Courtesy of the Musée National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris

VICTOR VINCESLAS JACQUEMONT

From the Bouvier-Mme Mérimée Portrait

A RIDE ON A TIGER

The Curious Travels of Victor Jacquemont

DAVID STACTON

"A traveller in my line has several ways of making what the Italians term a *fiasco*; but the most complete *fiasco* is to die on the road."

JACQUEMONT

LONDON
MUSEUM PRESS LIMITED

First published in 1954

Printed in Great Britain
by Richard Clay and Company, Ltd.,
Bungay, Suffolk

FOR SHOLTO

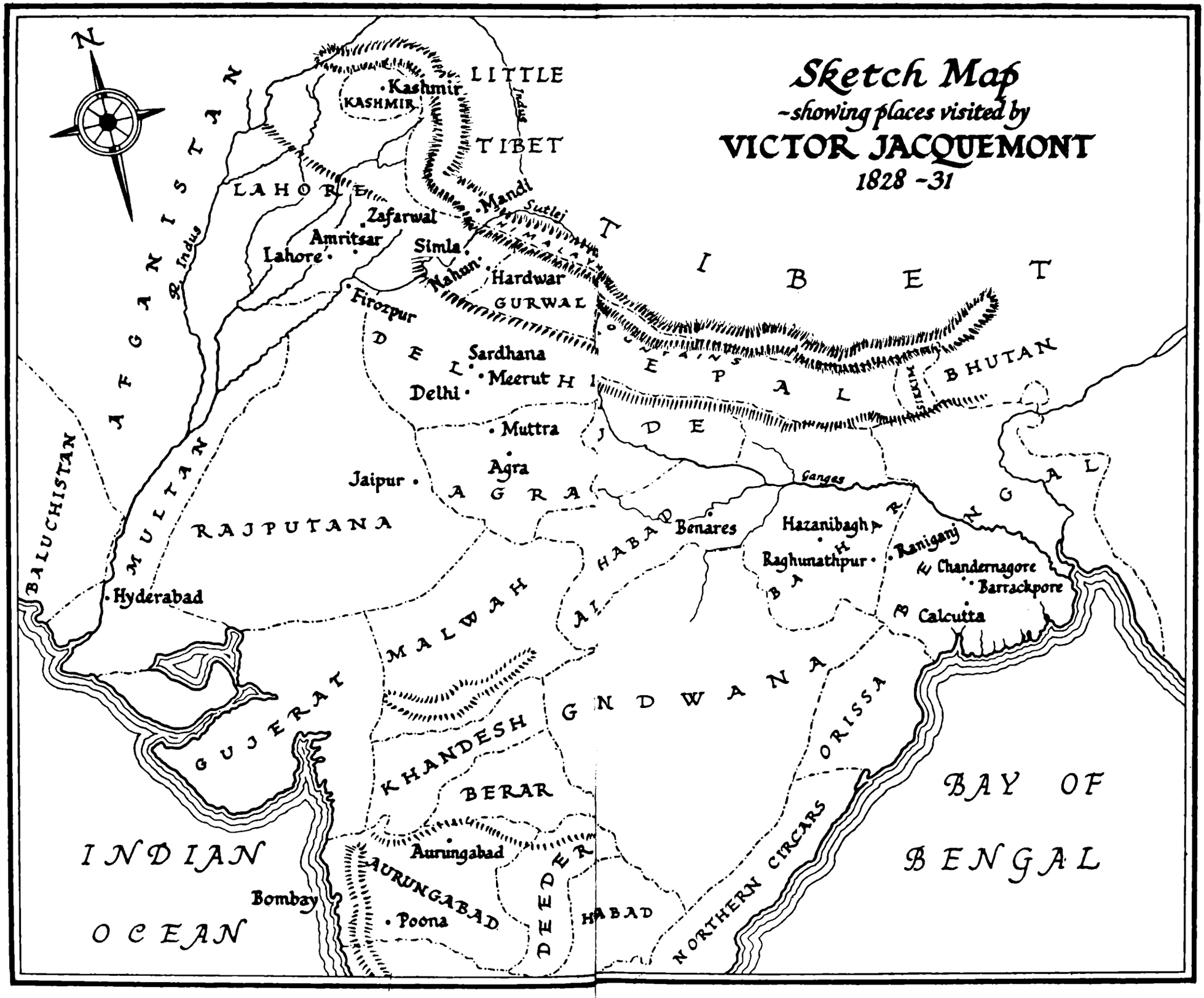
JOACHIM DU BELLAY. XXXi

Patriæ desiderium

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THE author wishes to express his gratitude to Dr. and Mme Bridgman, of Paris; to Mme Duprat of the Musée National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris; to J. R. D. Needham, former librarian at Welbeck; to His Grace the Duke of Portland, for permission to reproduce the Bentinck Portraits at Welbeck; to the late Professor Kofoid; to George Wickes, of the Belgian American Foundation; to Francis Bennett of Caius College, Cambridge; to John Rucker and Lord Amulree, for much editorial assistance; and to the authorities of the National Portrait Gallery and of the Indian Section of the Victoria and Albert Museum, for their many courtesies.

ILLUSTRATIONS


Sketch Map
~showing places visited by
VICTOR JACQUEMONT
1828 -31
N
LITTLE TIBET
Kashmir
KASHMIR
Indus
AFGANISTAN
R. Indus
LAHORE
Zafarwal
Amritsar
Lahore
Mandi
Sutlej
Simla
Nahun
Hardwar
GURWAL
TIBET
Firozpur
DELHI
Sardhana
Meerut
Delhi
KUMAON
NEPAUL
BHUTAN
Muttra
Agra
Jaipur
AGRA
JUDE
Ganges
BENGAL
BALUCHISTAN
MULTAN
RAJPUTANA
Benares
Hazanibagh
Raniganj
Raghunathpur
Chandernagore
Barrackpore
Calcutta
BAHAR
ALLAHABAD
Hyderabad
MALWAH
GUJERAT
KHANDESH
GONDWANA
ORISSA
BERAR
Aurungabad
AURUNGABAD
DEDER
HABAD
Bombay
Poona
INDIAN OCEAN
NORTHERN CIRCARS
BAY OF BENGAL

INTRODUCTION

THIS book is less a life of Victor Jacquemont than the story of that fantastic and improbable journey through India for which he is chiefly famous. If he has not been much considered or written about since the year of his death, this is not altogether surprising. Even at that time his friend Prosper Mérimée confessed himself in a quandary which faces any biographer of him, for, as Mérimée said, "he has told his life to his friends better than anyone else could tell it." This is neither a compliment nor an exaggeration. In the year 1831, for example, Jacquemont found time to dash off 346 letters, as well as keeping a copious journal.

To himself he was the typical hero of his age, and it is certainly true that his age was remarkable. To travel or to explore is not the genius of a Frenchman; but at the height of the Romantic Movement the joy of junketing got into the French soul and, in that brief period before the virus was successfully immunized, produced as fine a flair for eccentricity as ever England knew. True, it was eccentricity somewhat on the English pattern. The smart young Frenchman of that day desired either to be a jockey or a Milord; to be English was to be chic, and it is sometimes observable that, perhaps because Milords were often their own jockeys, the French often confused the two. Such conduct was not precisely Byronism. Yet it was the age of Géricault, the early Delacroix, Baron Gérard and Napoleonic attitudinizing. If distance lent enchantment, travel lent glamour to the view, and so Jacquemont travelled.

Victor Vinceslas Jacquemont was born on August 8th, 1801, which was also the year nine of the French Republic. His father, also Vinceslas, was a man of some

substance, prominent enough for his probity to be imprisoned during the French Revolution. He was an amateur philosopher, who devoted his mature years to the compilation of a work on what he was pleased to call " real essences ". This work has never been published. An earlier collection of family papers contains the explanatory footnote: " A philosophical term invented by V.J. *père* which we cannot undertake to explain." It was the daily habit of Jacquemont *père* to read alternately, and each evening, a volume of Sir Walter Scott and a volume of metaphysics. Nonetheless he managed to produce three sons: Porphyre, the eldest by twelve years, Frédéric, the elder by two, and Jacquemont himself. The mother, Geneviève Josèphe Rose Euphémie Laisne, though credited with charm, seems to have been completely squelched by her own excessively talkative family, and died young.

The diet was romantic. Schiller's *Don Carlos*, the operas of Rossini, paintings by Baron Gérard, a family friend, plays by Shakespeare, and lengthy, intimate conversations with Mlle Merlin, or Merlini, the singer, who to improve her voice made a practice of smoking rather large Havana cigars in the wings shortly before the performance. At this time Jacquemont, in his middle and precocious teens, was five feet ten and very thin, with a small head, hair some called dark brown but which he thought red and which was naturally wavy, grey eyes and extreme far-sight. His manner was lively, but he was easily bored. Bad taste, he said, led to crime.

He therefore struggled to be tasteful, and succeeded, at least, in sometimes giving a somewhat cold and emotionally reticent impression.

Studious to the extent of eleven hours a day and also quick, Jacquemont was botanizing and studying chemistry at seventeen. He so damaged his lungs during a chemistry experiment that he was forced to retire to the country to recuperate. He retired, with an instinct for comfort even then well developed, to the *château* of

La Grange, a property owned by General Lafayette, where he met such celebrities as the philosophic Tracy family, Ségur, Lord and Lady Holland, Sir Charles and Lady Morgan and, naturally enough, a variety of eminent Americans come to visit Lafayette. In these years he enjoyed himself hugely, travelled as much as he could, became an amateur of science and managed, besides, to help found the *Société d'Histoire Naturelle de Paris*. It was a concentrated youth.

By 1822 he was busy studying medicine. Medicine, however, did not greatly attract him, so he went on studying botany and geology as well. Eventually he abandoned medicine, at the last moment, for he feared both the uncertainties, he said, of the profession, which might lead to unconscious diagnostic murder, and equally the insecurity of its financial rewards. By temperament he was one of those people who can combine a healthy interest in money with an ability to get along beautifully without it.

He promptly met Stendhal and fell in love with an actress or, to be accurate, with a singer then appearing in the operas of Rossini. Rossini, naturally enough, led to Meyerbeer, with whom Jacquemont had a squabble which, in turn, was productive of a friendship with Prosper Mérimée.

And in the salon of Baron Gérard, an indifferent painter but an accomplished host, surrounded by the works of Horace Vernet and of Géricault, he entered into the intellectual society of the day. He was not without manner and address. Through his father he was well connected. The qualities of his voice were apparently extraordinary, of a singular flexibility, charm and sweetness, not unmixed with guile. He was a success. At the salon of Mlle Godefroy he made the acquaintance, also, of the naturalists Cuvier and Humboldt, the former shortly to be of such assistance to him. When he was not performing as a young man about town and with his usual insouciance, Jacquemont proceeded to give Stend-

hal literary advice. It was, for Jacquemont was no fool, rather good advice, and it was sometimes even taken.

It was the period when Stendhal was working on his book on love and had evolved his doctrine of " crystallization ". Jacquemont promptly crystallized himself into a passion for the actress and singer, Adelaide Schiassetti, a woman said to have evoked four thousand demanding letters from the pen of Ludwig of Bavaria, and thus excellently recommended. It would be unfair to cast doubts upon the nature of this affection. It is as easy to fall in love with this person as with that; society trains us into the foibles and fashions it prefers, and in the 1820s it preferred a fatal passion for an actress. Jacquemont endeavoured to do his best.

The Schiassetti, who had a family to support, departed for a sustained engagement in Dresden, upon which Jacquemont promptly fell into a decline. It was quite a thorough-going decline, for he had that ability, granted only to a few, of echoing the ideals and fashionable emotions of his own period to perfection. His first act was to neglect his medicine, which bored him anyway. He gave every symptom of being inconsolable, and was sent off on a sea voyage to America, fortified with letters of recommendation to various eminent personages supplied by General Lafayette. Though having a Frenchman's natural horror of the sea, he was delighted to be travelling again. It was the apprenticeship to later and longer voyages. He was twenty-five. The ship, appropriately enough, was called the *Cadmus*.

CHAPTER ONE

THOUGH the age demanded sang-froid, he was somewhat nervous about the Atlantic Ocean. However, his trepidation soon vanished. Atypical even as a Frenchman, he began to enjoy himself. He also began to develop that intestinal discipline which he thought to be the source of his own good health, and which was a subject on which he was a little mad.

He had never made an ocean voyage before. He was inclined to dread it, but his experiences reassured him. The sea, he discovered, was large, its waves rough, and it was given to contrary winds, which he found stimulating, even when the mainsail was ripped to shreds. He stepped up his daily constitutional walks and was delighted to observe his first flying-fish skipping in and out of the Gulf Stream. One flew on to the bridge, so he ate it that night at dinner. It made an agreeable change of diet, for the five sheep were too seasick to be slaughtered, and the pigs were reserved for the end of the voyage. He was never delicate-minded about food, and breakfast at nine-thirty, lunch at three, supper at seven and a glass of punch at ten amply satisfied him. Later, supper was suppressed and the punch moved forward to eight o'clock. He found the liquid part of the refreshment the best, tippling his way through Bordeaux, Sauterne, Port, Madeira, Pommard, Chablis, Champagne, English beer and American cider, the last almost as good, he found to his surprise, as the calvados of his childhood. The social side of life on ship was better than he had expected. Captain Allyn was of a good temper and, what he considered rare in an American, of a lively disposition. The sailors were agreeable and did not swear. Indeed, at that time they

were forbidden to do so on boats which carried passengers, under penalty of a stiff fine.

If he was not seasick, he did have trouble getting his sea-legs and often, during his constitutional walks, fell down. Diligent practice soon made it possible for him to avoid this, and he took particular pleasure in walking when the weather was so bad that no one else could stir. The waiters all spilt soup on him, but he hid the stains under a blue military cloak. It was a period when dry-cleaning was unknown. Stains could only be hidden. He swathed himself in shawls, but had discovered that he could sleep without a nightcap without coming to undue harm. It was a discovery that charmed him. He had always resented the tyranny of a nightcap.

He passed his time in study, mostly of the English language, dismayed only by the excessive smoking of his fellow passengers.

His English improved to the point where he could speak it, though not understand it. This handicap he blamed on the Americans, who spoke quickly, gutturally and low, without articulating properly. He was ever after to apologize for the deficiencies of his English by pointing out that he had learned it in America. A fellow passenger read him the newspapers, which helped; and Captain Allyn was extremely talkative. He also honed his English at night on the bridge, with those sailors and officers who did not speak French, a successful excursion into the Berlitz method. The night was beautiful, the stars radiant and the sea phosphorescent. He asked the name of everything, and was much concerned with whether or not the ship was sufficiently sturdy to withstand the voyage. The other passengers were less curious in the matter and more resigned: on stormy nights they foregathered in the saloon to play cards, there to await the crack of the masts or any other disaster.

He promptly began to dispense his two standard

remedies: Epsom salts and cathartics. His medical theory was of the pipe-cleaner variety, and he must have been a holy terror to the slightly ill. He himself was virtually indestructible, and could survive even his own dosages without visible result. During a particularly heavy sea he fell on his head and suffered no injuries whatsoever. His English continued to improve. He spoke it, he said, among and *against* all.

Squalls and rain alternated with periods of calm. Jacquemont collected rain-water for cosmetic purposes, undeterred by a fellow-passenger, an eldery Dutchman and amateur chemist, who believed that rain-water, in containing a superfluity of oxygen, was a dangerous poison. Jacquemont greatly enjoyed being becalmed. It gave him more time to finish his diagram of the boat. Other passengers passed the long days in other ways. One of them posted each day the number of Rheims biscuits and pieces of dirty linen eaten by rats during the previous night. Jacquemont found his chronicle wearing in the extreme and wished he was the only passenger. The days were monotonous, and the sailors, each of whom had a Bible, had formed the practice of sitting on the bridge and reading aloud the more blood-curdling chapters of the Old Testament. The reverend company landed in New York on Friday, December 7th, 1826, after a brisk voyage of forty-two days.

Despite floods of introductions from General Lafayette, who still had great popularity in America, Jacquemont was not unduly taken with New York, for America did not move him to enthusiasm. He was, at bottom, a mountain worshipper. Landing near New Jersey, he discovered the land flat, gloomy and sterile, planted with a few leafless and miserable trees. It is an impression which, it must be admitted, New Jersey has made upon the traveller ever since Janet Shaw first recorded it, in almost identical words, in 1775. He

visited a friend of his father's, a Mr. Stevenson, and lodged at a boarding-house. It was the boarding-house that so distressed him: it cost thirty-seven francs a week. However, in the end it did not prove quite so costly as he had feared, for with his usual facility for saving expenses he passed the month with some friends of Stevenson's in the woods of Jersey, at Ramapoe.

To accelerate his knowledge of English, he submitted himself to a merciless round of sermons, law courts and Shakespearian tragedies, assisted by Hugh Maxwell, another family acquaintance known locally as " Billingsgate McSwell ", but an excellent host, financially supported by a distillery and a tallow chandlery, and politically assisted by an association with Thurlow Weed.

He was very bored. He scratched up a duel with one General Lallemand, only to discover that duelling was illegal in the United States. He thereupon proposed to depart for Santo Domingo, a more promising duelling ground, and cordially invited the good General to follow him there. The General declined.

He departed for Port-au-Prince on January 20th, taking along, as light reading matter, the *Genera Plantarum* of Jussieu and the *Synopsis Plantarum* of Persons, both given him by the philanthropist Cooper to while away the tedium of the voyage, which took twenty-eight days.

At Port-au-Prince he met his brother Frédéric, two years his senior, who was, it turned out, living with a woman Jacquemont described as " young enough, pretty enough, and white enough ".

Jacquemont was shocked. A courtesan was one thing, but that his brother should live with a prostitute in the very house where she plied her trade disturbed his sense of the fitness of things. He was partly relieved when he learned that the islanders saw nothing shameful in the arrangement and that Frédéric paid for his board and room. The couple had been living together for two years, were quite happy and had no children.

Since the household made him uneasy, Jacquemont

made friends with a Dr. Sobet, a gentleman who claimed that if people died it was their own fault, for it meant that they had died either of a fear of dying or from their own excesses. It was certainly a most comforting rule of thumb for any doctor. Unfortunately the natives were so healthy that Dr. Sobet had not time to test his theories and very little opportunity. Perhaps it was a fear of dying that kept them well.

Frédéric wished to provide his brother with lodgings rent free. Jacquemont did not feel that he could honourably accept, and found the offer indelicate. He did not know whether he would be expected to pay his rent to Frédéric or to Frédéric's mistress and the quandary made him peppery. He was also dying of curiosity to know the exact monetary arrangements between the couple, both as a couple and in their separate business arrangements. To discover the truth of the matter, Jacquemont exerted all his charm, all his wiles and most of his detective instincts. They did not work. Frédéric refused to discuss his affairs, and so curiosity went unassuaged. It is impossible not to sympathize with Frédéric. Though neither the cleverest nor the most interesting of the three brothers, he was certainly the most human member of the family.

Curiosity blocked in one direction, Jacquemont, with the assistance of Dr. Sobet, went off to probe the status and nature of the local clergy. Here he was also baulked, for, contrary to his anti-clerical desires, he found the clergy polite, efficient and relatively honest.

Though Frédéric, he had to admit, was well-loved and respected in the colony, Jacquemont found his manner brusque and cutting and, at times, almost insufferable. He himself, on the other hand, he said, had a manner that was serious, good-natured and polite. With this granted, he was displeased that Frédéric treated him as though he were a booby. In short, Frédéric was one of Jacquemont's few failures, a circumstance that did not in the least sadden Frédéric.

This detestable brother, however, knew everybody, so that Jacquemont found himself well treated, better dined and adequately assisted in his researches, which, to tell the truth, were of a somewhat amateur character and, despite his horror of Frédéric's irregular liaison, sometimes led him to the red-light district. From his researches he took off enough time to assist the State Mint, which was in a quandary. They did not, it appears, know how to assay metals. Jacquemont naturally enough did, and was pleased to tell them that what they had thought to be gold was, in fact, only pure iron.

Meanwhile the chief minister, Monsieur Inginac, had been flooded with complaints about Jacquemont, whose geology and botanizing were becoming a public nuisance. He was always fated to be regarded as a spy, perhaps because of his insatiable curiosity. Monsieur Inginac, though not French, was of French education and dismissed the rumours. He also rather hoped that Jacquemont, in the course of botanizing, might possibly discover a gold mine, since the Treasury was far from full. This, alas, Jacquemont did not succeed in doing.

While in Santo Domingo he learned that his father had received a proposal, tendered by M. Louis Cordier, one of the administrators of the Musée d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris, that would in effect send Victor off to India for a few years to explore oriental flora and fauna for the benefit of the Government, at a tentative salary of 6,000 francs a year. This offer had been arranged by the family friends with the assistance of Baron Cuvier, the greatest naturalist of the day and a Jacquemont acquaintance. Jacquemont mulled over the suggestion and decided to accept it. He liked warm climates, he loved travel and he hoped to make a fortune out of the journal he would keep of the journey.

He departed for New York at once and spent the voyage writing letters. At New York he once more

stayed at Ramapoe with Stevenson's friends, whom he described as " rich peasants ". In due course someone was kind enough to tell him what American farmers thought of people who called them peasants, so he dropped the term. With India before him, he had already lost interest in America.

Being of an orderly temperament, before departure he first set down his opinions of the New World. What with Frédéric's moral irregularities, the coldness of the Niagara and the cost of boarding-houses in New York, these were far from flattering. On the whole he found the flora more interesting, he wrote, than the fauna.

The discoveries of Columbus, he concluded, drawing back to survey the whole field, had without doubt been fatal to a large part of the human race. Having made this sad but useful decision, he sailed quite happily for France.

CHAPTER TWO

HE knew nothing whatsoever about India. He could not, even so, have chosen a strategically better time to go there. In the late 1820s and early 1830s India was, as usual, in a period of transition. The successful wars of the late eighteenth century had consolidated British power. Lord Hastings, Governor-General of Bengal, had retired in 1823, and was succeeded by Lord Amherst, the sole accomplishment of whose somewhat sloppy administration was the conduct of a highly expensive war against Burma. He in turn retired in 1828, to be succeeded by Lord William Cavendish Bentinck in July of the same year. Lord William Bentinck had been chosen by the East India Company in the hope that he would retrench. There had been expensive unrest during the previous regime. The Gaekwar of Baroda had been refractory; the weak Rajputana States had turned rebellious; and the Rajah of Jaintia had ventured so far out of line as to sacrifice three British Indian subjects to Kali. Since his lands had been annexed in retaliation, this precedent was not followed up and caused no real harm. What had caused harm was the draining of the Company revenues occasioned by the wars against Nepal and Burma, for both of which the East India Company had had to pay out of its own moneys.

Though the charter of the East India Company had recently been renewed, it had been at the cost of the abolition of their trade monopoly. Since their real profit in India came not from trade but from land rents coupled with the opium monopoly and the China trade, the opening of India to free trade did little to damage the Company, which governed India for Great Britain

in return for a ten and a half per cent interest on its holdings, which were of three kinds: territory owned outright by the Company, a yearly levy paid by protected states, and property farmed for the British Crown but held by the Crown and not the Company. The revisions of the Company Charter under Pitt had ensured that the top appointed officials in India, together with broader political policies, were always subject to the ultimate control and approval of Parliament. In 1833 it was to be decided that the Company should sell all its holdings to the Crown, in return governing India for Britain at a fixed tariff. Not until 1853 did India become a British possession in name as well as fact.

Lord William Bentinck was the first Governor-General of India as such. Previous to his time, the other presidencies, though subordinate to the Calcutta government, had maintained independent legal dominion. When he assumed power in 1828, Britain, through the Company, firmly controlled all India up to and including a protectorate of the Rajputana States south of and contiguous with the Sutlej. The British Government was faced with two problems: Ranjit Singh, Rajah of the Punjab, and the Russians. The Russians had defeated Persia twice and had corrupted Afghanistan. It was feared that they might invade India. Certainly they wished to do so.

Between Afghanistan and India lay the Punjab, which Ranjit controlled. Though this astute ruler had once wished to bring the Rajputana under his own control, he had realized the superior power of the British, who in defeating his cis-Sutlej ambitions had left it understood that he might do as he pleased to the north and east of the river. Britain thus intended to maintain two buffers between itself and Russia: the Rajputana States and the Kingdom of Lahore. Therefore during Jacquemont's visit to India, Ranjit Singh was the one really important subject of official curiosity. The British wished to come to a further agreement with him. They

ardently desired the opening of the Indus to navigation, and thus to commerce. They wished to divert his military attention to Afghanistan, specifically against Peshawar, which he did seize, in order to gain a firm ally against the Russians. Indeed, the Treaty for the Free Navigation of the Indus was negotiated in 1832, after the meeting of Bentinck and Ranjit Singh at Rapur on the banks of the Sutlej in the same year. As a French, and therefore neutral, observer, Jacquemont was invaluable to both parties. This, even more than his personal charm of address, probably explains his successful passage through North India.

Of this state of affairs he realized little or nothing. He thought, however, that he could easily learn, and was not in the least bothered by his ignorance.

Besides, he had ample leisure on the voyage back to France to prepare his prospectus for the projected trip. It is a model of that sort of business letter which is written by people who do not know a great deal about business.

In it he reminds the Museum that it should ignore the more frequented parts of India and explore only those that are still, insofar as science is concerned, virgin territory. Coromandel, Nepal and Bengal have been cleaned out, he is sure. Instead, he proposes to visit the Indus, beyond that part of it held by the English. The difficulties of such a trip he regarded as no more than the invention of English travellers too deficient in curiosity or too lazy to penetrate into Kashmir. His memorandum suggests that a stay at Calcutta would be useful, if only for its famous botanical garden. He hoped to visit the Himalayas, where, he said, because of the extreme isolation of the inhabitants, money was no doubt worth more, and then to return overland to Europe *via* Mecca. M. de Meslay, whom he had met at Port-au-Prince, having been nominated governor of Pondicherry, he planned to voyage to India in the naval boat that had been assigned to that dignitary. He closed

his memorandum with a discreet paragraph that suggested to the Museum that stinginess would accomplish nothing. The directors of that organization had already lost at least two expeditions to India by undue parsimony in the matter of travelling allowances.

While he was at it, he turned his epistolatory facility to the useful end of paving his way to India. To Sir John Malcolm, the Governor of Bombay, was addressed a lengthy letter explaining, even more lucidly than to the Museum, his exact plans for the exploration of India. He wrote, he said, in the name both of science and of the illustrious Sir Alexander Johnston. Such a coupling of names none could resist.

This was followed by a note to Mlle. Tinette, one of his peripheral attachments at Port-au-Prince. He seems to have valued young women chiefly as the recipients of Byronic letters of farewell, and to her he wrote that, since he was going on a voyage of some four or five years' duration, she should not expect too much of him, but that he would send her the seeds of some Indian plants, for it had occurred to him that she might like to think of him, some years hence, when the seeds had produced trees and the trees fruit. Nor did he renounce the hope that, by some chance and in the doubtless remote future, he might some day pass by Haiti again. If that should happen, he would be delighted to see her. It was a most graceful letter of farewell.

Drawing another sheet to him, he then began a somewhat more congenial letter to Baron Humboldt in Berlin. He expected, he calculated, to be gone some four to six years. Since Humboldt had for a long time planned a journey into Asia, he wrote to him for advice. It was a pardonable request, since he knew nothing about India whatsoever. He had discovered the difficulties of penetrating Lahore, and Baron Cuvier had advised alternatively an exploration of the Malabar region. Though it was true this area had already been explored by the Englishman Reede, the English were not

scientific and had learned little. The English, in scientific matters, he had concluded, were mere amateurs, and he did not approve of amateurs. At the same time he did not consider it sporting to go where others had gone first, and could not resolve his doubts in the matter. He reiterated, for it had impressed him, that it was a French ship of the line that was to carry him to Pondicherry, and once there he hoped that his letters of introduction to Sir John Malcolm would carry him far. Indeed, he regarded his immediate future with considerable equanimity. He was twenty-seven, of temperate habits and well able to withstand such irregular or extreme climates as those of Santo Domingo and Philadelphia during the summer. Surely India could offer no worse? He then came to the real subject of his letter. Could Baron Humboldt provide a letter of introduction to Lord William Bentinck? He would have others to that useful gentleman, but one from Baron Humboldt might be expected to have a particularly good effect. It is clear that he hoped to overwhelm Lord William Bentinck with a deluge of paper. In this, as it turned out, he very nearly succeeded. His letters of introduction to that man eventually mounted to the number of five, not counting letters which merely mentioned him in passing.

Once he had landed in France, he hastened to gather up introductions for London. Prosper Mérimée, who had spent some time in England, was immediately consulted. How did one address an English lord? It depended upon the lord, but Mérimée rather thought that His Grace the Duke of Wellington, First Lord of the Treasury, delivered complete, would be correct. Baron Gérard was then canvassed. As a painter of the victors of Waterloo, he could be expected to provide a letter at least to Lord Lansdowne and to the Duke of Wellington. As it turned out, the Duke of Wellington was the only person ever to refuse to meet Jacquemont. But, then, the Duke of Wellington was notoriously stiff.

Though introductions presented no real difficulty, the Museum did. It provided him with only 600 francs, extorted from the reluctant treasurer of that institution.

He had the good luck to make an excellent impression on Sir Alexander Johnston, a founder of the Royal Asiatic Society, which was then only five years old. Sir Alexander Johnston, who had prudently refused a cornetcy in the dragoons at the age of eleven because the regiment was posted to active service, was a person who admired enterprise. As the former advocate-general of Ceylon he was not without influence, and his influence he placed at Jacquemont's disposal. Jacquemont worked like a beaver. Though the financial backing provided by the Museum was meagre, he intended to make the most of his opportunity. The Government allowed him only 6,000 francs a year, for the years 1829, 1830, and 1831, but did not even make allowance for the remainder of his stipulated residence in India. It was scarcely handsome.*

He departed from England with letters of recommendation to Lord William Bentinck, the Governor-General of British India; to Sir John Malcolm, Governor of Bombay; to Mr. Lushington, Governor of Madras; and to Sir Edward Owen, Commander-in-Chief of the British Navy in the Indian seas, all procured for him by Sir Alexander Johnston. Permission to travel in India had been more difficult to obtain. It could be procured only from the East India Company, which was notoriously more suspicious of motives either than the Government or any scientific body. However, Jacquemont, with his usual haphazard luck, had made the acquaintance of Thomas Love Peacock, then a functionary of India House, and in time credentials were duly obtained from the Court of Directors and the matter was settled.

* During these years the exchange rate of the franc stood more or less constant at 25 francs 35 centimes to the £.

Jacquemont departed for India on August 26th, 1828, a very tall, awkward-gaited, carrot-haired young man, somewhat icy and imperious with strangers, but amply supplied with wit, charm and kindliness towards those with whom he felt at ease. He also had that singularly coaxing and beautiful voice. It was often to stand him in good stead.

His last meal in Paris had been marked by a stoical calm. To his father Jacquemont said: "I'm sure you'll take care of yourself. Avoid catching cold." To his son Jacquemont *père*, who was busy reading Scott as usual, replied: "Don't worry. Write when you can." Only a servant wept.

Jacquemont's mind was not altogether at rest. If he had disliked America with all that force of detestation which a Frenchman can bring to bear upon anything not French, England had made him even uneasier. He was highly suspicious of the British regime in India. Though he had certainly been received with great kindness in England, which tended to make him place more trust in the British temperament, on the other hand, the extreme and anguished nuisance of extracting a passport from the proper authorities had convinced him of British bureaucratic barbarism and confirmed his worst suspicions. The proper authorities had not understood Jacquemont at all. He was even deemed by some of them to be either a Russian spy or else the bearer of some secret intelligence to Ranjit Singh.

Undeniably India appeared to be politically unsettled, but Jacquemont did not fear for his life. No Byronic hero would. He was much more concerned with the fate of his future specimens and feared that he might be plundered. No matter how wicked the British might be, he felt, it would be safer to begin his researches under the British ægis.

Though he had discovered that sea air agreed with him, the trip would, he knew, be tedious. He intended to relieve the tedium both of it and of his duller adven-

tures in India by keeping up a voluminous correspondence with his father, his brothers, the philosophical Tracys and on occasion with Prosper Mérimée, Stendhal and other worthies. During the voyage he wrote forty-nine letters to these. If the voyage was to be long, Jacquemont knew how to make the best of it.

The trip was long and complex. The boat, the *Zélée*, commanded by M. Poultier, sailed for Rio de Janeiro *via* Madeira, the Canaries and Brazil; the Cape of Good Hope followed in due course. They then tacked for Réunion, then the Isle of Bourbon, and from there, after a long delay, would reach India—in this case Pondicherry, since the boat was French. Jacquemont arrived on board a week before sailing and was delighted at the news of so many halts, since they meant a steady supply of fresh meat, vegetables and fruit—a prospect he found most pleasing.

He thought a battleship much more interesting than a mere commercial vessel and immediately set to work to study it. The crew and the officers were young, almost his own age, and amusing, though he found their humour puerile and coarse. They had the bad habit of singing Béranger's songs at the tops of their voices, which interrupted both his nap and his work, so he formed the habit of taking refuge in the map-room. M. de Meslay, of whom he had hoped much, was unfortunately seasick for the greater part of the voyage. He always was seasick during voyages, but this had not prevented him from stoically following a naval career. Jacquemont turned his attention to the ship's doctor, whom he found ignorant, so he forced medical books upon him. He never travelled without the first three volumes of Jules Cloquet's illustrated anatomy, and eagerly awaited the publication of the remaining two. The doctor docilely agreed to read them.

He next struck up a friendship with the commander, a young lieutenant of pleasing appearance, and then

with a second lieutenant, described by Jacquemont as simple, artless and useful. He congratulated himself on this second acquaintance, for inferiors, he knew, from their position were able to learn many important things which their betters, because of *their* position, could never know.

He gave himself up to those religious thoughts which seem to have been evoked more easily by the sight of a windjammer than by a steamship, and threw himself into an orgy of epistolatory leave-taking. Without pausing to blot a line, he had written happily right up until the eve of departure.

Fourteen days later, though the captain had been most thoroughly ill, Jacquemont was enjoying perfect health, a hearty appetite and the excellent sea-breeze. The ship was later to be used for explorations along the east coast of Africa and had a complement of junior technicians in naval clothing. These young men Jacquemont found congenial. The only really tiresome passenger, the Apostolic Prefect of Pondicherry, was induced to keep safely below decks, and Jacquemont and his friends devoted themselves to the study of Persian. Hindustani, he considered, since it was the spoken language of India, could be more effectively learned upon arrival.

As has been said, the boat was a battleship. On particularly dull afternoons the crew and officers relieved the tedium by firing off guns to the sound of a drum. They did not, after all, halt at Madeira, but went on to Teneriffe, where they procured enough citrus fruit to make lemonade all the way to Rio. Jacquemont was not unhappy. He meditated upon his childhood and wrote to his father. On reaching the latitude of Cadiz he broke open his trunks and put on linen suitings. He also liked the climate.

" I feel myself caressed by this genial air," he wrote, " and although my long thin body can scarcely be compared to a rosebud, I feel that I am beginning to bloom."

At Teneriffe he found himself in great demand. Frenchmen were rare and were esteemed for their manners. The drudgery of Gallic *contre-danses* was amply repaid by the opportunity it afforded him of practising both his Spanish and his English. He gorged on tropical fruit, danced his feet off and, retiring to his cabin for the purpose, as he explained, of dealing with some scientific manuscripts, instead wrote a metaphysical love-letter to his cousin, Zoë Noizet de Saint-Paul. He wrote to her of real essences, of, that is, " a class of enjoyments quite independent of the material interior of our existence ", by which alone " we can equalize happiness among mankind: for that which results from satisfying physical wants will always be naturally very bad and very unjustly divided." Six more foolscap pages of this and the boat gave a lurch. " You who have read Lord Byron's works must think the sea marvellously fine," he added. " For my part I feel none of its poetry."

Nor, to Zoë, was he more satisfied with Teneriffe. A romantic young man was never satisfied. " The whole world ", he concluded, " is tending to assume the same appearance, stupid, rather melancholy and very vulgar." He blotted the letter and prepared for the ceremonies of crossing the Equator. These were of the usual sort and were followed by a dinner of green peas, truffled partridges and similar dainties. The sailors sang ribald songs, the Apostolic Prefect of Pondicherry went blushing to bed and the party stayed up late, having so far exhausted their stores as to pass the remainder of the journey to Rio dining on salt beef, salt pork, dried kidney beans, *sauerkraut* and a few bananas prudently stashed away by Jacquemont at Teneriffe.

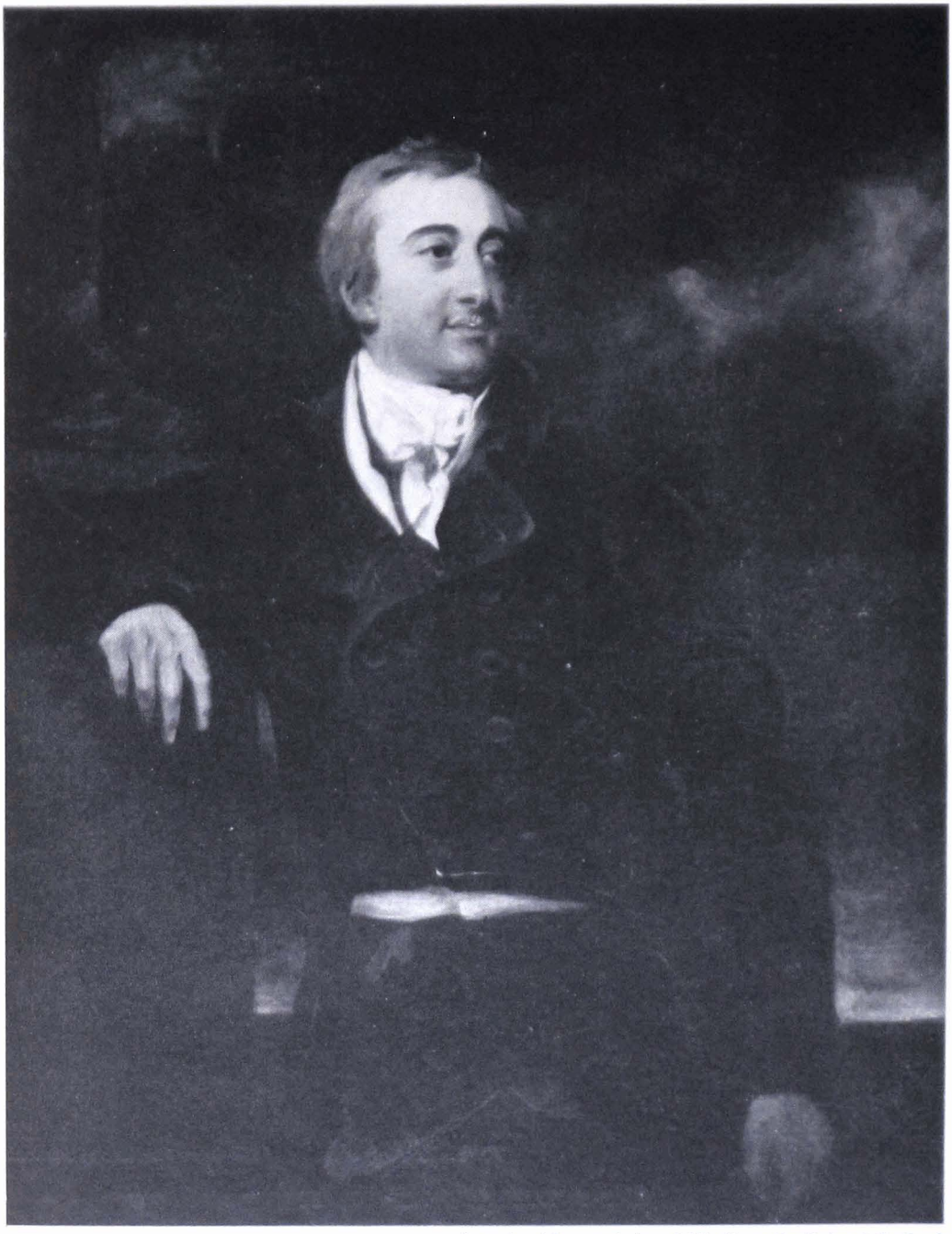
Rio was soon reached, and Jacquemont enjoyed it. He met some interesting Austrians; including the refugee, fashionable and not very good painter, Félix-Emile Taúnay, to whom he chatted about Baron Gérard. He was allowed and even encouraged to air his republican views, a thing he greatly enjoyed doing. He

was off to see " an animal extremely rare in America—an emperor ". We are not to suppose that a man of such Phrygian purity was off to seek royalty, however. It was only that the Emperor would be present at a performance of Rossini's *Italians in Algiers*.

Brazil did not please him any more than had the performance of Rossini, which was abominable. He found Brazil an abomination of desolation. The words are his own. He contemplated the salutary effects of regicide, but regretfully decided that it would only lead to anarchy. The ship set sail and the plain truth became apparent. His temper had cracked under the strain of sea travel. It was not surprising. It was the more credit to him that for three months he had remained so cheerful. " Oh my friend," he wrote in a fit of depression, " how has my youth been thwarted! What a life of wandering is mine! " Besides, he had only Catullus, Tibullus, Propertius, *Lalla Rookh* and *Tristram Shandy* to read, and of these he found the Latins dull and *Lalla Rookh* inaccurate; whereas *Tristram Shandy*, excellent as it was and long, was not long enough to support the rest of the voyage. The fifty members of the crew sang incessantly night and day, usually out of key. The boat was a log. The officers were ignorant, if amiable, and the monotony unendurable. Jacquemont plagued the officers with questions, but managed to flatter them. When he had a mind to, he could flatter a stone.

He was still disturbed about Brazil. Brazil seems to have annoyed him out of all conscience. One of the reasons became clear. It seemed that since the French colony in Rio consisted chiefly of hairdressers and milliners, and since the Emperor patronized both at rates ranging from ten to twenty francs per visit, the reputation of the French was such that Jacquemont was forced to pass himself off as an Englishman. He put on a stiff and insolent air, at which everyone received him kindly.

As for the remainder of the voyage, he was saved



Reproduced by permission of His Grace the Duke of Portland

LORD WILLIAM BENTINCK

From the portrait by Sir Thomas Lawrence

Reproduced by permission of His Grace the Duke of Portland

LADY WILLIAM BENTINCK

From the portrait by Sir Thomas Lawrence

from seasickness, spleen and melancholy only by the presence of M. de Meslay, recovered from his own illness and conveniently discovered to have been a friend of Jacquemont's brother Frédéric. The two of them protected each other from ennui and arrived at the Cape of Good Hope on December 28th. Here they encountered the *Astrolabe*, recently returned from an attempt to discover the fate of the explorer La Pérouse. Jacquemont met M. d'Urville, a survivor of the wreck of La Pérouse's expedition, who had more than a hundred portraits of Polynesians, Australians, Tasmanians, Malays and New Zealanders, which he carried about with him on the *Astrolabe* as cabin decoration. He had also compiled four vocabularies and had discovered, to his surprise, that the Polynesians were not unlike Europeans. Jacquemont was fascinated by this discovery, having decided that Man was the most " curious and interesting of all natural history specimens ". But though only a branch of the animal kingdom, Man was diverse and confusing, and Jacquemont did not like to have his studies confused by a multiplicity of source material. The Cape of Good Hope at that time was inhabited by the Dutch, the English, the Kaffirs, Hottentots, Mozambiquans, Malays and Madagascans, and their cross-breeds he found almost insoluble. He was able, though, to make the observation that the English had a natural aptitude for government. It was quite an unusual gift. It set them off from the Italians, who produced only singers, dancers and fencing masters; and from the French, who turned out wigmakers and *couturiers*. Apparently his experiences in Brazil still lingered at the back of his mind.

Meanwhile Baron Humboldt had forwarded his recommendation to Lord William Bentinck, and Jacquemont was grateful for it. It was increasingly clear to him that, if he was to make any progress at all in India, it was with Lord William Bentinck that he must ingratiate himself. In the meanwhile he polished off an article on

slavery and became irritated, as was his wont, with the boarding-house keepers and their rapacious commercial demands. Nonetheless he gave himself up to the luxury of green salads and clean sheets.

From the bedside he wrote a few Spartan thoughts to his brother Porphyre. "There is nothing like privation for making people delicate and voluptuous," he explained, having had an excellent dinner. He then blew out the light and went to sleep.

At the Cape of Good Hope he passed the time amiably gobbling fruit and Constantia wine, studied his own writings and decided that, once he had mastered English, he would know half of German, because of the similar vocabulary. However, he found the Cape Town colonists uninteresting and was glad to be away. The trip to Réunion was diversified by a running argument with a British man-of-war. Jacquemont took up the megaphone and, as usual, won the argument.

At Réunion, though well housed with the Flacourt family, he was the victim of a storm great enough to rival the machines of Horace Vernet and Byron, and which destroyed all his possessions. Chance, for twelve hours, made him live in company with some slave-dealers, though without his knowledge. He left in moral indignation when he discovered the truth: besides, the Flacourt plantation was more comfortable. He enjoyed a brief period of magnificence. "Luxury to-day, want to-morrow," he wrote. "What matters it at my age?" At the moment of writing he was sitting in a pavilion in the middle of a garden, hidden by jasmine and lemon trees, whose odour, wafted through the Venetian blinds, made him sleepy.

When at last he boarded ship for the final voyage to India, he took with him a large quantity of milk, 200 fowls and a profusion of vegetables. He was feeling better. Increased intimacy with the future governor of the French possessions in India and attendance at an amputation at which he experimented with a

new method of tying off arteries left him in an excellent humour. If only, he speculated, he could have performed the entire operation himself, it would have been a more successful one.

Only slightly impeded by the hurricane, in which he lost a black coat, waistcoat and trousers and estimated the velocity at forty-five metres a second, he proceeded to India. As for the hurricane itself, others may have lost a fortune in spices. Jacquemont consoled himself with the thought that only his guns were wetted, a trifling matter since at that time he did not shoot.

Nothing would bother him, he was sure. He had a system. It was a regimen of diet and abstinence, marred only by the engulfing of four cups of coffee per meal. It would preserve him from hepatitis, fevers, dropsies and disorders without number, such as afflicted the rich English, who committed excesses at table, he calculated, exactly 720 times a year. It is rather a curious figure, since it works out at only 1·97 meals a day. He observed that the local negroes subsisted on a diet of rice, alleviated on Sundays by a slice of putrefied cod, and decided to follow their example. And so, making his intestinal arrangements, he sighted the coast of India. He thought it would be a triumph to land there. He was quite right. It was.

CHAPTER THREE

HE landed at Pondicherry, capital of the French possessions in India, or, at any rate, capital of what was left of them. It was a town of about 46,000 inhabitants. Since it lay south of Madras, the native language was Tamil. Originally no more than a small fishing village, it had been presented to the French as a gift in 1673. Since then it had frequently been seized both by the Dutch and by the English, who had last returned it after the Congress of Vienna. The European quarter was a grid of streets facing the sea, embellished with neo-classical French buildings and shaded by tulip trees and tamarinds. It was atrociously administered, badly run down and hopelessly neglected. Despite the fact that it had the best harbour on the coast, its trade was negligible. In addition to this, when the British had returned it to France, they had retained small land holdings deliberately designed to chop up the colony and so prevent any future military operations on the part of the French. The only considerable industry was the manufacture of cloth, the local water having superb bleaching qualities. The climate, though, was salubrious and, as an administrative backwater of stuccoed villas painted every pale shade of the rainbow, it was not without its charms.

Jacquemont stayed there for only two weeks, since that excellent and appropriately named ship, the *Zélée*, was prepared to convey him to Calcutta, and it was the British who ruled India, not the French. He paused only long enough to cement a few useful friendships, for Jacquemont's friendships, though sincere, somehow always were useful. He was one of those fortunate mortals who are able, through some enviable inter-

weaving of the moral fibre, to combine self-advancement with a willingness to oblige. Besides, he carried with him the mail-packet of Lord William Bentinck, the recently appointed Governor-General and a gentleman he was most eager to meet. He paused at Pondicherry only long enough to fire off at M. de Meslay a memorandum on the advantages of establishing a larger botanical garden. He did not on the whole feel that Pondicherry was the place to establish one. He did suggest that the plant samples already there should be dried, sorted and labelled. These amounted to some 900 and had never been attended to. As for the use of the garden already in existence at Pondicherry, he suggested that it be given over to the raising of indigo, an unpredictable but at times profitable crop. The planting of olive trees that would not bear and the importation to the Indian zoo of European sheep that did not fatten impressed him as being foolish. He recommended the planting of edible bananas and the hiring of some extra gardeners, and hurried on towards Calcutta.

The passage to Calcutta was not pleasant. The mouth of the Ganges was shifting and tricky, the delta profuse of tigers. Upon landing, his Portuguese valet, hired at Pondicherry, ordered him a palanquin, and Jacquemont, dressed in black from head to foot, uttered his first Hindustani sentence, which resulted in his being set down at the magnificent house of Mr. Pearson. Jacquemont entered between the double hedge of servants who lined the stairway and was ushered into the drawing-room, which was large and where he found three ladies, dressed stylishly, alone with a man in a light cotton dress suitable to the climate. This company perspired gently under the shifting punkahs. The footman announced Jacquemont, who unfortunately forgot his English and felt an overwhelming desire for a drink.

"I spoke a few words of English formerly, sir, but I perceive I have forgotten the whole," he said. "So I must entreat you to help me!"

It would be a mistake to under-estimate the guile of that voice. Naturally enough Mr. Pearson did help him, and so did Mrs. Pearson, and so did Mrs. Pearson's daughter, and not less did Mrs. Pearson's daughter's governess, Miss Parry. Soon Jacquemont was swimming in English like a fish in the river. He presented his letters of introduction and, the seals on these once broken, was accepted as a member of the family. They asked him if these were his only introductory letters. In answer he pulled out an enormous packet and, beginning with the more unimportant, with merchants and captains, rose through a judge, a chief justice and a member of the council, to terminate with a flourish upon one to Lady William Bentinck and five to her husband. It was an instructive performance. The Pearsons, and not least Miss Parry, the governess, drew their chairs closer and became even more cordial.

At eleven Mr. Pearson departed for the Supreme Court, leaving Jacquemont in the care of his daughter, an arrangement which had attraction for them both. On Miss Pearson's advice they piled into the Pearson carriage and galloped to the gubernatorial palace to see Lady William Bentinck. Miss Pearson tactfully remained outside to tend the carriage.

Jacquemont found Lady William Bentinck in her private drawing-room, a handsome woman of fifty, the daughter of Arthur, Lord Gosford, a woman of character and once of considerable beauty, who had a sprightly turn of mind. Accustomed to the superior intellectual treats of the Continent and something of a bluestocking, she was more than a trifle bored with Calcutta. Naturally enough, Jacquemont quickly proved that they had mutual friends in Paris, not the least of whom was Baron Gérard, and they chatted away busily until Lady William's physician appeared to take her in to luncheon. Jacquemont stayed to luncheon, needless to say. Miss Pearson, no doubt tired of waiting, had gone home.

Lord William at last bustled into the dining-room

in the centre of a cloud of ministers. Jacquemont presented all five of his introductory letters. After luncheon, though the introductions had gone down well, Jacquemont wisely concentrated on relieving in some measure the boredom of Lady William, who briefed him on the eminence of the Bentinck family and its connections. He was, to put it fairly, launched. He was also impressed. The Cavendish-Bentincks were both distinguished and redoubtable.

At this time Lord William was fifty-four. The second son of the third Duke of Portland, he had alternated service in the Napoleonic wars with a spell as Governor of Madras. He had served in Portugal and Spain, and had been envoy and virtual governor of Sicily. In 1827 he had been chosen as Governor-General of Bengal and, when the East India Company Charter was renewed, became automatically first Governor-General of India. In manner he was somewhat prim and punctilious; as an administrator he was at first unpopular for his little economies, by which he reduced the India debt and converted it into a profit of £2,000,000, and later popular by virtue of his honesty and, since honesty is at no time in itself popular, for the diplomacy with which he disguised that quality. During his span of office he suppressed the Thugs and introduced important land reforms, but he is chiefly remembered for having abolished *suttee* by defining it as legal homicide. At the time that Jacquemont met him he was having not only trouble with such formal enemies as Ranjit Singh in the North, with whom an uneasy alliance had been established, but also with the English officials under him, who resented his investigations into the rake-offs they had for so long accepted as an essential feature of their positions.

Of the two troubles, Ranjit was the more vexing. This gentleman, born in 1780, can best be defined in terms of the adjectives then applied to him. He was small, selfish, false, avaricious, superstitious, drunken,

debauched and a born ruler. He was also astute, competent and of administrative genius. He was, unlike most of India's native princes, neither cruel nor bloodthirsty. He died of drink in 1839, complicated by two strokes. Since his favourite drink was a mixture of corn brandy, meat juice, opium, musk and assorted herbs, neither the demise nor the strokes are surprising. He was also virtually impotent, producing only one legitimate child, a stupid young man assassinated by his son, who was in his turn assassinated on the way home from his father's funeral, thus rounding off the dynasty. Politically, however, he was anything but impotent.

Jacquemont was pleased with the Bentincks and elated that they should find him pleasing. When he returned to the Pearsons he discovered that he had been provided with two comfortable rooms and a horde of servants, all of them bearing fans. At five o'clock Mr. Pearson returned and delivered a disquisition on the Pearson family in return for a description of the Bentinck reception. At six they all went for a drive before dinner. Jacquemont did not stay for dinner, but dashed off to the Residency.

Lady William was waiting for him with some pleasure, and once more he played the interesting foreigner. He found the surroundings both royal and Asiatic, the dinner French and the wines moderate, though served by tall servants in white gowns, with long beards and turbans of scarlet and gold. Between courses, to stimulate the flagging appetite, a chamber orchestra composed of Germans but led by an Italian played Mozart and Rossini in the shadowy distances of the next room.

Jacquemont was overwhelmed. The fruit was exquisite, the flowers languorous and the champagne, no less than the music, admirable. He talked to Lady William in French on art, literature, painting and music, and to Lord William in English on French politics. Modesty induced him to mimic the behaviour of a lad

of sixteen, so he reported later. After dinner they withdrew to Lady William's drawing-room, where he drank six cups of coffee and was complimented out of his wits. To Lady William he must have been a godsend, being as thorough a conversational rattle as anyone could desire and stocked with all the latest European subjects besides. During this *soirée* he also found time to speak of physiology to the attendant physician, in order to display the breadth of his knowledge, not having had an opportunity to do so before.

Next day, in the Pearson carriage, he made his first round of visits and waited on those whom he had met the night before and to whom he had brought letters. This routine engaged him merrily for the next two weeks, when he departed for the Governor-General's country house at Barrackpore, reached by steamer up the Ganges. Here he took outings with Lady William Bentinck on the elephant always placed at her disposal, and on which they sat and chattered away together. She had taken a great liking to him, and at Barrackpore he was given a cottage to work in. Society, however, had its dangers: so much *pâté*, of which he was very fond, was served to him of a meal that he grew fat and was forced to avoid luncheon. Each afternoon he talked with Lady Willaim; and after dinner either music was performed or else he would corner Lord William on Indian and American subjects. At ten he would retire, first taking a stroll with Colonel Hezeta. Colonel Hezeta was a noble Spanish refugee, born in Cuba, who had served under Bentinck in Spain, had lost everything and had been given refuge in India. He was grizzled, over fifty, but of a sweet and intelligent nature. For Jacquemont he had the added advantage of speaking and writing French excellently. He was to be Jacquemont's particular confidant for the next four years, and they consoled each other for the horror of their life amid English society.

A visit to Hezeta, wrote Jacquemont immediately

upon returning from it, had left a memory of sadness, and he quite agreed that to be forced to live in exile among the English was a dolorous thing. The English, though equable and well-meaning, were not essentially sympathetic. They forced Jacquemont to take his solace in the thought that he lived among things rather than people, but he fully realized, he explained, how hard it must be for a Spaniard to live among people who were things, and so incapable of inspiring any feeling of tenderness. However, Hezeta was so superior to those among whom he was constrained to live that he could take comfort in that thought.

Besides, Jacquemont had a remedy for colonial boredom. Cold and dull though the English might be, he advised his new friend, curiosity could perhaps find something of interest in the study of them. It was true their life and habitat were confusing, but at least now Hezeta had Jacquemont for a friend, and in friendship age was no barrier, particularly as he, Jacquemont, had suffered beyond his years. Nonetheless English life was confusing. Jacquemont was forced to invent the verb "*tiffiner*" to describe the process of afternoon tea, which he defined formally as "a collation taken between luncheon and dinner".

The English temperament itself he ascribed to childhood and to romantic adolescent sources. He could find nothing but a disappointment in love that could explain their maniacal habit of endless horse-riding, the silent drinking of two bottles of wine at dinner and the langueurs of tiffin. The English method of horseback riding he found mechanical. He varied it himself by repeating "She loves me, she loves me not". On the first, he went slowly, on the second, broke into a canter. It must have been an interesting progress to watch, and the end of it was that he became lost in a fog, in the middle of a wood, and there found Lady William in the same condition.

Meanwhile he had removed to Garden Reach, the

estate of Sir Edward Ryan. He could not, he said, turn his host's house into an anatomy laboratory and, besides, it was impossible to think in any place occupied by the English. Borrowing a barge from Sir Edward, he had himself rowed every morning across the Ganges to the relative seclusion of the Botanical Garden. He had also found himself a private house that he could afford, but as it was in the Himalayas, some 500 leagues away, removal to it might take some time to effect.

He continued to study local society. His essentially logical mind had perceived and reduced to an apothegm the true state of Indian affairs. " People do not come here to live and enjoy life," he wrote to Victor de Tracy. " They come—and this is the case in all states of society here—in order to gain something with which to enjoy life elsewhere. There is no such thing as a man of leisure in Calcutta." The ruling class, he admitted, did have a taste for study, but all others with lesser gifts, not to mention lesser incomes, yielded to a disgraceful indolence, supported by their taste for forming societies devoted to such subjects as craniology, phrenology, horticulture, literature and medicine. Jacquemont avoided them as a waste of time, and instead ingratiated himself with the legal colony in the persons of Sir Edward Ryan, Mr. Pearson and, inevitably, Lord William Bentinck, who thought and acted, Jacquemont decided with approval, like a Philadelphia Quaker. If Lord William failed, there was always Lady William, who at the moment was trying to convert him from agnosticism. Local society was dull, and if it was his duty to lighten the burden of boredom even by theological means, Jacquemont was not one to shirk a social duty. He promptly became expert at theological debate.

But he was eager to learn about the English. He saw, he wrote, an immense empire rolling smoothly, except for the clamour of a few blackguards. When such blackguards quarrelled, as in any other country, one

cut the throat of the other behind a wall, the dead were buried and that was the end of the matter; so the administration really suffered little by it. Public disputes among officials while performing their official duties were, on the other hand, refreshingly rare, largely because the English were scattered so thinly over the surface of India that it was difficult for them to assemble a quorum for a quarrel. On the side of discipline, insubordination drew, as punishment, a mandatory apology. A refusal to apologize resulted in dismissal from the Indian service. The resultant superior excellence of the English administration over the French he attributed directly to the cluttered bureaucracy of France as against the sparse one of England. Then India, after all, was held by the East India Company in order to maintain the benefits of the China trade. It was thus a business-like government.

The English in India, according to their own lights, prospered. A lieutenant of the infantry, for example, certainly a lowly enough post, rode each dawn before seven in the morning, kept a small house of five or six large rooms and verandas, took in the morning papers and the fashionable novels, lunched sensibly but elegantly and dined well amid silver and crystal, taking in an ample supply of wine and beer; he drove out in a carriage of an evening, changed his linen four times a day and he smoked too much. Such officers bemoaned their lot, thinking that they had made a great sacrifice to the Crown in coming out to India at all. This Jacquemont could not understand. On the whole he found the system more admirable than the people it sheltered.

By Act of Parliament the East India Company was obliged to maintain 25,000 European troops in India, but as to do this would be expensive, it kept only 15,000. The mortality rate of this body was high, not from the dangers of war, but from the dangers of the bottle. Though to Jacquemont's French temperament spirits

were a deadly poison, there is some truth in what he says.

There was little *esprit de corps* among the officers, who lived alone and took their domestics, bed, kitchen and staff to battle with them, meeting their fellow officers only during the engagement itself. Such idle loneliness made them wayward, and it was a rare day that the papers did not report one of these officers court-martialled for conduct unbecoming to an officer and a gentleman. They found it difficult to be both.

The King's regiments, on the other hand, as opposed to those of the Company, had to dine in commons and there discipline was much better kept. It was maintained by a system of polite ostracism. If an officer absented himself from morning muster, this was considered an insult to his fellow officers, who thereupon would refuse to drink with him that evening. As there was nothing to do of an evening except drink, this was an effective measure. The officers, of course, were not intimate with the ranks, be they either native or English. Each company, as a matter of form and face, maintained two or three native officers, but if these proved either too conspicuous or too efficient, they were retired with full pay, an honourable and face-saving device to keep them from competing with their European colleagues. Any officer who studied Persian or Hindustani—and most preferred to drink and smoke rather than make the effort—had an excellent chance of advancement to a more lucrative position. After eighteen years of service members of the rank and file automatically became captains. It was an excellent way of keeping order and maintaining strength.

In those days it was quite possible to make a considerable profit, one way and another, out of one's military service despite the fact that anyone even nominally employed by the East India Company was forced to hand over any gifts he might receive from the natives. This rule applied even to the Governor-

General. But though personal profit often led to a private fortune, official trade did not flourish. India was by no means a profitable venture either to the East India Company or to the British Government. Only two provinces produced a sufficient revenue, and this revenue was used to defray the expenses of the others, which operated at a loss.

In addition to this, in the year 1829 trade was rapidly diminishing, the indigo-planters were having a difficult time, largely because of their own bad methods, and America was replacing India as a producer of cheap cotton. Saltpetre, opium and the always uncertain indigo were the only really profitable enterprises. Most of the opium went to China, and the Chinese were, as usual, being fractious and unreliable. The indigo-planters were unruly and given at times to murder. Jacquemont could not understand why the Government did not avail itself of the right to banish them from India. That would be high-handed, but bad means, he felt, often led to good results.

Until just before his arrival, the English had been forbidden to own property in India. Now this was changed. The political scene was complicated in so far as the Company were eager to buy out the few small foreign colonies remaining in India. They particularly wished, and succeeded in doing so, to buy the Danish settlement at Serampore, for this tiny colony near Calcutta had become the refuge for every thief, bankrupt and scoundrel who had to flee from British India. But, once sold out, these worthies removed to the French possessions, largely to Chandernagore. Jacquemont thought the French also should sell out, for their colonies were maintained only by the joint grace of God and of the English, and the French, because of the maladministration and poverty of their colonies, were looked down upon by the British in India.

He had recently made an excursion to Chandernagore in the Government steam yacht with the Bentincks.

Chandernagore was a few miles above Calcutta, on the banks of that mouth of the Ganges called the Hooghly. Though once the site of an important French factory and still in French hands, it had been ruined by war, the tariff wall, occasional floods and the rise of Calcutta. It was a sleepy little town with the inevitable French Colonial grid plan and architecture, pleasant in decay and surrounded by woods and swamps.

The yacht dropped anchor and Jacquemont prepared to make his visit. Lady William thought it would be considered rude were she to remain on board, so she insisted upon landing.

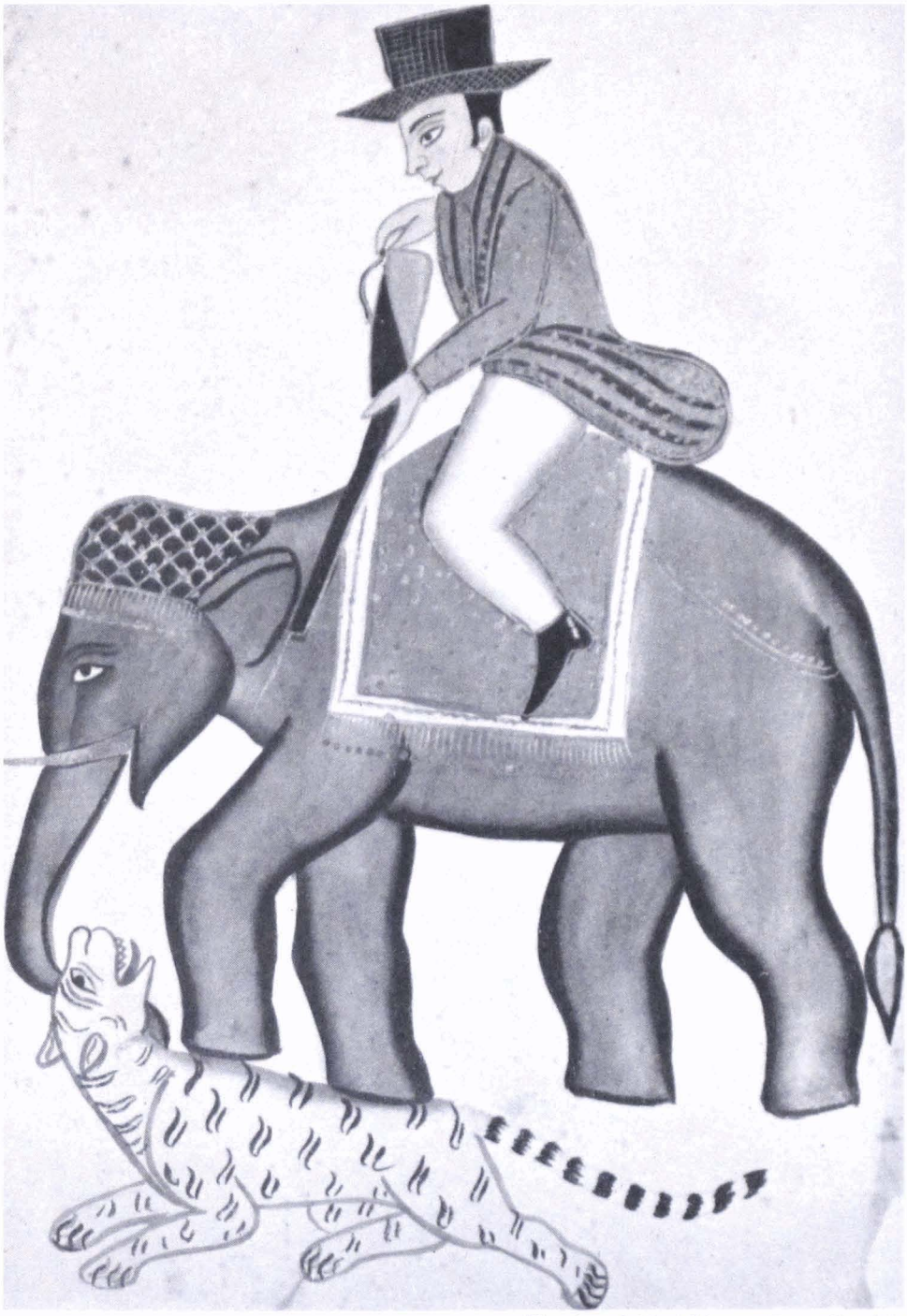
Jacquemont descended alone, on the pretext that Cordier, the Governor of the colony, might be away. He at last collared a French-speaking native and was taken to the house of the Governor. His visit set all the domestics in an uproar, and at length M. Cordier entered the room. He had been dressing hastily and he was fussed. Jacquemont announced the appearance of the Bentincks. Cordier glanced out of the window of his drawing-room, saw the yacht at anchor and promptly fled to his wife. A few moments later he returned with his hat on his head and rushed out of the house as though the devil were after him. He had been flabbergasted by the unexpected visit. His little army of servants hastily changed into white uniforms, but even this did not calm M. Cordier, who confessed that he had not enough cannon to fire an official salute. All the same, he was ravished by the honour of the visit. He hastened to the wharf, and found Lord William and his wife about to descend, umbrellas up above their heads against the fierce heat of the sun. The gubernatorial carriages were swung down from the deck of the yacht on to the shore. Lady William entered hers; Lord William preferred to stroll through the attendant crowd. As he set forth, thirty soldiers, most of them house servants hastily pressed into uniform, performed manœuvres and presented arms. Since the Bentincks had brought a

guard of 100 with them, this was not altogether a satisfactory display.

At the Residency they discovered the remaining servants also in improvised uniform drawn up on each side of the hall. Mme. Cordier was waiting to receive Lady William in the salon, which unfortunately contained scarcely a stick of furniture, though it was at least clean. Jacquemont felt shame for his fellow Frenchmen before such visiting splendour, but tried to pass it off. M. Cordier spoke of the pleasures of Chandernagore. So did Lady William, undeterred by the fact that there were none. The little group at last agreed in deciding that the climate, at least, was slightly cooler than that of Calcutta, the ground being a foot or two higher. After a painful half-hour the company retired, M. Cordier escorting Lady William's Tom Jones down to the dock, and the rest of the company following on foot. As the yacht drew out from the shore, M. Cordier went home slowly, and Chandernagore, sad, lonely and deserted, dropped from sight. It is impossible not to believe that Jacquemont enjoyed showing off his powerful new friends. But it is also impossible not to sympathize with M. Cordier and, in particular, with M. Cordier's wife.

The Bentincks almost always came up to scratch. "So far as agreeable society goes, I want for nothing," said Jacquemont with some satisfaction, and of these amiable hosts. He had plunged into study and equipped himself with a native to teach him Hindustani. He found it a detestable language with a difficult script and not one resemblance to French; a language, moreover, of no use to anyone, since it could not be spoken to any purpose in Paris. The pronunciation required a throat of rusty iron, and the enunciation, he reported, was that of a balked sneeze. Elsewhere he described it as the scream of a new-born calf for its mother.

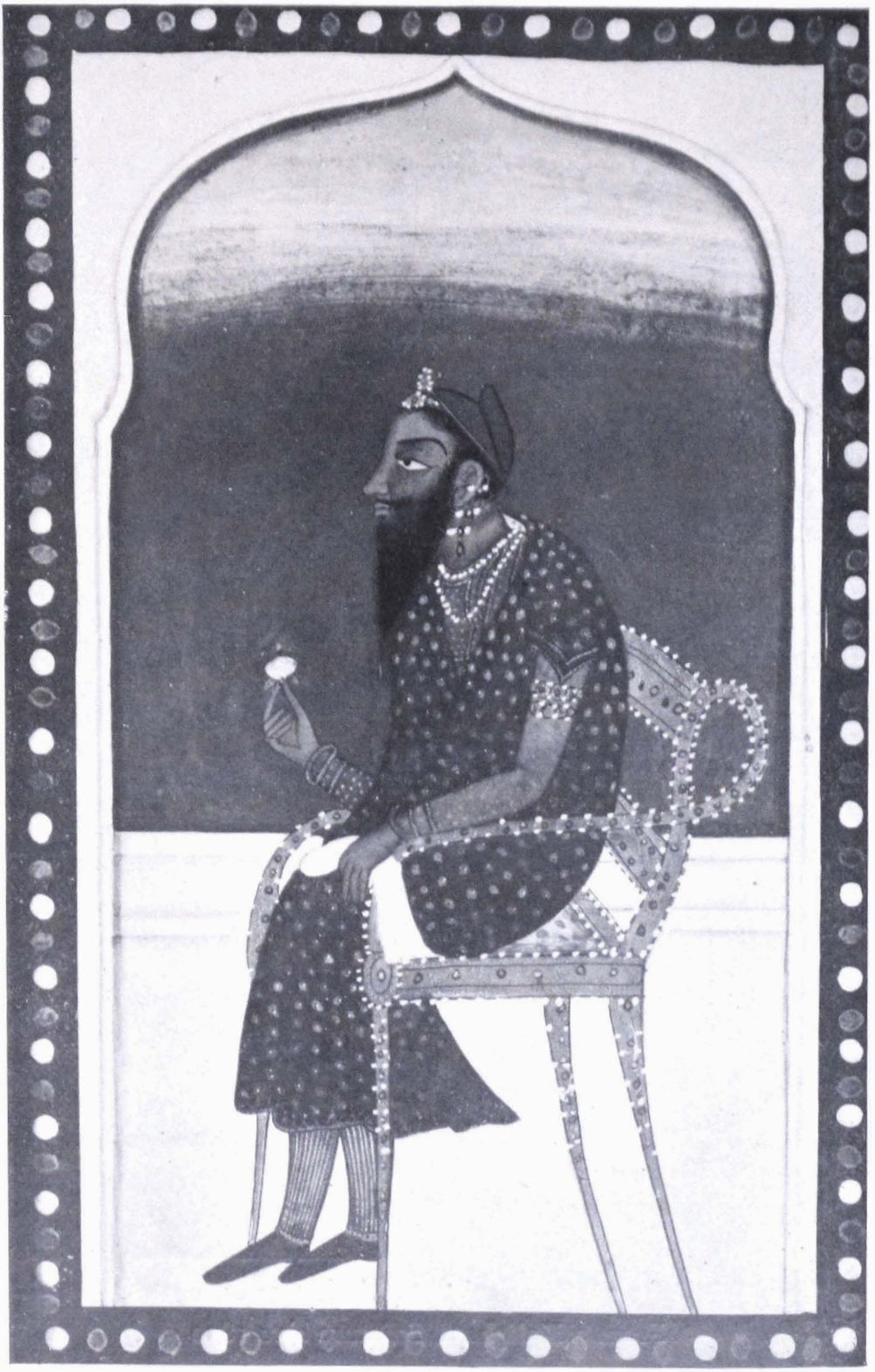
Unlike mad dogs and Englishmen, he avoided the heat of the day and could not abide the equestrian habits of his hosts, who galloped about every evening like auto-



Victoria and Albert Museum, Crown Copyright

THE WELL DRESSED TRAVELLER

From a Kalighat Miniature *circa* 1830



Victoria and Albert Museum, Crown Copyright

RANJIT SINGH, RAJAH OF LAHORE

Guler miniature 1805

matons, to no earthly purpose that he could discern. "There is a great deal of stupidity at the bottom of this exhibition of manliness which the English think themselves bound to make," he wrote. "It forms a very ridiculous contrast with the cumbrous multitude of sumptuous articles necessary for their comfort." Coming from a man who was shortly to tour the Himalayas with extensive luggage, a pier glass and the best cook that Lahore could provide, this was a somewhat self-righteous statement.

But among the English, society proved expensive. He wished that his salary could be raised to 15,000 francs per annum but had few hopes of this being done. He was then having, and was in the future to have, many difficulties with the Museum about money. He had recently received his balance sheet and allowance from the directors of that stingy organization. He regretted the smallness of the sum allotted him for his own sake, he informed them, but far more for theirs. He attempted to explain his difficulties to them. These were considerable.

The prejudice of the caste system necessitated the hiring of a great many servants, since one would not do the work of another. In India one travelled either by *dak*, carried by porters, or by a march, conducted on horseback, surrounded by bullocks and servants. It was customary to march by day in winter, by night in summer, and even so it was impossible to make more than six or seven leagues in a day. The animals were so small and weak that they had to be changed frequently. They also had to be fed.

He pointed out that M. Dussumier's collection of stuffed fish had cost 9,000 francs to assemble. How, then, could he live and assemble large collections on only 6,000 francs? It was an impossibility. Since he could not even live on 6,000, he reported, he had determined to accept the hospitality of the English, and he did not intend to set forth upon any exploration until such time

as the Museum cleared up the matter of his budget. It was, on the whole, a stiff letter; but like many letters even stiffer, it did not work.

However, he had also written to the Ministry of the Marine, offering his services as a seeker-out of suitable sites for French colonization. He had received a somewhat jesuitical reply. Despite these negotiations he was not, whatever the British might think, a spy. He was only driven to such practices by a need of money. He had, though, written to de Meslay at Pondicherry, saying that the rare advantages which he enjoyed among the English permitted him to be most useful. Since de Meslay was Governor of all the French establishments in India, this was at least a leading letter. Whether any arrangement was reached between them about this is not known; but in October 1829 Jacquemont wrote Meslay a long letter from Chandernagore, full of details about the English in India, which has somewhat the ring of an official despatch. He also offered his services as a specialist upon silkworm culture, for he really did need money badly. In addition, he endeavoured, and was partly successful in doing so, to receive the revenues of the director of the Jardin du Roi at Pondicherry, who was habitually absent in Europe and so might be supposed not to need them. One cannot blame him for taking every ounce of help he could manage to coax from his hosts, for the Museum treated him abominably.

CHAPTER FOUR

MEANWHILE there were the English. He found their kindness to him no less astonishing than their coldness towards each other. They refused to bubble and thus, in his opinion, deprived themselves of one of the greatest pleasures within their reach, and he marvelled at his own character, set like a true jewel in this essentially tiresome social crown of paste. His father hoped he would make a good match while abroad, but Jacquemont's opinion of the young Anglo-Indian ladies was anything but favourable. One night, after a particularly gruelling session with one of them, he rushed home and set down the entire conversation while he was still in a rage. As a sample of corrosive English it owes something to Dean Swift's *Polite Conversation.* Alas, it also has the stamp of authenticity.

He had been to dinner at the Residency, and there had had the misfortune to take in to the dining-room a young lady of the usual Anglo-Indian sort, though in this case, to be charitable, she seems to have been somewhat worse than the average. As a sidelight on an earlier and neglected phase of the feminist movement if as nothing else, his account deserves to be set down as he wrote it. The skirmish began, of course, in the drawing-room. Jacquemont, whose sense of social responsibility was sometimes his undoing, approached the young woman.

Jacquemont : Mademoiselle, may I have the honour of offering you my arm to the dining-room?

Girl : Gladly, Monsieur.

Jacquemont : I am very grateful to Lady William for the pleasure she has given me of being able to dine with

my compatriots. For more than the month I have been in India, I have not had the chance to speak my own tongue.

Girl : And you scarcely know how to speak any other?

Jacquemont : It is true. I do not express myself easily in English.

Girl : It is impossible for the French, I know. They cannot pronounce it properly.

Jacquemont : As for you, Mademoiselle, I would not have taken you for an Englishwoman to hear you: are you not French?

Girl : No, Monsieur.

Jacquemont : Your father, I know, is English; but your mother is French. You were born in France; you passed your childhood there. . . .

Girl : Monsieur, I tell you, and I repeat, that I am not French.

This preliminary skirmish was followed by a brief, embarrassed silence, while each patched up the wounds of his own insularity. Bridling slightly, his companion once more swerved in to the attack.

She : Monsieur, are you married?

Jacquemont : No, Mademoiselle.

She : Good. What is your religion?

Jacquemont : But you know that, in general, the French are Catholic. I am not a Protestant.

She : Then you are Catholic?

Jacquemont : Why yes, without doubt: my family is Catholic.

She : But Monsieur, are *you* Catholic? Explain more clearly, for I do not understand you.

Jacquemont : I had the honour to tell you, Mademoiselle, that my family was Catholic, and I have no reason to believe that I am not of the religion of my parents.

There was another brief pause while, like a skilful bulldog, she shifted her grip. In the interim Jacque-

mont glanced desperately around the table, but it seemed unaware of the carnage. His companion did not allow him to escape, either into vagueness or into food.

She : What is your fortune?
Jacquemont : Very small.
She : Yes, but how much do you have to spend in a year?
Jacquemont : To tell the truth, I cannot say.
She : How singular! It seems to me, Monsieur, that I ask sufficiently clear questions to have clear answers to them.
Jacquemont : Mademoiselle, I suppose that I have fifteen thousand francs a year.
She : That is very little. It is only the pay of a captain in this country.
Jacquemont : It suffices.

Having already catalogued him as a poor stick, she cast about in her mind for some explanation of a young man, even if he was merely French, who could be content to live on 15,000 francs a year. With that income he scarcely seemed worth talking to, but they had to get through the meal somehow. At last she thought of an explanation.

She : Are your parents still alive?
Jacquemont : My father is.
She (hopefully) : Is he old?
Jacquemont : Very old.
She : Very good. Has he something to leave you?
Jacquemont : Very little.
She (clutching at straws) : You perhaps have some old bachelor uncles or elderly relatives from whom you can inherit?
Jacquemont : I have little hope of it.
She (airily) : It is extremely agreeable to inherit, especially when one has only fifteen thousand francs a year.

Jacquemont (*nettled, but still polite*) : Mademoiselle, I have the good luck to have very simple tastes and I am quite satisfied with what I have.

She : I have no wish to disturb your pleasure: but your pleasures go on foot. In your place, I would search for a decent sinecure in order to keep a carriage.

Jacquemont : I do not find, if you will pardon my saying so, that to hold a sinecure is exactly honest.

She (*astonished*) : Why not?

Jacquemont : It is only by the labour of the unfortunate that one can gain a surplus for the lazy. I would suffer from conscience if I had a good so badly come by.

She (*contemptuously*) : You are philanthropic, so it seems.

Jacquemont : A little.

She : No, too much.

Jacquemont : Too much, then, if you wish it.

She : Why aren't you married?

Jacquemont : No doubt because I have had neither the wish nor the opportunity to marry.

She (*dumbfounded*) : What age are you?

Jacquemont : Twenty-eight.

She : Then it is time to begin thinking of the matter.

Jacquemont : Oh, I am still quite young, at least for a Frenchman. You must remember that we marry later than do the English.

She : That is extremely bad.

Jacquemont : Why bad?

She : Monsieur . . . aren't you a Christian?

Jacquemont : I have already had the honour of telling you that I was not only a Christian but without doubt also Catholic.

She : I understand, and a philosopher into the bargain: all philanthropists are. And so, Monsieur, when you are so philanthropic, why don't you marry?

Jacquemont : I do not see the connection.

She : You are short-sighted.

Jacquemont : As you see, I wear glasses.

She : That has nothing to do with it.

Jacquemont : May I ask what does?

She (*with large and appealing eyes*) *:* Marriage.

Jacquemont : It is true: I had forgotten.

She : Your memory is as unreliable as your eyes, I take it.

Jacquemont : Alas, yes.

She : It is very bad not to have a memory.

Jacquemont : I am inconsolable.

She (*uneasily aware that she is being spoofed*) *:* To return to the subject, do you think women are happier than men?

Jacquemont : I do not know.

She : What *do* you know, Monsieur?

Jacquemont : I am extremely learned, but I do not know that.

She : Oh well, Monsieur, since you are so learned, tell me if there is more good for women in being married or unmarried?

Jacquemont : That depends.

She : On what?

Jacquemont (*warily*) *:* On a thousand circumstances.

She : Have the goodness, I beg you, to tell me without circumlocutions if you do not think it bad for women not to be married?

Jacquemont : I agree, generally.

She : In that case, Monsieur, you are extremely culpable, and inconstant to your philanthropic principles, in being a bachelor at your age. When men remain bachelors, then women must remain spinsters. It is no more than egoism in a philanthropist to remain in a condition which is agreeable but which involves the unhappiness of another person. Is that not so?

At this point Jacquemont pushed his chair back from the table, doubtless let his hands dangle by his sides and heartily wished that he were somewhere else. However, it was necessary to go on.

Jacquemont : My conscience will be perfectly tranquil that I will wrong no one. Apart from that there are

men, and I am one of them, sufficiently sensitive to wait to marry until sentiment prompts them to, since reason can never determine the matter. Sentiment is involuntary.

This little speech seems to have taken them both off balance. She blinked and once more shifted her hold.

She : Do you believe that you could love anybody ugly?

Jacquemont : To tell the truth, I think that amiability would be swallowed up by the ugliness.

She : Thus, in your system, those who are neither beautiful nor amiable would have to remain spinsters.

Jacquemont : I did not say that.

She : You have said it, but it does not matter, for the case is rare. Women are very agreeable.

Jacquemont : Mademoiselle, you should allow me to say that.

She (*again shifting*) *:* Monsieur, what do you think of the chorus in Greek tragedy?

Jacquemont (*baffled by this Socratic nightmare*) *:* What do I think of the chorus in Greek tragedy?

She : Yes. What is so obscure about my question? It is an absurdity in the theatre but the ancients did not have a theatre.

Jacquemont : At least they did not have theatres like ours.

She : I prefer the plays of Voltaire.

Jacquemont (*cautiously*) *:* Some of them are very fine.

She : What! Some? Are they not all fine?

Jacquemont : In his old age he wrote many which show a decline in his powers and which are decidedly tiresome. They are never played. I imagine that you have never read them.

She : I assure you, Monsieur, that I have read all Voltaire.

Jacquemont : Allow me to compliment you: I could not say so much.

She : What! You are French and you have not read Voltaire?

Jacquemont : Not all Voltaire. But there are some I have read many times. The *Romans Philosophiques*, for example.

She : I like them very much, and also *Candide*. It is a great and profound work.

Jacquemont (*reminiscently*) *:* Very sad.

She (*sharply*) *:* Very amusing, I find it.

Jacquemont : Ah, in some ways, no doubt.

She : But your clergy have forbidden you to read Voltaire, have they not?

Jacquemont : I do not know. But one can read without their permission.

She : But surely they forbid you Voltaire as well as the Bible?

Jacquemont : It is a coupling that does honour to Voltaire.

She (*grimly*) *:* They forbid him because he attacked the Catholic faith; but Voltaire was an atheist, and his works are no less condemned by us, who are true Christians, than by the gross and superstitious priests of Rome.

Jacquemont (*coldly*) *:* How is it that you are not afraid to read them?

She : Does it do any harm to see them? The superiority of the female spirit and judgment allows us to read works without harm that would be dangerous to men.

Jacquemont : I have never heard that said.

She : I do not pretend, Monsieur, to echo the public in what I say. But can you sincerely doubt that women are not greatly superior to men?

At this point Jacquemont gave a start of incredulity mixed with boredom. He had, of course, met many a blue-stocking in Paris. He had never before met a militant feminist, particularly one so young and wide-eyed, rather than long in the tooth. She took the start

for triumph and, thoroughly detesting him, swung into her peroration.

She : Are you ignorant of history? Was Alexander greater than Semiramis? Æneas than Dido? Pindar than Sappho? And in modern times, are not the reigns of Queens Elizabeth and Anne the most glorious in English history? Maria-Theresa, Catherine the Great, were they not women born to command? Your Salic Law is one of the most abominable things in your constitution. What do you think?

Jacquemont (*considering*) *:* I think that our opinions about women do not perfectly agree.

She : No, they do not. But, Monsieur, however much you French may refuse them their rights legally, do women not have power in France?

Jacquemont (*gloomily*) *:* Much too much.

She : That is because there is little good to be accomplished in France; a woman's actions would have difficulty in being useful there, for the people are so ignorant and the Catholics so superstitious.

Jacquemont (*marvelling*) *:* Am I so superstitious?

She : Without doubt, if you are Catholic. There is nothing so shameful as Catholicism. The French are notoriously inferior to the English.

Jacquemont (*fed up and viciously*) *:* Undoubtedly. For example, they make knives less well.

She (*rhapsodically*) *:* The English always defeat the French. The French are not a warrior race.

Jacquemont : I believe, however, that for the past thirty-five years they have given certain proofs of their skill in that field.

She : How did that end? Who defeated them at Waterloo?

Jacquemont : The Prussians.

She : No, Monsieur, the English.

Jacquemont : I will believe it, if that will please you.

She (*again shifting the attack*) *:* What is your device?

Jacquemont : I do not know my armorial bearings very well; but I do not know my device at all.

She : That seems unintelligible. You say that you do not know your bearings. Don't you have any?

She, in her turn, drew back her chair, for they had galloped through the meal and she was ready to catch him out as no better than a bounder. He was not a satisfactory young man at all.

Jacquemont : I believe I have and, what is more, that there are three turtledoves on some part of it, on a sort of shield. . . .

She (contemptuously) : I, Monsieur, have a banana on mine: it is the emblem of my name. But what will you do when you wish to marry? Do you believe that anybody would consent to marry you without knowing your crest or the age of your family? Surely one would have the right to expect proofs of descent from you at least equal to those which your prospective wife could establish?

Jacquemont : I should study the matter, Mademoiselle, for I am, as you are, very delicate about the degree of equality in birth in an alliance. And, as my ancestors were nobles at the time of Charles Quint, I could not marry anyone who could not prove to me at least three hundred years of nobility. I should ask that even of you. For is there anything so ridiculous and so blameworthy as a *parvenu*?

She : I think, Monsieur, that one could reasonably marry only somebody very rich.

Jacquemont : Mademoiselle, they are going into the salon. Will you accept my arm?

She : I will take that of my mother, thank you.

As an example of social chatter in 1828, even in Calcutta, it is not heartening. He may have won the skirmish, but he had made an enemy. However, since

women of that sort are born to be enemies, in this case it made little difference.

Fortunately, on the whole, such extreme encounters were rare. His luck was usually better. " I am often astonished how I can please men so different from myself, whose thoughts rest on objects so remote from those which mine visit when I set them at liberty," he confided to his journal. After all, he was a mere scientist, and the Revolution, which had drawn men of science from their closets to mingle with the world in France, had yet to take place in England. But he found himself in high esteem for having read some of Shakespeare's tragedies, some of Byron's poetry and some of Scott's novels; for having seen and admired some of Reynolds' pictures; and for having heard of one Mozart and one Rossini, who wrote very beautiful music. He also had an insight into the mechanics of his own art of pleasing, an art he knew better, perhaps, even than did Balthasar Gracian.

> " They think it strange that I should question them concerning the commerce of this country, its internal administration and the mechanism of the different public services which the local government performs; yet this desire for knowledge is very agreeable to them, since it enables everyone to talk of what he knows best, and because I thus wage war, without premeditation, against the insipid conversation of their long dinners. The truth is, my dear friend, that without being melancholy I am not a bit gayer than you have ever seen me; but this comparative seriousness is gaiety to them, whose gravity is, to us, a dull and gloomy silence."

This was the self-conscious manner in which he always wrote to Victor de Tracy, who demanded a philosophic tone, for Jacquemont had a Tartuffian skill at varying his manner to suit his host. To his father he was some-

what more frank. To his eldest brother, almost bumptiously boastful.

He had just come from the house of Lord William and Lady William Bentinck, whose kindness was unremitting. They had asked him to stay to tiffin, a meal for which he had no regard and which he now defined as "a slight meal at half-past one". The character of Lord William he found seductive. For one thing, Lord William allowed himself to be cornered in his own drawing-room while Jacquemont jabbered away the whole evening. Certainly his portraits do much to confirm the impression of affability. It is a patient face, slightly deaf but amiable. As for Jacquemont, he was delighted with such company, for in society he found pleasure for his vanity and interest for his mind. He learned many things which direct observation would never have taught him, and he formed an acquaintance with men of influence, whose support and good offices could be materially useful to him.

He continued to meditate upon the character of the English. "I could find interest in English society", he advised Hezeta, "only by regarding it as a subject for study." His conclusions were dolorous in the extreme.

Each morning a solid and elegant boat conveyed him across the Ganges to the Botanic Garden, where he spent the day in study. In the evening he returned to Garden Reach. His hostess was ill, and this, he found, made the house quiet, silent and so quite favourable to study. He decided to improve the scientific knowledge of his host with potted lectures.

"A Frenchman has much greater facility in entering into an Englishman's friendship than would another Englishman—they are like bodies similarly electrified which repel each other," he observed, and turned his electrically receptive talents to the task of playing chess with Sir Charles Grey, while Lady Grey played soft music soothingly as a background to cerebration. In large gatherings he drawled his speech and made

himself ponderous, in imitation of the English. But in private he maintained a saucy sprightliness. The Greys were very rich. This, which might seemingly have made life difficult for him, had quite the opposite effect. Jacquemont was a traveller, and this was an excuse for not spending anything. The Governor-General lent both his yacht and his steamboat. Jacquemont was French, and therefore eminently entertainable. The loan of horses, carriages, botanic gardens and libraries, good dinners and good wine followed in due course. He was an admirable young man, but serious, as the young woman at the dinner-party had discovered. He did not, as he informed his father, spend his time ogling an heiress. Instead he studied. He studied, among other things, the graceful art of making six thousand francs do the work of twelve.

He was certainly poor, but it was a poverty with certain advantages. One letter to his father—and he had written 120 pages' worth of letters in the past five days—concluded: "I leave you for pleasure; to dine in a palace, in the middle of a beautiful garden, with a pleasant, amiable, learned and clever man, very kind to me, and a pretty woman. I shall be welcomed and caressed almost *à la Française*." After dinner he returned to write twenty more pages to his brother Frédéric. He had just seen the Advocate-General (500,000 francs a year), a judge (150,000 francs, with a retiring pension of 36,000 francs a year), a Danish botanist, M. Wallich, in charge of the Botanical Garden (72,000 francs), the Chief Justice (200,000 francs),* and yet he himself continued to have only 6,000 francs a year, with no retiring pension whatsoever. Though accomplished at ferreting out an income, he had not been able to determine Lord William's. On some subjects, no doubt, Lord William could be a taciturn man.

Nonetheless, Jacquemont felt that a Frenchman had

* In computing their revenues Jacquemont included both official and unofficial sources of revenue.

seldom attained to such extensive and universal intercourse with the English. This he had achieved by talking his head off. Indeed, if he talked as fluently and copiously as he wrote, his social character must have been formidable and one to which only the placidly deaf could hope to remain immune.

His world began and ended with the Bentincks. They were amiable people and they petted him outrageously. Truth to tell, in that dull and closeted society he must have seemed, to anyone of any sprightliness, an outrageously pettable person. To Lady Bentinck, daily, either aboard an elephant (and to discuss Rossini aboard an elephant is, after all, a special skill) or else walking in the garden, he would jabber about God, Baron Gérard, Mozart, Rossini, painting, Mme. de Staël, happiness, misery, love and so on. He thought it showed some confidence for a woman to discuss these matters *tête-à-tête* with a young man who was not only a bachelor but also French. What Lord William thought of it all is not recorded. No doubt he found it soothing, for apparently his wife was as indefatigable a talker as he was a listener. A change was sometimes welcome.

It was an excellent reception he had had. " Things like this ", he wrote, " sometimes happen to Yorick, and yet I look at myself and find no resemblance between me and that sentimental hero." He seems to have looked at himself rather often. It was the rainy season and, being bored, he made a new addition to his list of talents —one that surprised him. To amateur surgery, botanizing, correcting the works of Stendhal, acting as ship's interpreter, flagging down miscellaneous vessels of the British fleet and improving Sir Edward Ryan's scientific skill, he added the new accomplishment of drawing. Certainly he drew no worse than many another amateur of the period, and was particularly good at the delineation of his own figure. What he liked best to design were profile heads. Some of these have an elegance and delicacy that are most pleasing.

And while he remained in Calcutta, fighting out his allowance with the Museum authorities at home, he continued to study. He learned, among other things, how to walk in the sun without expiring. And he found Lady Grey so beautiful, although, as he notes, she was not really so, that he allowed her to transport him to her country house near Barrackpore until the end of the rainy season.

And, as always, he had only 6,000 francs per annum —too little to allow of exploring—so he stayed where he was, immersed in study, pleasure, claret and good conversation, and hoarded his capital. He intended to climb the Himalayas in the April of 1830. He was to set forth on this journey on November 20th, 1829, and so he contemplated the nature of his trip.

A bamboo cart would carry the luggage. A bullock would carry his tent. Jacquemont would ride a white horse, and only a white horse, out of a sense of the fitness of things, so it was necessary to procure a white horse. He would take six servants—a very small staff in that place at that time: one to carry his gun, another the water, a third for the kitchen and pantry, a fourth to feed the horses and two more for miscellaneous purposes. In addition to these, he would need cattle-drivers, but it was certainly a most modest safari. An Englishman, in his place, would have travelled with twenty, including one to tend his pipe and one to tote the *chaise-percé*, an indispensable adjunct of British travel in India. He would also have taken along at least four cooks.

By comparison with this, Jacquemont found his own ambulatory establishment miserably plain. But, as he pointed out, others might have 60,000 francs a year, but he had his letters of introduction. Having learned what he could do with those he had already presented, he did not expect to come to any serious harm in presenting the others. At the same time as his own trip the Bentincks would be making a progress through India, and Jacquemont hoped to join them in April, in the house

which his Lordship had prudently had built for that purpose at Simla.

Meanwhile there was the problem of money, as usual. Jacquemont meditated taking a post with the Indian Government, but decided that though it would bring him in 24,000 francs a year, it would effectively lower his social position, for then he would be identifiable as a unit of the Indian social system, whereas in his footloose and impecunious state he had the acceptable glamour of an oddity. "By the vulgar method, that of splendid carriages, grand dinners and extravagant houses, I should require at least a hundred and fifty thousand francs per annum to maintain the position which I now occupy with my six thousand francs, and should probably remain beneath it," he decided. Needless to say, he did not hesitate, but continued in his present position.

Before setting forth he was well informed of the dangers of the route. He found that one officer in thirty-one and a half was apt to perish during the average year. He did not consider this to be a particularly perilous risk, if only because, in his opinion, the officers drank themselves to death. Jacquemont proposed to drink nothing but water mixed with one drop of brandy.

He had his own secret formula for survival, as has every traveller, whether it be fussy or practical. It was an elementary precaution that had first occurred to him at the end of adolescence and from whose hygiene he had never departed. It was, in short, his syringe, one of the best in India. "It is for want of lavage," he told his brother confidentially, "that the English for the most part die." He also conceded that they were apt to die of shame at the mere mention of such a ritual.

As for other possible dangers, disease bothered him little and the wild life even less. He knew perfectly well how to deal with wild life, whether tiger or elephant. "Never fire unless sure of hitting," was the formula there. There were robbers and thugs in the country,

but it was known that they did not molest Europeans, for they were, he had it on authority, dreadful cowards. The servant problem, that hardy perennial, caused him more irritation.

He had six, but the man who carried water for human consumption would not carry water for the horses; and the man who fed the horse could not, because of the caste system, draw water. Jacquemont had but two plates, but had to have a special man to wash them. By an unusual artifice he did succeed in actually finding one man—a colossus among Indian servants—who was willing both to cook and to serve at table. This little triumph almost cheered Jacquemont up, until he realized that he did not have a table. He determined to eat standing or kneeling, and be waited upon all the same. What the servants thought of this spartan solution to the problem we do not know.

While waiting to depart, Jacquemont practised walking, getting wet and going out into the heat of the day, until he was accomplished at doing all three with no ill after-affects. Everything was done to give him a good send-off. Mr. Pearson—the hospitable Mr. Pearson—went so far as to procure a Périgord pie and a *pâté de cailles truffées*. We must remember, though, as Jacquemont did, that, since Mr. Pearson earned 400,000 francs a year, he could afford these treats. Later, when on his route, Jacquemont discovered Calcutta biscuits and a Christmas cake which had been surreptitiously added to his stores by well-wishers. He approached them gingerly. "Take care of your health," he had written to Hezeta. "Eat little, drink less, water your wine and avoid afternoon tea." Christmas cake was notoriously the most dangerous ingredient, after the beverage itself, of afternoon tea.

There was the question of what he should wear—no slight problem in those days, when the supplying of safari equipment had yet to become a fashionable industry. Jacquemont decided not to follow the English

fashion. He despised, he explained, any ignoble dependence upon external things. He would retain his European costume, but add to it a few Cashmere shawls thrown over a nankeen dressing-gown, a large straw hat trimmed with black taffety and his spectacles. However, since he was subject to head colds, he might, he thought, add a turban, but only in the privacy of his tent. In public it would be thought odd. In the future, when he met any Englishman taken aback by his appearance, he proved he was a gentleman by reciting Anacreon, Shakespeare and Homer, rising in his stirrups to do so. This, as well it might, silenced all criticism by taking the critic thoroughly aback.

He was encouraged to discover that wine and brandy were procurable in Tibet, but the peaches were bad. The coffee, too, was awful: "Cups of hot water and milk, dirtied with powdered charcoal and considered to be mocha." He was beginning, also, to be aware of his future destiny in the person of Ranjit Singh, the overlord of the Punjab, who was then suspected of being on the verge of invading British territory.

His preparations made, he took his departure on November 20th for Benares, Delhi and the Himalayas, assured of meeting the Bentincks at Simla the following April or, if not the Bentincks, then at the very least Sir Charles Grey would be there, and Lady Grey was always agreeable.

His caravan consisted of himself on a white horse, a groom, a grass-cutter to provide the horse with fodder, a rude car made of bamboo drawn by two oxen, the grand master of his wardrobe, a waiter and cook, a plate-washer and a water-carrier, together with a driver to manage his tent. This party proceeded at the rate of six to eight leagues a day and would reach Benares in thirty-five days. He lived on rice, roast chicken, milk and water mixed with brandy. His regimen was strict.

He rose before dawn, dressed rapidly, the cold being excessive, and called to his head servant, who woke

the others. A lantern was brought to him, together with water to wash in. The cook next entered with a tumulus of rice, underneath which was the inevitable chicken. He ate while his servant cleaned and removed his heavy equipment, bridled his pony and broke up camp. After breakfast they set forth. At noon the march was halted and the servants were immediately sent on a milk hunt. When they had found a sufficient number of cows—and it usually took a good number to produce a single glass of milk—they brought Jacquemont his lunch. He ate lunch, and spent the afternoon writing and studying what specimens he had collected during the morning. Towards evening he spent an hour or so chatting with the local natives, if there were any, and by dusk the bullocks had brought up his tents, and these were pitched under a tree. When dusk had fallen, Jacquemont went for a tour of the local settlement—again if there were any—and returned in time for dinner, which was again a tumulus of rice with a chicken under it. While he ate he drank milk and read a few pages of Hindustani, in order not to eat too quickly and thus damage his digestive system. After dinner the servants presented a tall glass of sugar-water, with a drop of brandy in it to cut the taste of the unrefined sugar. They then left him alone. The major-domo returned to present the night guard, who in his turn presented arms. Jacquemont retired to bed, the major-domo first shouting: "Excellency, you can sleep." Jacquemont shouted back: "Very good." Then he went to sleep, surrounded by pistols, rifles and barometers, together with the three volumes of anatomy to be consulted in case of nocturnal illness. Next morning he was once more up before dawn.

Such was his invariable routine. As he took his way towards Benares, he had in his saddle-bag the following note:

"Monsieur Victor Jacquemont, a native of France, engaged in scientific pursuits, being about to travel

in Hindustan, with the permission of the Honourable the Court of Directors and of the supreme government of India, it is the desire of the Governor-General in council that every necessary assistance and protection shall be afforded to him by the officers and authorities of the British nation; and further, that he shall receive from them any attention that they may have it in their power to offer."

It was still another kindness on the part of the Bentincks, and one which was to assist him powerfully. And as though it were not introduction enough, Lady William had supplied him with many more. But then, in his experience, one could never have too many introductions. In the rather intimate atmosphere of nineteenth-century society they were even more essential than they would be today.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONTRARY to his expectations, it was a delightful journey, though not without incident by the way. He was an adaptable young man—he knew he was—and in this case, and it all too often does not, that word meant the ability to derive the maximum of pleasure with a minimum of pain. The flow of letters continued unstaunched. Indeed, one of the drawbacks to Jacquemont, as a subject fit for serious scholarship, is that he so thoroughly documented his own life that there is very little left for serious scholarship to discover, beyond the exact date and degree of some particular stomach-ache. He ate biscuits, drank what he was pleased to refer to as sub-alcoholized water and, instead of pitching his tent picturesquely in the wilderness, slept comfortably in a government bungalow which he found conveniently to hand. When he could not sleep he studied Arrowsmith's Atlas and plotted his progress.

He was approaching the wilderness by gradual stages, to say the least of it. At Titagarh, a station about twelve miles above Calcutta, he made friends with a young officer, very handsome and very tall, who took him off to his bungalow, where he was plied first with coffee, then with newspapers, then with the favourite dogs, who came to be fed bread; and lastly with whisky and soda, before being sent off to dress for dinner.

Dressing for dinner involved bathing, and bathing involved the attentions of a clutch of servants. While this was going on, Jacquemont read the *Edinburgh Review*. Since the *Edinburgh Review* was the only English journal ever to devote any of its pages to him, albeit thirty-seven years after his death, there was something appro-

priate in this. He approved of the *Edinburgh Review* highly.

Dinner was long and luxurious, after the English fashion, and was followed by hookah-smoking. At eleven he was driven to the rest cottage.

He had been well received, as usual, the officers merely considering it unmanly of him to ride a pony rather than an arab. Jacquemont wondered what they would think of him if they knew that every morning he indulged in lavage and that he used a book for a pillow. But he thought his own routine the manlier of the two, and he did not care for the inexorable rhythm of an English meal. At home, in France, he was content with one knife, one glass and one cup. True, the cup was of the best Sèvres, but that was beside the point—the point being that he thought the English had too many possessions. He also meditated upon firing his language master, from whom he had learned enough Hindustani by this time to realize that his teacher was ignorant. Still and all, life was agreeable.

A month later he was less sure of this. "What a difference between this strange life and my existence at Calcutta among the refinements of all kinds of European opulence, grafted on to Asiatic luxury," he said. It was only a month, at that, since he had turned Arab.

The transformation had not been a difficult one. True, there were irritations along the way. When he had arrived at Chandernagore, the Governor, M. Cordier, was sunk deep in melancholy because he had recently lost a military engagement with the English, owing to lack of cartridges. It cast a gloom over the visit. A few days later he had had to refuse an invitation to dinner because his beard had grown too long. This was not too great a deprivation, for, having read Bentinck's passport, the official thought it wise to deliver six cooks, tables, chairs, saucepans, several spits and, of course, food to the guest cottage. So delighted was the official to have this gastronomic panoply accepted that

he added an armed guard and a special janissary to conduct Jacquemont safely along the next stage of his route. In this manner he reached the city of Burdwan, the next considerable town after Chandernagore on the road to Benares.

Burdwan, the capital of a rich raj, had 14,000 inhabitants and was saddled with an English civil station comprising a commissioner, a judge, a magistrate, a collector of taxes, two invalid military officers commanding a native army of 882 men, a doctor and a superintendent of roads, or, roughly, one Englishman to every 2,000 natives. They lived comfortably, under the direction of one Captain Vetch, a rigid Presbyterian.

Jacquemont sat down to dinner with all eight of the English. Here it was suggested to Jacquemont that he needed a guard. The Bentinck *laissez-passer* was produced, and this in its turn produced five sepoys in full uniform—and a colourful uniform it was—who were to accompany him for the next eighty miles. This little semi-private militia, though its personnel varied, was to remain with him throughout British India. In moments of emergency it could be depended upon to pull his carts from the mud of the local river and to perform other useful functions. Jacquemont enjoyed the pomp of it greatly, but took heed to remember the example of Marcus Aurelius and modify his government. Despite his efforts to keep it within small proportions, his retinue continued to grow, but he reflected that, except for his horse's purchase money, his 6,000 francs still remained more or less intact. The sepoys were free.

The progress was an orderly one, but at Dhonna and Dinajpur he first encountered the jungle and found it disappointing. For a naturalist no grief could have been more severe. He had wanted something impenetrable, rich, thorny, with cascades of flowers, such as he had seen at Rio de Janeiro. Instead he found himself in a monotonous wood, with nothing more savage in it than the distant ringing of the woodman's axe; and the only

tiger he saw was a dead one, stuffed. It was miserable, without large trees, inaccessible places or even serpents. It was very depressing.

At Raniganj he discovered a subaltern agent who had sheets, and he lingered for thirty-six hours to enjoy that almost forgotten sensation: sleeping between them naked. When he was not in bed he explored the local coalmine. It was the only working coal-mine in India, and therefore invaluable to science. Samples packed safely away, he continued to Raghunathpur. For the moment his company had swelled to fifty people, who were invaluable for extricating his baggage-wagons from the sand. The local children, never having seen anything like Jacquemont before, followed him through the streets, enchanted.

He found the country more populous beyond Raghunathpur, the roads better, despite bad engineers, and he was cheered by relays of servants and by the adequate guest bunglaows, each divided into two compartments, each with two beds, two tables and six chairs. Each, moreover, had three permanent servants attached.

Jacquemont was unshaved and coated with mud from the results of too great botanic zeal. He met on the road a district collector, his wife and child, travelling with an elephant, eight cars of luggage, two cabriolets, a special chariot for the child, two palanquins, six horses and sixty porters, who carried the collector's dinner-service. The chance acquaintance was highly tentative, the collector finding Jacquemont somewhat hard to explain, and therefore odd. Besides, since they were both travelling to Benares by the same stages, both processions were apt to converge on the same guest house each evening, which was an annoyance. In addition to this, the collector had an excellent appetite and, since he dined earlier than did Jacquemont, left the latter very little to eat. It was an intolerable situation and, to escape the nuisance, Jacquemont rose early and stole a forced march in order to arrive two days ahead of the

other, thus insuring that by exhausting each accommodation as he came to it, he would exasperate the unfortunate tax-collector who lagged behind him. However, since the bungalows, though cheap enough, were not free, he decided to develop a preference for sleeping in his tent and so cut down expenses.

In this manner he continued through the forested table-lands across the Damodar, arriving at Hazanibagh, an English settlement, where he re-staffed his small private army and received an invitation to dinner. His host, a medical officer, he found elegant, clever and amiable, though ruined, in his opinion, if not actually yet brutalized, by drink.

His spirits had begun to flag. The mountains were still 400 miles away, and he did very much want to reach the mountains. He had also heard that the hot winds of the foothills were unbearable. He travelled by day, rising at four in the morning, eating his plate of sugared rice by moonlight. The day was spent in munching biscuits and gorging milk, a beverage which, in the American and somewhat sensible manner, he regarded as essential to survival. In the evenings he ate his chicken—always chicken—prepared with rancid ghee and spices. He estimated that this diet cost him fifty francs a month, half of which was stolen. It was a reasonable enough sum. As his party made its somewhat cumbersome progress, mindful of his mission, he collected geological and botanical specimens. His method of doing so was simple. He saw a plant, told his man to pick it and, if the man did not immediately do so, gave him a hearty kick. He rather hoped that his servants would not mind this procedure, as he did not want to be put to the inconvenience of replacing deserters when he reached Benares. He was constantly haunted by the fear of being deserted by servants paid in advance, who might melt into the night as soon as he paid them His solution of this problem was extremely practical: he did not pay them in advance.

And so he jogged along, wearing his Pondicherry hat, an invention of his own, made of date leaves covered with black silk and of a somewhat shapeless shape. He was very proud of it. He lacked only two things, he wrote Hezeta: a camel and two women packed into its saddle-bags. He had seen them carried in this manner, trussed up like a brace of fowls.

On December 25th he crossed the river Sone and was within a week of Benares. His waking hours he employed in talking to everybody who would come within earshot, in order to polish up his Hindustani. He talked to his servants, his sepoys and perhaps also to his bullocks, and he talked them half-way across India. Nor was he displeased at the English practice of enticing into the Army members of the Brahmin caste, for that made them more intelligent as talkers, though he made no attempt to follow their theology.

Both the theology and the caste system thoroughly annoyed him. He found it impossible to apply to both what he was pleased to call a critical synonymy. He dipped into that elegant repository of oriental wisdom, Mr. Wilson's *Hindu Theatre*, but found nothing there to assist him. Having been a week out of society, he was deeply bored. The admiration of the beauties of Nature, he discovered, is soon sullied by enjoyment. Nor did he enjoy the nocturnal cold. He did not wish his correspondents to think, however, that he was fed up with India. "I write a great deal in all tones," he explained, "and without effort, according to my humour, the state of my stomach and the quality of my pen. No one is all sublime, all dignified, all smiling. After a geological description will come a confidential page."

Still writing, he arrived at Benares on December 31st, 1829. Lord William Bentinck's introductions were as dependable as ever. He soon found himself well lodged and with an elephant attendant at his door, when he awoke, to take him visiting. Having breakfasted, he

duly mounted the elephant and went his rounds, reading his accumulated mail while he did so.

He was feeling less bored, having shaved off his beard, donned his best black stockings and trotted out to accept what invitations might come his way, in order once more to enjoy elegant and solid conversation and to sit back and contemplate, not only the nature of the English in India, but also what pleased him far more, the nature of his own success with the English in India. His chief host was Mr. James Prinsep, director of the bank. Jacquemont hit him off in a happy thumb-nail portrait as the wittiest man in India, and an authority on those Indian antiquities which bored Jacquemont to tears. There was also Captain Taylor, the explorer. While making his first calls on these men he discovered what he had always feared—that elephants were not fast: at best they could do no more than three miles an hour.

He had already had one bad scratching in the toils of the Anglo-Indian marriage mart. His father had been taking him to task for not contracting an heiress as soon after arrival as possible. He wrote by return post to explain the true state of affairs. Portionless girls, he had discovered, who had not succeeded in snaffling a husband in England, were as a last resort shipped out to the East by desperate mothers, arriving in cargoes and virtually for sale, though on honourable terms, to the civil and military officials into whose pockets, so he darkly suspected, poured more than merely salaries.

These gentlemen, he explained, selected wives from the inflowing supply as they would a girl in the street, though Jacquemont was careful to point out that in the circles in which he moved the matter was less obviously managed. He summed up his matrimonial chances as bad, but did not deeply repine because of it. He found the daughters of the local rich so accustomed to extravagance that they would marry only the rich, a circumstance by no means unique to India; besides, since the English were intensely matrimonial, the resulting

large families did much to diminish the available wealth, so that the leaders of society had to recoup their losses somehow. In addition to this, as though his chances were not slight enough as things were, he found the young women infernally dull—as, no doubt, they were.

Nor, when it came to cases, was Jacquemont any too adroit at the preliminaries of a courtship. There was, for instance, Miss Pearson. She was certainly clever, certainly agreeable and certainly twenty. But when she spoke to him of the more intimate details of the heart, Jacquemont's vanity was piqued, for she spoke to him as to an older man. The young girl was ill, perhaps dying, and soon to be shipped to England, and thus there was little reason for him to make a special effort. In these circumstances it was difficult for Jacquemont to satisfy the marriage-broking propensities of his father. The elder Jacquemont was, after all, the author of the philosophy of Real Essences, and the son was not above reminding him of the fact. Real Essences were incompatible with any but the most fortunate of marriages. They encouraged belief in a distant inamorata, the more distant the better. Eight thousand miles was a good distance, and Jacquemont's letters to Mademoiselle Zoë Noizet de Saint-Paul Arras, his cousin, grew warmer with each furlough. She was delightfully inaccessible. To Zoë he wrote impassioned letters about the salubrity of his diet, and in praise of milk and sugar-water. By imbibing these mixtures, he assured her, he would avoid the fate of the English residents, all of whom were buried pickled in champagne or preserved in brandy. His letters to Zoë noticeably lack conviction, sparkle or spunk. He contents himself, at most, with mentioning the cheerful red uniforms of the sepoys or the appearance of the camels he is about to hire.

On the other hand, if his letters to Zoë lack spunk, the screeds with which he bombarded M. Victor de Tracy can only be likened to philosophic gas. When it is possible to extract a definite statement from them, it is

of such a matter as that the local rajah's court lived on boiled rice and superb titles.

He left Benares on January 6th, 1830, in a northerly direction. One side of the Ganges or the other, Lord William Bentinck's introductions and passport continued to work their wonders He wandered into the realms of the Rajahs of Boghilkhand and Bundelkhand, who sound, somehow, notably like Tweedledum and Tweedledee. He had perfected the art of reading on horseback, but was somewhat nervous that the English would not consider it a correct art. However, he was a scientist, not a sportsman, and therefore entitled to make good use of his time. He was pleased to learn that the English, being rich enough to stop at nothing, had not stopped at the Himalayas, but had equipped them with adequate and comfortable bungalows.

By jogging along with the Assistant to the Resident at Delhi, he managed to travel in an agreeable retinue consisting of his own sepoys, eight servants, twenty bullocks and a dozen horses—not counting his own—four elephants, with seven more due to arrive, a multitude of camels and 100 attendants. This, he felt, would permit him to penetrate into regions otherwise denied him. The magnificent and rambling caravan had originally been organized as a tiger and boar hunt at the cost of 10,000 francs a month. The leader of it all was Mr. Trevelyan. "When Mr. Trevelyan unites his little army with mine," said Jacquemont, "we shall travel like conquerors."

He reached Agra on February 21st, and there found his customary hospitable reception, with an unending supply of unpaid-for and graciously provided elephants, carriages and horses to convey him from one famous ruin to the next. Agra did not impress him, despite its being the chief architectural monument of the late Moghul period. He went twice to see the Taj Mahal and grudgingly thought it quite pretty. But neither the seventeenth-century tombs along the Jumna nor Akbar's

tomb provoked so much as a pleased nod. The nearby deserted town and palace of Fittepur Sikri, built by Akbar, fazed him not at all. Neither did nearby Muttra, the legendary birthplace of Krishna, with its Gupta remains. The only thing he found to admire was a recent tomb raised in a mixture of neoclassical and Mohammedan architecture, and that only because of its costliness. He was almost totally indifferent to any works of art of any kind, with the possible exception of portraits of people he knew, and he particularly disliked Indian culture, possibly because it was un-French.

Agra did provide him with ecclesiastical diversion. He visited the local Catholic bishop, a man in a most unfortunate position, both as a Catholic and as an Italian, for the local society was English and Protestant. The episcopal palace was merely a ruined Indian mosque, and the Bishop was a thing which no Italian bishop can bear to be: the Bishop was poor. However, he had an excellent appetite and he knew how to make the most of a poor dinner. He was a jovial, fat, ruddy and energetic man with a good long grey beard.

The local English called him padre, which nettled him, so the Bishop was delighted to be called Monsignore in the presence of the English. It was by such light but felicitous touches as these that Jacquemont made friends. They were amiable enough touches, certainly. The prelate offered dinner, was refused, and then offered wine. Asked about the extent of his diocese, he replied that it was large but that the meat was poor. In fact, it was no more than a lamentable *fricassée*, lost on a platter too large for it. Jacquemont was amused. The English were not. They seemed to find the carnivorous instinct in a bishop not quite good form.

From Agra Jacquemont hastened to Delhi, which was at no great distance. He had found Agra fatiguing, and was put in a much better humour by a tour of a local diamond mine. At Delhi he was created Sahib Bahadur, a title he considered equivalent to that of

Baron. Baron or not, he continued to eat his chicken and boiled rice, exactly as did the local Rajah's courtiers. All the same, it had amused him to be received in audience by Mohammed Akbar Rahzi, the official, though completely impotent, ruler of Muslim India. The audience had cost 100 rupees, which, he noticed, was the exact fee that Mme. Pasta, the singer, received for a concert in Paris, though in London she received twice that much.

There were several royal refugees at Delhi. There was Shah Shudja, once King of Afghanistan, who had a black beard and good manners. This was the gentleman who, somewhat reluctantly, had coddled the pride of the British ambassador, Elphinstone, by exchanging a peek at the royal nose for only thirty-nine bows. British gratitude for this saving of face had resulted in the comfortable installation of the royal nose at Delhi, when it had been forced into exile. His brother, Shah Zeman, who had had his eyes put out, passed his time in devotion. This did not keep him—as why should it?—from maintaining a large harem at British expense. The two puppets were quite comfortable in Delhi.

Jacquemont's elevation to the peerage had amused him. He had been received at a durbar by the Grand Mogul, conducted to it with tolerable pomp. Tolerable pomp comprised a regiment of infantry, a strong escort of cavalry, an army of domestics and ushers and a troop of elephants. The Grand Mogul presented him with a dress of honour, which was immediately and ceremoniously donned, so that he could re-enter the court properly clad. No doubt the costume suited him well. The Grand Mogul, no more immune than most to the Jacquemont charm, then fastened one or two jewelled baubles in Jacquemont's hat, which had been disguised as a turban for the ceremony. Jacquemont decided that he rather liked the Mogul, for whom he felt sorry, for he was a fine man with white hair, a white beard and an unhappy expression, the English having cut him down

to a pension of only 4,000,000 francs per annum. This at times made him pettish, so that when the English lent him enough guns to fire his own royal salutes, he promptly turned the cannon on the English. Having captured the cannons back, the English were fond of exhibiting him to visitors as a harmless curiosity and as a relic of a more splendid past.

Apart from the title of Baron, or perhaps because of it, Jacquemont found Delhi delightful. Unfortunately the local British colony enticed him to hunt, and he remembered that, after chronic hepatitis and cholera, falls from horses were the biggest cause of death in India. Falls were so common, as a matter of fact, that no hunting party ever started out without its own surgeon. Hunting by horse applied only to boars. Tigers and lions were approached from the superior elevation of elephant back, and if ever anyone fell from an elephant in the heat of the chase, Jacquemont does not record the fact. He enjoyed elephant-hunting. The pavilion atop the elephant resembled a witness-box, a gentleman came behind with an umbrella or a parasol, and if a tiger leaped on the elephant's head, the *mahout* took care of that emergency, even if only by satisfying the tiger's appetite. There was, at all times, a comforting array of artillery close at hand.

Tiger-hunting with Mr. Trevelyan pleased his sense of pomp, but he was disappointed that he would not see Sir Charles Grey at Simla. Sir Charles, who had occupied himself with announcing Jacquemont's arrival at Agra, Mottra and Delhi, as though he were an outrider, had found himself embarrassed by the Calcutta papers which, as provincial newspapers will, had hinted that the emotional Francophilia of Lady Grey was so pronounced as to have reduced Sir Charles to little more than an obliging *cavaliere servante*. Learning of this, Jacquemont beat a hasty but dignified retreat. He proceeded in the direction of Hardwar, a small town on the Ganges, as that river escapes from the mountains, where

he hoped to find a celebrated fair, crowded with Chinese, Tibetans, Tartars, Afghans, Persians and as many races as he might wish to investigate. There he hoped to be able to buy warm clothing inexpensively and to visit the Begum Sumro, a woman rumoured once to have been a slave, but who now ruled Sardhana, and was not without wealth. Besides, Sardhana had some excellent ruins, in addition to this woman. She, having, some sixty years before, in a moment of absent-mindedness, married an Italian, now long dead and disposed of, had become a Christian and a Catholic. Jacquemont rather thought that the old witch would make a good catch. However, the Himalayas drew him.

He planned to enter them by the valley of the Dhund, progressing quietly from one English outpost to the next, and bound for the small state of Kanawar, north of the Himalayas and technically a part of China, but where the English, with their accommodating habit of smoothing his way, deliberately or merely by chance, had built a rest hut or two. He found the prospect delicious. He would live at 10,000 feet in a country whose summers he expected to be Hungarian, and whose winters those of Lapland, surrounded by eternal snows. Kanawar was independent of England, but it was not far from there to Kotgur, where the English were in power. His British friends had lent him some quadruple tents, which were pitched ahead of his journey each day, so that he might have some stable destination ahead of him.

At the moment he was in Sikh territory, and he liked the Sikhs. The Rajah of Patiala had provided him with an adequate breakfast, together with seventeen elephants and 400 horses. After breakfast, Jacquemont and Trevelyan mounted their elephants. In the Rajah's absence, his tinsel-and-velvet howdah was available to Jacquemont, a courtesy he appreciated, and with 400 cavalrymen and two drums they floundered into the desert, a sandy plain covered with thorn shrubs and a few trees, slaughtering hares and partridges on their way.

On their return a cold bath and a rub down, the donning of light clothes and supper helped to pass the time. With the dessert entered some Persian comedians, so amusing that Jacquemont found it necessary to throw himself on to a carpet in fits of laughter. The comedians were followed by dancing-girls, who were more refined, he found to his surprise, than those at the Paris Opera. He was looking forward to seeing nautch-dancers farther north. After four hours' sleep, he was wakened with a cup of mocha made with great care and to his taste, and galloped off for what might be considered a breakfast hunt, if not a hunt breakfast, with the usual company of 400. This life he continued for a week. Science may have suffered: Jacquemont did not. The local game having, by the end of the week, all been slaughtered, he and Trevelyan proceeded with a much-reduced company, retaining only the cavalry and the elephants against the rigours of tiger-hunting to come.

Dismissing the elephants and the cavalry at Sharunpur, Jacquemont took his leave of Trevelyan and continued alone, in the company only of his servants and his bullocks, in the direction of Bera. He reached the second range of Himalaya foothills in very poor pomp, with only thirty-six carriers, five servants, a gardener and an informal bodyguard of five Gurkhas. The cooking had deteriorated and consisted of boiled kid day in and day out, which gave him indigestion. The weather had also deteriorated. Lightning striking outside his tent, two of his servants were temporarily paralyzed on the left side. He thought it not unlikely that the jealous heavens were aiming at him, and was grateful for the badness of the aim. So, in this wise, more than a year after its beginning, his journey reached its first goal.

Sitting within a grove of wild apricots, in a field of strawberries and among the smells of burning cedar and pines, he took stock of himself. His eyesight was not what it once was. He was growing short-sighted and,

since his gun did not have any optical correction, he abandoned it. Apart from that, except for a sensitivity to cold, his health was excellent. He was the bosom companion of dashing officers whose annual incomes he estimated to be at least 240,000 francs; he had a box of medicines against cholera, dysentery and jungle fever; and his syringe never left him. In addition to this the dashing officers, out of their plenty, had supplied him with horses without cost. He was very pleased. He was about to climb to the sources of the Jumna, at an altitude of 6,000 feet.

CHAPTER SIX

THE Himalayas, which even today are a somewhat hazardous undertaking, were more so then, and they were more dangerously guarded. Both the political autonomy of Tibet and the vastness of the mountains made travel difficult. Chief to undertake such expeditions were those bored and adventurous young military officers who would plunge in from Simla in search of risk and entertainment. Some of these men, such as Captain Herbert, Jacquemont had met. Others he had read.

He sat under the apricot trees and thought the matter over. It was May 20th, 1830, and he was suffering from mountain sickness—an illness for which he found himself unprepared. It is certainly not an agreeable disease, but fortunately it is one that soon passes. He was also experiencing dietetic troubles, for, having lived frugally on rice and forced his servants to do the same, he found his rice exhausted and had to fall back on wheat and barley. What his servants, accustomed to richer and more wasteful food, thought of his commissary arrangements he did not bother to inquire. He was much more concerned that his barometers should be taken for light artillery, a mistake that he was sometimes to find useful. Occasionally he would be passed by a troop of merchants on magnificent camels, dressed in Turkish costume and comfortably seated on little mountains of cushions, surrounded by an arsenal of sabres, daggers, pistols, dirks and so forth. They had a theatrical look. If they also looked dangerous, he had the servants train the barometers on them, and the subterfuge usually worked. He had recently fallen thirty feet into a tree, along with his horse, but as the

servants had hauled him up again with ropes, he did not give the matter any further thought. He was much more concerned with the paucity of specimens among the higher peaks, particularly above the timber line. "I regret," he wrote bitterly, "the poverty and monotony of Nature."

Nonetheless, he had his gurkhas raid a local village and steal some potatoes. These he ate with salt, as did Bonaparte, in a similar difficulty, artichokes. The potatoes gave him indigestion.

He was camped under a group of pinnacles which he had climbed twice, despite the superstitions of his servants and their cowardice, for they had no mountaineering instincts at all, remaining below while Jacquemont, linked only to his gardener, scaled the heights. From time to time the servants called out to the gardener to turn back, but the gardener was as afraid to do that as he was to continue.

Jacquemont, though exhausted by the first climb, had enough energy left to beat the cowardly into submission. They then tied ropes round their waists and allowed themselves to be led along the edge of a crevasse in the snow. Poor people! they were in the grip of a man eager to know at what height all vegetation ceased, and who pulled them after him in this pursuit, willy-nilly, while their complaints froze in the crisp air.

Etiquette was no less important than the conquest of cowardice. He was forced to box the ears of a man who had addressed him as "you" instead of "your highness". He decided he should be more jealous of the correct etiquette, for the worse his appearance, the higher the title he felt it necessary to extract; so that the longer his beard, the higher he climbed in the peerage.

It was a somewhat startling beard, carrot red and surmounted by luxuriant mustachios. To the natives, who admired a fine growth of hair, it was awe-inspiring. Its length and dirtiness distressed him, but since it made such an impression he allowed it to grow. What dis-

tressed him even more was an accident the nature of which he could relate only to his brother Porphyre.

He had bedded down happily in the country of the Sikhs, trusting in the vigilance of his small caravan and exhausted no less by the rigours of letter-writing than by those of the march. It had been a difficult day, followed by his usual frugal meal, chased down with a weak solution of brandy and water. Once he had retired, he slept soundly. The camp was in a mountain plain, with low bushes and a flickering moon. It was, in short, excellent weather for crime.

Close on dawn, when light was scarcely seeping through the sky, he was wakened abruptly by an uproar. People were shouting " Thieves ". There was a general and useless commotion, while the servants both pretended to be helpful and protested their own innocence. Jacquemont got little help from any of them. Sleepy though he was, he had to make his own investigations.

His tent was a small one. He discovered that the thief, whipping out his sabre, had slit the canvas as neatly as a man's neck and, crawling under Jacquemont's bed, which was low, had made free with whatever he could find. This was not much and, being scattered in the darkness, was hard to evaluate. Pistols and watch had not been disturbed. The thief had taken alarm and, grabbing what was within reach of him, which turned out to be a powder-flask and Jacquemont's toilet kit, made off out of the camp.

Making his escape to the neighbouring village, he had inspected his loot on the way and disgustedly thrown aside a razor strop, a shaving box, a phial of nitric acid and other personal aids to hygiene. These were found later. But as for that object whose existence Jacquemont had so carefully concealed from his English friends, the thief had mistaken its pewter glitter for silver and had made off with it, perhaps imagining it a sacred vessel, which it was, and of much value, which it was not. Jacquemont, in short, had lost his syringe.

Theft from a man with friends so eminent produced much consternation in the district, and every minor plenipotentiary of every footling rajah in the region was soon clamouring at the camp with a demand for a description of the stolen articles and the promise of spreading a search for them to all quarters. Such were Jacquemont's recommendations and alliances that they even offered to indemnify him for his loss. Unfortunately the syringe was unique. Nothing could indemnify him for its loss. As such promised indemnification took the casual form of a levy on the local villages, the plenipotentiaries could afford to be generous. But to no avail. Loss of his syringe sent Jacquemont into a panic.

He had some difficulty, despite his recently acquired talent for draughtsmanship, in making these eager officials understand just what it was that he had lost, though he made not only a life-size drawing, but also copies of it, to be distributed everywhere. At this moment his English friends appeared and, seeing the drawing of the instrument, were thrown into a blushing confusion. They were righteously angry with Jacquemont for stooping to use such a devilish device.

Seeing that secrecy was gone, Jacquemont, who was in a neurasthenic dither anyhow, foreseeing an early death if he had to go without his lavage, made a clean breast of things. He told his English friends it was a matter of life or death to him to have the object back.

He would have us believe that in a chorus the English replied: "Ah, death a thousand times over rather than keep one."

"No," shouted Jacquemont. He forgot his terror in the joys of proselytizing. "A thousand douches rather than a single headache." Squaring off, he delivered himself of an impassioned panegyric in praise of the uses of the syringe and the dangers to health to which he was exposed in its absence. For good measure, he included a satire against the medical practice of dosing with jalop, mercury, calomel and other injurious remedies. It

must have been an impressive scene, at dawn, the military standing about abashed, the Hindus wringing their hands and Jacquemont wringing their hearts. Whatever they made of it, they saw he was excited, for they wrote to the local rajah to induce him to beat all the bushes in his paltry empire in search of such a lost treasure and, if it were found, to return it with a good escort to whatever place Jacquemont might happen to select.

Jacquemont was cynical of the success of such a hunt. He had a vision of the syringe being delivered to him in Paris, borne on a velvet cushion by a party of Sikh cavalry, a picture pretty enough for Constantin Guys. He was, in short, in despair.

Their initial shock having died away, his English friends—reconciled to the instrument, so he claimed, but more likely in order to smooth him down—overcame their scruples and sent riders out to scour the province in search of a substitute. All the military hospitals for miles around were ransacked. At long last a syringe of venerable antiquity was unearthed. Jacquemont thought it ancient enough to be the prototype of all such. And there, supposedly, the matter ended; though on May 27th we still find Jacquemont bitterly complaining, from a forest below Mount Kedar-Kanta, some 10,000 feet up, that he was suffering. He had fatigue and was seized by excruciating pains in his bowels, almost to the point of delirium. He put himself on a strict diet, foresaw an immediate death and cursed the Sikhs for scoundrels for having stolen the one thing necessary to his health. It was the worst calamity that had ever befallen him. Since he found himself still alive on June 4th, he felt called upon to explain how he had achieved such a miracle in the face of such odds.

Each day, he wrote, he spent seven hours on the march, clambering up and down mountains of no inconsiderable height, to sweat out the body's natural poisons. To enable him to achieve this callisthenic endurance feat

he drank milk instead of water, two bottles being downed each evening at dinner as an antidote to curry sauce. Milk, however, demanded the presence of cows—somewhat scarce at that altitude. On many days, having sighted a cow, he had to turn aside from more orthodox scientific pursuits and give chase. The cows yielded little milk, and it sometimes needed a dozen of them to fill his two small bottles, at the rate of two or three sous per gallon. The arrival of the day's milk was usually timed to coincide with the climax of the culinary operations and it was served up steaming from the udder at the same time as the curry. He sent the gurkha sepoys on these expeditions with orders to extract milk by violence, if necessary. Though milk was, in this manner, usually forthcoming, he found the routine wearing. He was a little tired of the Himalayas for the time being.

So he decided that, given more money, he would go to Kashmir and throw himself on the mercies of Ranjit Singh, the far-from-merciful ruler of that country. He had already heard much of this gentleman, the Sikh King of Lahore and, as such, the chief oriental opponent of British rule, though a friendly and courteous enough opponent when not actually engaged in fighting. But Ranjit Singh was old and, should he die, his country would swiftly return to anarchy, for there would be a squabble among his supposed sons as to the succession. Jacquemont had no desire to be pillaged, ravaged or tortured in such an affray. Besides, there were other matters to take into consideration, such as the reputation of the Sikhs for casually eunuchizing any stray foreigners they happened to find in the kingdom, a Turkish custom with which Jacquemont had little sympathy.

However, to a man still brooding over the loss of a syringe the dangers of castration seemed remote and trifling, so he continued, from time to time, to meditate upon Ranjit Singh. He had also struck upon M. Allard, who, though kept on a short leash, sometimes emerged

from Lahore long enough to visit the officers' mess at Ludhiana, in Patiala, where the syringe had been lost. Ranjit Singh, who was no fool, but who had in his employ a good many Europeans, most of them military, though he paid them large salaries, also forced them to spend their earnings in Lahore in order to keep them to hand and in order. At this time Allard was about fifty, of medium size, good figure and of a handsome and proud appearance. He spoke well, in a modest tone, and had a long white beard and moustaches, grey eyes and a strong physique. A former Napoleonic officer, he was in charge of Ranjit Singh's troops and, being somewhat lonely in Lahore, was known to be cordial towards other Frenchmen.

With thoughts of Ranjit Singh in both his mind and his future, Jacquemont prepared to enjoy another round of visiting. His pride had been pricked by the report that another European savant was exploring Tibet with an escort of 1,200 Cossacks He hastened off to the nearest European settlement to scotch this rumour by his own presence and, having succeeded in doing so, induced his hosts to order a supply of *pâté de foie gras*, both of Périgord and Strasbourg, against his return from another bout of exploring.

His diet of curry and milk was often relieved by such treats, for on the peaks of Mussouri, high in the Himalayas, he had encountered an artillery officer, an elderly bachelor, who had supplied him with *pâté de lièvre truffé* and Périgord *pâté de perdrix-rouges truffé*. He estimated his host's income at 100,000 francs and found the food excellent. It put him in an excellent humour and he drank Toursine wine to wash down all the truffles.

He had also enjoyed Simla, a place which he compared to such notable spas as those of Mont d'Or and Bagnères, as being a resort for the rich, the idle and invalid. The settlement was then only nine years old, more or less the creation of Captain Vans Kennedy, his

host there. Kennedy, a captain of artillery commanding a regiment of gurkhas, was judge, magistrate, collector of taxes, justice of the peace, pinch-hit clergyman, political agent and overlord of the neighbouring petty states, all of which duties occupied him for not more than two hours a day. For the rest of the time he entertained with a profusion of champagne, tents, warm houses, night-girls, fruits, strawberries and other amenities. He was dictatorial enough to have a large guest-house built, when the tents erected to accommodate them collapsed in a hurricane, in a matter of two days. And this emergency housing had been the foundation of Simla. Mountaineers had felled the cedar trees, squared them and built some sixty houses, scattered at random over the hills and peaks. Roads had been cut through the living rock, and in a mere nine years the place had become fashionable and luxurious. Needless to say, Jacquemont liked Kennedy, who had 100,000 francs a year. Indeed, none of Jacquemont's Indian friends ever seem to have been able to earn less than that amount. It was the absolute minimum for friendship.

After discharging his official duties in the hour after breakfast, Kennedy devoted the rest of his day to amusing Jacquemont, a task which can seldom have been uncongenial, since there were always so many willing to undertake it. Kennedy, Jacquemont found, was a dandy and somewhat stuffy, but agreeable. Besides, if ever there was a truffle-hound, Jacquemont was one, and at Simla he was stuffed with truffles.

In the mornings and in the evenings they rode, in the mornings for exercise, in the evenings to beat up company. It was a society of bachelors and soldiers, a society Jacquemont found more congenial than any other. The older the officer, the better. He preferred his friends to be over forty, he said, for then they treated him as a younger brother.

At half-past seven they sat down to dinner, not rising until eleven. Jacquemont, for reasons of health, drank

only hock, claret, champagne and malmsey. The others, more reckless, added port, sherry and Madeira. After two months alone exploring, Jacquemont felt he was entitled to indulge himself and ate and drank heartily. The cooking was excellent and his health improved. He was storing up pleasure against another four months of curry and rice.

The Calcutta papers arrived each morning in time to be read at breakfast, and he dined in silk stockings. Captain Kennedy, his host, introduced him to the vizier of the Rajah of Bissahir, who lent a staff officer to guide him across the Himalayas. Captain Kennedy threw in two gurkha carabineers and a janissary, and so the private army was replenished. Jacquemont's porters refusing to carry baggage across the Himalayas, Captain Kennedy obliged by threatening them with arrest if they did not. Though still recalcitrant, Jacquemont soon subdued them, for he had been granted the power to arrest them. The Rajah of Bissahir had also been threatened that if " the French Lord, friend of the great General Kennedy " was not well coddled, he might expect the worst.

These matters settled, Jacquemont sat down to breakfast and read the papers. He had his choice of *John Bull*, the *Hurkuru*, the *East India Gazette*, the *Government Gazette* and the *Literary Gazette* not to mention others printed in Hindustani. Occasionally he found his own name mentioned. " Rely," he wrote to his father, who was upset about his straying into hostile territory, " on my prudence and my complete submission to the exigencies of places and seasons."

His study of the local language, meanwhile, had fallen into a decline, for he had taken a distaste for it. He agreed with his friend Sir Charles Grey, head of the Asiatic Society of Calcutta, who had no use for Indian history or antiquity and who much preferred the study of European languages and literature. Sir Charles Grey, he felt, would go far.

Jacquemont did not like anything about India but the hospitality and the geology. Its antiquities bored him. He had contempt for them. Sanskrit he avoided. It was a language, he claimed, perhaps rightly, without any social use and hence of no use whatsoever. "Sanskrit," he wrote, "will lead to nothing but Sanskrit." He gloomily predicted that the vogue for literary Orientalism would not wane, for he thought that those who had spent fifteen or twenty years learning such things would not have the candour to admit that they had wasted their time.

He preferred to cultivate his moustaches, for he had discovered that they would be much admired in the region in which he was about to travel.

"*Sachez, sachez* (he sang)
que les Tartares
ne sont barbares
qu'avec leurs ennemis,"

and made arrangements to deposit his so far collected specimens with Captain Kennedy. He had determined to travel more simply. After being carried along the banks of the Sutlej in a sort of armchair imperfectly protected against the heat of the sun, he planned to pause at Seran, the summer palace of the Rajah of Bissahir. There he would dismiss his porters, which would reduce his suite to fifty persons and one horse. His baggage would be similarly reduced. It was only by stripping himself, he felt, that he could proceed with so few people. Nonetheless, he took along an adequate supply of clothing suitable for all occasions and a pier glass to dress by.

As for the scenery, it was of only scientific interest, being, to his mind, poor and monotonous. There was, he grudgingly admitted, grandeur, but it was grandeur without beauty. The mountains were piled up in such a disorderly manner that it was almost impossible to determine their arrangement or to perceive any natural order in them. The English physicians and adventurers

who had explored the territory, moreover, had been inaccurate, which made the use of their charts a folly. The climate, it was true, was amazingly dry, there not even being any dew. This was not enough. The Himalayas might be unforgettable, but they were as monotonous as the ocean, which to him was the most monotonous of all things. It was so dull it could not be described. It had to be drawn. Even so, he found his sketches of Tibet almost as lifeless as the country they were meant to represent. Chaper may have taught him how to climb mountains, but no one could teach him how to admire the Himalayas. The roads were fit only for mules and for men mulishly devoured by curiosity.

He also, to his horror, found that he was becoming unaccustomed to speaking French. To practise at least the writing of it, he sat down to write to Achille Chaper, the gentleman who had pleased him so much years before. "Alas, I am alone here; no friendly recollections will associate themselves with those which I shall preserve of these strange places to render them dear to me. To live alone, to be solitary in feeling! Oh, my friend, it is not because I am so far from our country, lost in the icy deserts of the highest mountains of the world, that my isolation is painful to me; I should perhaps feel this cruel void quite as much in the midst of the sweets of European society—perhaps in the midst of its tumult and its pleasures, I should not suffer less—and I am not yet thirty! Let us drop the subject," he wrote, not dropping it, and writing from the house of his friend Captain Kennedy at Simla, either before or after one of those omnibibulous meals. No doubt, in addition to a capacious cellar, the house contained a good library. If so, *Childe Harold* was within his reach.

Looking out of the window at the Himalayas he had, for once, a poetic reaction to them, for they reminded him in that deceptive light of Grenoble. "Oh," he wrote to Chaper, "how beautiful the Alps are!" He was referring, of course, to the French Alps.

CHAPTER SEVEN

DESPITE a tendency to write as though in the utmost and most romantic distress, Jacquemont seems to have travelled with some comfort and no little pomp through the Himalayan valleys to Kanawar.

Captain Kennedy, no more immune than any other man to the Jacquemont charm, had loaded him with sweetmeats and messages. He had also tactfully smoothed his way, so that when Jacquemont arrived at Seran, the Rajah of Bissahir, thoroughly intimidated, came himself, as quickly as he could, to pay a visit of courtesy and to offer to serve Jacquemont to the best of his ability. Since Jacquemont had prudently equipped himself with a draft against the Bissahir treasury, he was soon given an opportunity to oblige. Examining the document with outward calm, the Rajah bore up nobly and sent messengers throughout his rather small kingdom to warn local officials that the draft was to be honoured on sight. Emissaries were also despatched to Ladakh, to bully the lamas there into a like submission, and with their assistance Jacquemont hoped to go as high into Tibet as it was possible to go. The Rajah added his own most notable servant to the caravan, to act as interpreter and to ensure that, whatever Jacquemont's orders might be, they would be carried out.

A state visit from a Rajah, particularly in those days, was not without its protocol. British custom in India had, if anything, even complicated this. Jacquemont had pitched his tents in his usual random fashion, with his soldiers lolling about whatever fires they could light, which guttered in their faces, since there was a hurricane blowing. It blew particularly lustily against the tent

Victoria and Albert Museum, Crown Copyright

A TRAVELLER'S CAMP

From a contemporary painting

Victoria and Albert Museum, Crown Copyright

GULAB SINGH

Sikh miniature 1830

Jacquemont had erected for the reception of the visitors. After the courtiers had assembled, shouting the name and glory of the Rajah above the storm, the Rajah himself approached, skirts billowing in the wind and waving a fan.

Jacquemont was disappointed. He had hoped to see the interior of the royal palace, but was prevented by etiquette from so doing, for the correct usage forbade that a European should ever go to an Indian first, but that the Indian must come to him, and this applied even to Rajahs. Captain Kennedy had been particularly firm about this point, for it was Jacquemont's habit to satisfy curiosity first and etiquette second, but Kennedy was concerned to keep face. A Rajah was presumed to be deeply moved by the condescension of a European in allowing the Rajah to be seated first, and by the extreme favour of being permitted to shake hands. It was impossible for Jacquemont to reciprocate any gift, embrace the Rajah, or return the visit without himself losing face and, which bothered Kennedy, also losing face for the English in the process. He was thus constrained to stand there like a stick.

This troubled Jacquemont's egalitarian spirit, for after all, as he wrote, the Rajah was not a bandit of the lowest kind, skulking in a cavern, covered with scarlet rags, and with daggers and pistols at his belt. On the contrary, he was the legitimate king of a considerable country, though, true, most of it was always covered with snow, abandoned to forests or else an arid pasture of naked rocks. The Rajah had an income of at least 150,000 francs per annum after payment of taxes, and it seemed downright impolite not to ask 150,000 francs to sit down. Captain Kennedy, 100,000 francs, always sat down.

Still standing, the Rajah, or rather his servant—for the Rajah, who had a dignity of his own to keep up, could not be seen giving anybody anything out of his own hand—presented a complimentary bag of musk. In

return, Jacquemont delivered a lecture on the geography of Bissahir. It was a small thing, but the best he had to offer, and he felt it might divert the Rajah, who was ignorant of geography, since he spent most of his time fastening his Kashmiri slaves into their cages. They were not even beautiful slaves, either.

This little comedy over, Jacquemont went his way, crossing the Sutlej on July 11th. He continued his journey along the heights on the other side, some 4,000 or 5,000 feet above the river. He was not altogether charmed by what he saw. Hitherto, in no matter how bad a region, he had found the climate pleasant and the native garden produce good. But on the northern bank of the river the rain fell in torrents, the fog made the world invisible and the wind was brusque. True, there were apple and grape arbours, but the fruit was out of season and would not be ripe for the plucking until his return, months later. The prevalent religion was now Buddhist, and polyandry prevailed, with the result that the excess females were forced to retire into convents, there to eat their yak butter in solitude. He did not find the prospect pleasing.

However, he had forty-six pounds of tobacco in his saddle-bags (bought for seven francs, or forty-six times less than it would have cost in Paris, a thought which cheered him as he smoked of a morning), and he was once more approaching a region where milk was easily procurable—always a thing to cheer him up. He had a new cook, better than the previous one, for if he cooked badly, at least he cooked no worse. And the mountains provided him with rhubarb. This was celestial bliss, he wrote, examining a cluster. It was a remedy for those ailments caused by the absence of the still unrecovered syringe.

At last there was good news about the syringe. Life had taken a turn for the better, for eventually, and after much trouble, it had been found. After three months of the most intensive research the Rajah of Patiala had dis-

covered it. Jacquemont longed to embrace him: the man had not only found the syringe, he was also worth 4,000,000 francs per annum and was an ally of the English. He was altogether admirable.

The news of the discovery was published in the *Patiala Court Gazette* and the instrument itself taken to the Resident at Delhi under a strong cavalry escort. It was lodged securely in the residential palace, and Jacquemont was written to with a request for official instructions as to its care. The correspondence was undertaken by the political department of the Indian service. As Jacquemont said, with no more than truth, it was the most diplomatic and historical syringe upon record. He wished to leave it as a relic to the descendants of his brother Porphyre.

Reassured, he marched on to Kanum. There he met that incredible Hungarian original, M. Alexander Csomo de Koros, who was living under the modest incognito of Scanderbeg, or Alexander the Great, dressed in oriental style, in sheep's skin and a black astrakhan cap. He had been travelling through Asia for ten years, had been living at Kanum for the previous four on a small pension from the Calcutta Government, and was perfecting his grammar and vocabulary of the Tibetan language. Unfortunately it was impossible to check the accuracy of M. Csomo de Koros' scholarship, since he was the only European who understood Tibetan, but Jacquemont judged, from other details, that the scholarship was probably sound. The grammar and vocabulary had been translated into English, a language M. de Koros could write but had never spoken, and the Tibetan was written down direct from the vernacular jargon of the priest with whom Csomo de Koros studied. As for the Tibetan encyclopædia itself, it was a jumble of astrology, alchemy, medicine and theology, and Jacquemont was sure it was nonsense. The encyclopædia was the great work to which the grammar and vocabulary were a prelude. As

for M. de Koros, he hoped to maintain himself in Calcutta, when he returned there, by giving the English colony Tibetan lessons, a completely impractical scheme. Jacquemont abandoned the Hungarian lexicographer and went on his way.

He was annoyed. His moustaches, grown to impress the natives, though succeeding admirably in their purpose, being of a fine, rich, uniform red and an inch long, had a tendency to trail through his breakfast porridge. But life could have been much worse. He consoled himself with the thought that while the political resident at Lucknow, with an income of 200,000 francs a year, was sweating and stifling in his palace, Jacquemont was warming himself at the fireside in a little house costing 100,000 or 200,000 francs, which the resident had built two years before, in order to spend a fortnight in it. What a luxury a house was, he thought, be it ever so wretched or small.

In this retreat he read the European newspapers, brought to him by courier. Jacquemont senior said he caught a fever every day, between four and six, when he read the papers. Jacquemont took them more calmly. The only real danger to his position, he felt, was not political, but climatic, and he preferred to let the treasure trove of the Rajah of Patiala quiet all fears in that direction. By the treasure trove, he meant his syringe.

He was enjoying himself, racing up and down the bleak frontiers of Kanawar with the greatest of glee, despatch and panache. On his first invasion of that reluctant Chinese outpost, all the villagers were away on a religious procession to a pilgrim shrine, so he camped with his seventy followers and stared the Chinese officials down. When he was ready to leave, he took to the road, chanting " *Om mani padmi hum* " and distributing tobacco to the lamas. This was at a height of 18,000 feet. When threatened for any reason, he would ride into the enemy camp across the river, again

shouting "*Om mani padmi hum*", again distributing tobacco and as usual getting his own way. The Chinese, in revenge, over-charged him for farina. He had also made the discovery that mountain sickness, from which he no longer suffered, but from which the English did, was caused primarily by tippling at hard spirits. Almost every serious ailment was caused primarily by tippling at hard spirits. It was water that kept a man well.

He made another military excursion into the Celestial Empire, which is to say, he conducted his bodyguard of troops and servants across the somewhat vague border of Chinese Tartary. He was proud of the manner in which he conducted this foray, for he got his way with threats and murderous arguments when the Chinese opposed him; and he saw what he wished to see in a decorous manner, surrounded by his guards.

He had had to march for five days across an unpeopled waste, over two passes 18,000 feet high. This required that he should take provisions sufficient for both parts of the journey, but since he had troops to the number of sixty men, this was not too inconvenient: they could carry their own provisions. The Chinese proved immune to his charm. He ignored them. He was in search of beds of sea-shells, which he had deduced should be on the shores of the higher peaks and which, indeed, he found.

Only six of his men could fight, and the rest were burdened down with specimen shells, but as the fighting skill of the Chinese was even worse than his own, he managed well. In that remote region the advance of a column of over sixty people upon the obscure village of Behar so frightened the natives that they ran away. Jacquemont pitched his tents in the deserted village and next day received the local Chinese official, who turned out to have only two guns, and those made of leather. Sensing that the man had come to complain, Jacquemont complained first, speaking very rapidly and, when the official was beaten down, dismissed him. He then

fired two balls into a tree, which greatly impressed the Chinese audience that had gathered round him, and presented them with some tobacco, for which they were grateful.

At this moment he was drinking his brandy and sugar, and lit the brandy to melt the sugar. This demonstration of near magic routed the Chinese for the time being. That night they returned and set a watch over Jacquemont which followed him on his dawn explorations the next day. Annoyed, Jacquemont briskly took the leader of this company by his queue and flung him to the ground. This completely routed the Chinese, and Jacquemont continued peaceably with his exploration of the local strata.

Next he went on to Ladakh. He met marauding bands of Tartars, but did not find them fearsome or difficult. He persuaded them to address him as " Lord " and drove them before him to the number of thousands, he said, like sheep, though he himself had an armed guard of only six. He found the Tartars mild, peaceable and addicted to tobacco, which he distributed with a clear conscience and a free hand, since it had cost him only seven sous. He was pleased to find that they were less servile by disposition than were the Indians.

His investigations of Ladakh yielded him spinach, buckwheat, apricots small as cherries and somewhat flavourless, and a cold leg of mutton. It was not much, and he longed to return to Captain Kennedy, who had written to say that he had laid in a store of *pâté*. The long mountain evenings he passed in practising his written English, a language he did not much care for. He found the second person plural cold and impersonal after the joys of being able to *tutoyer*, and an English letter struck him as being insipid. As for his own correspondence, it arrived regularly, even while he was climbing mountains, sent on by Lord William or some other obliging official. Some nimble Tartar, despatched by the Vizier of Sugnum, would deliver a

packet. Jacquemont read the contents as he climbed, his father's letters at the lower altitudes, his brothers' somewhat higher up. He was once more meditating on a trip to Lahore. M. Allard had written a most cordial letter, and he sat down on an alp to answer it. It was a letter well worth answering and ran as follows:

Lahore, July 28, 1830

Sir: I am informed by Dr. Murray of the arrival at Simla of a French traveller, distinguished for his attainments and the mission with which he is charged. This news gives me the hope that an old officer may find it in his power to be serviceable to one of his countrymen, in regions so remote from the mother-country. I therefore have the honour of addressing to you the present letter by one of my hurkurus—(a sort of footman, chamberlain, or what you please)—to offer you all that my situation at the court of the Rajah of Lahore may enable me to be useful to you in. Dispose of my services, Sir, as freely as I offer them; it will be a mark of nationality. In the meanwhile receive assurance of the high consideration with which I have the honour to be, yours, etc.

This buttery epistle met, as it was intended to meet, with the most cordial of receptions, stirring, as it did, almost every responsive fibre of Jacquemont's being. He told his brother Porphyre all about it. "This cordial offer from a stranger," he explained, "who thus came in search of me on the frontiers of China, affected me and I am sure I answered it with some sentimental effusion." It drove out of his head, for the moment, all thought of Captain Kennedy's *pâté*. Certainly his answer was not free of gush.

"To visit the plains of the Punjab," he explained, this time to Allard, "would be of no great service to me; but if M. Allard could overcome the repugnance of the Rajah, to suffer Europeans to penetrate into Kashmir,

and succeed in obtaining this permission for me, guaranteeing me perfect safety, I should feel under very great obligation to him. As a motive to induce the Rajah to suffer me to see the mountainous part of his empire, M. Allard may inform him that my researches will enable me, more than any other, to discover mineral masses which it might be advantageous to work."

This exchange of letters had made him quite jubilant. To his brother he was even more confidential. "On the spot," he wrote, "it is possible that I may find some means of getting something out of Ranjit Singh." It was high time. His money was due to run out. He gave himself up to dreaming.

At Lahore he could be the guest, in some comfort, of M. Allard. Once there he could not fail to be admitted to the presence of the Rajah at a durbar, and to hook in passing, he hoped, at least a good Bokhara horse and a Cashmere shawl. He thought that Ranjit Singh would certainly be more generous than the Grand Mogul at Delhi, a gentleman described by Jacquemont in a moment of irritation as a Jew. But in order to enter Lahore it would first be necessary to write to Lord William Bentinck for the proper passes and permissions. What that "good Quaker" would think of the journey he knew not.

He was not worried. He never worried about himself, and he advised his family not to do so either. "Rely on my dry and stringy fibre, my prudence and—what more shall I say?—my dexterity," he admonished them. Besides, in the stubborn absence of his syringe, he had found a solution and a substitute. The eating of spinach mixed with buckwheat loaves and coarse corn solved the problem. It was his habit to exchange alimentary notes with his brother, who had a like interest.

Wrapped in thick blankets, he sat writing letters. The climate was odd, with moderate snow in winter, no thaw, almost no rain, but with the perpetual Himalayan wind, which blew up regularly at three in the afternoon

and continued until dawn. The nights were bitterly cold. However, the Vizier of Sugnum, always dependable, had sent along a small basket of bad apples. Jacquemont sat up in his blankets, shivering while he gobbled them, and thought of the grapes of Sugnum, which would be ripe by the time he returned that way, though they grew at ten thousand feet. He would gorge on them, he thought, before passing on to Simla and Captain Kennedy's *pâté*.

Meanwhile he was deeply concerned about politics. In politics he was a bad prophet, but he pooh-poohed any suggestion that the politics of India were getting out of hand. He was forced to admit the talents of the English in matters governmental, which he saw were immense, especially by comparison with the French, whose colonial strategy was at best mediocre. In those circumstances his father's anxiety that he should at all times carry papers proving that he was French seemed misplaced. It was safer by far to side with the English. Jacquemont *père* might live to be a hundred before he saw a massacre of the English in India, said his son. Unfortunately Jacquemont *père* did not live to be a hundred, and the Sepoy mutiny was only eight years in the future. Siding with the English was the only proper policy: he begged his brother to superscribe his letters with "Esquire". It was a most important point. It lent him a certain English dignity.

Meanwhile he was most anxious about Lahore. When he descended from the mountains, which he planned to do on November 1st, 1830, he would have only 2,500 francs left, which, added to his last payment, would leave him only 8,500, or enough to get him to Lahore and back, should his efforts fail there, and also enough to procure a comfortable passage home on a British merchantman. He thought he would prefer a British merchantman. They were better boats. Thinking about it, he managed to set fire to his moustache by smoking cigars of his own manufacture.

There was much for him to do. He was still adrift in Chinese Tartary, and if M. Allard had raised pleasant dreams for the future, there were tasks to be performed first. There were, as always, letters. He wrote them on India paper, with a peacock's feather dipped in powdered indigo. A goose quill would have served better, but he consoled himself with the thought that the materials to hand were at least elegant. But the indigo stained his hands and it was difficult to wash off.

"I often contemplated with avidity this immense country which opened before me," he wrote, "and often considered with bitterness whether the access to it would not be closed to me by my poverty. I now look with satisfaction on the distances I have travelled and am in no wise dispirited by the remoteness of Madras and Bombay." And he continued to meditate upon the nature of the English.

He found that they had nothing which the French would call society, and were virtually incapable of graceful conversation. Their serious talk was dull. Thus he considered that a Frenchman had a great advantage over them, for a Frenchman could lead them to the pleasant meanders of general conversation and thus give their life a much-needed and proper tone. It was to this circumstance, he believed, that he owed his success in what they falsely called their society; and he felt it his duty to practise this skill in order to make himself better known. Though he did not speak the English language well, he found that the effort so to speak it was a good discipline. And letters rained on him, he said, like anchovies preserved in butter. He thought it miraculous that he managed so easily to pass among the English.

In his own obscure part of the Himalayas he did not expect to come to much harm, for the fakirs, though given to careless killing, preferred small children, whose hands and feet they cut off in order to steal the copper

and silver bracelets attached to them. Bereft of jewellery and somewhat over-size, Jacquemont felt he had nothing to fear from them. He looked forward, instead, to seeing Kennedy, who was to ride out from Simla to make a progress with him through the petty states on the verges of the Himalayas.

For the time being he had had enough of the Himalayas.

There was the problem of the natives' fear of water. This he offended by taking a bath. His method of taking a bath was to strip in the snow and have a skin of water poured over his head. It was a performance which proved attractive to the Tibetans, who never took baths and badly wanted to see a white man play the fool. This, in turn, annoyed Jacquemont. He solved the problem by having his servants stand about with water-bags, ready to squirt the natives—a thing which filled them with horror.

In between baths he studied in the theological library at Kanawar, which was composed of tomes of Sanskrit and Tibetan—which is to say that he looked at the pictures in the books and found in the ritual nothing more than a corrupted Roman Mass.

He made a botanical excursion into ritual and discovered that the usual "*Om mani padmi hum*" of the priests was of Indian origin, the lotus growing only in the temperate climate of India. In this he was wrong, for there were lotuses in the lakes at Lhasa. Not having gotten to Lhasa, he could not know this. Nor had he any desire to go there. He had climbed the Himalayas in search of a supposed flat tableland at their summit which did not exist, and disorderly and irregular lumps of mountains did not beguile him. A true Frenchman, he liked order in everything, even alps.

Needless to say, he was in Tibet illegally, for it was barred to the English. The Tibetans never having heard of Frenchmen and not knowing quite what to do with them, Jacquemont took advantage of their

confusion and barged ahead with his company of sixty and, though often stopped by whole villages lined up against him, pushed his way through them. They retaliated by over-charging him for provisions, and to his stingy temperament this was a terrible retaliation indeed. In return, he threatened to steal their cattle, and this settled the matter. Provisions became cheaper. His mails had been interrupted, and he feared that perhaps his letter-carriers had been eaten by tigers. On the whole he was relieved to return to Simla.

CHAPTER EIGHT

BEFORE he could seriously settle into Simla or contemplate his trip to Kashmir, he had first to come to grips with his perpetual bother about money, for his credit would expire while he was in Kashmir, he thought now, leaving him no funds with which to return to Europe. Apart from the dilatoriness of the Museum and its officials, there was also the slowness of communications. At home his friends proposed a political career to him, but he was not sure of that. It was true he needed the money, but first he wished to finish his Himalayan geography and his *Flora Tibetica*. He called Victor de Tracy, the Duc de Broglie and the minister Guizot to his assistance in his battle with the Museum for his salary. He had decided that one ministry should pay him his moneys, since if it was agreed to parcel out the cost, he would never receive anything. What he did not know and was not to learn until 1832 was that by a piece of administrative juggling he had a considerable credit at Pondicherry, which was carried on the official books as a remunerative fee from the Ministry of the Marine. As things stood, he only knew that the Museum would not answer his appeals for funds, and he wrote to remind them that he could not hope to compete with English science unless he got to new territories first, since the English had a financial backing he did not. He appealed to the Duc de Broglie direct, and to Elie de Beaumont, an old and influential friend at the School of Mines. As a parting shot he wrote a most polite and regretful last note to the Museum. For a small sum, he said, he could have made a complete collection of the various diamonds produced by the mines at Poona, but financial prudence forbade him so doing,

which he regretted. He was often forced to regret such collections, he informed the directors felinely, because of the smallness of his allowance and the non-payment of its arrears.

Despite these worries, he was overjoyed to return to Simla. He had been living on the Tibetan variant of buckwheat cakes for four months and had found nothing more edible in Chinese Tartary. He was full of joy to be returning to Captain Kennedy, warm beds, *pâté* and champagne. For the previous four months he had been deprived of all European society. Now he was delighted to have a roof over his head, to dine in company, to hear that sister language, English, and to read the latest newspapers. All this made him jumpy and nervous with pleasure, so that he could scarcely sit still at his writing-table. The flow of that river of ink, brown, blue and black, was somewhat interrupted for the time. But though he was grateful for these amenities and comforts, he still rode twelve miles on horseback each morning and six every evening, to work off the dangerous ill-effects of too much good living.

The thought of Mr. Moorcroft sustained him. Mr. Moorcroft was one of India's originals, a veterinary surgeon who had abandoned a successful practice in London and come out to India. Not only was he the author of that invaluable work, the *Directions for Using the Portable Horse-Medicine Chest for Service in India*, but he himself could never resist a horse. He had explored the obscure reaches of India and Tibet in search of new and better breeding strains, and his discoveries would have been useful if he had not been too much given to amatory dalliance along the way and not enough to accurate observation. His researches were worthless, according to Jacquemont, even though he had penetrated deeper into unknown territory than any man before him. He had gotten as far as Leio, at which place, though information is hard to come by, he was apparently either shot or poisoned, presumably for the sin of political impertinence.

Mr. Moorcroft liked disguises and daubed up as a fakir; and, pretending to be dumb in consequence of a vow, he got as far as Lake Manasarowar. On the journey which was to end in his death he had dressed himself as a Persian merchant, but curiosity having led him beyond the boundaries of his rudimentary Persian, he was caught out and done away with. He had represented himself as an official member of the British Government, an exaggeration for which the British stopped his salary, only to get in a quandary when his death was known, for the stoppage brought up the point of whether or not his collections were private or Company property.

Jacquemont did better in assuming no disguise. His private army and his taste for giving orders carried him through. When confronted by a superior force, say 200 lamas out for an excursion, he pursued the policy of pushing one or two of them firmly in the chest. This almost always succeeded, and he did not doubt but that he could conquer all Asia by such manual manœuvres. By dressing in white he managed to terrify the Tibetans, who thought he was the Old Man of the Snows.

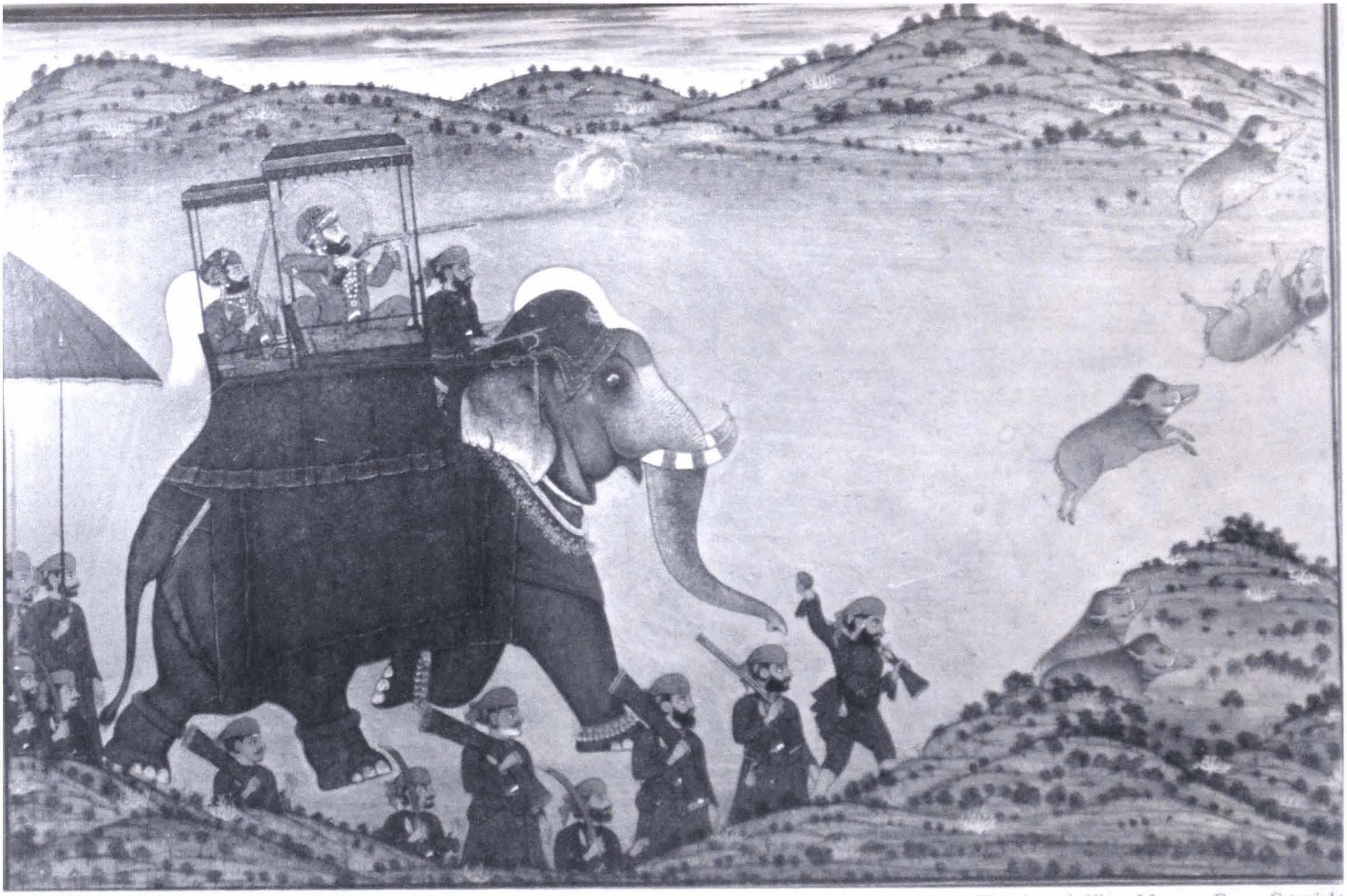
At Simla he occupied himself with negotiations with Ranjit Singh for entry into that potentate's kingdom, and with Calcutta for permission to leave British India. He was certain of success, but realized that he would have to pursue the elusive Rajah into odd territory, for Ranjit was waging war against his revolted Afghan provinces on the Upper Indus. Jacquemont thought he would undertake the pursuit in Turkish dress, for the Sikhs would like that.

While waiting he preferred to enjoy the amenities, particularly those gastronomic, of Simla, for he calculated that in his recent exploration he had eaten 118 very bad dinners, and wished to remove the memory of them. Despite such an atrocious diet, he had returned from the mountains stouter than he had entered them, with an excellent snow tan, magnificent whiskers and all his

teeth still firm. In Simla he dressed in white cambric, and for dinner in full dress with black silk stockings. He needed a new tailor, but despite this the formality of his dress found him favour. He hoped to find a tailor in Meerut, and was somewhat ashamed of his calves, which were thin, otherwise he would have taken to knee-breeches. He had to remain content with long trousers, to which he added a new dress coat of heavy Chinese silk. For the daytime he kept white gowns of yak's wool. In short, his wardrobe was a trifle odd. In the evenings, while exploring, he wrapped himself in twelve ells of Tibetan flannel at ten francs, and in a large white shawl which cost nothing, having been a gift.

As for his health, cow's milk, to which he had added that of buffalo and goat, kept him hearty. Most of his brandy, however, which he used indifferently either to drink or else to pickle his specimens, was exhausted. He had only four half-pints left. But the death of a local official, who had left some casks of wine behind him which were sold out of hand at public auction, permitted him to buy some excellent port at the bargain price of three francs a bottle, since it was worth fifteen or twenty. He never failed to remember the bargain with pleasure when he abstemiously sipped this port.

The excitement of the moment at Simla was the funeral of this official. Though there were only seven Europeans in residence at the time, it was a good enough affair. The deceased was a young officer who, it seemed to Jacquemont, had five or six reasons for dying. He knew them all, for, having a free morning, he had performed the autopsy himself, and was gratified to note that the officer suffered from none of the diseases which might be expected to cause a premature demise. In the circumstances, he felt justified in citing tippling as the cause of death. His own good health he as customarily ascribed to moderation in drink and excess in the use of lavage. His only vice was to smoke his tobacco mixed



Victoria and Albert Museum, Crown Copyright

THE JOYS OF SPECIMEN COLLECTION

Udaipur miniature 1855

Victoria and Albert Museum, Crown Copyright

LIFE IN POONA

From The Young Civilian's Toilet, Bouvier after Taylor

with dried fruits and conserve of roses, a mixture he found delightful. Also, since the tobacco was filtered through a bubble pipe, all danger of impurities was absent.

The funeral was succeeded as a subject of interest by the matter of the Rajah of Belaspur, who in a fit of temper had hanged his Grand Vizier, who, being a popular man, had by his death roused the people, who had driven the Rajah into exile. The Rajah had been forced to solicit the aid of Jacquemont's host, Kennedy. Kennedy demanded a pension for the vizier's family and then, with the aid of a regiment or two, restored both the Rajah and public order. Such petty squabbles arose every day. More serious was the dissatisfaction of the Sepoys. Lord William, that "good Quaker", had reduced their pay, with the result that they threatened to revolt. At the moment there was a storm of disapproval directed against Lord William and his economies. One cannot blame him for them. When he arrived from England he discovered that the cost of governing India exceeded the revenues by 20,000,000 rupees, and seeing either that the revenues must be upped or the expenses downed, retrenched. This made him unpopular with the entire British colony, who accused him of Dutch stinginess. There were those who hoped, publicly, to see him drowned in the Ganges, but it cannot be denied that when he left India he left it solvent.

Another diversion was provided by Rummohun Roy, who was about to sail for London. A Bengalese Brahmin of some skill, who could talk his way with ease through Greek, Latin, Arabic, Hebrew, Sanskrit and English, his purpose was to convert English missionaries to his own brand of Unitarianism. The English considered him a deist, the Hindus thought even less of him, but Jacquemont rightly applauded anyone with the will-power to convert a missionary, and wished him good and similar luck in England.

Preparations for his visit to Ranjit Singh, on which he

set such store, were daily, if slowly, going forward. The first person to come to terms with was M. Allard, and this was not difficult. M. Allard was only too willing to have a French visitor.

M. Allard was a Napoleonic left-over. In 1815 he was captain of cavalry, Chevalier of the Legion of Honour and aide-de-camp to Marshal Brune. After the murder of that Marshal, Allard removed to St. Tropez. Almost provoked into a duel by the rudeness of the Governor of Marseille, he went to Egypt, and from there to Syria, Turkey and Persia, where he entered the service of the Shah. However, the Shah was so opulent and so lazy that Allard, who longed for active service, left Persia in the company of an Italian officer, Ventura, and, crossing Afghanistan and the Punjab, the two offered their services to Ranjit Singh. They reached Lahore in 1821, and were soon put to work, Allard at the head of the cavalry, Ventura of the infantry. He had been successful in Lahore, and was admired even by the English for his probity and generosity, for he distributed a good deal of his salary to the poor and deserving. At first the English had mistrusted him, fearing he was training troops for an invasion of India, but when this turned out not to be true, they relaxed, and even enjoyed his company on his infrequent sallies out of Lahore. As has been said, he was a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour. His one life ambition was to achieve a higher rank in that organization, and this ambition Jacquemont was at last instrumental in seeing gratified. He was awarded the Gold Cross of that order. He was not only a military officer but was engaged, according to Jacquemont, in spreading French culture beyond the Sutlej. A letter arrived from this gentleman in October. It was most flattering.

> " Sir—Your answer, which I expected with the greatest impatience, has reached me at Amritsar, where the Rajah usually collects his troops for the

festival of the *desera*. When I had the honour of addressing you, I flattered myself that you would receive my letter with pleasure; but I was far from expecting that it would draw so many obliging things from you, which I receive with gratitude, but which add nothing to the sincere desire I have of being useful to you. I shall be happy if, from my situation in this kingdom, I can facilitate the scientific discoveries which, with truly astonishing courage, you are come to make in regions so full of dangers. However my goodwill, to which will be joined that of my good friend and brother in arms, M. Ventura, who is no less impatient than I am to become acquainted with you, gives me the certainty of easily smoothing many difficulties for you if you decide on crossing the Sutlej. It is true that our Rajah is not pleased to see Europeans coming from India to visit his Kingdom, particularly the province of Kashmir; but if you could obtain letters from the Governor of Delhi for Ranjit Singh, or even from Captain Wade (a deputy of the Governor of Delhi, resident at Ludhiana), the first difficulties would be removed; and as to what remains to be done, it will be our place to provide for your safety and necessities: all these things are necessary for a countryman of ours, such as M. Jacquemont, to travel in the Punjab. Lord William Bentinck and Sir Charles Metcalfe did not deceive you when they assured you that a journey into the country of Kabul was impracticable. To undertake it would be to expose yourself to almost certain danger."

The letter ended with flowery compliments and was received by Captain Kennedy.

Jacquemont was pleased, but saw no reason to show too much of his pleasure. He replied rather sternly, saying he was determined upon the visit and should put Allard's credit with the Rajah to the test. He also

wrote to Lord William Bentinck to apply what political inducements were available to assist the journey. He then sat down to consider Ranjit Singh, a popular enough occupation at that time. Jacquemont decided that Ranjit Singh resembled, most likely, the Pasha of Egypt. He could not be too terrible, for he and Allard had for years maintained a polite state of mutual intimidation that had harmed neither of them. Ranjit Singh was more inclined to trust Allard than not, which was just as well, for his course with those he did not trust was invariably swift and fatal.

Jacquemont had his own strategies. One of these consisted of his begging Lord William to entitle him Lord Physician Victor Jacquemont, to support which dignity he intended to carry with him a supply of cantharides, presumably for use upon Ranjit Singh, whose vices were both urbane and notorious. Not only had Mr. Elphinstone made himself popular during his embassy to Kabul by means of his dosages of Venetian pills, but one of the commonest diseases of the Orient was premature impotence, which frequently occurred at twenty-five. Since the Levantines used cantharides to good effect, Jacquemont thought he might as well take a supply along. He would feed it to the natives, saying: " Go and multiply."

India had long been plagued by doctors, professional, amateur and quack. The profession brought prestige and, out of pure love of the science, Jacquemont set up shop whenever he could. He was never happier than when dosing his caravan of, at one time, 100 with compulsory morning purges.

It had occurred to him that he might find official employment at Lahore. Having nothing to read at the moment but the *Annuaire du Bureau des Longitudes* for 1829, he could allow his mind to wander. It wandered to the 500,000 francs per annum earned by the Viceroy of Kashmir.

The time had come to part from Captain Kennedy,

who, knowing that Jacquemont neither ate opium nor chewed betel, gave him a bubble pipe. They parted at the plains, Kennedy to return to Simla, Jacquemont to plough ahead to Delhi and Lahore, travelling with a Mr. Fraser, a civil, judicial and financial officer of the highest rank and also an explorer. He had even helped Elphinstone peddle his red Venetian pills in the Punjab.

"My meeting with him," wrote Jacquemont, "is providential." He liked Fraser, who was something of an eccentric, and meditated upon his own extraordinary luck with the English. "I am not yet accustomed to the singular attraction which I exercise over the English: its effects often astonish me," he explained, wondering much. At Captain Kennedy's he had seen officers from all over British India, and in his travels often met them again at their own posts. They were always flattering and sometimes useful. The latest, for example, had just been appointed Viceroy of Hyderabad. Jacquemont found his heart swelling with emotion as he said goodbye to the future Viceroy of Hyderabad and decided that he would be gloriously feasted if he ever went there. The people who pleased him most in India were the military men separated from their units and employed on political, civil, judicial, financial and military duties. It was from them that he obtained the best information and also, needless to say, the best hospitality, and he loved them in return.

There was a delightful libertarian levee awaiting him at Meerut. News of the Revolution of 1830 had just arrived, both by English and by French ship, the French having entered the Ganges flying the tricolour. Other French ships in the harbour had promptly hoisted theirs, which they had had in readiness, and the English received the republican news with pleasure. Jacquemont being the only Frenchman present at Meerut, all came to congratulate him, and his host wept for joy as he embraced him.

In referring to the enthusiasm, Jacquemont said he could have destroyed all his papers, including his letters of introduction, and still, as a Frenchman, have been received everywhere. He was the focus of the celebrations, and he enjoyed being the focus of them. There was a banquet, a speech by himself in English, several toasts and a liberal flow of champagne. In his speech he said that he would always remember this memorable, this most poetical occurrence of his life. He made many graceful allusions both to the English and to himself. The gallic cock, he said, was not a bird of prey, and he foresaw an *entente cordiale* between the two countries. As a toast, he proposed France and England for the world, apparently a race of neck or nothing. He was pleased to report that, as he careened through his high cockalorum, flattering murmurs interrupted him at every turn and finally swelled to a thunder of applause. It was, he said, like magic. It was also reported at full length in all the papers.

He had arrived seasonably at Meerut, for it was a time of grand military reviews, than which nothing could have been grander. Splashy uniform followed splashy uniform, regimental review regimental review, and there was a fine sprinkling of banquets and toasts during which he was requested, with all cordiality, that he might sometimes forget, among the English, that he was far from his native land. He would never have dreamed of forgetting it. " You have seen in England," he wrote to his friend Hezeta, " the Portsmouth tunnel, good horses, virtuous women and men worth admiring—and the country seats of noblemen; but you do not know what the society of Paris can be like for the happy few. I knew in America a poor man who had known that supreme good and who, kept in his free and tiresome country by lack of money, went mad and saved his reason by fleeing to live with savages." No, Paris was the place. There was no other. He made a resolution to be both more sober and less sentimental, but such

attentions overwhelmed him with thoughts of home and, speaking from his heart, he found whatever he had to say was always well received.

He had arrived in Meerut in all haste, travelling eighty-four miles in a day by relays of horses. He exhausted nine, and upon arrival, finding Arnold, his host, ready to go out for an evening's canter, requested a tenth to accompany him. He got on as well with Arnold as with everybody else. Arnold was a brilliant, a superb cavalry officer, doting upon his profession and his troops. It was his fate, Jacquemont reiterated, to please the English; he pleased Arnold; and he suffered his fate to lead him where it would, unaware of doing anything to attract it.

Spontaneous kindness greeted him everywhere. He returned the greeting and then marched to Delhi, a distance of forty miles. Having been provided with first-rate horses, he covered the journey between breakfast and dinner on December 15th, 1830, in an agreeable temper, well pleased with the world and equipped with an introductory prod from Lord William Bentinck to help him to Lahore.

Alas, the prod was not completely or immediately successful, for the resident at Delhi had only limited powers, had only just arrived from Hyderabad, and was not too well informed as to his official relations with Ranjit Singh. These things considered, he was timorous of exercising his authority on his own responsibility. Jacquemont sent a second letter to Bentinck in all haste, and this evoked a more specific answer. What was refused to a British Officer was not to be denied to Jacquemont. He might go to Lahore.

Jacquemont was introduced to Ranjit Singh's representative in Delhi. It was explained in Persian—a language not entirely amenable to such explanations—that he was a scientist and thus, at least in those distant days, politically innocent. That he was, moreover, under the protection of the British Crown, and that it

was to the personal interest of Lord William Bentinck that he owed his petition to enter Lahore.

The petition was successful and was embroidered with Persian compliments. Jacquemont found himself described as the true light, the true principle of the movement of things visible and invisible. He had, besides, in his pockets, absolute directives from M. Allard to all officers within Ranjit Singh's domains to treat Jacquemont with care.

He therefore felt, somewhat complacently, that he might soon set forth. He would be the first European traveller to explore the country, with the exception of Elphinstone's hasty trip, since Bernier entered it in 1665. He also expected to be the last for some time, since he anticipated that anarchy would conquer even Ranjit Singh and make his country once more untraversable. "It is to the happy chance which brought about the friendly relations I have formed and keep up with the Governor-General of India that I am indebted for the flattering prospect now smiling upon me," he wrote to his father. "No Asiatic friendship could recommend me better than that to the King of Lahore." The British, he concluded, were more reliable than his French employers at the Museum. Nevertheless he continued to write home for more money. On an income of 6,000 francs a year, as frequently as not unpaid, it was no wonder that he had to use his wits.

The pleasures of Kashmir beckoned with the delights of a supposedly enchanting climate, and he thought that many fine things might be said of it for the benefit of those who remained comfortably seated at their firesides in Paris. In other words, he contemplated writing a book. A book might be profitable.

He hoped to travel with Fraser, the commissioner at Delhi. Fraser was curious to see Kashmir himself, but only succeeded in accompanying him part of the way. He must have been good company. He was a man of fifty, eccentric, which prevented him from rising higher

than he stood in the service. He received only 150,000 francs per annum, Jacquemont calculated, instead of the 250,000 his natural abilities might lead him to expect. Jacquemont had met him at Captain Kennedy's. He was, unfortunately, a misanthrope to most of the world but his friends, with whom he was sociable enough. His only real fault was that Anglo-Indian society bored him and he showed his boredom. He also had the foible that he could not resist a battle or a war and, whatever he was doing, would drop it in order to join in the fracas. As a result, his hobby of being at the head of any storming party had cost him two wounds in the arm, a pike in his loins and an arrow in his neck, of which latter he had almost died. Since he was opposed to killing and would carry no weapons, his mode of battle must have been curious, yet he always seemed to escape serious consequences. Pacific by nature, he found danger voluptuous. At the smell of it, his big black beard began to quiver, although by nature he was the mildest of men. His eventual fate was untimely. Although misanthropic, he had formed an attachment for the Nabob of Ferozepur. But the Nabob was equally misanthropic and after some fancied slight, had Fraser dirked in an alley. Though the murderer and, eventually, the Nabob too, was hanged for his impulsive action, it was the end of Mr. Fraser.

Mutual compliments flowed between the two men. Fraser said that he deemed Jacquemont the only person he had met with whom he could travel amiably. Jacquemont replied in the same strain. Besides, Fraser was a fountain-head of useful information, his knowledge of the natives and friendship with them, both always an offence in the eyes of Anglo-Indian society, were profound. They decided to jog along together until political pressure should force Fraser to turn back. They agreed to share expenses and to keep them low.

Jacquemont had become disillusioned about the problematical generosity of Ranjit Singh. Allard, also

a Frenchman and thus in a position to judge, reported him stingy. So now he expected no more than Turkish dress and a horse, the customary gifts to persons of distinction on their first appearance at any Indian court. At the most, in excess of that, he might be granted the favour of raising a small tariff in rupees at such villages as he encountered, also a common courtesy to travellers in the East. Between the source of all benefits and himself stood M. Allard. And M. Allard, as has been said, had the French sense of money.

Jacquemont intended to enter Lahore from the north, via Peshawar, in order to pass through Simla once more, where he hoped to find Lord and Lady William Bentinck, the always useful Kennedy, Colonel Fagan and others of his acquaintance. Meanwhile he left his collections, so well poisoned, he said, as to withstand any ravages, in a military warehouse at Delhi.

He had had a good time and was looking forward to another period of exploration. He had assisted at the humiliation of the Rajah of Belaspur, who had been turned out of his country because of his amiable habit of having the royal elephants trample unwelcome visitors to death. Kennedy had supplied him with a *corps de ballet* of dancing-girls at Subhatu. He had fallen back on his regimen, abandoning these delights. Almost all explorers in India, he wrote to Victor de Tracy, had died. He found all sorts of reasons for not following their example. His physical regimen and the extreme ugliness of the Oriental women, which made continence possible, helped. Continence was most important for anyone who had to walk or ride horseback all day in cold and heat, rain and the north wind. He congratulated himself on his continence. He did not mention that he was suffering from the after-effects of Kennedy's night-girls to the point where to sit on a horse was agony.

At Nahun, capital of Sirmur, he and the Rajah had gone for long elephant rides together, while Jacquemont lectured that prince on suitable moral subjects.

Having exchanged the vastness of the Himalayas for the plains of Hindustan, he found the latter deficient in charm, furnished out as they were only with a white thorny shrub and some yellow withered grass, the ruins of villages and the ruinous village tombs. There were many deserted cities, their mosques and shops abandoned. He did not care for the spectacle. He hurried on, polishing up his Persian by reading the *Persian Gazette* of Calcutta in company with a young Brahmin. Apart from that, he could find no amusing employment. He did not admire Persian and thought the literature insipid. He did not, for that matter, admire any Oriental language at his disposal. Not only that, but he had found no fabled white roses at Delhi and had decided that the roses of Paris were preferable anyhow.

He thought the plains intolerable, hot in the sun and freezing out of it, and since he was staying with an elderly gentleman whose pyrophobia prevented the lighting of fires in the house, he had to sit up wrapped in shawls and blankets, with his feet bundled into a heap of carpets.

He had added to his poundage of cantharides a complete medicine chest, for dysentery had broken out again and, under the care of English doctors, nine patients out of ten died of it. In his baggage was a stock of grey paper for drying plants and a complete supply of purges.

His luck had soured for the moment. Fraser turned back, unable to get permission to continue, having presented him with two elephants and two handsome servants, which he added to his company of two camels, his servants and his strong bodyguard, donated by the Resident of Delhi. The caravan was preceded by a servant bearing an engraved plaque proclaiming Jacquemont's official titles and dignities. For the rest of it, he dined off a tough peacock washed down with brackish water, and did not greatly care for his dinner.

He was trapped at Kurnal by a two-day rain, writing letters and a petition to the Museum for more money. It was not until after he entered Lahore that he was to hear from the professors of that institution, after a silence of well over a year. They supplied him with a supplement of 2,000 francs a year. Though it was not much, it eased his fears somewhat. Unfortunately they had not provided any means whereby he could collect the money. Somewhat impatiently, with a slight edge, he informed them that he had been forced to leave the results of his first Himalayan expedition at Delhi for want of money to ship them home. He said no more. The Museum were as yet unaware of his attempts to pull wires behind the scenes and so force a decent allowance out of them.

His last letter-carrier had been attacked and robbed, for a poor naked man carrying a bundle of letters was considered a prize by the local banditti, whose diligence was such that, despite two guards outside his tent, Jacquemont always woke surprised to find his pillow still under his head and his shirt on his back. His beard was now three inches long. He wore wide calico trousers, a green dressing-gown and a black fur cap, and thought he looked a decent Afghan in such a costume. The dogs, however, could smell a Christian and therefore barked; the buffaloes and cows lowered their horns at him, the horses were frightened; but the natives were frightened more than the horses and bowed low, which was sufficient to satisfy his pride.

Nonetheless the trip was monotonous. To while away the time he sent Mlle. Zoë Noizet de Saint-Paul, pressed in a letter, an anemone, a primrose gathered from Tibet, a violet and a myosotis, though he doubted if she would know what the latter was. The rain had made him sentimental, though not too sentimental to inform her that it was related to the forget-me-not. She was, he said, thinking what a safe distance separated them, the sultana of his thoughts. The truth of the matter was that, with

Lady William far away in Simla, he longed for female society, even for the society of a young female. And there was nothing to be said in favour of the European ladies he met in India. He found them stupid. They read nothing but the *Mirror of Fashion*; and though they had the external manners of society, he found them inwardly damnably dull. As for the domestic life of the English, it puzzled his understanding. He could find little intimacy between husband and wife and what intimacy did exist was scarcely intelligent. They met only while actually eating, and, after eating, the wives withdrew. Once they had done so the men relaxed, while the poor women remained in the frozen wastes of the drawing-room, amusing themselves alone as best they could. Their husbands tippled interminably at the bottle, for so long that when at last they rejoined the ladies they found the ladies had retired and that the lights were snuffed out. Fashionables, it was true, did not linger so long once the cloth was removed. They dutifully went in to the ladies. But what, he asked, could you talk about to an average English lady? She could not talk seriously for fear of being labelled a blue stocking; and so she jabbered only of mutual acquaintances, which he found dull, or else of fashion, which he found duller. He hoped that God would preserve him from an English wife, and was quite willing to help God out in this particular, should that deity show the least signs of a wobbling allegiance.

These thoughts occurred to him in the desert of India's central plains, a low and dusty jungle frequented by tigers and peacocks. He sometimes shot the peacocks and regretted it, for they were as beautiful as they were inedible. Even served up as a mulligatawny, they failed to tempt the appetite. The only recompense he could find for his present existence was that his present servants were handsomer and taller than the last bunch, these being from the Northern provinces. Their costumes he admired, since they were embellished by a

broad red belt slung over the shoulder, with a plate of copper, engraved in Persian, announcing they were the servants of " V. Jacquemont, a very mighty lord ". His name was engraved in Roman characters amid the Persian, but he thought the plate most imposing, particularly so since nobody could read it. He had also his private infantry of eight men, and with their assistance he reached Ludhiana without being molested, lodged with the British political agent there, and felt more cheerful. He once more dared to hope that Ranjit Singh would be amiable; and M. Allard was calling loudly for the approach of the " very mighty lord ".

His host, Captain Wade, showed him over a Cashmere shawl factory, if such it might be called, and trotted him off to meet two of Ranjit Singh's political cast-offs. Being ex-kings, one of them had had his eyes put out. The other owed his downfall to his one-time possession of the Koh-i-Noor diamond. Ranjit Singh had wanted the diamond. He had therefore offered asylum to the royal refugee, who had been foolish enough to accept. Ranjit Singh then put him under lock and key and slowly starved him for a month. After which, with the somewhat puzzling etiquette of the East, they exchanged turbans as a mark of amity and, with the turbans, three provinces and the Koh-i-Noor. These visits over, Jacquemont went out to a neighbouring cemetery and, using one of the graves as a letter table, wrote his usual lengthy letters, squinting in the light of the cold sun.

Meanwhile, his arrival was well known, and coincided with that of the first British ship to penetrate to the Sikh kingdom, a ship carrying some horses to Ranjit Singh under the care of Alexander Burnes, who was also instructed politely to spy out the lie of the land. Alexander Burnes, a descendant of the poet Robert Burns, had been in India since he was sixteen. He gained fame in later years as ' Bokhara Burnes ', because of his repute as a traveller. His stubbornness was well known. It was his absolute refusal to admit even the possibility that

the Afghans would dare to touch an Englishman that resulted in his being murdered during the Kabul riots of 1841. With one spy coming by boat, it was hard to scotch the rumour that Jacquemont was also a spy, or a secret messenger from the King of France, or a Russian agent. The petty Rajahs, having a simpler temperament, merely concluded that he was a military espionage agent, and perhaps only Ranjit Singh really knew who he was. M. Allard wrote to speak of the pleasure with which Ranjit Singh was looking forward to the visit. This Jacquemont dismissed as flummery, since the man was a perfect old fox.

The old fox, though sending his Prime Minister's son to welcome Jacquemont, was up to foxish tricks. He belonged to that class of rulers who love mischief for its own sake and so, instead of forwarding passports in proper order as promised, temporized. Jacquemont wanted to rush on and take Lahore by force, but as Ranjit Singh kept up a steady stream of messengers, he was always compelled to await the next directive.

Patience was at last rewarded and the final arrangements concluded. The son of the Prime Minister would await Jacquemont at Falur, on the Lahore bank of the Sutlej. Jacquemont's route had been firmly inked in by Ranjit Singh, who in addition despatched a travelling companion who was no more than a spy, since it was his duty to send off a messenger each dusk to Ranjit with a complete report on Jacquemont's movements during the day.

The journey took three dull and tiresome days. Each evening the local villagers came out to pay their respects, a literal enough statement, since they brought presents of money. Jacquemont refused the money as a diplomatic gesture. The party was a large one, and Jacquemont was forced to buy a tent in which to receive visits in proper state. He even had to buy a chair. M. Allard wrote daily and the other chief European military aide, the Italian Ventura, did no less. In

both their correspondence the men chatted of literary and æsthetic subjects.

The Afghans were magnificent men, and Jacquemont was not displeased. Most of the delay had been caused by the arrangements for necessary pomp. M. Allard wrote to say that a party of thirty horse had ridden out to receive him at Falur. As for the trip itself, there was some ice on the ground, but it was not cold weather, and the sun grew hot by ten in the morning. Jacquemont hid in his beard. He had recently developed the theory that toothache was often caused by a clean-shaven jaw, and so preferred his insulation, which, it must be remembered, was of a fine carrot colour. Lord William, in far-off Simla, had a company of 103 elephants, 1,300 camels and 800 wagons drawn by bullocks, whereas Jacquemont had only one wagon and a couple of camels. It is true that his state was not great, but he appears to have forgotten the elephants and cavalry at his back, not to mention the elephant under him and the escort of Sikhs which surrounded him.

Once across the Sutlej and Shah-el-Din, the minister's son, sent men to greet him, presenting a vase of cream, a basket of fruit and a bag of money—quite a heavy bag of money. This gift was accompanied by full military honours. In the evening Jacquemont, the money safely under lock and key, took his first stroll in the so-long-forbidden realms by walking along the banks of the river in the dusk, a troop of guards following him at a discreet distance.

Next day they started the final march to Lahore, Jacquemont ahead on his elephant, with a small company of horse prancing around him; Shah-el-Din three miles behind. When they set up camp in the evening, visits were exchanged and a new bag of money was donated. Jacquemont was then ushered back to his own tent by a fanfare of trumpets, laughing in his beard. He had taken to speaking of himself only in the first person plural. Next day they continued by elephant, since

Jacquemont preferred it, at the moment, to a horse, because of the infection he had picked up from Kennedy's night-girls. However he was dosing himself daily, and hoped for the best.

They paused at Jullundur to be received by the governor of that town, and after the usual bag of money had been presented, Jacquemont was serenaded by the local musicians, standing about outside his tent. He did not like oriental music and so sat inside writing letters. Meanwhile he had turned his attention to the bags of money, which averaged about 250 francs apiece. Since he was to travel six more days, he calculated that this would net him 2,250 francs. He could quite understand why Ranjit Singh was reluctant to receive visitors if that was what it cost. Previously he had bewailed the slowness of travel in India. Now he felt he might amble at his ease, at the speed of a tortoise. He decided that he liked the Punjab very much. He found the people agreeably simple and honest, not to say handsome, and their habits were certainly graceful. He was very happy.

CHAPTER NINE

DESPITE the evening bags of money, he was eager to press forward. On March 12th he came within sight of Lahore and hurried on. At two leagues distance from the city he found drawn up by the wayside a spanking calash and four. This contained the French contingent, which is to say, M. Allard, M. Ventura and a M. Court, a lesser officer, all in uniform and all looking cheerful and fit. Both parties halted, Jacquemont clambered down from his elephant and he and M. Allard embraced with emotion, though they had not much acquaintance with each other. M. Allard then introduced his colleagues, Jacquemont entered the carriage and they whirled away through the dust towards the capital. The journey took an hour across wild country, while the four of them jogged and jabbered busily along.

The environs, like those of Delhi, but in a clearer, more timeless air, were strewn with the ruins of Mogul grandeur. There were tombs, barracks and abandoned compounds slowly crumbling to dust. They reached the outskirts of the city proper and stepped down at the entrance of a small oasis, a parterre of carnations, irises and roses, with walks of orange trees and jasmine bordered with basins in which gurgled a multitude of small fountains. In the centre of all this geometric elegance stood a small pavilion or folly, furnished with both luxury and taste. This was to be Jacquemont's residence while he was in Lahore.

In the hall they discovered a table laid out with service, fruits, the ingredients of a good breakfast and, of course, since his habits had been carefully studied, milk. After breakfast and for the rest of the day the four of them

rambled through the gardens, satisfying their curiosity about each other and mutually caressing their vanities with compliments. Jacquemont was well content. Night fell quickly and the new friends were forced to separate, if friends they could be called, after so much oriental fawning. M. Allard and M. Court had like residences, but at a distance of two leagues from the city and in other directions. Ranjit Singh preferred to isolate his Europeans, and the arrangement was certainly agreeable. When they had gone, Jacquemont poked about in ecstasies of admiration. No doubt he was wondering what would happen next.

Later in the evening his servant, who had been despatched to Ranjit Singh, returned bearing both congratulations and presents. The former were fulsome, but the latter even more abundant, consisting of bunches of white Kabul grapes—a fruit upon which Jacquemont was known to dote—succulent pomegranates, a variety of other goodies, all of the best quality, all of which he gratefully ate, and a bag of 500 rupees,* which he as gratefully put by him. These benefits eaten and admired it was time to dine.

Dinner was served by torchlight, by a horde of servants richly dressed in silk. Eventually Jacquemont was to have as many as ten cooks in Lahore, of Indian, Georgian, Persian, Armenian, Kashmiri and Punjabi origin. They would speak in a babel of French, English, Italian, Hindustani and bad Persian, but concocted excellent polyglot meals.

In the midst of this plenty Jacquemont had the courage, so he said, to sit down only to bread, milk and fruit. It was the regimen which best suited him and he wished to appear at his best. In the late evening, lulled by the scent of the carnations in the garden, he went happily to sleep, and was awakened the next morning by MM. Allard and Ventura, who always seemed to arrive together, perhaps because jealous of each other's

* The rupee was worth 2*f.* 50*c.* or about 2*s.*

prerogatives. They were on their way to the Rajah, who had wakened them at midnight to announce that he wished to see them at dawn.

Jacquemont's celebrity had been well advertised, and he learned that not only the natives but also Ranjit Singh were in agonies of curiosity to see him. That monarch had already had a full report of Jacquemont's appearance and behaviour within the capital, but enjoyed the luxury of a delayed approach to his own person. Jacquemont passed the forenoon in polishing up a few Persian compliments, M. Allard having departed with the statement that since Jacquemont knew everything, had seen everything and was acquainted with all the world, the Rajah was eager to see him.

The meeting took place that afternoon in a Chinese pavilion in the royal gardens. By March 16th there had been several such meetings. Accomplished though he was at steering a conversation, or at supplying a monologue in the absence of a conversation, Jacquemont found conversation with Ranjit Singh a nightmare. The Rajah was not only a relentless talker himself, but also had a bump of curiosity if anything greater than Jacquemont's own. It must have been an odd series of interviews. Ranjit Singh was the first inquisitive Indian, Jacquemont wrote, that he had ever seen, and his curiosity was sufficient to balance the apathy of the entire continent. He asked endless questions about India, Europe, Bonaparte, this world in general, and the next; hell, paradise, the soul, God, the Devil and a myriad of similar matters. Like most people of his rank in India, pampered as pekes until dethroned, he was an imaginary invalid. Indeed, with a numerous collection of concubines of both sexes and the best quality, with wealth enough to procure any food or drink at will and enormous appetites, he ate like an elephant and was, in consequence, often sick of a surfeit.

One of their more important conversations hinged

upon the concubines. It was the theory in those days that excesses in such matters led to impotence. A certain delicacy attending open mention of such a state of affairs, Ranjit Singh preferred to refer to his digestive troubles. It was a customary euphemism. When the local potentates of India complained of the weakness of their stomachs, the well-informed knew the truth of the matter. Ranjit Singh and Jacquemont consulted about it for some time in the most allusive and elusive of language.

To prove his point, the old *roué* held an open levee, surrounded by officials, in the fields, on a fine Persian carpet laid down for the occasion and fenced off from the impious by a guard of 1,000 soldiers. He sent for five girls out of his seraglio, who were seated before Jacquemont and ordered to display their natural advantages. Ranjit Singh then asked if, in view of the display, his case was not a sad one, and what did Jacquemont think of the girls? Jacquemont replied moderately, displaying a somewhat startled but scarcely ardent admiration. The Rajah then had the girls sing a few harmless airs, which their facial expressions rendered agreeable, and imparted the information that when he was extremely bored he had them ride bareback for his entertainment. He held out a promise of a glimpse of this treat. Properly grateful, Jacquemont bethought himself of that faulty remedy, his poundage of cantharides. Hereafter, whenever he wrote to the Rajah, he always included an aphrodisiac pill or two in the envelope—a kindness which was much appreciated. It must have been a lively afternoon. Even in appearance Ranjit Singh was a lively man.

Nothing marked him out for official dignity but his position at the summit of a half-circle of courtiers, seated jauntily on the peacock throne he had stolen from the Persians. He was a thin little man with a good figure, somewhat ugly because of his smallpox pits; his one good eye—the right one—large; his nose delicately

modelled and turned up; an attractive, humorous mouth, superb teeth, little moustaches with which he perpetually twiddled, and a long white beard which, though thin, was imposing, and which stood at a motionless point on his chest. He wore a muslin turban badly done up, a long tunic with a collar of jewels and narrow trousers. He was barefoot, but his clothes were of white Cashmere, bordered with gold. For ornament he wore only massive earrings of gold ornamented with pearls, so heavy that they distended the lobes of his ears; a pearl collar of some size; and ruby bracelets modestly hidden by his sleeves. At his side his sword had an emerald-and-diamond hilt, but for a Rajah so rich and so powerful his appearance was almost of a Spartan simplicity.

The girls dismissed, he went on to speak of his French officers, who had trained his army well. These officers often excited his most profound suspicions, though they had served him loyally for ten years. Though knowing them to be French, at times he suspected them of being either Russian or British, two nations which, since they endeavoured to impinge on his domains, roused his native xenophobia. His suspicions were, on the whole, a matter of strategy, having the purpose of keeping them circumspect and efficient.

His reception was very favourable. Jacquemont heard, for example, that Ranjit Singh continued to praise him even after he had left the Court—a most unusual form of behaviour—and had referred to the Frenchman as a demi-god.

On returning to his own residence, the demi-god despatched a few prescriptions to his Royal Highness, all innocent and harmless, but most of them relying upon the itchy cantharides. He knew that Ranjit Singh, who to tell the truth did not really need them himself, would not use them personally, but would amuse himself by trying them out on his friends and servants, by force if necessary. The next day, having done this and having

been amused by the results, Ranjit Singh asked for further supplies, which were given him. The city had detected a new favourite, and rumours flew accordingly. Ranjit Singh kept up the flow of compliments and fresh fruit, though still privately considering Jacquemont to be a spy. He did not consider him to be an English spy. No Englishman, he explained, would have changed his posture twenty times during a conversation, have illustrated language with gesture, varied the tone of his voice or laughed at the proper times. Amity was well established. Jacquemont began to hope he would be given the run of Kashmir.

He was not, however, deceived as to the character of his host. Ranjit was no saint, but he was not cruel either. Though he had a taste for removing the noses, ears and hands of eminent criminals, he was not so brutal as to enforce the death penalty. Besides, he doted on horses, and no man who doted on horses could be wholly bad. He doted upon them to the extent of having conquered a neighbouring province in order to capture the stud he wanted. Though personally courageous—a rare enough attribute in an oriental prince—he got his way more by statecraft than by violence. His special excellence lay in the tactful breaking of treaties, always a sign of the highest diplomatic skill. Though a Sikh, he was himself a sceptic. Though he made his yearly pilgrimage to Amritsar, the sacred capital of the Sikhs, he managed to slip in a few devotions at the tombs of prominent Mohammedan saints, just to be on the safe side. He was, in short, a scoundrel, but what offended his own people was not his dishonesty, but the fact that he augmented his seraglio by dips into his neighbours' and, what was worse, into the common streets. He also liked to amuse himself publicly with his courtesans while riding through the streets on an elephant. There were those who found this habit offensive. Flagging energies had pushed him to extremes that were not always engaging to watch. None-

theless he had one legitimate son, Kharak Singh, a man of thirty, without talent and with little chance of succeeding his father. Ranjit detested him. But his harem produced children to the number of thirty or so in his absence, and one of these he pretended to think his own. This was Chet Singh, future governor of Kashmir and Ranjit's favourite. The two heirs cordially loathed each other, and this their father encouraged, for he did not care what happened after he was dead, but intended to hold his own throne while he was still living.

So far he had held it very well. The bearded gentleman whom Jacquemont found installed on a gold-plated, plush-lined throne resembling a late Victorian hip-bath was in his fifty-first year and was the third of his dynasty, one too much controlled by women. Ranjit was an only son, and his father, Maha Singh, died in 1792, when Ranjit was twelve. His mother, whose profligacy was well known, had seized power and had intended to keep it, ruling with a prime minister who was a former lover. Since Ranjit was not a sturdy child, she thought her chances of maintaining power excellent. A childhood attack of smallpox had blinded him in one eye and blotched his face. His mother ordered that his education should cease and, hoping to make a permanent invalid of him, indulged him in every vice she could think of. Since she had an inventive mind, it was an intensive course. Unfortunately it did not work. Ranjit assumed power in his seventeenth year by the sure method of murdering not only his mother but also her minister. This he accomplished with the aid of his mother-in-law, who was able to raise a considerable body of troops. A useful war with Afghanistan and an even more useful treaty with the Shah of Persia consolidated his power. He was wise enough not to challenge British power to any serious degree, and as a result was undisputed King of the Punjab. Very little disturbed his peace of mind, though at times Kashmir proved difficult to subdue.

When Jacquemont met him he was about to engage upon a fund-raising tour of his empire. It was the most hazardous kind of tax-collecting, and preparations included an army of 10,000 men equipped with thirty pieces of cannon. This army would split into three parts, one to be headed by M. Ventura, one by Allard and one by Ranjit himself. It was almost time for leave-taking. Jacquemont was informed that at his final audience he would receive one or two more baskets of presents and a dress of honour, much grander than that he had received at Delhi, and made of Cashmere shawls. He intended to forward it to his father. His military chest, in the meantime, had grown heavy with gifts of royal rupees, in sufficient plenty to get him to Kashmir for a stay of four months, and an unlimited credit had been established there for him by Ranjit.

There was a delightful farewell party held in Jacquemont's garden palace and given by his fellow Frenchmen. There was dancing and singing and girls to do both. One of these was particularly beautiful. She was a gift from his considerate hosts, and Jacquemont found her waiting for him in the salon, the others having maliciously and charitably retired. It was the same sort of hospitality Kennedy had provided, but in this case offered more luxuriously and with more finesse. At dessert Jacquemont drank a glass of champagne to celebrate, offering a toast to General Lafayette. The Museum had just written to say that they had renewed his contract and increased his salary. He thought himself in a terrestrial paradise, and prepared to explore the local mountains.

He had his farewell audience with Ranjit Singh, who gave him a dress of honour worth 12,000 francs. It consisted of two Cashmere shawls, two more less magnificent, and seven lengths of silk cloth of the best workmanship—eleven articles in all, this being the most honorific number. In addition he received a turban ornament of some value, though he thought the stones

badly cut, and a purse of 1,100 rupees, making 2,400 rupees in all, or considerably more than his official yearly salary.

In addition to this, Ranjit provided him with horse and foot soldiers, a secretary, camels to carry tents and baggage, carriers to carry these things where the camels would not venture, and made arrangements for payment of another 500 rupees at Pindaden-Khan, and of 2,000 at Kashmir. In addition even to this, anything Jacquemont should like at Kashmir, without exception, the Rajah agreed to buy for him.

"Of course," commented Jacquemont, "we parted very good friends."

An invitation to a royal hunt he turned down, having been told it would be a bore. M. Allard also added gifts to the already considerable number, and in return Jacquemont agreed to help Allard's son, who was in France. Discovering that 2,400 rupees amounted to 6,200 francs, he sent the money off to Calcutta, to Messrs. Cruttenden, MacKillop and Company, where it could peacefully accumulate eight per cent interest. This money he considered a private windfall, not a public one, so he had prudently decided to save it against his return to Paris. His fortunes restored, he advanced towards Kashmir.

CHAPTER TEN

NOT only did Jacquemont transcribe his conversations with Ranjit Singh at some length, but that monarch had six secretaries on the spot while they were going on, to make record of them. These talks were highly successful. The English, Jacquemont considered, talked like the Chinese, and their prattle was too monosyllabic to be of interest. Ranjit Singh liked to be amused in conversation, and the English habit of reducing small talk to a single word of assent or dissent bored him. He therefore found Jacquemont a highly diverting gusher, and opened up accordingly. Though taken in by the Frenchman's charm, he was not above using him for his own purposes, and Jacquemont thus had much to do with the forthcoming and politically important meeting which Ranjit was to have with Lord William Bentinck.

Ranjit talked freely and simply, representing himself as a man whose only desire was for the peace and concord of all. He was particularly avid of details about Lord William, his age, his character, his talents, honours and relations with the King of England. And why had he come to Simla, which he regarded as dangerously close? Jacquemont explained that it was for the pleasure of being the nearer to a Rajah for whom he entertained the liveliest regard. Ranjit then changed the subject and asked Jacquemont if he had met the King of England himself.

This threw Jacquemont into a mild confusion. M. Ventura, who knew his master, stepped forward and said that of course Jacquemont had. Jacquemont, taking the hint, said that of course he had. "Your Highness knows", Ventura added, "that it is by the

permission of the King of England that Jacquemont is in India at all. He had to see him to obtain that permission."

"How were you received?" asked Ranjit sharply.

"In his cabinet, seated on a chair. He rose when I entered. I took off my hat and saluted him, and he bade me sit down."

Jacquemont invented the scene vividly.

Ranjit Singh remained suspicious. "George IV is dead," he said. "Do you know the new William?"

"His life well, himself no," said Jacquemont.

"What did he do before becoming King?"

"He was Admiral of the Fleet," explained Jacquemont bravely, and added with republican enthusiasm: "He rose from the ranks." Ranjit Singh's progress had not been dissimilar.

"Is he well loved?" was the next question, followed rapidly by a demand to know the extent of his revenues. Jacquemont replied that William IV was worth one billion five hundred million francs a year, though only twenty-five million francs of that represented his personal income. The rest went to maintain the army, the navy, the priesthood, school teachers, road-building, the construction of fortresses and so forth.

Having made some mental calculations, Ranjit anxiously inquired how big an army King William had. The temperance of constitutional monarchy was a concept alien to his nature, and he wished to be prepared for the worst. Jacquemont replied, at random, 100,000, most of them in occupied territory. There were twenty thousand in India, for instance, and they fought extremely well.

"As well as the French?" demanded Ranjit, hoping, by hitting at patriotic emotions, to get at the truth.

"Almost as well, since Bonaparte taught them how to make war," was the answer. Since Ranjit was a fervent admirer of Bonaparte, it was a tactful and perhaps even terrifying reply.

Ranjit gave thought to his own borders and asked next about the Indian auxiliaries. How well did they fight? As well as Europeans, for example? Jacquemont thought not but, also thinking of the borders, added that under European officers they fought very well indeed. Since there had not been a war in India since his arrival, he confessed that he did not feel himself competent to judge. But Indian fortifications were poor, and a European war was a serious matter. Napoleon had once slain 40,000 men in a day. Impressed, Ranjit then wanted to know if Jacquemont had seen Napoleon.

In the full swing of the thing by now, Jacquemont said yes, that he had, very often and very close to, and he could report that, like Ranjit, Napoleon was a small man who by his courage and wisdom had become King (here, recognizing the parallel, Ranjit nodded a gratified head). The greatest king on earth, Jacquemont added, looking for a pleased sparkle in the royal eye and finding it. Even the English, he added, had defeated him only by internal treachery.

Having been defeated by the English himself, Ranjit again changed the subject and wanted to know how many sciences Jacquemont was versed in. Not quite equal to this, for regarding his own profession he was singularly honest, Jacquemont was about to give a short list when M. Allard stepped forward, hissed "*toutes*," at him, and so Jacquemont said, in Hindustani, "All."

"And which the best?"

"Astronomy, mathematics, all mathematics; alchemy and the science of plants, minerals, medicine . . ." Jacquemont paused, having run through the 'm's' and trying to think of a few more.

"And war?"

Slightly embarrassed, Jacquemont considered, so once more M. Ventura stepped forward. "Since he knows everything, he naturally understands the art of war as well as the rest; but does not descend to the details,

which are beneath him. He knows such things, but does not conduct them himself," he announced.

Having got his wind, Jacquemont added that he knew in detail the battles of Europe since the days of Alexander the Great and down to the period of Napoleon, sieges and all.

"And politics?" demanded Ranjit, pressing on eagerly.

"He is very profound in politics," said M. Allard.

"And what are your principles of government?" asked Ranjit.

"It would depend upon the country you supposed me to be king of," Jacquemont replied snappishly.

"Here, for example?"

"I am sure that Your Highness puts into practice the maxims that I would follow," said Jacquemont gracefully.

His Majesty was delighted and delivered himself of a few Machiavellian apothegms that he had, in the course of experience, found useful. Jacquemont informed him that these had penetrated even to Europe, though of course of Indian origin. He was tired of political fencing, but Ranjit had one more question.

"What conquests can I undertake now?" he asked. It was a simple appeal to the sybil.

"With good, well-disciplined troops such as I see about you, Your Highness should be able easily to conquer all the countries of Asia not belonging either to the English or to the Russians," said Jacquemont curtly.

He was rewarded with an amiable nod.

"But what province should I think of taking? Tibet?"

"You have been to Tibet?" asked Jacquemont, parrying. Tibet, it appeared, would not support the troops necessary to seize it.

"Indeed," said His Highness, "why should I take such a country?"

It seemed to him that there were countries far richer.

For example, could he not have Sind? he asked wistfully. It was reputed to be rich. The only trouble was, what would the English say?

Jacquemont replied that His Majesty could safely take any province the English did not have a treaty to protect.

Ranjit next wanted to know what the English would do should the Russians sweep down through Persia. This was the great alarm of the day, and continued so for many a year to come.

Though tempted to say that the English would seize the Punjab, kick Ranjit out and push the Russians back, Jacquemont temporized in a diplomatic manner. He replied that with a well-trained army—an army, that is, trained by Frenchmen—Ranjit would himself be able to push them back. Without M. Ventura and M. Allard, not to mention the somewhat neglected M. Court, it might, of course, be another matter. He then launched into a eulogy of British power.

It turned out that Ranjit was less interested in British power than in the horses, long overdue, that the English were supposed to be sending him and which Alexander Burnes was bringing by water, in order to have an excuse to explore the navigable possibilities of the Indus. Ranjit was afraid that the inhabitants of Sind had held up the shipment, and wanted to know what the English would do about that. Jacquemont unwisely said they would re-route the horses. Ranjit then wanted to know whether the English would allow themselves to be bested by mere Sindis. This question proving embarrassing, Ranjit tactfully switched over to another one of his perpetual worries—that of the existence of God.

As a matter of fact the horses eventually appeared, conducted by Mr. Burnes, and so delighted His Highness that Mr. Burnes went away richly rewarded for his trouble.

Jacquemont confessed himself unequal to the task of discussing God, insofar as he was a scientist. He

suggested that the priesthood would be better qualified for such a conversation.

In reply to an anxious question as to the existence of another world beyond the veil—His Highness was fifty-one and far from well—Jacquemont replied that the answer to that question was one we could be certain of only when it was too late.

Ranjit then wanted to know if the French ate beef—a most important question on religious grounds. Having been well primed, Jacquemont replied, with well-simulated shock, that the French were a nation of vegetarians. It was the English who ate beef.

This impressed Ranjit forcibly, and he decided that Jacquemont was not only a wise but also a holy man. On his own grounds, Jacquemont was no less impressed. He reported that Ranjit, unlike most Hindus—and after all he was not a Hindu—used many gestures when talking and, what was more singular, that all these gestures were French, including finger-waggling, hand-waving and picturesque shrugs. He found this encouraging. It showed a certain degree of culture.

Their next conversation also opened with military subjects. In an understandable desire to whittle down the sums he paid his French advisers, Ranjit wished to know how these things were managed in France. But Jacquemont, who owed much to Allard and Ventura, parried neatly and gracefully and testified to their merit.

Ranjit had heard that Jacquemont had seen the Mogul emperor at Delhi, and wanted to know how he had been received. Jacquemont made a full and even enhanced list of dignities received, and also of the number of salaams he himself had had to make. These amused Ranjit highly. It surprised him that so empty a power should be given a semblance of dignity by the English, who had, after all, helped to make it empty. When they had come upon the Grand Mogul, he had been a terrified and powerless ninny, cowering for fear of his life in the dark corners of a fort.

Jacquemont replied, with some truth, that in Europe it was the custom to surround dethroned princes with all the honours and respect possible, in order to console them for their loss of power. It was a gesture that meant nothing, since it was easy to overturn it. The English might well surround the Mogul with deference, for without the pension they granted him he would have been a miserable and outcast pauper. It had been easy even for Jacquemont to remain standing in the Mogul's presence, for he knew that he did not have to do so, and that put a pleasant irony to the courtesy.

Ranjit remarked that all the kings of India were idiots who did not know how to rule. He then asked after Shah Shuja and Shah Zeman, in whom he had a certain affectionate interest, having blinded one and stolen the Koh-i-Noor from the other.

Jacquemont replied gracefully that Ranjit was the only exception to this rule. He was rewarded by a royal flutter of the hand and a smile. More important, properly petted and soothed, Ranjit had determined to give Jacquemont *carte blanche* in Kashmir, of which he spoke with some enthusiasm, saying it was a terrestrial paradise, inhabited by thieves, murderers and rascals, but also by the most beautiful of women. To demonstrate this latter point he promptly produced five of them.

Jacquemont agreed to think them stunning, the most beautiful women he had seen in India. They were, of course, laden down with jewels, their ear-rings so heavy with pearls as to drag their lobes almost to the shoulders. They were also heavily painted, their lips bright red from eating betel; their eyelids smeared with antimony; their faces with chalk-white. It could not be denied, though, that they had large and noble eyes. He expressed his admiration in appropriate terms.

"Ah, what it is to be young!" said Ranjit wistfully, thinking of his own debilities, cantharides or no cantharides.

" But with such beautiful girls there is no need to be young," said Jacquemont, and this also pleased Ranjit.

The conversation promptly plunged to an earthier level, but M. Court warned Jacquemont, in French, that the proper attitude would be one of a cold calm. Later, he added why. He himself had often been invited by the Rajah to private parties on the royal barge. Court had remained aloof and, on being asked by His Highness if he were an eunuch, replied that yes, as far as public prostitutes were concerned, he most certainly was, if only for reasons of health.

His foibles and resultant illnesses being well known, His Highness had quickly changed the subject. Court added that should Ranjit send such living presents to Jacquemont, the latter must not receive them. It was not hygienically safe, and it befitted neither his dignity nor his character.

Indeed, chastity and his well-publicized diet of vegetables and sugar-water had already earned Jacquemont a valuable reputation for sanctity in Lahore. Such a reputation was the most useful of protections. Among his French hosts, however, he was neither so chaste nor so abstemious.

Safe or not, the conversations were for the moment suspended. Court, Ventura, Allard and Ranjit Singh went off to collect taxes. Jacquemont proceeded to Kashmir, eager to collect plants.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

AFTER the fashion of the period, his eagerness was spasmodic and vitiated by a distinct tendency to dally by the way. In his own manner and his own time, however, he was extremely efficient. During his field trips he collected eleven barrels of specimens. His method was to gather every botanical specimen that appeared along his route and that he had not previously collected. In the Himalayas he was more thorough, attempting to deal intensively with the entire local flora and fauna, taking extensive geological samples and attempting to map out the historic geology as well as the cartography of the region. But in general, and particularly in the plains and foothills, he restricted himself to collecting magpie fashion, by the circulation of questionnaires and by conversation, every scrap of information of whatever kind that came to his attention. These he duly entered in an enormous journal.

His first important stop on the road to Kashmir—and it was more a royal progress than a scientific tour—was at Ramnagar. Here he was met by the local ruler, Gulab Singh. Gulab Singh was a handsome, wily, accomplished and extremely dignified man. Ranjit Singh had commanded this worthy to meet Jacquemont at Pindaden-Khan, where there were some celebrated salt-mines. Gulab Singh, knowing his ruler's temper, had thought it better to march out three days' journey from there and meet Jacquemont, who after all to Sikh eyes was the new favourite, on the route. Gulab Singh was brother to Ranjit Singh's court favourite, Tihan Singh, and was something of an adventurer who, upon Ranjit's death, was to wrest the throne from the quarrelling and rightful heirs. He was thus a man of

considerable address, and Jacquemont was impressed by him. He was slightly over forty, of medium height and extremely handsome, with a superb head of long, black, curly hair, an aquiline nose of great beauty, large black eyes, oval in shape, a small, delicately-shaped mouth and a beard and moustaches in the style of Henri IV. His ears were neat, his legs shapely and his feet and hands magnificent. Like a good many men of medium stature, he combined force with grace, having a huge chest and impressive shoulders. He was plainly but elegantly dressed in a military uniform consisting of pleated trousers of a full cut, a white muslin jacket and a white turban rolled jauntily over his left ear. In jewellery, he limited himself to pearl ear-rings and a large pearl collar. He carried the usual emerald, ruby and diamond hilted sword, and at his back was a large shield of rhinoceros hide varnished a shiny black. Since after Ranjit Singh he was the most powerful ruler in the Punjab, he could afford to be amiable. Jacquemont was recovering from dysentery, complicated by bruises incurred when his horse fell on him—a thing his horse quite often did—and so was pleased to find a sumptuary host.

They met at evening, Jacquemont paying the expected ceremonial visit. Surrounded by courtiers, the two men embraced each other for fifteen honourable minutes, half stifling in the process. At last, with a play of raising each other from the ground by turns in a see-saw of protocol, they managed to relax, jabbering away busily in Hindustani diluted with Persian. The visit lasted well into the night.

Next day, and at the next halt on the journey, Gulab Singh repaid the visit, presenting a double-barrelled gun of local manufacture but of English pattern. This was a further gift from Ranjit Singh, who was proud of the local arms industry. Unfortunately the products of the local gun industry did not fire properly, and Jacquemont would have preferred one of the Sikh matchlocks. He was tactful to praise, however, as usual. Together they

crossed the river and camped at Pindaden-Khan, in a large orchard of pomegranate and orange trees, which were in blossom and shaded, in their turn, by mulberry trees. Jacquemont's dysentery improved.

Gulab Singh, whose name meant Rose-water Lion, was a soldier of fortune and a usurper. Jacquemont did not doubt that he was superior to the legal ruler of the region, and applauded the usurpation. The two men were extremely pleased with each other, for they had just paid a visit to the local salt-mines.

They had set out at break of day, in cool and delightful weather. Jacquemont had equipped himself with his copper barometers and, as he wished to take readings, they travelled slowly. The barometers struck terror into the natives, who regarded them as instruments of necromancy. In this manner Gulab Singh was for the first time exposed to the delights of geology and botanizing. The two inspected every stone and plant along the way, Jacquemont eloquently Latinizing their names. This so delighted Gulab Singh that he took to collecting himself, bringing in new specimens that even Jacquemont had missed.

Jacquemont liked to charm the natives, and discovered a curiosity about things European which it gave him pleasure to gratify. Gulab Singh would listen for hours, so long as information was imparted in a proper rhetorical style. Since Jacquemont found it difficult to speak other than in a rhetorical style, he found this easy enough to achieve. Two armchairs were carried ahead of the party and, whenever they passed a conveniently shady tree or if Jacquemont wished to sort specimens, the chairs were put under a canopy and the two men sat down. When they were seated, Gulab Singh would summon two secretaries, who, squatting on the grass, took out their writing tablets and solemnly wrote down everything Jacquemont said. Gulab Singh's favourite subject was European politics and administration, together with manufactures; and on these subjects

Jacquemont could be inexhaustible. The secretaries soon developed writer's cramp.

In this Socratic manner they arrived at the salt-mines. The salt-mines made Gulab Singh uneasy. He did not care for what went on underground, and told Jacquemont long stories about miners buried alive, about the heat, the bad smell, the dirtiness and the winding paths. He added that no gentleman would stoop to descend into such a common sewer.

Jacquemont, seeing which way the wind was blowing, abruptly replied that he would go down alone.

This put Gulab Singh in a dilemma, for a fear of going underground balanced in his mind the fear of that other deadly danger, Ranjit Singh, for should Jacquemont be the victim of a cave-in and Gulab Singh not be there to share the falling stones with him, Ranjit Singh would take the matter badly. Gulab Singh knew what that would mean. Swallowing hard, he agreed to descend into the mines, no doubt thinking he might as well lose his head one way as another. Jacquemont dragged him through not one mine, but several, delivering a lecture on geology as he did so. The next day he continued both the inspection and the harangue. The miners must have been startled by the sight of their potentate scrambling through the workings with his turban a-tilt. Whether the secretaries followed with their writing tablets is not known, but it seems unlikely.

Despite this experience, the two men parted company in the best of tempers and as the best of friends on April 9th. Jacquemont went on alone, through very bad weather and frequent storms, across the plains of the Punjab towards the mountains. Letters had arrived through the courtesy of M. Allard, and Jacquemont, though busy, managed to dash off sixty-three pages of replies during the afternoon. Catching four hours' sleep, he rose at dawn and tramped ahead on foot towards that section of the Himalayan complex which separates Kashmir from Little or Upper Tibet. He went

on foot because his horse continued heartily to fall on him. It is very hard to charm a horse.

Jacquemont was in an excellent temper, and thought on the whole that India had improved his disposition, a desire to please having softened his own character. One of his servants having robbed him to the extent of a few rupees, instead of falling into a passion and whipping him, Jacquemont, in his new-found equanimity, merely docked his leave and fined him heavily. Pleased with his own clemency, he then retired to bed and read the newspapers which had been sent on by Lord William Bentinck until he was sleepy. He was a bit tired of rummaging among mountains, though nothing suited him so well as botanizing on the banks of the Hydaspes Alexandidu tributary of the Indus, or galloping through the desert with a long-bearded equerry. It was his wish to reach Hindu Kush, but Ranjit Singh's power there being weak, he feared he would be mauled by the local banditti, and so put the trip off. Instead he consoled himself by keeping up his daily correspondence with Gulab Singh, writing in Persian. The two were sufficiently intimate for Jacquemont to write with his own hand, instead of using a scribe. Gulab Singh could neither read nor write, and considered both accomplishments slightly vulgar and ungentlemanly. Each, after all, was a trade. But in a lord, and particularly in a European lord—for so Jacquemont was considered—writing was an elegant accomplishment. Other countries, Gulab Singh knew, had other manners. He was sophisticated enough to make allowances.

Though himself alone, Jacquemont realized that at the moment the Punjab was cluttered with expeditions. M. Ventura was marching against the reluctant citizens of Multan with an army of 10,000 soldiers and tax-gatherers; M. Allard was advancing towards the usurper of Hindu Kush with a punitive force; and Jacquemont himself, with twelve camels and a body of cavalry, was trying to gain Mirpur and the mountains.

Each evening his cavalry returned to camp bearing fowls, kids, butter, milk, eggs and flour. His cook was a gift from the Rajah, and cost nothing. When he slept, it was with six guards outside his tent to prevent robbery. Despite frequent storms, the weather had turned agreeably warm, and in the mountains he would be free even from the summer monsoon. At evening Jacquemont changed his clothes, drank a toast in punch to his absent father and dried himself out. He had been galloping three hours through a cloudburst.

To Hezeta he complained that his status was like that of the solitary-cell block prisoners at Philadelphia. He considered that solitary confinement, or solitary wandering—which he thought much the same thing—had driven him neither crazy nor maniacal, but when the mails were slow he did sometimes think perhaps his friends were sick, dead or ruined. This was the tone of his writing. In his journal he reported his situation more favourably.

Not only was he in love with the Punjab, but, as he remarked to M. de Mareste, Ranjit Singh, the ruler of that district, had had the good sense to fall in love with him. The relationship was, unusually for the Punjab, a platonic one, but at the same time Ranjit paid all expenses. The situation was most gratifying.

Such musings soon came down to earth, for when he reached Mirpur he found a shock in store for him. It kept him in a bad temper for all of five days, and it was as much as he could manage not to swear on paper. He had just discovered that basic law of Eastern politics, that the power of sovereignty decreases in inverse proportion to the distance from the capital. When, at Sukshainpur, he had presented his orders, the officials had replied that they were not in the least interested in Ranjit's directives, preferring those of their own ruler, Ranjit's son. This statement the local commandant followed up by barricading himself in a mud fort and threatening to fire. Jacquemont was forced to turn out his cavalry, who

sacked the town, and though this settled the argument for the moment, the obstacles at Mirpur were more severe.

He had expected to find there forty carriers and mules on Ranjit's order, but there was no sign of these. He waited three days and still they did not come. He accused his staff, but his staff blamed the petty mountain chieftains, who had the habit of rebellion. Jacquemont resorted to threats. The inhabitants of Mirpur, by way of retaliation, fell back upon their fortress and locked themselves in it until he should go away. Jacquemont considered sending for more troops, but that would mean waiting twelve days until they could be brought up. He did not think that he could bear Mirpur for twelve days, for the thermometer stood at ninety-four degrees. It was a quandary.

Going for a walk one day, he caught sight of a score and a half of runners and, having had them seized by his cavalry, loaded them then and there with his most essential baggage and set off ahead of the rest of his company, which was to follow when it could. Arriving at the first halt, he found they had not followed, but at long last they caught up with him bit by bit. By four that afternoon, having roughly licked the problem of bearers, he sat down to a hearty breakfast.

He had passed once more into the territories of Gulab Singh and, since his friendship with that ruler was known, his luck improved. The neighbouring chieftains came trembling out of their mud forts to bow down before him, and they brought promises of carriers and mules. These were only promises. It rained all night, with the result that most of his captured couriers melted away into the darkness and no new ones arrived. Fortunately he had procured ten more soldiers, and these he set to searching for new bearers. The soldiers also disappeared, and he was no better off than before. With what men he had left, and on asses commandeered forcibly from the villagers, he went on his way. Mounted on a donkey, he scanned the horizon with a spy-glass in

search of fresh villages and fresh supplies. Alas, there were no villages, and the night's rain had so swollen the rivers that he could not ford them. A dozen servants, who had concealed themselves in high grass, were at last located by means of the spy-glass and eventually recaptured. Leaving his headman behind, Jacquemont pushed forward with what forces he had, abandoning a good portion of his baggage in the process. Eventually he succeeded in fording the torrent and sat down near a village half hidden in the woods, while his cook created a modest breakfast out of forty eggs and a like quantity of flour and rice. He was better off. The village farms provided green corn for the horses, he had a tent, chair, table, ink, pen and paper; and his soldiers, with matchlocks and swords, came to beg food. He beat them off with a few well-directed kicks, for in the mountains, he had learned, everybody fended for himself, and he was busy fending. Hungry they might be, but their discipline was abominable. They could wait.

It was not a comfortable morning. Two cloudbursts had not only soaked him but had also melted the ink on his specimen labels. Everything had to be reclassified. Two of his horsemen's horses had fallen over a precipice and his own horse had cast all four shoes. The water—and he liked to drink water—was four-fifths mud as a result of the storm, and moreover the butter in which his omelette had been cooked was rancid. In the brief sunshine between two cloudbursts he took a stroll outside his tent, shouting damnation against the whole world in French, English and Hindustani. Damnation sounded worst, he decided, in Hindustani.

By the morning of the 20th his headman had brought on the baggage, together with twelve Kashmiri captured in an isolated village. This show of force had induced the local vizier to produce ten additional porters. These Jacquemont was forced to bribe by actually paying them their salaries. During a pre-prandial stroll in the neighbouring woods he had found three more men cowering

in the shrubs, and felt much better as a result. Even a narrow brush with the local lightning did not dampen his spirits, and he sat up at night, by the slim flame of a candle, perusing a recent scientific publication forwarded to him by Elie de Beaumont. Finding himself in a better humour, he allowed himself the luxury of a cigar after dinner. Before going to bed he sent off a despatch to Ranjit suggesting that rebellion against his authority should be punished, and thought the day well spent.

Next morning he found his men huddled together, benumbed as serpents buried in snow. The horses were stiff as wood, and everything had again gone badly. The men pulled themselves together, the soldiers slid out from the bushes under which they had been cowering, they gathered up a few more deserting Kashmiri and the party plunged on. Geological hammer in hand, Jacquemont tapped his way along the ground, trying to puzzle out the direction of the strata, and this only confused matters, for the roads were bad, the woods dense, and it seemed wisest to move in a tight clump of soldiers, which is what he did, tapping busily. The headman having turned moody, there was no food. Jacquemont put up a stronger guard, told his men they would eat the next day and galloped onward. The headman had apparently turned very moody, and did not appear at all. Eventually a servant came up to announce that he had fallen over a ledge and broken his arm. Turning back and searching for three hours, Jacquemont found him squealing with terror at the bottom of a canyon and at the same time tippling at a bottle of arrack. Having had the bottle smashed by a servant, Jacquemont left the headman resting on a bed of pine-needles, surrounded by a guard and far from cheerful. He was brought up the next day on a litter. It was most exasperating. Mixing himself a strong punch, Jacquemont went to sleep. Next morning, having found a pass through the mountains, they stopped for breakfast at Berali. And if Mirpur had been vexatious, Berali had even more cogent annoyances in store.

CHAPTER TWELVE

HE was, in short, captured by bandits, though more to their eventual chagrin than to his own. One cannot help feeling sorry for the bandits: they obviously did not know their man.

Somewhere short of Berali, Jacquemont was walking on ahead, firstly because his horse was lame, and secondly because he was annoyed with the strata, which refused to run the right way. He found himself, with his rear-guard of soldiers, at the foot of a nearly vertical mountain on the edge of whose flat summit he could just make out a fortress. He was told that it belonged to Ranjit and that it was garrisoned by 300 or 400 soldiers under a royal governor. He soon saw some people of a suspicious appearance burdened with matchlocks, swords and bucklers, coming down towards him by the only path leading down from the fortress.

These people came up to him, made their bows and told Jacquemont they had come on behalf of their master to show him the road and to see to the safety of his baggage. Their master, they added, awaited him on the plateau with which the mountain was crowned, eager to offer his salutations, together with a *nuzzar*—which is to say, a complimentary gift, an offering by an inferior to a superior. It was the treatment to which Jacquemont had become accustomed, and he found nothing unusual in it. After a long hour of sweaty and painful climbing he reached the summit, followed by his escort, and found the plateau to be a pretty and smooth sort of lawn in the centre of which, on a mound, stood the fort, greatly contributing to the picturesqueness of the scene. Bands of soldiers laden with all the messy panoply of Oriental irregulars stood about in groups, reminding

Jacquemont of the pictures of the brothers Vernet. His own baggage-train he found waiting under an immense sacred fig tree, the only tree on the plain, and he ordered it to proceed. His servants, with much clamour, told him that this was impossible, for the people in the fort had forbidden it.

Meanwhile some soldiers had dashed out of the fort and crowded round Jacquemont's horse, which he had mounted in order to keep up appearances. Curiosity seemed to be their only motive, and they fell back readily enough when he attempted to ride forward. The crowd had so grown that his guard was swallowed up in it. Impatient of the delay, and rendered impotent by separation from his guard, Jacquemont shouted for the Governor to come as fast as he could. He then settled down to wait. It must have been a discouraging scene on that desolate plateau, surrounded by the silent mountains.

The supposed Governor appeared promptly, surrounded in his turn by a body of troops much worse looking and more desperate in expression than the previous group. The Viceroy was himself so wretchedly clad that Jacquemont had to ask which of the party he was. Out of respect for Ranjit, whose deputy this man was supposed to be, Jacquemont did get down from his horse, and awaited the presentation of compliments. The compliment took the form of a bleating kid, which was promptly seized and carted off by the cook. Jacquemont was indignant at being kept waiting, and was impatient for the so-called Viceroy to finish his speech of welcome, so that he could then complain of the halt. The speech at last over, he demanded, vigorously, if it was true that the Viceroy had ordered such a delay.

Nas Nihal Singh—for that was the bandit's name—was disconcerted by this show of mock violence and, instead of answering directly, attempted to mollify Jacquemont with an offer of soldiers to guard the impounded baggage. Jacquemont replied that since Nihal

Singh and he were the only real people there, the only need he had of Singh's soldiers was that the latter should withdraw them.

Nihal Singh replied that even if he gave such an order it would not be obeyed. Observing the sort of rabble that was in arms, Jacquemont pretended to see the wisdom of this and accepted the guard for the baggage. It was now obvious to him that he was a prisoner. It was also equally obvious to his new headman, who, joining his hands together, offered up heartrending supplications. This encouraged Nihal Singh, who began to bluster. At last, after a long recitation of the wrongs done him by Ranjit Singh at the request of Tihan Singh, the court favourite, he joined his hands together himself and, with infinite apologies, broke the news that Jacquemont was to consider himself as a hostage against better treatment. Jacquemont, baggage and troops were to be kept prisoner until Nihal Singh felt himself redressed.

To this Nihal Singh added a further recital of his misfortunes, which had included a demand of surrender from Gulab Singh. This was unreasonable. Nihal Singh was poor, owning only the fortress. He had refused to surrender. Gulab and Tihan Singh had then cut off Nihal Singh's revenues, with the result that for three years he had had no better dress than the rags Jacquemont saw him in. His soldiers had been forced to live on grass and mulberry leaves and so, alas—he regretted it, it was impolite, but he was forced in the circumstances to the discourtesy of taking Jacquemont prisoner.

Jacquemont saw, to his own displeasure, that his speech had inflamed the crowd which had collected. They broke into an uproar, drowning out their master's voice. It was most menacing: the fuses of their guns were sputtering brightly.

In the circumstances the only thing to do was to order the crowd to be quiet. This Jacquemont did, im-

periously. Somewhat surprisingly he was successful, except for a few discontented murmurs. The calm indifference which he affected and the unstudied elevation of his oratorical style combined effectively. His contempt, he wrote later, overwhelmed them. Even Nihil Singh did not dare to address them in that manner. He thus managed to intimidate the crowd into deserting their chief. This done, he led Nihal Singh, who was by now somewhat dazed, under the shade of the great fig tree, speaking to him in a kindly tone and forcing him to squat humbly on the ground while Jacquemont called for a chair.

Seeing that Nihal Singh was only an apprentice bandit, not very well trained, and eager to press on with the business, Jacquemont decided to keep him on tenterhooks, and so, instead of speaking to him any further, called for a glass of sugar-water, which was a long time coming. He then complained of the heat, had a servant hold a parasol over his own but not over Nihal Singh's head, had himself fanned with a plume of peacock feathers and settled down to enjoy himself as best he could, calling for even more comforts than he usually demanded. Nihal Singh he left to squat in humility on the dusty ground to meditate upon the enormity of the crime he committed in detaining Jacquemont, not to mention its possible consequences when Ranjit Singh should hear of it. Then, after delicately and lengthily sipping his sugar-water, he explained just what these consequences were apt to be. The explanation was not without effect.

Nihal Singh protested that he had had no criminal design, but had merely thought, in all innocence, that when Gulab or Ranjit heard that Jacquemont was a prisoner, one or the other would have remitted Nihal three years' arrears of salary.

Jacquemont quite understood this, but explained that though the money would, in that event, of course be delivered, extremely barbarous assassins would be sure

to follow in order to reclaim the money by an act of murder. In any event, sooner or later Nihal Singh was bound to be punished, probably with the utmost cruelty. Jacquemont went on minutely to describe the utmost extents of cruelty as understood in Lahore, though in a friendly, man-to-man fashion that was extremely touching. Nihal Singh considered, and proposed to set him at liberty at once, but to retain the baggage.

After due consideration of this offer, Jacquemont had another refreshing glass of sugar-water and regretfully turned down the suggestion. It was all very well, he explained, for Nihal Singh, who was clearly not a gentleman, to live simply, but Jacquemont could not travel without his tents, furniture, books and clothes, for he changed his clothes at least twice a day. Jacquemont then glanced at his watch and ordered breakfast to be served, though there was no breakfast to serve, the servants being afraid to open supplies in the presence of the robbers. He also called for milk.

His servant desperately explained that there was no milk.

Hearing this, Jacquemont turned blandly to his captor and suggested that milk should be sent for. Thoroughly confounded, Nihal Singh uncertainly sent some men to procure milk. Jacquemont called them back and instructed his servant to tell them—protocol forbade that he address them directly—that it must be the best cow's milk, and not the inferior fluid of the buffalo or goat. They must see the cow milked before them.

This was done, and having got his captor to obey him in small matters, Jacquemont hoped by degrees to educate Nihal Singh to liberate him as a matter of course. Nihal Singh was flattened. Seeing that this was so, Jacquemont, while waiting for his milk, offered kindly to make a small gift and to write a letter of recommendation to Ranjit Singh. At the sound of the word

gift, Nihal Singh brightened perceptibly and demanded 2,000 rupees. His cohorts, who had been edging closer, raised the sum to ten. Jacquemont sternly stared them down.

"Neither ten nor even two, not even one," he told the bandit. "But in consideration of your wretched position, I will give you five hundred rupees."

"What is the good of that?" asked Nihal Singh. "We number four hundred men, who have been dying of hunger for three years. Two thousand or you remain a prisoner."

Jacquemont shrugged his shoulders with contempt and said he had not that much, and that his treasurer should convince the bandits this was true. The bandits then sensibly asked to see the treasure—a natural enough demand in a bandit. Jacquemont said haughtily that they would have to trust his word, for the word of a European was always reliable. He felt insulted that his speech should not be taken at face value.

Nihal Singh apologized for the insult, but repeated that his people must have more money. Jacquemont gracefully changed the subject, and suggested that they should continue their negotiations in the shade of a nearby village. Assembling his servants, he made a great bustle of removing himself there, leaving Nihal Singh to follow as best he could. Along the path he paused ostentatiously to examine plants with a large magnifying glass and in other ways displayed his unconcern. This combination of haughtiness and delay put the mob out of humour, but it was still intimidated and held its peace.

The amateur bandit, having had future tortures vividly explained to him, was by now reduced to a gibbering idiot. When they were resettled, he gratefully accepted an offer of protection from his own prisoner, complaining that he could never let Ranjit Singh know of his plight, since the court favourite intercepted his letters. Jacquemont was quite willing to expend paper

and ink and promised to write to Allard. This he promptly did, much to the pleasure and relief of Nihal Singh. The idea of keeping Jacquemont prisoner had gradually been abandoned in favour of a cash payment. Jacquemont repeated that he could not pay 1,000 rupees, and placidly set about collecting information as to the local roads, the nature of the next village and the availability of food. He had his tents and kitchen sent forward to the next village and, hoping to avoid the loss of 500 rupees, talked his head off.

He could convince Nihal Singh, a weak enough stick after all, but the rabble proved more difficult. Seeing this, Jacquemont swallowed his pride, summoned his treasure and had 500 rupees counted out.

In as much fear of his own men as he was of Ranjit's retribution, Nihal Singh pulled himself together and was properly grateful. He would not receive the money, though, unless it was made as a gift. Jacquemont laughed and agreed. Nihal Singh then declared that he was Jacquemont's grateful servant and that, if he had not been so poor, he would have given him magnificent gifts. The servant stepped forward and made up the difference, for the bag of money was a few rupees short, and gave the bag to Nihal Singh, who humbly begged that Jacquemont would condescend to touch the money as a gesture of friendship. Jacquemont consented, but extended his left hand, as being the less honourable. Feeling the august touch, Nihal Singh prostrated himself, declaring that he was loyal, devoted, faithful and humble. He then endeavoured to extract pin money from Jacquemont's acting headman, but without success. Jacquemont made them shake hands, and then commanded his caravan to advance to Berali.

Nihal Singh offered an honorary escort of fifty bandits, but this Jacquemont prudently refused, taking only five and ordering the rest back to their fortress. Nihal Singh, in farewell, begged in a low voice for a bottle of wine to be sent him. This Jacquemont did, but took

care to send him Delhi arrack rather than his own preferred port.

Jacquemont now swept ahead, his progress disturbed only by the flight of the five bandits, who eloped with the lean kid presented by Nihal Singh. Jacquemont, who was glad to get rid of the bandits, consoled himself that the kid would have been tough eating, anyway. At the next village he set up a strong guard and, though performing his usual letter-writing chores, did so with a brace of pistols on his table, several more under his pillow and his rifle propped against the bed. He considered that he had come out of the matter very well, as indeed he had, and hoped that M. Allard would do his best for Nihal Singh. Cheering himself with the thought that his wounded headman, who was limping in the van, might fall into the same trap, he remembered only to direct that Nihal Singh should be held prisoner by Ranjit until he had left the Punjab for good, and then he slept peacefully and safe, conscious of a good day's work done. He had even, while parleying with Nihal Singh, found a few new specimens of mountain grass.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE remainder of his passage to Kashmir passed virtually without incident, and he congratulated himself on having seen the last of Nihal Singh. At a short distance from Berali he met Ranjit Singh's army on its return from Kashmir, and sat down under the shade of a tree to pass them in review. There were, in all, 3,000 men. The commander, Shah Nur-Mohammed, leaped off his horse, made the usual respectful gestures and offered a gift of rupees. Jacquemont had the man sit down beside him without ceremony and talked for an hour. He regretted that he could not have met Nihal Singh a day later, at the head of this army, in which case he would have had him thoroughly thrashed. As it was he contented himself with making a full report of all particulars. This he ordered Shah Nur-Mohammed to deliver in person. Should the Shah discover that Nihal Singh had imprisoned Jacquemont's unfortunate headman, he was to lay siege to the fortress. Otherwise retribution could wait. Besides, the new army was inconvenient, for it was discontented and rebellious, and Jacquemont was in some danger of being looted. However, a man hanged that morning from a tree by the wayside did much to point up discipline, though nobody knew why or by whom he had been hanged. Since everybody in the Punjab lived by the gun, particularly if poor, the danger of capture and hanging was never far off.

Jacquemont would not have been displeased to see British rule extended there. European civilization, he felt, *deserved* to invade the universe, if only for the quality of its administration. With this thought in his mind, he proceeded with his own private invasion, slowly and in

some pain, for he had been having pulmonary trouble and had had a hæmorrhage. He cut the hæmorrhage short by sending men out to catch leeches in the nearby rivers, and these he applied, to the number of sixty-five, to his chest. This prevented bleeding by bleeding him dry, and the loss of blood he repaired by having two sheep killed each day and gobbling as much of the meat as he could manage. The cure seemed to work, but was certainly heroic.

He had to cross four torrents of icy water, higher than his waist, in a day, so he considered himself lucky to get off so easily.

Only one range of mountains now separated him from the deep basin that was the valley of Kashmir, and this cheered him up, despite the necessity of passing a fortress belonging to Ranjit Singh. Yet he did not really expect any more troublesome banditry there. He was, he felt, too poor to rob. Again he wrote to Ranjit, from Koteli, a pleasant enough if desolate and barren town, explaining just how poor he was. He also wrote to Wade, an emissary sent to Lahore by Lord William Bentinck, about the bandits, for he was determined on satisfaction. Five hundred rupees was a considerable sum. His mind relieved, he topped the pass of Pruj, though it was heavy with snow, and arrived at Kashmir on May 8th, 1831. His reception left nothing to be desired.

The Governor, or Viceroy, sent out his own boat with a staff of officers to receive him at two leagues' distance from the city. He was conveyed by this state barge to his designated residence, a palace in a garden planted with lilacs, rose trees and immense planes. At the end of one of its avenues, on a platform jutting into a lake, stood a small pavilion. This was the actual palace, and here he was lodged. His servants pitched their tents under the trees, and barracks were hastily built to accommodate his cavalry and officers. Once lodged, he was in no haste to sally forth on state visits, for the Viceroy was not a great lord, deserving of deference, but

a man of low extraction who held his office only temporarily. It was finally arranged that the first official meeting between them should take place at Shalimar Bagh, formerly a summer palace of the Mogul emperors. This residency was small and fallen into neglect, but still charming, chiefly because of its situation and the groves that surrounded it. It too was on the lake, two leagues away, opposite Jacquemont's garden. The Viceroy sent his state barge with a numerous bodyguard of other boats, and the flotilla drifted back and forth across the lake like a small navy. The Viceroy had organized a large fête in honour of his guest, so that the gardens splashed with a multitude of fountains and were crowded with guests, a good many of them Sikh troops magnificently dressed and drawn up to attention along the avenues. The Viceroy received Jacquemont in a small gazebo, by rubbing his long beard on Jacquemont's left shoulder—an act of deference suitable in a *parvenu*—while Jacquemont rubbed his beard on the Viceroy's right shoulder—an act of superiority suitable to an explorer. This formality done with, they sat on a dais on two chairs, the vice-regal court squatted round them on a carpet, and after a lengthy exchange of threadbare compliments the fête commenced.

Jacquemont found it insipid, particularly as the singing and dancing were apt to continue from morning until well into the night. He had found such entertainments graceful nowhere but at Delhi. And the Kashmiri nautch dancers had nothing in their eyes to compensate for the dullness of their singing and dancing, though they were darker-hued than the choruses of Lahore, Amritsar or Delhi. Captain Vans Kennedy had taught him his lesson about nautch dancers He still remembered it, as he examined the architecture of the palace and the splendour and variety of the soldiers. He stared into the distance, at the snow-capped and blue mountains, and stayed only half an hour, returning, as he had come, slowly and in triumph across the lake.

He spent the afternoon in seclusion, exploring his own establishment, which pleased him far more than had the royal palace of Shalimar Bagh.

His own had flimsy walls, closed with elegantly carved Venetian blinds of considerable artistry, and was open to every wind—in that climate an advantage—but also to every stare of the curious, who flocked over the lake by hundreds to have a look at him, as they would look at a wild beast, he wrote, through the bars of its cage. To secure privacy, he had the palace hung with curtains; and the Viceroy sent an extra numerous guard to help control the crowds. In addition, sentinels were placed everywhere in the gardens, to drive back the indiscreet. When he went walking in the streets of Kashmir, a body-guard always accompanied him to clear the way with whips and the flats of their sabres.

His palace was both central and conspicuous, but it was pretty, so he planned to remain in residence for four or five months, leaving his heavier luggage there and travelling about by barge, launch, on horseback or on foot, as he chose. Ranjit Singh had again been generous, and his generosity made possible the collection of a considerable zoo, which was lodged temporarily in the rose-gardens.

But Jacquemont was nervous about being there at all, since an Afghan fanatic, Sayed Ahmed, had threatened to capture Kashmir and put it to the sword. However, his nervousness soon abated, for, looking across the lake one morning, he saw guns firing a royal salute, and learned that one of Ranjit's sons had just massacred Sayed Ahmed and his army and was reported to be coming to Kashmir to oust the Viceroy and rule in his stead. This prospect pleased Jacquemont, who, though he had nothing to complain of from the present Viceroy, would have preferred the princeling, who was friend to M. Allard, and who would therefore have been most generous. He was also more powerful, though Jacquemont had nothing to fear, since Nihal Singh had been

captured under penalty of having his ears and nose chopped off if he ever caused trouble again. Jacquemont's 500 rupees had also been restored to him by royal gift. This show of retaliation helped vastly to assure Jacquemont's personal safety.

Jacquemont was displeased, one morning, to find twelve men hanging from trees in his garden. The Viceroy arrived, but, instead of apologizing, explained that in the first year of his term of office he had been forced to hang 200 to establish order, so at least, as Jacquemont could observe, order had improved. Jacquemont said nothing, but decided that were he in power his first act would be to clap the Viceroy and his personal bodyguard of 300 into irons, for they were all robbers of the first and most dexterous quality.

Jacquemont was besieged each morning by hordes of people of the better class, who offered their services as guides, though they had themselves never ventured out of the capital. These he ignored, passing his mornings in studying Persian for an hour or two.

Though previously he had thought it safe to travel with a guard of only fifty natives, now, such were the dishonesty and rapacity of the Kashmiri that he felt the need of 500, and abandoned all thought of penetrating to Ladakh, since that barren region would not support so considerable a troop. But, on his eventual return, his way would be papered with fiats from Ranjit Singh and Gulab Singh. Despite this, he thought he would feel safer once he had crossed the Sutlej and got back to British India.

At the moment he was content to feast on cherries, apricots, grapes, almonds, apples, pears and peaches out of his own garden, the vines of which were two feet thick. There was also a steady supply of melons and water-melons and the climate, he remarked with pleasure, was like that of the South of France.

His cook had long served under an English physician who was also an epicure. Jacquemont gave the cook

carte blanche, and had no reason to regret it. The supply of raw materials was first rate, and the dinners which were produced left nothing to be desired, though there was no wine. On the whole his servants were excellent. He even succeeded in finding an honest treasurer, who could be relied upon to pay his fourteen domestics as little as possible. He congratulated himself on such a small company, for M. Allard found it difficult to scrape by with 150. It was an ideal life. Jacquemont occupied his afternoons in collecting piscatorial specimens for Baron Cuvier by the simple, pleasant and direct method of fishing in the lake for them, out of the pavilion windows.

He was looking forward to seeing M. Allard, whose arrival was expected. The mother of a brood of Rajahs, having died in the mountains and left nine lakhs of rupees to be quarrelled over by her heirs, Ranjit Singh wisely sought to settle the quarrel by sending M. Allard to remove the lakhs. Should that man arrive, he could be sure of a good reception, for the Viceroy had sent Jacquemont ten sheep, forty fowls, 200 eggs, sacks of barley, rice, flour, sugar and some native brandy which tasted unpleasantly like a mixture of anisette and bad kirsch. Jacquemont distributed it among his servants. He was well, and since he had brought along a pier-glass purchased in Delhi, he studied himself in it, finding that he was thin, but well-tanned.

If he was not disappointed in himself, it was quite otherwise when he regarded the women of Kashmir. He found them hideous witches of quite exceptional ugliness, the reason being that any attractive girls were sold at the age of eight and exported to the Punjab. The price fluctuated between eight and 120 rupees, usually standing at about fifty, and their parents profited accordingly. Gangs of uncomely women presented themselves at his palace gates daily, and from these he was supposed to select forty to sing and dance. He did not do so, for which the people admired him, chastity, by

reason of its rarity, being a local attribute of saintliness and much praised in others. His habit of distributing alms and medicine also aided in giving him this reputation. He was capable, if given the opportunity, of purging whole populations.

But some, far from thinking him saintly, still persisted in believing him an English spy. In the circumstances he had to act with circumspection, and a good deal of his day was spent in religious debate alternately with the Mohammedans and the Hindus. When believing that he might be caught reading, he always carried a prayer-book, which he considered to be good policy.

Eventually he received a letter from Ranjit Singh announcing the actual capture of Nihal Singh in detail. Since Jacquemont was known to abhor physical torture, Ranjit had abstained from that self-indulgence, but the man was loaded with shackles and thrown into a dungeon, which did almost as well. The letter contained the assurance: "The country is yours. Establish yourself in whichever of my gardens pleases you best; order, and you shall be obeyed," and was accompanied by a soothing gift of money. Jacquemont was not slow to take either the money or the advice.

Finding it pleasant to sail on the waters of the lake, he ordered a state barge with thirty rowers, even though he himself had to pay the rowers. To be a favourite of a Rajah required some state, and he was unwillingly forced to keep up these little pomps. On his botanical expeditions, for example, he was followed by a procession of courtiers lined up in two rows on either side of his chair. At first his habit of firing on likely specimens from the chair upset the courtiers, but they soon grew used to it. They could not grow used to his habit of rolling up his sleeves and groping for plant specimens in the water over the edge of the state barge. Gentlemen, in their canon, used neither their hands nor water. But they had to put up with the ugly sight. M. Allard wrote almost daily.

All the same, Jacquemont was disgruntled. Moore's *Lalla Rookh*, which had disgusted him when he read it on the way to India, seemed even more deplorably inaccurate than ever as he sat in his palace on the outskirts of the city, surrounded by guards. He was displeased to note that his major-domo was strutting about in a costume costing more than his salary, which seemed to hint at petty thievery in the commissary. However, were he to punish his chamberlain for taking bribes, the Kashmiri would think the act unjust, so he contented himself with warning the man not to extend his venality too far.

There were also the defects of the cook. These consisted in excellence, for the food was so rich that Jacquemont was forced to ride fifteen miles a day to work up sufficient appetite to enjoy the ample treats. *Lalla Rookh* being execrable, Lamartine monotonous and Chateaubriand too picturesque, he sensibly did not read. Instead he congratulated himself on his present felicity. Though neither duke nor millionaire, he remarked, he thought he had done well enough.

Only his surroundings seemed to pall. The women were so ugly they could all have been witches in *Macbeth*, if *Macbeth* had demanded 100,000 witches. The men, though handsome in the extreme, were dirty, fanatical and, what was more important, dishonest. He wrote off to Stendhal to complain. "Manners—none; customs—beastly," he began. "The roses are without smell, the fruits tasteless and the dancing girls are not only ugly, but never change their underclothes," he explained. The Moguls had called Kashmir a terrestrial paradise only because, by comparison with their capital at Delhi, the climate was endurable. But the buildings were all of wood, the citizens were either dressed in rags or not at all, and the famous lake was little better than a swamp. In fact, on second consideration, it was a swamp. Poets might feed upon this sort of beauty: he could not. In short, he had just passed his thirtieth birthday—a sad

event in the life of a Byronic young man—and, to add one misery to another, he had a cold in his chest. The local music gave him earache, the women were not only ugly but brown, where he preferred a phthisic bleach, the mountains contained none of those picturesque details which made the Alps attractive, the palace of Shalimar was inferior to any of those on Lake Como and he was upset about the British, who seemed to be converging on Ranjit Singh with a view to political manœuvres and a meeting between Lord William Bentinck and Ranjit himself. Jacquemont was jealous. He had come to look upon Lahore as his own.

A diversion presented itself in the form of a message from Ahmed Shah, the ruler of Little Tibet. He wrote that being informed of Jacquemont's arrival in Kashmir —and perhaps also of Ranjit's patronage—he was eager to assure the Frenchman of his devotion and friendship. To prove both, he put his country at Jacquemont's disposal. Somewhat puzzled, Jacquemont at once sent for one of those spies with whom Ranjit surrounded him, showed him the letter and dictated an answer, containing an acknowledgment of a yet-to-be-presented gift of crystal, gold and musk. He requested that Ahmed Shah collect some wild animals and send them on alive, and asked some geographical questions. His reasons for dictating this answer to one of Ranjit's spies were somewhat complex.

The letter from Ahmed Shah was the result of overtures made to that nervous monarch some six or seven years before by Mr. Moorcroft, the English physician who worked for the East India Company as director of its stud, a most lucrative employment. Securing a leave of absence, Moorcroft had set out to explore the Himalayas. He had inhabited the same garden in Kashmir that was at Jacquemont's disposal, but had had the unlucky notion of passing himself off as a political emissary in order to lend himself dignity. He had sent a letter to Ahmed Shah, a copy of which Ranjit Singh had con-

fiscated and forwarded to the British authorities. Ahmed Shah, who had received the original, had thought himself about to be invaded by the British and now, having worried about the imminent invasion for six years, thought it best to placate Jacquemont, whom he considered to be the agent of this long-expected war. Jacquemont, by using Ranjit's spy as intermediary, hoped to allay that highly suspicious monarch's fears that he was a British agent. Since Ahmed Shah was well protected from the Sikhs by the poverty of his own country, there was no fear of bringing Ranjit's retaliations down upon the Shah's head.

On the other hand, the whole invitation might be one of Ranjit's snares, for Ranjit delighted in snares and often tried to trick Jacquemont in these ways. He had recently, for instance, apparently out of a disinterested love of pure mischief, tried to whip up bad feeling between Jacquemont and the acting Viceroy of Kashmir by reporting to the latter that Jacquemont had requested his removal. This terrified the Viceroy, who hustled his secretary into a barge and hastened across the lake to deny everything. Jacquemont dismissed the matter as a joke, but the Viceroy did not, and insisted upon handing over the Viceroyalty to Jacquemont. He would not be content until Jacquemont wrote out a certificate saying that nothing was wrong. Jacquemont refused both the Viceroyalty and the certificate, seeing both as a ruse on Ranjit's part to find out whether he was eager to meddle in affairs of state. These daily intrigues were nerve-wracking, and Jacquemont found nothing upright or honest in the natives of the country, whom he considered perfidious in everything. He hated to intrigue with them, if only because he knew them to be more cunning than any European could hope to be, and so feared to get the short end of the stick. All a European could hope to do was to shout them down. Jacquemont therefore shouted.

Ahmed Shah's invitation had not been without effect.

On his next side trip Jacquemont was forced to accept the presence and attentions of Ranjit's spy in chief. He had his revenge by walking the man off his feet and then leaving him to freeze on a mountain top. For the mountains were cold, even though the valley was broiling. The heat below, however, was alleviated by gifts of sherbet, sent fresh every morning by the Viceroy, and by iced punch.

His mails were delayed, and in the absence of Parisian political and personal gossip, he was forced back upon the Court Gazette of Lahore, which was not only written in Persian, but also dull. His mails were certainly in confusion, for though Thomas Love Peacock at the India Office had succeeded in establishing a monthly packet service to and from India, the French were much slower, and letters sometimes arrived a year late.

Meanwhile the Kashmiri passion for borrowing money without the least intention of repaying it had depleted his treasury, so he was anxious to be off to the mountains, where he could better hoard Ranjit's liberality. Such were the demands upon him at Kashmir that he could save only enough money to buy himself a wardrobe of the best stuffs, including a smoking jacket, waistcoat and trousers of black shawl, very thin, soft and admirably cool. To these he added a Persian dressing-gown for use at Simla. A supply of fashion magazines from England greatly assisted the tailor; indeed, these magazines constituted the chief reading matter of the women of British India. Jacquemont thought this folly. Unable, because of transport difficulties, to be directly in the latest mode, they compensated themselves for this by exaggerating what modes they came by to ridiculous extremes. Jacquemont's extremes were at times no less ridiculous and, to keep his figure in trim, he took a swim every sunset in the warm waters of the lake for at least an hour. It was little trouble to do so: he had simply to step to his study window and dive in. He

found the exercise not only increased his strength but also made him sleep better.

There was news from Lahore. Captain Wade, an old acquaintance, had arrived there to arrange the etiquette of the forthcoming meeting between Lord William Bentinck and Ranjit—no easy matter, as each step, gesture, attendant and wave of the hand had to be arbitrated in advance. Neither side seemed willing to budge an inch from its own formalities, and the job was a headache. In addition, arrangements had to be made for the Bentinck escort. These consisted of a regiment of lancers, one of native cavalry, one of English infantry, two of sepoys and a battery of light artillery, all hand-picked to make the most show, and so have the most trenchant moral effect. It is difficult to determine what finger Jacquemont had in this political pie. Though not a spy, it is certain that he kept Lord William Bentinck and the British well informed.

Jacquemont was planning his own future travels. He had intended to return to Europe across Persia, but thought it more prudent to avoid the Russians. They had recently intercepted some English travellers in Persia and packed them off to Siberia for an indefinite stay and for indefinite reasons. Alternatively he wished to go to Nepal. This project, too, had to be abandoned, for the Nabob of Katmandu was so nervous about such few Europeans as he allowed into his country that he kept them virtual prisoners in the building assigned to them in the capital. Also, like that dictator of Paraguay who imprisoned a French scientist for over twenty years, he was reluctant to allow them to leave the country once they succeeded in getting into it.

Instead, he set off on a side trip into the mountains with a party of twenty-nine—an economical expedition, since his usual complement was a hundred. His scientific expeditions always ran into snags, for the Hindus, from religious scruples, objected to the killing and pickling of zoological specimens and would assist him to do so

only if he paid them double the usual sum. Even so, when the local inhabitants saw one of Jacquemont's hunters killing game they set upon him, beat him and broke his gun. Jacquemont, as a result, was forced to have thirty of the natives bastinadoed in order to go on procuring specimens. The hunter himself was subdued, but later resigned, saying he could not bear the shame of a profession so odious and sacrilegious. Another hunter followed the first for the same reasons, and Jacquemont could find no replacements. Religion, he considered, meddled in everything.

Jacquemont's collecting methods were usually improvised upon the spot. The flora presented no problems. They could be put into a press. Geological specimens could be chipped out and packed. The fauna proved more difficult. He had no adequate knowledge either of the preservation of hides or of taxidermy, though he had briefly studied the latter. For a while he collected skins, but these rapidly decayed in the humid air or, since most of them were not tanned, putrefied. Carcasses presented the same problems, for in the extreme heat they were apt to become revolting before they could even be catalogued or drawn. Smaller specimens he gutted and pickled in alcohol, usually in brandy, but sometimes even in wine. What specimens could be saved by these methods were ported, either by servants or on horses, to whatever collection-point might have been selected at the moment. The accumulated hoard would then be deposited with the British, either at Simla or Delhi. He depended heavily upon the British. They were good-natured enough to assist him, and after his death his collections were assembled from their final resting-places in Bombay, Calcutta and Pondicherry and shipped back to France. There they were promptly impounded by the customs authorities, finally released to the Museum and then deposited in the basement. After cautiously considering the matter for thirteen years, the Museum finally published a three-

volume catalogue of whatever had not rotted, decayed, fallen apart, or been lost or stolen in the interval.

Jacquemont's actual collecting methods, in the matter of fauna, were for the most part highly indirect. His usual procedure was to ask the local rajahs to send him whatever animals they could capture. The animals had a tendency to arrive at his camp either mangled or dead. However, at Kashmir he was able to maintain a private zoo, which he quartered in the rose-garden, and which gave him great pleasure.

The collecting of specimens took up only part of his time. He was also greatly concerned with the current talk of the French selling their possessions and factories to the English, the price to be fixed at about £1,000,000. He was strongly in favour of this move, for the microscopic establishments of the French in India were ridiculous and a source of humiliation in case of war. As for trying to attach any importance to Pondicherry, Jacquemont knew that it had none. Its citizens could swallow their patriotism easily, if it were eased down with a little money. Besides, the French trade in India, which had ruined those investing in it, was not capable of being extended or revived. Such goods as were imported were consumed only by the French already in India, consisting as the cargoes did of Bordeaux wine, Bourbon coffee and a little silk. There was only one French commercial house in India, that of M. Bonaffée at Calcutta, and it did not prosper, for the French, in their usual cautious way, refused to risk large consignments and were far from honest. As a result they were always ruined by bankruptcy, robbery and law-suits. Detained in India by a lack of passage fare home, they were reduced to living clandestine and fraudulent lives on small brokerage, and one heard of them only when they were caught and police action was taken against them. It was better to clear out.

As usual, these speculations aside, Jacquemont's progress was not without incident. He fell into company

with two sects of Mohammedans engaged in a religious war, and Jacquemont's Sikhs, to quell the quarrel, set fire to the city in which it was taking place. This led to a twenty-four-hour battle from which Jacquemont emerged unscathed only by setting his bodyguard on some plunderers. He was next held up by a local chief who forebade him passage. Only strong threats succeeded in putting this worthy down.

He was fed up. He was bored, to put it mildly, with the ruins of Mogul magnificence with which Akbar, Jehanghir, Shah Jehan and Aurung-Zebe had strewn Kashmir. These had all fallen into ruin, though the temples still survived. The country was cluttered with temples. In his visits to them Jacquemont was surrounded by hordes of the sick and poor, come to beg alms. Most of them were incurable and to these he did distribute alms, but the others he detested. The Rajah, on the other hand, kept him well supplied and he estimated that he had eaten his way through 400 or 500 sheep and several thousand fowls at Ranjit's expense. This had not made him fat, for his health was bad, which he attributed, for once, to an absence of alcohol rather than to its presence. The climate of Kashmir approximated to that of Europe, and Europe, he knew, demanded alcohol.

He had his medicine chest follow him everywhere, for he thought it foolish that a man should allow himself to die at the age of thirty, and he had no desire to play the fool. Parisians, he wrote, must aim at Père-Lachaise, and not die elsewhere. He was given to cerebral activity, and thinkers tended to live a long time; therefore, in self-protection, he continued furiously to think. He also wrote in French, not English, for he was still distressed by the absence in English of the second person singular. The most tender father, the most impassioned lover or husband, he noted, reduced to the impersonal plural, had no choice but to ape a British frigidity.

The weather had turned extremely hot, so he had

deserted his palace garden, which was like a hothouse, and removed to an island in the lake. Even there in the still atmosphere it was stifling, and he envied the Indian plains their hot winds. He took along writing materials, but the weather made him too languid to work. Indeed, he had scarcely the energy to breathe. It was a heat-wave of unusual intensity, something rare in Kashmir. The rivers had dwindled at their sources, leaving the country parched, and the priesthood, seeing little chance of success, forbade public prayers for rain. When some storm-clouds appeared, they had hastily abolished this edict, but without success.

He went swimming, but the water was so warm that he had to tread it for long periods in order to feel the slightest relief, and he emerged from it more exhausted than when he entered it. Being red-headed, he was as scalded as a lobster in a pot, and the friction of his clothes drove him to distraction. He dispensed with European dress and sat semi-naked, with a servant to wave a fan over him. Not even that helped.

The island had been a summer belvedere of the Mogul Emperors and was still shaded by two plane trees planted by Shah Jehan. It was very small, being no more than a large gallery open on all sides and supported on fantastic columns. Shalimar was opposite him, on the shores of the lake. On another shore was a large forest of pines, and the minaret of the mosque in which one of the hairs of Mohammed's beard was lovingly preserved glittered through the tree-tops. It was a comely view, but he was still too much of a European, he confessed, to find any charm in it. The costumes of the natives were attractive, but the social life was tedious beyond belief, both the seclusion and the impurity of the women making them dull company. Friendship was equally impossible. The most conspicuous emotion he observed was violent hatred, and this was not exactly a firm basis for social intercourse.

He thought of marriage, as his father had often thought

of it for him, but marriage did not attract him. Like many people of his disposition, he considered his life over at thirty, for since he was no longer young in manners, appearance or mind, he thought that no one would notice him. He abandoned the problem and went swimming in the lake, which he thought inferior, for this purpose, to the Seine. While he was swimming, his escort sprawled on the shore, marvelling that he had the strength to do so. When he emerged, they chanted his praises, comparing him to Rustum. To escape both from the heat and the praise he once more went journeying in the mountains.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

HE foraged in the mountains which separate Kashmir from Little Tibet and which, though not the Himalayas proper, are quite sufficiently rigorous in their own fashion. The region was swept by forceful and frigid winds. The cold froze his feet at night, waking him up. He sat up, wriggled his toes and philosophized on the climatic extremes of high mountains. He was also worried about an unexpected visit from the local inhabitants, who were quite eager to trudge a hundred miles in order to plunder a caravan. They were particularly fond of taking slaves. Jacquemont, for him, was well guarded, the local chieftain having offered protection. He was a poor chieftain, starved by the kickbacks he was forced to surrender to those who allowed him to govern. Occasionally he rebelled, and had recently held out against Ranjit Singh for six months. Jacquemont had taken tea with him, which had so flattered the man that he had turned his small country topsy-turvy to please his guest and had even sent his own army off to collect specimens. It was his hope that Jacquemont might have his tax arrears cancelled, and Jacquemont was inclined to attempt to oblige. Not all the local chieftains were bandits, and some of them, like the present one, though mistakenly and for their own motives, were kind.

Food, despite kindness, was a problem. Mohammed Shah Sahib, not knowing how cold the mountains were, sent frequent gifts of water-melon, which were ported up from Kashmir. Jacquemont would have preferred wine. The liquid crystal of the fountain, he decided, was, after all, a stupid drink, and he looked forward to tippling at Simla with Kennedy.

He was on the tea route between Chinese Tartary and Tibet, but he found the tea intolerable, totally devoid of fragrance and served up in a goulash of milk, butter, salt and some alkaline substance with a bitter taste, the whole producing a turbid, reddish liquid which some liked and some did not. It was certainly better than the tea of Kanawar, which was made by boiling the leaves for two hours, throwing the water away and dressing the rancid leaves with butter, flour and minced goats' flesh—a detestable ragout. He made his own in the ordinary way, with hot water, sugar and no milk. It threw him into a sweat, after which he could sleep, wrapped up in thick shawls, until about three in the morning.

Nonetheless he was in a good humour, having discovered two new kinds of limestone, between which he found it difficult to distinguish, many new plants, a marmot, a bear and a new species of chamois, a lake, unique in that region in being a deep one, and other marvels. He camped beside the lake in order to study it. He was also attempting to dissuade his chamberlain from eating opium as though it were bread.

Wedged between a basket of grapes and a basket of pears, he prepared to depart, to join Ranjit Singh. New specimens included several more bears and a new kind of panther, but the heat was so intense during the day that these putrefied before they could be classified. They had been collected by some enthusiastic Afghan greybeards who had been driven to the chase against their religious scruples by the threats of the local Rajah. Also it was raining again.

Camped beside his newly-discovered lake, he had spent happy days dissecting large birds, beasts and fishes, and was engaged upon this congenial task when two messengers arrived, one from the Rajah of Little Tibet and one from another chieftain, the first bearing gifts, the second only compliments. Since the latter had also brought 200 men, Jacquemont feared an attack and was

forced to browbeat the 200 men out of this idea. Swiftly changing into European dress, he seated himself on a chair under a canopy hastily erected above a carpet. His people lined up on either side of him, though their ragged condition did not improve the dignity of the occasion. The emissaries then presented letters filled with the roses, narcissi and basil perpetually blooming in the gardens of these potentates' affection. The wording is theirs. Ahmed Shah announced that, obedient to orders, he had captured forty-two specimens, but all but two of these having died, he forwarded only the survivors, together with a dress of honour, the dress of honour in this case being a euphemism for three large lumps of rock crystal, eight sacks of dried fruit, two live antelopes and a length of stuff made from antelope hair. Then, in private, the emissary announced that Ahmed Shah was suffering from venereal disease and requested a cure, but was himself so drunk with opium that it took Jacquemont some time to understand what was being asked.

This dealt with the first ambassador. The other then advanced. He was a mountaineer of about thirty, extremely handsome, haughty, but mild in his manners. If it had not been for his escort of 200, Jacquemont would have liked him enormously, and decided that he liked him anyway. He had come to request Jacquemont to ask Ranjit Singh to release one of his wives and one of his daughters who were being held captive in Kashmir. Always impressed by a pleasing appearance, Jacquemont said he would do his best. He contemplated accompanying the man to his mountain capital but, deciding that this would only result in his being held hostage, compromised by riding along part of the way with him. Jacquemont decided that even Sir Walter Scott could not imagine anything better by way of a chieftain.

As for the first emissary—that of Ahmed Shah—that gentleman, being ugly, impressed him much less. This emissary was an adventurer who, if not besotted by

opium, would have been able to tell amusing stories; a native of Bombay, with a white skin, Persian ancestors and of so low an extraction that Jacquemont's servants discovered that he had been a servant himself. Having travelled much and often, he was retained by Ahmed Shah for reasons not altogether clear to either. He was a rogue and a busybody.

What these people wanted from the British, Jacquemont could not determine, but it was clear that they did want something and that they took him to be a British agent. Ahmed Shah, unlike most rulers, was popular with his subjects, and in addition was dreaded by his neighbours. He was safe in Little Tibet from any punitive measure Ranjit Singh might devise. Therefore Jacquemont could not make out what he wanted. Jacquemont was alarmed. Mr. Moorcroft's obscure death had warned him of the dangers of pretending to be a British agent, and he promptly wrote letters to everybody, including the English (who still, at times, assumed him to be a French spy), to explain that he was nothing of the sort. Meanwhile he felt pleased. The rock crystal had no scientific value, but would make a very pretty set of tea-cups; the royal stuff he could see as a handsome dressing-gown, and the dried fruit, which was exquisite, he began to eat at once. On his own part he was forced to disgorge a gift in return, but since Ranjit seemed willing to continue to replenish his treasury, that was not too high a return for the future tea-cups, dressing-gown and dried fruit.

On this journey, to tell the truth, he had encountered little trouble. He had learned his lesson. Merchants, it was true, might go almost everywhere, for the good reason that discretion was used in robbing them, so that their annual passage should not entirely cease, but European travellers and casuals were stripped to the last rag. In the circumstances there were only two ways to travel: either to disguise oneself as a beggar in the national costume of the country, like the Hungarian,

Csomo de Koros; or else to travel in pomp with a well-trained private army. It was no trouble to acquire a private army. It accumulated by a process of natural law, so that if you started with two men and a horse, you were most likely to finish your journey with fifty or a hundred. A number of advantageous threats made out by supreme local authority were also useful, and with these he was well supplied. He also flattered himself that he was just and that this justice made an instant popular appeal. Perhaps it did, for certainly he was often asked to arbitrate in disputes. Ranjit Singh, hearing of this and drawing an Alexandrian parallel, added Aristotle to his list of previous titles. It was now autumn, but even so Aristotle swam for an hour and a half every evening to relax his mind.

He received a new, more urgent request to join Ranjit Singh and thought it prudent to obey, though that meant leaving Kashmir ten days earlier than he had intended. He was to meet the Rajah at Amritsar, for close to that holy city, at Rapur, was to take place, with all due pomp, the meeting between Ranjit and Lord William Bentinck. This was the parley which had been so long in view, and for which Alexander Burnes' gift of horses had been a prelude. Its ostensible purpose was a discussion of the forthcoming and hoped-for Treaty for the Free Navigation of the Indus. Its actual purpose was a consultation between the two men upon the problems of the Russian infiltration of the country north of Kabul. By stimulating Ranjit with a succinct description of the Russians, the English hoped to encourage him to seize Peshawar, thus both annoying the Russians and diverting Ranjit's interest in the Cis-Sutlej territories. As it turned out, Ranjit had only a vague idea of who the Russians were, but since he was only too delighted to invest Peshawar, the long-planned meeting attained all those objects which the British desired. This meeting Jacquemont did not choose to attend, thinking he would only be lost in the shuffle of the two Powers, for such Eastern

magnificence would mean a display of rich dresses, and he had no rich dresses. He intended to leave Ranjit and beat back into the mountains, in order to explore the iron and salt mines at Mandi and thus once more to stay with Gulab Singh. He left Kashmir on September 19th, 1831.

The Viceroy, though a fool and a thief, presented a dress of honour worth 4,000 francs, and Jacquemont then paid a visit to Mohammed Shah Sahib, a man of sufficient rank to be visited by a European without the latter's losing face. Mohammed Shah also loaded him with honours, so profusely that out of conscience Jacquemont felt compelled to refuse some porcelain vases and a horse, taking only a plain if handsome drinking-cup as a personal souvenir. He liked the man very much and the cup was excellent for drinking coffee. He would drink coffee out of it in Paris.

His departure had been delayed, for his headman had purchased six wives locally and could not settle the difficulties of transporting them over the mountains. Jacquemont was unsympathetic and set out immediately on learning of this. The caravan was forced to follow. It was somewhat numerous, consisting of sixty soldiers, fifty porters for the baggage and a few captive animals trotting along at the rear. The headman and his six wives were left to shift for themselves at Kashmir. Jacquemont was soon in the plains of the Punjab again, though the change in climate made some of his caravan exceedingly ill. Needless to say, the increased heat bothered Jacquemont not at all. He changed into cotton clothes and rejoiced in the sun.

The country he passed through he did not enjoy, for it was a collection of border states which Ranjit had not been able adequately to put down. If he wished to avoid being shot it was necessary to keep a close watch. He had no desire to be shot and to end his days like a dog, without the smallest flower thrown on his tomb. He then entered territories controlled by Gulab Singh.

That dignitary was absent, but his Vizier supplied all that was needed, and his son, a boy of fifteen, a favourite of Ranjit's, was exceedingly affable. Jacquemont decided to pause long enough to go on a sight-seeing expedition with the son, did so, and delivered a tactful moral lecture upon the problems of being a royal favourite. The boy presented a purse of 300 rupees—no doubt as a lecture fee—and Jacquemont went on to meet the father. He paused on the way to have a robber beaten by a member of an inferior caste, a stern humiliation, and drew up a memorandum advocating the establishment of a few local prisons, the country not having so much as one. He thought they would do considerable good.

He also wrote to his own father, who had been prying into the generosity of Ranjit, to say that he did not yet own a gold hat but only several bales of Cashmere shawls. It was true, however, that Ranjit was generous. Knowing the financial abilities of his father's philosophical mind, he did not say just how generous. One reason for the generosity, though, may be stated. Whenever Jacquemont wrote to an oriental potentate, he slipped in one or two pellets of cantharides with directions for use, as a thoughtful gesture. The gift shawls, duly considered, were a bother. He would have liked to take them back to France, but was afraid that the duty on them would be too high.

He was beginning to regret that he had not pursued a political career in France and, with recent political changes there, this would now have been possible. It seemed to him that he would make an excellent deputy, for he thought that an honest man who would play the part of a mediator without art or craft would be most useful and successful. It is, even for him, a most naïve conclusion. On second thoughts he decided against such a career, concluding that he would rather be at the extreme of Asia than be forced to act as an impotent witness to the fatal dissensions of French politics. He

turned his attention to the local scene. And here it was necessary for him to praise the English: he did his best. He looked for no improvement until they should control all India. The dishonesty of India itself he attributed to polygamy, which destroyed the natural bonds of family life and made acquaintance with a woman impossible. As for friendship among men, he said that it persisted only in the manner of Nisus and Euryalus, a reference somewhat obscure, but accurate enough. Because the Sikhs were so much taken by his red beard, he was often embarrassed by such analogies and had difficulty in preventing their being made. The Greek kingdoms were still remembered and admired in the Punjab. Their example he found to be personally dangerous. No, the British must improve India. To those of the British who retorted that if they improved it too much they would lose it, he replied with the comfort that by the time that day came they would be safely dead, their children would be safely dead, and their domination of no use to anyone. It would be agreeable to know how they took these well-meant remarks.

He was peaceably camped near Gulab Singh, who had sent out officers to salute him, and was resting under a tree waiting for his breakfast, which he took at a little after noon, following six hours on horseback. The Rajah would pay him a visit after the meal, and Jacquemont would return it. In this he was exceptional. The British did not bother to pay these return courtesies. Jacquemont found that to do so was a wise and pleasant policy. Certainly he had done well out of it himself.

For the rest, plague was raging in Persia and cholera in Benares, and he was glad he was not officially a doctor, since, though interested enough in both diseases, he had no desire to come too close to them.

He was greatly diverted by an account in the Calcutta newspapers of the death of a Piedmontese traveller, Count di Vidua, who for two years had travelled through India in a palanquin, had gone from there to China, and

then to the Moluccas on his way to Java and Sumatra. Jacquemont regarded the man as a meddler, a mere tourist, with a more decided taste for heaps of stones and old bits of brick than for any other kind of observation. He was not a scientist, and so had richly deserved his somewhat unusual fate, for he had had the awkwardness, not to say the folly, to tumble into a boiling bog, from whence the hot mineral springs of Java rise, and had died from scalding. In a scientist such a misfortune would have been excusable, but for a poor devil of an Italian antiquary to go and get boiled in Java was unthinkable. What business had he there, in the first place? demanded Jacquemont irritably, with professional contumely. It could have been predicted that he would never—as indeed he did not—return alive. Turning from this subject, Jacquemont started negotiations for having his collections shipped to the coast. They were to be sent back *via* M. de Meslay, M. Cordier at Chandernagore, and the firm of Eyries *frères* at Le Havre. He was looking forward, in the not too distant future, to walking in the gardens of the Tuileries with his brother Porphyre. As for his brother Frédéric, that unregenerate young man had gone from bad to worse, and was now the succcessful and presumably happy proprietor of a rum distillery and the father of a son.

Gulab Singh paid his visit, arriving late, and the two men talked of mountains, Kashmir, the immortality of the soul, the nature of the universe and the structure of the steam engine, so that the time passed pleasantly enough, and they chattered on by torch- and candlelight. Jacquemont was as fond of Gulab as ever and decided to stay on another day.

Accordingly, next morning he paid his return visit, before the Rajah was properly out of bed, and they remained chatting until it was time to go forth on a hunt. Two towers had been built in the forest, camouflaged as trees. Gulab Singh took his station in one and Jacquemont in the other. The cavalry, entering the wood

from all sides, drove the game between them. Jacquemont in this manner succeeded in killing a peccary, which did not please him much; but the royal cooks, who had been packed along with the guns, improvised a banquet or hunt breakfast out of the killing, the food being served on large leaves. The Mohammedans were so horrified by the sight of roast pig that they took to their heels, while Gulab Singh and Jacquemont ate heartily. Jacquemont spent the rest of the day in the royal camp, receiving gifts of a white horse decked with a rich saddle—a white horse being a mark of especial esteem—and more Cashmere shawls.

He took his leave reluctantly at nightfall and plunged onward to Zafarwal, where he met the first European he had encountered in seven months. This was M. Avitabile, also in Ranjit's service as governor of a province, a position which had unfortunately brought out a latent sadistic strain. He talked a blue streak—in fact too much for Jacquemont's stomach—of various judicial mutilations which gave him pleasure. He had a good many of these to relate, for among other documents of this period which survive concerning him is one that records that, as tribute from one suppressed chieftain, he exacted the heads of fifty Afridis, neatly severed and payable annually. The document is in his own handwriting. To the naturally sanguinary legal measures of the region, General Avitabile added his own Renaissance Italian tastes, and the mixture certainly could not have been edifying. Jacquemont pushed on to Amritsar.

There he found Ranjit eager to receive him and had an interview alone with that monarch on the following day. Ranjit had indeed fallen in love with him, and offered him the vice-royalty of Kashmir out of hand. The offer was tempting. It meant an income of 500,000 francs per annum. On the other hand, what heads, noses, eyes and hands were cut off in a year, how many women taken by force, he reflected, for the amusement of old

men, and then thrown into the fire on the death of their master. What wickedness, dishonesty and cruelty! In addition to this, the offer might well be a trap. Ranjit was quite serious, but only slightly less wily than usual, and Jacquemont thought it better to laugh the old boy out of the offer. Ranjit did not seem much put out by his refusal, and caressed him more than ever, this time in the presence of British witnesses, which was embarrassing. His title was also changed from Jakman Sahib Bahadur to Aflatun el Zeman, which was much grander. This intimacy was somewhat checked by the appearance of Captain Wade and two other officers, sent by Lord William Bentinck and come to escort Ranjit Singh to Rapur, the place appointed for the interview between the two men. Jacquemont was delighted to see Wade, who was young, personable and a good host.

It was the time of the Festival of the Unlocked, the most important of the Sikh religious observances. On the eve of the festival Ranjit took Jacquemont to view the famous tank at Amritsar, in the centre of which was the golden temple in which is preserved the sacred book of the Sikhs. Though it was certainly plated with eighteen-carat gold, Jacquemont was not impressed with the temple. The fanaticism and madness of the religious warriors who crowded the place made him nervous, and would probably have been fatal to a European had Jacquemont not had a guard. In fact, he entered the temple on a State elephant, surrounded by Sikh cavalry, and so pushed the *akalis*, or religious warriors, aside. The temple itself was guarded by a regiment of Sikh cavalry. Once inside, Jacquemont paid a visit to an old priest, celebrated for his sanctity, who was waiting to receive him at the Rajah's order. By him he was led over the temple, hand in hand, for if he once let go of the holy priest's hand it was probable that the *akalis* would have cut him down, whereas while he held hands he also was regarded as sacred.

That night the temple was blazing with lamps, and

Jacquemont offered up to the sacred book a gift of 300 rupees which Ranjit had given him the day before, and received a small gift in return.

The crowd was noisy and splendid. In the midst of it, Ranjit reviewed his army of 200,000 men, who fought a mock battle against huge giants made of papier mâché, which ended with the giants going up in flames, and with a distribution of costumes and more presents. This battle Ranjit viewed seated with Jacquemont and Wade in a large and magnificent tent pitched on a dais in the centre of the plain. All the chiefs first did homage to Ranjit, and then the army marched past in a gaudy and elegant panoply. After that the battle began.

Next day Ranjit broke camp, most of his colourful mob following him, though against his orders. Jacquemont was detained by M. Allard, but hastened after the Rajah, afraid of being lost or attacked in the crush of departure. Conversations with Ranjit, which took place aboard an elephant, were interrupted by belly botany. Should Jacquemont spy anything he took a fancy to, the elephant was made to kneel while Jacquemont took a closer look at the plant and decided whether or not he wanted it.

On the evening of October 21st he took his final farewell of Ranjit. They had spent the day discussing his forthcoming expedition to Mandi. This small, cantankerous and independent mountainous state lay in the foothills of the Himalayas, adjacent to Kangra, the latter celebrated for its school of miniature painting. Mandi was less civilized, its fame resting more firmly upon its salt and iron mines. It was barren and small, but its capital was imposing, being perched above the river Blas at a height of some 7,000 feet. Its ruling house had been in power for about 600 years, a testimony rather to the remoteness of the principality than to the stability of its economy. Ranjit had not been of much help with Mandi, since the country was so refractory that

it took him 10,000 men merely to extract taxes from it. The interview, nonetheless, was a long and friendly one. Ranjit lavished caresses on him, shook hands with him repeatedly, absorbed his flattery, and Jacquemont was himself deeply moved, though also embarrassed, since the officer commanding Wade's escort was witness to the whole fulsome pantomime. It was quite dark when he finally left the Rajah, giving him all wishes for his glory in this world and the next, and taking away a large gift. When he got back to his tent it was to find that Ranjit had sent still another gift of 500 rupees. It required all Jacquemont's passion for geology to bring him to leave the pleasures and securities of Lahore, merely to throw himself back into the wilderness. He anticipated difficulties there, nor was he wrong in doing so.

As for Ranjit, he proceeded to his meeting with Bentinck, the outcome of which was successful. If it was so, it was in part because Jacquemont had done much to prepare the way. But one result of the meeting, alas, was that Ranjit was saddled with a British embassy. He relieved himself of this, when he lost patience, by taking its members for strenuous tiger-hunts, not on elephant back but on horseback. Since attendance at the hunt was, of course, compulsory, the embassy soon departed and left the old man in peace. His weakness for personable young Europeans persisted. In 1835 he was to offer Charles, Baron Hugel, 6,000 rupees a month to stay on at Lahore. It was less than the Viceroyalty of Kashmir, but Baron Hugel did not have red hair. The offer was refused.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

HIS first if expected misfortune was a brush with one of those religious autonomous states of the Punjab, a small mountainous district governed by a centenarian of ingrained habits who was at the moment having a battle with his eldest son, an ambitious youth of fifty. This son reproaching him on his longevity, the father had become annoyed and, rising from his seat, had lopped off the filial head with one stroke while the courtiers had enough presence of mind to yell: "Well done! Well done!" Even Ranjit stood in awe of this formidable old man of the mountains, so Jacquemont reluctantly decided to distribute placatory gifts. He was not given the opportunity. The fortress was closed to him lest he defile its sanctity, and some miles farther on he was ordered out of the state for the same reason. As the order was delivered by some *akalis* armed with long guns whose matchlocks were already lit, Jacquemont prudently slipped over the border and camped in the next valley. Here he thought himself on friendly territory, since it was owned by one of Ranjit's supposed sons.

In this he was wrong. Next morning, as he was mounting his horse, he observed a group of vagabonds posted in front of the camp with their guns cocked. Jacquemont's cavalry proposed to break through in a swift charge. Jacquemont thought not. He put on a splendid dressing-gown of white-flowered Cashmere, sat down in an armchair, smoked a cigar and had a drop of brandy. It was a manœuvre he had already tried with success on Nihal Singh. This time the parley took a considerable length of time, but at last produced Kadja Singh, who was flattered, wheedled and threatened for

an hour or so. Thinking the matter settled, Jacquemont got on his white horse and spurred on, waving a jaunty good-bye. It worked. Startled and perhaps hypnotized by this approach, the enemy salaamed, apologized and silently watched his departure.

He marched for three days, pausing only to send messengers ahead to the Rajah of Mandi. He was tiring of this type of diplomacy, which made him long for the relative peace and calm of British India. However, the Rajah of Mandi turned out to be most affable. Alas, his sentinels and outposts were not of a mind with their ruler. Jacquemont was forced to storm the borders, and each day, as he advanced, received a fresh deputation from Mandi begging him to proceed no farther, as well as deputations from the Rajah himself asking him to come. Thinking both factions mad, he continued his advance. He found Mandi in an uproar and himself treated as a conqueror. Puzzled, he pitched his tents, and at last received a visit from the Rajah's uncle, an elderly and respectable man who told him the trouble. The court astrologers had announced that if Jacquemont and the Rajah met that day the monarchy would collapse. Jacquemont stayed on, overladen with gifts and attentions from the terrified Rajah, who was hospitable and humble, but superstitiously refused to be met. A gift of money Jacquemont declined. The Rajah then had it distributed among Jacquemont's men —eager at any price to stave off the astrological calamity. At last, when the period of danger was over, the two men met.

The next six days—and it was November—Jacquemont devoted to a thorough exploration of the local salt and iron mines. He passed for a pundit, and was treated to the monotonous splendours of the Court by the now relieved Rajah, leaving Mandi on a horse which, though it might look wretched, was of valued stock and of course a gift from the Rajah.

Cursing the expense of keeping up four gift horses,

he arrived at Sukit, where he established his next camp. The first man to meet him was his own groom, carrying a finger of his left hand in the palm of his right. It had been bitten off by a stallion, the gift of Gulab Singh, which, though valuable, was vicious. Jacquemont had to kill the animal on the spot and then, dressing the man's stump, arranged to compensate him by giving him two years' wages.

Still, to his inexpressible relief, he crossed the Sutlej on November 9th, and felt so safely out of hostile and alien country that he had the illusion that he was securely returned to Paris. He had crossed the river on an inflated skin, and when he reached the British bank, the young local Rajah, under investigation at the time by the British, hastened forward to pay his respects and endeavour to obtain an intercession. Jacquemont admonished him firmly and sent him away.

At Belaspore he dismissed his men, each with a bounty, to the total extent of 1,000 rupees, and also secured promotions for his escort by writing to M. Allard. His secretary he rewarded in a like manner, and there was a steady round of regret, gratitude and compliments. To tell the truth, Jacquemont was moved—so moved that he put a spur to his horse and galloped away to regain control of his emotions.

Kennedy wrote to say he was expected at Simla and, pushing on firmly, Jacquemont arrived there after three days. Kennedy was not alone. He had with him some old friends and a Mr. Maddock, who had recently exchanged a residency at Lucknow for one at Katmandu in Nepal. Mr. Maddock had come to Simla expressly to meet Jacquemont, and further discouraged him from entering Nepal. The scheme was therefore abandoned for good. So was Simla. Though Lord William Bentinck had been there recently, warming the hearts of the recalcitrant British to his administration with a judicious series of excellent dinners, the town was freezing cold, so the party moved to Subhatu.

Jacquemont was delighted once more to see congenial company; nonetheless, as soon as his camels could be prepared and transported to the foot of the mountains, he planned to leave for Delhi, where he hoped to intercept Lord William. There had been a mishap with Lord William, who had a good memory, and complained that Jacquemont had said something against his administration. It was a matter to be cleared up promptly if Jacquemont was not to lose a powerful friend, and fortunately it could be cleared up for he had said nothing of the sort, approving of Lord William Bentinck more than did most of the British settlement. At this time Lord William was much disliked for his misplaced economies, which were causing much pain to local profiteers.

From Delhi, Jacquemont hoped to go to Bombay and Poona. For the time being, however, he had ceased to be the Plato, the Socrates, the Aristotle and the Alexander of his age, he could no longer levy tribute or be treated like a visiting prince, so he perhaps missed Lahore, though on the whole he was just as pleased as he had previously been. His escort, he wrote, had dwindled to a walking-stick, and at least that was cheaper to maintain. He was in a good humour. He still felt that once out of the Punjab he was that much closer to Paris. He was not doing too badly. As one who had travelled in regions closed to the British, he was much in demand as a dinner guest. And though his friend Kennedy was not a rajah, he ruled as one. He popped Jacquemont on a horse to review the troops, and turned out for his benefit a ceremonial review, complete to the firing of cannon. Jacquemont nearly fell off his horse at the sound of the cannon, but was forced to make a speech. To fix the jape, Jacquemont gave a long rigmarole in English, which Kennedy drowned by having the drums rolled, dismissing the men. Any frolic, wrote Jacquemont, even an English one, after six months of solitude, did him immense good. He was always particularly fortunate with the English. It was

because they were so bored with their desolate stations that any new face was a godsend to them. They were bachelors, between thirty and fifty—Jacquemont's favourite condition and age-group. He had a wonderful time. In the evenings after dinner they all sat round the port and roared their heads off.

As the British Government paid for his postage, he wrote letters at greater length than ever. He was feeling sad. Cuvier was dead, and that was a pity, though the man had cared nothing about people and was egotistical in scientific matters; Canova was dead, a man admired by everybody but the Americans; Rossini was dead. Everyone of any prominence was dead, it seemed, but Jacquemont and Mrs. Trollope, whose *Domestic Manners of the Americans* he was reading with relish. On the whole he agreed with her, and projected a possible visit to America. It would not be for pleasure that he would plan to stay at Washington, any more than he dissected carrion for the enjoyment of the smell. No, he merely wished to study the American government. Government reminded him of other matters, more personal and immediate, and he wrote to Pondicherry to reprove de Meslay. If Lord William Bentinck could give him the privilege of free franking, then why could not de Meslay? It was a most annoying economy. It was particularly annoying in so far as the Museum, though granting him an increase of salary, had still made no provision for paying either the salary or the increase. In addition, he had been forced to buy a new horse, since one of his would eat nothing but sugar, which was expensive. On top of all this came the failure of Mr. Palmer at Hyderabad, the most celebrated of Indian bankers, which had swept away not only Jacquemont's own savings, made thriftily out of Ranjit's generosity, but also those of Allard. Jacquemont went out and bought lottery tickets for them both on the off chance.

Poor Mr. Maddock, in the meanwhile, had paid

heavily for his admiration of Jacquemont. He had fallen ill and, with his usual Spartan energy, Jacquemont had purged him, given him an emetic, several daily enemas, quinine, camphor, calomel, slapped him all over and had set him dazed on his feet again. The man had had mountain fever, it appeared. Mr. Maddock fled, resolving never to be sick again.

Maddock cured, Jacquemont turned his attentions to Kennedy. He had picked up some Hindu simples, and these he determined to try out on his unfortunate host, who was indisposed. It could not be cholera. Gentlemen in India did not get cholera. Only the Irish contracted it. It was therefore something to do with the bowels, and Jacquemont whipped out his syringe immediately and forced Kennedy into submission. As a medical assistant he must have been more terrifying than any disease.

Kennedy subdued, he scuttered across Subhatu and the valley of Pinjore to make up for lost time and to escape the awful cold. He was upset about the debts of his friends. The English in India ran up immense debts, and were always surprised when they were hauled up before the King's Bench about them. They went to the European banks in Bombay, then to the Parsees to borrow the interest, and when that failed, to others to borrow the interest to pay the borrowed interest, until the whole ended in bankruptcy. Jacquemont had a French horror of debt and found the system deplorable. Debts showed nothing but the insanity of the debtors. His theory was that the English, being gentlemen deprived of the delights of London, ran up these debts to console themselves for the deprivation, particularly as liquor was expensive and they all drank heavily.

If good living ran the English into debt, Jacquemont could not sufficiently praise his own bad dinners—chicken hard as wood, coarse cakes and water. These not only saved him expense, but also purged his body of the rich sediment left in it by Kennedy's hospitality.

Also, Jacquemont realized he had had too much to drink, for the English had no conversation and many bottles, so what could one do in their company but drink? Boredom itself could make one drunk. He had smoked like a steam engine, to avoid drinking from the bottles as they were passed round the table, but to no avail. Hence insomnia, a muddy head and compulsory horseback riding—which he hated—to aid digestion of excess solids. He determined to fall back upon a milk diet, and longed for a good French soup. Resolving which, he proceeded to Delhi, where he ate and drank his way through thirty-six hours with Lord and Lady William Bentinck, to whom he had explained his supposed criticism satisfactorily.

To the Bentincks he jabbered of politics. Politics, in those days, consisted chiefly of the Russian threat to invade India by way of Persia, a worry which made Ranjit Singh's position a good one in so far as bargaining with the English went. Ranjit, though his meeting with Lord William Bentinck had had a good effect on both sides of the Sutlej, was no more reliable than ever, and it was thought that if he could have come to an agreement with the Russians favourable to himself he would not have hesitated to do so. He no doubt thought himself equal to tricking the Russians, and so coming to rule India himself. Fortunately he was both astute and old, and Lord William had found him as slippery and difficult as could be, despite the mutual splendour and amity which had dignified their meeting. The meeting was marred only by Ranjit's habit, common enough to Indian princes, of committing, as it was called, a nuisance in corners of the tent while the entire court was present.

So eager had Jacquemont been to arrive at Delhi and talk over these matters that he had whipped his camels raw and driven his bullocks lame. He had become mahoganized, a verb in use among his friends and indicative of a deep tan, accompanied by a shrivelled and

mummified appearance. He was so exhausted that he was not even equal to a ball at Kurnal.

His chief occupation at Delhi was to round up his collections, which he had deposited with anyone willing to assume the responsibility of them, in order to have them shipped to the coast, packed in double layers of tin and wood. These collections comprised not only his scientific specimens but also a bale of Cashmere shawls and other gifts. Once this was done, he planned to leave Delhi for Bombay. He had been among the Himalayas for so long that he found himself strangely sad at the thought that he would not see them again, but he was determined to explore the south of India. He planned to return to Europe in December of 1833, on the *Zélée* with Meslay, for he preferred to return to France in the spring, in order to reaccustom himself to the European climate at its most favourable season. He was looking forward to his return, for he described himself as radically Parisian.

There were disturbing letters from his father to be answered—letters full of what might be termed French fears. His father maintained a revolutionary terror of the English, and would rest easier once Jacquemont was out of British India. He was endlessly concerned, as usual, to see his son settled and married to a woman with as large a *dot* as possible. He also feared that the British might consider Jacquemont a spy, which indeed some of them did. But Jacquemont hastened to disabuse his father of this fear and told him how well he got on with the English. The English quite understood that in his travels he collected more than scientific information, but they valued him accordingly. Jacquemont felt exhausted and testy. He had become involved in the scramble for carriages, palanquins and horses after a ball, and had not got to bed until three in the morning.

He meditated the writing of a biography of Ranjit Singh, but decided that the facts were of such a nature as

could not be written in a common tongue, but only with extensive Latin notes. Yet despite everything blameworthy in that sovereign, he remained fond of him. He looked back to Lahore with something very like nostalgia.

In Delhi he lived with William Fraser, and it was with him that he had gone to visit Lord and Lady William Bentinck, who were encamped on the ruins of ancient Delhi. He drank their health in water. The party included Mr. Thoby Prinsep, the Secretary of State, General Whittingham, and Mr. Metcalfe. After this Lord and Lady William marched out to meet the new Governor of Bombay, Lord Clare, and Jacquemont remained alone in Fraser's immense house, a kind of Gothic fortress designed and built by himself at considerable expense. Except for the workmen who were packing up his collections, he saw no one. In the evening, if it was fine, he rode on horseback; if it was raining he took a litter into town and dined with the resident, Mr. Martin, who received 13,000 francs a month to pay for his table, and who thus dined well. Jacquemont would eat but not drink, and departed at ten to retire with friends and talk until midnight. At midnight he lit a cigar, wrapped himself in his Cashmere gown, got on his horse and, preceded by two link boys, galloped back to Fraser's fortress. He remained with Fraser for two months, and grew fond of him, despite the misanthropy of the latter.

He continued to insist upon a certain amount of personal pomp. All visiting Indian dignitaries had to remove their shoes in his presence—a thing not even the British governors of Bombay demanded. Such procedure was obligatory, though, at Delhi. Between drunken soldiers, rioting sailors and the somewhat opulent and irresponsible indigo-planters, there was little respect for the British in Southern India. No doubt they did not demand it because they knew they would not receive it there.

Jacquemont plotted his progress in southern India, planning to visit Jaipur, Ajmir, Nusseerabad, Indore, Aurungabad and Poona on his way to Bombay. He hoped for a good reception.

He also had time to consider that somewhat uncomfortable woman, the Begum of Sardhana, whom he had first met at breakfast the previous December, at Meerut. He had breakfasted and ridden with this old witch and had even brought himself to kiss her hand, as well as to drink wine with her at dinner. The result was that he had been asked back for Christmas dinner.

She was almost a hundred, doubled with age and with a face as shrivelled as a dried raisin, a sort of walking mummy with an excellent business head, who had the ability to listen to three secretaries while dictating to two others. She walked in a cloud of secretaries, day and night. Her methods were direct and successful. Four years before, in her early nineties, she was capable of having her ministers tied to a cannon and detonated like shot. They had displeased her. Sixty years before she had had her husband's favourite slave buried alive and then held a party for her husband on the tomb. Her two European husbands had died violent deaths, under some mystery of murder, and to this forceful character she added a strong dose of mysticism.

In middle life she had been converted to Catholicism by some Italian monks, who had reduced her to a permanent fear of the Devil. To placate this alien deity, she had gone to the lengths of building a church at Sardhana and had written to the Pope to demand that it be made the seat of a bishopric. To the British Government she had addressed a petition that at her death a portion of her domains might remain attached to this establishment. It was not altogether a religious motive that prompted her. Though she made a practice of burying a fourth of her yearly income under the trees in her garden, to avoid death duties, at her demise her revenues would pass to the British Crown and this she

did not wish to have happen. Hence the church. Ranjit Singh had also taken to burying money. It had become a fashion among the Indian princes to do so.

Jacquemont wisely rejected the advances of this doddery but deadly old bag of bones. Nonetheless he found her company had a certain morbid fascination. She was enormously rich.

At Delhi he rejected a title, since it would have meant expense, and remained content with those given him by Ranjit Singh for nothing. The weather was bad, a mixture of rain and wind, which rendered his tents heavy. The camels slipped in the mud and wrenched their knee-joints. The attendants, soldiers and camel-drivers lapsed into chronic melancholia, but all the same he plunged on, away from the Begum, and usually managed to arrive at his destination. His turpentine preserving-tanks leaked. One thing after another went bad and his luck seemed to have changed, but he did not despair. Instead he gave himself up to pious reflection.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

AFTER all, no matter how much he may have preferred the French Alps, it was no slight thing to say farewell forever to the glories of Northern India, or to those white and granite mountains which scraped the sky. It seemed to him that in that region he had lost his own youth. Even in the foothills, well toasted and entertained at Simla by Kennedy, he had not felt that sense of irreparable loss that filled him now as he prepared his trip south. Laugh as he might at the viceregal splendours and the native courts, the tyrannies of the English and the pomps of the Punjab, there had still been a vigour and beauty in them which well suited him, no matter how much he might long for Paris.

He had never coveted power. He was a libertarian. But for a young man of his spirit and address it was no mean pleasure to invade states, conquer cities and travel in pomp like a prince. He had always behaved like a Byronic hero, but to be treated like one had been another matter. To give all that up was too much like giving up youth and promise themselves. His vanity, above all else, was piqued.

Relations between Ranjit and the British having already cooled, he congratulated himself on travelling in the Punjab when he had. But there would be no war yet. The British were too strong and there was nobody strong enough—not even Ranjit—to fight against them. He did foresee, however, that the British would be forced to make war on China, in order to preserve what he pretended to regard as the tea trade, though for months he had been plaguing the authorities with specific embarrassing questions about the opium traffic. Such questionnaires he at times distributed on official paper,

spangled with gold flakes, and, to practise his official style, began with eight lines of merciless compliment, addressing his annoying and inconvenient requests for information to the high, the exalted, the sublime, the just, charitable, generous, mighty, victorious, invincible and most celebrated of sages, ornament of the universe, pillar of the world, arbiter of destiny and so forth, as inspiration might take him. After this he would make an oblique reference to the subject of the letter, and so close. It was a style in which he had become proficient, and the uses to which the native princes put it never failed to amuse him. In writing to the British he sensibly remained somewhat more succinct.

He had learned, for example, that should a woman wish to write to her husband, she would send for a priest, an intimate of the family, and hiding behind a curtain would explain to him through it what she wished to say. The scribe, if he was wise, would then phrase the letter as though it came from someone other than the wife. Handwriting, being a manual skill, was thought vulgar. Nor should the subject be mentioned with directness. That would be crude. Should the woman be pregnant, the matter could be referred to only elliptically. Despite this excess of courtesy and tact, spelling was atrocious and literary style often wanting. Jacquemont's own secretary cost him fifty francs a month, a camel and his own three servants, who had to be supported. Was it any wonder that Jacquemont's own style improved, or that he should seek to improve it? These thoughts filled his mind as he slowly paced out of Delhi, among the ruined mosques and the deserted tombs, and as he approached Firozpur.

The Rajah of Firozpur or, rather, the Nabob, was an excellent young man whose friendship with Fraser had not yet reached the peak of having him murdered in an alley. Firoz, in Persian, meant "sublime" or "excellent" and was the name of the turquoise. Knowing this, Jacquemont hoped for the best.

Two leagues outside the capital, one fine morning, he saw a troop of horsemen advancing towards him, headed by a fine young man whom he recognized as the Nabob. The two embraced each other and, after a profuse exchange of compliments, remounted their horses and cantered to an elegant small palace in which Jacquemont found himself lodged. The guns of a nearby fort fired a salute and a European breakfast was served. It being Ramadan, his host could not eat. Jacquemont, alone in the midst of plenty, consumed his customary bowl of milk and a few oranges. This in turn produced a compliment. The Nabob, seeing the frugality, remarked that the most brilliant of God's creatures live only on the nectar of flowers and that he was thus not surprised to see Jacquemont eat so little.

Breakfast over, Jacquemont retired to meditate upon his specimens, but at noon he paid a ceremonial visit to the Nabob, whom he found secretly consuming a meal. This *contretemps* over, they went on a sight-seeing tour of the capital by elephant, and Jacquemont returned to work.

The Nabob was the eldest son of a Mogul family, and owed his good fortune to an ancestral alliance with Lord Lake during the Maratha troubles. In return for this assistance the British assured the rule of the principality to him, and he ruled Firozpur somewhat after the fashion of a German duke. He was quite rich, having an income of 400,000 rupees a year.

A messenger arrived from Fraser announcing that he could not bear to be parted from Jacquemont and planned to join him. Jacquemont, who was feeling gloomy, did not halt, but proceeded to Gurgaon, where he met two eccentrics who cheered him up. The first of these endeavoured to convert him to Christianity by telling his own story, which was dreary and misleading. He had killed someone in a duel, repented, and now travelled through India as George Borrow did through Spain, with an ample supply of Bibles in his saddlebags.

One of these Jacquemont was forced to accept. Unfortunately the Bible was too heavy to carry while walking, so Jacquemont gave it to his secretary, who also found it oppressively heavy and popped it into the geological specimen bag along with a hammer, and consigned the bag to a porter.

The other visitor was a Hindu judge. Of high Brahmin caste but poor, this worthy had attracted the interest of an elderly British officer, who had taken him to Calcutta and given him a European education. The European education had converted him to Deism, with the result that both the Hindus and the English considered him a frightful and dangerous theological sinner. This puzzled the poor judge and made him grateful for Jacquemont's company, since the two were probably the only practising Deists in India.

That evening, deserted even by the judge and feeling melancholy, Jacquemont saw a tall white figure wrapped in robes coming towards him. It was the announced but unexpected Fraser, and together they took a reunion meal of milk and cakes. The meeting was interrupted by the arrival of the Nabob's elephant, come to fetch Jacquemont.

These state elephants were dangerous. For if the Nabob had any conspicuous faults, apart from his eventual murder of Fraser, these mostly took the form of having his elephants beaten whenever he felt bored. As a result, the elephants turned vicious. They caused Jacquemont no trouble, but were apt to run amok and smash a village or two if they had been beaten too much. Learning of this, Jacquemont sensibly paid his visits in a calash.

He amused himself by riding through the local forests of date-palms to visit the state mines and with shooting quail for his dinner. The visit ended with the presentation of a certificate of hospitality received, which the Nabob promptly and gratefully forwarded to the local British resident to prove his merit.

Jacquemont and Fraser walked, or strolled, from Firozpur to Suna, and from Suna to Noh. In Fraser, Jacquemont had found a congenial soul, for if Jacquemont rose at dawn, Fraser rose even an hour earlier, and was the first to go exploring. But the man was shy. Afraid of the emotions of farewell, he moved his tents in the middle of the night, so that when Jacquemont awoke he could see no sign of him.

If the Nabob of Firozpur was obliging, the Nabob of Alwir was not. Jacquemont punished the incivility by having Lord William Bentinck withdraw the Alwir's official present, causing a severe loss of face, and then swept on to visit Lord William, who was in the neighbourhood. He discussed politics with him and religion with Lady William, who gave him letters of introduction to Lord Clare which would help smooth his passage through the Bombay region. His movements were becoming rapid, restless and incoherent, and he pushed on to Jaipur, which he reached on March 1st, 1832, staying there for three days in the uncongenial, for him, occupation of sight-seeing. He indulged in a whirlwind of visiting. He did not care for the Deccan. The husband bought a wife, the father sold his daughter, the son his mother, and the only dishonour was to be sold at a poor price, he reported. He disliked these people. Every village set up its own Rajahs, and they were a tiresome lot. For one thing, he missed the power he had had in Kashmir. For another, he had lost his voice temporarily and, as Prosper Mérimée testified, it was the guile of that voice that usually obtained for him whatever it was he wanted. Without it he was almost powerless. He was reduced to sight-seeing among ruins, an occupation he detested in a scientist; but he had to while away time, for both his bullocks and his servants were prostrated by the heat.

He was now in the country of the Bhils, a nation of robbers by profession, ruled by the English. The country was tropical, rank, florid and hot, and was

studded with some of the more impressive of India's ruins. He wished, however, that he was back in Kashmir, and found no difference between hell and a tent pitched in the Indian sun. The local British resident had reduced the population to shepherding and light farming, and from nothing had created a crown revenue of 50,000 francs a year. Jacquemont admired the reduction, but not those reduced. Again he moved on.

In Sind he found a palace prepared to receive him and the authorities drawn up to do him honour. He delivered an address in Hindustani and settled comfortably in. He was far from well and badly needed a rest. The climate of the Deccan did not agree with him. He wore only a turban of muslin and a pair of light trousers, but suffocated just the same. The heat rose to at least 100 degrees in the daytime, and it was high summer, which had arrived with the velocity of a cannon ball. At night the thermometer fell to freezing, and as a result he had a continual series of chest colds and his voice refused to come back. He stopped with a British doctor, who made him some *tisane*, which seemed to revive him, but he still felt extremely tired. He had to go on an exclusively milk-and-water diet and cut out tobacco. The English said that Southern India was very unhealthy, but Jacquemont thought, despite his own ailments, that this was only because they ate and drank too much. Further to discourage his own eating he went out and deliberately hired the worst cook he could find. This gentleman was indeed such a bad cook that to his delight Jacquemont found he was scarcely eating at all.

In that season of the year no European travellers ventured about in India and all troop movements were cancelled as from about March 10th. The only thing to do was to lie quietly indoors until sundown, curse the country, drink brandy, smoke and be fanned by servants. One went out only at dawn and dusk. Jacquemont foolishly persisted in ploughing through the day, assisted

by a pound of green tea purchased at Delhi, which he drank cold, with a little sugar only, and brewed strong. Tobacco was a problem, for the Indians mixed it with moist sugar, dried raisins, conserve of roses and other flavourings. Even so, after being put in a bubble pipe it was so strong that he could scarcely smoke it.

The heat was so incredible that he made a bundle of his jacket, waistcoat, shirt, flannel waistcoat, shoes and stockings, and sat on it. In an hour all the clothes were wringing wet with perspiration. He was one of those rare people who blossom in extreme heat. He was grateful not to be compelled to have recourse to his syringe, for the weather was so hot that the water would have been boiling. He breakfasted on milk and plantains, which he found tasted of sweet stale jasmine hair pomatum, and dined on onions fried in rancid butter, lukewarm water and tepid lemonade. For rancid butter he had, of necessity, developed a taste, but the rest of his diet bored him. He had by now passed into the region of Bombay, and all the officers along the route had been alerted to receive him well.

To pass the time, he made an inventory of his dresses of honour. These by now included five pairs of large Cashmere shawls; eight other Cashmere shawls; five pieces of China silk and silk shawls with gold borders; seven muslin turbans, each from forty to sixty feet long; two scarves of black Cashmere, embroidered in silk and gold; seven or eight lengths of muslin and two of gold brocade; and other scraps, all dutiable before entry into France. The thought appalled him. He plotted to evade the *douane*, but was looking forward once more to sitting at a French table, eating French soup and drinking red wine and seeing his father and brother Porphyre. A tear, he wrote, started to his eye when he thought of such joys. He had seen much—London, Philadelphia, Haiti, the Niagara, the Brazilian forests, Teneriffe, South Africa, Bourbon and most of India and a good deal of Tibet. He had seen enough. He was

ready for Paris. He was getting no younger. Either he or Porphyre, he wrote home, should get a rich wife to play sister to the other. He did not see why that should not be so.

He had got as far as Ellora, and had seen its rock-cut temples. For once these had impressed him with some slight idea of India's past. The thermometer stood at 110, the country was wild, his wagons broke down and he was twice attacked by tigers. To protect themselves his party travelled in two tight groups. For safety's sake he had retreated to elephant back.

On May 17th he had reached Aurungabad, which he found a wretched place, but where he was received by a division of Bengal troops. He was in Hyderabad, whose Nizam, if thrown on to his own resources, would have lost his throne in under two years. The British made quite a good thing out of Hyderabad.

Lord Clare's orders from Bombay had thrown all hospitality open to him, and he found houses, porters and palanquins all at his disposal. He was in no hurry to reach Bombay, which he had heard was unhealthy, and hoped to go to Poona instead. It was not only reported to be healthier, but was also of scientific interest.

He settled down to read an analysis of the Tibetan encyclopædia produced by M. Csomo de Koros, in whose aid he attempted to intervene with the Royal Asiatic Society, but it was a bootless task. The encyclopædia unfortunately ran to such important subjects as the kind of shoes a lama ought to wear, a discussion taking up twenty chapters; additional material informed him that lamas were forbidden to cross rivers by holding on to the tail of a cow, and of the advantages inherent in the flesh of griffins, dragons, unicorns and Pegasi. No one could be expected to be interested in such nonsense. The Tibetans, he decided, were a race of madmen and idiots, and he rated M. de Koros not much higher for wasting his time on them.

Of an evening he galloped in the moonlight, taking pot shots at hyenas, though his horsemanship was as styleless as ever. A lack of knowledge of the rules of equitation, he felt, produced a mixed carriage which kept him from falling off too often, and he was proud of it. He had begun to adjust himself to the climate or, at any rate, suffered from its excesses to a lesser degree than before.

He continued to visit the rock temples, accompanied by a large folio guide-book which was inaccurate. He liked the temples because they put him in mind of Gothic architecture, but detested the idols he found in them, which he deemed illogical. He went about alone, for his British friends were prostrate. This he attributed less to the heat than to their talent for downing two bottles of claret and two pounds of meat per day. The weather had made a vegetarian of him.

Plunging irritably on, he reached Poona on June 5th, 1832. Poona, having been put down by Lord Hastings in 1808, and so domesticated, was by now one of the strongest of the British military stations in India. The country was at an elevation of about 2,000 feet and was pleasant, even the rainy season being relatively mild. He planned to stay there for three months in order to explore the region, and rented an ugly thatched house for 260 francs a month. Even so, Poona is not the loveliest of British stations in India, and he took an instant dislike to it that grew rather than diminished.

First of all, he did not like the British residents. Why, he asked, were the English north of Benares better mannered and more distinguished than those south of it? Poona was as tiresome and beastly as a French provincial town. He could not say enough in praise of the English to the north. They were mountaineers, explorers and men of wit. Those in the south were abominable. He had an explanation. In the north the English had real power, and so could live like princes,

for they were rich. In the south it was otherwise. There a lack of power had made them, he considered, swine. There were reasons for his irritation. For one thing, he had dysentery. For another, he had to put up with Lord Clare.

Very few people have had a good word to say for this gentleman, who was once able to make Byron cry, and Jacquemont was no exception to that rule. Lord Clare, he wrote, was an English peer, Irish by birth, Italian by appearance and the schoolfellow of Lord Byron—a fact of which he was indiscreetly proud. He was also something of a dandy, and syruped Jacquemont with compliments in limping French. Jacquemont preferred Lord William Bentinck. New to India, a frequenter of the expatriate society of Naples, Florence and Vienna, Lord Clare was ignorant of the languages of India, and had neither the experience nor the talent for a career in political affairs. He was five feet two, very thin, a trifle too scented, and resembled, Jacquemont decided, a *maître d'hôtel* of Italian extraction in a house occupied by an English lord.

" I ignore what he is," wrote Jacquemont to Hezeta. And that was the trouble. Lord Clare would not be ignored. Jacquemont paid an obligatory visit, riding on his state charger, which had a Mogul saddle of brocade, a black velvet bridle embossed with gold and silver, and was otherwise well turned out, except that he wore a handkerchief on his head and a Cashmere robe to avoid taking cold, and did not care how he looked or whether people liked it or not. His voice was still a whisper. All this did not put Lord Clare off. Lord Clare was persistent. Lord Clare insisted that Jacquemont should stay with him. Knowing his man, Jacquemont was equally insistent that he should not. Lord Clare pressed him to stay. Jacquemont pressed for removal, and so the tug of war went on. Jacquemont won, and the schoolboy friend of Byron sulked. It was all most disagreeable.

"What clods they are at Poona," Jacquemont confided to Hezeta. "They ride horseback, or in a carriage, have lunch, dine, dress, shave and undress, gather together into a committee to regulate the affairs of the library, in which I have never seen anybody but myself; sleep, sleep some more, and snore loudly; eat as much as they can, sin, no doubt, as much as they can; and read the papers from Bombay: that is their whole life. The clods. The clods. The judge is almost an idiot, the magistrate is a mad hunter and the only reasonable person is the general, who is a gentleman. The others could be likewise, but they are beasts and nullities." They were impossible to talk to. They were brutes. They were not interested in India and they knew nothing about India. They were torpid and stupid. If they resembled anything, it was Lord Whatthen in Voltaire's *Princesse de Babylone*. They had no interest in culture. They were interested only in utilitarianism. To them the only useful members of society were the manufacturers of hats, clothes and toilet articles.

Nor was it only the English who drove him to distraction. There was also a German Baron,* self-styled and sensibly so, he thought, for what is a German who is not at least a baron, at any rate outside his own country? Jacquemont himself, he found, was the only Frenchman abroad who did not lay claims to a title, and at times he blushed for his own simplicity in this matter. The German Baron had a local reputation as a naturalist. Which was to say, Jacquemont discovered, that in his spare time he stuffed a few birds. It was deplorable. And if it was not the German Baron come to annoy him, it was Lord Clare. Lord Clare, apparently, had no social shame, and would not be rebuffed.

Not only did Jacquemont have a touch of dysentery, but one of his servants had come down with it the night before. The symptoms were unmistakable. Observing this, his other servants spent their time in the garden

* Baron Hügel, later to attract the attention of Ranjit Singh.

weeping bitterly. But Jacquemont managed to keep the man alive for thirty-six hours. Dysentery was sweeping Poona at the time. So was cholera. Jacquemont took good care of himself, took some alcohol as a preventative measure and swilled down a good deal of tea mixed with rum. The servant died the next morning and, all the servants going to the funeral, Jacquemont was forced to dine out. He consoled himself that he had always treated the unfortunate man well and had paid him double wages.

He discovered that he had recently been appointed a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour. The news did not entirely please him, and he decided not to use the title. Since all French travellers had some title or other, there was more distinction to be had in assuming none. Chateaubriand, he remembered, had once said that liberty needed no ancestors.

Sixty or seventy people were dying daily of cholera, which had invaded even the ranks of the British army. This was a new and fit cause for alarm. Gentlemen, however, were less liable to the disease statistically than foot soldiers, and Jacquemont put his faith in statistics. The rains had begun and his luggage was sprouting inedible mushrooms. The air was filled with moisture. It was all indescribably unhealthy.

Boredom and illness downed him. He was in bed for five days, swallowing blue pills, calomel, rhubarb, opium, magnesia, cream of tartar, castor oil, ipecac and having gum arabic douches, all of which heroic treatment seemed to cure him. Even so, he felt, he might die of ennui if not of the arrowroot broth he was forced to eat and which tasted vile.

However, he was shortly well enough to gallop off into the hills on botanizing expeditions, and this he enjoyed, despite the mud and the rains. His illness had upset him: it was the first serious illness he had ever had. His head being clear, he would sit up in bed and curse. His doctor was a Scotsman, and the two of them argued

constantly, in between side trips, as to the correct course of treatment.

At last he could stand Poona no more and departed for Bombay by way of the island of Salsette. The Parsees ran all business on that island, he discovered. The only diversion was news of the Portuguese squabbling among themselves at Daman and Goa. Lord Clare was heard from once more. He had been forbidden to sightsee by the East India Company on the grounds of the expense involved. The grounds were sufficient, since he wished to travel with 700 elephants, 1,400 camels and several thousand ox carts, and had even done so until his extravagance was stopped. Meslay wrote to warn Jacquemont of the climate of Salsette but, safe from Lord Clare, Jacquemont rejoiced in the island. It was certainly agreeable and graced not only with pleasant scenery, but also with admirable rock temples. Jacquemont would retreat to one of these to admire the view.

Unfortunately Meslay's warning came too late. Jacquemont had contracted a disease.

He became so ill that it was necessary to remove him to the military hospital in Bombay, where he was lodged in a pavilion with a good view. He had an inflammation of the liver complicated by fever, and realized that he was probably dying. He made his will, put his affairs in order and settled down with considerable courage to study the disease and await the outcome. For a while he seemed to grow better, and was taken out of an afternoon for an airing in a palanquin along the seashore. He wrote philosophically to his brother Porphyre, the person who in the world he most loved, and composed himself as best he could.

Whatever else he may have been, he was at least a brave man and, if eccentric, no fool. The doctor came twice a night during the crises, from the first of which he recovered. With the doctor he discussed medical subjects and directed his own treatment. Though weak, he felt little pain, but he could not sleep at night. If he

was dying—and he of course knew that he was—he wished to do so with as much dignity as possible and sat up in bed dictating letters. "Farewell," he wrote, "for the last time," and alas it was for the last time, for he died at six in the morning of December 7th.

It fell to Mr. James Nicol, one of his friends resident at Bombay, to write to France, which he did on the 14th of that month. Jacquemont had died of an abscessed liver. His last wish was that his grave was to carry only the inscription that he had travelled in India for three and a half years.

His funeral was held on the 8th, in the evening, with full military honours. His grave was by the sea, in the Queen's Road cemetery of Bombay. And there, for many years, it was forgotten.

EPILOGUE

WHEN Jacquemont died he left behind him twelve barrels of specimens, animal, vegetable and mineral, and one barrel of personal possessions, a manuscript journal of some 5,800 pages, a handful of published articles and, of course and most importantly, his correspondence. The Indian part of this has gone astray. Everything else was shipped to France.

A two-volume selection of his correspondence was collected by his brother Porphyre, somewhat firmly edited by Prosper Mérimée in the interests of decorum, and published in 1833. It met with instantaneous success. It was pirated in Belgium and translated into English in 1834. An augmented edition appeared in 1841. An augmented version had also been brought out in England in 1835. Further correspondence appeared in France in 1867 and 1869, and these editions were also successful.

The Museum was much slower, and took from 1835 to 1844 to publish, in three volumes, his journals, together with a three-tome description of his collections. For the next hundred years stray letters continued to turn up, and with a reawakened interest in Stendhal came also a new concern with Jacquemont. The standard life, by Maes, is almost totally lacking in English sources and is a thin performance. As for Jacquemont's appearance, it was preserved chiefly in a portrait painted by Mme. Mérimée, which was copied by lithography, engraving and etching. There are a few posthumous busts and statues.

The Museum did not behave handsomely. By 1863 a traveller to Bombay, Jules Rémy, found the grave so

neglected that he asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs, though not until 1880, to have the body returned to France. This was, for a wonder, done. The Museum handsomely agreed to accept the coffin so long as it did not have to pay any charges upon it. So the body was shipped home in 1881, in a coffin crowned with a wreath of convolvulus, a plant Jacquemont had introduced into India from America. The Musuem put it in the basement beside the catafalque of Guy de la Brosse and next to the hot-water pipes. It remained there for eleven years, until newspaper publicity forced the authorities to do something about it. Guy de la Brosse, who had founded the Museum and who died in 1794, had been equally neglected, and for a longer time. At last Alphonse Milne-Edwards, the director, had the ashes of both installed on either side of the lobby of the building, under the stairs on the north side of the Zoological galleries, and a bust was erected to Jacquemont. In 1933 the directors tardily got around to giving a memorial dinner and held an exhibition of memorabilia, so that honour was satisfied.

Except for an article in the *Edinburgh Review* in 1869, no work about Jacquemont has ever been published in English. With the exception of a selection of his letters brought out by Macmillan in 1936, his correspondence has not been reprinted since the original translations of the 1830's.

BRIEF BIBLIOGRAPHY

Six lettres de Victor Jacquemont, voyageur naturaliste du Musée en mission aux Indes orientales à MM. les Professeurs du Musée à Paris. Imprimerie de Jules Didot l'aîné. Dec. 1832.

Correspondance de Victor Jacquemont avec sa famille et plusieurs de ses amis pendant son voyage dans l'Inde. Paris. H. Fournier. 2 vols. 1833, but dated 1834. These went into six editions and were pirated in Belgium. The editions were variously augmented.

Correspondance inédite de Victor Jacquemont avec sa famille et ses amis. Paris. Michel Levy. 2 vols. 1867. 3 editions.

Lettres de l'Inde. Paris. H. Gautier. 1890.

Voyage dans l'Inde pendant les années 1828 à 1832. Paris. Firmin Didot. 6 vols. 1835–1844. The first three volumes comprise his journal, the fourth a description of his collections, the fifth and sixth an atlas and a volume of illustrations.

Nouvelle correspondance inédite de Victor Jacquemont avec le Capitaine de vaisseau Joseph Cordier. Paris. Henri Omont. 1896.

À propos du centenaire de la mort de Victor Jacquemont. Quatre lettres inédites au professeur Cordier. Paris. L. Bultingaire. 1932.

Lettres à Stendhal. Paris. Andre Poursin et Cie. 1933.

Lettres à Jean de Charpentier. Paris. Masson et Cie et E. Leroux. 1933.

État politique et social de l'Inde du Nord en 1830. Paris. E. Leroux Masson et Cie. 1933.

État politique et social de l'Inde du Sud en 1831. Paris. E. Leroux Masson et Cie. 1934.

Letters from India, describing a Journey in the British Dominions of India, Tibet, Lahore and Kashmir, during the years 1828–1832. London. Edward Churton. 2 vols. 1834. 2nd edition, enlarged by the addition of his English letters. 1835. An edition in Italian was published in 1845.

J. Beauverie: *Une correspondance inédite de V. Jacquemont.* Clermont. 1923.

Besson: *Les aventuriers français aux Indes.* Paris. 1932.

Cuvillier-Fleury: *Notes historiques sur le général Allard et sur le royaume de Lahore.* Paris. 1836.

Cuvillier-Fleury: *Voyages et Voyageurs.* Paris. 1845.

Duminy: *Les Jacquemonts.* Paris. 1909.

Guyon: *Aventures de Victor Jacquemont dans l'Inde.* Paris. 1930.

Maes: *Victor Jacquemont.* Paris. 1935.

Tébutien: *Notes sur Victor Jacquemont.* Paris. 1836.