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The Maharajah Sahib of Gondal,

K.C.I.E., LL.D.,

FOR HIS LOVE OF TRAVEL AND OBSERVATION,

and for the enlightened liberality which, besides relieving his subjects of a number of harassing imposts, has provided a comparatively small State with Railways and other public Works at an outlay that will soon go a hundred lakhs of rupees.

G U J A R A T H A N D T H E
G U J A R A T T S.

Pictures of Men and Manners
taken from Life.

THIRD EDITION,

BY

BEHRAMJI M. MALABARI.

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A P O L O G Y .

THIS third edition of *Gujarat and the Gujaratis* was promised nearly five years ago; but owing to pressing engagements, especially in connection with Social Reform, the publication had to be deferred month after month.

The author sincerely regrets this delay, and begs to apologize to subscribers in India and elsewhere, not a few of whom have probably forgotten the very title of this erratic little volume.

Bombay, September 1889.

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INTRODUCTION.

PERMIT me, gentle reader, to briefly explain the genesis of this little book. Starting on life's pilgrimage in the too early twilight of youth, I have often stumbled into dry nulláhs*—very dry and dismal, and with very steep sides. And in groping my way to reach the other side, I have scratched and cut myself badly. But it is matter for thankfulness to be able to say that in none of my stumbles have I broken any bones. However bad the fall, I have always managed to pick myself up; and, with the rope thrown down by friendly hands, have struggled up the stony hill-side. These roughs and tumbles of life have become a part of my nature, and I have often felt a vague sort of conviction that life would be scarcely worth living without some prospect of having to rough it.

A POOR BEGINNING.

I began life at twelve, giving private lessons. One scarcely feels at ease in coaching his elders.

* Empty water-courses.

It was a poor beginning. At sixteen I became a regular teacher. I had seen enough of the world before this—the world of Surat, that is. I entered upon my new duties, therefore, with hearty interest. The work did not feel a drudgery for some time ; but two or three years after, my migratory instincts again asserted themselves. I felt that I wanted a change. I had taught and studied children long enough, and I thought I must now study “children of a larger growth.”

A TEMPTING OFFER.

At this time I was offered the joint-editorship of a local (English) weekly. I jumped at the offer, and submitted it to a few friends whom I used to consult on matters beyond my management. These gentlemen, each and all, scouted the idea, and strongly advised me to keep where I was.

MY TROUBLES.

Here began my troubles. I had already been favourably known as a versifier ; and with the overweening confidence of youth, thought I had the right and the power, too, to enlighten

the public on political and other topics of the day. There was nothing for it, however, but to bow to friends' decision, once having sought their advice. During the next two years I had the most miserable time of it. They made me a morose, disconsolate verse-monger. I scribbled English verses by the yard; and after destroying the bulk of them, ventured to publish a few pieces. But no end of verse-writing could compensate for the glorious chance I had missed of becoming a journalist and public censor. However, I received fresh overtures soon after.

STRUGGLES OF A CHEAP NEWSPAPER.

It was a cheap weekly, hitherto owned by two partners, cousins, one who had given it money, the other brains. Two more partners were added, my friend N. bringing money, and I supposed as supplying brains. The work was fairly divided—the first proprietor, D., a small clerk, undertook business management. N. was to help D., and also to make himself useful to us—my friend P. and myself—in the literary business. For a week or two all went on smoothly; but we soon felt the necessity of discussing our position. N. was a man of tem-

per, and among other things "compositors" did not take kindly to him. I received frequent complaints as to his harshness; but knowing he had brought us the sinews of war I could do nothing more than appeal to his good sense. On Saturday night Mr. N. was given a "proof" to read. He corrected it; but instead of entering corrections on the margins, poked his pen into the body of the "composed matter." The compositor, of course, could not follow such corrections, and the paper was delayed next morning. On Sunday, when we four proprietors met, I gently asked Mr. N. to be good enough to enter corrections, in future, on the margins of the proof-sheet. N. glared at me for what he took to be an insult, and replied that he had paid Rs. 1,000 to be his own master—that he would do just what *he* liked, and would not be bullied by people who had not contributed a pie. This sneer was passed over by me; but the co-editor winced under it, and replied hotly to N.'s insinuation. What threatened to be a bad quarrel was, however, soon made up; and we all adjourned to an adjoining hotel to discuss the future of the paper and a substantial breakfast provided for the occasion, I forget by whom.

EDITORIAL VAGARIES.

But by-and-bye we two editors could not quite agree between ourselves. I was for treatment of social questions chiefly ; my friend P. affected politics. We settled this difference by confining each to his own *forte*. Our ignorance, even in this, was as boundless as was our arrogance. But was it not glorious to criticise and ridicule leading men in the country ? What a privilege for too-early-emancipated school-boys ! Nothing could be easier than my share of the literary work : I turned into prose, every week, two of my versified social essays, of which I had a large supply at home. Did poet ever sacrifice his substance as I did, in those days, in the public interests ? My sweet sonorous hexameters surrendered bodily to the manipulations of the dirty P. D. ! No martyr could do more. My friend P. wrote political essays. He was decidedly better-read than I. Besides he took pains with his essays ; but how could a young man of less than twenty overtake topics which baffle the grasp of veterans ? One day, writing, I believe, of the battle of Plevna, P. asked me what was meant by "the Porte." I explained "the Porte" might be the Sultan of Turkey's principal wife. P. thought it was

only the European title of the Khedive of Egypt. We often thought and wrote in that curious way.

EDITORIAL AMENITIES.

This could not last; and one evening P. suggested, in council, that our capitalist partners should get a few reference-books for the editor's table. Mr. N. refused to pay for our "extravagance." I submitted, as chairman, that we were neither of us extravagant, and that Mr. N. was wrong. Hereupon he brought definite charges against us. P. replied to the accusations and N. retorted, winding up rather suddenly with a demand for his money. P. was dum-founded, but he soon found courage to ask N. if he meant really to be so "perfidious." N. replied, with equal ferocity, "Return my money this minute." "Very well," coolly said P., taking up N.'s new turban and throwing it out of the window, desiring its owner to leave instantly, on pain of being sent after the turban by the same means of exit. But N. did nothing of the sort. He took P. by the throat and demanded the satisfaction of throwing out *his* turban. "It is my right, give me my right," he shrieked, "and then I'll leave."

Here they closed. They tugged and lugged, tore each other's clothes, and mauled each other very prettily. It was with the utmost difficulty that the young Tartars could be separated. And the two—once intimate friends and college chums—have never since been on speaking terms. That evening, in the presence of servants and neighbours, who had come up on hearing of the *fracas*, the chairman sobbed audibly in his editorial and presidential chair, at all his hopes of fame and fortune having vanished so suddenly. One could put up with light inconvenience, such as of working as compositor, reader, printer, distributor, manager, editor and so forth, all offices rolled into one. But this exposure—oh it was too, too cruel!

But crushing as the disappointment was, it enabled me to cast about for some equally powerful distraction. I had long cherished the hope of visiting Gujarát and Káthiáwár with some definite business views, and having, at this juncture, received an offer from a friend, I accepted it thankfully.

A POOR PROGRAMME.

This personal explanation has been given, reader, to warn you against expecting too much

from my book. Now that you know me, I know you will not be too exacting. If you are curious to revel in the luxury of deep and learned research, I must frankly refer you to *Oriental Memoirs*; to Forbes, Briggs, Ferishta, and such others, with whom my acquaintance is of the slightest, barely sufficient to make me know my place. If you want to refresh, and at the same time to enlighten your mind, you had better turn to the picturesque details of the gifted *padre** Heber. Should you wish to have correct statistics and authenticated accounts of this Presidency, I could safely recommend you to pore over Mr. J. M. Campbell's *Bombay Gazetteers*. In these prodigious results of editorial labour you will find a forest of facts and figures which you can traverse leisurely, till you become another Hunter,† a prince of particulars, a very king of quotations. But if you care to have a fresh account of, perhaps, the least known but most interesting parts of Her Majesty's Indian Empire, of the inner life of an important people, their habits, customs, manners, the moral and social forces at work

* Applied, in India, to Christian missionaries, preachers or priests.

† The Hon. Sir W. W. Hunter, formerly Member of the Governor-General's Council, Director-General of Statistics to the Government of India, &c., &c.

among them, then you are welcome to these pages, such as they are. You will have to be content with rough, hasty sketches, but generally taken on the spot—sketches from real life. I would not promise you much of system and order—because, you see, this is not an Official Report. A number of these sketches appeared, at the time, in the *Bombay Review*, and are all the better for having received touches here and there from the accomplished editor. Not a few of them were, indeed, undertaken at the suggestion of that veteran journalist.* These sketches, and a few more contributed to other papers, are here put into shape, intermixed with extracts from letters to friends and the contents of a rough diary—all strung together on a rather slender narrative thread.

I do not mind confessing, reader, that this is a poor sort of programme. But it is, perhaps, as well it is so. I may also prepare you for a little exaggerated expression, wherever the writer is "intense." But you will not find cause to question my *bonâ-fides*. In spite of occasional levity, no writer ever meant to be more serious. If you follow my sketchings in

* Mr. W. Martin Wood, formerly Editor of the *Times of India*, and of the *Bombay Review*.

the spirit and the letter, if you read between the lines, you will not find them all mere caricatures.

The first edition of *Gujardt and the Gujardtis* was brought out under serious disadvantages. The MS. had to be sent off to London unrevised, and revision of proofs was out of the question. An attempt was made in the second edition to correct misprints, supply omissions, and to check the tendency of some of the observations to appear too sweeping. The glare of paint which disfigured one or two of the "pictures" has now made room for sober tints. But though the form has been in some instances modified, the matter is substantially the same. For what defects still remain the critic would do well not to condemn the workman for the poverty of his materials.

Several new chapters have been added to this third edition to suit different tastes. These chapters could be easily elaborated for a larger volume. The rough illustrations might serve as "aid" to readers who have never been to India. These are the best that could be obtained on the spot, not, however, without many trials by friends in the profession. The experiments so far did not justify a more serious effort.

In conclusion, the author may be allowed to say that, though his book is intended to deal with Gujarát only, many of the larger descriptions and general observations apply equally well to other parts of the country.

TRAVEL AND STUDY.

I am now and then asked by European friends how often I have been to England, and how long I have stayed there altogether. And when I protest that I have never been out of India, my friends shake their heads knowingly. The fact is, I have my own ideas of travel, as more or less of everything else. The first tour I remember having made was, of course, round grandmother's kitchen parlour. Thence I transferred my attentions to the front-yard of the house, thence to the street, the neighbouring street, the whole suburb of Nanpura and the surrounding suburbs; next the Camp and the villages beyond. The climbing of trees and roofs, in search of paper kites, was another round of useful tours. Next to climbing of trees and roofs, swimming or fording the Tapti, and running over to Bhatha, Rander, Adajan and other *gaums** was also a means of touring.

* Outlying villages.

My early local tours were often extended to Udna, famous for toddy. My last long tour from Surat was a walking match to Nowsari. From Surat and its districts I have passed on to Gujarát generally, and from Gujarát on to Kathiáwar and Kutch. I have seen much of India during the last seven years, but Gujarát and Kathiáwar I know best. Much of these two provinces I have done on foot, and with my eyes open. And a good deal of my experience is the result of hard tramping. I hope one day to finish India from end to end; and then, who knows that I may not go to Europe, America and the rest? Less likely things have happened.

But whether I go on the grand tour or not, I will never give up my habit. In study, as in travel, it is best to begin at the very beginning and to proceed by slow stages, gaining something at every stage, and that something such as to be of immediate practical use on the next stage. This is the only way of travelling and studying. Your globe-trotter will laugh at my antiquated method, but he cannot deny its advantages. When you travel or study by degrees, every fresh step or item of knowledge is a keen enjoyment. You are prepared to receive it, and thus received, your knowledge will fruc-

tify. But when knowledge is thrust upon you without previous discipline, that is, without your being made fit for it, it will lie inert and unleavened. What is the use of visiting foreign countries when you know nothing of your own? When you go to Europe, ignorant of your own national life, you will miss those thousand points of comparison and contrast, those thousand shades of difference, those thousand beauties and blemishes that modern European civilization presents. At the best, you will *look at* things, not *see* or *see through* them. Knowledge is best acquired, take my word for it, by the comparative method. And what will you compare your new acquirements with when there are not half a dozen home ideas in that empty head of yours? You go to see the Windsor Palace and are lost in admiration at the sight. Have you seen Agra? Had you seen some of the architectural glories of your own country, you might, at any rate, have controlled your faculty for admiration. You might have been quite at liberty to admire the structure, but at the same time, you could have seen what beauty it has which the palaces of India do not possess, and *vice versa*. The same is the case with study. If you learn Greek after learning Sanskrit, Persian or Arabic, you will enjoy the

process, recognise the advantage of one over another; and though you may admire the European classic as much as you like, you will have no reason to be ashamed of your own. I honour you for your desire to examine the arts, sciences and philosophies of the West, but you cannot do this with advantage to yourself and the world unless you have already made yourself familiar with the national systems. The worst result of this method of travel and study that I am complaining of is, that it gives a man poor ideas of everything in his country in proportion to the exaggerated notions he imbibes about other countries. This is a charge from which very few of our England-returned men can escape. It makes one sick to hear a man rave about this thing or that 10,000 miles away, when a much better, perhaps the original, thing is lying unnoticed at his very door!

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