

TOTEMS, TIGERS, TORCHES
AND OTHER STORIES

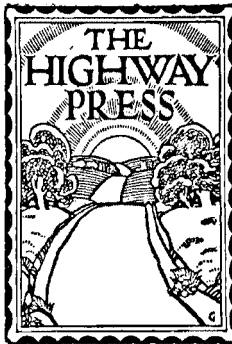
TOTEMS, TIGERS, TORCHES

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*



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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

TOTEMS, TIGERS, TORCHES, AND OTHER STORIES OF INDIAN BOYS

CHAPTER I

TOTEMS, TIGERS, TORCHES

An Adventure in the Jungle

THIS is a tale of the Gond people, a tribe living in the jungles of Central India, and still little touched by western civilization. Missionaries have been working among them, and many are now Christians. Gond-land is a great district for the hunting of tigers, as this story shows.

Excursions and Alarums

“**H**URRY up, Dede, or we shall not get the weeding done before the next storm comes along. Besides, to-day is market day and we must be off early.”

The speaker was a small boy, Sonu by name. He was urging his would-be sister-in-law to take him to the weekly market.

“But what about the child if you go to the bazaar?” she asked.

“Oh, Lala is all right,” he said. “I left him fastened on the swing under the *machan*^a in the courtyard.”

But Lala was *not* all right, for at that very moment a loud scream filled the air. A buffalo, as it strolled along, had decided to take the

^a Native shop quarter.

^b A platform, often erected before a house door.

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opportunity of a wayside snack by devouring the cloth in which the child was wrapped as it swung under the machan. Everybody rushed forward to rescue the cloth, and incidentally Lala too. A tug of war resulted, and finally a long piece of cloth was dragged out of the buffalo's throat; luckily, the baby had not yet gone down after it.

But now the threatened storm began, with a roar and a vivid flash of lightning. When they had rushed to the house to rescue the cloth and Lala, their *kumris*¹ were blown right along the field where they had been weeding, and fell into the river. Sonu was almost as much at home in the water as on dry land; without a look he plunged into the river after Dede's *kumri*. A few strokes enabled him to seize it, and swim back to the bank. But what is that other splash and swirl?

"Help! Quick!" Sonu was pulled out of the water just as an ugly pair of jaws snapped at him. The *muggar*² was just too late!

Those Queer English

"Ram, Ram,"³ exclaimed Sonu, "whatever is going to happen to us? Here comes a *sahib*.⁴ What an extraordinary looking person; see, he is wearing clothes made of thick stuff as if he were freezing, with a sort of dish on his head! He has been driven here by the storm, I expect. Look, he has found some one to guide him. He

¹ Umbrellas made of leaves on a bamboo frame. ² Alligator.

³ A hero of early Indian legend, now worshipped as a god.

⁴ Englishman.

is going towards the bazaar ; he will be camping somewhere round here, I suppose. I wonder how he will like the *marai*¹ and the shouting, where every one gets drunk ? ”

“ You know, Dede,” he went on, “ these all-powerful English folk have very dirty habits, so my cousin says. They actually use the same plates over and over again instead of making new ones for every meal, as decent people do ! Why, it does not take long to pin a plate together with thorns when once the *sal*² leaves have been collected. My cousin said that once, when he was servant to a sahib, he was carrying a lot of plates and his foot slipped into a rat-hole. A few plates were broken ; and though it was a fine chance for the sahib to get new ones my cousin was fined four annas ! Really, he ought to have been rewarded.”

Totems and Toddy-drinkers

“ Ah, here come the *marai* poles,” said Sonu, in much excitement. “ How fine they look, all decorated with peacock feathers. I hope the sahib will give us plenty of *baksheesh*³ to get well drunk, and we will dance and shout all round his tent and bring good luck for his hunting. I wonder if it is really true, Dede, that the *Shaitan*⁴ could not find the path into *Edan Bagh*⁵ till it was shown him by the peacock, since when peacocks have always been used in his honour in the *marai*

¹ A festival ; see later in the chapter.

² Plane tree.

³ “ Tips ” ; money.

⁴ Hero of the story on which the *marai* festival is based.

⁵ Garden of Eden.

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dance? Hille ho! let's dance along and shout with the rest!"

All down the various jungle paths can now be seen approaching processions of devil-dancers, each village party waving aloft its peacock and trident-crowned pole, with its own set of dancers longing to join in with the others.

All are making for the centre of the bazaar, to place their own totem alongside a pole from which hang down all round strings of onion peelings to represent human skins. For the marai represents a murderous human sacrifice to Shaitan. If you keep the devil in a good temper by human or pig sacrifice, says the Gond to himself, then he will let you alone in peace; and so you will avert his wrath and other misfortunes. Doubtless many of the Gonds, who consider the old religious spirit is sadly dying out, would like to see a living person hung on the marai; but the British police see that it is not done.¹

But the sun is mounting, and the people are growing thirsty; there is a rush to drink the *mahwa*² toddy. It is sweet and refreshing, and every one drinks to-day. The dancing men (only the men are dancing) shout louder and louder, as if fearing that their cries may not be heard by the gods above. The *mandas*³ beat faster and faster; the men leap and cry aloud, for it is nearly twelve o'clock, the height of the feast. And then the chief priest,

¹ We may compare with this custom of the Gonds the human sacrifices of the Nagas, in the interior of Burma, to forbid which the British Governor recently made a long journey in person.

² A tree from which a sweet spirituous liquor is distilled.

³ Gond drums.

master of the ceremonies, steps forward with his black buffalo horn. For a moment there is silence, to hear the first blast. It only serves to deepen the din that succeeds, a din of shouting men and women who are beginning to be tipsy; the noise of the horn blowing and the kettle-drums rattling. Then one or two people, and soon the whole crowd, rush forward as of old to pluck what used to be the human skins, but are nowadays only onion skins; every one wants to carry a trophy home. But there is no time to lose, for there are tigers that roam in the jungle before dusk.

“ Away! Away! ” is the cry. “ We have had our drink and got our trophy. Let’s go home to our own villages and spend the night round the fire, exchanging the news of the day and laughing over the odd figure the *diwan*¹ cut as he tried to answer the sahib respectfully when he asked what all the *tamasha*² meant, and why there was all this drinking! ”

The Pros and Cons of School-going

It was the day after the feast. Sonu’s father was awakened (all too early, he thought sleepily) by his son crying, “ Here is the *patwari*,³ Father! Here he is, in our courtyard, asking to see you, now that you are the *bhoi*⁴ of our village.”

At last a lazy figure, looking like a man up far too late, and only half awake, gave a drowsy greeting to the village patwari. “ Ram, Ram,

¹ The deputy head of the village.
² Revenue officer.

³ Show.
⁴ Headman.

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brother, you have come very early. Had we known of your coming we should have been ready to greet you in a worthier fashion."

But Sonu had already done the patwari the honour due to his rank; a *charpoy*¹ was set out covered with a rug of sorts, and the fire was blazing. During a pause the visitor explained the reason for his coming. The English sahibs were actually anxious that the village Gonds should send their children to school!

"But not the girls?" said Sonu's father in real alarm. "Remember what the wise Manu² said: 'When donkeys climb trees, then will girls learn to read,' and *he* was a wise man, as all the world knows. As far as boys are concerned, for the matter of that, will going to school help them to plough better, to know the seasons and the times propitious for planting and sowing? Shall we have better crops by letting our sons waste their time over learning things that are no use, at the feet of a Hindu *pundit*?"

The patwari had not much of an answer ready. "The ways of the sahibs are truly wonderful, and the paths along which they drive are often blind alleys," he said reflectively. The fact is, he himself thoroughly agreed with Sonu's father! At last, obtaining a reluctant promise from the bhoi that he would do his best, he mounted his pony and rode off to try his luck in the next village.

Sonu thought carefully over the whole matter. A week later he suddenly burst out, saying to his

¹ Rough wooden bedstead.

² An early law-giver of India.

³ A professor or learned scholar.

father: "Please let me go to school, if only for two months, to see how I get on. Father, there is one advantage of going to school; it will help us to read the patwari's accounts and see if the amounts he charges us are correct! And I can find out, too, if the sahibs really expect us to help to pay for the royal weddings in England, as the patwari says; for I overheard a policeman say the other day that it was all rubbish, and that the patwari was getting far too rich."

So to school Sonu went, to shout and yell with the rest, all sitting on the floor, learning their A B C by sight and ear. As Sonu had prophesied, there was one curious result of his school-going; for later on the patwari's accounts did seem to become a little different, and there certainly was a reduction in his demands in various bills.

The Hunter and Ninety-nine Tigers

One evening, as Sonu returned from school and entered his courtyard, he saw a Moslem—for such he judged him to be by his dress—sitting on the family charpoy, and close behind him stood a wiry, half-starved-looking pony. He pricked up his ears when he heard his father say to the stranger:

"No, Amir Khan, I have not seen any signs of the tiger, neither tracks nor tiger-fly for many weeks now."

"Well," said the other, "I have come nearly a thousand miles, and I mean to kill my hundredth tiger, or perish in the attempt. I have already killed ninety-nine, and this is to be number one

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hundred. My plan is to spend the day-time up in the pass. There I shall tie my pony to a long rope and let him feed. The tiger, when he comes that way, will go for the pony, and give me a chance, by the mercy of God, to shoot him. I shall, with your kind permission, spend each night here. And I intend to keep on this *ghat*¹ till at last the tiger one day takes the pony. Is not there a government reward on its skin of Rs 500? I shall then return home, and will pay off the debt on our farm, and live happily evermore."

"But, O *shikari*,"² replied Sonu's father, "is it not very dangerous so to tempt this famous man-eater?"

"Ah!" was the reply. "But when he sees us both he will not bother about me; I have no flesh worth speaking of. It is the pony he will go for. Now I ask you, will you let me have this fine boy of yours to be my servant and helper?" And he pointed to Sonu.

Sonu cried: "Oh, do let me, Father." But the bhoi shook his head so firmly that Sonu knew it was of no use to argue.

Amir Khan, however, was given lodging, and became a sort of family fixture. He would appear every evening, shortly after dusk, and spend his night till dawn in the shed placed at his disposal by the friendly bhoi. Khan repaid the kindness of his courteous host by occasional gifts of venison. But he meant to get that man-eater, and he was afraid of using his ancient gun too much on other

¹ Mountain pass.

² About £37.

³ Hunter.

game, lest constant firing might scare the wily beast off. It was always on the move. Evidently the tiger did not believe in the old proverb that, "A rolling stone gathers no moss." Its beat had a total length, from end to end, of not far short of 200 miles! Indeed, the passes and jungle paths along this length were all said to be haunted by man-eating tigers; but actually there was only one, as was known by the fact that when its left foot pointed north, the right pointed north-east. No wonder that the British Government, which really cared for the safety of the people, had put a heavy reward on the skin of this far-famed man-exterminator.

The Tiger Trapped

Some weeks later, ere the first streaks of dawn appeared, Amir Khan lazily rolled off his blanket, blew up the smouldering fire, made a concoction which he called tea, devoured one half of a *chapati*,¹ and, stuffing the other half into his capacious pocket, placed the rope round the willing pony's neck—for was not his master simply taking him out to feed? With a *salaam*² to the yawning bhoi, off he sauntered out of the village (he was almost always the first to be up). Before the sun peeped over the distant horizon the curious pair, hunter and pony, were traversing the low-lying plain at the foot of the mountain. The slow ascent was begun as the sun rose. Again and again, from mere habit, the hunter examined his gun.

¹ Thin, flat cake of unleavened bread.

² Bow.

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"The peafowl are making an unusual din this morning," he mutters to himself, as he warily approaches the tiny oasis about one quarter of the way up the ghat. It is here that a mountain stream issues forth and, tumbling downhill, forms many a pool fringed with long, green grass and bushy shrubs. The pony meanders slowly through this luxuriant dell.

But hallo! the pony refuses to obey the tug on the rope. Amir Khan turns suddenly round. Ah! no wonder—"Stripes" is on top of it! He retreats a few yards to obtain a clearer view for his shot; he fires, and the tiger falls in a heap on top of the dead pony, and lies there, motionless.

The echo of the shot is heard in the village below. It is succeeded by a deathlike stillness; such a silence as, once heard, can never be forgotten. The whole village scarcely dares to move. Even the animals and dogs seem frozen still. All are awaiting the next sound. Will it be a shout of victory—or what?

Visions of wealth and glory dazzled the sight of Amir Khan. All the same, he kept a wary eye on the tiger. Apparently it was stark dead. He gave a loud call to the villagers: "*Bagh mila; maragaya!* (I have got the tiger; it is shot dead!)"

A great shout of joy rang through the whole village. Every face beamed. Every man and boy volunteered to go to help bring in the dead foe.

Sonu said: "I thought I saw a tiger-fly in the fire last night."

"Then why did you not tell us?" they asked.

"It was so burnt that I could not be quite sure. So I did not say a word." He rushed into the house and came out holding a fine, strong spear in his hand.

"No, you cannot go with us," said his father.

"Why not?" the boy asked indignantly.

"Please let me go. Remember who it was that burnt the panther's whiskers,¹ when Jhetu the *baiga*² was mauled. Did not I do it? So let me go. I dipped my spear in the panther's blood. Do let me help to carry in the tiger, Father."

"All right, then, go and get your mother's leave," said his father, anxious to save his own face, and to have some one to share the blame should anything untoward happen.

It was quite noticeable how slow all seemed to be to start. Some wanted a bit to eat, some another smoke, the real reason being that all were aware that the dangerous time to track tigers is just after the shot. Sonu ran round, hurrying them all up, though he took care to do so unostentatiously.

The Trapper Tricked

Meanwhile, what was Amir Khan doing? He had a long smoke; and then, as he heard the sounds of the trackers coming nearer, he thought: "I will just show them what a man I am." As

¹ All the jungle tribes hate tiger's and panther's whiskers, and burn them off if possible; they are used as a poison at times, and if a small piece is swallowed it is liable to produce an internal abscess.

² Member of a hunting tribe.

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they hove in sight, one by one, all in single file, he strolled up to the tiger, gave it a good sound kick with his foot, and shouted: "I have done for you!"

Suddenly—no one could say exactly how afterwards—the tiger gave an unexpected lurch, seized the man by his hip, and would have killed him had not Sonu's father, followed by the boy, rushed forward with a yell. The tiger dropped Khan, and with a deep growl made off. As the tiger seized Khan, all except Sonu and his father and one other climbed up the trees like monkeys, and yelled for all they were worth. All were too shaken to attempt to follow. Besides, no one had a reliable gun except the shikari, and he lay on the ground groaning.

It was known at once in the village what had happened. A charpoy was soon brought up; and later on that very afternoon a party of four men started off to the government hospital some thirty-five miles distant. But the unfortunate Amir Khan did not recover; he died four days later.

What the Sahib Found

The same afternoon news of the affair was sent to the English sahib whose acquaintance we have already made. He arrived the next morning, hoping to track down the wily beast. He got to the pass shortly after sunrise, and was taken to the spot where Khan had been mauled. He found that the tiger had returned in the night and devoured the whole pony, except the four legs

and head. At first they could not imagine what had happened to the pony, as nothing whatever was to be seen, till suddenly Sonu cried out : " Here it is ! " and dragged the head and legs from under a bush. " Stripes " had tidied everything up, and hidden the few remains, in-order to screen what was there from the piercing eyes of vultures, and of course with the intent to return. But—what was more surprising still—his claw marks were found on a *salai*¹ tree ; from this he had plucked off leaves and made a leaf-plaster for his wound, which must have been fairly slight after all. Not a trace of this " first-aid dressing " was found, however, nor of the tiger. He left that danger zone for many a day.

Sonu had the great privilege of carrying the sahib's gun for some time ; but all to no purpose. The man-eater was shot the next year by a forest officer 150 miles distant from this spot ; and that is the end of his story.

Torches for the Bride

A few days later Sonu's father said to the mother : " Is it not time to fetch the bride home ? We want her help on the farm. And, as every one knows, Sonu and Dulari have only circled the wedding post three times. So they have still to go round four times more before the wedding is *pukka*.² They have asked to have part of the ceremony in the village of Sonu's uncle. But if we go on like that, the ceremony will have

¹ Frankincense.

² Perfect.

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to be carried on in seven different villages, and the expense will be far too great for us."

So, after some discussion, it was agreed that the next four circlings should take place right before the front door. The whole village looked forward eagerly to the coming marriage. The *dhulias*¹ began to get their drums into trim. New clothes were bought, stores of food and sweets were laid in, and, a few days before the long-looked-for event, *pandals*² were erected in front of the house, gaily decorated with evergreens.

Then, two days before the day fixed for the circling of the wedding post, Sonu and his party set out to bring the bride home in state, with drummers and torchbearers all in good order. They were duly awaited at the bride's house, and on arrival were feasted handsomely. Next morning, amid tears and lamentations—for the bride was leaving her home for ever, and she was only about 12 years of age—Dulari was hoisted on to Sonu's pony to sit behind her bridegroom. Both were half smothered with yellow powder (the wedding colour), and off they went.

The procession was timed to reach the village just at dusk, to give the torches their chance. The sound of the drums, echoing from hill to hill, and the wavering lights wandering down the mountain path, made a scene never to be forgotten. Before they slept that night they all related, round the fire, the jokes and adventures of the trip.

Next day the wedding post, which had been fixed up some days before, was marked again. The

¹ Drummers.

² Booths.

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"lines and squares of life" were laid out in curious pattern on the ground, with rice, powder, and chalk. Then at high noon the bride was shown to the company, enveloped in a long cloth covering her from head to foot. Ceremoniously she was tied to the bridegroom, with a real marriage knot which may never be broken—for only once in her life is a Gond bride married with full ceremonial. As the drums beat aloud with their deep-sounding note, the wedding pair were taken to the post and slowly, very slowly, circled round, the bride's feet being placed carefully for her in each square in turn; for her wedding robe prevented her from seeing. And so, as the seventh circling was completed, Sonu was fully and truly married.

CHAPTER II

PAIN AND PLUCK

On the North-West Frontier

THIS story of her friend Tomash was written by Mrs. Underhill, formerly Mrs. Starr, who is well known for her rescue, in April, 1923, of Miss Mollie Ellis from the wild Afridi tribesmen over the border. She was with Dr. Starr when he was murdered by a Pathan in the C.M.S. hospital at Peshawar, of which this story tells, in March, 1917. After the war Mrs. Starr returned, till her re-marriage, to her missionary work in the hospital for these North-West Frontier folk.

Picturesque Pubbi

IN a village which is called by the quaint name of Pubbi, in the Peshawar plain away on the North-West Frontier of India, lived a large family. They were poor, but cheerful. There was plenty of work to do to keep the family together. It was, in fact, a hard-working village. All round it were sugar-cane and wheat fields, and pear and plum orchards, and orange groves, watered by the branches of the Kabul River. Away beyond the green and fertile plain rose the hills, a soft blue in the dust-haze by day, and very beautiful in the sunset glow; but a nearer view showed them rugged, rocky, and bare, the home

of the outlaw and robber, and of the adventurous men of the trans-frontier tribes.

One of the cheeriest members of this family was Tomash, a boy 11 years old. He was tall and strong for his age, with a keen eye and a healthy look. He had no love for books, and did not have to learn from them, for much of his time was spent in helping his father by work on the land. He knew how to net the wild fowl, or coax an obstinate camel to kneel, and he would wrestle or box with the older boys to show that he was made of the right stuff for a Pathan.

On the Highroad to Death

One day when wrestling Tomash was knocked out by a sudden blow, fell, and broke his arm. This would not have been very serious if he had been an English boy, whose parents would have called in a doctor at once to set the bone and splint the arm properly. His father and mother did what they thought best, and carried the boy off, with his arm hurting more and more every moment, to the most important man in Pubbi. This was the *mullah*.¹ They asked his advice. Everybody did that, whatever was wrong; and whatever he advised they did, for he was learned, knew Arabic, and taught the Moslem boys of the village the Koran.* "So he must know everything," they said.

Now Tomash's father lived only twenty miles from one of the most important towns on the frontier. This was Peshawar, where there was

¹ Moslem priest. * The sacred book or bible of the Moslem.

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a big missionary hospital. Though the father had never been there, he had heard talk of it, and of the miraculous cures accomplished by the English doctor. So he asked the mullah privately what he thought of it, for the mullah must know everything.

"Whatever happens, do not go *there*," replied the mullah, hastily. "Do you know what that would mean for you? Why, they would not look at the boy unless you took costly gifts, at least a calf and a basket of fowls; and even then your son might get worse, and (this in a horrified whisper) he might die, *there*, in an infidel Christian house of healing—and he a true son of the Prophet!"

That settled it, at least for the time, and the broken arm was dressed by the barber, at the mullah's direction, between two wooden boards, and bound over with dirty cloths and tied up very tightly. In a few hours the arm swelled and the pain grew intense. Tomash was a Pathan, and tried not to make a sound, for Pathans are always brave; but he could get no rest or sleep for the pain. By the next day fever had set in. The boy could take no food; each day and night the agony grew greater and the arm blacker, till by the fifth day Tomash could feel scarcely anything, for he was faint and almost dying.

The Avenue of Escape

His father had trusted the mullah till now, and, though he and the mother watched their son by day and night in great distress, yet they dared

not undo the poisoned arm, and they had no medicine to ease the throbbing pain. But his father, Khan Mohamed, saw that the boy could not live under such treatment. In his desperation he decided that as things could not be any worse he would try the hospital, even though his action might incur the mullah's wrath. Quietly and quickly they laid the boy on a straw mat over a rough wooden bedstead, covered him with an old blanket, and with the help of two neighbours carried him, without a pause for rest, to the city of Peshawar. A short distance beyond the high wall of the city, near some great gates standing open, they saw a little group of men, camels, and donkeys, and they found that here was the entrance to the hospital for which they were searching.

What sort of reception would they get? Would the fees be very heavy? Alas! they had in their haste forgotten all about the calf and fowls for an offering that were mentioned as necessary in the last words the mullah had spoken.

A Surprising Reception

But, before many minutes had passed, the gate-keeper had taken them inside the big gates, their burden had been set down, and the doctor had been called and was already examining the arm. The broken limb had hitherto been tied up so tightly that it was by now quite dead, and gangrene was fast spreading up it. Khan Mohamed and his friends watched in great

astonishment. No one asked for money or gifts before they touched the sick boy, no one minded the smells, and every one seemed to know what to do—and to want to do it! Could he live? Was he dead already, as he lay there, silent and cold?

Meanwhile the English doctor was telling Khan Mohamed that the boy would live if what was necessary was done without delay. The poisoned arm must come off at once, he said. The mother protested, for if a Moslem loses a limb he thinks he may still be without it in Paradise

But Khan Mohamed sharply rebuked her: "Is it not enough if the boy himself lives?"

So the amputation was skilfully performed and Tomash lost his right arm, but he got many compensations. So plucky a boy did he prove to be, plucky even among other brave and hardy frontier folk in the hospital, that he became quite famous in his small new world. His whole family—parents, brothers, and aunts—arrived at the hospital and stayed there to be with him, possessing themselves of a little room and feeling quite at home.

An Arm Lost—and a Life Saved

Tomash did not die. But it took two big operations and weeks and weeks in hospital before he was well enough to walk about, with the empty arm of his coat pinned up. His pluck stood him in good stead, and before long he was practising writing lines and letters with

his left hand. He had never learned to read and write, as his father thought that it would be a waste of time for a boy who would only work in the fields. But field work would now be difficult, perhaps impossible, since he had only one arm, so he started instead to use his brain. Later, instead of going back to his village home, he stayed in Peshawar, lived with other boys in the Christian hostel, and went to the mission school. Though he is now only 14, he studies in English and Urdu as well as his own language, Pushtu, and is a regular reader of the Gospel. He will be a fine man some day, for his pluck is wonderful, and carries him through all the difficulties that he meets.

The Open Gates—and the Secret that Keeps them Open

He and his father often return to visit the C.M.S. hospital at Peshawar, and the friends whom they made there. That hospital still stands open to all comers. Perhaps as you read these very lines some other boy is being carried to it, on a camel's back down the Khyber Pass, or on a donkey from Kohat, or by the hands of his father and brother from "picturesque Pubbi" itself. Still they come; and something like the story of Tomash, which is true from beginning to end, will be repeated again and again in this and in every year. All these boys hear, at the hospital, the story of One Who "went about doing good" and healing the sick because He loved them. So, like Tomash, they may guess

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also the secret that makes the Christian doctors and nurses at Peshawar so glad to do their best to give back health and strength and life itself (even in exchange for a lost arm!) to the plucky boys of the North-West Frontier.



SADHU SUNDAR SINGH

CHAPTER III

THE BOY SADHU

How India trains her Saints

ONE of the commonest sights in India is the pilgrim friar or *sadhu*, who lives, in poverty, a life of devotion to the god whom he worships. Many of them are also *gurus*, or teachers, who have bands of disciples to follow them. This story, told by one of them, shows how strict is the training for this office that they sometimes receive. (A famous Christian *sadhu*—Sundar Singh—has visited England and preached in London and elsewhere since the war.)

An Unpromising Start

MY name is Kalo Ram. My father was a brass-worker at Benares. He was a shop-keeper of moderate means. He was deceitful and cunning. He used to buy old utensils, and, after polishing them, sell them at the price of new. He had two kinds of weights, heavy and light; by the heavy he used to buy his ware from the merchant, but when selling to customers he used lighter ones. In the evening when he came home he used to tell us stories of the deceit and swindling which he had practised on his customers during the past day. As a boy of 10 years old I heard all his bad doings, and I often thought in

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my heart that though my father cheated people so cleverly yet there was no blessing in his earnings; for we lived very poorly.

My parents were always abusing each other, and very often my father in a fit of bad temper would beat my mother because she was a woman with a long tongue. When these quarrels were going on between them I always trembled and kept silent, knowing that if I even spoke a word both of them would belabour me.

As a child of 10, for any error, however slight, I was abused and beaten by both of them. My father wished me to follow his own profession; but somehow, I cannot say why, I hated the very idea. In our neighbourhood there were no other people any better than my parents. I played with other children who had no more idea of right and wrong than I had, and I was developing like one of them. I had no idea of decency of language, nor did I behave in any better way than my companions. I would, it seems, have grown up to be a thorough scoundrel. But my whole life was to be changed by something that happened when I was 10 years old. It came about thus.

The Rich Aunt

An aunt of mine (on my mother's side) paid us a visit. She was a widow, and had no children of her own. My parents knew that she had got some house property, some ornaments, and also a considerable amount of hard cash. She was also getting an allowance of Rs 25¹ a month,

¹ About £1 18s.

for which her husband had made provision while he was alive. She loved me as her own child and had given out that all her worldly possessions would one day be mine. Now my parents, being greedy, used to flatter her, simply in the hope that she would give all her fortune to me during her lifetime. But to this she would never agree. This time, when she came to our house, my parents were anxious to find out her final decision about her possessions. She was very much grieved to find me dressed in dirty rags, untidy in my habits, and using bad language. She scolded my mother for her neglect towards me. But my mother laid all the blame at my door.

"Sister," she said, "I bathe him every day, and put new clothes on him, but this silly boy becomes untidy in no time; and, though I warn him not to play with bad companions, he pays no heed."

To support my mother's statement I told my aunt that what my mother had said was all true. The boys in the street had torn my clothes and thrown dust over my body; hence I looked untidy. When she went on accusing my parents, saying that they were neglecting me and I was growing up a wild boy, they told her a lot of lies.

My father, protesting, said: "I want this fellow to sit with me at the shop and learn all the tricks and secrets of my trade, but he pays no heed."

My aunt at once remonstrated and replied: "I am glad to hear that the boy has no inclination for your trade. I wish him to go to

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school and be educated properly, and to follow some honest profession or trade."

My father said : " But we have no funds for educating him."

My aunt replied : " If you will simply make up your minds, I will see that the necessary funds are provided."

A School Experiment—and How it Failed

With great reluctance my father agreed. Next day my aunt purchased some clothes for me and all the necessary articles for school. I was entered in the lowest class with children of 6, 7, and 8 years old. I was the only child in the class who was in his eleventh year. As I had breathed the atmosphere of wrong talk and ways all my life, whether in the house or in the street, I was very soon found unfit for my class because I uttered nothing but bad language and abuse. I tortured little boys of my class without any reason or cause. The teachers tried their best to reform me but they failed. So at the end of six months the school authorities decided that I must be sent to some reformatory. The school was not the right place for me, they said. They thought that for the sake of the others I must be sent away.

When my parents came to know about it, they sent for my aunt and reported all that they had heard from the school authorities. They abused her fiercely because they said I had wasted more than six months of precious time. If I had been learning my business for those six months, I

should have become expert in deceiving people, and should have been able to support myself. My aunt listened to these sarcastic remarks quite coolly. Then she addressed my father thus :

“ Listen, my brother ; if Kalo Ram takes up your profession, he will become worse and worse, and will never be happy in this world, and I do not know what miseries he will bring upon other members of his family. Will you do this one thing ? I know you think him a burden upon your resources. I am prepared to take charge of him, provided that you forgo all your claims, and that you will never demand him back from me so long as I live. I am not very old yet, and I feel confident that I shall not die before the deaths of you old folks. I am sure I shall see Kalo Ram married and the father of many children, and that every mite of mine will go to him and to his children ! ”

A Modern Samuel

All was arranged, and I departed with my aunt for Hardwar. My aunt had a priest there whom she always consulted about all matters. After we had been in Hardwar for a few days, one fine morning she took me to see the priest. As soon as we reached his place he looked at me and said to my aunt : “ Shanti, you have got a ‘ boy *sadhu* ’¹ with you. Who is he ? ”

My aunt smiled and replied : “ My holy *guru*,² he is my beloved sister’s son, and is a spoilt child. His parents will have nothing to do with him.

¹ Holy man, pilgrim (see introduction).

² Teacher.

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They are tired of him, and I have taken charge of him. As you know, I have no children of my own; so I have adopted him. For this very reason I have come here to consult you about his future."

The priest said: "I have read the signs of a sadhu in him. He must have been a great *muni*¹ in his previous life, and he has to do some penance in this present life and thus finally attain his salvation."

My aunt told him all that she had heard from my parents, and of the bad opinion my school-master had formed of my character. But the priest was firm in his opinion, and he asked my aunt to leave me in his charge for a while.

When I heard that my aunt was prepared to leave me with this priest, I felt sorry that I had ever left my parents' home, because there at least I had had freedom to practise my wickednesses and to do as I liked.

One morning, my aunt took me to the bazaar and bought some nice things for me, and when we got home she began to address me thus :

"Now, my dear, I shall be going away tomorrow to Lucknow, and you will stay with my holy guru, and do all he bids you. He is my guru, and I trust that he will be able to shape your future for your happiness."

I began to cry, and wanted to accompany my aunt, but she said :

"Twice a year I visit my guru and stay here for a few days, but on my future visits I will stop

¹ Devotee.

for a longer period than formerly. And I will try now to come more often than twice."

But I found no consolation in this at all. In spite of my protests my aunt left, and I was made over to her priest. On the first day I was with him this holy man asked me to undertake all the sweeping of his house and to do all kinds of menial work for him. During the day-time neither did he take any food himself nor did he give me anything to eat or drink. In the evening he had some dry water-nuts and a little milk, and I was given some parched grain and as much water as I could drink. After this meal I was asked to spread a rough mat near the guru, and on it I slept without any mattress. Only a worn-out blanket was offered to me for the covering of my body. I remonstrated that my aunt had provided me with a nice mattress and a quilt, and that I should be allowed to use them, but no heed was paid to my protest.

Next morning I was awakened at about four o'clock, and found that the guru was getting ready to go out for his bath. I was asked to take a pitcher with me. My guru's house was about three miles and a half from the bathing-place. We reached there very early in the morning. My guru bathed, and then ordered me to follow his footsteps homewards, carrying a pitcher full of water. I got very tired, and over and over again I begged him to let me have a rest. But he made no reply. When we reached our place I was so fatigued that I burst into tears and sobs, but still the guru paid no heed. I began to think

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that not even my parents were as hard-hearted as this priest of my aunt. My guru engaged himself in his *puja*¹ and asked me to sit near him. When he had finished his puja he turned towards me, saying :

“ Look here, Kalo my boy, you are here to obey me, and must not be disobedient. Your father and mother have surrendered all claim upon you. It is your aunt Shanti who owns you, and I am her guru, and I have to see that you prove worthy to be Shanti’s son.”

Half a Loaf is Better than no Bread

Then I said: “ But, *guru-ji*,² I am hungry, please give me some food ; because after a whole day’s fasting I have had only a handful of parched grain and nothing else.”

The guru began to stare at me, and said : “ My boy, you know yourself that I have eaten nothing except a few dry water-nuts and a little milk, which was not so substantial as your food. Now, wait for a while. Soon some of my *chelas*³ will be coming, and one of them will accompany you, and you will have to go and beg for alms.”

At about ten o’clock some chelas came, and one was ordered to go with me, and teach me how to beg. I went to several *bhandaras*⁴ and begged as I was taught, saying : “ Give me something to eat, in Rama’s⁵ name.” In each of four places I

¹ Worship. ² Ji is a term of respect. ³ Disciples, or pupils.

⁴ Places where food is distributed free.

⁵ Name of a knightly hero of early Indian poetry, now worshipped as a god.

was given four chapatis¹ and a small pot of *dhal*.² Thus I collected sixteen chapatis and four pots of dhal, and so did the chela that accompanied me. All the other chelas came after us, and kept us back till they had finished their begging.

Then we all returned to our guru. There we found a number of street dogs round about him. He was petting some, and some licked his feet. When he got all the alms dishes from us, he threw the greater part of the alms to the dogs, keeping only one chapati and a little dhal for himself, and giving to each of his chelas one chapati, or part of one, and a little dhal. My share came to only half of a chapati and a table-spoonful of dhal. All the others were happy and satisfied with their share, but I was not. Every moment my hunger was increasing, and when I spoke about it to the guru, he simply said: "Drink some water."

The whole day passed. In the evening I was given a *plantain*³ and a little rice on a plantain leaf, and double of that share was given to the other chelas; but the guru on that night ate nothing. At about nine o'clock all the other chelas went away. I remained with the guru. In the early morning at two o'clock the guru awoke me, and asked me to do sweeping and other work before four in the morning, when I should have to go with him to the bathing *ghat*.⁴ At four o'clock I set off with him, carrying two empty pitchers. On our way back the guru carried one

¹ See page 9.

² Lentils.

³ Banana.

⁴ Edge, place.

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of these pitchers and I the other ; mine was filled with water, but the guru did not fill his. Again I felt tired, but the guru would not take any notice of me. When I got back, I made a plan to run away from his place. Three times I attempted to do so. Every time I was caught by some of the guru's chelas and brought back to him. I observed one thing, however—that the guru never used his stick, nor did he ever abuse me. All he used to say was : “ *Bachcha sansar men mat phans* (Child, do not get entangled in this world).”

For over six months I remained thus with the guru, and the routine work was the same. Every day the chelas brought in the alms, and the guru always gave the food to a number of street dogs who came in time for their meal and disappeared afterwards. My hunger was not so intense now. I began to be satisfied with what I got. But by this time I was wondering why my aunt did not come, as more than six months had already passed. I learned later that the guru had sent her word that she must not come, nor even see me for the next seven years ; and she was so devoted to her guru that she obeyed his orders. For eighteen months I lived this life. I was given two hours daily for reading and writing, and now I could write a letter and read any book in Hindi. I committed many *slokas*¹ to memory. I could also say from memory morning and evening prayers in Sanskrit.²

¹ Verses.

² A “dead” language, in which the great Hindustani classics are written.

False Prophets

One night a number of sadhus came to our house. I was sound asleep when I heard my guru calling me. I got up, and he said: "Look, these people have come to us and we must serve them. Be ready with the alms bowl and go from house to house and beg in the name of Rama." I hesitated, and then told the guru that I could not go alone. He said: "Very well, I will accompany you." So he went with me, and we begged till five in the morning, but got nothing. My guru began to be uncomfortable, and told me to go to the bathing-ghat and bring some water for him. I obeyed, and when I returned I found him in a state of meditation. When he saw me he said: "Kalo Ram, those whom we thought to be sadhus must be thieves, who have only disguised themselves as sadhus. It will be on this account that Rama did not allow people to give us alms; for Rama's name is so beloved by people that they never withhold anything if it is asked in his name."

When we reached our place, we found that the guru was right. The so-called sadhus had disappeared and left behind a lot of booty which they had secretly brought with them. They were chased by the police, and next morning the police came to our house, collected all the booty, and took it away. Our guru was arrested, but after a while they released him.

Once, too, a sadhu came to our place and my guru treated him kindly. He was, however, too fond of drink. He asked my guru to procure some liquor for him. He also asked leave to stay on

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with the other chelas. My guru refused this request, and told him that he had not yet subdued all his passions.

Another time a sadhu came and stayed with us for some time. During his stay he tried to kidnap me. I went with him, but after two days I found my guru standing before me, and he asked me where I was going. When I looked round I found that the kidnapper sadhu was nowhere to be seen. My guru spoke to me kindly and said: "Kalo Ram, there are some who call themselves sadhus, but they are not. You have already experienced that there are thieves in the garb of sadhus; there are drunkards, there are kidnappers. Beware of these. On the night before last, when I slept, I saw you going away with this sadhu. I let you travel for two days with him. But you are my ward; Shanti has entrusted you to my hands. It was therefore my duty to release you from his clutches. I had to come and stand before you. Always serve sadhus, even if they are wicked. Their garb must be respected. In the end their deeds will betray them. I, as a guru of so many chelas, do not make any distinction among my visitors, if they come to me dressed as sadhus. When their deeds betray them I do not abuse them; they have abused their garb, and for this they will bring punishment upon themselves."

These and many other things my guru used to explain to me whenever any occasion arose for such instruction. This was his method; he always used examples to illustrate his teachings.

A Stern Training

When I had finished two years with my guru, he sent for me one day and asked me if I would like to go back to my parents. I began to think over this question seriously. I told him that I did not want to go back to my parents, but that I should be very glad to go back to my aunt.

He said: "Very well, write a letter to your aunt and see if she is willing to have you."

So I wrote a long letter and entreated my aunt to come to Hardwar and take me home, or to allow me to come to her. To this letter she sent a very cold reply, saying that she could not see me before seven years had passed from the date on which she had left me at her guru's place. There was not one word of affection or love in the letter. I took the reply to the guru, and all he said was: "Shanti be blessed! She knows what implicit obedience is." My guru then asked me again if I would like to go away from him anywhere I pleased. He further said that he would be ready to provide me with clothes and journey expenses. I began to think again; but after all I decided not to go away, but to stay for another five years; after which I thought my aunt would have me in her home.

When the guru came to know my decision, he appointed one of his senior chelas to prepare me for making pilgrimages to sacred places. The first thing he taught me was implicit obedience; he gave me some orders which I disliked, but I was made to carry them out. This teaching was given me for six months. The second thing he

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taught me was poverty. He told me that he himself was the son of a great landlord, but that he had had to renounce all, and yet was feeling quite happy. Many temptations to follow riches were brought before me, but by the help of my guru I escaped them all. The period for this teaching was extended for eighteen months. Now I was over 16 years of age. The third thing that was taught me was purity. I was made to go to the bathing-places of the women, and to sit there for hours, and then come back and relate my experiences to my instructor, and he would correct me when I expressed anything undesirable. I was taught to look upon every woman as my own mother, sister, or daughter, according to her age.

The period allotted for this training was two years and a half. By this time I was about 19 years old. My guru now started out on a pilgrimage, and I was asked to accompany him. We first visited Amarnath, and then went to all the other sacred places, and last of all we visited Jagannath, and came back to our own place at Hardwar. The period of pilgrimage lasted some two and a half years. During these journeys my guru gave me lectures in a higher course of Sanskrit. Thus I became well acquainted with Sanskrit, and had read and heard most of the scriptures of the Hindu religion, and committed a great many slokas to memory.

The Guru's Passing—and his Successor

During our absence my aunt came to see her guru, but as he was away she went back to

Lucknow. When we returned from our pilgrimage, one day when I was 21 years old, my guru asked if I wanted to go back to my parents.

I said: "No, but I should like to meet my aunt."

He said: "You will meet her shortly."

Then he asked me if I wanted to get married, offering to help me, if I wished, in finding a suitable bride.

I said: "How can I think of it, when I have promised to live a life of purity?"

He replied: "A *gristhi* can also live a life of chastity."

After a great deal of thinking, I said: "I do not wish to entangle myself in the world."

He said: "Go, then, and see your parents for the last time, and say good-bye to them."

I asked: "What about my aunt?"

He answered: "No, you are not to see your aunt at her home; you will see her here."

I had to pass through Lucknow, and I badly wanted to see my aunt, but I had promised implicit obedience. So I went straight to Benares and saw my father, who was there on his death-bed. I wished him good-bye just when he breathed his last, and left my mother mourning and weeping. The guru had allowed me to stay for three hours at my parents' home, and I then returned to Hardwar.

Here I found my aunt nursing guru-ji, as he had fallen ill. All the chelas were anxious about him. As soon as the guru saw me he shouted:

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“The successor has come!” As soon as I approached him and touched his feet¹ he pointed to his *gaddi*² and asked me to sit there. I obeyed, and all the chelas, including my instructor, offered their salutations to me. My guru then told my aunt: “Now, Shanti, that ‘boy sadhu’ is your guru; henceforth serve him all your life here.” Immediately he had said this he fell back dead.

To-day I am 63 years old. I have been the successor of my guru for forty-one years, and all the chelas have served me faithfully. My aunt lived on here for twenty-one years, and rendered all the help she could to many of my women disciples. My mother also came and settled at Hardwar, and very often paid me visits, but there was no change in her heart. She very often quarrelled with my aunt. She thought that it was my aunt’s doing that I had become a sadhu. She died ten years before my aunt’s death. I am carrying on my guru’s orders faithfully.

¹ A mark of discipleship.

² Throne.

CHAPTER IV

CHANGED IDEAS

A Boy of Kashmir Learns to Play the Game

VERY few schools for boys in the East are quite as well known as the C.M.S. Boys' High School in Srinagar. Its head master since 1891, the Rev. C. E. Tyndale-Biscoe, is a Cambridge Blue who coxed the 'Varsity Eight in the 'eighties.

Kashmir is one of the loveliest countries in the world, a land of mountains, lakes, and rich valleys. Its lands have always been coveted and held by stronger invaders. Hence its people tend to become slack and unmanly and dishonest, and let their chief city of Srinagar remain dirty and untidy. But there is fine material in the Kashmiri boys, hundreds of whom have been turned into first-rate men by this Christian boys' school, now numbering over 1200 pupils. Here is the story of one of them.

The Streets of Srinagar

COME with me and I will conduct you to my house. This street is one of the widest in the city of Srinagar, and there is just room for two *tongas*¹ to pass each other. Be careful of the gutter on either side; for that is the only kind of sewer which this city of 130,000 people possesses. The shops do not bear much resemblance to your English shops, do they? Over the

¹ Light carts.

gutter projects a platform, on which squats the shop-keeper ; around him are arranged his goods—rice, Indian corn, dhal, salt, tobacco, oil, and a miscellaneous collection of other things. In the darkness behind, you can see rows of old biscuit tins which contain assortments of all kinds of ware. Hung on the black wooden pillars are crude pictures of gods—seven-headed gods ; gods with the Ganges issuing from their heads ; gods with a dozen arms ; Ganesh, the elephant-headed god ; Hanuman, the monkey god ; and Kali, the black goddess, with her long, blood-smeared tongue and necklace of skulls. Here, too, you will find English goods, Manchester cotton, Sheffield knives or scissors, and little looking-glasses, or cards of buttons.

The streets are very crowded, and you have to pick your way carefully. Dogs lie about everywhere, all terribly mangy, all half-starved, and many mutilated. Sahibs sometimes come and kill those with broken legs or the badly wounded ; but it is considered a sin to take life, and so His Highness the Maharajah does not allow it. Don't run into that old cow there ! It won't move out of your way. It has been used in the plough, and that is how it has had its tail twisted off. Now it wanders down the streets and helps itself to the vegetables on the shop fronts.

The men and women, as you see, both wear the same kind of dress—the *pheran*. It is a loose gown reaching from the neck to the feet, with very baggy sleeves turned back at the wrist, and a deep tuck runs round the foot of it. This dress

has one convenience ; for in the winter we carry about a little fire basket called a *kangri*, and it is easy to slip the arms out of the sleeves and carry this next to the skin, though we often get bad burns through doing so. Notice the old women going down that steep, narrow alley to the river with their water-jars. The smell is worse there, because the drains run into the river at those places. It is heavy work ; see them fill their pots, and hoist them first on to the knee and then up on to the head ; it is no wonder that the ground is littered with broken earthenware.

There are numbers of children too, without clothing, playing about in the mire, mostly with " scalded " heads and eyes sticky with dirt.

My Home—and Early Days

But now we turn down this alley. Mind where you walk, the *mehtar*¹ does not come down here because the inspector does not examine the back alleys. Here is my house, and this is the mud wall round the compound, ² but it has fallen down in many places. Wait, and I will bring you a few stepping-stones to help you to get through the slush. Up these steps, please ; we push open the folding doors turning on wooden pivots and enter the ground floor room. It is rather dark, because the windows are made of sliding shutters of trellis-work, and these are papered over, glass being too expensive to use. The walls and floor are all plastered and whitewashed. We have

¹ Sweeper who clears the refuse from the streets.

² Ground surrounding and belonging to a house.

no chairs, but if you find it awkward to squat on the mat I will bring you a charpoy to sit on.

Here I have spent all my life. I have many little brothers, and when I was small we all played together in the bazaar. The gods rewarded my father for his "virtues" (i.e. his careful attention to themselves) by sending him only one daughter, and seven sons, but one of my brothers died of smallpox and one of cholera.

Of course, several of the most important events in my life took place long before I could recollect anything. Often has my mother told me of the ceremonies, lasting ten days, which were held at my birth; of the altar on which *ghee*,¹ rice, sugar, and raisins were offered, while the priest recited *mantras*²; of the sacred mixture of milk, sugar, and ghee which my father, my mother, and I had to drink for our purification; of the great feast for all our friends and relatives; and of all the other religious ceremonies which then took place. I was given the name of Ram, after the great god, and my caste name is Chand, for I am of the Brahman caste. When my little sister was born my father took no part in the ceremony, and there was no feast.

Another great day in my life, which I can just remember, was when my head was shaved for the first time; I was then about 2 years old. A propitious day was appointed by the astrologer; there were again many religious ceremonies, and I was given a bath and dressed in new clothes.

¹ Clarified butter.

² Sacred texts or incantations.

Going to School

At last the day came when I was to go to school. I was sent to the State primary school in my neighbourhood. I was awakened earlier than usual, and after ceremonial ablutions in the river I had the *tika*¹ marked on my forehead. My mother prepared a special meal, to be distributed among the neighbours on my return. My uncle took me to school, and we were accompanied by a servant bearing a basket of *kulchas*.² One was given to each of the pupils and the remainder the teacher took home with him.

I could hear the noise of the school long before I reached the building. On entering the door I saw a room full of boys, squatting on the floor, the elder with their backs to the wall, and the younger in the middle of the room. In the corner sat the teacher, an old man with a grey beard, very dirty. The method of teaching was this: the pupils would go up one by one and squat down facing the teacher, each with his book in his lap. The teacher would then read out a sentence from the book, the pupil following it with a grimy finger and repeating it after the teacher until he had got it by heart. In the meantime the rest of the pupils were all repeating their respective lessons in a very nasal sing-song, and rocking their bodies to and fro; hence the noise I had heard from afar.

I had first to learn my letters. For this purpose a wooden slate is used with a handle at the top by

¹ A paint mark placed on the forehead by a Hindu when he worships his god.

² Small round loaves, in appearance like a penny bun.

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which to hold it. The letters are written with a reed pen and an ink made of a kind of clay, which dries white and can be rubbed off with a damp cloth, and the board is then polished with the bottom of an old bottle. The writing runs from right to left.

There was no recreation period, and any boy reported for playing after school was punished. In the summer time, when whole holidays were given, the boys were previously stamped on their right leg with a school die, and this mark had to be shown to the teacher the next day, as evidence that the boy had not been in the water. If the stamp was effaced the boy was punished.

When the inspector sahib came round, the teacher generally managed to prompt his pupils ; and during the examinations I could usually contrive to compare notes with the boys next to me, or carry into school text-books and notes which are easily concealed in the pheran, and I would ask the gods of learning that I should come out successful from the primary school.

A Crisis

So I passed up, after three years, into the middle department, and for two more years made good progress with my books. Then came a crisis. To be promoted into the high department we had to pass a State examination conducted by masters of the State school. Now it so happened that one of the examiners had had a quarrel with the head master of my school, and, when the results came out, it was found that he had passed

all the worst boys and rejected all the best boys (including myself, I may say). He did this in order that subsequently my school should have bad results in the matriculation examination, and that my head master should consequently be degraded by the State authorities. My father was very angry that I had not passed, and at once sent in an application for a discharge certificate. The application was at first refused, on the pretext that it had not been received on the correct date ; but as my father was a friend of one of the State ministers he was able to bring pressure to bear, so the certificate was signed and I left school.

How I Became "Twice-born"

Some time before this I had been invested with the sacred thread of the Brahman. The ceremony that takes place on such occasions is as follows. The horoscope¹ is first examined and a propitious day is appointed. About ten days before the ceremony all the inside of the house is white-washed, and the mother goes round to summon the guests to the feast. The women spend the nights in chanting, and on the third night before the ceremony an aunt (on the father's side) paints the hands and feet of the boy, and also the hands and feet of all the womenfolk who have assembled in the house, with henna, a kind of red dye. For the time being the boy is the *Maharaja*.² The chief room is plastered with cow-dung, and an altar is prepared on which the priest

¹ A sort of calendar for a person's life worked out in connexion with the position of the stars at his birth.

² Great king.

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pours libations of ghee and burns offerings, while he chants Veda mantras. There is then a ceremonial washing, and the young Brahman is invested with new clothes. Many intricate rites are performed and curious designs are drawn on the walls and mud floor. The boy stands in his new pheran, girded with a robe of woven grass, with the hide of an antelope fastened on his right side, and a staff in one hand and a begging bowl in the other. His head is shaved bare, save for the sacred tuft.

Then comes the moment when his father invests him with the sacred threefold thread (which must always be worn from henceforward), binding it round the right arm and then round the neck. The womenfolk meanwhile have been in a separate room and continuously keeping up their chanting; but for the last offering all the men, women, and children in the house stand round the altar, each with a handful of barley and rice; and as the priest makes the offering of ghee, these handfuls are also offered up upon the altar. At last the boy is taken down to the ghat by the riverside, and there, with the aid of the priest, performs *sandhya*.¹ The boy holds the thread on his two thumbs. At the first reading of a mantra he inhales; on the second reading he holds his breath; and on the third he exhales. He learns the correct ritual and corresponding mantras for rinsing the mouth, bathing the body, squatting in meditation, drinking the water and casting up handfuls of it to the gods. He is now "twice-born."

¹ Worship.

My Introduction to the Mission School

After my failure in the State examination, and removal from the other school, my father decided to send me to the mission school, for this had a great reputation, and had recently been visited by the Viceroy. Moreover, my uncle on my mother's side thought that if I went to the mission school the sahib in charge might give *him* a recommendation for a post in the forest department, the head of which department was a European.

I had heard much of the mission school, and of the strange things that went on there. I had often seen a great tamasha when the mission schoolboys paddled along in their *shikaras*¹ just like *mangis*.² To my surprise, Hindus and Moslems were together in the same boat, and even the sweeper³ of the school had I seen taking part with the Brahmans. And yet they were all happy and laughing together; it was a very strange sight. Once I had seen some mission schoolboys driving a donkey to their school, and I thought they must be looting it. Afterwards I heard that they had fed it well—fancy feeding a donkey, that can easily browse on the refuse in the streets!—and kept it till the owner turned up. They made the owner pay for its keep, and told him that donkeys ought to be fed and cared for, and even after he had taken his donkey home some of the masters came to inquire about it. I wondered what their *mailab*⁴

¹ Kashmiri boats.
² Scavenger.

³ Kashmiri boatmen, or bargees.
⁴ Motive.

was in troubling about strange donkeys and dogs, especially as the Christians killed the sacred cow—how horrible! Perhaps it was a way these boys had got into by becoming "Boy Scouts," as some of them were called.

One day I saw an ox that had drawn an extra heavy load up the road from Pindi, 200 miles away, lying by the roadside, exhausted. It was of no further use to the owner, who had left it there to die. An old mission schoolboy came along. He first drove off the vultures that were trying to peck out its eyes. He then found some coolies to help him get the animal into a yard, and, strange to say, he managed to nurse it back to life. And yet it couldn't have been worth anything! I wondered whether they were going to sell it again, to be killed outside Kashmir, in British India?

Well, I went to the mission school full of curiosity. In the compound of the school, when I arrived, there were 500 boys. I went in my pheran, and as it was cold I was carrying my kangri underneath. All the boys were wearing *patloons*¹ cut short above the knee, and one or two boys had even tucked their shirts inside their patloons, instead of allowing them to hang free, as all Indians do. I was not allowed to take my kangri into school with me, as I was told that it was unhealthy.

Presently the sahib arrived. He went up to the head master and began to talk with him. I wanted to hear what they were

¹ Trousers.

saying, so I went up to listen ; but I was rudely driven away, and told that it was not good manners to listen to other people's conversation. Then the sahib went into his office and called some of the boys in. I went up and looked in through the window, just to see what they were doing, but again I was turned away and asked whether I wanted to clean the window with my nose ! Soon the school bell went, and I went into the hall with the boys. I left my shoes outside on the ground, but later I learnt that each class had a special rack allotted to it in the outside veranda for depositing its shoes.

We all squatted on the floor for the roll-call, and, when that was over, some boys with flutes began to play. I knew the tune, for it was one of our own Indian airs ; but the words were very strange, though they were in Hindustani :—

The Lord is full of compassion and gracious,
 Slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy ;
 As far as the East is from the West,
 So far hath He removed our trespasses from us.

“What nonsense !” . I thought to myself. “Don't I know—for the priests have told me—that nothing can possibly alter our *karma*¹ ? How can God remove the fruit of our works ? Escape can only come by acquiring right knowledge, so that works, whether good or bad, at last cease to bear fruit, and then we are delivered from the curse of being re-born into the world ; but that can only be after myriads of re-births.”

¹ The Hindu doctrine of fate (explained in the sentence following the word here).

After the singing we had a prayer to the Christian God, and asked Him to help us to be true and just, obedient to our parents and teachers, kind to our neighbours, and keen in our games.

More Shocks and Surprises

There were four boards of honour in the hall. One contained a list of the boys and masters who had performed great feats of strength; another, of those who had gained the "Viceroy's Medal," and to my astonishment I found afterwards that it was not given always to the boys who gained most marks in their examinations, but to the best all-round boys, and that deeds of kindness and service to others in need carried most weight. But strangest of all were two boards recording what were regarded as the highest honours of all. One was for "Those who have risked their lives for the sake of others," and the other for "Those who have given their lives for others"; and some of those whose names were recorded had saved mere women! I wondered whether the boys were paid for this, and why the sahibs who were masters at the school wanted lives saved. The people surely wouldn't pay anything *after* they were saved!

All round the walls of the school were picture postcards in little frames, and I found afterwards that each room had pictures of different countries and subjects, and that the boys had to notice these and learn about them. And yet this was of no use for the matriculation examination. What waste of time, then!

After the prayers all the boys doubled out of the hall to their class-rooms to the music of the flutes. Being a member of a respectable family, I began to move forward leisurely, in a dignified way, but was soon hustled along by a master and made to run. "There is all the day before us," I said, "why this unseemly haste?"

As soon as we were in our class-rooms, a master came round and examined all our heads, faces, and ears, and our hands and feet, to see whether we were clean. He sent me out to the tap to wash my neck, and my ears and my feet. Who ever heard of washing in the winter? They also called me *na-pak*¹ because I had got some lice on my head under my turban. I protested: "Who hasn't got them? Even our priests never wash; are they then *na-pak*?" I supposed it was another of these strange English ideas.

Then came what was called the "Bible period." The sahib told us the story of a man who was robbed on a highway, and how first a priest and then some other holy man came by and did not help him; but an outcaste who was passing went and tended to him, and bound up his wounds and took him to a *serai*,² and paid for him till he was better. The sahib said that this parable taught us that God did not care so much for our caste as for our deeds. "What!" I asked myself, "can a low-caste man be as good as a Brahman? Are not we Brahmans twice-born? Did not we issue from the head of God, while the low-caste people issued from His feet? Is not it by

¹ Unclean or unholy.

² Inn.

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the law of karma that we are Brahmans and they are outcaste? Why should a holy Brahman defile himself by touching a chance stranger? ”

I took a great deal of trouble over my lessons, as I wanted to pass the matriculation examination with honours. I learnt the English in particular very thoroughly. On that first morning, for example, I could write out, word for word, with the notes, the poem which the master asked us from the set book :—

Home they brought her warrior dead ;
She nor swoon'd, nor utter'd cry ;
All her maidens watching said,
“ She must weep, or she will die.”

Or, as we Indians should say : “ No sooner her young family members saw this than they exclaimed that ‘ you must rain your tears or you will expire out your breath.’ ”

But when the recreation period came, on my first day at school, I was much astonished. Suddenly a bugle sounded ; all the boys leaped up and rushed out on to the veranda. From there they slipped down poles and ropes, and others stampeded down the stairs. Before I knew what had happened, they were lined up in the compound. I stood aloof, wishing to continue learning the notes on the poem, but “ master-ji ” came and told me that every day, on the sound of the bugle, I too must rush out in this undignified manner. Now it had been snowing hard while we were in school, and I said that I wished to sit

inside and to have my kangri to warm myself. Master-ji would not listen to this, and turned me out into the cold.

Worse still was to follow. The boys were throwing snow at each other. I was standing still when a low-down Moslem boy threw snow in my face. I became very indignant, and made up my mind that I would stay no longer in a school where they seemed to pay no respect to passing examinations. As soon as school was over, I went home and composed the following application for a discharge certificate :—

“ SIR,—Most respectfully I beg to approach you with these few lines which, I hope, shall receive your deep and favourable consideration. In the recreation period, the upper school was engaged in snow fighting. I, being ignorant of the danger of this game, remained stationary at a place. A Moslem boy, whom I may call a *gunda*,¹ from the mode in which he fell upon me and nearly would have strangled me, regardless of consideration of religion threw his hand in my mouth. I could not help weeping. At that time my sight began to fail. Under the observance of Brahmanism I am bound to keep fasting for several days. I am a boy rather of a respectable family, so I am obliged to request you the favour of granting a discharge certificate ! ”²

¹ Lewd fellow of the baser sort !

² The above is a translation of a letter actually received by the head master.

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My Ideas are Changed

The sahib laughed at this letter which I wrote after my first day at the mission school ; but he was kind, and said I must learn to play games, because it was good for me in all ways. So I did not leave the school. Now I am playing cricket, or football, two or three times a week. At first I went to games because I was fined for staying away, but now I go for the love of it. I also had to pay extra fees because I could not swim ; but I soon learned, and every Tuesday through the summer I went out in the boats. It seemed strange at first doing the work of a bargee, and I hoped my friends and relatives would not see me, but soon I began to look forward to the weekly regattas. Many sahibs come to the Dal Lake to watch us, and they cheer the boat that wins each race.

The most exciting thing comes at the end. We start off in the boats, then the sahib blows a whistle. At once we all stand up and run to the bow of the boat, so that the water rushes in and the boat is swamped. I was frightened the first time, but all the other boys were laughing and enjoying themselves, and I soon found that it was quite easy. After being swamped, every boat has to be first turned bottom upwards, and then righted again. Then we set to work and empty out the water with our hands. As the boat rises, we get in one by one, till the whole boat is cleared of water and we paddle back. One great point of all this practice is that we can always help to "save



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life" in an emergency, when there is an upset on the river.

I like the recreation period, too, now, and I think I may become a gymnastic instructor before long. The other day I saw an old woman carrying a heavy load of cow-dung. Now the sahib always says that we ought to help the weak whenever we can, and that Jesus Christ went about doing good, and so we also ought to follow His example. There were a lot of people round, and I knew that they would laugh at me; but I said to myself: "Am I not a mission schoolboy, and isn't it cowardly to mind being laughed at?" So I took the load and carried it to the old woman's house. She thought at first that I wanted to steal her load or that I wanted *pice*¹; but when she found that I only wanted to help, she almost wept for gratitude. The bystanders jeered at me for doing coolie work, but somehow I enjoyed it immensely. I cannot explain, but I felt something inside me that I had never felt before.

A Picture and a Question

Now I am beginning to understand the life of Jesus Christ. Surely he was a great guru; no teaching can surpass His. Many of the English Christians spend their whole lives helping the people, because they say they follow Jesus. Can I follow Him? Many Indians believe on Him secretly but still call themselves Hindus. Some who profess to become Christians do it from low motives. Tika Lal is going to read the Bible with

¹ Small Indian coin.

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the *chota*¹ sahib, who has just arrived from England. The chota sahib thinks that Tika Lal wants to become a Christian, but really he only wants to learn English. He told me that if I pretended to want to be a Christian the missionaries would send me down country and pay for my education at a boarding school. Then, too, some of the Indian Christians ape the sahib's dress and manner, and it is said that some, who were Moslems before, and therefore total abstainers, take to drinking when they become Christians. But I do know one boy, Masih Kol, who is a real Christian. They nearly killed him when he became an inquirer, and he had to escape for his life and be baptized down country. He does not lie nor cheat, nor take bribes as all the Hindus do.

It is all very difficult. Cannot I be a Christian without being baptized and breaking caste? My father and mother love me dearly and I love them, but it would break their hearts if I openly became a Christian, and they would sooner see me dead, or even poison me themselves.

The other day I saw a little card hanging up in the chota sahib's house-boat. It was a picture of Christ, hanging on the Cross. On the left side was written: "This have I done for thee"; on the right side: "What doest thou for Me?" and underneath: "O Saviour of the world, Who by Thy Cross and precious Blood has redeemed us, save us and help us, we humbly beseech Thee, O Lord." And ever since, I have not been able to

¹ Younger, literally small.

get that picture out of my thoughts, or to cease from wondering how *I* can answer that question on the right side of the figure of Christ: "What doest *thou* for Me?"

• • •

A Sequel

[Ram Chand, who has told us this tale of his own life, has ended with a question. We must finish his story for him. He did find an answer to that question on the picture-card he saw in the house-boat by becoming baptized as a Christian. That was before the war. During the war he served in France and Palestine with some Indian troops, and was one of the few Indians "mentioned in dispatches." Afterwards he did magnificent work during a rice shortage in Srinagar in organizing the proper food-supply of the poorer people, becoming a kind of modern Joseph. His whole life is devoted to the welfare of his people; and, like many old boys of the mission school who have not professed themselves Christians, he is trying, in the teeth of severe opposition, to lift the whole standard of manhood and womanhood in his own city.—*Editor.*]

CHAPTER V

SANTOSH' THE SWEET-SELLER

A Popular Figure at Calcutta School Gates

THIS picture of a Calcutta boy shows us how like a modern city of the West that great Indian city has become, with its trams, taxis, corporation, and public schools.

I

A Wayside Bath

"**H**E! Jao!" Santosh was addressing a large white cow that had switched her long white tail with some force across his chest as he made his way along the street pavement.

It was quite a common occurrence, but the tail was an unusually muscular one, and for the moment the owner's holiness was lost to Santosh's mind.

It was midday, and Santosh was returning to his father's shop after having had his midday bath. It had been very refreshing. A kind city corporation had seen to it that in the Indian quarters of Calcutta at regular intervals in every street a hydrant or man-hole is set on the edge of

¹ Pronounced "Shontosh."

the pavement with an iron trap-door over it. The Ganges water bubbling up from the tap thereunder provides baths for all who desire cleansing at a convenient distance from their shops, and Santosh was as clever as the others in dipping up the water in his brass pot and pouring it over himself limb by limb, changing his wet *dhoti*¹ for a clean dry one afterwards with a dexterity and propriety surpassing many a conjurer's sleight-of-hand tricks.

Sweets in the Making

Giving the cow a disrespectful slap, he picked his way between several *pi*-dogs² sleeping on the pavement and entered his father's tiny shop. Like all the rest, it consisted of one square, low room, open on one side to the street and raised two feet from the ground. His father was a seller of sweetmeats, and everything was done "on the premises," for Indian sweets are generally perishable, being mixed with milk or curd of ghee.

His father was just finishing the daily batch of *jellabies*,³ and Santosh watched the process with his usual interest, for odd scraps were his perquisite, and *jellabies* are good.

In the front of the shop a small mud oven about a foot high was built, with a hole on top. Red-hot charcoal glowed inside its grey mud walls, and on it rested a large, flat, round pan with

¹ A cotton cloth draped round the loins and legs to form shirt and knickers.

² Street dogs, usually unclean.

³ A very succulent sweet

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a handle at each side, full of bubbling, boiling fat. Squatting on the ground beside it, Santosh's father was tying up some yellowish paste or dough in a *jham*.¹ Holding the four tied corners in one hand, he squeezed the mass over the boiling fat with the other, pressing out a slow, snaky stream through a small hole in the underside. With a rapid movement the sweet-maker formed twisted rings of the paste on the fat, and these rapidly became solid; when he had covered the pan with these he took a long iron ladle and turned the rings over and lifted them out to drain. When finished, they looked like pinky, golden, barley-sugar bracelets. He piled them in a sticky pyramid near the *shondesh*—square white sweets made of sugar and cream curd decorated with bits of silver paper or tiny red petals of flowers.

Then his father lay down to sleep as only an Indian knows how, swiftly and soundly, with his head on the sugar-bag and his feet on the kneading-board.

Some Customers

Santosh took up a long switch of grasses with a wooden handle, coloured black, yellow, and red, and lazily frightened away some of the flies within his reach, singing a song to himself. Then he went to the back of the shop, and found the remains of his father's morning meal in the usual brass pots. When he had finished eating, sleep overcame him also, and he stealthily lay

¹ Duster.

down, careful to do so in front of his father, so that possible purchasers should wake him first. This soon happened.

"*He! Bai!*" Up sat Santosh, and, rubbing his eyes, saw a college student obviously desiring sustenance. *Roshagulas* were his desire, lots of them. These are round, white balls something like scented sweet rice-pudding soaked in syrup, and kept in earthen pots. To be properly consumed these should not be bitten, but dropped whole into the mouth, which they exactly fit. Santosh counted out the required number, which was unusually large.

"Babu, for whom are you buying such quantities?" he asked.

"Cease thy questions, boy. Have we not our volley-ball cup-final to-day, and do we not desire many roshagulas to celebrate our victory?"

"But," said Santosh, "seeing you may be defeated, what then?"

"Then assuredly will we need comfort for our stomachs," the philosophical one replied, as he threw down the money, eight-sided four-anna bits, square two-anna bits, round annas—a truly princely order. This done, he acknowledged the boy's salaam and went away.

Santosh had managed adroitly to drop one roshagula on the floor, and, noting with inward relish that it was unfit for sale, he picked it up with his right finger and thumb, held it above his open mouth, bob-cherry fashion, and dropped it in. Then he settled down again, and slept in

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the haze of heat and flies and dust that make noontide in Calcutta.

II

A Person of Importance

“Wake up, thou lazy one, or I will throw thee as a dinner to the kites and crows!” Thus his father affectionately awakened him.

Santosh gathered together his stock-in-trade, hastily brushing sugar and dust from his dhoti. This was the busiest hour of his day and the most exciting, for he was for once a man on his own, and of supreme importance in the eyes of hundreds of boys richer and cleverer than tongue could tell. He picked up a large brass tray laden with many kinds of sweets, bags of nuts, spices, and chewing beans. This he placed on his head and, tucking a cane stand like an elongated hour-glass under his arm, he snatched up the scales—simple things of string and cane—and a money-bag, and made off for the scene of his daily social triumph. This was the pavement outside the great pillared portico of the large Hindu boys' school behind College Square. Here he set up the stand with the tray on top, and, squatting on the pavement by the railings, awaited the moment when the school should be over. He was not a moment too soon; for the avalanche descended on him immediately. The din was terrific. Calcutta schoolboys, like their cousins in England, yield only to the crows in the amount of noise they can produce in a small limit of space and time.

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There were boys hanging over the rails, small boys squeezing through the rails, tall boys doing business from behind. His sweets and spices and nuts were all too soon exchanged for pice, and the thrilling event was over.

Day-dreams

Santosh was alone again now, save for the leper near by him, sobbing out his wail for baksheesh and sympathy in a sustained "*baba—ma ma—*" He who had been of so great importance a moment ago, perhaps even in the eyes of a rajah's son, was once more only Santosh the sweet-seller, as his fathers before him had been. And those boys? How often had he watched them arriving at school in their fathers' *gharries*¹ or motors, and admired them as they picked their way across the pavement in their Oxford shoes, silk socks, and latest American suspenders glistening under their fine white dhoties. What would they become? Lawyers, city merchants, *zamindars*,² doctors, judges? What might they *not* become, while he—Santosh the sweet-seller—would always be on the pavement, or flicking flies off sweets in the little dusty shop?

Santosh sighed, for he, too, had his ambitions. Sometimes he wandered out at "cowdust,"³ when the orange bars of light from the

¹ Carriages.

² Squires or landed proprietors.

³ Twilight, called "cowdust" because of the dust raised by the cattle coming home.

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sun's afterglow blazed on the dome of the little temple opposite. At such an hour the business of life seemed to stand still for a time, its machinery to slow down, its pulses to throb more freely ; and it was then that Santosh felt his own secret dreams of desire surge up within him. Sometimes he would go and sit on Howrah Bridge and watch the stream of bullock-carts swaying across and the taxis darting in and out of the slower traffic. There, he felt that his dream could actually be realized in driving a taxi through crowded streets, master of all within his reach, holding death in his hand and time in his grip ! He would have liked to have a turban, and a fierce moustache and beard like the Sikh¹ drivers ; but, then, Bengalis (and he was one) do not wear turbans, and never look fierce. Still, apart from these details, the prospect glowed tantalizingly before him. . . .

Santosh sighed, and, again gathering his properties together, left the school railings and went back to the shop and the flies.

III

A Picture with a Challenge

That evening, when his dreams were calling him, he wandered down a side-street to look at the Hindu picture-shops, which are hung with gaudily coloured prints of gods and goddesses in various attitudes. Between two pictures, of Kali the bloody-tongued and Ganesh of the

¹ A warlike tribe in North India.



Photograph

THE HOWRAH BRIDGE, CALCUTTA

[H. Howse

]p. 64

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And a sweet-seller he must remain. And having accidentally knocked two roshagulas out of a full bowl in his haste to serve an important babu, and seeing their satisfactorily damaged condition he picked them up, one at a time, between his right finger and thumb, held them above his open mouth and dropped them in.

CHAPTER VI

THE DAY-DREAMS OF AN OUTCASTE

From Mang Cowherd to Master Carpenter

IN strong contrast to the city life of Calcutta comes this tale of a Mang boy in his village setting. He was one of the fifty million outcastes of India—people who are like the serfs of the Middle Ages. The reason for their low position and degradation is suggested on the page below. But hundreds of thousands of others like Manohar have been lifted from serfdom into happy, useful lives, by the Christian religion and Christian education. The Mangs as a tribe are found in the Deccan.

Born into Serfdom

MANOHER was dreaming. What else was there to do as the long, hot hours crept by?

He must keep awake, that goes without saying; otherwise the cattle he was looking after would stray and he would lose the twopence a month he earned per animal; a meagre sum enough, but it helped to keep the wolf from the door.

He was an outcaste boy, a Mang, one of the aboriginal races of India, that long ages since had gradually retreated southwards before the oncoming march of invaders from the north. At

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night, when half the village gathered round his father's door to listen by the hour together to the ancient songs and stories that had been handed down from father to son for centuries, he would sometimes catch glimpses of the far-off time when his forefathers had been men of importance.

Tradition said that no Brahman was prouder and more respected to-day than Manohar's ancestors had been in the old forgotten days. And now? So low had their descendants sunk that not even the air was theirs to breathe freely. Manohar, for example, rarely entered the village proper; his house, or rather hovel, made of mud, was outside the sacred precincts of the main village; for was he not an outcaste whose very presence defiled these lords of the earth, the caste people? Late in the evening he might wander from house to house and beg; and the proud Brahmans would not dare refuse him some grain, for ill luck follows in the wake of refusing food to a Mang; but the grain was given from fear, not from love, and the unwelcome visitor returned as soon as he could to the outcastes' quarter, there to spend the night huddled together with the rest of the family in one small room—it was all the hovel boasted—or, if the weather was hot, he had for his roof the myriad stars of an Indian sky.

A Motley Herd

Manohar was an early riser. No sooner did the first faint glimmer of dawn lighten the eastern horizon than he used to be awake and up. There was not much water available for a boy who might

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not touch the village well lest he should defile it. He usually managed to get enough to rinse out his mouth, and, hoping to make up the deficiencies during the day at some stream, he started off, driving the cattle before him; a goat or two belonging to his father, and several belonging to neighbours, as well as a dozen great grey buffaloes, their close-shaven skins caked with mud. A few clouds paved the sky with rainbow-coloured lights like a mosaic. Before Manohar had reached his destination up came the sun, the clouds vanished, and as it was the month of March the air rapidly grew hotter and hotter till it was like a furnace, and the hard ground burnt the boy's bare feet. There was little enough for the beasts to eat, for no rain had fallen for months; no grass was anywhere to be seen, but here and there a few weeds grew, just enough to keep life in the thin bodies of the cattle.

Manohar Dreams—of Childhood

Manohar cast himself down under a tree; most of the leaves had fallen, but a little shelter is better than none, when by midday the temperature will be 110° in the shade. Far away in all directions stretched the boundless plain, the hot air quivering over it like a live thing. The cattle wandered about in search of the food they needed but could not find, and, as the heat grew more intense, sought the shade of the nearest tree. Manohar lay dreaming with his eyes wide open. He had very little knowledge of the outside world, for he had never in his twelve

years of existence travelled far from his village in the Deccan ; he knew nothing of books, for he was only an outcaste, and education was for his betters ; so, instead of the adventures of heroes, his own life filled his thoughts.

He remembered the first time he had ever been sent out in charge of the cattle. A child of 5 years old, he had set off for the day in sole charge of three goats and two kids, and very proud he felt. His clothes consisted of a charm tied round his neck, but when one is only 5 and lives in a hot climate, what need of more ? He trotted on until his small legs refused to go any farther, and then sat down to rest ; the hot air made him more and more drowsy, until before very long he fell fast asleep. When he awoke no goats were in sight, so he just sat on and waited until his mother and elder brother came out to fetch him. As it was his first attempt they did not scold him, but sent him home while they trudged on for three miles in search of the missing animals. His only punishment was that his mother arrived home late and so the evening dinner was late too, and he was terribly hungry before he was able to squat on the floor and eat his flat bread made of coarse millet and suck his lump of boiled sugar. He took good care never to let the animals stray out of sight again !

His first fright came a few months later. How well he remembered it ! They were staying with some cousins in a neighbouring village which boasted a well for the outcastes. Manohar haunted that well. It was such a joy to have

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water enough and to spare for drinks or play. Then one day his elder brother fell over the side, and when the children peered over the edge of the well he was nowhere to be seen. Home they went as fast as they could, sobbing for the brother who was no more. Soon, however, he turned up smiling; he was a good swimmer and had kept his head under the water to frighten the others; he clambered up the ledges at the side of the well as soon as he heard the uproar.

—Of an Early Marriage

Manoher's dream flowed on till it reached a day when he was 7 years old. He remembered wondering what was in the air that day; there was an unusual amount of gossip going on. His parents paid visits to a neighbouring village—the village where the well was—and some of his relatives came back with them, and there was talking and bargaining after the day's work was over. He soon found out the reason, for the talk ended in his engagement to his second cousin, a little girl of 4 years old. People of his race always marry their own relatives; sometimes even first cousins marry, provided their surnames are not the same. Manoher's parents had to provide clothes for the fiancée and give a dinner to twenty-five or thirty relatives, an event that literally meant years of debt to follow.

Six weeks later came five days of holiday from work while the long-drawn-out wedding ceremonies took place. Manoher enjoyed the dinner part of it the best; the rest rather bored him,

but he obediently went through his duties, prompted by the older people. There was a daily bath given him in public; then he was rubbed all over with saffron till he was a bright yellow. Next followed the dinner, the guests, all relatives, sat cross-legged on the ground and ate with the fingers of the right hand. For three days running only a plain dinner of flat brown bread and *basin*¹ could be afforded. The fourth day they fared better, for a goat was killed in honour of the occasion and they ate their fill of flesh—a rare treat. On the fifth and last day there were rather tiresome and meaningless rites to be performed, at least so it seemed to Manohar. Once upon a time they must have had some meaning, but their origin was forgotten and only the custom lingered on. The bath came as usual; before it was finished he was bidden to fill his mouth with water and squirt it over Dugadi, the four-year-old bride, while she tried to retaliate. Why? Nobody knew.

Next she held tightly squeezed in her hand some *supari*, a mixture of coriander, betel-nut, cloves, and so on, wrapped in a leaf. Manohar had to unclasp her fingers and snatch the stuff from her, possibly to show he was the stronger and therefore would be her master in the future. That done, he seized her under his arm and struggled with her to the house, where both were decked out in their bridal clothes. The fifth feast was composed entirely of sweet things.

¹ A light brown peppery paste.

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Lastly, as darkness was gathering, the bride and bridegroom stood together in front of a haughty stranger of their own caste, summoned from one of the few villages where dwell those who are authorized to perform the Mang marriages. He spoke a few charms over their heads and invoked the blessing of numerous gods and goddesses, and then the knot was tied in real earnest, as Manohar had to fasten a corner of his flowing garment to a corner of the bride's dress. The guests all threw grains of millet at them to bring them luck, and so the day ended.

Manohar, as he dreamed, remembered how flat the next few days had seemed when the guests had gone, and the bride too, and the feasting and the laughter were over, and he had to go out with the cattle again. Soon after, Dugadi had come back for a few days, then gone to her own home again; every few months she changed round thus, and he rather liked having her at his home. She was only a girl, and so not much good at playing with him; but he had been the youngest in the family till then, and now he had somebody to patronize or order about, to protect or bully as he pleased.

—Of a Narrow Escape

The sun grew hotter and hotter and the shadows less and less, and still Manohar dreamed on. One day stood out sharply in his memory. He had started off with two older relatives along the cart track leading to another village. The others walked fast, and he soon lagged behind

until they were out of sight. It was nearly harvest-time ; and as he walked through field after field of millet, the broad green leaves waving above his head, he could not see more than a few yards at a time.

Suddenly his keen ears heard the sound of heavy bodies pressing through the forest of stems and leaves. Black buck abounded, but they would be more wary than to come so noisily near. As he reached a small clearing his fears were realized, for in front of him he caught sight of a pack of wolves. He stopped dead and mechanically counted them till the number reached fourteen. Old tales of the doings of these fierce brutes flashed through his mind. He remembered Vishrantibai, of his village, who had left her baby at the edge of the cotton field while she was at work ; she never saw the baby again, but caught sight of a gaunt form loping away in the distance. Then there was Dattu, who had once spent a night out in the open, surrounded by some half-a-dozen wolves who were afraid to attack him and yet would not let him pass. Other stories were current of boys of his own age who had met wolves and their fate at the same time. Woe betide the man or boy who unsuccessfully attacks a Deccani wolf ; for, once attacked, the animal will never rest till he has killed his aggressor.

Manoher's hair slowly rose on his head ; there was no tree near by that he could climb, and the wolves were looking at him. A few moments and they might bound towards him. If he ran

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away, they would come at him all the sooner. Never could he forget the awful suspense. But what was that sound he heard? The sharp trotting of unshod horses? One horse would not have stood a chance against so unusually large a pack of wolves, but luckily several merchants came riding by, and the wolves slunk off through the millet while Manohar gladly ran by the side of the newcomers.

—Of a Swim for Life

He remembered another occasion when his days were nearly ended abruptly. It was the beginning of the monsoon¹, which is generally ushered in by sudden storms. The waters gather in the hills and roll along the empty river-beds with terrific force, carrying with them anything that happens to be in the way. Manohar had been playing with some bigger boys in the bed of the Shivna River, when word was passed along that the river was coming down in flood. Soon round a bend in the river came a solid wall of water. The boys clambered on to some flat-topped rocks in mid-stream and yelled delightedly as the water swirled along beneath their feet. It rose, however, higher and higher till it came within a few inches of their shelter. Still it rose, and the elder boys, expert swimmers all of them, plunged joyfully into the flood. Manohar's home not being near a river, he had never had a chance of learning to swim. The others shouted to him to come. He looked at the torrent, chocolate in

¹ A great Indian wind, which brings the rain.

colour with the mud it was bringing down ; he looked at the bank, now seeming so far away.

It was "Hobson's choice" ; so, making a desperate effort, he plunged in and was swiftly carried many yards downstream. He struck out instinctively and battled with the waters, and at last, choking and spluttering and nearly exhausted, reached the bank and safety ; but he had left in the flood all ambition to become a swimmer ! Death had come too near for him to risk it willingly in that form again.

—Of Mother Pestilence and Her Shrine

Seldom had he gone far from his village, and great had been his excitement, therefore, when his father promised to take him on the annual pilgrimage to Werkhed. They trudged all day, spent the night in a strange village, and on the next day waded across the Godavery River, and climbed up the steep bank on the southern side. It was the first time Manohar had been out of the Nizam's dominions and into British territory, and he wondered at the good repair of the roads and bridges, for he had seen bridges washed away by the floods and then left to lie for two years in the river-bed before any one thought of mending them.

Many other pilgrims were travelling in the same direction, and when Werkhed was reached they found that several hundreds of people had assembled. Here was one of the principal shrines of the chief goddess of the Mang race—the formidable Mari Ai, or "Mother Pestilence." Plague

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and cholera are her servants, and, should any one displease her, sudden death by one or the other disease punishes him. No wonder she is feared, and no wonder that the Mangs, her special devotees, although they are despised and down-trodden by the caste people, are yet treated better than some of the other outcastes ; for if the dread goddess is offended by the treatment meted out to her Mang protégés by the high-caste folk, swift punishment will come down upon them.

People of all castes had gathered to-day at Werkhed, some bringing flowers and red powder to offer to the goddess ; but the ceremonies were in the hands of the Mangs, who far outnumbered the other worshippers, and they all brought animals to be sacrificed. Manohar felt sickened by the sight as he watched cocks, he-goats, and male buffaloes sacrificed by the hundred, and their heads thrown on to a heap that grew and grew ; a crowd of vultures hovered in the air above, and on the ground flowed red streams of blood. The heads only were offered before the shrine, and then became the perquisite of the officiating *potras*¹ ; the bodies of the slain beasts were feasted on by the pilgrims who had brought them. On the whole, Manohar was not sorry to turn his back on this scene of slaughter and wend his way homewards across the sun-baked plains. . . .

Now he rose with a start. It was time to take his herd to the nearest water—a muddy drinking-hole, but better than nothing. That done,

¹ Mang priest.

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animals and boy alike rested once again ; and again he dreamed.

—Of "the Terror that Flieth by Day"

As a child he had gone with his parents to the tumble-down shrine of Mari Ai, outside the village, but had taken no part in the worship. Not till he was 10 years old did they teach him how to make the offerings she loved. His initiation had taken place about two years ago, and since then he had never dared to go for the day with his beasts without going round to the shrine. It was not love that took him there, but deadly fear lest she should strike him dead for lack of reverence. He learnt the reason of the daily bath that he had been trained to take whenever water could be procured ; it was this, that if he failed to bathe, Mari Ai would plague him with disease—merely, of course, as a sign of anger. It never occurred to him that disease and dirt could be connected, apart from the will of the goddess. He learnt, too, that his childish fear of the dark was reasonable, for evil spirits were abroad after sunset. It was not safe to call aloud after dark, for a spirit might hear and answer and get the luckless man into its power.

Manoher could not have said with certainty that he knew of a man being killed by an evil spirit, but men died strange deaths sometimes, and who could tell? It was better to be on the safe side. He thought of a time not long ago when the goddess had been angered. A man had gone on a journey without paying his respects

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at her shrine, and ere he had gone two miles she struck him, and he died in agony before many hours had passed. Others, too, fell ill not long afterwards without any visible reason—and very few of the people in Manohar's tribe ever recovered from any serious illness. Then a man who had come from the nearest large town urged them to send for the doctor and have an injection put in the left arm—"get pricked," he called it. But the villagers knew better; their ancestors had done no such thing. How could that appease the goddess? No, they would have a procession, and escort her far beyond the boundaries of their village.

One night the procession set out. A wooden image of the goddess, gaily dressed, was put in a small cart and drawn to the village boundary and there left, in the hope that the goddess would turn her attentions to the neighbouring village and leave them alone. In spite of this precaution the people went on dying. The irreligious thought rose in Manohar's mind: "Could it be true that the white man's medicine could overcome the wrath of Mari Ai better than the ceremonies handed down by their ancestors?"

—Of "Gods Many and Lords Many"

Mari Ai is the patron goddess of the Mangs; but into Manohar's dream came the forms of other gods whom he had been taught to worship.

There was Bhowani, elsewhere known as Kali, the bloodthirsty consort of Siva, to whom even human sacrifices used to be offered before the

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British put the custom down. Her decoration of skulls and her red tongue showed her tastes, though now she must perforce be content with animal blood. He passed daily before her temple, which was outside the village walls, but he was not allowed to go near; he could only worship from afar, for the caste people are the guardians of her shrine.

Then there was Ganesh, the pot-bellied elephant-headed god, who always seemed to Manohar kindlier than the other deities. He also must be worshipped from a distance.

There was Hanuman, too, the monkey-god; Manohar loved the story of how he and his monkeys had bridged the straits from India to Ceylon when Rama went to win back his stolen bride from the demon king of Ceylon. The monkeys, some said, had made a bridge of their bodies, twisting tail with tail; but others told of their bringing huge rocks all the way from the Himalayas, and as, they maintained, the rocks they dropped on the journey are still to be seen round Hyderabad, surely the latter version must be the true one. Some real feeling went into the bow that Manohar made before the distant image of the monkey-god, and he was eager to feed the god's representatives, the great grey monkeys that sometimes slept in the trees round his village when food became scarce in the hills.

Manohar did not know many of India's 330,000 gods, but he included the snake-god among those he worshipped, and, should a cobra make its home in one of the numerous ant-heaps that cover the

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Deccan, he would take care to feed it with milk and rice.

—Of "Those Christians"

Why was it, he wondered, that Christians were not afraid to kill the sacred cobra? A few families in his village had become Christians, and it disturbed Manohar's peace of mind. He wanted to dream through life, and these new Christian beliefs and customs that were gaining ground among his relatives made him think—a process he disliked. The Christian boys certainly seemed and looked happier than he did himself. They were not afraid after dark as he was, either. Sometimes Manohar would join them as they sang hymns set to old Indian tunes, squatting in a circle under the stars at night. They worshipped neither Ganesh, nor Hanuman, nor even the terrible Kali, and yet they did not meet with horrible deaths as a punishment. They said they worshipped one God only, and they often repeated some favourite words of theirs from their sacred Book—"God is Love." Who ever heard of a god that loved human beings? They offered no animals in sacrifice, but said their God had come down to earth and died for them. It was all very puzzling, and he would give up thinking of it.

—Of the Future

There were other things to occupy him, too, for he was now 12 years old and he would no longer be spending all his days out in the fields

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with the animals. He was now a full-fledged Mang, and was to take upon him the duties and privileges of a Mangki.

His race were the hereditary slaves of the village; their privileges consisted chiefly in the right to beg; their duties were more numerous. He would be expected to beat the drums daily before the idol. Of old these were beaten at the village gates to scare away evil spirits, and to warn the villagers not to stir outside the walls; now they were beaten in honour of Hanuman—or Maruti, as he is also called—the monkey-god. There would be no difficulty about learning the complicated drumming—the eight different kinds of beat according to the custom—a wedding, a funeral, the Hanuman salute, and so on; for from a child he had seized on anything that would make a noise and had hammered out beats in imitation of his father. He would now learn how to make the drums out of goat-skin. He would also make rope for the owners of fields; and, if he had time to make more rope than they needed, he might be able to sell it and so to earn a little grain or even money. He would be expected to train young bullocks to plough, and when the harvests came round he would be busy reaping the grain or picking the cotton. But, though he would be a useful member of the community, he knew that he would never be independent, but would always be despised and persecuted; and his heart was sore.

The sun had almost sunk; the long, sultry day was merging into a hot and breathless evening;

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the jackals would soon be making night hideous with their cries ; the wolves and hyenas would be on the prowl again ; so Manohar left his dreaming, watered his herd once more, and drove them homewards.

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From Bondage to Freedom

Some years have passed, and Manohar has left his village. He is no longer a village servant, living in fear of men and demons. Not long after the day of dreams which we have just shared with him, his own parents decided to follow the example of some of their relatives and become Christians. Their children followed suit. It took a good deal of teaching, for they could neither read nor write, and they were not used to remembering anything. At last they were pronounced ready, and they went to a village on the banks of the River Shivna, where other converts were assembled. An Indian clergyman questioned them and their children very closely as to what they believed, and why they were giving up their old religion. They handed over to him their household gods—small brass likenesses of Bhowani and Mari Ai—and then stepped down into the water, Manohar among the rest, and were baptized. Some of them kept their old names ; others were given new ones, especially those who, like Manohar, had previously been named after a Hindu god. His friends forgot the new name, however, and went on calling him by the old one.

That day changed not only his outward form of religion but his inward outlook. No longer need he fear the dark and the spirits that are abroad in the dark, for the Master he had promised to serve had "made both darkness and light"—so the Book said—and all evil spirits were subject to Him. Manohar's brother was sent to a Christian boarding school; but he did not like it and so ran away. The school was not big enough to hold all the Christian boys from the villages, and, though Manohar would have liked to go, he was told there was no room, and, if vacancies occurred, boys who were not so likely to run away would have first chance. At last, after many refusals, he was given a trial, and worked hard at his lessons for three years. The age of 13 is late to begin to study, and he found it very hard work after his out-of-doors life. When he was 16 his father refused to pay the fee any longer, and demanded that he should come home and work. He worked as a coolie for some time in the home of an Indian in the Civil Service, earning sixpence a day. His employer took a fancy to him, and paid him extra for extra jobs when the ordinary day's work was done.

At last Manohar managed to save enough to learn carpentry. He had conquered his inherent laziness and made swift progress, and was soon earning £2 a month, a fabulous sum as it seemed to his heathen relatives. Before long he found another job with still higher pay, and at last

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realized his dream of becoming entirely independent, for he saved enough to set up a workshop of his own. Nor were his relatives forgotten, for he sent for a young cousin and began to teach him his trade.

Other outcaste boys starting from similar beginnings have had more chance of education. Some have matriculated and are hoping to be ordained. Others are schoolmasters. But Manohar has made his way without much outside help; he has won through, by sheer pluck and determination, from cowherd to carpenter, from outcaste slave to a self-respecting Christian craftsman. His success has outstripped the wildest of his dreams.

CHAPTER VII

ANAND'S AMBITION

The Challenge of a Great Ancestry

INDIA to-day is full of a spirit of rising nationalism ; the desire to see India a great people expressing itself to the world in its own way. The young men of India especially are filled with this spirit, which is as healthy and natural as the pride a British boy feels in the Empire. They know the greatness of India's past ; they have high hopes of her future, and are ambitious to help in making her great again. This story tells how such an ambition came to one Indian boy, and how it grew within him to definite shape.

A First Day at School

ONE evening in a village near Poona¹ a small boy was squatting outside his father's house. It was built of bricks and mud, but the wooden door was richly carved, and presented a strange contrast to the rather tumble-down appearance of the walls. The time was nearly sunset. The fierce glare that had lasted till late into the afternoon was now gone, and there was a feeling of pleasant relief in the cool evening breeze.

Anand wriggled his toes into the warm sand and smiled. He was indeed feeling rather pleased

¹ A large city not far from Bombay.

with life. He was by nature of a happy and merry disposition. His name "Anand" means "joy," and, though the name was given him because of the joy of his parents at the birth of a son after a succession of three daughters, yet it could not have been more appropriate to the nature of the boy himself. But Anand had a special reason for being happy on that particular evening. It had been his first day at school.

It is true he knew little of what a village school had in store for him, but he was feeling all the dignity and importance of his new position. His friend Narayan, who lived on the opposite side of the road, would have to wait another year before going to school. He was only 5 years old and Anand was 6; and how good it would be to talk to Narayan of all the things he was doing at school and see the latter's look of envy! That morning his father, Gangadhar, had taken him to the Marathi primary school¹ in the village. It was the day of *Dasara*,² a most auspicious day, according to Hindu ideas, for sending children to school.

The school-house was a low, oblong building, with a veranda running along the front. A round, flat piece of metal hung near one of the veranda posts, with a short metal bar poked through the string that held it up. These were the school bell and the hammer with which to ring it; and Anand had felt greatly tempted to

¹ An elementary school, where Marathi, one of the main Indian languages, is taught.

² Hindu festival.

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see if he could make it sound ; but his father had quickly hurried him inside. A man in white turban and dhoti was sitting at a desk with seven or eight small boys standing round, also with their fathers or some other relative. He was busily writing down their names and taking their fees, for this was the first day of the new school year, when new boys could be admitted.

Gangadhar had to wait his turn, but at last his son Anand's name was entered in the school register, and the entrance fee and the fee for the first month were duly paid. The father asked the head master to pay special attention to Anand's education, as he hoped great things for him in the future. This the head master promised to do, and Gangadhar then went off home.

Anand was sent to the infants' class, and he then began to look round the school. There were five groups of boys squatting on the floor in different places, and he was in the largest class, though it was the bottom one. The noise was deafening, but Anand rather liked that. The master came up to him and took the slate which Gangadhar had bought for him in the bazaar on their way to the school, and drew on it a picture of the goddess Saraswati.¹ Anand then had to stand the slate against the wall and "do puja" (that is, to worship it), repeating some words beginning: "I bow to Ganesh . . ." Anand had now begun his career as a schoolboy.

¹ The goddess of learning.

² The goddess of good luck.

Anand Reports Progress

He went home that evening in high glee, and, as we have seen, was sitting down to enjoy the retrospect of his first day at school, when he heard a voice behind him: "Hullo! Anand, so you're back. Well, how do you like being at school?" He turned round, and saw his father standing in the doorway; he had just come back from his work.

"Oh! Father, it was fine! I've begun to write on my slate, and I can say some of my tables. Look here!" He ran into the house and brought back a slate covered with a series of scrawls, meant to be the first vowels of the Marathi alphabet.

His father looked at them with a smile, and said: "Well done! You've made a good beginning! And how about the tables?"

Anand replied: "In the afternoon, when our other work was done, one of the older boys was called out from his place and began to sing, 'Twice one are two.' Then we all sang it after him, and he went on until he got up to 'Twice thirty are sixty,' but I don't remember them all yet."

"Never mind," said Gangadhar, "you'll soon have them all at your fingers' ends."¹

"Father," said Anand, "there were two rather poor-looking boys sitting in a corner of the school-room. No one spoke to them

¹ Mental arithmetic presents little difficulty to the mind of an Indian boy. There are probably few English boys who could say, for instance, what "nineteen times twenty-seven" are, straight off; yet this would come as easily to a schoolboy in India as "nine times seven" to an English boy.

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and the master shouted at them now and then, but never went near them. Why was that?"

"Oh, I expect they were *Mahar*¹ boys," said his father, "and, of course, these outcaste boys cannot sit with Brahmans; though, as it is a government school, they cannot be prevented from attending it; but remember, Anand, that you should never be unkind or rude to such boys, but show your superiority to them by behaving always as a Brahman gentleman should. As a matter of fact, many of these Mahar boys, especially those who have been educated in mission schools, have become very superior and enlightened people. So they are people with whom we may have to reckon seriously in the future."

Anand soon dropped into the regular ways of school life, but he found that being at school was not all enjoyment. He was a quick and intelligent boy, but he got desperately weary of learning so many things by heart. The master, too, kept a cane lying on the table, which he frequently used, sometimes for the most trifling offences. As time went on, Anand was given a good deal of homework to do. His father was very particular about his doing this properly. After the evening meal Anand would squat on the ground in a corner with a dim, spluttering lamp, his books on the ground and his slate on his knee, and write the Marathi exercises and do the sums appointed for the next day.

¹ Name of a low-caste tribe.

A Holiday Excursion

One day the school was closed for a Hindu holiday, Ram Navmi, the birthday of the god Rama.¹ Gangadhar said to Anand: "Would you like to come with me to see the temple of Parvati at Poona?"

"Oh, yes, Father," said Anand, "I have often seen the hill it stands on, and have wondered what the buildings on the top are like."

"All right," said his father, "we will go after our morning prayers."

Gangadhar and Anand then went outside to the bathing-place, stripped themselves to the waist, and washed in the proper Brahman fashion. Then they came into the house. On a certain shelf was a row of little idols, some of silver, some of brass, and others of stone. To these Gangadhar and his son did puja, which consisted of repeating some Sanskrit verses and sprinkling the idols with water, afterwards offering them some flowers and food. Anand helped his father in this puja by bringing the necessary things as they were required. After their morning meal they went outside and found a bullock-cart waiting there all ready for them.

It took several hours to get to the foot of the hill on which the temple of Parvati stood, as the average rate of travelling is two miles an hour (though with a light load bullocks will do more). They got out and began to go up some steps. Up and up they went, until Anand began to get

¹ Rama is the name of a knightly hero of early Indian poetry, now worshipped as a god.

out of breath ; so they stopped after a time, and looked at the view. There below them stretched the great and ancient city of Poona, crowded with many houses, yet looking quite green because of the numberless trees dotted all about the city. As they got near the top the steps became very steep, and they passed through a gateway, and found themselves at last in a great courtyard. There was a large temple in the middle with some smaller shrines at each corner. They went in and did puja before the silver image of Parvati, the god Siva's wife. Then they came out, and made their way through the crowd to a space beyond the temple, where there was a large ruined building on the edge of the hill.

"Oh, what's that?" exclaimed Anand.

"Let's sit down on this rock," said Gangadhar, "and I'll tell you all about it."

A Picture of the Past—and What Anand made of It

"Your grandfather, Anand, did not live near Poona, but away over those hills—the Ghauts—down on the Konkan near the sea. He belonged, as you know, to the caste or tribe of the Chitpawan Brahmans, who in very ancient times came to India, according to an old story, from some regions beyond the sea, and were shipwrecked off the coast. They had to undergo many hardships from the people already in the country, but soon gained control over them by their superior intelligence and adventurous spirit. They cut down the forests and brought the land under cultivation ; they drained off the sea water and

filled up the creeks, turned aside the fresh-water streams rushing down from the Western Ghauts to water their own lands, and built their own colonies and villages, which can still be seen. For this the native Government excused them from part of the payment of state dues for the lands, and also granted them certain other rights and privileges. As they were more clever than ordinary people, they were given the task of collecting government taxes from other tenants, and of keeping account of the money and sending it to the Government. The men who did this were called *khota*, or village accountants, and for this service they were rewarded with certain lands. Your grandfather, Anand, was a khot, and possessed a large estate down on the Konkan."

Anand was getting a little confused by so much history; but he wanted to share his father's enthusiasm, and at the mention of his grandfather he nodded intelligently, and his father went on.

"But many years before your grandfather lived, Anand, many of the Chitpawan Brahmans, seeking the fertility of the Deccan, where we now live, and realizing the poverty of their own land, crossed the Ghauts and settled down here. Among these early emigrants was a family known as Bhat, and one of them, by name Ballaji Vishwanath, took service under the Marathas, who then were the chief power in Maharashtra, this part of the land where we now live. He soon rose to power and turned out the Maratha ruler of that time, and became practically king himself, taking the title of Peishwa. This old ruin

you see in front of you is the palace of the Peishwas, who ruled Western India for many years. The last of them was defeated by the British more than a hundred years ago, just below the hill there, on the plains stretching towards Kirkee. Ballaji Vishwanath himself was sitting on these very walls, as we are doing now, watching the battle.

Anand peered over the edge at the plain below ; to his imaginative mind it was full of the noise and tumult of the battle of long ago. Then he turned back to his father, who was evidently wanting now to say something very important to him.

“What I want you to remember, Anand,” said his father, solemnly, “is that, though we Chitpawan Brahmans have lost the sovereignty of Western India, yet in another sense we are still the real rulers of the country. It is we who have the greatest intelligence ; it is men of our race who guide public opinion, and who have taken the lead in social and political reform. It is from us that such men as Gokhale, Ranaeda, and Tilak¹ have come. It is upon us, I fully believe, that the future welfare of Maharashtra depends. If only you will make full use of the education I am trying to give you, who knows but what you may not become one of the great leaders of the future?”

Anand sat there listening to his father's words. He could not understand all that had been said, but the main ideas were clear. His eyes wandered over the rugged outline of the old castle before

¹ Three great political leaders of modern India.

him, and the thought of the achievements of the great men of his own caste gripped him. For the first time a wish that he too might one day do something great for his country sprang up within him, young though he was.

A Lucky Start in Life

That evening, after they had got back home, Gangadhar brought a roll of parchment out of a cupboard and began to unroll it. Anand and his sisters all clustered round to see what it was. "This is your horoscope, Anand," said his father. "It shows that you were born on Monday, the 6th of the dark half of the month of Ashad, corresponding in the British calendar to the 30th of August, at two hours and five minutes before sunrise. The astrologer who made this horoscope showed us that at that time the sun and the planets were all in favourable positions, so that your mother and I have great hopes of your being successful in your future life."

"And what joy you brought me when you were born, my son," said his mother. "I had had three daughters, and I thought I was never going to have a son! I began to think that there would be no one left in our family to perform our *shraddha*,¹ which prevents the souls of our ancestors from becoming evil ghosts. So I worshipped the sun daily after an early bath, and each morning went a-hundred-and-one times round the sacred *tulsi* tree, saying my prayers; at last the gods were gracious and gave me a son."

¹ Homage to spirits of ancestors.

"I wish I had been a boy instead of a girl," said Damayanti, the youngest of Anand's sisters, "and then father and mother would not have been so sorry when I was born."

"Oh, hush," said her eldest sister, "it is our karma, our fate, and we must not dispute the will of the gods. Let us hope that at least we shall bear men-children when we grow up."

Shortly after Anand's eighth birthday, Ganga-dhar performed his *munj*, or thread ceremony.¹ This is a most important event in the Brahman boy's life, as it admits him to the full privileges of a Brahman. *Munj* is a kind of grass, which is woven into a string and tied round the boy's waist. A cotton thread is also passed over the shoulder, to which is attached a small piece of deer-skin. This is to indicate the coming student days in the Brahman's life, for the Brahman student is supposed to sit upon a deer-skin mat. He also now has to wrap a piece of cloth round his waist. The ceremony consists of various washings and the sayings of mantras, or prayers, and then the putting on of the sacred thread. After this was over Anand went home feeling very proud of himself, for was he not now *dwija*, or twice-born, a real Brahman, and superior to every one else? For a few days after this Anand had to beg his food from others, as the Brahman student is supposed to be poor, and to be dependent on others for his meals.

Anand got on well at school, and was a general favourite, as he was good at work and also at

¹ For a similar case see p. 45.

games. Often in the evening he would be the leader of a group of boys playing *attya-pattya*, a game played in a series of squares marked out on the ground, the players having to get from one to another without being caught by the opposite side. Other games were *kho-kho*, a similar sort of game, but played on either side of a line instead of in squares, and *vitto-dandoo*, the Indian form of "tip-cat." But Anand was specially keen on gymnastics. The only apparatus for this was a strong wooden pole about nine feet high stuck upright in the ground. Anand would climb up this, cling to it in all sorts of extraordinary positions, and then slide down; feats which an English boy would find extremely difficult to copy!

New Ideas

When the time came for Anand to enter an English school, his father was specially delighted, as that advantage had been denied to himself, owing to the poor circumstances of his family. He hoped that his son would in due course enter college, and, after graduating, would occupy one day a high post in government service, carrying with it a large salary, and would thus end the family's poverty. His mother, although she herself could not read or write, looked with pride upon Anand, her only son, when he began his English studies.

Anand found the English high school quite a contrast to his vernacular school, which he had just left. The raised forms, the high desks, and

the new furniture were a novelty to him at first. He also found his teachers more sympathetic and less ready to use a cane, and yet there was much better order and discipline than in his former school. He did not quite understand this at first, but after a time he came to see that the head master went on the principle of trusting the senior boys, about ten of whom were appointed as school prefects; these were made responsible for the order of the school outside the class-rooms. Anand now began to play cricket and football, and soon became quite good at both. After some years he got into the school elevens, and played in matches against other schools. But there were times when he felt no interest in games, and was glad to get away by himself into the country. Sometimes when he was on these solitary walks there would come back to him that thought of doing something great for his country, which had first come to him as a small boy when he was gazing at the ruins of the old Peishwas' palace.

This English school which Anand was now attending was a mission school, where the Christian Scriptures were daily taught. At first Anand only attended the scripture lesson because he was obliged to,¹ and he always used to sit in the back row. But soon the new things he heard began to interest him, and to rouse within him a feeling of opposition, as he felt the contrast between the Christian truths and his own religion.

¹In most mission schools now attendance at scripture lesson is free and not compulsory; but nearly all the boys come voluntarily to these lessons.

He was very keen to ask questions and to raise objections ; but gradually, as he turned things over in his mind, he began to question the truth and propriety of long-cherished customs and beliefs of his own religion. Gradually his outlook on life was widened. At home he made no secret of his changed views, and his father began to be alarmed when he observed his son getting slack in his daily observance of sun-worship, his morning ablutions, and the repeating of his *sandhya*, or morning and evening prayer. He also stopped wearing the sacred cloth at meal-times.

When asked why he neglected the observance of certain customary habits or ceremonies, Anand boldly challenged the advisability or propriety of such things, and his parents gradually came to look upon Anand's behaviour as the unfortunate but inevitable effect of his English education. Moreover, social gatherings were held at the school occasionally, and then Anand had to mix freely with boys of other castes. As a result, Anand's formerly narrow views on the subject of caste gradually disappeared, giving place to a more sympathetic attitude to people of other communities. He also began to read the newspapers, and to get acquainted with the political events of the day.

A Marriage

At this time his mother, who was getting feebler, insisted that Anand should be married "before her eyes," meaning before she died. But his father at first counselled patience, as he

wanted his son to pass his matriculation before marriage. The mother, however, began to consult the professional match-makers, asking them to be on the look-out and to tell her if they found any good-looking bride for her son. At last Anand passed his matriculation examination, and his parents decided to marry him before he went to college. Gangadhar looked forward to getting a handsome dowry from the bride's father, as their son's value in the marriage-market was now raised by his being a matriculate, and a would-be graduate. Anand's three sisters had all been married before this, and, as their father had paid large dowries for each of them, Gangadhar was in debt, so he hoped to get a large dowry with the girl Anand would marry.

But Anand was now feeling himself a man, and his mind was filled with the ideas of romance and love of which he had read in his school books, so he insisted on having some share in the selection of his future wife, much to the inconvenience and annoyance of his parents. As a compromise, Anand was allowed to see the girl, when selected, before his marriage, and he was satisfied that she could read and write and was also good-looking. According to the strictly orthodox rule, the young couple do not even see each other's faces until they are actually made husband and wife. At that moment, when from under a covering they first look into each other's eyes, they know that they are looking at their inevitable fate; for the marriage bond is unbreakable with the

Hindus, who hold that after death, even in future re-births into a fresh life on earth, they may be still man and wife.

Anand's Ambition takes definite Shape

After the wedding the newly-married bride was sent back to her parents' house, and Anand went to Bombay to join a college there. His eldest sister had married a man in a government office in Bombay, so Anand made his home with them, and attended the college from their house. To his great delight, he found that his old friend Narayan had just joined the same college. He had seen little of him of late, for Narayan had gone to another high school, but they were both very glad to be together again. Narayan was an ardent disciple of Gandhi—the famous nationalist leader—and had no use for anything English or western. Anand, on the other hand, had come into personal touch with Englishmen at his school, and refused to take Narayan's extreme attitude. There were many discussions among the men in college on the burning topic of the day: "When is India going to get self-government?" Narayan was always strong in his desire for non-co-operation,¹ by which the present Government was to be made impossible, and full self-government to be given at once. Anand wanted self-government for India just as much, but he saw farther than Narayan.

¹ Refusal to take any part in the British Government and its work; a kind of passive resistance or boycott of British rule; this movement was first begun by Gandhi, but he and other leaders have greatly lessened its claims of late

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One day the two went for a walk to the "Hanging Gardens" on Malabar Hill in Bombay. From there a magnificent panorama of the whole city lay before them—Colaba Lighthouse, the Military Barracks, the University with its huge clock-tower, the Law Courts, the Municipal Offices, the Taj Mahal Hotel, the Victoria Railway Terminus, and miles of buildings of all kinds—offices, shops, flats, and bungalows—with the harbour beyond and its immense docks full of shipping, the whole set on a background of the dim, misty hills of the mainland. For some time both were silent, looking at the view.

Then Anand said: "Narayan, you and I know that the existence of this great city is chiefly due to English and western influences. You may say: 'It is all wrong; we want to return to the simple Indian life of former days.' But you must admit one thing—it is a great achievement. Two hundred years ago this island was little more than a series of mud flats, hardly fit for human habitation. Now it is the second largest city in the British Empire, and one of the most beautiful cities in the world, though, I admit, it has its blots and blemishes, like those hideous slum-tenements over yonder, where the labourers for the new factories and mills live.'

"What has made Bombay great, Narayan? The vision and enterprise of a few men. Do you remember that Angria, one of the first Governors of Bombay, said: 'This is a city which God intended should be built.' He and others had a

¹ See Chapter VIII.

vision of what it might be, and began to work towards it. Narayan, you and I talk a lot of what *ought* to be done for India, but the real question is: 'Are we going to do anything?' We don't want to build another Bombay; it is far too western for us. And we don't want all the slums and overcrowding of the West repeated out here, either. But we *do* want to build up an India, that is a real nation, and not just a number of loose fragments of different peoples—an India free from evil social customs that sap her national life, an India based upon righteousness and justice, and full of the spirit of brotherhood within, and towards other nations, too; *that* would be a task worthy of us Brahmans, wouldn't it?"

Narayan did not answer, and silence fell again. The vision of a great future for himself had come to Anand once more; but it was a vision, now, of patriotic service to India and to the world. And perhaps he owed that vision to the teaching of the mission school, and to the Christian Englishmen there, whose own ancestors had defeated the forces of Anand's forefather, the great Peishwa of Maharashtra, in the battle on which he looked down despairingly from the walls of the fortress at Poona, years before.

CHAPTER VIII

GOPAL THE FACTORY BOY

Caught in the Wheels

At the end of Chapter VII we saw a picture of the city of Bombay as it has been made by Englishmen in the last hundred years. It is only since the twentieth century began that the huge factories and *chawls* (see p. 105) have become so large a part of many Indian cities. They bring riches to India, but much misery too, taking people from villages to indoor life, from homes to wretched lodgings. If we turn back to p. 101 we shall see how Narayan resented the coming of western civilization to India. Perhaps as we read this eighth chapter we shall find some excuse for his attitude of hostility to the western nations who have so changed the simple life of India's people by factory and slum and similar evils.

(N.B.—We may be wearing cotton which came through a Bombay factory to an English shop.)

A Dreary Prospect

GOPAL turned over and yawned. Morning had come, and it was time to get up.

The boy could hear the other occupants of the room astir. He sat up, rubbed his eyes, and would have lain down again for a little more sleep; only he knew that it would never do to be late. He had been late the other morning, and



Photograph]

CHAWLS IN BOMBAY CITY

[H. Howse

trouble had come of it, and he must not risk trouble again. So he stayed sitting up and looked around him.

There was not much of interest about the room, which was bedroom, sitting-room, and kitchen all in one. The floor was of bare cement, and the walls of dirty grey plaster. There were a window and a door, the latter opening on to a balcony. The window had not any glass; all the same, very little air came through it, for the opening was well-nigh blocked with dhotis and other garments hanging up to dry. If you stepped out on to the balcony you could see that it ran along the whole length of the building, and that numbers of other and similar rooms opened out on to it. There were two balconies above and three below, just like this one. And concrete steps (outside the tenement building—or *chawl*, as it was called) led from the balconies to the ground. Altogether there must have been fully seventy or eighty rooms in the chawl. And there were row upon row of such chawls, all built to identically the same pattern and all very close one to another. The only view from any of the windows was a monotonous display of bricks and mortar.

Gopal, like the others, slept on a cheap cotton quilt which he spread each night on the floor. There was no other furniture, except a broken stool and a few brass pots for cooking. A fire of charcoal glowed dimly on a sort of raised hearth. On a shelf in one corner of the room was a clay figure painted red and black and

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yellow—an image of the Hindu god whom the family specially worshipped.

The occupants of the room were seven in number. Besides Gopal, there were his uncle and aunt, two boy cousins and their sister, and a lodger who worked in the same factory as did Gopal, and who paid a trifling sum to be allowed to sleep and board here. The room was scarcely ten feet square. On hot, sultry nights the atmosphere in that small room became almost unbearable.

No Time to Lose

“Get up, Gopal,” his uncle said, “or you will be late.” The boy reluctantly obeyed. First he rolled up his sleeping-quilt and put it away in a corner. Then he doused his head under a tap (just outside the room), and “brushed” his teeth with a small piece of stick kept for that purpose. Dressing was quickly done, for it meant no more than donning a loose shirt and a white turban. Then, after a hasty mouthful or two of coarse grain, the remains of last night’s supper, and a piece of a chapati which his aunt had just baked, he was ready to start off for another day’s work at the cotton-mill. The rest of the chapati he took with him; it would come in useful at lunch-time. Gopal had to be at the mill sharp at seven o’clock. It was a full half-hour’s walk there, and he had little time to spare. He ran down the concrete stairs and out into the road.

The first part of the walk was dull—along drab streets with nothing but high chawls and ugly

railway shops on either side. But a little farther on there was more to see. Already the vendors of fruit and sweets by the roadside were spreading out their merchandise for sale. Gopal had a spare pice hidden away in his dhoti. This he quickly exchanged for a lump of brightly-coloured candy.

Then he came out into one of the wider streets, where the tradesmen were taking down the shutters of their shops. Milk-sellers (with bamboo supports over their shoulders and brass vessels full of milk at either end) were doing a roaring trade. Bullock-carts, laden with wood and fruit, were proceeding leisurely up and down the street. Suddenly there was the rattle of an electric car ; it swerved round the corner, passed by Gopal, and swiftly left him and the bullock-carts far behind. A strange contrast that—those slow-going primitive vehicles such as were used by the Indian people century upon century ago, and the huge car driven by one of the recent discoveries of modern science. But Gopal had not time to meditate on these things. He must get to the mill before the clock struck seven ; else he would find the gates closed and himself outside.

A Beehive of Bobbins

At last the boy reached his destination. The mill was surrounded by a high brick wall. Numbers of men and boys (as well as some women and girls) were crowding in through the large iron gate. Gopal entered with the rest. He knew where to go. His scene of work lay in an enormous room, in which stood row upon row of

tall frames—each frame a good deal higher than himself. Between the frames were narrow gangways up and down which the workers moved. On the frames were numbers of great white balls of thread, wound round wooden cones called "bobbins." It would have been difficult to guess how many of these bobbins there were; you could have counted them by the hundred. And these almost countless bobbins were all whirring round and round. The air was full of their ceaseless droning hum, as of a gigantic beehive.

Altogether there must have been some eighty or ninety men and boys in the room, some attending to the machinery, others taking the full bobbins off the frames, others carrying them to a trolley some distance off, others, again, bringing empty bobbins to be filled. Gopal was a carrying-boy. To carry, on outstretched arm, a pile of these huge balls of thread is a task more difficult than it would seem at first sight. When he had been quite new to the work, it had made his arms and back ache terribly. But he had been doing it now for some six or seven weeks, and was getting more used to it. All the same, it was still hard work.

As the sun rose in the heavens, the place became hotter and hotter. Gopal was glad when towards midday there was a brief interval in his work. He went out into the yard and ate the other half of his aunt's chapati. Then he made his way to a small shop close to the mill and refreshed himself with an onion and a cup of tea.

Caught in the Wheels

It was during the afternoon that the accident happened. How it came about Gopal does not know to this day. All that he *does* know is that he fell forward, there was a sudden stab of pain, and a whirr of wheels close to his ears—and he remembered no more. When consciousness returned, the boy found himself—not in the noisy mill, nor in the stuffy chawl. He was in a ward of the government hospital. He had been carried there from the factory, so he was told, on a stretcher. And there were other men and boys in the beds around him.

It seemed strange there—right away from every one he knew. For Gopal had not been born and bred in this great city. Up to a few months ago his home had been in a small village fully two hundred miles away. His parents and his brothers and sisters still lived there on the farm. But he had left home in order to get better-paid work. The monsoon had failed that year; a terrible time of drought and famine had followed; and, when Gopal's father heard that there was an opening for a boy in one of the great mills of Bombay, it was decided to send Gopal there. This is how it came to pass that the boy was boarding with his uncle and aunt in the big city.

As Gopal lay in bed, he felt more homesick than he had ever been since he came to Bombay. He pictured to himself his small home of dried mud and thatch, the courtyard into which the cattle were driven each evening, the shady banyan-tree under which he and his brothers

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had so often sat and talked and played. The village home was open to the air and sunshine; here, in the city, he was shut in by miles of drab and ugly buildings from which it seemed almost impossible ever to get away. *There* he spent the hours of daylight out in the open, looking after the goats or helping in the fields; *here* the whole day from morning to night was spent in the hot mill, amid the whirr and din of machinery. *There* he enjoyed freedom, and time was of little consequence; the sun and his stomach were quite sufficient guides as to how much of the day yet remained. *Here* he had to keep time by the factory clock, with severe penalties attached to being late. He felt he had been caught—mind and body alike—in the wheels of a great and pitiless industrial machine. It seemed strange, lonely, altogether unnatural. He wondered how his parents were; he longed to be home again.

New Friends

In the bed next to Gopal lay a middle-aged Indian of the name of Vishvas. Before many hours had passed, the man and the boy got into friendly conversation, and Gopal found that they both came from the same part of the country, though Vishvas had lived in the city now for many a year. Gopal soon felt drawn towards his fellow-patient. There was something about Vishvas's face and voice that made the boy want to be friends with him—something happy and brave in spite of the fact that he was suffering terrible pain.

The next day Vishvas had a visit from a Christian catechist (or lay-preacher) who sometimes visited the patients in the hospital. He had a long and cheery talk with Vishvas, and before saying good-bye left him a basket of fruit.

Gopal's curiosity was aroused ; he wished that some one would come to him like that ; and, as soon as the catechist had gone, he asked Vishvas who his visitor was. Vishvas told him.

" Then are you a Christian ? " the boy asked.

" Yes," said the man, " I have been a follower of Jesus for twelve years." And then he told Gopal the story of how he had become a Christian—how once he had found himself stranded in the city, and out of work ; how, while wandering along the street, he had been attracted by the preaching of a foreign sahib ; how he had since proved that what the sahib said was true, and that Christ could be a real Friend to men to-day.

Gopal became much interested, and they had many a conversation together. And next time the catechist came (it was about three weeks later, on the very day before Gopal was to leave the hospital), Vishvas introduced the boy to him, and the catechist invited Gopal to come some time to a small mission church in the poorer part of the city and hear more about the Christian life.

Back to Work

" Wake up, Gopal. The morning has come." The boy yawned and opened his eyes. Yes, he was back again in the stuffy chawl. He must

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be getting up and starting off once more for the cotton-mill. He did not look forward to another day's toil in its heat and noise. Then the thought of Vishvas and of what he had heard from him came to his mind. He wanted to be as true and brave as Vishvas was. It would not be easy to live a straight life in the mill; temptations were many and strong. But Vishvas had told him of the help that Jesus gave to the tempted. Perhaps Vishvas's unseen Friend would help him too? And, encouraged by this new confidence, he jumped up, folded his quilt, washed his face and hands and teeth, put on his shirt and turban, ate his half chapati, and hurried down the concrete stairs into the street below.

CHAPTER IX

HUSSEIN AND THE LAUGHING SAHIB

WE come back to Bengal, not to the humble city life (Chapter V) of a sweet-seller at the gates of a great college, but to the adventures of a country boy in a neighbourhood where the visit of a sahib is an event.

The Sahib and the Singers

“GET thee down to the *khal* (river), baba, and fetch up the beasts, and see thou wash them clean or there'll be mud in the milk and trouble for thee.”

Thus bidden, the son of the house rose languidly from his cool string bed and set off down the dusty village path. It was his mother who had called him, and she, being a strict Moslem, had shown only the corner of her veil at the kitchen door, for there were men about the compound. She called him “baba,” but this meant only “sonny.” His real name was Hussein. Brothers he had in plenty, but to the mother he was always “baba,” for there was a special bond between them. He was the youngest born, and, though only 5 years old, the mother had perceived depths in those dark brown eyes which she found in none of her strapping older sons.

Arrived at the canal, he found, as he expected, the five great beasts placidly soaking themselves

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in the stagnant water, with no particle of their carcasses visible except eyes and tips of noses.

"Hi, you sons of Adam,¹ leave your water dreams for another day and come with me!"

But all his threats were in vain. Our hero accordingly discarded his robe, and was soon astride the back of the oldest buffalo. With a squelch the animal rose from his mud bath and stood with his two front feet on the bank while his 5-year-old master scrubbed the mud from his flanks.

Before the rest were cleaned and on their way home the sun was setting, casting a fiery glow on the parched fields around. Hussein, riding on his buffalo, felt like a rajah on his elephant as he surveyed the passers-by. All had a smile for him, for he was a friendly soul, and had a hand in all the affairs of the village.

Suddenly he sat bolt upright, with a look in his eyes akin to fear. Not fifty yards ahead was a little knot of men standing around a group of singers. The beat of the drums always roused something inside him, and usually he would relieve it by tearing off full tilt to know its meaning. It was generally the signal for some interesting news from the village crier; a fire; or the threat of floods; but this drumming was the accompaniment of a song, and the cymbals were clanging. He could see the minstrels swaying to the music, and, standing in their midst, a man

¹ Popular legend says that Adam coveted the power to create. God gave him the power, and he produced the buffalo; but so disgusted was he at the result that he asked the Creator to withdraw His gift!

with a face white as paper ; a strange sight indeed, and yet he was dressed in native robes.

In a trice Hussein was off his mount and skulking behind the tallest of the throng. Though he knew the tune, the song was a new one: "I am the Way, the Truth, the Life." The words were repeated to form a chorus to each verse, till Hussein found himself swaying to the music like the rest ; but still his eyes were upon that paper-coloured face. Soon the music ceased, and the face began to speak. How red the lips, and how pale the eyes, like those of a sick man ! It was most uncanny. He tore himself away and ran to tell his mother. To his surprise she took him in her arms and said : "Go not near, baba ! He will bewitch thee as he did Nolini's son, the brightest lad she had. The boy met the sahib and talked with him, and then he ran away from home. The sahib carries pictures to attract our sons, and little books which teach them to forget their mother's love. Keep thou within this house and say thy prayers. The Prophet will protect thee !"

But curiosity proved stronger even than Hussein's faith in his mother, and next day he was out again, hovering round the crowd of listeners till the white man smiled at him. Then he ran home and said his prayers to Allah. That night the man with the drum came round the streets announcing that there would be pictures—"big pictures all of light"—shown under the mango-tree that evening, and invited all to come. Hussein heard this as he lay upon

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his bed. His mother heard it too, and peeped in to see her son, but he was fast asleep; so all was well.

He did not mean to go, certainly not alone. But when his cousin Amir came stealing in and called him he could not resist; so they slipped out together, and, following an eager throng of labourers who were bent on the same quest, arrived on a scene which filled him with awe. A great half-circle of men squatted around a sheet suspended from a bamboo frame, on which there shone in very truth a "picture all of light," as the sahib had promised. First one picture appeared, then another; as one moved off, another took its place, and all the time the paper-faced man was talking. Hussein took nothing in till at the very end the pictures vanished and instead a brilliant light filled up the sheet. Into this light walked the white man (he must have been very brave!), and told the people he was living in a tent just beyond the village well, where he would be glad to see any of them if they came.

Next day Hussein went with Amir and a crowd of boys to see the sahib, who wore Bengali dress. He had seen a sahib before, but only in the distance, and that one was shooting leopards. This sahib, they said, was not on a shooting expedition, but sat and talked and laughed and gave them books to read. Hussein vowed he would touch no books; but he felt he would like to see the sahib laugh. The sahib was busy when they arrived. He was cleaning a black tin

box which, he said, made the light pictures. When that was done he called his singers together. It was their time of prayer. They sang another song, read from a book, and then followed a long silence while they all knelt down. Hussein watched in amazement. It was not like the prayers he had been taught. Now and again one would pray aloud. They seemed so much in earnest that any one would think that God was really there and they were talking to Him.

Now it was over and the sahib came out of the tent. He came straight up to them, and, squatting down in the midst of the bigger boys, started to ask their names. He knew something about all of them—this one's uncle, that one's brother who had read in the mission school. Then he read a letter sent by Nolini's son from college.

"Is it true," asked one, "that Nolini's son is now a sahib, and wears a sahib's clothes?" Oh, how he laughed at the idea, this white man! And they all began to laugh too, till all their fears vanished.

After this Hussein was down at the tent every day. The sahib took little notice of him, but he soon found himself cleaning the magic lantern and actually accompanying the preaching party on its evening tours. He had a quick ear for music, and soon picked up the songs.

One day he asked the sahib if *he* was "the Way, the Truth, and the Life," and the sahib said: "No, that is my Guru; I am but His chela." From that time Hussein set himself to

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learn Who this great Guru could be Who had chelas¹ from among men of other races. He asked his friends, but none had seen Him. Some laughed and told him not to meddle with magic, but he was unsatisfied.

At last one day he asked the sahib himself. A kindly hand was placed on his shoulder. "You want to meet Him, do you? Come tomorrow morning and you shall! I will show you Him myself."

That night Hussein dreamt that he was wandering miles and miles, holding the sahib's hand—always in search of the great Guru. He woke at dawn, and hastily washed his face, wrapped his best robe around him, and walked to the camp. The site was vacant; the tent had vanished! Hussein sat down with tears in his eyes; then, feeling the chill of the morning, wandered slowly homewards. Amir met him at the banyan-tree with a message. "The sahib has gone to help some people in a village where cholera has broken out. He left you this book, and said that one day you would learn to read it and would then meet the great Guru for yourself."

Disappointment

Life seemed a bit dull for a day or two after the camp had broken up, but a mad jackal ran amok in the village and was not caught for three days, during which time the memory of the sahib's camp grew dim. Then the district *moulvi*,²

¹ Disciples (see Chapter III).

² Moslem priest.

hearing that missionaries had been to the village, decided to pay a visit to undo any work which might have been done to lead Mohammed's followers away from their own Prophet.

So for another ten days the village was agog with excitement; this religious man must be housed and fed at the common expense. Housewives vied with each other to provide him with sumptuous meals. Might he not curse the village if they failed to honour him? And then the crops would fail and the cows would give no milk. To the elders he proved from the Koran that Christ was but *a* prophet, and Mohammed *the* Prophet. Those of simple faith were impressed with his regular hours of prayer, while any who had been beguiled into buying farthing gospels were ordered to present them on a certain day for public burning. Thus was faith restored whole and inviolate as before, and Hussein used to spit as fiercely as the rest when the name of Christ was mentioned.

Years passed. In due time our hero went to the village school. His teacher was a Christian, and one of the books he learned to read was none other than the hated "Scriptures." He learned by heart a wonderful prayer called "The Lord's Prayer," and some attractive stories called "parables." One day a sahib (not the one Hussein knew, but another) arrived to inspect the school. He asked questions on these parables, and was so pleased with Hussein's answers that he gave him a little book, on the cover of which was a picture of a Man holding a lamb in His

arms. This was the first prize he had ever had, and he valued it very much. Sometimes he took it with him when he went to fetch the beasts, and would ponder over its meaning till he longed for some one to explain it all. He ventured to ask a few questions at home, at which his father and brothers became angry, so he did not ask them again.

There was, however, a boy in the village who had been to the sahib's school at C—, where there were 200 boys, nearly all of them Christians. There this boy had learnt many things about these Scriptures, which he taught to Hussein. But something had impressed Hussein's friend even more than the Scriptures, and that was the life of the sahib who had taught him. He was, learnt Hussein, like a father to many boys, inasmuch as none ever went to him in vain. Had he not given up eating his own food and taken to sharing their rice, so as to be able to support more of them at school? And he had learnt their language so well that few could tell it was not his native tongue. But what appealed to Hussein most was the statement that the sahib could laugh; was, in fact, always laughing. His own mind returned to the days of camp some years ago, and a tremendous desire filled him to wander forth from home and see the sahib for himself.

That night he told his mother he wanted to go to a bigger and better school, where he would learn to pass examinations, and he asked how far C— was. But she hastily changed the

subject ; and when, before he went to sleep, she brought him in a handful of *luchis*¹ made with her own hands, he felt that, after all, it was good to be at home.

Next morning, to his grief and dismay, his father told him he must finish with schooling and start to work in the field. Tears sprang to his eyes ; his heart was full of rebellion, but he showed no signs of disobedience and went silently to work.

Thus he remained for three weary months, weeding, ploughing, and minding the cattle, and had it not been for an accident he might have been there to-day. But many an accident has changed the life of men.

A Great Fair

The main road ran a mile from the village, and on that road sahibs of all kinds passed in their springless carriages called *tum-tums*. It was the Christmas season, and the roads were good. All sorts of people passed that way, rich Hindu *babus*² on ponies, government officials on tours of inspection with bullock-carts groaning under their weight of tents and furniture, planters on well-bred mounts, shop-keepers with winter stores of hurricane lamps and glass bracelets for local branch shops, sellers of thatching grass with bundles piled high on their heads, Hindu " holy men," smeared with paint and ashes, begging their way from shrine to shrine.

¹ A delicacy corresponding to pastry.

² Men with some western education.

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Hussein was often to be seen at the cross-roads, where the great banyan tree hung its snake-like tendrils right across the highroad. He would make a leap into the air to catch a swinging root, and propel himself like a monkey from one tendril to another till his arms could hold out no longer. There were an unusual number of travellers. With each of them he passed the time of day, asked whither they were bound, and so forth. They mostly seemed to be on the same errand—to the *mela*¹ at Robalpur, where a famous Christian sadhu² was expected to preach.

Now a boy in India can no more resist a mela than an English boy a country fair. But Hussein had his work to do, and his sense of duty might have won the day if it had not been for a rattle and bump of wheels which heralded the approach of a tum-tum.

With a jolt and a lurch it reached the cross-roads just as Hussein leapt from the swaying root on to the bank at the side of the road. The tendril swung playfully back just in time to catch the *topi*³ of the sahib who was driving the trap and flick it neatly off his head into the ditch. For one moment the culprit stood poised on the bank ready to fly. One never knew how a sahib would take a little thing like that! But the pony was reined in, the sahib stood up with a loud laugh and called: "Now then, you little rascal, don't run away. Come

¹ Great festival or fair.

² See Chapter III. His name is given in the introduction.

³ Pith helmet.

and fetch my topi or hold the pony." Hussein leapt down, seized and dusted the hat, and handed it up to—the laughing sahib! There was no longer any doubt; it was he, right enough, and Hussein, too, was soon recognized.

"Where have you been all these three years? Why didn't you come to see me? I've been expecting you," the sahib said.

Hussein made his excuses, and said he was too busy at school.

"Why," said the sahib, "you are too big now for your village school. You ought to come to C—— and learn to play football. Won't your father send you?"

"It was because I mentioned C—— that I was sent to work in the fields," replied Hussein, bitterly.

"Oh," said the sahib solemnly, "so that's how things stand, is it? Well, my boy, come to the mela, anyway—your father won't mind that. If you go, ask for me; I'll see you get some rice to eat." With this he whipped up the pony and was gone.

Next day Hussein was striding along the road to Robalpur. The mela was in full progress when he arrived. Here was a great exhibition of country produce—huge melons nearly three feet long, cauliflowers bigger than his mother's cooking-pot, bunches of bananas so big and heavy that he could scarcely lift them. Here was home-grown jute, its long grey fibres all ready to be woven into sacks; there, a solid lump of indigo, enough to dye a hundred shirts. And then he

saw the women's section ; lace and needlework, beads cunningly woven, even pictures and patterns such as he had seen on the walls of houses, all worked with pipe clay on a red-mud surface. Some one had done a large picture of Christ on the Cross, and he wondered what it meant.

Then he passed to the boys' workshops, where carpentry, blacksmith's forging, weaving of dusters, and various other occupations were in progress. His mouth watered as he passed the refreshment stalls laden with round white *roshagulas*,¹ sticky red and yellow jellabies, long sticks of date-palm sweetmeats, and a hundred other delicacies. The whole place was filled with a swarming crowd of excited folk admiring, criticizing, purchasing, and bargaining till he felt bewildered ; and at last, feeling the pinch of hunger, he ventured to ask for the sahib.

All the sahibs were, apparently, in the large "tent of meeting," which he found was in the centre of the mela. Here was a contest of song ; all the village choirs were competing for the prize, and as he saw the rhythmic swing of their bodies to the music and heard the clash of the cymbals he was spellbound. A touch on his shoulder recalled him to the realities of life. It was the sahib. He was led off to a tent near by, put in charge of a servant, and soon sat down to a plate of rice and lentils. For two hours after his meal he slept ; and when he woke he found the sun had set. Instead of the bustle and confusion of an hour ago all was still except for a tree-cricket,

¹ Indian sweets (see Chapter V).

whose piercing note only intensified the silence. He shook his blanket, wondering who had covered him while he slept, and stepped out into the dark.

The distant murmuring of a voice caught his ear. Crowds of people were in the tent of meeting. Some one was praying aloud. He crept nearer, then slipped inside a corner of the tent flap, for the night was cold. The whole tent was packed with crouching figures. Some sat tailor-wise with bent heads, others knelt with foreheads on the ground, and all were still as death till the prayer was finished. A hymn was sung, and then the famous sadhu spoke. It was not so much what he said—although he told them stories of his own exciting deliverances from danger which thrilled his audience—it was the simple, unaffected way in which he said it that attracted Hussein. Here was a man who spoke with authority, and called men to rise up and follow his own Master.

Hussein's heart was soon burning within him as he listened. Such a life as this of the sadhu was far better than ploughing the fields. Here was satisfaction of soul and spiritual adventure. On one point he was clear—he could never return to his fields again. He talked long and earnestly with the sahib, and before the mela ended he had made a plan of action. He would go home and ask to continue his studies, but at C—. Of course, his father would fly into a rage; he would then quietly depart at dead of night. He felt he was old enough to decide for himself about a matter so all-important as religion.

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A Midnight Flight

On his way home he sang snatches of the songs he had learnt at the mela ; one at least brought back vivid memories of bygone years—" I am the Way, the Truth, and the Light " ; and he now began to understand its meaning. If this was the great Guru of the sadhu and of the sahib, He must be *his* Guru as well.

He was received coldly by all except his mother, who took him in her arms and said with tears in her eyes : " They told us, baba, you had gone to the laughing sahib, and we all know what that means. But you love your mother still and have come back to her. Fear not, baba, the fields are hard and dry now ; you cannot go back to work."

But next day, when he laid his plans before his father, there were hot and angry words. He was bidden to go to the Hindu school near by.

" If it is a coat and breeches you are wanting, put on these," scoffed his brother, as he held up a ragged pair of ancient trousers.

" Or has the sahib promised you a white bride ? " cried another.

Hussein left them for the Hindu school without a word, more determined than ever now to carry out his resolve as soon as he could. But it was none too easy, for he was under suspicion. He was accompanied to school by a servant daily, and brought back again by one of the senior boys. A whole fortnight passed in this way, and he began to despair of escape.

One day school was closed early, as the teacher had been called away ; accordingly Hussein was escorted home again, and arrived to find a carriage at his father's door. He walked into the compound and found a regular family gathering. Some distant relatives had come over from a village ten miles away to consult with Hussein's parents.

A sudden hush fell on the gathering when Hussein walked in, and he was hustled out and sent off with the servant to mind the cattle. But there could only be one explanation to all this. Had not his father once before held such a gathering in his house to choose a wife for his eldest son ? Hussein was sick at heart. So this was how they intended to keep him—by binding him for life to a girl whom already he detested (for he had met the one chosen for his bride).

Before midnight he arose, stole softly from the house, and was gone.

CHAPTER X

HUSSEIN AT THE CHRISTIAN BOARDING SCHOOL

THE British contribution to India has not been limited to factories where men work at machines (see Chapter VIII). Factories for the making of character have been set up too. Chief among them is the Christian boarding school. How Hussein, in spite of difficulty, persecution, and danger, made his way through such a school, helped by the laughing sahib, is vividly told in this last chapter by a master at the school described.

Sports—and a Spy

THERE was no brighter boy in the school at C— than Hussein. He seemed to have taken on a new lease of life. By the time he was 14 he was one of the fastest runners in the place. He carried off half the prizes on sports day and showed promise of developing as quickly with his brain. But he was of a serious nature, and loved best to talk and think on deeper things than either sports or work. His great friend was a Moslem, Abdus by name, who had joined the school shortly after he had arrived. Abdus, in actual fact, was a distant relative, and had really been sent to the school as a spy from Hussein's own neighbourhood. He was always full of news about Hussein's mother and home, and this formed a bond between them. Abdus,

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moreover, was the best swimmer in the school, and had been known to swim right across the tank under water, so he was a popular hero every morning between 8 and 10 a.m., whereas Hussein shone only in the sports season.

While Hussein gave most of his attention to his books, Abdus devoted his energies to agriculture, a department of the school which gave scope for his natural and inherited talent. Indeed, he had evolved a far-reaching scheme; for, when they left school, Abdus himself was to devote his life to the development of his paternal acres on modern lines, while Hussein was to take charge of the village school and work it up to high school standard.

Hussein said little on the subject of his friend's dreams. It seemed to him that Abdus was reckoning without one of the fundamentals—religion. The more he lived among Christians, the more convinced he became that he could *never* return to his old life in the old way. He had caught a glimpse of the famous sadhu's vision and knew already in his heart that there was no going back now. He talked to Abdus along these lines one day, but here his friend failed him; there was no response, and yet when Hussein announced his intention of joining the catechumen's¹ class in preparation for baptism, Abdus readily agreed and the two friends went together.

¹ A catechumen is one who is being prepared for Christian baptism.

These classes were held in the little school chapel at an hour when the rest of the school were busy with their evening's preparation. To Hussein these quiet classes were a solemn and wonderful experience. Here he faced up to the great facts of Christ and what it meant to "leave all and follow" Him. Well he knew that it meant the loss of his mother and his home. He would be for ever an outcast—the disgrace of the family, hated by all who had loved him and condemned to go his own way through life apart from those he dearly loved. It was a bitter struggle indeed. And then would come to mind those words straight from the lips of the great Guru Himself: "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me." At times in agony of soul, he would rise from his bed at night and pray for help. Could he not visit his mother once more before he took the step? But no, he knew it would be worse than useless. He would only be drugged, poisoned perhaps, and, even if he did not die, he might be a mental wreck for the rest of his life. But these doubts were decided for him in a way he little expected.

He came in one day from his evening walk to find a tumult around the sahib's house. Men stood in a threatening attitude with sticks in their hands, and as Hussein came near he recognized his father's voice raised in angry threats of vengeance. The truth was out now. Abdus had been sent to school as a spy to give warning if danger threatened. Hussein had not yet come of age, and his parents could claim

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legal control over his body, if not over his mind. He must fly! It was not till half an hour later that the mob learnt of the boy's escape and sullenly betook themselves home.

Hussein found refuge in a Christian school in the heart of a great city, many miles away. Here he found boys of every walk of life and from many parts of India. And they were boys with a future, many of them, Hussein felt as he sat in the great school hall, with its honour boards telling of past champions in football, cricket, and sports of every kind, and recording the names of boys who had won public distinctions. Here was a canon of the Church, there was a member of the All-India Legislative Council, and here again a famous surgeon who had qualified in England. And they had all been boys here like him.

For the first time Hussein found himself a member of a "House," and was soon proud to feel his running was of some value to the school. Here for the first time, too, he was initiated into the mysteries of a straight bat and a good length ball. The strangeness he felt as a new boy soon wore off, and he found himself picking up English phrases with an ease which he could scarcely have believed a month ago.

There was no end to the variety of interests around. Saturday mornings were devoted to painting. A master from an art school would come and open to the boys the wonders of colour, and from him Hussein learnt to sketch and was soon painting his own Christmas cards.

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Monday afternoons were spent in the carpenter's shop, and he realized for the first time the skill and dignity of labour with his hands. Till then he had thought it menial work and not for people like himself, but only for lower castes who had nothing better to do. Now he realized how it was that the great Guru Himself had not been too proud to work at a carpenter's bench.

A Scout Prepares for Life

One of his greatest delights was scouting. At first he thought it waste of time to tie and untie knots, but soon the tenderfoot stage was passed and he blossomed out into a fully qualified scout with as many badges as any in his patrol. He could make a rough setting for a broken limb, improvise a ligature for a bleeding artery, cook his own dinner over a fire made without the help of a match. He could read the heavens and tell the planets, signal by Morse and semaphore, and follow a track through a pathless jungle. During the Christmas holidays¹ the scouts went into camp, sometimes in the hilly districts, sometimes by the sea.

Hussein had never seen either a hill or the sea before (his village had lain in a vast plain), and his eyes shone, on his first day in camp, as he looked down upon the world below from the hilltop at sunset. He sat there and watched the great red ball of fire drop into the Western Plains, and then he gave himself to reverie. "This is how the world looks to God," said he, "only He

¹ The weather is mild then in India!

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can see more of it even than this, and He can see Mars and Jupiter and Venus, as well as all those other suns beyond with their planets."

He began to wonder if the men on Mars knew God as he did. Why, of course! The worlds were made for men, not men for the worlds. Did Jesus, then, go to Mars? Did He die on the Cross for them again? How puzzling it seemed, and how very small his intellect, in such a vast creation. Then he thought of himself, invisible to all men in the growing dusk but not invisible to God. *Why* did God love men so much as to send His only Son, the great Guru? What had they done to deserve it? But he was only waiting now till his matriculation was passed and then—before the world—he would confess his eternal allegiance to the great Guru in public baptism; what his work was to be after this he was still to learn. That night at prayers round the camp fire he asked for the hymn which runs:—

Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated Lord, to Thee,

and the scout master read that wonderful passage from Isaiah,¹ which finishes with the words: "Here am I; send me."

His last term at school came at length. He had been a prefect for his last year, and had captained the school cricket eleven. As a prefect he had learnt to judge character in boys, to watch and warn; help and advise. It was a difficult

¹ Isa. vi.

position he was in ; neither master nor boy and yet a bit of both. It puzzled him at first ; but he learnt the hard lesson that " the greatest . . . is he that serveth." He soon forgot to think of his own dignity in his zeal for that of the school. His responsibility became a sacred trust ; and sometimes, when the senior boys were rebellious, he would lie awake in the night and pray for guidance, as many a prefect has done before in many schools all the world over.

And this sense of responsibility towards the school led him to feel a wider responsibility towards his country. Here was he in possession of a priceless gift—the knowledge of God through Christ—which scarcely any of his countrymen possessed. Could he withhold it from them ?

So there came to him, as naturally as to any Christian-hearted boy in the world, his first call to missionary work. He did not say much about it at the time, for he knew that many would smile and throw cold water on his plans. He kept his own counsel, and waited to see where he should be led.

He little knew along how dark a path he would have to travel to his decision.

Two months later, on the high bank of the C—— bathing-pool where Hussein had learnt to swim at his former school, stood a small crowd of boys and men. The flight of steps which led down to the water edge was thronged with boys from the school, and in their midst stood a little group consisting of an Indian clergyman robed in his surplice,

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Hussein, dressed also in white, the school missionary, and one European, with whom we are already familiar as the laughing sahib. There was silence as the padre read the exhortation of the baptism service: "Dearly beloved, . . . I beseech you to call upon God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that . . . this person . . . may be baptized with water and the Holy Ghost, and received into Christ's holy Church." All bent their heads as the prayers were recited. Hussein then stood forth before them all, and in a clear voice which all could hear declared his desire to be baptized into the Faith he had taken as his own. A moment later, while the choir sang a hymn, he stepped down into the pool, and the words rang out like a pæan of victory: "Hussein, I baptize thee in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." -

The Brotherhood and its Leader

For the last two years Hussein had been a member of a small "brotherhood" in the school which aimed at doing some piece of work for God both in term-time and during the holidays. On Sundays they visited hospitals and ran Sunday schools for Hindu children. In the Christmas and Easter holidays they went into camp in villages where Christianity was unknown, and preached from village to village much in the same way as the disciples of old must have preached in Galilee. It was hard and tiring work, and Hussein often felt weary; yet sometimes when the preaching was over he would go

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off alone and visit the houses of those who had listened most earnestly. He found himself quite equal to meet the arguments of Moslems, but he soon discovered that argument and counter-argument did no good, and he resolved to preach nothing but "Christ and Him crucified."

About this time the school opened a little mission of its own at a place a few hours by rail from the city. The man in charge of it—the "missioner"—was an old boy of the school, who had now adopted a sadhu's mode of life, accepting only the bare means of subsistence which the school could afford to pay. Hussein had heard much about him, but had never met him in person till one day the missioner turned up in the brotherhood camp. He looked spare and slender in his white cassock and girdle, but in his face was a look of joy and determination, an earnest look which went right to Hussein's heart. They spent much time together, and after camp was ended Hussein was invited to return with him to the school mission. There they read and talked together of the great things they might do if only they were able to unite forces and go about from village to village. Hussein was to sing and draw the folk to hear, while the missioner was to teach them and invite them to the mission house for further instruction.

Hussein was amazed at the power his new friend seemed to wield. It was impossible to pass down a street of the town without a crowd of youngsters hanging on to him. They ran out from their homes to share his smile, shopmen

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hailed him from behind their counters, sharp-eyed lawyers driving to the courts waved a hand ; and he was indeed the " friend of all." Across the road from the mission house stood a large hostel filled with schoolboys, mostly of high caste ; but, caste or no caste, the missionary was always welcome. Did he not visit and tend them when they were sick, and did they not bring all their troubles to him ? Nay, more, a great deal more in their eyes, he refereed at their football matches and kept the peace between opposing teams. He had also been known to lecture in the public hall ; but what drew them to him was his simple friendliness, and it was for this that they loved him. But with that love went also in many minds something of fear. *Why* was he different from other men ? Some said he was seeking his own salvation by works of mercy, and called him " Brahmacharya ! " But most men who had families guessed, and guessed aright, that it was not his *own* soul he was striving for, but for the souls of their own sons. And so it came to pass that in certain quarters he was hated by the parents as ardently as he was loved by their children.

Drought and Danger

The opposition to the missionary just now became greatly increased by political agitation. There was passing over the country one of those waves of unrest which generally follow on the heels of a bad harvest. Only those who have to depend for their entire livelihood on three

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acres of land can realize the terrible distress which accompanies a bad monsoon. India is utterly dependent on her two periods of rain. Not till the first rain comes can the land be ploughed, for it is hard as rock and cracked by the heat into crevices like parched mouths gaping for water.

This first or early rain had already fallen ; and the oxen had been busy ploughing the red soil. Peace and contentment reigned ; every man, woman, and child was occupied. The schools were half empty, for who could waste time over books when the good God had sent rain to soften the hard soil ? The rice seeds, stored so carefully during the year in the *golas*¹, in great earthen pots, were carried to the seed-beds, and in due time the little green sprouts had appeared. Bigger and greener they grew, tended daily and watered with loving hands till the second rain—the great monsoon—should burst and flood the fields ready for planting out.

But, alas ! this year the monsoon did *not* come. The fields became hardened into great masses of solid earth, and the farmers sat down and waited in despair. All hope gradually dwindled away. Those who could fled to other parts of the country, where the rains had already broken ; but the majority were left to face, with their wives and children, a year of starvation. Up leapt the price of rice ; moneylenders from the cities came to claim old debts, demanding the failing stocks of rice as the alternative to cash

¹ Granaries.

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payments. And so the wretched villagers were left bereft of their last hope of maintenance.

A discontented populace is rich soil for political agitators, of whom many now swooped down upon the villages. "Who are these foreign sahibs," they demanded, "who live in luxury while the people of the land slowly die by inches? What is a foreign government doing in the land at all? What help do the people get from it in their hour of need? Out upon them all! Let the people govern themselves, then there will be no more distress!"

And so it went on, till those whom the people had called friends a month ago were now believed to be their bitterest foes. So fierce was the feeling stirred up that even in their dire poverty the people refused to hire out their bullock-carts to the factory sahibs who needed carts and carters. Why should they help those who were sucking their very life-blood?

Not only the foreigners shared the hatred and scorn of the peasants, but all who stood by them, the Christians most of all. For the second time in his life Hussein found himself an outcast. But there was no retreating for him. In the school opposite were boys who had come from homes safe from starvation, and who therefore did not understand the popular outcry. Some of these were constantly in the mission house, devoted friends of the missionary and daily reading the Bible with Hussein himself. Two of these boys in particular were earnest inquirers and fully prepared to face the opposition of their relatives,

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which they knew must come the moment it was noised abroad that they were followers of a religion which was looked upon as foreign. One by one the inquirers drifted away before the bitter reproaches of their friends, and then even these last two were forbidden by their parents to visit the missionary again.

It was at this critical time that the laughing sahib came walking into the mission house, bringing the sunshine of a joyful heart with him. Long and earnestly they talked together, these three—the missionary, the sahib, and Hussein—of how they might help those two boys; and together they knelt in the little church, pleading that strength and courage might be given to the pair in their hour of trial. A week passed, and then the sad news came that one had turned back. Hussein saw him at the head of an excited band, parading the streets and shouting with the crowd.

The other, however, still stood steadfast in his new faith. Early one morning, while the three were at prayers in the church, a friendly milkman left a note written in the boy's own hand. He wrote: "I am a prisoner; last night my brother beat me because I would not curse the name of Christ, but I rejoice to suffer for His Name. The songs you taught me are my companions. Pray for me that my faith fail not, and come and help me if you can. You may send me a Bible and a letter by the hand of this milkman. He will not expose me." But the plan failed; the milkman was searched and the

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letter and Bible intercepted. The result was that the mission house was boycotted and no one would be seen speaking with the sahib.

A Tragedy—and a Trust

Two days later came an invitation from the European factory to tea, and the three set out together. The evening was closing in, but they feared nothing; indeed, they welcomed the dusk which protected them from the scornful glances of the passers by. But they were being shadowed, none the less. A man met them, one who had been their friend, and asked them whither they went. They told him, and he passed on. The talk during tea centred round the one absorbing topic of the unrest and bitterness of the town-folk. Two young engineers who had come in for the day turned the argument against missions in general, blaming them for educating the mob and feeding suspicion by proselytizing.

"Withdraw your Christian missions," they maintained, "and you will remove the trouble at once."

"I venture to think," replied the sahib, with a smile, "that the trouble would still continue. Do you suppose that if we went there would be no one else to take our place?"

To which Hussein breathed a fervent assent under his breath. The older of their factory friends was more sympathetic. He had known the laughing sahib and his ways for upwards of twenty years, and he knew who was the real friend of the people.

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"The cause of all this unrest," he broke in, "lies neither with missions nor with the Government, but with Providence itself. Give us a downpour of rain and the unrest will be dead in a week!"

No prophecy was ever more truly spoken; for even before they rose from tea a wind had sprung up from the south. And when the sahib and his friends departed they could see great storm-clouds were scurrying across the sky.

They had reached the gates of the drive when a man suddenly stepped out from behind the hedge. He walked up to the laughing sahib with hand outstretched. Next moment a revolver shot rang out and the assailant vanished.

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For three days the rain fell in torrents. The land was transformed from a desert to a garden of luscious green grass. Men and oxen were busy again in the fields, while the agitators returned to the towns seeking a more responsive audience. Every one was rejoicing over the rain. But there was little room for joy in the mission house. The doctors had done their best, but from the first they knew it was a hopeless case. Day and night the two devoted friends watched and prayed by the sick man's side, refusing to believe he could be taken from them. They talked of plans for the future when he should recover, of the inquirers who were now calling anxiously at the house to ask after his condition, of everything which concerned the work of Him Whom they

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served—of anything except the dawning truth which they dreaded to believe.

What those hours meant to both it would be hard to describe, but to Hussein they brought an overwhelming sense of new responsibility. It was for him to take up the work of the laughing sahib, cut short in its prime. Yet was it cut short? Was it not to find its completion in Hussein himself? And so, as these two stood beside the bed of their friend, a great glory shone in their faces. Their master was going to the great Guru and had committed to them the solemn trust of carrying on his work.

At that moment, like a message from the beyond, there flashed into Hussein's mind the words from Isaiah which had so stirred him at the scout camp: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?"

His answer came swiftly—a prayer and a promise:

"Here am I; send me."

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