

TOTEMS, TIGERS, TORCHES
AND OTHER STORIES

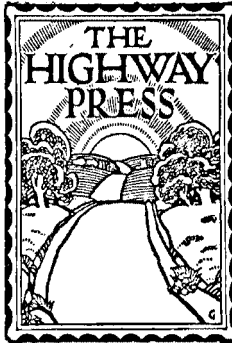
TOTEMS, TIGERS, TORCHES

AND OTHER STORIES OF INDIAN BOYS

Edited by
R. W. HOWARD

"I come from the West to the East as a young man and a stranger. I want to know you and I want you to know me. I want to grasp your difficulties and appreciate your aspirations."

—*The Prince of Wales, on landing in India*



6 SALISBURY SQUARE, LONDON, E.C.4

1926

*Made and Printed in Great Britain by
The Camelot Press Limited
London and Southampton*

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INTRODUCTION

"To India and back for ninepence!" It sounds like a fairy-tale indeed. And yet that is the kind of phrase that most easily describes our experience after a visit to one of the great modern films of life in India—"India To-day" for example, or "Romantic India," or the Everest pictures. Wild jungles, mighty mountains, wide plains; remote villages where customs have scarcely changed since the times of William the Conqueror, and restless cities with their rushing trams and taxis, factories, hotels, and crowded streets; vast and venerable temples, and tiny wayside shrines—in such a film all these scenes pass before our eyes in swift and varied succession.

But the human procession is even more arresting in its variety. It is the *faces* that we remember most vividly. Sometimes we must have longed to get "behind the pictures," as it were; to follow to their homes these men and women and children, who flit for a second or two across the focus of the camera and then disappear.

If we are young, in age or mind, we cannot escape the questions which curiosity forces from us. "How does that cheery jungle boy spend his hours from dawn to sunset? What was the matter with that poor fellow hobbling into the Peshawar Hospital? That wonderful holy man—the *sadhu*—with his robe and staff, and bowl, was he ever young and mischievous? Do Indian boys get to like football, and cricket, and rowing, and scouting? Are there 'tuck' shops or 'sock' shops at Indian schools? Those despised outcaste

chaps, the 'down and out' of India—do they ever get a chance to rise on the ladder of life? Does a Hindu boy ever have the ambition to do something big for his country? Why did that fellow look so pale and tired as he came out of that huge Bombay factory at lunch-time with hundreds of other workers? Do they have boarding schools in India, like our own, and scouts and prefects, and all the rest of it? If so, who runs them, and why?"

It will be seen by a glance at the contents itself, that it is to answer these very questions, and others like them, that the nine chapters of this book have been written. The stories in it are all "founded on fact"; most of them, indeed, are descriptions of real boys well known to those who have written about them. For the nine writers, with one exception, have been giving their own lives in personal friendship and service to the "oncoming generation" of India. They believe that these boys are some of the finest in the world; splendid material, in fact, for the making of the India of to-morrow. So they ask us to come alongside of these Indian boys and those whom they represent, to "get behind the pictures," and to see them in their own country at close quarters in the spirit of the Prince of Wales's words (quoted on the title page). They want us to learn from these boys, and get to like them; and, if we are Christians, sometimes to pray for them and for our own kith and kin, who, in our name, are trying to give their best service and sympathy to India and her growing youth to-day.

R. W. H