

A VISION OF INDIA

Mr. JOHN MORLEY, in his Indian Budget Speech in the House of Commons, July 20, 1906, said :

' One of the books about India which I would respectfully recommend hon. members to read is by Mr. Sidney Low—a gentleman of proved competence in political subjects. Mr. Low is a man who knows what he is writing about.'

LORD CURZON, in a Speech at the New Vagabond Club, May 15, 1906, said :

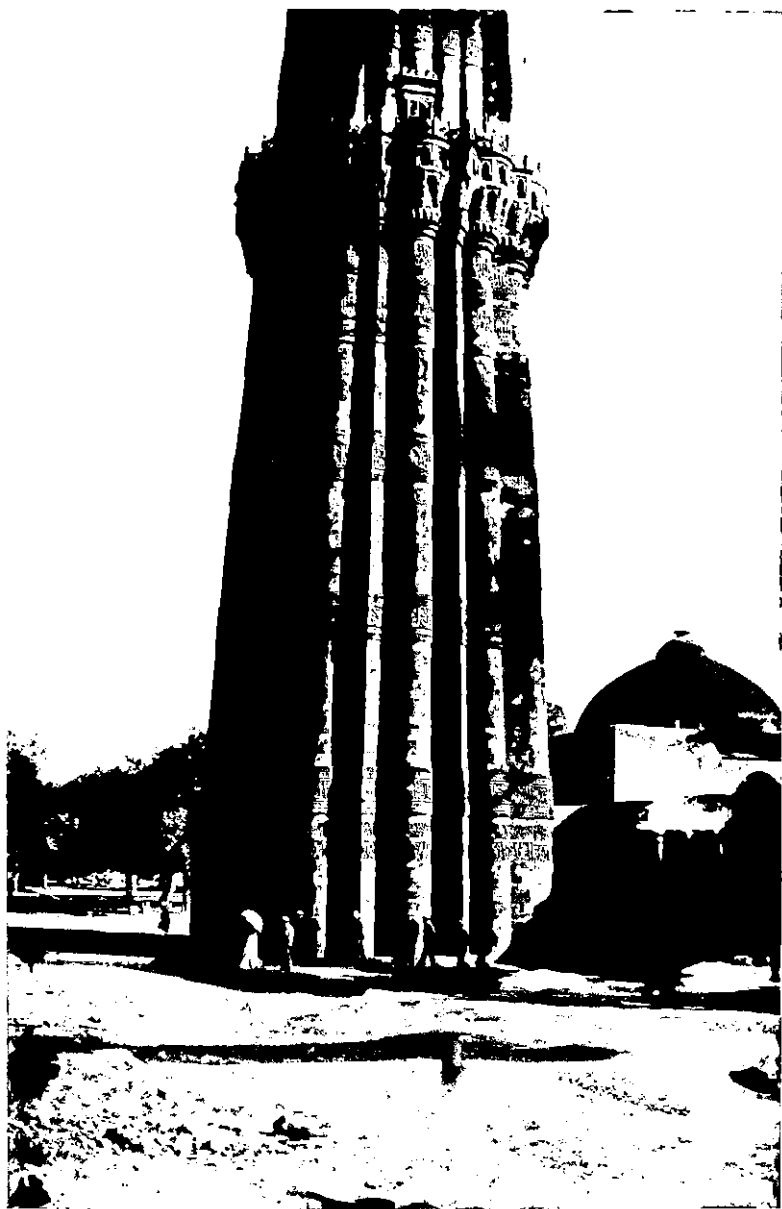
' Mr. Sidney Low, the author of that interesting book, "A Vision of India," has succeeded in giving a striking picture of Indian life under many of its varied aspects, which I believe to be substantially accurate, and which is clearly the result of much acute observation and penetrating insight.'

SIR CHARLES CROSTHWAITE, K.C.S.I., late Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Provinces, and Member of the Indian Council, says :

' Full of information in a picturesque shape on the forms and problems of Indian life—altogether a remarkable book.'

SIR DONALD ROBERTSON, K.C.S.I., formerly of the Indian Political Department and Resident in Mysore, says :

' I would especially exempt from the circle of unreliable critics the talented writer of "A Vision of India." I do not know Mr. Sidney Low; but for a clever and moderate account of India and its peculiarities, I have never read anything more interesting and entertaining.'



PAST AND PRESENT :

THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS OF WALES AT THE
KUTAB MINAR, NEAR DELHI.

[See page 164.

A
VISION OF INDIA

BY
SIDNEY LOW

*WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS
BY THE AUTHOR AND OTHERS*

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P R E F A C E

THE materials on which the following pages are founded were collected, for the most part, during the progress of the Prince and Princess of Wales through the Empire of India, which I was permitted to accompany as Special Correspondent of the *Standard*, in the autumn and winter of 1905 and the spring of the following year. Of this interesting journey much might be written from the personal, the political, and the purely pictorial side. It is not, however, with these matters that I am chiefly concerned. I deviated rather frequently from the route of the royal travellers, since it was my object to give some general idea of the conditions of life and society prevailing in India, rather than to furnish a circumstantial record of the tour, or to describe in detail those places of historical, antiquarian, and æsthetic interest which were included in the official itinerary. It has been my aim to reproduce something of the impression which our vast and varied dominion of the East—almost a world in itself—leaves on the mind, in its splendour and its contradictions, its colour and its mystery, its wealth and poverty, its medley of classes, creeds, and peoples: to hint at a few of the absorbing problems suggested by the contemplation of this strange and fascinating amalgam. I hope that my survey, partial and incomplete as it may be, will not mislead those who know India only from hearsay and

from books, and that it may even contain some things which may be deemed worth consideration by those who have an intimate acquaintance with our Asiatic Dependency.

I left India with a grateful sense of the kindness and courtesy which I received everywhere, both when I was with the Royal party and when I was travelling alone. From the late and the present Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief downwards, the officers of all branches of the civil and military services seemed anxious to assist the inquirer and to supply him with authentic information. I can do no more than return my thanks in general terms to the numerous Anglo-Indians, whether they were civilians, officers of the headquarters staff and of our native regiments, lawyers, police superintendents, journalists, or men of business, who placed the results of their accumulated experience, and sometimes also the resources of their offices, bungalows, and camps, so generously at my disposal. I owe much to the ladies who assisted me to obtain some insight into the conditions of domestic life: much also to my Indian friends, of the Hindu, Mohammedan, and Parsi communities, through whose courtesy I was enabled to gain a better idea, than would have been possible without their aid, of the opinions held by many educated and influential natives on various questions of importance. If I forbear to make more precise acknowledgment, it is because the catalogue would run beyond due limits were it to include the names of all those who helped to make my *Vision of India* pleasant and did their best to render it fruitful.

S. L.

May 1906.

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Most of the illustrations are from photographs taken by the Author. The remainder are reproduced from photographs by Messrs. Bourne & Shepherd, of Bombay, and Messrs. Johnston & Hoffmann, of Calcutta, except the copy of the print representing 'Hodson shooting the Moghul Princes' (facing page 168), for which the Author is indebted to the kindness of his friend, Mr. A. W. U. Pope, C.I.E., of Lucknow. The medallion on the cover is an enlarged copy of an old Hyderabad rupee.