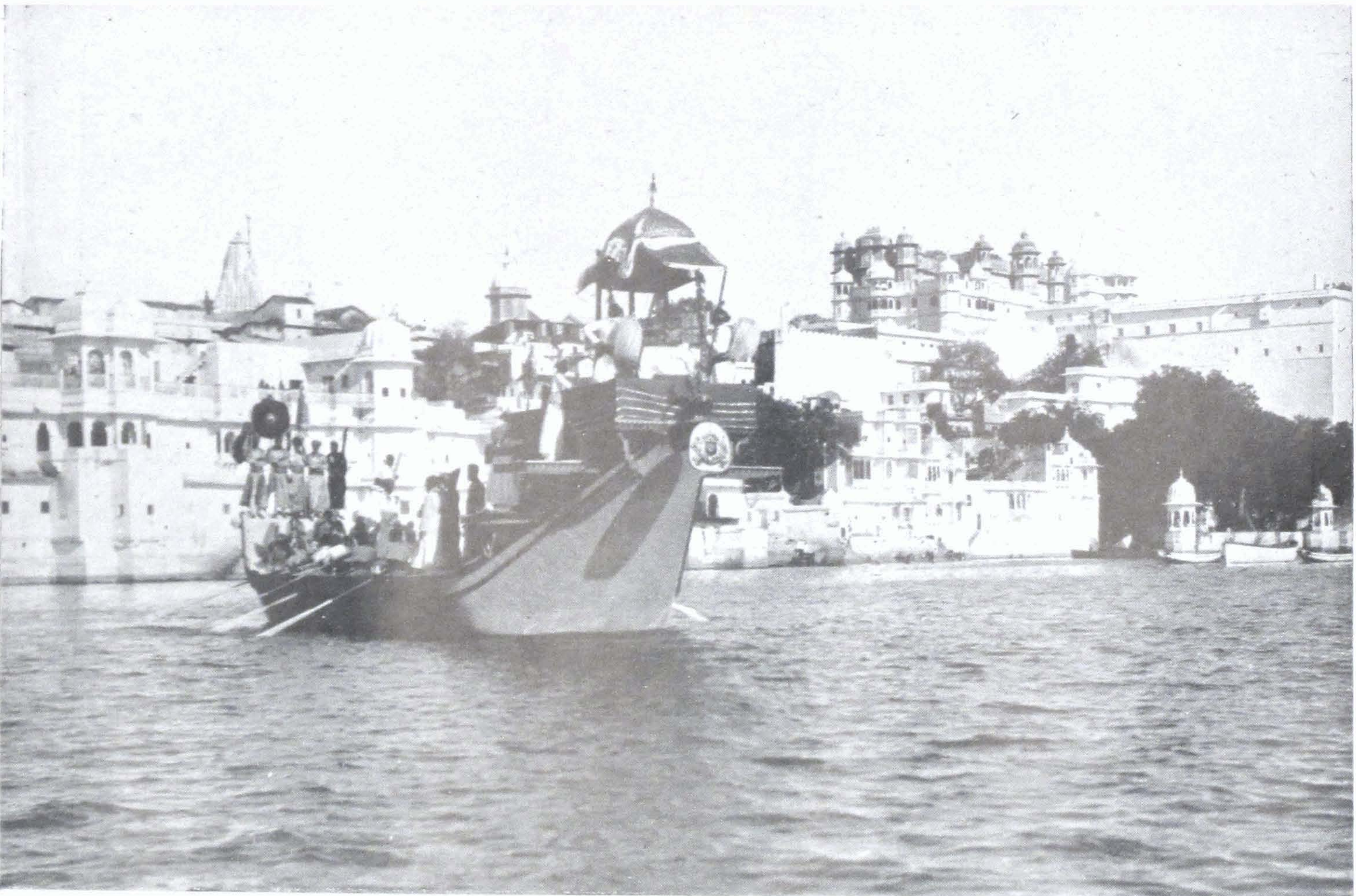
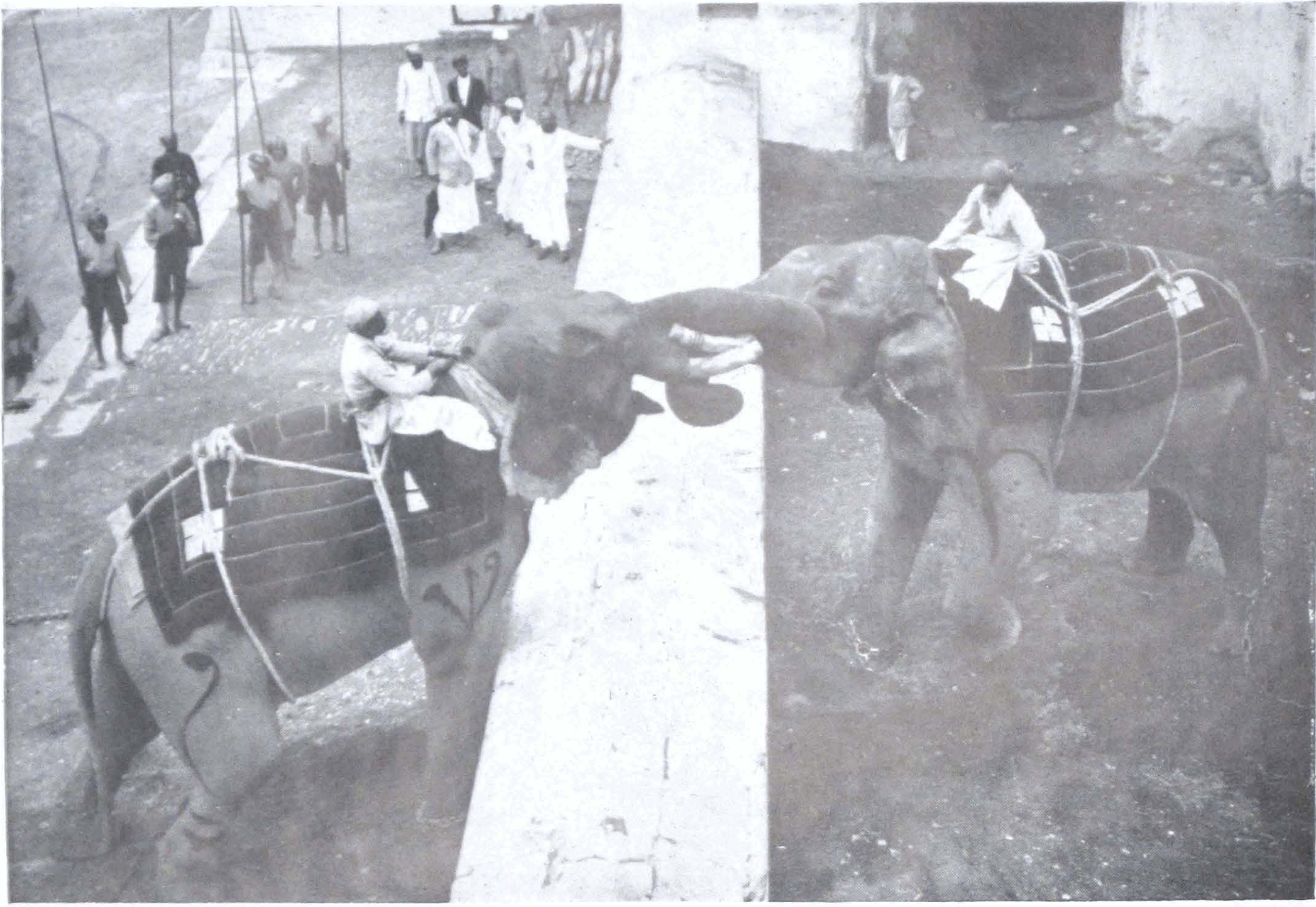
The circling years again rolled on; Hitler was well into his stride and all Europe was quaking before him. I visited Germany half a dozen times between 1933 and 1938, and on each occasion the rapidity of which we were heading towards the abyss was brought home to me.

Hitler was living in a world of resentment and vengefulness, and his scores in 1938, the crucial year, were 'really great', to use his own words. Three times the Prime Minister of Britain had appeared before him, the leading statesmen of France and Italy, in company with Chamberlain, had met to consecrate his triumph. His readiness to take risks had brought victory; there seemed to be a law of diminishing risks in his enterprises; each game won reduced future risk. One of the secrets of his power was the recognition of the weakness of his opponents and the unreality of their strength. He always seemed to me to have a monopoly in resolution and action, coupled with rapidity.

Hitler's whole outlook on European politics and his mental balance had entirely changed. He was the same old Hun that has come down through the



THE MAHARANA'S STATE BARGE GLIDES OVER THE LAKE



THE MAHARANA OF UDAIPUR ENTERTAINS HIS GUEST WITH ELEHPANT FIGHTS

centuries, he had gathered together a gang of men who were utterly unscrupulous, and none tried to end the Nazi regime when its evil character was manifest; they could have made short work of it, and they alone are to blame that this mad experiment came to its logical conclusion.

The Fuhrer had come into his own, and he said that the end justified the means; he admitted to me that he would sign anything if in Germany's interest and then break it should circumstances so demand. "Why not sign a pact if it pleased others, and they thought it got them anywhere!" Such was the Hitlerian technique.

The Nazi chief had now become one of the greatest cracksmen in history, a criminal who was to deliberately and literally crack the safe of civilization, to belch fire and slaughter on a vast scale across the entire world.

With one or two exceptions, no one in England seemed capable of seeing anything in its true light; it was the lone voice crying in the wilderness, and efforts to point out the danger were nullified by the cheerful prophecies of those in authority. Their attitude was perhaps natural, for any government which sought to prepare for a war on a big scale would soon have been compelled to pack up. Hitler knew this, and how often he referred to it! He was banking on a certainty . . . and he was desperately in earnest.

* * * * *

Nazi No. 2—Reichsmarshal Hermann Goering—I did not meet until the end of 1938, when I was in Berlin as the guest of the German Academy of Aeronautical Research. It was just after the Munich crisis when this jovial old murderer invited me out to his country estate at Karinhall, in a forest of 134,000 acres, forty-three miles from Berlin, where he lived in medieval state.

Goering's principal aide-de-camp, a major in the Nazi Army, with Dr. Paul Schmidt, called for me in Berlin and together we drove out to Karinhall. Schmidt was an enigmatic and sinister personality, Hitler's confidential interpreter, and he knew more than any other man what Hitler had said to foreign statesmen. His greatest *tour de force* was at the Munich Conference, when he was the sole interpreter to Chamberlain, Daladier, Hitler and Mussolini. Schmidt was omnipotent; whenever Hitler met Mussolini on the Brenner or elsewhere he was there; when Hitler telephoned Mussolini, Schmidt listened in. His memory was phenomenal and he always carried a little black note-book in which he recorded Hitler's off-the-record utterances. He told me he had been offered a large sum for his memoirs, yet his name scarcely ever appeared in the Nazi papers.

On the way out Schmidt gave a graphic account of his meeting with the three principal men, Chamberlain, Daladier and Mussolini, when they came to see Hitler. Of the trio, Hitler liked Chamberlain the best, and Mussolini was the only one of the four leaders who could talk to the others each in his own language. Schmidt was logical in his arguments; he said, "We ought to agree first of all on the points on which we are going to disagree, then, having cleared the ground, and satisfied ourselves as to where we can get to grips, carry on and get down to brass tacks." He admitted that German mentality was entirely

different from ours; that Germany had not the hundreds of years of tradition behind her that we had, she had no parliament, and it was "to all intents and purposes a one-man show", and, added Schmidt, "in dealing with the one man it is essential to get the right sort of negotiator". Hitler, he said, liked Chamberlain, "but couldn't stand Halifax, whose attitude, method of approach, and general demeanour only irritated the Führer". I said doubtless Halifax had his own estimation of himself, and Schmidt rejoined . . . "if we could only see ourselves as others see us".

Having animadverted on one of our people I told Schmidt they ought to get rid of one or two of theirs, as much in German interests as ours, and cited Goebbels again, who had played me a dirty trick, of which Schmidt was aware. Schmidt said Goebbels was hated in Germany, but that he had been instrumental in helping to get Hitler into power and the latter did not like to throw him overboard, as he might be more dangerous outside the camp than in it.

So, chatting away, we came to the outer wire fence that encircles Goering's hunting-box. We passed under a lych-gate, which had been swung open by the Nazi guard as the car came up. We were in a lovely forest of birch and ash and oak; four miles farther on the house suddenly appeared in a clearing, a hunting-lodge in the heart of a Prussian forest. It was feudal and ancestral, yet completely modern in its appointments, and it stood four-square round an imposing courtyard. The roof was of thatch, with a raised and thatched verandah running round the sides. The courtyard was oblong, and the main entrance was at one end up a flight of a half a dozen steps.

Here Nazi No. 2 liked to live in medieval state, surrounded by picturesque retainers in a green hunting livery, not unlike the henchmen of Robin Hood. One of them ushered us into the great hall, or rather corridor, which was about sixty feet long and twelve feet wide, running at right angles to the entrance. The finest tapestries covered the walls, relieved here and there by trophies of the chase.

Beneath one of the tapestries was a fine old refectory table that would have commanded a small fortune in a London auction. There were also some good pictures, worthy of any national gallery.

Everything in the house seemed on a large scale, even the chairs and windows, and fitted in well with their gross and ostentatious owner.

We were shown into the main reception salon, with immense windows reaching from the floor almost to the ceiling, with views on to the forest and lake. It was a noble room, fully fifty feet long by twenty-five wide and with a huge open fireplace at one end. It was, Schmidt told me, a copy of an old baronial hall, and beneath the vaulted roof running across the room were oak beams. If Goering wanted to impart an idea of grandeur he had certainly chosen the room to do it in. There were trophies on the walls as well as several fine engravings, but I noticed they were all based on uncommon subjects, such as the shooting of Telemachus, and the burning of Christians in the Roman arena.

The apartment was lit by electric hanging lamps of rare workmanship and design, whilst scattered about were chairs and divans and some exquisitely inlaid tables. I was impressed with this apartment, and, at Schmidt's request,

seated myself in one of the armchairs and wondered what would come next.

Goering was seeing off some friends when we arrived, but had ordered some sherry to be sent in, which was served in the choicest cut-glass goblets as large as a tankard. The sherry was good and it certainly created an atmosphere for an adjournment to the host's study. This was another large and massive apartment, with a writing-table facing the french windows, opening like the other room on to the forest.

Suspended on the wall behind the writing-table was a big two-handed sword. . . . It gave one the idea that here, with the windows, the beautiful view, was an air of peace and quiet, but behind the chair of the second man in the Reich was war.

Goering greeted me without formality of any kind; he was in uniform with the Order of Merit round the collar. He looked hearty, coarse; a boastful, swaggering type possessed with a sort of *folie des grandeurs* and I should say inclined to be *nouveau riche*. One could see that there were contradictions in his character, which, as I saw it at Karinhall, are best illustrated by his ruthlessness to enemies of the Reich and his extraordinary liking for animals. We seated ourselves in huge armchairs, whilst outside in the park were tame elks brought from the forests of Sweden, to whom Goering would croon and he would call to them with long mooing cries.

He knew all about me and most of the places I had been to . . . had heard of one or two of the world's records that I held in big-game shooting; he liked wild animals, he said, and had issued a decree on the most advanced lines for their protection.

This typical Boche was very wealthy, and able to indulge his expensive tastes without limit, mostly stolen from the docile German people and their land. As he sat at his desk and discoursed on various topics he appeared to me to be the largest man I had seen, broad-shouldered, powerful, with that jovial and almost boyish face. He was, indeed, the jovial old murderer and looked the part, but with a peculiarly attractive manner and smile.

It is interesting to recall his convictions about Russia in those just-after-Munich days. "Russia?" he said to me. "Why, she isn't at all ready for war and doesn't come into the picture . . . we've nothing to fear from Russia." He seemed so certain that the Soviet had no sort of organization or planning even remotely capable of standing up to the German Reich.

Throughout my stay at Karinhall, the tone and air of the man was insincere; he was trying to throw dust in the eyes of the guest, and spoke of peace in his heart for all the world, following it up by the remark that he had three concentric rings of aircraft defence round Berlin. "Nothing can get through that," he said, "nothing"—with a dramatic wave of a large, fat hand . . . and he believed what he said. The Berliners believed him, too, until the Royal Air Force appeared.

"Well, Marshal, that remains to be seen," I rejoined.

He spoke of peace in his heart, for all the world, and as he did so I thought of that strange hum of activity going up from the 3,000 rooms in the Hun Air Ministry, and of one of his understudies—Udet—teaching the *Luftwaffe* the art of dive-bombing! What, too, was the need for that hidden swarm

of thousands of aeroplanes, whose numbers not anyone in Britain credited when I returned? How cleverly these Huns concealed the thousands of tanks being prepared in the factories that were working twenty-four hours per day since Hitler came into power. I thought of all these things, and ventured to ask Goering from whom he expected attack! He avoided the issue . . . like ministers do in the House of Commons.

Later on during my visit he sounded me as to the possibility of a visit to London, and I said I would ascertain the reactions in influential circles, although I had no doubt in my own mind what the general opinion would be.

On my return to London I mentioned it to Mr. Neville Chamberlain, and others who counted, as well as to H.M. Queen Mary in a long conversation I had with her on this and other topics. The letter I subsequently wrote to Goering was not encouraging! Somehow I felt that, apart from myself, none of my friends, nor the British public in general, would be thrilled to see him.

I ought to mention Goering's bathroom, for a bathroom reflects, to some extent, the mentality of its owner. With its pictures of nude women in various postures, together with mirrors and fitments in keeping with a *maison publique française*, but not with that of the residence of the second man in the German Reich, it was in line with this mixture of a man of ruthless action, this upstart and gangster, this plausible, lying scoundrel whom no one could ever trust.

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As I have said, I was the guest, on this last visit, of the Academy of Aeronautical Research, of which Goering was the president, Milch the vice-president, and Udet, who taught the Germans the art of dive-bombing, was one of the committee.

I had just completed a flying tour of Germany and on return to Berlin lunched at the Haus der Flieger (Aero Club), which was the largest and best appointed flying club in the world—with its President Gronau, and Herr Krogmann the Secretary-General, both war pilots. Our conversation was packed with exciting incident, and when alone in my rooms at the Adlon once more I sat musing over the great crises of history, and the parts these men and others had played in them.

I thought of the drama of choosing which path to take—a problem which confronts the boldest of the human race once at least in a lifetime—one road leading to renown and prosperity; the other to irreparable ruin. How the mighty had fallen, and the mightier had risen over them. The higher one rises, the farther one has to fall, I was thinking to myself, when the telephone rang . . . would I dine with the ex-Crown Prince at Potsdam on the following evening?

I had been his guest on several previous occasions, and recalling the interesting conversations we had enjoyed, and the intimate revelations he had made on numerous historical incidents, I readily accepted.

As usual, the ex-Crown Prince sent his car for me—and what a car! A long, low Daimler-Benz with the grace of a serpent. We glided out on the *autobahn*, and with uncanny acceleration simply shot forward, but so smoothly that the high speed of travel was not apparent. The kilometre posts swept past just

like the telegraph posts when one looks out of the window from the Flying Scotsman.

Almost with the magical speed of a film tour, Potsdam was reached . . . Potsdam, the Windsor of Germany. What preludes to Prussia, what Hohenzollern vistas are opened up by the name Potsdam!

We were sweeping up the drive to the country house where the ex-Crown Prince lived and which are now the headquarters of the Soviet Commander Zhukov. A lovely place. The ex-Crown Prince had planned and built it on English lines in 1910. A garden framed by tall trees surrounded the house and the drive led up to a covered entrance, which opened into a spacious hall. The whole atmosphere was distinguished, exuding quiet baronial comfort. I remember the first time I had been there the owner told me how his father, the Kaiser, envied the house, and had said, "This house should be mine." But the son replied, "I'm sorry, Father, it's mine!"

My host greeted me with his customary smiling cordiality. A courteous man, with a kindly manner which puts his visitors at ease. Tall, with military erectness, and that alertness that one immediately becomes conscious of in quick-minded people. Conversation could never lag with him; he is a good talker, and, what is unusual, an equally good listener. His house provides just the right background for his personality, and invites repose and quiet thought.

We always dined in a long low room, with beautiful panelling and an old English fireplace, the small round dining-table reflecting the shaded lights in its polished surface. We were waited on by a German manservant; the dinner was simple, but excellent, with champagne and the best Rhine wine. The ex-Crown Prince takes very little himself and is likewise a sparing eater.

I shall ever remember that last dinner; we sat down at 7.35 p.m. and rose from the table at 1.40 a.m. Never have I enjoyed a talk more, for it covered the widest possible range of subjects.

The ex-Crown Prince was chatting away informally and amusing me with his vivid cameos of world personalities.

He told me Hitler had been dining at this same table a few days before; "He has done good work for Germany, but he neither drinks nor smokes and has no range of topics . . . and he doesn't like women . . . what can you do with a fellow like that?"

For some reason or other he was referring to the Kaiser, and telling me how he wanted to become a colonel of a Highland aegiment. How this fantastic idea ever began I can't say, but a German colonel of a Scottish regiment struck me as being really funny, and I tried to imagine what a German tartan might look like, and if a new clan could be originated—MacSchmidt, perhaps!

A great deal of our conversation revolved around the Kaiser, who was a many-sided man. His pomposity had sometimes to be deflated, and Queen Victoria was always very successful in doing this with infinite grace.

On one occasion the Kaiser observed King George V and the Czar chatting together in a corner of the room in Berlin, and his curiosity about the subject of their conversation knew no bounds. "What are they talking about?" he kept muttering. "I wonder what they're up to?" He never found out!

My host told me how his father simply hated to be left alone with King

Edward. "He's bound to tackle me on some vital matter, and go for me," he said. This was at the time when King Edward visited the Kaiser in Berlin, and just before His Majesty's arrival, the Kaiser had said to his son, "Now remember you and the boys are not to leave us alone together under any circumstances." It so happened that the Crown Prince did leave his father with the King, without thinking, and no sooner had he left the room than the Kaiser dashed out into the corridor, shouting: "Come back, come back! How dare you go away and leave me in there!"

The ex-Crown Prince has several sons and daughters, and they are a happy family. He is a good golfer, and also cross-country rider, and lives the life of an English squire.

His chief interest centred round his estates in Silesia, but his knowledge of world affairs is wide, and although he takes no part in politics, is a keen observer of all that goes on, everywhere.

As dinner proceeded, the conversation, which had opened in a light, bantering way, turned to serious matters, and I asked him about Germany's leadership, and of Hitler. "Hitler," he said, "was here ten days ago. He is an idealist, but as a guest he is difficult.

"Tension was high in Germany during the crisis; the position was far more intense than either England or France realized. None wanted war here; not a soul, and the possibility of war with England was repulsive, especially to me." He appeared to speak with sincerity, and his voice was sad. "The one desire of all is to live at peace with France and Great Britain."

I recalled a previous conversation I had had with him at the same dining-table, when he had said: "The best alliance would be between Germany, France and Great Britain." "Yes," he rejoined, "what a combination, and what a power for peace the world over. Perhaps it may still come about. Let us hope so."

Then he referred to the Munich crisis, saying: "We thought nothing was so fine as the way Chamberlain saved the situation by cutting through the red tape and difficulties of diplomatic procedure. He certainly did the right thing." He was lost in thought for a moment, and then turned to the menace of war. "Armies," he said, "will be highly mechanized and destructive: in fact, the catastrophe of hostilities will be so appalling that everything should be done to avoid war breaking out. I am only too willing to play a part in the task of prevention."

We discussed the Far East and how Japan had gripped the Chinese mainland. "Long ago, my father said, 'Look out for Japan. It is rising up in the East.' How right he was, although at the time none paid much attention to the position. My fear is that Japan and Russia may be drawn into conflict over vital differences. That would be serious for America, and even Britain might find herself drawn in."

The ex-Crown Prince is deeply interested in farming and an expert on agricultural matters. He spoke with enthusiasm of the new Youth Movement in Germany, which had awakened interest in the land. He spoke, too, of how important physical culture, is, and how Germany was concentrating on the task of building up a healthy, patriotic and vigorous people. Germany was settling down to prosperity, working day and night towards unification, whilst

France was upset by continual strikes and internal discord. The picture he drew of Europe, in a few vivid words, embracing each country, was masterly. His vision was prophetic, and all he visualized has come to pass.

In the light of after events, what he said that night on the immediate future was singularly prophetic. I asked him as to the possibility of another war and the form it would take. "As I see it," he said, "the next one will be largely in the air, and air power is going to be a decisive factor. At sea naval fights will be mostly under the water; submarines will go all out; they will be of long range and power and will carry their attacks into harbours and places where mines ought to stop them . . . but won't!" How right he was in these prognostications.

"What about the armies, then?" I said.

"Armies will, as I say, be highly mechanized and terribly destructive; tanks are going to be everything."

Was he thinking of the German tanks then in course of preparation in their thousands, or didn't he know anything about it? I wonder!

He described Britain drawing her Empire closer and standing on guard, and America looking out 'two ways', one, across the Atlantic, with its new storms and old friendships; the other, across an ocean no longer pacific.

"In the New Europe," he said, "aircraft will be the master. A mechanized era lies before us, moving at ever-increasing speed, and even our food will be more highly organized and distributed, and will, to some extent, be concentrated in tabloid form. The security of the world will largely depend on one factor: whether Germany and Great Britain can come together. If they pull too far apart, civilization must bear a great strain." Looking back on his words, I found the conversation of historic importance. "The real danger looms in the Far East. There you have low wages, minimum rates of living, and tremendous competition, which must react on Europe. Eastern competition will be an increasing factor which should help all Europe to work closer together."

We talked of India and tiger-shooting, for he had visited India and stayed with the First Royal Dragoons at Muttra, of which regiment the Kaiser was Colonel-in-Chief. "I have never had a better time than I did with those fellows," he said. "According to the official programme I was only supposed to stay four days . . . but I was there fourteen."

In Lucknow he was due to attend a garden party given by the principal chiefs and leaders of Oudh, but had an assignation with a Burmese lady elsewhere . . . of which he told me the story.

"The Kaiser had a dream," I said, "like the great Napoleon, of an empire in the East." . . . I was thinking of the conquest of India that the Germans had planned in the last war. "Was this so?" I asked—rather a forthright question. My host admitted there was a certain amount of truth in it. There was quite a lot, as I knew, having been behind the scenes in India.

It was in 1918 that the Germans, released from the struggle with Russia by the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, seriously considered the idea of an attack by a Turko-German army on India. The Germans had begun to prepare for it early in the war, and were as thorough—and as short-sighted—as usual. The German system of propaganda was characterized by forethought and detailed

preparation, and in furtherance of their designs on India they received in Berlin in 1915 some notorious Indian revolutionaries.

Copies of an autograph letter addressed by the Kaiser and his chancellor to the ruling princes of India came into our hands, and showed not only the amazing optimism of the Germans, but the steps they had taken to set up a German government in India, which was to be inaugurated, if not by the Kaiser himself, at any rate by the ex-Crown Prince.

The Germans were going to take as their slogan 'Asia for the Asiatics', and it was here that the Kaiser went astray. The Germans took up Pan-Islamism as a means to destroy British power in India; they ignored the fact that the Pan-Islamic cry would in the end drive the three hundred and forty million Hindus into the arms of the British Empire again.

The ex-Crown Prince, after a long discussion on the topic of India, retaliated on me by saying, "Why do you think my father was unpopular with your people, *vis-à-vis* Uncle Bertie." (King Edward VII). I said we thought he was sometimes impetuous and said and did the wrong thing. "Yes, I know he did, but I'd love to hear some instances from you." Thus emboldened, I gave the story of Sir Thomas Lipton when he was at Kiel during the regatta on his yacht the *Erin*. In view of the tea king's friendship with King Edward and his sterling qualities, it had, apparently, been hinted that the Kaiser should invite Lipton to lunch on board the *Hohenzollern*. "No," said the Emperor, in the hearing of some of the British entourage, "I'm not going to sit at table with my grocer."

I told him one or two other things of a similiar nature that had irritated the British public and their King, both of whom had a great admiration for ability and merit, no matter what the individual's standing in life might be. "Yes, I quite agree," said the ex-Crown Prince, "but, unfortunately, I could never do anything about it!" He sighed. During coffee and liqueurs, we left the fate of Europe to look after itself, and chatted of lighter things. Once more his wit tickled me. His smile was infectious, and his sallies at all sorts and conditions of people were sharply pointed, without being unkindly.

He said how burdensome was the job of kings and princes. How one had to harden oneself to being a public figure without any private life save in one's own home. "And at dinners and shows one has to dance with the most ghastly women," he said, shuddering slightly. "Oh, this king business is a self-sacrificing job, believe me."

I did believe, and inwardly sympathized with, him.

* * * * *

From Lutheran Germany we now jump poles and also popes apart to Catholic Italy,

The power of the Pope is great, and the fight to win the leadership of Christendom figured largely in medieval history. There have been two hundred and fifty-eight Popes of Rome, beginning with St. Peter in the first century of our era. Only one Englishman has ever been Pope—Adrian IV in 1154.

At various times and places I have met remarkable men, and now I was to see the head of three hundred and twenty-four million Catholics.

Pope Pius XI, a mountaineer of credit and renown, a man of vision and peculiar charm, knew about the flight over the world's highest mountain and expressed a wish to hear the story of it at first hand. The Italians also invited me to lecture, and so I went to Rome.

They say that all roads lead to Rome; you can go there on foot, but it is a long and tiring path, not even straight like the road to salvation. I flew there from Vienna and Budapest, and did in two or three hours what the pilgrim of the Middle Ages took months to accomplish.

His Holiness asked that I would come to the Vatican at ten-thirty on Palm Sunday, and so on that day I went there, the largest private city on earth, to enjoy this rare distinction of a special private audience.

Pius XI was a simple man, of great ability, and he probably cared little what clothes you wore so long as it was a 'comfy' kit, but time-honoured ritual is all-important to the permanent staff. Instead of the usual morning dress I was to go in evening dress with a black waistcoat, but as I had only a white one this rule was readily waived.

I drove to the Vatican alongside the great square of St. Peter's, whence I headed for the private apartments of the Pope. A dozen barriers had to be passed, of Swiss Guards, reputed to be the world's oldest regiment, of black-coated attendants, of halberdiers with pikes of the fifteenth century, of attendants in red and gold, of papal guards, and gendarmes. In succession they examined my letter from the Pope's private cabinet, and wafted me obsequiously on, a peculiar gift that is essential to their particular calling. One or two of the more exalted looked me up and down after the manner of a levee at St. James' Palace.

Once inside, I ascended by long flights of stairs to a series of galleries from which doors opened on to innumerable apartments. Along these galleries I went with my guide, who was evidently a person in authority, ascending more stairs, until we reached a reception-room which gave promise of a near approach to the Pontiff.

The steps on the Vatican stairways must run into thousands, the corridors seem endless, some of them with artificial light, others with windows high up. So far we had walked, but now we entered a lift and shot skywards for three or four floors, where two other gorgeously dressed equerries took me in hand. From the lift we went along another lofty gallery, to enter a state-room hung with priceless tapestries, the floor covered with a heavy pile red carpet.

There was a chamberlain in the room, dressed in early Georgian costume; my other attendants faded out, and he beckoned me to follow, for the etiquette of the Vatican demands that conversation shall be carried on only in a whisper the nearer you approach the papal apartments. I thought that by now I must be comparatively close to the presence, but nine more state-rooms, each with its magnificent tapestries, its soft carpets, and beautifully embroidered window-curtains, had to be traversed before I gained an inner sanctum. It may be a long, long way to Tipperary, but it struck me as being no mean distance to the papal presence.

Here yet another chamberlain took me over. He was clothed in scarlet robes with a long gown, and flitted, rather than walked, across the room. He asked me to wait a moment, and with the flitting movement, of which he was a

past-master, floated silently like a ghost cross the adjoining stateroom and through a heavy double door beyond.

In a moment or two he returned and with a low bow and gracious beckoning signalled for me to cross the intervening chamber to the door . . . which he slowly opened. Immediately in front of me was a fretwork screen of rare workmanship, and to the side of this the chamberlain edged and made a profound obeisance. I came behind him, made my bow, and there before me, standing at a large gold and marble writing-table, dressed in cream-coloured silks, with a cross and rosary, and a small white cream-coloured cap on his head, stood Pope Pius XI, the Supreme Pontiff and leader of those three hundred millions of Catholics.

He greeted me with singular charm, like someone meeting an old friend, asked me to be seated, and then opened the conversation. He led off in English, fluted easily into French and then into Italian, his own limpid and musical language.

Now the room we were in was quite forty-five feet long and twenty-five feet wide, with some pictures by old masters on the walls, and gilt and embroidered furniture dotted about the room. One side looked out through large windows on to the Vatican gardens below.

There were a number of exquisitely bound volumes on the writing-table, testifying to his sincere passion for literature, in which he gained a reputation.

Pius XI was a thick-set man, slightly below middle height, and he looked at me steadily with clear, penetrating eyes which had a decided sense of liveliness and humour. His face was expressive, and he entered into a discussion of things with a quiet emphasis, with every now and again a slight movement of the hand on the table, and a vocal gesture, as if quite confidently he were about to produce the ace of trumps. There was a cosmopolitan air about him, a real man of the world, and yet not of the world as we know it from its everyday aspect and its unconventialities, for he must, perforce, live in, and be encompassed by, all the pomp and state and strict ritual that dominate the life of the Pope of Rome.

Judging him purely from the human standpoint, and my own experiences all over the universe, it was impossible not to feel that here was a man to whom one would instinctively like to come and pour out one's troubles, for his outlook was that of one who had known the strenuous life, but had now taken a definite position among the influences of his time.

He was a great mountaineer, had ascended many of the formidable peaks of the Swiss and Italian Alps, and was noted for his knowledge of climbing craft which it takes years of practice and concentration to acquire. He was much interested in the problem of reaching the summit of Everest and had devoted considerable study to it.

"I followed your Everest flight with the greatest interest," he said, "because for me it had a singular fascination, the fascination of mountains and great height. What was the altitude at which the aeroplanes passed over Everest?" I said it was probably one or two hundred feet, striking a balance between the estimates of the pilots and observer, but that it was difficult for them to gauge it accurately when moving at such high speed, and in a maelstrom of currents and draughts that pulled the leading machine down about sixteen hundred feet in

four seconds. "How thrilling," he remarked, and his thoughts seemed to travel back to those halcyon mountaineering days when he tackled the highest peaks in Europe.

"What is the view like up there; I take it the vista must have been almost illimitable and very wonderful, eh?"

"Yes," I said, "the scene was superb and beyond description, masses of peaks and glaciers extending north, south and east."

"It's a great country for climbing in . . . but terribly difficult," continued the Pontiff thoughtfully. "I've always followed the fortunes of the climbers and realize the tremendous obstacles they have to contend with. I think they will get there in the end.

"I have a piece of rock that the expedition of 1924 sent me from Tibet. After immense physical exertions, in which they fought against wind and weather, they came fairly close to the summit, and brought back this piece of rock which I treasure as a souvenir of a gallant effort" . . . and the Pope regarded the rock lovingly as one might a pearl beyond price.

"What does Your Holiness think of mountains and their relation to mankind?" I asked.

His face lighted up, and with a gesture of delight, he replied: "I love the mountains and the mountain air; to me they are the epitome of all that is beautiful, for they are so inspiring and breathe the spirit of delicacy and grandeur. I know nothing better than a holiday in the mountains. Up amongst the peaks you are in a world of your own that sparkles like an icicle. High mountains act on a man's spirit and draw out the best that is in him."

The Pope paused . . . he was warming to his favourite subject: "Then, too, the mountain air is a cure in itself. I attribute my own good health, and my long life—I am now seventy-eight—to the influence of the mountains and their life-giving air."

When it came to talking about himself he was reserved, like all really great men, but with mountaineering he slid, as it were, into top gear and treated me to a learned disquisition on climbing.

On one of his Alpine trips he told me a guide fell into a crevasse. This is a nasty moment, as I know, and people are apt to lose their heads. Not so the Pope. His presence of mind, skill in throwing the rope, and physical strength brought the guide back from death.

We talked of aeroplanes and aviation, for I wanted to get his views on the great way of the future. "I'm certain aviation has a tremendous future. I've always thought so, and well remember seeing Farman. He was then making his first attempt; I saw we were on the edge of a new world . . . the possibilities of which no man can gauge. That initial flight of Farman was a wonderful thing . . . just think of it! He flew only a few yards from the ground . . . but the problem was solved. From that moment I saw the way the world was going, in so far as flying is concerned." In saying this I felt he had been a partner in shaping great destinies.

"We live in an expanding universe . . . the world goes on to greater things and we are trying hard to reap the benefits of science. There is good in this, for it is all to the benefit of civilization. Although I've never flown myself, I am, as you see, a believer in aviation, because, before long, it will take the

leading place as the means of getting about." His intuition and prophecies continued.

"The one difficulty, as I see it, and I speak merely as a layman and without technical knowledge, is to land in a confined space. Everywhere it is becoming very crowded and you want a fairly wide area to bring your machine to ground."

I said that air travel would be safer than the comparatively peaceful transit of a busy street in Rome or London . . . whereat he smiled broadly. Perhaps he was thinking of the humorous side of a Pope indulging in such a commonplace act as dodging the traffic to cross a street.

"Yes," he said decisively, "the job now is to land where you will, to come quietly and safely to ground in a small space. As soon as they can do that I should like to see an airport in the Vatican."

The idea of an aerodrome in the Vatican, the vast and almost forbidden city of the Popes, was startling and original. I wondered how this would appeal to the more conservative and less expansive minded of the Catholic world! Would they accept it as a divine decree, or protest against such an idea! Perhaps he saw what was passing in my mind, for he remarked, "There's no denying aviation will have an immense future."

The Pope was a progressive and meant to move with the times. He had put in lifts and a telephone system in the Vatican City, Marconi had himself installed a broadcasting outfit, and for the first time for generations a Pope had left his prison for a beautiful villa on Lake Albano. He was keen on ultra-modern utility and said, for instance, that through aviation we could carry out photographic and metallurgical surveys of the heart of Australia, of the Andes and unknown parts of South America. I felt that he would like to be with the people who did it.

We talked on of various things, of England, of his days at Oxford, and divers other matters. Then he got up, remarking with a jolly smile, "I have two cardinals waiting to see me . . . and I expect they're getting anxious.

"And now," he said, "I want to give you a little souvenir of our meeting. This medallion is one I have had struck of the Holy Gate which I am closing next Sunday (Easter Day), and I should like you to take it as a memento of our talk." It was all done with such gentleness and sincerity that I was deeply moved.

I went out into the gorgeous ante-chamber, along the corridors and down the stairways, through the ranks of Swiss and Papal Guards. Outside in the great square of St. Peter's the people were pouring in; a motor-coach full of trippers from the country was having the external wonders of the Vatican explained by a raucous guide. I looked back at the immense pile, with its courtyard in which you could drill a brigade. I thought of the barriers, guards and servitors innumerable that had separated me from the simple, kindly man who understood the other fellow's point of view and was clearly out to help. I stepped into my car and went away wondering.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Aerial conquest of the world's highest mountain—I visit the hermit kingdom of Nepal—The owner of Mount Everest—His people and palace—The god's armchair—A £70,000 hat—A wonder shooting camp—An amazing coincidence—The surprising city of Udaipur—A fight between a tiger and a wild boar.

WHEN Colonel L. V. S. Blacker, a war-time friend and comrade, first approached me in January 1932 with the idea of flying over Mount Everest the word 'difficult' kept jumping out with discouraging frequency.

It was a new kind of adventure, as well as a new kind of aviation, that I confess I was rather taken aback. Having spent sixteen years in and near the Himalayas I knew the inaccessibility of Everest and its holy character in Hindu and Buddhist eyes. The people hold Mount Everest sacred; great to them is the significance of the mountain's proximity to the skies—the point where earth 'rises nighest Heaven'. Religious opposition is usually formidable, but ancient custom and belief that go back to time immemorial might be impossible to overcome.

It was a great problem . . . but the spirit of adventure led us on. I had been up and down and round the world, but this was something far beyond the ordinary. Looking round, there were few, if any, strongholds of Nature which had not already been tackled and conquered. What was there left to do? What sovereign secrets of science and geography had Nature reserved in the golden currency of adventure? What was there left for us to try?

There was one secret that still rested safely stowed away in the cold storage of centuries of ice and snow. There remained only one unconquered geographical objective on which to prove the efficiency and worth of British aircraft in the world of aviation—Mount Everest.

But another problem then arose—to get permission from the Maharajah of Nepal, who owns Mount Everest, to fly over the mountain; he would be guided in a decision by the ideas prevailing among his people, and they held Everest as sacred and inviolable.

Gradually, one by one, the obstacles were overcome. We formed a small but influential committee which would provide the key that opens doors usually firmly closed. The late Earl Peel, twice Secretary of State for India, was the chairman, with several others of world-wide repute. Lord Willingdon, Viceroy of India, was a tower of strength . . . the India Office, the Air Ministry . . . all gave us their blessing. Then came the permission of the Maharajah of Nepal to fly over the mountain, it being governed by two conditions: the aircraft were to fly direct to Everest and back, without any deviation or landing on Nepalese territory. Secondly, the machines were to fly as high as possible over Nepal. These conditions took account of the religious susceptibilities of the people, for by flying at a great height and going and returning by the same route, very few people would see us. This, in the event, is what happened.

Our preparations proceeded apace and the full story of the expedition has been told elsewhere, but here I relate some of the things that do not appear in that book.

Hard at work in our office, Blacker and I grappled with the mass of detail facing us from day to day, January to November, when Air-Commodore Fellowes joined us, with his technical and scientific knowledge. Actually it was fourteen months of preparation, planning, devising, computing . . . leaving nothing to chance . . . trying to foresee the obstacles and snags we might be up against . . . determined that, so far as human ingenuity, energy, labour, and drive could do it, we would make this expedition a success . . . and confound the many pessimists who looked upon us as 'crazy'. How well it all panned out was summarized by the Secretary of State for India, who, at a luncheon given by *The Times*, at which the present King, then Duke of York, and five Cabinet ministers were present, characterized it as 'a triumph of organization'.

What of the men who went on the great adventure?

Blacker was the star turn, with the spirit and outlook of the old adventurers. He always wears a monocle and feels undressed without it; at Sandhurst, when he was a cadet, the monocle had already started its career and was not at that time regarded too favourably by the brass hats. But Blacker went his way; he stuck to his guns and his monocle.

Then there was Lord Clydesdale, now the Duke of Hamilton, the most air-minded of the younger generation, and one of the people who spent available spare time in the sky.

Flight-Lieut. D. F. McIntyre was the second pilot; a man who at the medical examination held his breath for one hundred and twenty seconds. Try it, my friends, and see if you can emulate that! Air-Commodore Fellowes I have already spoken of.

We were faced with the problem of raising the requisite finance to pay for the expedition, so made out a list of six of the richest men in Britain, and tapped them, one by one. Nothing happened . . . and it was then recommended we should try Lady Houston who favoured aviation.

It was at first suggested that I should go up and see the lady, but the obvious man for the job was Clydesdale, with his charm of manner and attractive qualities. I had no experience of women; at least, not in that way, never having had to get money out of them . . . it had always been the other way round; and so Clydesdale went north to Scotland and succeeded in getting Lady Houston to put up £10,000. She was apprehensive of the danger, but Clydesdale assured her that it was no more dangerous than walking across Hampstead Heath on a foggy night. Later she advanced a further £5,000, on condition that it should be refunded after the flight, and this we did. Incidentally, the total cost of the expedition, from start to finish, was £19,634, partly due to generous terms accorded us by some of the firms we did business with.

Concurrently with our preparations we were approached by firms and stores who wished us to take their various products as an advertisement; we were bombarded with clothing, boots, patent medicines, pens, foods of every sort and description, camp furniture, lamps, everything that would have stocked a general store.

There is one of these many offers that I look back to with regret, made by a Scottish distillery firm! They wished to present the expedition with eight large cases of whisky; rightly or wrongly, I referred the offer to the chairman, who, personally, decided against it, "for," he said, "it might get round that this is a boozing expedition, and that you are all filled with the wrong kind of spirit for flying at great heights." So it faded away. I have often wished they would make the offer retrospective!

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At last, all being ready, we left for our base at Purnea in India, three hundred miles north of Calcutta.

In response to an invitation from the Maharajah of Nepal I went up to his capital at Khatmandu to meet this enlightened ruler who is sympathetic to scientific endeavour. Maharajah Sir Joodha Shum Shere Jung Bahadur Rana, Prime Minister and Supreme Commander-in-Chief of Nepal, is a great hunter, and just prior to my visit had been down in the jungles and shot thirty-one tigers! *

When King George V came to India in 1911 he shot with the Maharajah, and a special shooting-box, having exquisitely furnished rooms within and lawns and rose trees without, was built, and, still more remarkable to relate, is to this day maintained in perfect preservation as a 'tribute to a great and charming personality and a mighty hunter'.

When it was decided to what station the royal train should come on the borders of Nepal, the Maharajah had a road, thirty-two miles long, cut straight through the jungle to the shooting camp. Let there be a road . . . and there was a road. Six hundred and thirty-four elephants were employed on the shoot, and, said the Maharajah, "of the thirty-nine tigers bagged, twenty-one fell to the King's rifle".

Nepal and its ruler were a revelation to me; we know little enough about this friendly kingdom which in the First World War contributed two hundred thousand fighting men to the British armies and surpassed its own efforts in the second one. The Maharajah is a charming host, a dignified but unostentatious figure, who has a sense of humour and lives in a palace furnished by Maple's of Tottenham Court Road.

The Maharajah is a noble figure when in gala or any other uniform, and the outstanding feature is his head-dress, reputed to be the most valuable in the world, and insured in London for seventy thousand pounds. It is covered with diamonds, rubies, and pearls . . . a hat worth lifting.

Having settled the many details connected with the flight I rejoined our base camp at Purnea, staying *en route* four days at Delhi as the guest of the Viceroy and Lady Willingdon. I was allotted the Curzon suite; entertainment was on the grand scale under the masterly supervision of Lady Willingdon, and one night there was a dinner-party at which fifty-four maharajahs sat down. It was more like a peep into the Arabian Nights than a twentieth-century dinner. Afterwards we ascended to one of the drawing-rooms. I walked up the stairs with the Maharajah of Alwar, an abnormal character, who might have made a

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* The Maharajah has recently resigned and gone into spiritual retirement (1946).

good ruler, but missed the mark and died discredited in a Paris hotel. He was deposed by the Government for misrule, and had a penchant for doing extraordinary things. In a tiger shoot he delighted in giving the most dangerous butt to the most timid guest, and he once poured petrol over an offending polo pony, which was then set alight.

The late Maharajah of Patiala was also at the dinner, scintillating with diamonds, ear-rings and necklaces; indeed, when talking to him I was quite dazzled with the display he put up. He invited me to Patiala, where his palace is a dream of Eastern architecture; there are about five hundred horses in his stables, and he has more than a dozen different dining-rooms, all beautifully furnished, for each of the type of guest in nationality and religion he may be entertaining.

An outstanding figure that night was the Maharajah of Nawanagar, the famous 'Ranji', who joined our committee as it was deemed desirable to have a Hindu prince of standing to allay the disquietude and mistrust that had arisen amongst orthodox Hindus throughout India . . . and thereby ensued a strange sequel. The moment 'Ranji' came on the ferment abated, the gods would not be angry, the sacred and inviolable mountain would be safe in his keeping . . . the abode of gods where trespassers would be instantly prosecuted. In the minds of the local people there was also the legend of a golden temple, a sort of Valhalla of the reigning gods, situated upon the summit of Everest.

Destiny now played a hand. Everest was flown over for the first time on the morning of April 3rd, and 'Ranji' died on the night of April 2nd!

Still another strange happening!

Some time after we left India an earthquake occurred round the scene of our exploits, the people attributing it to the wrath of the gods affronted by the aeroplanes flying over Everest, disturbing their dignity and privacy. They had now exacted vengeance. It was also declared that Everest was one thousand feet higher than it was before the earthquake, having been lifted by the gods for their future protection. A curious fact caused amazement throughout the countryside; in spite of the damage done in Nepal not a single one of the three thousand temples in the state was destroyed, or even cracked. "The gods spared them," it was said.

We are apt to smile at this belief in the mountain gods, yet make our own peace with less formidable 'spirits' in black cats, dates, and charms. Why do so many appease a little god that is supposed to bring them luck? Perhaps it is easier to believe in the might of the Himalayan gods than those in the horseshoe over the door. At any rate, the Everest gods were not vague or slow in showing their displeasure.

It was just after we had received permission for the flight from the Maharajah of Nepal that the Dalai Lama of Tibet introduced himself into the negotiations. He wrote to the Government of India that he had heard two giant birds were about to fly over Everest, the Goddess Mother of the Snows; that he and his people viewed the idea with disquietude, and what were we going to do about it?

The Dalai Lama, vice-regent of the Buddha on earth, the 'Sea of Wisdom', is supreme in all things and a non-stop ruler who never dies, for his spirit passes into that of his successor the moment he leaves this earth. The Dalai

Lama is the head of the Buddhist priesthood, a pontiff wielding supreme power; his rule dates from the eighth century and his palace is a vast and imposing building of hundreds of rooms and halls in Lhasa, the capital of Tibet.

To set the Dalai Lama's fears at rest we replied that nothing was further from our thoughts than to disturb the heavenly bodies, and that the gods might rest in peace—which they did. When all was said and done I think that though the flight was viewed with mixed feelings of distrust and alarm, the local people were secretly impressed by our daring to try conclusions with the gods and that British stock rose sharply in consequence.

In much the same way that the aircraft and equipment had been tested, so the personnel were to be put through an examination to reveal any unsuspected weaknesses which might betray them when flying at great heights.

The most spectacular of these tests took place in a large sealed chamber at Farnborough. In its appearance the setting was something between a waking nightmare and an experiment in a new world of literature. It was in a sense dynamically static.

I can assure those who have journeyed to the hushed consulting-rooms of Harley Street, or even to the happier haunts of the family doctor, in order to have their organs tested—readers who have held their breath or tried to hold the beating of their hearts—that they still know nothing of the true heights and depths of an overhaul. All such affairs are like trying to go to sleep in a comfortable bed compared to swinging in a hammock below decks in a rough sea.

Realism can be studied to effect when undergoing the full force of a Farnborough high-altitude test. It was to take place at eight o'clock in the morning, not a particularly inviting time, especially as it was a December morning with a cold, raw fog. We were asked to enter a large chamber made of steel and extra-lined for safety. There was a huge Martian door, but the windows were tiny and like the square portholes of a modern liner. Time counted for nothing here; this was the waiting-room of space.

Directly we entered this weird chamber we began to feel like beings from another world. The shining instruments, the uncanny hum of machinery, the oxygen pipes and masks helped the illusion. We were about to be taken to a height of 37,000 feet without leaving the ground, which sounds rather Irish. In other words, the conditions at that height, and more if necessary, were to be reproduced in the chamber exactly as they would be at the heights given . . . and we should see how we liked it and how our anatomy would react to these novel conditions.

When the machinery was turned on we had the sensation of going up into the air, yet we knew that we were on the earth, for faces peered in at us from outside the portholes, hushed and expectant, wondering what was going to happen.

We were conscious patients in the operating theatre, living organisms in the sealed test tube of science. All our actions and reactions were going to be the object of the most careful scrutiny and analysis, and everything we did would be taken down in evidence against us. The two doctors were going to take us to a height seven thousand times taller than the average man, and watch the results.

The engines started with a low hum of reproachful surprise. Then things

began to happen. In front of us was a huge altimeter, which, starting at sea level, started to work. We sat on ordinary wooden chairs and each of us had a table with paper and pencil at his side. The reason for this will presently be seen.

In this electric chamber the conditions governing the ascent with all their variations would be reproduced, although in actual fact we should not leave the ground. The eye alone would find things normal, while every other organ would be experiencing much the same sensations as would come to us high above the Himalayas. The strain on the human anatomy could be almost exactly matched, and we should be observed very closely to see what reactions occurred.

The doctors started to explain what we should feel like at various heights; nothing would happen until we had risen about 20,000 feet, but at 23,000 we might feel queer inside! At 30,000 feet our brain and mind would begin to turn round; at 37,000 inertia would set in, with possibly even worse things. We were not to consider this as rather a good game but as a serious and momentous undertaking.

The actual danger at high altitudes, apart from the risk of sudden bleeding and the bursting of a blood-vessel, is that the body becomes limp and lethargic for want of sufficient oxygen, causing the brain to falter and no longer register. A man is then in the position of a child who reasons neither quickly nor clearly, nor can act on its thoughts when it has got them.

Without a sufficiency of oxygen you have an overwhelming desire to do nothing. Your one desire is to sit down and be left alone without any worries. The exertion of doing anything at all becomes extraordinary, and strong will-power is needed to move an arm or leg. A man feels much the same as if he had been given some deadening drug, and he cares little what happens.

Gradually, snail-like, we saw the needle creeping up the scale. Air was being pumped out of the chamber to correspond with the more rarefied atmosphere met with by fliers at higher altitudes. Beginning with the density of sea level the air gradually became more tenuous.

Now we were higher than St. Paul's; now we had climbed Snowdon; now we had left Britain altogether and were in the bracing altitudes of the Alps. Above Mont Blanc we had to adjust our oxygen masks. The oxygen was diminishing and failing around us. A slight tingling feeling and loss of bodily weight signalled our arrival in the exalted places of the Himalayas. From now onwards the doctors watched us like hawks.

At 35,000 feet we had reached a totally new world, so strange, so different from ordinary physical laws and facts that some of the differences are worth setting down. We were dwellers in a sealed world of our own, a world of deathly silence, without noise and almost without sound, there being too little air to carry the sound-waves. Jingling keys and rattling coins deluded the sense of hearing, for they were silent. You coughed and, hearing nothing, wondered what had happened to your throat. All communications had to be written down and passed from person to person; that was why we had the tables and writing material. Though we could talk we had become dumb.

A piece of paper dropped in that thin air fell heavily to the ground. Throwing out an arm suddenly, the movement was so violent as to be almost painful.

The chamber would have sent Galileo into a decline by upsetting most of his pet terrestrial laws and deductions. An apple dropped from a tree would nearly have brained Newton.

At this height the external force on the walls of the chamber exceeded the internal pressure by almost *one thousand tons.* The pressure on the ears felt as though a one-hundred-ton hammer was being driven against them, and might cause them to burst any moment. This sensation was counteracted by continually swallowing and by clearing the throat. The moment you forgot to do so, however, you approached explosion point again. A curious indescribable feeling attacked the pit of the stomach. Looking round, I saw one of my companions touching himself with his hands to see if his body was still there. We were beings on another planet; not all of us unduly distressed, yet far from comfortable. Having ascended to seven miles above the earth we slowly came down to its level; the Farnborough test was over; another important milestone on the road to Everest.

As the news of our activities became widely known, so did the humorous side come into prominence. It was amusing to see the number of people who wanted to go with us on the flight, some of them quite sane but without the slightest idea of where Everest was to be found. One genius said he wanted to come because he had never been to Wales; another asked if he should bring his tropical kit with him. A rather tired business man was sure he could be useful for he had spent his boyhood making model aeroplanes and his wife had taught him to cook and clean the house. But the ladies proved the bravest . . . at least in theory . . . and also the most insistent. One girl wrote that she wanted to go up in one of our 'planes . . . she was well-off and quite ready to pay whatever was asked . . . she was beautiful . . . so she said . . . although she was judicious enough not to send a photograph. Moreover, she had never suffered from seasickness and she had a strong digestion. I reasoned that if she was all she claimed to be she might prove a distraction to the pilot . . . and so had to refuse her request.

Then there was the old lady, the sort of delightful and genuine antique whose letters would probably smell of camphor. She imagined the Ark rested on the summit of Everest, and wanted us to bring back a piece as a souvenir. I don't think any amount of dissuasion would have convinced her that she was wrong; she looked upon our flight as a grand opportunity to prove the truth of the Bible to unbelievers. We explained that the Ark might be hidden under the snow, or have slipped down a few thousand feet when Noah wasn't looking, but it was no use. The Ark was there; the fliers would be going there; and she hoped for a piece of it on our return. Of course, it would have been easy to appease her with a piece of firewood, but somehow we preferred to let her think we had missed it.

There was a man eager to go up in one of our machines; his plan was to don a parachute and when the aeroplane was alongside the summit he would drop gracefully over the side and land on the upward path, whence he would continue the journey on foot and be back in a suitable camping ground down in

the valley in time for dinner! He was a curious individual, who failed to take into account a trifling wind of one hundred and twenty miles per hour, a polar temperature, the slippery rocks, and the fact that if he fell, as he most probably would, he would go on falling until he reached the glacier, 14,000 feet below!

His idea had a tragic sequel. He actually arrived in India, and being unsuccessful in getting permission to fly over Everest, for which his small machine was quite unsuitable, he determined to attempt the conquest of the mountain on foot. So he journeyed to Tibet, apparently in disguise, and accompanied by some porters began to climb Everest. Thereafter the story of this strange character ends, until in 1935 the last Everest expedition sent out from England a reconnaissance party which surveyed the route the climbers were to follow a year later. There, at 21,000 feet, they came across his body, the silent witness of a crazy adventure.

* * * * *

As I have said, we had our flying base at Purnea, below the Himalayan range. The Maharajah of Darbhunga placed his bungalow-palace there at our disposal, specially refurnishing it for the occasion, and we owed a great deal to him for his kindness and generosity, truly Eastern in its abundance.

One day we went over to Darbhunga to dine with him in his capital, one hundred and ten miles away, and since aeroplanes had not visited him before and there was no landing ground, he ordered hundreds of coolies and a couple of steamrollers specially brought up from down-country to level some fields and make a landing ground, so when we arrived we found an aerodrome like a billiards table.

Aladdin's lamp was unnecessary where deft retainers sprang up like mushrooms out of the floor to do one's bidding. Comfort became like a cushion—always ready to hand. Dinner was served in a dining-hall, with priceless carving and decoration. Valuable porcelain and plate looked down at us from the walls; rare carpets looked up at us from the floor. We sat in gold-backed chairs. The Maharajah, who was twenty-seven, had a large number of elephants, polo ponies, and a fleet of motor-cars. Some of his chariots and state coaches would make a museum feel rich for life; one of them in which we rode was a goliath coach, drawn by four super-elephants, covered by an embroidered canopy and with wheels as high as a lofty room. The population of the capital, men, women, children, and even cattle, came to watch our arrival. Only the elephants remained calm and stolid amidst the general excitement, viewing the proceedings and flapping their ears in dignified silence. One night the conversation turned on the Indian Mutiny, and one or two of us expressed surprise at the lack of authentic information relating to the Nana Sahib, the butcher of Bithoor, who played the principal part in the tragedy of Cawnpore in 1857, in which the *dramatis personae* were women and children and a villain whose fate still continues to be wrapped in mystery. On the day that the victorious Havelock drove the rebels from Cawnpore, the Nana fled; he mounted a horse and rode away . . . where, no one knows! It is said that he made for the Terai, the dense strip of jungle below the Himalayan foothills,

that he passed through Darbhunga, and that as the price of sanctuary, the then Maharajah took from him a necklace of black pearls valued at £80,000. The subject was a delicate one and I did not ask our host if there was any truth in it.

It was amusing to watch the reactions of different types of natives who camped round our flying base; they had come from far and near. With an intimate knowledge of the language it was a never-failing source of interest to me to hobnob with these people and answer, somehow, their questions.

Most of them were simple country folk, with long black hair coiled round their heads and nothing in the way of clothes beyond a loincloth, so old and worn that it would be almost indistinguishable against a jungle background. They might be away from their homes for a couple of months, but they had enough luggage to last from Saturday to Monday, and it was wrapped up in one or two bundles which the man and his wife carried on their heads.

They bivouacked under the trees with the heavens for a canopy and the stars for lamps; a wood fire cooked their simple food of rice, vegetables, and the wheaten chupatties common throughout the length and breadth of India. When they wanted water they took it from a stream that ran alongside one edge of the aerodrome, and if there were bugs, flies, and bacilli in it . . . so much the worse for them. They had no need of boots, for their feet were as hard as leather and much more pliable; whilst as for the mosquitoes and sand flies which infested the place, they seemed to drop off after one bite, for the effluvia of these people was too strong even for a mosquito. Cleaning and sanitary arrangements were primitive, the morning wash and brush-up being open to the public gaze. They cleaned their teeth with a stick, and the women washed their hair by sprinkling water over it and rubbing it with the dust from the ground.

Some of these quaint people came from the borders of Nepal; they knew that, years before, the King-Emperor had passed many days in the Terai jungles and they still talked of that wondrous shooting camp.

One day one of them asked me if the King-Emperor approved of all we were doing; they seemed to think the King communicated regularly with me on the subject, and were quite happy when I told them that His Majesty thoroughly approved of all we were doing and had told us so in writing. They asked if the King was also a pilot and did he fly hither and thither every day! This baffled me; I knew that His Majesty never flew, he probably hated aeroplanes, but I wanted these naïve little folk to think well of him—and of me—and so I said, "Well, he doesn't fly every day, but he is a great man at everything he touches." This delighted them, and then I gently turned the conversation for fear of giving them a shock if they pursued the subject too closely, by which His Majesty might have slipped down a peg or two in their esteem.

Insanitary and primitive people, no doubt, but there they were, and a monument to the curiosity and half-concealed admiration which had induced them to leave their distant homes to come and see the aerial battle between the sahibs and the gods.

Besides the native element we made many friends at the local club where the Europeans and their ladies forgathered in the cool of the evening. One such was a planter who used to come over on a small hill pony, his long legs

dangling on the ground; he just shivered along as the monks of old did when they set out from their monasteries to ride to Canterbury. How well he knew the Indian and his wiles and ways, and I passed many pleasant hours in the cool verandah of his bungalow.

Often he came and dined with me and we talked 'about it . . . and about' . . . as Omar Khayyàm says in his immortal Rubaiyat.

He was a jovial, hail-fellow-well-met type, the sort that is always good company. We sometimes closed the night with a bowl of punch, a drink I had discovered in India and known as 'Samson with his hair on'. It was the nectar of the gods . . . a secret of the few . . . and required a good head! It was, indeed, tall tipple, said to have been invented on the night of the battle of Ferozeshah in the Sikh War of 1848, when a toast was given to the memory of one who received a bullet where he had hoped to put the punch.

At intervals during our talks under the light of the stars and a tropic moon the night watchman would shuffle his way round the bungalow, throwing another sidelight on India and its complex problem. He was old and decrepit, and would have been useless should even the most timid burglar attempt to break in; but there he was, mumbling to himself as he performed his nightly task. "Why have a night watchman?" said some of the unsophisticated. "He doesn't do anything and couldn't put up a show if he tried."

But I knew the East, which will always be the same; its mental workings are beyond the average understanding of the West and strange customs exist peculiar to it. If you don't have a watchman in all probability you will have a burglary. The guardian pays tribute to the fraternity, who thus control the powers of light and darkness in league against the public.

To look at our old watchman one would have never believed that he controlled anything, not even his legs, which shook and trembled as he staggered round the bungalow. But he symbolized something understood by his fellows; he represented the East in a house inhabited by people from the West. This was in the nature of a compromise, and thus a certain amount of protection was afforded, not by his physical qualities but by his presence. The East moves in a mysterious way its wonders to perform.

The Japanese, who say that one seeing is worth a hundred hearings, have a proverb. 'Let no one use the word magnificent until he has seen Nikko'. Knowing Nikko, I would still reserve the final term of splendour for the close-up of Everest and its surroundings. Mountains named and unnamed rise below it in every direction, Godwin Austen, Nanda Devi, Makalu, and all the great ones of the Himalayas. Who knows but what there may be a mountain higher even than Everest? Hidden away in south-west China, the innermost recesses of the Karakoram, or in the dark mysteries of the Kuen Lun, which I had partly penetrated some years before, some giant to eclipse Everest may be found! From our own observations, and those who have followed us, there are indications that this may be so.

There is a legend that on the summit of Makalu, 27,790 feet, twelve miles east of Everest, is the god's armchair. From a photograph the summit does

resemble a chair; it is cut out as if by design, the back of the chair being 2,000 feet in height and the seat about the same in width and length. There, so the lamas told me, the goddess comes in the afternoon before the setting of the sun to look out over the world. They assured me she and her satellites could even see the King of England far away across the universe, sitting on his throne and robed in state.

The fliers when they passed over Everest saw no such wonderful sight as this, but they saw enough. Theirs was the glory of men sitting on top of the world; Central Asia, India, Tibet . . . lay at their feet . . . a view that was a gasp.

In the sunshine the snowy regions about them took on the quality and glitter of a diamond, each facet being a different mountain face. Dark were the rocks and precipices, grimy an occasional glacier in contrast with the dazzle of the snow. There were the immense cliff precipices of Kinchenjunga and Makalu, deepening into chasms filled with cloud. In every direction for hundreds of untrodden miles, splendid and defiant, stretched the halted ranks of the ranges, throwing up every now and again a giant leader, unconquered by man, overtopping all the rest. Westwards they rolled in white waves to the Karakoram; northwards they extended endlessly beyond the plateau to those dim dream mountains of the Kuen Lun; and eastwards the snowy skyscrapers continued towards those gorges where the Brahmaputra flows through the Himalayan barrier in cataract upon cataract. A land of silent spaces and silver dawns, filled with the fierceness of frost and the freshness of spring; a land of white magic . . . the roof of the world.

From the might of these mountains Alexander of Macedon and his men, singing their songs and drinking their warming liquor, had descended to the plains of Hindustan to overwhelm and capture King Pårus in 327 B.C., since when hardy warriors and raiders followed in their wake to seize the rich spoils of northern India. Foremost among them came the first Moghul emperor, Babar the Lion, in 1526, who swooped down on India to found a dynasty that reached the zenith of its power and fame when Queen Bess was on the British throne.

These mighty warriors, of whom only the memory and monuments remain, came to sit in cushioned ease on diamond and peacock thrones. They toppled Hindu monarchs from their sea-built cities and palaces of marble. They set up the might and power of Islam in India.

Here, then, was the meeting-ground of three empires, four civilizations, and no trippers.

* * * * *

With the successful outcome of the flight, our task in the Himalayas was accomplished. For weeks on end we had been living in the clouds, in thought, word, and deed; now the time had come to descend to earth again. We had to leave those changeless, monumental places, the mountains lifting their heads in a timeless challenge to the sky and turn our eyes once more to the plains of India, always grey with the dust of journeys. Invitations had come to us from enthusiastic Indian princes and others who were anxious that we should pay

them a visit; from the many I chose a few, either because their states were of outstanding interest, or because their rulers were personal friends.

One of the first places we visited by invitation was Lucknow and the famous Residency . . . and thereby hangs a tale.

Lord Curzon, perhaps the ablest Viceroy India has ever had, paid a first visit to Lucknow in the early days of his viceroyalty. He was famed for his extraordinary fund of general knowledge, which made him resemble in many respects a dignified encyclopædia, complete in one volume, so to speak. From the first play that Euripides wrote, to the last horse in the Derby, Lord Curzon knew all the details. How pins are made, in what quantities, the temperature of Trinidad in November, the early history of music and painting, the lives of the world's greatest men, these are just a few of the things Lord Curzon knew all about.

Whilst in Lucknow he was taken to the Residency which had been defended in the Mutiny by the heroic garrison under Sir Henry Lawrence. He was seeing it for the first time and was shown the room in which, they said, Lawrence died. Upon entering it Lord Curzon looked quietly round the apartment, then he looked at his staff and those with him, and then at the room again. They expected him to say something appropriate; but they did not know him or would never have expected anything so conventional. Instead, he said . . . very quietly, "No, this wasn't the room in which Lawrence died."

Everyone was staggered. How could he say such a thing! Besides, to contradict a historical fact—no one ever did that sort of thing!

"But, Your Excellency," one of them stammered, "history tells us so . . . and there on the wall is the marble plate to prove it."

Lord Curzon was quite unmoved by this and replied, "I don't care what the marble plate says; Lawrence did not die in this room." The startled assembly looked at each other and, completely bewildered, remained in silence, save for nervous coughs and the shuffling of feet.

Lord Curzon then continued, "Now, I'll show you where he did die, if you'll follow me." He strode out of the room like a headmaster followed by a number of sheepish pupils. He led the way through corridors, round corners, right, left, and left again, until at last they arrived at a small outside room which Lord Curzon entered, followed by his audience. "This is where Sir Henry Lawrence died," he said. He then turned to the archæological expert with the remark, "Write to Surgeon-General Sir Joseph Fayrer, who attended Sir Henry at the time of his death, and ask him to mark on a plan of the Residency the room in which Lawrence died."

The party then broke up in wonder and the matter dropped for a time, until the plan arrived. To their amazement it showed that Lawrence had died in the room Lord Curzon had indicated.

No doubt Lord Curzon left them pondering over the plan, smiling quietly to himself. Although he was invariably right in encounters of this kind, he hated listening to people admitting they were wrong. To point out accurate facts was all he wished to do, but never to take any personal credit for being so uncannily correct.

* * * * *

In due course we reached Jodhpur, a fortress on a rock, suggestive of Edinburgh Castle or the Acropolis at Athens, a stronghold that has been for centuries the capital of Jodhpur. Round the city is a six-mile wall pierced by seventy gates.

In Jodhpur we saw the crown jewels, valued at over two millions sterling. Emeralds, rubies, and diamonds glittered and winked on golden trays, and by their side were ropes of pearls that would ransom a king. I asked the Maharajah if they were not afraid of thieves with so much portable wealth within easy reach, and enquired if they had ever experienced anything in the shape of a smash-and-grab raid. He told me that any such buccaneering would be impossible in Jodhpur, since not only was the treasure well guarded by a labyrinth of passages, but it was surrounded by corridors and gateways sufficient to tie up the cleverest cracksman and hold him secure until captured.

The Maharani, whom we did not see, must be a veritable walking jeweller's shop on a large scale, for she has bracelets of the finest precious stones, of every hue and kind, from the wrists up to the shoulders, anklets, rings, collars of gems, and necklaces reaching down to the ground. She is said to be worth well over a quarter of a million pounds when in gala dress.

There are a number of Jains here and in Udaipur, a curious sect who are pacifists, and nothing will induce them to take life in any form. Rather than unwittingly swallow an insect they will wear a gauze over the mouth, will carefully brush a seat before sitting down for fear of crushing insect life, and filter the water with a cloth which they deposit in the river or lake, lest some invisible creature should be destroyed. The Jain world is a strange one; the more charitable and orthodox of these people, so far from disliking bugs and fleas, will occasionally stay the night at a sort of bug refectory in order that the insects may be nourished.

The principles of the Jain religion embody chastity, charity, and the simple, inexpensive life. Yet they have a shrine at Dilwara which is a blaze of gold and silver and precious stones, valued at over eighteen million pounds!

From the sporting city of Jodhpur we flew on to Udaipur, one of the most astonishing and beautiful places in India.

On the way we passed over Jaipur, probably the only town in the world that has been laid out by an astronomer. It is on the dead-straight, American grid-iron plan, with streets a hundred feet wide. Everything is governed by mathematical precision, so that from the air an American might be excused for thinking he was approaching Chicago.

Jaipur's ruler has masses of jewellery, amongst them a necklace of three rows of rubies, each as big as a pigeon's egg, on which it would be impossible to put a value, for they are the only specimens of their type in the world. Some of them were collected by the Emperor Akbar, under whom the Mogul empire rose to the zenith of its power and fame, a contemporary of Queen Elizabeth.

Udaipur is the capital of the state of Meywar and little is heard of it in the outside world. Yet no city could be more lovely. From the roof of the maharana's palace you see the India of your dreams—a city of white houses on a lake blue as the sky.

Here in this walled city, pierced by many gateways through which enter and make their exit slow-moving figures with scrip and staff looking as if they

belonged to the Bible, and where the ambling ass walks in and out, the fame of the maharana has grown into a fable and a legend. Other maharajahs may possess more rupees; not one of them has so good a pedigree or such a golden past.

No one had ever visited this city before by aeroplane, so that on arrival we were greeted as beings who had consorted with the gods and had now condescended for a short time, out of charity, to descend to earth.

Udaipur is a jewel set in an encircling rampart of hills, that, when viewed from the air, shows off her hundred facets of sparkling lakes, islands covered with palaces, clumps of green trees and the domes of temples shimmering in the sunlight.

Udaipur is dotted with lakes; I visited one that is reputed to be the largest artificial stretch of water in the world, made by a capricious ruler in medieval times.

Among the curiosities of the state is the coinage, Persian in origin, bearing on the reverse side the curious title 'Friend of London'. Under the palace is said to be buried, no one knows where, hoarded treasure of gold and silver ingots, precious stones and pearls of great price.

All roads lead up to the palace at Udaipur, or down to the iris-blue waters of the lake. In the palace, that is a dream in marble, lives the maharana, who claims descent from Rama the Sun-God. Udaipur more than any other spot I have seen looks as if it had stepped out of a fairy-tale. Here is a sort of Eastern Avalon, where the young prince of fiction finds his princess, tells her of his love, and they settle down to live happily ever afterwards. It is not so much a place as a picture painted for some old story-book. To heighten the illusion we were lodged in a guest palace containing almost everything that one could desire.

From the windows and verandah of our quarters we could take in the beauty of Udaipur, its wealth of water and islands each adorned by a palace or a temple; with its palm trees, blue lakes, and masses of flowers it is really a little bit of Italy that has wandered off into the tropics and got lost. One has the feeling that Udaipur is not really India at all, but a piece of Eastern enchantment stolen from the West, that may one day wake up and remember that it does not really exist in a modern world.

While at Udaipur we became acquainted with a curious custom begun by a maharana more than fifty years before. They say that there is nothing new under the sun, but Udaipur can provide something that is not found elsewhere in the world.

Every evening at five o'clock a small boat comes to the landing-stage at the jungle end of the Pichola Lake carrying sacks of maize, and a huntsman and one or two henchman go ashore with the sacks. Climbing up to the wall of the old fortress, the huntsman raises his voice in a high-pitched call. At the first sound of his voice the jungle, apparently deserted, becomes alive with moving figures, herds of wild pig which have lain hidden begin to show themselves. The advance guard appeared just on the edge of the bush, sly and wily looking, their little eyes gleaming. In a few moments three hundred of them were grunting and stamping round the walls of the fortress.

On our visit the huntsman and his men went down amongst the guests. They are accustomed to him, but woe betide strangers who venture here

alone. Looking neither to right nor left, but keeping straight on, the hurtling mass of piggery charged towards the fortress. There it split up, fighting and pushing for the largest share in the scattered grain. No quarter was given or asked; where the biggest pig had his nose buried in the dust and where the noise was greatest there was generally to be found the largest portion of food.

At this dinner-party the only thing that counted was unaffected greed; bristle to bristle they proceeded to turn the banquet into a battle. The gluttonous grunts that went up from the squirming mass seemed loud enough to attract every animal in India to the feast. Never have I heard a repast so much appreciated nor so loudly advertised.

There was nothing tame about these creatures; they were the real jungle pig, swift as a horse, surly as a bear, and brave as a lion . . . and then suddenly silence descended on the scene. Having eaten their fill and left nothing over the wild pigs turned, and on a sudden trotted off to their lairs in the jungle. For a minute or two we heard their hooves ploughing through the undergrowth; then all was quiet and we were left wondering at what we had seen. We were alone on the ramparts, gazing into a forest quiet with the approach of night.

Someone suggested that this must be an enchanted jungle—that Circe probably lived there, and that she turned human beings into boars; people perhaps whom she found dull or who had the impertinence to try and modernize ancient Udaipur, last relic of the golden age.

At that moment we would not have been surprised if further manifestations of fairy tales—Little Red Riding Hood, or the Three Bears, for instance—had stepped out of the forest and confronted us.

The maharana showed me his state elephants which are not used for transport and processions alone. There are also special ones kept for tug-of-war, or push-of-war contests, to entertain the maharana and his subjects on high days and holidays. In a large enclosure open to the sky we saw elephant-fighting, and remarkable for being, so far as I know, the only place in the world where this form of combat is carried on officially.

There was one thing which I had yet to see which recalled the days of ancient Rome and the gladiatorial fights in the arena. Not far from where the wild boar are fed is a high arena, and into this a tough and fierce-looking boar was persuaded to enter. The arena was about sixty feet by twenty; the spectators were all round and just above it, where every movement in the contest of strength and savage aggression could be clearly seen. The boar had been captured only a few days previously and a sparring partner was found for him, in this case a tiger taken in the jungle less than a week before.

This was a battle royal; about two hundred pounds' weight of reckless courage and muscular strength were pitted against double that weight of sinuous slinking power.

The floor of the arena was of beaten mud and stones, and with its seats above and around it reminded me of the Coliseum at Rome. This was the local stadium for the games, although there was no flourish of trumpets or parade for the entry of the gladiators. This was how the combatants actually entered. A small door was raised quietly, and before one had realized what it meant the boar rushed out into the open, looking furiously about him. He pawed the ground like a restive horse; then turned round to face his adversary who had

come out of another door flush with the ground. Here was something on which he could vent all his rage; this soft-padded creeping king of the jungle had come slowly out into the open . . . ears flattened back, face contorted into a scowl, a splendid specimen of a tiger. At first he crept along the wall of the arena, moving with the noiseless momentum of the cats, and the boar watched him. Then, leaving the protection of the walls, he walked out slowly to where a trough of water evidently attracted him.

The moment the tiger came into full view the boar charged down, his backbone projecting in a fierce ridge. Not for him were red cloaks, or toreadors, or barbed darts; possessing only the fraction of a bull's bulk he held within him three times the natural ferocity. He forced the pace from the word 'Go.'

The tiger gave ground under the charge, snarling his annoyance and dislike; the boar wheeled and turned his back, apparently contemptuous of his far more powerful foe; then turned again, ready for a fresh charge. At this point he reminded me not so much of a jungle animal as of a medieval knight entering for a tourney and holding the list, against all comers. For spurs he had the speed of his own recklessness, and his tusks served him instead of lance for striking down his foe. This time he charged the tiger from right across the arena, the latter turning sideways to avoid the hurricane and getting the impact on his shoulder. It was difficult to decide how much the tiger had been shaken up by the boar's charge, but he seemed to have had enough, and bounded towards the nearest wall. The boar wheeled into line, and manœuvred for the next round.

The tiger now got up on to a little ramp in a corner of the arena, where he evidently considered he would not be followed. He little knew his opponent, however. Round one had clearly gone to the boar, who was out for a quick decision. Now came round two, the boar having disadvantage of ground; his charge uphill was less forceful, and the tiger, feeling perhaps for the first time a sense of his superiority of equipment, followed him from the ramp. A few breathless moments of short, quick thrusts and head-on attacks from the boar were countered by an aggressive and now thoroughly roused tiger. In this bout, so far as I could see, neither side could claim any decided advantage, though the boar was still the aggressor, still disdaining retreat, except as a means of gaining impetus for a fresh charge.

Again the tiger retired to the shelter of the ramp; the boar followed instantly and forced him off it. Then the tiger half sprang and gripped the boar with his tremendous jaws in the withers. The boar had his razor-like tushes in the tiger's chest . . . and there both remained in a clinch for two or three minutes, with no referee to make them break away. Despite the grip of the tiger, with the whole of the boar's withers in his jaws, the gallant pig would not give way—or perhaps he couldn't.

Native attendants now arrived on the walls above and tried with stink bombs to induce them to break away and finish with this in-fighting. At last the clinch came to an end; the boar turned away, the tiger sank into a resting position on the sand, and when he stood up again his expression was of mingled wariness, ferocity and disquiet. Was he preparing to turn defence into attack?

Before he had time to make up his mind, head down came the boar, full

tilt; a magnificent example of courage and irresistible force encountering a nearly immovable object. He caught the tiger in full career, giving him the heaviest blow so far delivered in the contest and hurled him against the wall with a thud that shook the arena.

Still it was not a knock-out. The tiger gave ground, retreating towards the entry by which he had arrived. He had obviously had enough. The tiny portcullis was raised; he slunk gracefully from the scene, and as the door was lowered the boar thundered up from the other end . . . still searching for his opponent, or anyone else for that matter, on whom to work off his combative instincts. He was a gallant warrior, and had proved in the ordeal by battle the stamina and fighting value of the wild boar.

Whether he was brought out on another day to fight I never heard, but I hope that honour was satisfied and that he was taken out and released in the forest to hear the call of the custodians, and get his share of the evening repast provided by the maharana.

* * * * *

We, who had just come from pitting ourselves against the most formidable mountain in the world, could still appreciate these lesser contests in the City of the Sun God. We felt it was quite appropriate that some of the last things seen on these tours should be these strange fights between adversaries matched against each other nowhere else in the world.

We had seen the cold unearthly splendour of the top of the world, the last stronghold of the gods. Now, in this sunburnt city at the other end of the scale, the Everest fliers were to separate, leaving behind them the weeks of comradeship shared and purposes accomplished. We knew that this was the greatest adventure that any of us had ever taken part in, and that we should never forget either the grandeur of Everest or the wonders that had been shown us on our subsequent wanderings. Moreover, we could at least go home with the knowledge that we had made history in the world of aviation and given a contribution to science.

It was a glorious May morning when the aeroplanes took off, circling over the city and bringing out the population to watch their departure. They droned above the marble palace and the placid waters of the lake, dipped in salute to the maharana, and then headed for the west.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Off to Arabia—Negotiating an oil concession for Britain—The new Arabian Nights—King Ibn Saud—Arab psychology—A compelling story.

OIL is a dominating factor controlling movement by land and sea; the call for it goes on increasing, and one wonders if the supply locked away in the bowels of the earth will eventually be able to cope with the demand.

In the spring of 1936 I went out to Saudi Arabia to negotiate an oil concession for Britain, along the Red Sea coast from the Gulf of Akaba in the north to the Yemen border in the south.

Arabia is on the fringe of Europe, yet it remains a land of romance, its customs veiled in mystery and the streets of its towns so full of oddities that the traveller begins to suspect that for once the story-tellers have not been able to catch up with reality.

It is a land where a man may divorce and marry a hundred times if he can afford it, where it is almost a crime to die rich, and you can pay the lawyer's fees with goats. Many Arabs still prefer the camel to the motor-car, but signs of progress, mostly brought on by the war, are visible, and Ford, amongst others, has been busy in the land of the new Arabian Nights, whilst aerodromes are springing up and then the age-old atmosphere will vanish.

I came from London to Suez by sea, embarking there on a ramshackle coasting steamer for Jeddah, the port on the Saudi-Arabian shore of the Red Sea whence pilgrims set out on the journey to Mecca and Medina. It is a dreadful-looking place, and a Dutchman aptly described it to me as 'the last place the Lord made—and He broke a shovel making it'.

Beyond the open deck the heat of the sun fell like molten brass, and the metal- and iron-work of the ship was hot enough to sear the hands. The sea was glassy in its surface, with the air still and motionless, and all round the smell of pilgrims and unwashed humanity.

We had a number of pilgrims on board, and early on the morning of our arrival they were on deck eager to get a glimpse of the holy land. Through a quiet and glassy sea we threaded our way amongst the reefs, anchoring about two miles offshore. There lay Jeddah, shimmering in the burning sun, with its white walls and multi-coloured shadows, the sandy desert behind it trending away to some low hills in the background.

Amidst the noise and hubbub of excited pilgrims I went ashore in a launch, they following in large flat-bottomed sailing barges, into which their baggage was tumbled, stacks of it, baskets and bags, cheap suitcases, bamboo boxes done up with string, and cloth bundles which took the overflow from the rest of the luggage. The noise those pilgrims made could be heard far away; it was probably the same sort of pandemonium as in the Red Sea drama when the waters opened to let the Israelites pass over.

Each party of pilgrims was in charge of a licensed guide, for under Ibn Saud, the hajj (pilgrimage) has been regularized, and an organized ritual and conventions govern the pilgrim the moment he lands.

For the pilgrim there is little choice of stopping-places; the Arab inn is quite unfurnished, with small bare rooms, and the guest must bring his own bedding and cooking things. Swarms of beggars infest the place, innumerable flies plague the inmates, and the personality of the innkeeper is usually in keeping with his house and his ideas on a standard of comfort and sanitation.

I was fortunate in having a friend, an Egyptian banker, in whose house by the city walls I stayed.

It had large rooms and beautifully-latticed windows, beneath which was one of the gateways to the city. Through it came strings of camels, and Arabs gowned in long flowing robes swung past with the stately stride of the men of the desert.

The city itself is a queer medley of tribes and races, of varied architecture and contrasts in transport. The streets are narrow and covered with mat roofing, flimsy weatherbeaten carved wood balconies hang on to the fronts of stone buildings, the shops are open and the owner squats amongst his wares, whilst all around are clouds of flies, and big brown rats defy the cats. There is no sanitation and no system of drainage . . . everything is as it was in biblical days, and the inhabitants, dressed as in Bible times, observe the old covenants and slay sheep to seal vows.

It is a city of contrasts; here is the camel, the latticed balconies and the quaint minarets, the age-old customs and conservatism, and butchers' shops where the meat is literally black with flies, whilst honking through the bazaar comes a Ford car, and the sound of wireless is heard as you pass along the street. The population is about 35,000, but this may be trebled during the pilgrim season.

Jeddah houses have never known the touch of steel and concrete; they are huddled Eastern buildings rarely breaking out into palaces or skyscrapers. Everywhere you see little latticed windows through which harem inmates can peer, and latticed doors at which the visitor knocks discreetly. When a white, sepulchral figure came out of a turning at dusk, in front of me, I thought I was seeing a ghost, but the ghost uttered an exclamation, drew her veil which had been partly opened and silently sped away . . . like a ghost.

The houses, hot as Turkish baths, had no proper ventilation; no wonder Moslems are fond of the rooftops. It is the only place where you can keep cool at night, away from the exhalation of dust.

History and geography walk arm in arm in Jeddah and religion speeds their footsteps. The streets are like a furnace, making fast walking one long gasp, but near the water it is a trifle cooler. There you see pilgrims from world's end, burnt almost black by the sun, arriving in crowded Arab dhows. It is a sight for gods and men to watch how conductors, dragomen, mutawifs, descend as flies on the human cargoes, eager to take advantage of a flourishing trade. For fourteen shillings, I was told, you can go to Mecca return from Jeddah.

"Times have changed," an Arab friend said to me, "but not the feet of the faithful. They go on as Allah wills—until they reach the Ho'y City." Each man has two sheets, one worn over the back and knotted on the right side, the

other draped in front. "Once started on the journey," continued my friend, "he should not wear anything on his head, nor marry or kiss; he must not destroy anything, and when he scratches it must be with an open hand."

Watching the pilgrims sorting themselves out, choosing camel, car or donkey, I thought of the untold millions of people, rich and poor, who had made the journey before them. It was a sight to make one think; a procession that has been non-stop for twelve hundred years.

The pilgrims poured into the town, the narrow, evil-smelling streets were packed with them, they bought meat from which the flies rose in clouds, the smell of drains polluted the air, but the crowd pay no attention to it; they are accustomed to smells and savage with religious hunger. It is altogether a weird and unsavoury place, with its damp and staggering heat, the flies, the mosquitoes and sand flies, the food, the hot winds that come like a breath from hell, the mangy dogs wandering about searching in vain for shade, the pitiless sun that climbs into the sky at 5 a.m. and reigns supreme over all until 6 p.m. of a sweltering, unbelievable day. Old King Husain said in 1803, when he besieged Jeddah, "Surely this place is hell and the people in it must be allied to the Devil." He was right.

The highlights of Jeddah are the flies, the sand, and the heat. I said to an old Arab acquaintance, "It's getting hot in Jeddah now; in another month it will be like Jehannum (hell). How do you like it?"

"I like it not at all," he said; "it is always filthy and full of bugs and lice and fleas and flies . . . and the heat . . . I can scarcely breathe here."

To this grim and unsavoury spot occasionally comes Ibn Saud, Lord of the Hedjaz, Keeper of the Holy Places, and head of the Wahabis, a fanatical Moslem sect founded at the end of the seventeenth century by Abdul Wahab, who aimed at bringing the Moslem faith back to perfect simplicity by ruling out luxuries and every form of indulgence.

In connection with my oil quest I met Ibn Saud, dictator ruler of Arabia, strong man of the desert, and a modern figure out of the Arabian Nights. His life story, personality, and achievements are part of the highlights of his time. I found him to be the living creation of the all-powerful sheikh of fiction; no other ruler is patriarch, nomad, and absolute monarch all in one. My meeting with this conquering king, who had been married one hundred and sixty times and had twenty-six sons, with an unaccountable number of daughters, took place at Jeddah, where he has a one-storeyed palace outside the town.

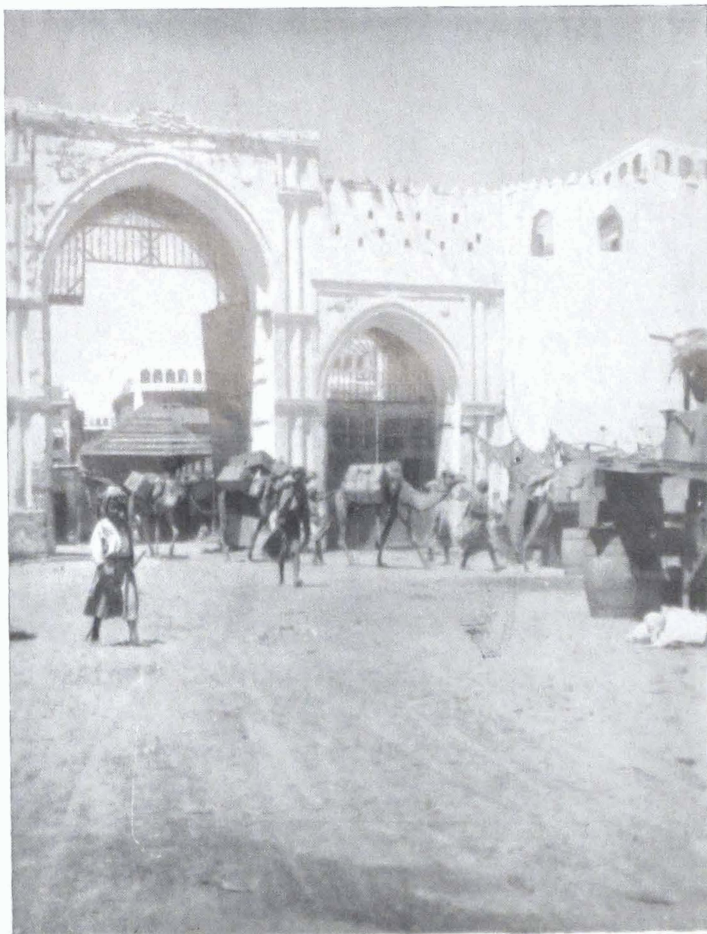
Ibn Saud greeted me in a long and cool apartment upstairs. It was hung with mirrors and carpets, for pictures are against Moslem law. He was seated on a divan throne, surrounded by ministers and court officials arrayed in the picturesque Arab dress.

The king is a man of majestic stature—he stand six feet five inches and towers above his surroundings in figure as well as in fact.

At first we talked politely of travel and foreign countries. Ibn Saud told me that he had never left his own land, but would like to come to Europe some day. Whilst he conversed about the British, to whom he appears attached, I thought what a sensation this giant king would make in London, in his brown and white robes, his red and gold head-dress and richly embroidered shoes.

I had brought him out a new wireless, for the Arabian King. "I like

UDAIPUR. A BIT OF ITALY TRANSPORTED TO THE TROPICS



A GATEWAY IN JEDDAH

THE ROMANTIC SOUTH-EAST COVE ON LUNDY

the wireless," he told me, "for I consider it to be a wonderful thing, and Europe's best invention." With this, he told me, he could keep his ears open to world events. "Is it not as bad to be deaf as blind?" He tunes in daily to hear all the latest news, and his trained staff of secretaries are acquainted with various foreign languages. They listen in and prepare statements of the gist of what has been said, whether it be in English, French, German or Russian, and this is submitted to the King. Thus he keeps in touch with what is going on beyond the desert frontiers of his Kingdom, and he knows what is happening and what the various dictators in the world are contemplating next.

Despite the fact of his desert upbringing and surroundings, he is a most astute ruler, and his staff check up on foreign situations and keep him notified of new developments.

A woman singer's voice came through, singing old familiar songs, which caused one of the ministers later on to ask me whether it was a child crying, for Arab music and song are totally different from ours.

We discussed various subjects before my interview with this great man came to an end. It was not the voice of aggression, nor even words of his 'Philco', that punctuated my visit with a full stop, but the call of the muezzin, calling the faithful to evening prayer. The King and his long-robed retainers instantly responded, turning devoutly towards Mecca. Ibn Saud invariably breaks off for prayers, no matter what he is doing. Even a Cabinet meeting would be absolved in Saudi Arabia when the call to worship circles above the housetops.

The ceremony concluded, I saw this desert king, so simple and yet so wise, widely feared and yet loved, get into his car and drive away out across the desert to enjoy the evening air. Two big black Nubians stood, one on each running-board, their scimitars ready to hand. As I watched, it seemed to me that 1936 was driving away on a visit to the Arabian Nights, with a last glitter of farewell, taking the road to desert romance with churning wheels.

Later on, the ruler of Arabia would be leaving the motor road and mounting his camel, riding out into the yellow distance of his golden realm, a wonderland and a wilderness that has been called the Garden of Allah. Here the King would live like a simple hunter or soldier, in a tent; all the modern accessories of civilization would be banished and forgotten like a dream of yesterday, and he would turn into a simple man. He would become a Bedouin like his people, those happy-go-lucky creatures who, from time immemorial, have been raiders, appropriating the flocks of a neighbouring tribe when the opportunity offered, in spite of Ibn Saud's decrees against this sort of thing; but you cannot eradicate by a stroke of the pen something that is age-old.

Being a great admirer of women, in more ways than one, I noticed how hard their lot is in the desert; they do all the work, and the Bedouin looks on. The care of the flocks, the milking, the shifting and pitching of camps, the loading, the cooking, all work light and heavy; in fact, there seems no end to the uses to which this gift of God, and universal provider of the Arab, can be put.

The romantic side of Arabian life, if it ever existed, is passing out, and modern ways and means are gaining control, although the people look upon Ibn Saud as their political leader and religious head. As such, he is trying to maintain

his authority and carefully preserves Arab customs. The cinema is banned, but he is prepared to fit in with the trend of modern ways and means and utilize the advantages of mechanical science.

The first telephone from Jeddah to Mecca caused intense opposition, the sheikhs and high priests regarding it as the work of the Devil. Ibn Saud listened patiently to his followers, and then dismissed them whilst he settled in his own mind what he was going to do about it. A few days later he sent for them, explaining that it was regarding the telephone he wished to speak to them. He was not sure that the telephone *was* the work of the Devil—at any rate he would put it to the test. The wily monarch had arranged for one of the religious heads to be at the other end of the wire at Jeddah, forty-four miles away. He directed one of the deputation to pick up the receiver. To his astonishment, it was the words of the Quran which were coming over the wire. The voice was the voice of a friend, but the words were those of the holy book of Islam. If the telephone could dictate a passage from the Moslem bible, how could it be the work of the Devil?

The deputation was satisfied and the telephone came into its own.

The King spends much of his time at Riyadh, deep in the desert, where the customs are strictly religious. I was told he has a fortress palace there fashioned out of ten buildings. Bridges connect one house with another and lead to the mosque within his home. From the topmost pinnacle of his palace a powerful incandescent lamp flashes out its light at night, like a beam from a lighthouse, over the surrounding desert, a symbol of the new power and prestige that have arisen in Islam.

* * * * *

The Arabs have a sense of humour, with a typical slant on greatness and getting on in the world. The Arab mind is also linked up with story-tellers, and the tongue of Mahommed's followers is a golden one.

One night a couple of ministers dined with me, and I thought it might help the oil negotiations if I told them some stories bearing on the sagacity and wisdom of the Arabs. So after the dinner, when the food and drinks had diffused geniality around, and my guests were in topping form, I gave them a story, which I had heard or read long before, of an old Arab who had died and left, *inter alia*, seventeen camels to be divided amongst his three sons in the proportion of one half, one third, and one ninth.

My guests were all agog to see how this could possibly be worked out. The sons, too, could by no means decide the issue either on grounds of equity or arithmetic. How could seventeen camels be halved, and if by some miracle this feat were performed, then how would it be possible to take a third and a ninth of the uneven results? As usual, where wills are concerned, the attitude was one of take, not give and take, quarrelling set in, and dissipated the family harmony. Finally, the sons decided to take their problem to the qazi, or local judge.

The qazi pondered long and deeply, stroking his flowing white beard . . . until at length he said, "Come to me after the noonday prayers tomorrow, and I will give a decision in this matter." So, on the morrow, they arrived, and

with them came the seventeen camels filing into the courtyard, for a visual demonstration of mental artithmetic.

The old qazi returned the son's salutations, and in his sonorous eastern voice told them he would now make the distribution in accordance with the will. Whereupon he added one of his own camels to the seventeen—making eighteen in all. Then he divided them into one half, one third, and one ninth . . . the sons getting nine, six, and two as directed . . . and the qazi then took back his own camel. My dinner guests were delighted with this story, with its Arabian flavour, whilst showing the innate and biblical wisdom of the Arab. It had gone down well . . . and the negotiations took a decided and favourable turn.

* * * * *

Despite the cordial atmosphere prevailing in my relations with the Arabs a disquieting thing happened which might have been the anti-climax, yet it all passed off quite happily.

Fate has no predictor. Whilst in Jeddah I presented Ibn Saud with the latest model Philco portable wireless set, for he is a listener-in and prior to the presentation I had discoursed at some length on the probity of British politics and politicians, although I admit I was not happy about the politicians themselves! I added a few remarks on the justness of British views, the gentlemanly traditions in our Parliament, and the integrity of its members.

When the wireless was turned on it was radio at its best at the worst possible moment. An announcer's voice was giving the Budget disclosures by certain members of the House which resulted in their having to resign their place in the Mother of Parliaments. I said nothing . . . the less said the better on such an occasion. Of all the things that could have come to us over the air, this echo of the Budget scandal, out there in an Arabian palace in the Arabian night, was one of those amazing coincidences which add savour to life.

* * * * *

It happened to be the fast of the Ramazan when I was in Jeddah. This fast, one of the greatest religious observances of the Moslem faith, begins at dawn and ends with the going-down of the sun. It is incumbent on all the faithful to observe this fast, which they do not always obey, for thirty days, a duty of such moment that Mahommed characterized it as the 'gate of religion'. It directly affects, or is supposed to affect, the two hundred millions and more of his followers, and the Prophet was emphatic about it.

There are twelve months in the Moslem calendar, alternately of thirty and twenty-nine days; the advent of Ramazan varies, for the Moslem year being lunar, each month runs through the various seasons in the course of thirty-two solar years. The reason for the choice of Ramazan as the period of fasting is that the Quran came down from heaven in that month.

The Quran ordains that during the fast no food whatever shall be taken

between dawn and nightfall. There are some curious rules governing the fast, which is rendered null and void if perfumes are smelt, there can be no eating, drinking, nor any form of material pleasure throughout the prescribed hours. There must be no bathing, nor is the true believer permitted to swallow his saliva. To such an extent is the Ramazan observed that the really orthodox will not open the mouth to speak for fear of breathing more air than is essential.

During the hours of complete darkness eating is permitted, but the greatest care has to be exercised that no particle of food is left in the mouth, for even a grain of rice secreted within the cavities of the teeth is sufficient to destroy the fast, and the reward to be gained in the hereafter decreases proportionately. A Moslem must not touch a woman, and to kiss her is disastrous.

Whilst the rich may lessen the strenuousness of the ordeal by turning night into day, its rigours fall heavily on the poor and industrial classes who must continue their daily labours, and when the month of Ramazan falls during the summer, with its eighteen hours of daylight, it demands from them great fortitude and physical fitness. Nevertheless, when the famous Orientalist, Sir Richard Burton, who spoke twenty-nine languages fluently, and had a nodding acquaintance with forty-eight more, was living in Alexandria disguised as an Arab doctor, he found some of his patients refused to break the fast even when they knew such an attitude meant certain death.

In the cosmopolitan crowd observing the fast were a number of Pathans from the North-West Frontier of India, who contrasted strangely with the sober-minded Arabs. The Arab and the Bedouin are feudal and follow their chiefs, but the Pathan is intensely democratic; he knows no law save that of the rifle and the dagger, and only bows to the decision of the tribal council when he knows it will be enforced by those weapons.

One of these hearty freebooters told me that the Prophet was a man of vision and could make allowances, on given conditions, in the fast, such as for those who might be on a journey, or ill, or, peradventure, said my friend, 'engaged in righteous warfare' . . . and then he added with a chuckle, 'only on condition that they fast an equal number of days at the first opportunity'. A Moslem chief with whom I once travelled for several days in Central Asia would not take advantage of the dispensation, and throughout the livelong day he stuck manfully to his vow.

On the expiration of the thirty days, revels and junketing take place, this period of joy being known as 'the feast of the breaking of the fast'; the reaction takes every form of conviviality, festive song and dance, the donning of light attire and brilliant jewellery, and presents are distributed.

One of my sheikh friends was a mine of information on all that concerns this curious place. He had never been to England, but had got hold of one or two ideas. He asked me if English women cut off their hair! I had visions of bobbed hair and Eton crops and didn't know quite what to say . . . he saw my hesitancy, and said, "I can think of no reason why a woman should part with her hair" . . . with which I agreed. From a rooftop we glimpsed below and around us walled-in courtyards in which veiled harem inmates wandered about.

Harems of wealthy Arabs are supplied from, amongst other places, Africa, whilst Syria is favoured, and laughing blue- and brown-eyed houris find their

way here from the Caucasus, but such beauties are rare nowadays. Behind the latticework, and the whispering fountains playing in the moonlight, are more tragedies than feminine treasure-trove, though Arabs, as a general rule, treat women well. I was told of a fair Armenian girl who had once arrived in Ibn Saud's capital at Riyadh, near the Persian Gulf, her hair a cataract of fiery gold, and how the sheikhs, to whom such flaming beauty was rare indeed, treated her like a goddess rather than a girl. Her red hair became a legend passed from lip to lip.

An English governess, too, once married into the harem of an Arab sheikh. She was a determined woman who knew her own mind; in a short time most of the harem had packed up and left, and in a year or two, far from being the slave of the sheikh, she was the ruler and he filled the position of henpecked husband. Turning the tables in this way is a rare accomplishment, however, more particularly since there are no tables in Arab houses.

My host told me, with a sly glance in my direction, that bachelors do not exist in Arabia! Everyone marries, even though an ungallant Arab proverb declares that marriage is more sorrow than joy.

I sometimes dined with Arab men of mark; they were good hosts, and one or two of them, despite the restrictions of the Quran, would have shone as 'good mixers'. The courses were varied, but all well cooked. Vegetable stews, meat dishes spluttering and plonking with clarified butter. Vine leaves followed, bursting with chopped spiced meat; roast meat spitted on long thin sticks of wood were the next surprise. For drinks we had, *inter alia*, highly perfumed water such as I had not tasted elsewhere. Possibly a hairdresser might have known what we were drinking.

After dinner the guests washed their hands over a bowl with scented water poured from a silver ewer, sucked their fingers, and then belched signs of repletion to show the host that the dinner had been appreciated. At one of these repasts, before we departed for the night, my host told me the origin of coffee.

"Cast your mind back," he said, "to the day hundreds of years ago, when a Moslem, thrice blessed be his memory, was journeying in the desert. He was cold and lighted a fire; he was careless, choosing a spot close to some bushes. They were coffee bushes and soon caught fire. The smell was delicious and attracted his attention. 'By Allah,' he exclaimed, 'I will see if this roasting bush with its berries is as good in my cooking-pot as it smells to be.'" He did so, and was uplifted by the result. In this manner, I was told, coffee came into the world.

I asked one of my friends to show me a slave market, or, at any rate, to tell me all about it.

A quiet street, with tall shuttered houses looking on, and stone benches for idlers, is suddenly transformed into energy and life. Peeping from behind latticed windows are a crowd of buyers clothed in flowing robes and head-dress. The human exhibits are arranged on stone benches, sitting in rows, parallel to the wall. The prettiest girls occupy the highest benches; they wear flimsy transparent clothes and veils, and when they stand up show off their voluptuous figures to advantage.

A dallal (seller) walks up and down with a young Abyssinian on one hand

and a comely girl from the Nile valley on the other. "O my masters, see the incomparable beauty of Africa," he calls. "What bargains; B'ismillah what unsurpassable limbs! . . ." A buyer signals to the dallal; he looks more closely at the girl, feeling her with delicate fingers. He decides she is the goods and makes an offer. The dallal calls it out, but this girl *is* the goods . . . she is really pretty and a pocket Venus, so an advance is made. And yet another . . . eventually the fairy goes to the highest bidder.

As for the slaves, those I saw seemed happy enough, as they might well be under the beneficent rule of Ibn Saud. They smile their way through life and are often treated with honour, more especially those who attend to creature comforts and see that all is well. It is a part of the picture of this land where men wear flowing robes and keep slaves, where dates are the staple diet and the most precious thing in life may often be a cup of water.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

The Battle of London—The coming storm—The devil's deluge—How London won through—The future.

IN December 1938 I visited South Africa, a tour made under the best auspices and I had the luck to meet most of the men of moment in the Union. Also I saw from the air the ground in the Northern and Western Transvaal over which we had fought so many years before.

The return from sunny South Africa brought me once more in contact with the darkening horizon coming up over Europe and the tense and uncertain situation.

In the summer of 1939 I stayed with Baron and Baroness Roques d'Esplas at their lovely home in Dordogne, in the south-west of France. War had not yet burst upon Europe, but it was dangerously close in the offing, the rumblings were growing nearer and the die was about to be cast. Long acquaintance with Germany and the Nazi leaders, and definite proof of the terrific rate at which they were arming, had made it quite clear to me that we were nearing the edge of the abyss. My French friends were unwilling to share my apprehensions; they, like many others, had been lulled into a sense of false security and could not believe that the Germans would, or could, plunge the world into war.

It was very disquieting, and anxiety increased as night after night we sat out under the big magnolia in an old-world garden, the soft breeze stirring the roses in the trelliswork, the moonlight streaming through leaf and tendril and giving a sensation of happy anticipation of what we hoped would come. But it was not to be. On September 2nd France declared war, and so we jumped into my car and I drove my host one hundred and forty kilometres to Poitiers, where he reported for duty, and I went on to Dieppe and England, arriving there the next day.

The long-expected had happened; the Nazis were massing for the kill . . . but, unfortunately for them, the kill never came off. All attacks were in vain, the boasted *Luftwaffe* were swept out of the skies, Britain . . . and London . . . stood.

As the result of my personal experience and knowledge based on command of an anti-aircraft brigade in the London Air Defences from 1925–30, from travels in Germany, and many powerful contacts abroad, I attempted in a number of articles and public talks to give a vivid and realistic picture of the near future in peace and war. The situation worsened as time went on, until the advent of Hitler as head of the German Reich and the putting into practice everything he had told me he was going to do, if he came into power.

Looking neither to the right nor the left, Hitler went straight ahead, his all-consuming passion being to make Germany the greatest power on earth. He held several good cards; he knew exactly what he wanted and by what

means he was most likely to get it. With his arrival on the scene the Nazis speeded up their plans and began to mobilize openly, and on a vast scale, not only the industrial, social, agricultural, and war production units, but also the brains. Professors, scientists and chemists were called up to help the Nazi drive to power.

I had seen the intensive preparations going on for the previous five years and the efforts made to back the programme by a preponderance of air power.

From 1933 to 1938 it was a period of frantic toil in which the whole of the German Reich was engaged. Hitler had always emphasized to me that Germany must be Number One on the Continent, and so his preparations were thoroughly in accordance with the spirit and temper of the man. A Germany armed at all points . . . in overwhelming strength . . . ready for any combination . . . and risks reduced to a minimum. Such was this megalomaniac's programme.

Since he came to power Hitler's moves and intentions were watched with growing anxiety and apprehension, not only by his nearest neighbours, but elsewhere in a distrustful world. A few years before, in far-away Rio de Janeiro, President Vargas had talked to me of these things; in Lisbon, Dr. Salazar had expressed to me his misgivings, for he was comparatively close to the volcano, and if Portugal were involved there was little, if anything, the Portuguese could do about it.

Several men from this country tried to warn the Government of the impending danger, but it was the lone voice crying in the wilderness. Air-raid precautions in Britain had hardly been launched in a big way, but they were already in the making, and as zero hour crept gradually nearer they were perfected so as to operate on the touch of the button.

At the end of 1938 I returned from a tour in Germany where I had met all their war leaders, as well as many industrialists. London seemed strangely calm after Germany; no one, it seemed to me, in the Cabinet thought of war, and when I went to tea with the Chamberlains at Downing Street, after the Munich crisis, I was impressed with the complacency of the Prime Minister, who could not believe that Hitler would 'do the dirty on us', and my assertion that they were 'all a lot of gangsters whom I wouldn't trust farther than I could throw them' called forth a mild rebuke!

All political parties were alike in their disinclination to listen to the tales from Germany. The Socialist opposition was strong about rearmament and they were antagonistic to the creation of a powerful air force that would have been the most formidable deterrent to war. It would certainly have proved a better one than the militant pacifism of so many Socialist leaders and the Utopian stripping of all our armour advocated by many of them.

I wanted to address one or two political circles, but was ridden off as it was considered that disclosures I might have to make relative to Nazi activities 'would upset the Premier's policy of appeasement'.

During the tour of Germany, whether I walked between the swastikas in the Sudetenland, rode in a car through a German city, or inspected a factory sprung like a mushroom from the new German war culture, I was acutely aware on all sides of a ceaseless and tremendous undercurrent of activity and intensity pulsating through everything. Germany was just one hive of industry and warlike energy, which other Continental nations feared would at

any moment turn into a hornets' nest. But the supposed nest was smoked out by the pipe of peace at Munich and turned towards more peaceful pursuits!

The Germany I saw and visited, and where they welcomed me with courtesy, was a Germany being reconstructed and reconditioned. Resources and products were exploited and expressed in terms not of the individual part, but of the national whole. Drones and doles were not tolerated in the hive, and the queen bee was one whom all must follow in the various swarm movements prescribed. The voice of Germany was the voice of the loudspeaker, ceaselessly instructing, informing, encouraging.

The Führer kept them at it . . . these willing and enthusiastic Germans . . . 'The Führer will broadcast at eight o'clock . . . he will speak for half an hour to the nation.' So ran the announcement. There was no escaping this unfailing and universal schoolroom in the air, with its studied instruction demanding the close attention of every German, whoever or wherever he might be. From cars, from shops, from factories, from private houses and flats, came the sound of the radio sets with their high-frequency talks. I have no doubt but that the power and performance of the Nazi dominion were mainly built up on the all-pervading and persuasive wavelengths of sound.

It was an impressive spectacle of a nation harnessed in peace-time to national effort. Action in every class of life was being staged for the strengthening of the Nazi regime all designed to make Germany that Number One on the Continent . . . and in the world. The swastika symbol itself appeared to be caught up in the wheels of organized production. It was given as a diploma to factories, framed and surrounded by the coy wheel of highly modern machinery.

At the Air Ministry in Berlin with its 3,200 rooms, I recall the words of Marshal Milch, then the Secretary for Air. We sat in his suite of rooms up on the fourth floor, at eight o'clock in the morning, for this beehive was in full swing day and night. "We have made great preparations, but with no hostile or aggressive intent towards England or France," said this arch-perverter of the truth. And there were people in Britain foolish enough to believe it.

At Friedrichshafen in the far south I looked at the new wonder Zeppelin, built for industrial purposes as it was not a practicable war proposition, while hearing Dr. Eckener's words, "Five and a half million rivets go to form the sinews of this flying monster you see before you." The Zeppelin shone with a silver lining where the sun came through the windows of the gigantic hangar. I wondered if this was the real German conqueror of the air, a new ship following the wake of Drake, Magellan and Cortez. Or was it another exception proving the rule that man's progress in the sky is bound up with machines heavier than air!

At Darmstadt I was towed into the air in a glider, with Germany's ace glider as my pilot. Everyone was encouraged to glide in Germany, for this was part of a programme for mastering the air.

What did it all mean, this ceaseless effort to build up a great, vigorous, economic, commercial, and warlike Germany? By December 1938 results, as I saw them, had already gone far beyond the clearing of grievances said by the Germans to have been brought into being by the Versailles Treaty. Germany now possessed not only a robust and cheerful, but violently militant, outlook.

Self-esteem, self-confidence, a tremendous belief in their own power and efficiency had been armoured and reinforced in concrete emplacements.

The Nazis were building for world dominion, industry and man-power alike were mobilized for the supreme task of creating a go-ahead and invincible Germany, which, as Hitler told me, could take on all comers. The red light was rapidly showing.

The storm was looming up. In the previous war France and Belgium had been the cockpit, although it had originated in the Balkans, whose explosive elements I had seen.*

Musing on many disquieting factors, I thought of Hitler and his studied preparations.

Appropriately enough, as I left the new flying-field at Frankfort I heard the voice of the wireless announcing . . . 'the Fuhrer will broadcast to the people at nine o'clock'. I had a vision of millions of wireless sets carrying words of decision, of direction, of encouragement, of dictatorship into the willing German ear.

* * * * *

When the storm burst in September 1939 it found us only partially prepared, and luckily nothing happened for many months after the outbreak, so we had more time to gather speed, whilst there was always that steady and unshakable confidence in the character and strength of the British people who were closing their ranks in readiness for the onslaught.

The Germans were determined to wipe out London. But why did they wait so long before attempting it? It was not until August 1940 that they weighed in for the Battle of London. No doubt they thought it was a 'sitter'; hitherto they had swept everything before them—Poland, Norway, the Netherlands, France, all had gone under. The Nazis stood on the shores of the Channel ready for the conquest of Britain . . . swaggering and exultant, as is the German way. It looked an easy job, for we had barely escaped complete disaster at Dunkirk, the bombastic Mussolini was frisking alongside Hitler, and the German strength on land and in the air was publicized by themselves to the point where it was regarded as invincible. We heard little or nothing of our own forces, yet when the showdown came it was they, and not the Nazis, who came out on top.

So far as London was concerned, a scheme of Civil Defence, embracing the London regional area, had been worked out, with all the component parts and services; Regional Commissioners appointed, and duties assigned to the quarter of a million men and women workers in the ninety-six boroughs comprising the area, which covered seven hundred and twenty-four square miles.

The different branches of Civil Defence were co-ordinated into one organized unit, operating under the immediate direction of the Regional Commissioners, but controlled in all matters of policy by the Home Secretary. The Regional Commissioners had been appointed by Sir John Anderson, my genial host at Darjeeling after the Everest flight. In the third week of the Battle of London he was succeeded by Mr. Herbert Morrison. Despite his record in the last war, and his objection to the Union Jack being flown over buildings within his charge,

* *Through Europe and the Balkans.* (Cassells.)

the choice of Morrison was a good one. A Londoner, and the reputed son of a policeman, he had some of the qualities necessary to cope with this unique situation.

Next in order came the Regional Commissioners themselves, headed by Captain Euan Wallace, who, unfortunately, died, and Sir Ernest Gowers reigned in his stead Gowers was unexcelled in an office, but could never be mistaken for anything else but what he is, the cold, acid, and impersonal Civil Servant.

The active Regional Commissioner, whose Chief Staff Officer and Personal Assistant I became, was Admiral Sir Edward Evans, a man qualified to handle the men and women workers. The office and its general direction, the letters and circulars, and ponderous correspondence beloved of a Civil Service department, could be left to others, whilst the Regional Commissioner went out to encourage the men and women—not that they wanted encouraging, for they worked with a will and determination that was, and always will be, the wonder of the world.

In various appointments held I have found that personal contact is important, for what men and women appreciate is that officers should be constantly in touch with them and not see things simply through the eyes of their staff and subordinates. In an organization such as ours it was vital to know the characteristics of the controllers and sub-controllers, of whom there were more than five hundred. Often in a general idea or scheme some wanted detailed and precise orders; they would do nothing on their own initiative and always played for safety. It was necessary for one to know who was, or was not, suitable for posts of responsibility.

In dealing with the various types of men and women of this complex Civil Defence organization, it was essential to be able to go up, or come down, to their level. To do this requires self-confidence and a knowledge of human nature, for an unfortunate comment, or a manner that leaves the audience cold, may have disastrous effects.

To those unaccustomed to dealing with such a mixed crowd as our civil defence workers, attempts to ingratiate themselves with their audience may be disconcerting. I remember Field-Marshal Lord Wavell, when dining with me one night, telling a story of Earl Haig in France, who invariably carried out an inspection in stolid silence. One day it was suggested that it might be a good thing, and appreciated by the men, if he spoke to one or two of them. Haig agreed . . . and when passing down the line suddenly stopped, and, looking at one of the soldiers, said abruptly, like a bark from a gun: "Where did you start this war." The man was completely embarrassed and taken by surprise . . . and replied: "I beg your pardon, sir. I didn't start this war, I think the Kaiser did."

* * * * *

The inherent wit and humour of the Londoner had to be maintained at its customary high level, although it never showed any signs of falling off. A poem composed by one of our war leaders was always a stimulant to the men and women on duty at the depots and stations all over the Region. A tribute to the qualities of the Londoner; this is what it said:

If you can keep yourself from going crackers
At all the things that you're advised to do,
When Hitler sends his horrid air attackers
With squibs and bombs to try and frighten you;
If you can hear that hellish Banshee warning
Without that sinking feeling in your breast;
If you can sleep in dug-outs till the morning
And never feel you ought to have more rest;
If you can laugh at every black-out stumble,
Nor murmur when you cannot find a pub;
If you can eat your rations and not grumble,
About the wicked price you pay for grub;
If you can keep depression down to zero,
And view it all as just a bit of fun;
Then, sir, you'll be a ruddy hero;
And, what is more, you'll be the only *one.*

The Regional Headquarters, known as R.H.Q., for the London area were set up at the Geological Museum in South Kensington.

The fossils, skeletons, and pieces of mammoth which were displaced by our arrival have crept back to their former quarters; they have returned in peace to take over the hidden hunting grounds of London's greatest war, when the enemy flew in under the moon for the kill, and the blitzes blazed and only a few underground rooms seemed at times to stand between the capital and destruction.

Here was the H.Q. of London's Civil Defence army. Here was written with fire and bomb a subterranean story that became a part of the people's life for five years, entering into almost every street and home.

No treasure room of an Arabian Night was more valuable than the buried London Regional war rooms during the blacked-out nights of blitz with the control-room mirroring air raids and counter-measures. Hitler was striving to drive London down and out and back to caveman days. London accepted the challenge and set up its underground war-rooms, armoured by a seven-foot enclosing shell of concrete.

A steel gas-tight blast door protected both entrance and emergency exit and could be opened only from inside. The switchboard-room connected with four exchanges, the raid-proof lines entering the building from four different cable routes. Sixty-four direct lines of call terminated on the switchboard manned by an expert Post Office staff.

Emergency lighting, air conditioning, gas filtration plant ministered to the nightly needs of a number of men and women, the war-room control staff, Cockney cave-dwellers, once again learning the strength of fire and matched against Nazi killers.

The self-contained stronghold under the ground founded on geology, operating geographically, was helping to make history. "A real museum piece," I once remarked to the Admiral. "Anything you like but mausoleum," he grimly rejoined.

There was the message room with its multiphones, supervisors, and industrial warning commentary, to the bare control-room, noting the messages

classed under the headings of 'To-day', 'Yesterday', 'Previous three days', with priority always given to Fighter Command telephony where a few seconds meant so much.

On a wall of the control-room hung two fateful three-inch to one mile maps of London divided by a tally-board. The second map had been intended to portray damage after raids, but this soon epitomized the impossible, and the maps were used alternately to show the raids as in progress, and the one of the previous night.

During bad raids control-room maps became veritable pincushions.

In came the first flash of alarm of enemy intention, the teleprinters would get busy, off went messages to Fighter Command, up on the map went a large green pin showing which of London's ninety-six Boroughs was for it, a large mauve pin following for anti-aircraft response, a blue pin for the smash of high explosive.

Every bomb of any and every sort, exploded and unexploded, each mine, each droning flying bomb, was faithfully recorded on these maps of life and death for eight millions. London writhed in the grip of aerial war. Each incident, each wound, each scar was faithfully marked down and not forgotten.

Every morning, when grim black-out faded into the daylight of respite, the control-room knew the answers to anxiety, tragedies and reprieves affecting millions of Londoners.

So active became the plotting—our murals—that when the V1 and V2 appeared the exact sites of fall were marked up.

The tally-board girls worked in the customary shifts; just ordinary young London girls, deft and debonair, and always on deck like the men. They were the Buntys pulling innumerable strings of war, and piling on responsibilities as easily as make-up.

And the Alsatian rescue dogs. Powerful and skilled they were conducted to the spot on a lead and at once began scenting out buried victims with uncanny accuracy.

Many lives were saved in this way, particularly south of the river. They were British dogs, trained in Britain, and paid a debt to a dog-loving country.

A bad incident could collect on the scene some hundreds of Civil Defence workers within a few minutes. Bulldozers swept aside the debris, mobile cranes lifted heavy masonry, opening the way for sound locators and the special tunnelling technique.

Often they had to bring their own lighting to the scene, and to turn lights on and off that were forbidden to the public.

A record case stands of an American soldier, buried several days in the West End, and eventually pulled out alive, asking for a cigarette.

When the flying bombs rained on us they were plotted in the control-room as they left their base abroad, and followed by radar and other means the whole way to their destination.

It was often possible to forecast in which area any given flying bomb would fall, and therefore to have the various Civil Defence parties waiting for it. In this way they were less of a problem to the control-room than the air bombs.

When the rockets were coming over we only knew when one had left its base—not where it was going to land. Moving at a mile a second, hurled two hundred and fifty miles into the stratosphere, on a diabolical parabola,

the rocket outsoared and outdistanced controls, though we were beginning to work out a special contrivance when war ended.

The Civil Defence was divided into sections, each with its duties clearly defined and an important cog in the great wheel. These were the Wardens, Ambulance Service, Stretchers Cars, First-aid posts, Rescue Service, National Fire Service which worked in the closest co-operation with Civil Defence, the Bomb Disposal Squads, Fire-watchers, Control-Room staff and messengers.

The wardens were a pivot on which the security of London largely turned. They numbered 99,000, men and women, distributed over the seven hundred and twenty-four square miles, with approximately ten wardens' posts to each square mile. The personnel of these posts were divided into two groups; those remaining on duty at the post sending and receiving messages, the rest patrolling streets and shelters. The duty of the patrolling wardens was to see that the black-out rules were observed and that there were no lights showing from windows. They reported fires and anything unusual to their post, who, in turn, passed on the information to the borough control-room which could then instantly lay plans to cope with the situation.

Whilst this was eventuating the wardens grappled with the incident; this they did to effect, for their training covered a wide range, from first-aid to anti-gas treatment and life-saving. They knew the locations of police-stations, telephone-boxes, water services, and so on; the moment anything happened and bombs came down they and the fire-watchers tackled the incendiary bombs and often, despite the deluge, the celerity of the wardens saved houses and buildings. Sometimes these fire-bombs fell at the rate of forty to fifty a minute, on one building in Finsbury forty-eight fell within a space of a few minutes; and on one borough during a heavy attack nearly 11,000 fire-bombs came down. Yet, despite such a shower, the damage done was negligible; what was really dangerous was our difficulty with the children, who, evading our efforts to round them up, played football with the bombs! One woman warden put out thirty-five incendiaries . . . probably a record, even for this wonderful service. The wardens certainly knew how to grapple with any situation, and always proved equal to the occasion.

The Ambulance, Stretcher, and First-aid Posts Service were likewise a highly organized section; for the ambulance cars there were 6,000 women drivers, each being a holder of a first-aid certificate, and a qualified driver. They were on duty day and night, and there were two or three ambulance stations in each borough, according to its size. The women, like the men, were of all types, the various strata of society working in friendly understanding and mutual respect. One driver I knew was on holiday from Australia when the war started and she promptly joined the Ambulance Service; another was a lady of title who had hunted her own pack, a fine driver and quick on fire-bombs.

There were part-time as well as permanent ambulance workers; this meant that they worked during the day at their jobs or in their homes, and came on duty when free.

The men helped with the heavy stretcher work and such duties as were too exacting for women, but first-aid posts were mainly women trained to their task and always ready to cope with an influx of cases.

The above services stand out pre-eminently, for before the battle began it was estimated there would be 300,000 casualties on the first day or night, arrangements were made to accommodate that number, and first-aid posts were established evenly over the boroughs.

When the battle began realism could be studied to effect in and out of these ambulance stations. The start for a bombed site, getting there through fires, craters, firemen's hoses, and a score of other things in their path. Then the return with the casualties.

Next came the Light and Heavy Rescue Service, composed of men only. Throughout the area they numbered 17,000 divided into parties at the depots and stations, of which there were approximately 750. The men were of all types, largely those of the building and similar trades. Their duties were the rescue of persons trapped in debris of bombed buildings, as well as those who were killed, the shoring-up or demolition of dangerous buildings, and the salvaging of furniture and goods from bombed houses.

At each rescue depot were lorries and cranes, with the requisite equipment for their work, and they, too, were linked up with the other component parts of the service.

After the wardens the rescue party and ambulance were first on the scene at an 'incident', as the place was called where bombs, rockets, or flying bombs fell, and often at the very commencement of their labours the humorous side of life would be exemplified in the tragedy and destruction around.

In a squalid back street of South-east London an old lady was standing in front of her home, looking up at it pathetically. On reaching the scene the rescue leader asked if there was anything they could do for her, at the same time surveying the blown-in door and windows. "No, there was nothing they could do . . . she felt quite all right" . . . then suddenly, as if uplifted by some unforeseen force . . . she said, "Ye know, 'ole Hitler's done something I ain't been able to do for twenty years . . . he's opened my bedroom window."

Then there was 'Lewisham Lily', another priceless old lady, who, in her ninety-two years, could forget that there are such things as war and strife. Her home had a direct hit, but luckily she was in an Anderson shelter in her tiny garden. The survivors were dug out from the crashed house, and we asked the grand-daughter if there was anyone else missing. She cast around . . . and then said, "But where's Granny?" Granny was not there . . . and so in response to the entreaties of the girl the rescue party set to with a will and dug again. They opened up the Anderson shelter . . . and there, sure enough, was Granny . . . reading the *Evening News* by candlelight. "Is anything wrong?" she asked.

The National Fire Service, which came into being as such in August 1941, the old London Fire Brigade, is a body of men with a world-wide reputation and the sheet anchor in the fire-bombing raids on London. Their job was a colossal one, the magnitude of which may be faintly assessed when I say that there were often more than a thousand fires raging in London on a blitz night, the climax being reached on the night of May 10th, 1941, when there were 2,036 separate fires in the London area.

The Fire Service was equally distributed, there being 786 permanent and auxiliary stations, in addition to river stations, many of which sprang into existence almost overnight, manned by a willing personnel, eighty per cent of whom, when the first raid occurred, had never had to tackle a fire before.

These heroic men won immortal renown on the night of December 29th, 1940, when the Germans tried hard to set fire to the City of London . . . and nearly succeeded. They concentrated on the part lying around St. Paul's Cathedral, hoping to wipe out the heart and focus of the capital. It was a dreadful night; the glare in the skies lighted up the major part of London, the Boche circled round with his 330 bombers, of whom thirty-seven were brought down; he rained down his fire-bombs and, incidentally, burnt up Paternoster Row and destroyed five million books. There were two outstanding events that night; never in the history of the London Fire Force had such a situation confronted them; the City round the Guildhall was a ring of fire, narrow streets were engulfed in a sheet of flame, and 240 firemen were hemmed in, their equipment, engines, ladders, fire-hoses, all had been scorched and burnt. No longer able to do their job, the men were caught like rats in a trap; how to get out? . . . not that this worried them . . . but headquarters at this tremendous fire were thinking of them . . . they were to get out as best they might . . . and they did, in orderly fashion, almost one by one, through the fiery furnace . . . and went on with the job when they had trickled through the burning and crashing buildings.

Now come perhaps the bravest of the brave—the Bomb Disposal squads. It was foreseen that bombs might drop and not explode on impact, but would do so later on; in other words, would be delayed action, and burst perhaps a day, a week, or a month or more later on; all this the Boche estimated would help in the reign of terror, unnerve the people, and lead to the long-expected and early collapse. There were many unexploded bombs, but perhaps the most remarkable was one that fell by St. Paul's Cathedral on the night of April 16th, 1941.

The Huns came over in force on that night; we got used to their nightly call and the turmoil that succeeded it. As usual, the sirens blared forth their banshee wail. In the distance was the gunfire which became increasingly intense as the Hun neared the capital, and soon all London was in the vortex. Overhead the guns were thundering, the flashes of bursting shells reflected down the sky. The roar of the guns, the distinctive drone of enemy 'planes, the crash of high explosive, and the tremendous pulsations we could hear, told us that another air battle was in progress.

On that night of April 16th they seemed to concentrate on the City and the area round Fleet Street, dropping high explosive and a couple of two-ton parachute mines, one in Fleet Street, which did not explode, the other right against the gardener's house on the north side of St. Paul's Cathedral! Providence was with us that night . . . the parachute with its two tons of very high explosive came slowly, almost majestically, to ground . . . it sailed down the side of Wren's masterpiece. . . . This is the end, we thought! Had the paramine gone off nothing could have saved the entire cathedral . . . the dome, the superb fabric, all would have collapsed.

A naval demolition party came along, not knowing whether the giant

mine was delayed action . . . and disconnected the working parts . . . and thus was St. Paul's saved.

The Guildhall was not so fortunate, being badly hit, but soon rose phoenix-like from the ashes of the December 1940 blitz. We subsequently had a parade in there headed by the Lord Mayor; it was an impressive sight and setting. Still safe on his broad pedestal against a scarred wall, William Pitt looked down encouragingly—the Churchill of his day—the man who in Napoleonic times helped to save England and Europe. Wellington, with part of his right arm missing in the blitz, now shared the same frailties with his great compatriot, Nelson.

In these enemy attacks on historical buildings the fire-watchers played a great part. They numbered thousands, many of them women, were both full- and part-time, and right well did they watch the skies for the advent of the Boche. They were ever alert, and I remember one night dining at a friend's house when the siren went, its depressing note warning us of the approach of the Nazi. A lady at the dinner got up and dashed off . . . she excused herself by saying that she was a fire-watcher, and when the 'All Clear' went her cook would come and relieve her . . . in case the Boche returned.

Fire-watchers had to be on the look-out for incendiary bombs and the flaming-up of fires. In an industrial borough they were stationed on the roofs of factories and other vital buildings, others patrolled the streets, and all of them ready for immediate action, for buildings could be saved from utter destruction if incendiary bombs were dealt with the moment they dropped. These fire-watchers would snuff out a fire-bomb as quickly as you would snuff out a candle, and the magnitude of their job can be judged from the fact that on many nights fire-bombs fell in dense clusters, so continuous and close that they set on fire the clothes of these splendid people, many of whom were women.

The control-room of each of the ninety-six boroughs had a staff of trained telephonists and personnel, most of them women—how grandly women have figured in this war!—and there were 7,000 of them in these centres. A control-room was a hive of industry; one side of the subterranean room girls would be sending out calls, on the other receiving them. Wardens reported what was happening in their districts, giving details and asking perhaps for assistance; if it was a serious 'incident' a messenger, the 'Incident Man', was ready to dash off to the scene of action. These girls in the control-room were kept busy; in one borough on one night they handled nearly 1,200 S O S and other messages. In a raid seven of them were killed by a direct hit . . . but of the remainder not one left her post.

Such, then, is the brief outline of the Civil Defence services designed to safeguard London and meet the onslaught of the Nazi. The relative efficiency of the ninety-six working parts depended to a large extent on individual boroughs; there were good, bad, and indifferent ones. In fact, the Admiral coined an expression for these relative values. . . . 'Gold for excellent, red for very good, blue for wishy-washy . . . and black for bloody awful.'

The plan of operations evolved with so much care and thought was tried out by the acid test of war. Let us see how the battle progressed, this civilians' battle that ranks with Inkerman, the 'Soldiers' Battle'.

The Battle of London, from first to last, through all its changing episodes, is the chief glory of the long and eventful history of the capital, a bright and shining tribute to the courage of London. It was waged under great disadvantages, but nothing could have better shown the inflexible, unconquerable tenacity of the people. They were determined to win the day, and the fact that they might be near losing it made no difference—all they thought of was to get on with the job, supremely indifferent to the initial superiority of the enemy and quite undismayed by his attacks.

The Nazi dropped his first bomb at Addington in Surrey on June 18th, 1940, the night after the French had succumbed to the onslaught on Paris. Over two months elapsed and then the Nazi returned for his first general attack on the London area. He was reconnoitring and feeling his way and on September 7th launched a daylight raid over London, using about 370 'planes, resuming the attack that night. A great deal of damage was done and 2,030 people were killed and wounded. The battle had begun in earnest.

Thereafter during September the enemy came over at night, for he feared the daylight and was rattled with the severe losses in 'planes . . . 185 on one day and 144 on another. He decided that night bombing was safer . . . and during 1940–41 came over London on fifty-eight nights running. Thus these attacks continued without interruption, and up to June 1941 double the number of houses and buildings were destroyed or damaged in London than all the rest of Britain put together.

It would be tedious to recount the numerous attacks, but they reached the climax for 1940 on the night of December 29th. The historic Guildhall was partly gutted, and many churches designed by Wren were destroyed or badly knocked about. Some of these churches might possibly have been saved had their doors been left open, but they were locked and barred, and battering-rams had to be brought to burst in the doors so that the firemen could get to work.

With the machine in running order the paramount problem was that of shelters. The population of London numbered over eight millions, and how to provide shelter for them in an aerial bombardment?

In our drive to instal bunks in the shelters and make them habitable we came up against the Civil Service, who sometimes show lack of enterprise, and think only in terms of circulars and ponderous pronouncements, many of them unintelligible and most of them useless. These Civil Servants appear to be obsessed with paper and memoranda; they circulated a memorandum on the most trivial subjects, passing it to each department or section that might be even remotely concerned, holding up action until all of them had recorded a 'minute'. Personally I used the telephone whenever possible, and was able to arrange delivery of bunks and other articles so vitally needed often without recourse to the time-honoured civil procedure. To avoid taking responsibility the Civil Service 'pass the buck' to someone higher up; he, in turn, passes it to the next man, and so it goes on, until the need for action has passed into the mists of antiquity.

The first attacks on London made clear that the shelters were inadequate and there followed a period of frantic toil to adapt basements, cellars, underground passages, tube stations, and so on, for this purpose and to equip them

with the necessary bunks. I arranged for a number of these bunks to be seen at a Ministry in Westminster, from which one was chosen by the Admiral, but it was six weeks before we could get them into production, owing to departmental delays and the necessity for looking at the bunks, their cost, and production from a score of different angles! In the meantime, many shelterers had to do without bunks. Nevertheless, by driving, tank-like, through this red tape we got furniture firms and others with the requisite experience to begin delivery . . . and to talk about prices and tenders afterwards. We agreed a reasonable price . . . and went ahead.

So gradually, in spite of many obstacles, shelters were organized, proper sleeping accommodation arranged, and the requisite food, water, and sanitation services installed. With all this came the necessity to organize welfare and entertainment, to counteract the inevitable boredom arising from a troglodyte life, and to set up rest centres where bombed-out people could be given the restful facilities to recover.

All sorts of cases had to be dealt with at these posts. Some suffered from shell-shock. . . . 'I can't remember my name . . . or where I live'. . . . What could be done about it! The Greeks had a word for it—amnesia, forgetfulness, fading out of the memory, a complete blank as to name, identity, relatives, or home. Some of these people recovered in a few days, after quiet rest and treatment, others might come back after years of blank memory, or not at all. There were different types of this shock. One man had not the foggiest idea of who he was or where he came from. His description was broadcast and various people claimed him . . . perhaps with a view to making something out of it. One woman said he must be her vanished husband; another that he was her brother on whom she depended for support; yet a third party asserted that he was their son and had run their small hardware shop. Careful investigation indicated that this last was the most plausible claim . . . and so the man of blank memory was decanted from a car some three hundred yards from the little shop. Sure enough, he set off up the road, turned right, left, and centre, and walked into his people's shop. The prodigal son had returned.

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In the blitzed areas mobile canteens had to be provided; they were held in readiness to move instantly wherever required, with the hot food and drinks, and their inspiring workers and waitresses.

The thing I noticed the morning after an air raid was the feeling of helplessness; the tremendous impact of the night before had, in many cases, left people almost speechless, and many had not the faintest idea of what they should do. Mobile canteens were required, and a powerful and imaginative organization set up to cope with the psychological effects of air raids. As I saw it, what was vital was something to deal with the large number of people who were merely greatly upset and required instant moral attention. The entire tempo of things could be changed if five per cent of official energy was expended on those not wounded, but had had only their windows broken and their ears deafened by many hours of noise and racket.

I always believed, and worked on the conviction, that the morning after a raid should come waves of social help, hot tea and coffee, news, properly served up, with personal organization so as to take people out, as it were, from what had happened the night before, and link them up with the outside world from which they were for the moment severed by lack of transport, destruction of telephones, electricity, gas for cooking, and so on.

I was always keen on the necessity of attending to the moral side. What happened to the minds of people in a 'blitz' was as important as what happened to their bodies, and their property, a greater number being affected menallty than were touched physically. The problem was a complex one, but simple means were called for which strengthened the morale and made people get out of terrible experiences of this kind something positive as well as something negative.

These social waves coming along next morning, the warm and inspiring food, the loudspeaker vans telling them what to do, where to find a rest centre, cheery encouragement, and the like, had a wonderfully cumulative effect, especially amongst women, whose moral strength was always good.

On early-morning visits to blitzed areas I would talk with the women, and always found them calm and collected, as though they had never been through such harrowing times. The children, too, were the same, and, true to their character, would be playing in the streets, absorbed in their dolls and toys, without an idea of the Boche or any other bogey.

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Life in the shelters had its amusing highlights. There was one old man of ninety-two in Wapping, who we thought should be evacuated to the country, instead of spending his nights in a shelter. "Well, I would go . . . only I just *must* stay and look after the children," he said. I was puzzled at one of his advanced years having children in need of care and attention . . . and so questioned the shelter warden. "Yes," he replied, "he has three children . . . but they're all drawing the old age pension."

A charwoman, whose attic had been hit in Chelsea, and where she stayed on right from the beginning until the fire-bomb got it, remarked quite cheerily: "I'm coming down in the world . . . but I'm still at home."

Another problem one had to tackle was the ever-persistent rumour; the report of hundreds of people being killed at a certain place, the number going up with the telling. These had to be refuted with the actual figures. There were fantastic stories about the hit on the Bank tube station; thousands had been killed with untold wounded. Actually the killed totalled fifty-one. A South London tube station was another star story . . . but the only sensational part of the incident was a two-decker bus which stood upright in the crater!

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In all this Civil Defence organization we endeavoured to solve problems on common sense, instead of red tape, lines. It was often discouraging, although we never let discouragement supervene, this battle with bureaucratic rule,

with its regulations, restrictions, and controls, its unimaginative theorizing, and its pathetic clinging to departmental custom, some of which seemed to me to date back to the Crimean War. The Civil Service have early Victorian views and they hang on to them as the one fixed thing in a shifting world.

What always alarmed me was the prodigal waste of money, and the complete lack of business acumen in many of these Government officials; their methods were archaic and would land a business house in the Bankruptcy Court within a week or so, but the taxpayer is always there to pay the bill.

In June 1944 the Battle of London entered upon a new phase. The first flying bomb arrived on the night of June 15th, falling in Bethnal Green, and thereafter following on with uncertain frequency.

So did we make acquaintance with the flying robot, the pilotless 'plane, more discussed at that time in Britain than any other visitor from Hunland since the arrival of Hess. It was the latest and most devilish device of Hitler and his sadistic scientists, the secret mechanical weapon—V1—the venom of the expiring Nazi monster and a characteristic portent, in more ways than one, of the incipient death-throes of the beast.

It had a variety of names . . . buzz-bombs by the Americans, doodlebugs by many in this country, a grim jest pleasing to Londoners. It was also called flying bomb, flying stooge, buzzard, and other names starting with a B. Nomenclature notwithstanding, it remained a mass killer, a murderer all the more menacing and mysterious because it knew not its victims or destination when setting a course for England.

Because of its composition, part phantasy and fairy-tale, part horror, the robot 'plane focused the attention and gossip of Londoners more than previous bombing or blitz attack. Viewed for the first time by Londoners, the flying bomb almost seemed to belong to the realm of broomsticks and screeching flying shapes, with nothing really real about it.

Heralding its appearance on the scene came faint and far away, a distant yet distinct hum, quite distinguishable to the attentive ear from all other air-borne craft. A vicious hornet hum with nothing pleasurable or polite about the noise. Quickly growing in volume and menace, if coming in your direction, was the sound of the racing engines, followed by a cloudy glimpse of a dark, midget object, and then when the robot was close, the hurtling, horribly unnatural noise like an underground train rushing overhead, roaring like an animal in the sky, bent on destruction, its destination doom.

Suddenly, operated by an automatic cut-out, the engine stopped and there was a sudden swooping silence, a calm more dangerous than storm, wherein the wise man dived for the nearest cover, be it a blast wall or the more bashful shelter of his office table. Look out! No, but it was almost unhuman not to look out for the crash which followed almost at once, or possibly not for fifteen or twenty seconds, according as to whether the robot was a diver or a glider.

At night the robots became no less visible and much more spectacular, fiery flying missiles lit with a glowing internal fire and with burning tails, as the flame poured out from the exhaust of this night murderer moving at four hundred miles per hour. The glowing flame seemed to me as though it came from the special infernal regions whence Hitler refuelled and requisitioned his imaginations and intuitions.

"Thank God . . . not stopping here," the Londoner would exclaim as he turned back to work . . . but some poor unfortunate would be getting it farther along. There were always innocent victims awaiting the accursed invention, the latest microbe to crawl from the diseased wing of the Führer. This flying bomb was one of the last and most scientific bolts from the Nazi blue, but it was surely a sign that they would soon have shot it.

In spite of the flying bomb, or because of it, the humour and spirit of the Londoner shone with added brilliance. I was coming back to R.H.Q. from lunch one day when a flying bomb came roaring along overhead, immediately above us. The engine cut out, and I felt certain it must fall in our street, and quite close to, if not on, us. But it passed safely over; I watched it from behind a tree which I shared with a Cockney. When it had got beyond our tree the Cockney turned to me and said, "It's all right, sir, she's non-stop."

Intelligence received about these flying bombs early in 1943 proved very accurate, even to the colour the bomb would be painted. This reliable information enabled our Civil Defence services to be adapted to meet the coming attack, which proved quite different from that of piloted aircraft, in that there was only slight incendiary effect and the size of the bomb was constant. Each was equivalent to a two-thousand-pound bomb. Another difference was that the flying-bomb attack could, and very often did, last right round the clock.

The main flying-bomb attack was, in fact, almost continuous from June 15th until the end of August 1944. When the enemy was thrown out of France these attacks were launched by aircraft over the North Sea, and later from land bases in Holland. Few, if any, of these latter reached the capital.

Flying bombs were plotted in the same way as piloted aircraft, and so an air-raid warning could be given for each attack. Early in these flying-bomb attacks an alert period often lasted longer than was justified by imminent danger, but after brief experience of the new raids alerts were sounded more frequently, i.e. for each wave of attack. This gave the public some relief from the ice-pack feeling in the stomach, which, by this time, was a common sensation until the 'All Clear' was sounded.

The system of plotting these 'buzz-bombs', as the Americans called them, was ingenious. Deep down in the war room was a plotting table, linked by telephone with the 'Alarm Control System'. As the bombs left their starting point they were plotted with uncanny accuracy. Unless they were shot down the operators followed them to London, and the connections, and 'tips', were so reliable that we could make fairly safe bets in which area the buzz-bomb would fall and the borough whose job it would be to report a flying-bomb incident.

Incidents generally proved more widespread than those caused during the air 'blitz', due to the excessive blast effect, together with lack of penetration of the flying bomb. The hideous noise heralding its approach, and the cut-out being the signal of imminent disaster, ensured that our services were rapidly on the spot.

Flying-bomb express parties virtually followed a bomb and arrived at the incident within a few minutes of the explosion!

After the flying bombs the rockets presented a number of new problems for us to cope with, the outstanding one being that a warning system was impracticable, although we picked up these long-range rockets by radar. The pheno-

menal explosion added to the difficulty of detection on the ground, since everyone over a wide area thought the explosion to be in his own back garden, whereas it may have occurred five miles away. Reports came from a variety of sources, all highly organized and linked up, the flying squads were 'on deck' and invariably standing by in the given area where the rocket might fall.

Connected with observation posts here and across the Channel the information on these rockets was accurate, although none could tell exactly where the thing would land, for the time limit of three or four minutes between starting off and explosion did not permit of certainty in location . . . but it was remarkably good . . . all things considered. These rockets were travelling at fifty miles a minute, they were almost mechanical perfections, the machinery delicately adjusted, and the Hun aiming at the bursting of the rocket at roof-top level so as to create the maximum amount of damage. This, however, rarely eventuated, for atmospheric conditions and passing through the stratosphere at an enormous height, anything up to three hundred miles above the earth, were problems he grappled with but did not solve. Amazing scientific calculations were required so that the rocket might burst at the thousandth part of a second on its downward flight of three thousand miles an hour from the stratosphere. No easy task!

With the collapse of the Germans the potentialities of flying bomb and rocket were left to conjecture; what will develop cannot be foreseen. We know enough, however, to estimate that flying and atomic bombs and rockets in a future war will far transcend anything hitherto encountered and all the things we have experienced in the past form but the prelude to the warlike things to come.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

The dream island—I visit Lundy—Potentates and pirates—Raiders of the sixteenth century—A floral paradise.

AFTER the strain and stress of five and a half years of war, of almost day and night duty, when, at long last, victory had come to us, I looked around for a retreat where one could find peace and restful quiet. I found it, not far from home, and thanks to the hospitality of my friend, the owner of this delectable spot, I spent five happy weeks there.

About twenty miles off the coast of North Devon, looming out of the Atlantic, is the island of Lundy, strangest and perhaps least known of the islands of Britain. This strategic sentinel commands the shipping lane from Bristol and the West Country, and is strongly linked by bird migration with the Atlantic and America.

It is the island of the story-books, where you land in a sunny cove, with no sound but the swish of the oars, the lapping of the water against the bow, and the cry of hundreds of sea birds. Here is the beach which has figured so vividly in many a story; this is the real thing, the isle of adventure, with an ancient tower high above the cove which must have been a pirate's look-out. Below it are caves where treasure could be buried and the pirate might count his pieces of eight, with pistol and cutlass by his side. Looking out, he had a singularly fine seascape, the waters of iris blue, dotted along the shore with splashes of amber from the seaweed.

Strangely beautiful is this island with its little glens and kloofs, painted by Nature's own hand, where early in the year before the birds on the mainland have heralded the arrival of spring, Lundy has already said it with flowers, and as the months go on so does this non-stop floral revue continue.

Lundy is the haunt of sea birds, of shipwreck and feudal romance, an island in the past so inaccessible that its owners were able to take on the appurtenances of kings. Here can be found the last surviving stronghold of rugged individualism and feudal privilege. Here still exists a tiny private principality, three and a half miles long by less than a mile in width, which can in some ways challenge comparison with Juan Fernandez of Robinson Crusoe fame. On Lundy dwells the only king, outside of royalty, in the British Empire.

The island has been privately owned throughout historical times, and royal charters have been granted to successive lords of Lundy, starting with King Stephen in 1135, and ending with the Charles Stuart, who was so royal that he lost his head. In consequence of these charters the owner has rights and privileges which sound strangely in modern ears.

He has his own stamps and mints his own coinage for circulation in the island; he can remove anyone he wishes from his domain and can land any cargo free of restraining thought of the customs or excise. The Lord of Lundy

can deny anyone the right to land, and he controls all fishing and marine catches for a specified distance offshore.

On this sea-girt fortress of time, where no tax of any kind is levied, and fishermen are not allowed without permission, the overlord of Lundy, besides being a king by right of tenure of this lilliputian strip of heather and fern-covered land, possesses the hard asset of some of the finest granite in the world that was widely exploited in Victorian days for all to see in the construction of Victoria Embankment of the Thames.

At one time Lundy would have attracted the attention of UNO, or any adolescent League of Nations, for from its fastness came raid after raid against the mainland and passing merchant vessels, the aggressors retreating to the safety of a castle with walls five feet thick, and a precipice on one side over which undesirables were hurled on to the rocks below.

In those days it was the age of violence; the Lord of Lundy had to make his home a fortress in which he could shut himself up and be safe from the attacks of his enemies. His castle had towers, and deep ditches and a drawbridge, with narrow slits for windows in the thick, granite walls.

The reputation of these swashbucklers became as fierce as the Atlantic gales that pound the island shores. Yet the visitor today who lands at Lundy and examines the island directory would find it contains the names of but twelve people, nine of them being lighthousemen. History seems to have been blown away with the wind and only geography remains, the hard core of a rocky islet and its bird voices that call all day across green waters and among the rock pinnacles, a feathered population so large and pervading during the spring and summer and at migration time, that one might think Lundy was talking in its sleep of the long days of imperious history and the nights of shipwreck and plunder.

Along the western side the Atlantic surges against the four-hundred-feet unscalable cliffs with a three-thousand-mile punch behind it.

The record of Lundy can be traced back to prehistoric and legendary times when St. Patrick was starting on his lecture tour in Ireland. On the way he came to Lundy, and legend tells us that this call explains the absence of snakes there.

The real story of the island is fragmentary: the first book on the subject appears to have been in Icelandic; there are others in Latin which require a profound scholar to interpret for they abound in ponderous and legal phraseology. Another effort is in Welsh; in fact, these three languages seem to have had control of the island story before the King's English was finally employed. The full and complete chronicles of Lundy, its colourful and glamorous history, have still to be given to the world.

In the twelfth century King Stephen awarded Lundy as fief to one of the de Montmorencies, or Mariscos, a name as prominent in its way among the feudal barons of Britain as Montgomery and Montague. These lords at once fortified the island and raised a castle built high up above the only landing cove. The many dwellers there have long since gone, but the castle still stands looking out over the ocean, splendid and defiant.

Sir John de Marisco fell foul of Henry II, who wished to give Lundy, valuable both for position and fisheries, to the Knights Templar. The King was

defied by the local sovereign and Sir Jordan went further . . . he started plundering passing vessels to show his indigation and independence, and Henry could do nothing about it.

Richard the Lionheart was too busy with the Holy Land and crusading to be stung into reprisals by the Lundy mosquito, but when his brother John reigned in his stead the old feud between the island king and the islet king was renewed. John tried his best to evict the Mariscos from their inheritance, but secure in their sea-girt citadel he could be defied and told there were other king's business besides his own. "Get out," ordered the impetuous John. "Come and get me out," was the reply.

Henry Plantagenet did better and for a time the aggressive tendencies of the lords of Lundy were held in check. Under the redoubtable and merciful Edward I, the king who believed in the rule of law to order his doings, Lundy was restored to royal favour.

Later on the ill-fated Edward II tried to escape the wrath of his rebellious barons by fleeing to the island in 1325, but he was betrayed by contrary winds and driven ashore on the Welsh coast, whence his wanderings subsequently led to Berkeley Castle, where he was destined to die a horrible death in the grim dungeons of that stronghold.

In the Civil War of Stuart days a new character appears upon the scene in the person of Thomas Bushel, who was working the silver mines on the mainland of Devon. Bushel was appointed to hold the strategic island for Charles I. This Bushel did by refortifying the old robber castle of the Mariscos with batteries, until, bored with idleness, he turned, like his predecessors, to plundering the coast and the shipping.

Thomas Bushel passed on, and in the fullness of time we come to another notorious character—Benson—who concluded a contract with the government of the day to transport convicts to people Virginia. Benson was wily; the contract stipulated that he should convey the convicts overseas, and this he did . . . by taking them to Lundy, where they were set to forced labour in the construction of walls at intervals across the island; they stand today as a monument to solid building.

Benson took to piracy, and is reputed to have massed quite a fortune which he is supposed to have hidden in a cave below the castle, but exploratory enterprise has not so far revealed any of the treasure.

The history of Lundy varied between sovereign rights and piratical wrongs, until in 1837 a new type of owner took possession, a parson, the Reverend Heaven, through whom the island became to be known as 'The Kingdom of Heaven'. The cleric carried out many improvements, he built the present substantial house of the owner commanding a view down the glen and over the wide Atlantic, whilst he laid out flower and kitchen gardens. No doubt a brisk tourist traffic would have ensued had publicity been permitted. Heaven was a scholar and went in for research, but unfortunately he never gave to the world the result of his investigations and the wealth of knowledge he must have possessed.

By way of a change from potentates and pirates of the West, there came in 1625 Turkish corsairs from the Middle East, who stormed the island under the nose of Britain, and took off some of the people. Before Queen Anne was dead

French marauders captured the stronghold, turning it for a while into a typical Frenchmen's creek for privateering.

The highlight in treachery and deceit seems to have been reached in 1700, when a party, pretending to be friendly Dutch, came ashore for milk and supplies for their sick captain . . . so they said. The ship stayed in the cove for several days, and then announced the death of the skipper, with a last request that he should be buried ashore. The islanders were lulled into a sense of false security and they agreed to this pious wish. So the ship's crew landed with the coffin and solemnly marched up the hill to where a church formerly stood. The islanders were invited to the last rites, and they duly came. After prayers the ship's company asked that the islanders should leave the church for a moment and they would be readmitted to see the body interred. So out they went, all unsuspecting, and a few moments later the whole ship's company, armed to the teeth, burst from the building, headed by the 'deceased' captain. They killed or made prisoners the too-confiding islanders and carried off everything they could lay hands on, including most of the cattle. The 'coffin' was full of arms . . . to such depths can treachery descend.

The present owner of Lundy—Mr. M. C. Harman—is, like his predecessors, a staunch believer in private ownership, and with a taste in liberty so dear to Englishmen. A lover of nature, he has turned his island over to the birds and now it is one of the most inviolable sanctuaries left on earth or sea.

Ornithologists and other enthusiasts who have landed on the beach of the south-east cove are fascinated with the feathered world to be found there. During spring and autumn migrations the granite cliffs have provided a safe halting place for countless birds arriving and departing in their armadas for the New World, or for Europe and Africa, long before Columbus took ship from Spain, or Sebastian Cabot came down the Bristol Channel into the unknown. Lundy is a sort of Clapham Junction for the birds, whence the lines radiate to each one's destination.

The noise of these bird armies joins the ceaseless orchestra of the surf in a cosmic sky chorus. One hundred and sixty-five separate species have been noted on Lundy, for the bird life is, as we have seen, its most remarkable feature. The birds are there in thousands, the chough, the peregrine falcon, black-backed gulls, herring gulls, kittiwakes, puffins and shearwaters. There are linnets, finches, buntings, warblers, wax-wings, and now the fulmar petrel has taken to nesting on Lundy. Formerly his southerly limit was the islands of the west coast of Scotland, but he evidently finds Lundy to his taste and so has moved lower down. This distinguished island resident if approached squirts an oily fluid at any disturber of the peace, much as a skunk does in the New World when annoyed.

It is fascinating to watch the bird clouds of Lundy and to hear the voices from sea and sky. It is strange to contemplate this aerial traffic which has been going on between the Old and New Worlds since bird life began.

The dominant bird migration is from east and west, with many migrants going south to the Azores and the Atlantic islands. The birds usually travel in small convoys of twenty to fifty, the young, curiously enough, often preceding their parents in the high adventure of oceanic flight.

The Lundy birds are an aerial story of the centuries, a feathered Odyssey

of explorations, pioneering and pilgrimage, with a homing interest thrown in. They arrive out of the night in wind-blown spring months, glimpse a verdant isle that looks good to them, an outpost of Europe, a journey's end, and here they settle and stay for the breeding season.

Different migrants and visitors utilize well-defined flight lines as distinct and shaped as any of the airways routes of the World War. The birds seem to know the route to follow; perhaps they map them out in relation to geographical features and pick up the landmarks as they go along. At any rate, they reach their destination, as has been proved by marked birds who have made the trans-Atlantic flight more than once.

Shore and wading birds, such as the tern, black-headed gull, and the kittiwake, come in from America along the selfsame sky routes used by trans-Atlantic airmen during the war. They seem to take off from Newfoundland for Ireland, a 1750-mile hop for a bird, via Greenland and Iceland, so as not to undertake a single flight of more than 500 miles.

The American Golden Plover, who has visited Lundy, pre-runner of Fortress and Liberator, is said to have made the 2000-mile passage in a non-stop flight.

I was stirred by these strong lines of bird flight, linking up Lundy with the New World, and my mind explored the romance of these untold millions of visitors, unconscious links with the great West, when man believed the earth to be flat and confined to the continents of Europe and Asia. The birds, of course, knew better, but that is still part of the unwritten story of Lundy. Did they bring any seeds of the future, any visible links between their two homes in their aerial traffickings of the past?

Besides the east and west migrations, many visitors to Lundy are polarized fliers journeying north and south. They are known to travel back to the Mediterranean and Equatorial Africa, and even as far as South Africa.

I was specially interested in one of the outstanding type of bird—the chough—reputed to be the highest living bird on earth, a real lover of altitude, and one that I found at over 20,000 feet in the Himalayas.

Until about the end of the last century you could meet the aristocratic Solan Goose, or Gannet, on Lundy, but who left the island, scared away by the unnaturally booming foghorn voice of the lighthouse.

On Lundy you can see Scoter Ducks from Iceland, linnets from America, song birds from Africa, and every kind of gull. It is an increasing bird paradise with the first prize handed out to the enchanting puffins, whose profile portrait appears upon the island stamps. The puffins take the island trip in May and leave again on their pelagic wanderings in July. How they contrive to muster and breed in almost biblical fashion is something of a mystery, since they believe in "only children", laying but one egg. They have a community sense as highly developed as human beings in overcrowded evacuation areas of war-time Europe.

Undismayed by total lack of domestic facilities, they fashion their own home-burrow, each several feet long, and in some cases to what amounts to a block of flats, or an apartment house, with entrance hall and rooms leading from it. On Lundy you can find puffins who share burrows, and no doubt help with the upkeep in terms of fish.

The puffin's enemy is the shearwater, night birds who attack after dark if they can catch them emerging from their burrows. Still more to be feared are the dive-bomber attentions of the peregrine falcon, the lord of wind and weather during daylight.

Lundy is an ideal spot for bird classification and observation. And what island base of this size could house and shelter so many thousands of bombers rather than birds? In the crowded nesting season you can find the nests of the Herring and Black-Backed Gulls, each with its mottled hatch of olive-brown eggs, or the decayed nesting materials used by the dainty kittiwake.

You can become friendly with the Pickwickian puffin, and watch the gorging of guillemots and shags. You can guess at the diving speed of the falcon, or admire the grave circles cut by the moth-like buzzard in the upper air, where he lingers to escape the attention of the home-making carrion crow.

On Lundy you can examine the peculiar arrangements made by guillemots and razorbills for their young, using the edge of the precipice, without nest of any kind. Nature so shapes the egg that it does not roll over, but spins round, thus avoiding disaster. When hatched it is a minor wonder how the chicks get down to sea level. Their first flight is to victory or death, as they parachute downwards, using their baby wings for the first time.

Each shelf and corner of crag and rock are over-housed with a black-coated, white-waistcoated, feathered population. Leisurely, careless, primitive, they know there are as many fish in the sea as they ever took out of it. The amount of fish the Lundy birds catch from the Atlantic runs into hundreds of millions annually, but no one notices any difference!

Down on the rocks and amongst the birds are Nature's school-children on picnic, for the grey seal shares the island with the gulls. The seal loves a crowd; in fact, it is usually when in numbers that breeding takes place, for the seal appears to seek noise and excitement for his mating purposes, and he gets them amongst the birds.

On the western shore of the island, where the amber seaweed clings to the rocks and no safe landing is possible, I found dunlins, terns, and colonies of puffins, with razorbills in thousands. In the trees which surround the owner's house and in the old castle walls and the massive keep, owls brood and blink amongst nature's battlements. I watched the marauding antics of the black-headed gulls indulging in what many people during the war in Britain would have liked to do—egg-lifting, on a large and unpunishable scale.

Above the curving shore line and the sharp projecting teeth of the rocky pinnacles are companionable glens and kloofs, gay with rhododendrons, hydrangeas, fuchsias, and honeysuckle, contributing their unexpected presence to the long array of wild flowers.

Apart from the two hundred and sixty species of plants identified on the island, there is one new to science, a plant that must have been flourishing here for hundreds of years, for a beetle, which is also peculiar to the island, feeds on its leaves. Although the beetle had been identified, the plant remained obscure. Lundy, too, has the royal fern, a rare specimen, growing proudly in a sheltered combe running steeply down to the sea, where the fern, as if conscious of its rarity, seeks safety and isolation from a modern world.

In the centre of Lundy is a small lake, that in summer becomes a dried-up marshland; it is surrounded on every side by masses of heather, where the wild ponies are friendly little creatures, but not sufficiently tame to let you get too close. This is also the haunt of a few Japanese deer imported years ago, and some wild red deer from Exmoor. How these came to Lundy no one seems to know. The combes are the favourite retreat of the red deer, where the ferns and bracken reach a height of four and five feet.

The north-west corner is a highlight of Lundy; here are wild goats, probably put ashore in far-off days, as the pirates did on the Spanish Main, and other places, where it might be necessary one day to retire and have supplies ready to hand.

Like all the goat family the Lundy one chooses the most inaccessible rocks and cliffs. I have hunted ibex in the Thian Shan mountains of Central Asia, as well as in the Himalayas, but the Lundy goat can hold his own for negotiating bad ground and the speed with which he can go down hill when alarmed.

In the late afternoon they come out to feed on the grass along the plateau, posting a sentinel whilst the rest of the herd feed. The faithful watcher takes up a commanding position and keeps a careful eye in all directions; not for a moment does he relax his vigilance, least of all to lie down or feed with the rest. It is one of those mysteries of wild life that we are never likely to solve. Is it done by selection, or according to a roster, with a penalty for slackness, or being asleep on his post, or how do the goats arrange it amongst themselves?

Along the eastern shore, which is the more sheltered, an expert at lobster-catching told of the 'powerful lot of lobster round Lundy'. And when we got tired of lobster-hauling we took to mackerel with lines.

All along the western side of Lundy there are strong tides and currents, and here on a dark night many a good ship has foundered; ancient and curious coins have been found amongst the rocks and embedded in the sand, that formerly belonged to the wreck of galleons sunk there, no one knows when. This shore line must have a wonderful tale to tell; long years ago a ship beating up from the ivory and gold coast of Africa was driven ashore on the rocks. It had on board a cargo of ivory, and leather bags holding gold dust; some of the ivory was afterwards recovered, but the gold dust has long since become merged with the sand.

The stoutest ship ever built would not last long against the waves and the surf that come rolling in with that three-thousand-mile punch behind them; and when they have lifted the doomed craft up on to the rocks the jagged teeth and edges soon tear the ship to pieces, with the waves acting as hammers and the rocks as anvils.

In 1906 H.M.S. *Montague* was driven ashore on Lundy, a brand new battle-ship which was trying out wireless for the first time. Parts of the equipment and guns were salvaged after immense efforts, but the seas were relentless, and soon battered the warship into bits and pieces. Now only the barbettes can be seen at low spring tides, wedged firmly in the rocks, a reminder of what the sea can do.

Perhaps the most striking example was that of a sailing ship, borne along by a tremendous and intolerant wind. The storm was smashing down and the ship was lifted on to the rocks. The impact of the roaring wind, the punch of the

giant waves, and the knife-edged rocks, crushed and smote her down. Up above the moon was shining calmly and clearly; below it the crew, on the rocks, were working desperately, fighting for their lives, four of them managing to scale the cliffs and make their way to the lighthouse. But when the lighthouse men returned with ropes and tackle for rescue purposes, there was no sign of the ship; it had completely disappeared . . . the sea had swallowed it up.

From the historical aspect the star turn on Lundy is the castle of the Mariscos, high above the cove in which you land. The old stronghold is massive and looks the part. It is grey and weatherbeaten with the passing of eight hundred years, yet still keeping a stern eye on the approach to Lundy.

Sailing leisurely along the east shore, which is the lee side and sheltered from the wind, it was inspiring to look up at the Mariscos' fortress, and although it is empty and deserted it radiates an atmosphere of defiance. History has come and gone to the castle, and left it with nothing but a past. For centuries Lundy lived, now it dreams away its old age, windswept, sea-haunted, and sun-warmed.

You can make the tour of Lundy in four hours, but you will not easily forget this abode of solitude and sea birds, last stronghold of individualism, this sovereign island set in the pathway of the Western Ocean. All the king's commands and all the king's men could not dispossess the Lords of Lundy, and there is a wild and romantic freedom about the island which nothing is likely to take away.

Lundy as a restful spot is a lovely retreat. Its sheltered combes gay with flowers and ferns. Pouring down these combes are tiny streams of pure water; as I have said, there are no snakes on the island and the people there live without a police force or a lawyer. The domestic economy of the island is simplicity itself; there is no doctor, you hardly need one with such a climate and such an environment. Blessed Lundy, no wonder Marisco, and those who followed him, never wanted to leave you.

THE END

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