

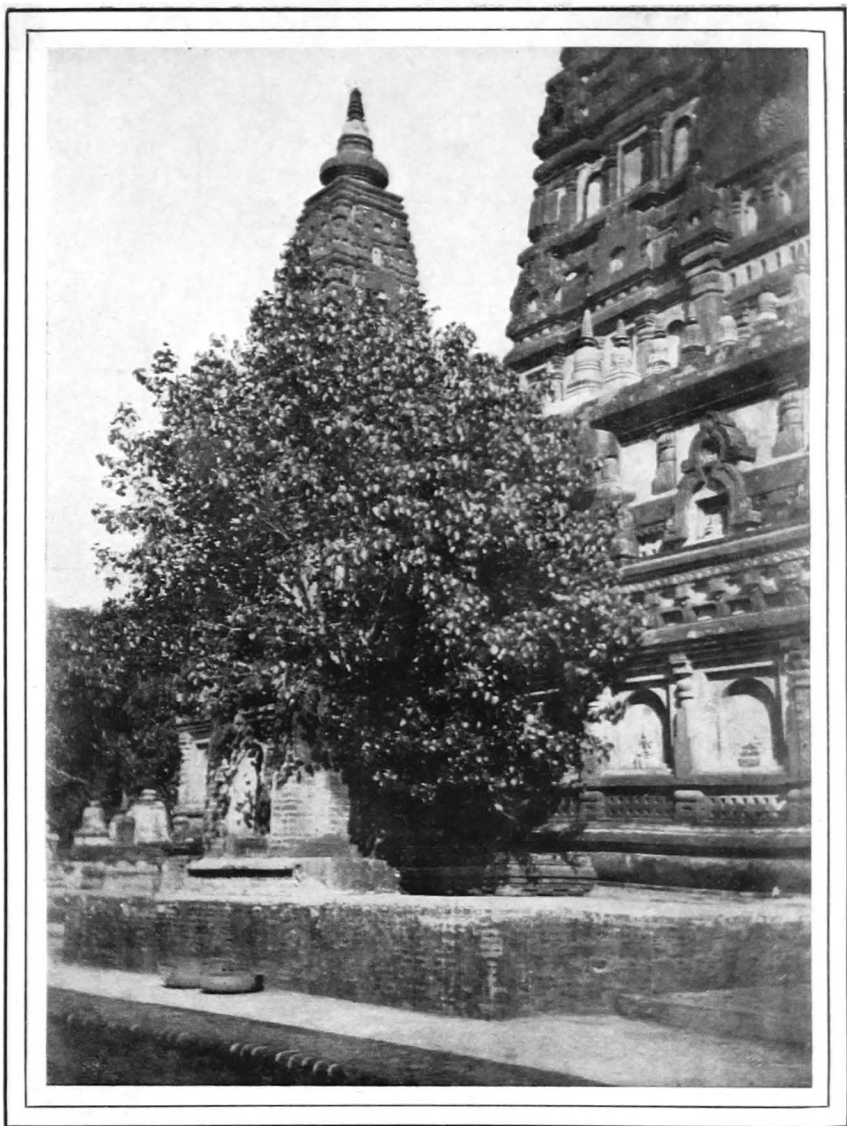
WINTER



INDIA



Winter India



THE SACRED BO-TREE AND THE DIAMOND THRONE, BUDDHA-GAYA.
THE CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE AND THE VERANDA OF KNOWLEDGE.

Winter India

By

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and "China: The Long-Lived Empire"



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TO
CAROLINE TOUSEY BURKAM
THE FRIEND OF
AN INDIAN WINTER

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INTRODUCTION



T can hardly be said with literalness that one enjoys India. I had not expected to enjoy it, and it proved itself, despite its color and picturesqueness, quite as melancholy and depressing a country as I had thought it would be; but so absorbingly interesting, so packed with problems, so replete with miracles accomplished by alien rule, so ripe with possibilities, that one soon overlooked the unnecessary hardships and discomforts of travel—travel as plain and primitive as in the Klondike, or as if the country had been conquered only within this decade.

The surprises, the contrasts, and the contradictions administer perpetual shock and mental stimulus, and the unexpected continually confronts one. Never have I suffered with cold as in India. Not a snake did I see or hear of in the cold-weather, tourist season, save in zoölogical gardens or snake-charmers' baskets, and the tigers were likewise caged.

There are so many Indias that no one person can know them all, and the Winter India which the tourist sees during the cold-weather weeks is not the real one which the Anglo-Indian knows the year around. The military man, the civilian officer, the

missionary, planter, and merchant has each his own India and view-point; and the British visitor, who is passed from home to home by the endless chain of Anglo-Indian hospitality, sees and thinks differently from the other tourists who suffer the drear hotels, the dak banglas, and the railway-station rooms.

The worst hotels in the world are those of India, and a British traveler has truthfully written: "You will enjoy your traveling in India if you have so many friends there that you need never put foot in a hotel. If you have not, you had better go somewhere else." Each winter the peninsula holds a growing number of surprised and resentful tourists, who, whether they land at Bombay or Calcutta, usually conclude that the shortest route across India is the best one. One month or six weeks is the average stay; and very few tourists ever go to the hills for the summer and come back to the plains for a second cold-weather season of travel. The average tourist sacrifices itineraries without compunction, and lives to warn away aged and invalid tourists and to convince those with weak lungs and impaired digestions that death waits in Indian hotels.

The glamour of the East does not often or for long enthrall one while touring Hindustan. Later it asserts itself, reveals its haunting charm; and then, be it months or years afterward, he "hears the East a-callin'." He forgets the ice in the bath-tubs at Agra and Delhi, the bitterly cold nights in drafty, dusty, springless cars, and in visions he sees only

“the sunshine an’ the palm-trees an’ the tinkly temple bells,” the brilliantly costumed people, and the miracles of architecture scattered so lavishly from end to end of the empire.

A new India for the tourist will date from the great durbar at Delhi in 1903, and India, which has been a winter preserve for visiting English, will be virtually discovered and opened to a wider clientele, made as possible and fit for luxurious travel as Egypt. Equally this day of cheap travel and cheap living will vanish as completely as on the Nile.

For one to announce that he will spend a winter in India is hardly more definite or precise than to say that he will winter in Europe. India is a very large country,—several large countries,—since it equals in area and population all of Europe outside of Russia; and one travels the nineteen hundred miles of its extent from south to north through as many political divisions as there are great divisions of Europe, and differing as greatly in climate, physical features, and inhabitants. The Spaniard does not differ more from the Laplander than the sooty Tamil from the blue-eyed Afridi, the weak Bengali from the fighting Rajput or the fierce Sikh. Besides the thirteen provinces under British rule, there are six hundred and fifty native states; but only two hundred of them are of great importance, since native states range in size from Hyderabad, the size of Italy, to single villages in Kathiawar and tiny valleys in the Himalayan foot-hills, empires two miles square.

The census of 1901 gave a total of 294,360,356 in-

habitants—five times as many Hindus as Mohammedans, and one hundred and nine times as many natives as English. The fourteen distinct races follow eight forms of religious belief, and speak some two hundred and forty languages and three hundred dialects; all legislative acts are published in English, Persian, Bengali, and Hindustani—and then only one man in ten can read. The permanence of British rule and the safety of British interests lie in this diversity of race, language, government, and religion. In division is strength, in discord is stability, since their race hatreds, jealousies, animosities, and antipathies would never permit a native leader to be acceptable to all the native malcontents, and patriotism or any national spirit is as lacking as the sense of those words, and of even the word for gratitude. With no common language or religion, no national feeling, in this congress of nations, one may paraphrase a certain interrogative and exclaim: “The Indians! Who are they?”

One fifth of the human race dwells between the Himalayas and the ocean; the records of their civilization go back for three thousand years, and history has been written upon history on those plains. Rice—two hundred and ninety-five kinds of rice, called by as many names in as many tongues—and pulse are the staple food of this great agricultural people, drought and famine the lot of some state or province each year, with plague and cholera seldom absent. Two great famines and the continual ravages of the bubonic pest greatly reduced the population during the last decade of the past century,

the decrease in the native states being many times greater than in the British provinces. Increased areas of irrigation and cultivation have made it possible for the increasing millions to live—to half live, according to European standards, for the Indian coolie or agricultural worker is lowest in the scale of living and wages and in standard of comfort of any Asiatic. Great calamities and scourges afford the only relief from over-population,—a population in which the women are in deficit to the number of six millions, and their illiteracy so great that only one woman in one hundred and sixty can read.

All these diverse races and peoples are picturesque to look upon, with their graceful draperies of brilliant colors and the myriad forms of turbans; but they are not an attractive, a winning, a sympathetic, or a lovable people. They are as antipathetic and devoid of charm as the Chinese, as callous, as deficient in sympathy and the sense of pity as those next neighbors of theirs in Asia, and as impossible for the Occidental to fathom or comprehend,—an irresistible, inexplicable, unintelligible repulsion controlling one. India vexes one sadly because of the irrational, illogical turns of the Indian mind and character, the strange *impasses* in the Indian brain, the contradictions of traits; and, because of the many things he cannot account for or reach solution of, he quits the country baffled and in irritation—forever the great gulf yawning between the Occidental and the Asiatic. “East is East, and West is West.”

Not one of the innumerable tongues that he hears spoken by the common people in the bazaars falls

musically on the ear, and beyond the numerals and a few utility words he is little tempted to dabble even with Urdu, the camp language, the lingua franca of the upper part of the peninsula. *Jao!* (Begone!) is the first word he learns and most constantly uses, the last syllable uttered on leaving.

From the babel of tongues, with no common alphabet, has come a confusion of spelling, and the modern or Hunterian method, although officially adopted by the government in 1880, does not enjoy general acceptance and use in India. Sir William Hunter gave years to investigating and recording local usages, to transliterating from Sanskrit and the vernacular the geographic names of the peninsula, and the publication of his great *Gazetteer* should have ended the confusion of nomenclature. Many of his departures were too radical for the older Anglo-Indians to accept—*bangla* was not the same as bungalow to them, *kuli* did not represent coolie, nor *pankha* the cooling punka; and five, eleven, and seventy-two ways of spelling a single place-name continue in common use—three distinct systems of spelling and local usage still prevailing, often in determined opposition to the Hunterian method. The first American authority, which is followed in this volume, does not wholly accept Sir William Hunter's decisions. The new method will ultimately prevail, but with another generation.

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