

A PEEP AT EUROPE

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PREFACE

When I joined the tour party organised by Mrs. S. K. Datta in 1935 under the auspices of the International Students' Service, I was realising one of my long-cherished dreams. Apart from satisfying to a certain extent the 'wander lust' inherent in man, the more beneficent results of such tours are only too well known to require enumeration here. The low cost that such organised tours involve, in contrast to the huge sums spent on those undertaken on individual initiative, may however be referred to in this connection as of special value to many in India.

On board the "S. S. Conte Rosso" westward bound, I received a letter from Mr. Devadas Gandhi asking me to be writing to *The Hindustan Times* about our interesting experiences in Europe. In response to this invitation a few articles of mine appeared in that North Indian daily and they were translated by many of the papers in my own province. Some of my friends in the west as well as in my own country strongly insisted on my getting these impressions of Europe

printed in book form on my return to India and that has been greatly responsible for this publication. It is some months since the edition in Malayalam was published, while the publication of this had to be delayed a little, due to certain unexpected difficulties. It is obvious to the reader that the Italo-Abyssinian war, the tragic death of the Queen of Belgium, the change in the Presidentship of Czechoslovakia are events subsequent to the completion of my tour.

In this rather sketchy outline of our tour, I do not pretend to have dealt, in any detail, with conditions political, economic, social and otherwise that obtain in the Europe of today. That is beyond the scope of this small volume and that has not been my object either, especially when illuminating works by able writers of the West and the East, on the same or allied topics, are by no means rare. Besides, our ignorance of the Continental languages and the shortness of our stay in the countries we visited, were handicaps in coming into close contact with the masses who form the back-bone of the population there as elsewhere. This is just an attempt of mine to

put before the reader our experiences in the West, as honestly and dispassionately as possible.

With all its deficiencies, if my "Peep at Europe" proves in any way interesting to the readers I shall consider this small volume as a fruitful effort to serve the public in my own humble way, as also a not unworthy expression of my deep gratitude to Mrs. Datta, whose untiring zeal made the tour the splendid success it was.

The Authoress.

TO
KAMALA NEHRU

**Who has been constantly in my thoughts ever
since I came into personal contact with her
on my way to Europe and whose untimely
death has been deeply mourned
far and near.**

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ERRATA

<i>Page</i>	<i>Line</i>	<i>For</i>	<i>Read</i>
4	8	" Miss J. T "	"Miss Jethi "
10	6	" groups "	" group "
17	1	" sarees "	" saree "
33	17	" or "	" nor "
84	11	" sceneries "	" scenery "
134	6	" struggling "	" struggling soul "
171	last line	" Tindisi "	" Brindisi "