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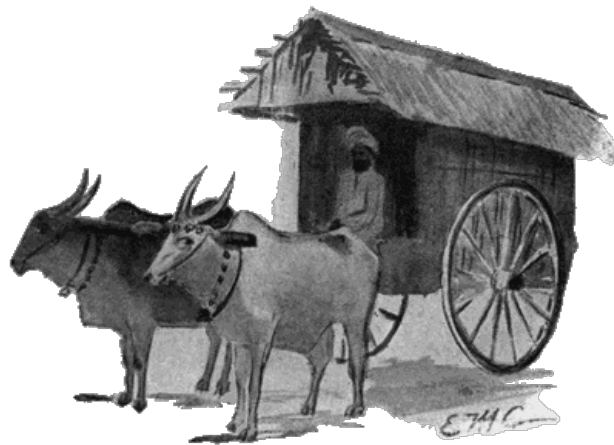
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IN KALI'S COUNTRY





**"MUNDRA HAD BEEN ONE OF THE HAPPY
BEJEWELLED GIRLS OF THIS VERY TOWN"**

In Kali's Country

Tales from Sunny India

By

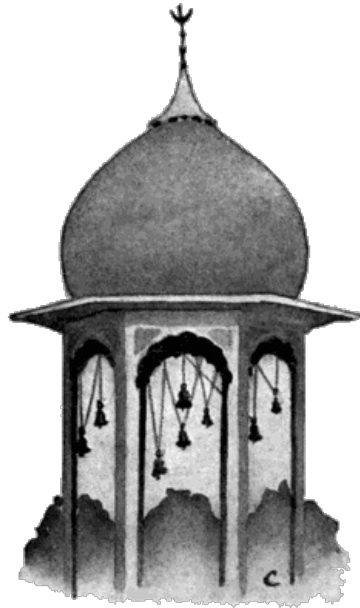
EMILY T. SHEETS

Illustrations from drawings by
ELMA McNEAL CHILDS



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*This book is dedicated to
My Mother
Jane Churchill Thompson
and
My Father
William H. Thompson, Jr.*



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Glossary

Anna—Indian coin, value about two cents.

Ayah—a nurse.

Bearer—body servant or personal attendant.

Chapati—the common bread of India.

Charpoy—a cot-bed.

Chokidar—night watchman.

Chota hazri—light, early breakfast.

Dhersy—the Indian man who does the family sewing.

Durbar—official levee of an Indian prince or ruler.

Ekka—a two-wheeled, springless conveyance.

Gari or gharry—a four-wheeled, closed carriage.

Gariwala—driver of a gari.

Ghat—sacred stairway on river bank adjoining a temple.

Hookah—a water pipe.

Kusti—sacred girdle of the Parsis.

Memsahib—Indian name for European lady.

Pan or pawn—Indian substitute for chewing-gum or tobacco, made by wrapping bits of nuts and lime in the leaves of the betel.

Pice—small Indian coin, value about one-half cent.

Punkah—a large screen-like fan swung from the ceiling.

Purdah—curtain hung for the seclusion of women. "In purdah"—in seclusion.

Rupee—silver coin, value about thirty-three and one-third cents.

Sahib—Indian name for European gentleman.

Sari—a long piece of cloth constituting the principal garment of the Indian woman.

Topi—a sola—a pith hat.

I

Kalighat

"The five years will be up to-morrow. When the sun rises next upon the festival of Kali I shall have completed my vow."

Scarcely had the holy man been able to say his prayers or repeat his sacred texts the whole day long, for there had been constantly before his mind the knowledge that this was the last day of his self-imposed sacrifices and that the next day he would be free from all restraints to do—what? Over and over had the thought repeated itself in the man's mind until now, unconsciously, he had given utterance to it and the stout, sleek priest of Kali who chanced to be standing beside his shelter, looked down upon him in surprise.

"What vow, most holy one?" he courteously inquired. "For many years thou hast sat here at the ghat, the most honoured and revered of all the holy men this side the temple of our Goddess Kali. Was this thy vow—to sit thus in ashes?"

The fakir started at the priest's voice, for his own remarks had been unconscious, and, looking up at his interrogator, he seemed slowly to comprehend that he had spoken aloud and that the priest had heard his words.

"Yes, Priest of Kali," he said, dropping his eyes and poking the little fire before him with his sacred tongs.

"Perhaps you of the holy priesthood can answer a question for me," he added slowly after a moment, without looking up.

The fat, half-naked priest, not loath to take advantage of any opportunity to do nothing, especially when at the same time he was being religious by talking with a holy man, dropped lazily to the pavement beside the fakir's rude shelter of a bit of thatch on four poles and, waving for a hookah from the rest-house across the narrow street, settled himself to listen in comfort.

But before the holy man propounded his question, for a few minutes he seemed to have forgotten about it. His keen, dark eyes, after turning thoughtfully from one side to the other of the small paved square in front of him, looked across the sluggish brown stream at the foot of the steps to the opposite bank where a few people were bathing in the water, and beyond to where were crowded close together the small mud houses of the native section of a great Indian city. While he gazed thus, the young priest took several puffs at the long pipe, leering lazily the while at two pretty girls who had come from the street into the square and, pausing before the fakir, timidly had placed a few pice on the dirty cloth spread out before him, but, seeing the leer of the priest, hastened to pull their saris over their faces and pass hurriedly down the steps to the sacred Ganges.

The holy man had not noticed the girls, nor did he seem to see the rest of the crowd of people who walked back and forth through the little square, having come to throw flowers upon the river or to bathe in its waters or, having bathed, to lie down and rest in Indian fashion in the roofed verandas charitably provided by rich and merit-seeking Hindus. He did not seem to see any of them, although so many of them brought their offerings of fruit and pice to him that his begging cloth was almost overflowing. Nor did he notice the presence of an American tourist who had stepped into the square and who, with a Murray under one arm and an umbrella under the other, was endeavouring to keep an immense sola, topi, from falling over on his nose while he took a picture of the "freak"; for how else could a globe-trotting American classify a man who, naked all but for a small loin cloth, sat cross-legged upon a deer's skin, his long hair, matted with filth into ropes, wound in a scraggy knot upon his head and his body smeared with ashes from the small fire that burned before him, the marks of white upon his forehead, intelligible only to the Hindu, making his bearded face almost frightful.

Nor did the fakir heed the naked children who trotted across the pavement at the heels of their mothers, going to perform the sacred rites at the river and to secure their children from all harm by a dip in its holy waters. The old woman, too, who, scarcely able to hobble along, had placed a little brass bowl of the dirty, foul water beside him (for the piece of water near Kali's temple is only a slip of the Ganges itself and is, therefore, particularly filthy) received not her usual blessing in return and sank down near by to wait until the holy man should notice her.

"Yes, Priest of Kali," the holy one turned from his gazing, "I have a question that waits an answer. Listen to my story. I was once a wealthy man, trained in all the learning of Brahminism. I did only what our religion allowed; I did all that it required, in sacrifices to the gods, in presents to their priests, and even in pilgrimages. But I was wretched within. I had no peace." As he spoke he laid his hand upon his heart and his eyes were heavy. "On the day of the great feast five years ago, on this very spot, after having made my offering to Jaganauth and to Haunamon and the other gods there," and he indicated with his dirty hand a little stone building at his left which contained a shrine to the legless, armless, hideous god, Jaganauth, and to the red, shapeless figure known as Haunamon, "I came to this spot to present my offering to the old man who had sat here ever since I could remember. But he was not here. He was gone. They told me that they had found him that morning lying dead on the steps there with his feet in the Ganges and that already his body had been burnt in the burning-ghat near by. 'What a reward!' I thought, 'to have died by the side

of Mother Gunga. Surely he must have found peace.'

"Can I not find peace by following his example?' The thought came to me suddenly as I stood here gazing upon his empty shelter and his neglected fire. I determined at least to try, for, at any cost, I must find peace! In my zeal and eagerness at once I stripped off my clothing and smeared myself with ashes from the fire which the holy man had kindled but the day before. Leaving my clothes on the ground underneath this little roof near the heap of ashes, as a sign that the dead man's place had been taken, to warn off other possible devotees from the spot, immediately I passed down the little street there between the stalls where are sold the articles needed in the worship of your goddess. At one I bought the little lamp; at another, garlands; at another, oil and a brass bowl; and at the street there I turned aside to buy, with my last annas, a black kid as a sacrifice for Kali.

"Through the narrow passage between the houses that surround the temple of Kali I went in haste, drawing the bleating kid behind me by a rope. When I reached the little paved courtyard before that small but most sacred shrine where dwells the goddess herself I gave the animal over to the priest. Then I watched eagerly as he put the little creature's neck between the posts so that he could not get away, and, with but one blow of the knife, severed the head from the body, letting the blood pour forth. I hastened to catch the precious blood in my brass bowl. I daubed it upon my forehead. I touched the sacred slaughter posts with it. I gladly stepped where it had flowed upon the pavement and reddened my feet in the sacred flood. Then, as the priest carried the carcass away and other sacrificers thronged in, I took my bowl and, mounting the steps of the holy place where no unclean foot has ever trod, I saw the door of the shrine open and before me stood the Goddess Kali in her black majesty, with human skulls for a necklace and human arms for a girdle, her protruding tongue thirsting for blood. I poured my offering of blood upon her and with prayers and presentation of flowers and incense, I invoked her blessing upon me and declared to her a vow that for five years I would sit at the ghat day and night; that I would follow all the customs of the holy men:—wear no clothes but ashes, eat no food but fruit, drink no water but that of the sacred Ganges, and pray without ceasing; and that every anna that I received as alms I would give to her.

"Now, Priest of this most revered goddess, all this have I done. I have never left this spot since returning from offering my vow to her five years ago; I did not even go home to tell my family, who after several days traced me here; but I was so changed that they did not recognize me. Now they mourn me as dead. Here I have sat for five years upon this skin. See my legs, how withered they are! See my body; there is not a clean spot on it! See, I have drunk nothing but this water," and he held up the jar of muddy liquid which the old woman had set down at his side. "I eat nothing but fruit; I think of nothing but my beads and my sacred book; I give every pice to your temple. I have kept my vow. But I am not satisfied. I have not found peace. What shall I do? Priest of Kali! What can I do to find peace?"

The sad heart of the holy man was in his eyes as he looked at the priest and his voice was pleading. "If thou dost know, tell me!"

The priest, who had been dulled by his bestiality so that he was not able to comprehend the soul-longings of the man before him, had already become weary of the fakir's earnestness and importunity. Lazily he pulled himself to his feet, after a last long suck at the pipe. "Come and be a priest of Kali," was his only answer as he turned down the lane towards the temple of his goddess, with lustful eyes fixed upon a pretty woman, who, attracted by the unusual animation of the holy man, had been standing near by until the priest arose.

The fakir, worn out by the eagerness with which he had spoken and the unappreciativeness of his listener, turned wearily to his holy book and his prayers. He knew the priesthood of Kali; in his five years at the Kalighat he had heard and seen strange things which as a Hindu he could not condemn, but which he knew would not bring peace to him, even as a priest of Kali, for in his young manhood he had tried them and had not been at rest. "I was, indeed, foolish to have talked to the priest at all," he murmured.

"Pardon me, holy one," a voice interrupted his thoughts, the voice of a young man who had been standing for some time with an open book in his hand, not reading, but listening to the words of the fakir. "I heard thy conversation. Hast thou ever tried the pursuit of wisdom? Study, learn, become the wisest of men and surely thou wilt become the most happy. I am a follower of that way."

The holy man, turning, looked fixedly for some time at the young man. "Son, what means the sad look in your eyes? Are you yourself happy? Tell me truly!"

The young man's intelligent but undeniably sad face was turned full towards the fakir. For a few moments he seemed to hesitate to reply. At last he said, "No, holy man, I have not found peace yet. I have not found happiness yet, but I am only a student. I am seeking. I study and read at all times—but even while I read my heart is not at rest, I must confess." He turned as he finished speaking and with bowed head, unmindful of the noise and confusion of the square about him, went down the lane.

The fakir sighed. "Peace is not found in that way, poor youth! For I have tried it. I was a Hindu scholar of note before I became this," and he gazed at his dirty hands and body with evident loathing.

The old woman, who had waited all this time for her blessing, said timidly, holding out her hand

towards him, "Holy man, most holy man! Give me thy blessing, for my son is ill. Tell me how he can be healed, my only son."

Mechanically the holy man muttered a blessing, and taking a pinch of ashes from the fire before him, with a mumbled prayer, dropped them into her hand. "Put these upon his tongue. Bathe his head in the holy Gunga water and forget not to offer a kid to Kali."

"But I cannot offer a kid. I have no money! I have no money! My son will die! My son will die!" sobbed the woman.

The holy man looked at her fixedly for a full minute, realizing her grief and her need. Then with a quick glance about him he leaned forward. He swept up the pile of coins on the offering cloth before him and thrusting them into the woman's hands whispered: "Go and buy! Go and buy!"

The woman went quickly, wiping her eyes with her sari.

The fakir's face became radiant. "Surely that sweet feeling was peace! Blessed peace! Is this the end of my quest? Has my soul at last found rest?"

As suddenly his face darkened. "Yet, yet—I should have given that money to the goddess. I promised in my vow that every anna, above the cost of my fruit and of the wood for my fire, should be given to her."

He bowed his head upon his hands.

"I have broken my vow—on the last day of the five years I have broken my vow! I am unholy! I am unholy!"

After a few minutes he raised his bowed head and seemed to be thinking aloud. "Peace could not have come in cheating the gods. That strange feeling when I gave to the woman to relieve her sorrow could not have been peace—but it was sweet, very sweet!" He paused with a half smile which soon, however, was overcast, for all the joy went out of his face again as he said, "It must be that I have not denied myself enough, have not made enough sacrifices. And I have been unholy! Surely there is peace for the truly holy. I will try again.—I will swear another vow. Take me to Kali!" He called the last sentence loudly, but ere the people in the square understood his wish, he remembered that he had no money, no offering to take; even he, a "holy man," could not go to Kali's temple to make a vow without an offering. He must wait until the people should fill his empty begging cloth.

"After all, it is best thus," he thought. It would have been useless for him to have gone to the temple without having planned what new form of self-torture he must add to his present life, in his search for peace. "I must plan my vow," he said.

In the meantime the sun had set and the people were leaving the ghat. Involuntarily the fakir pulled a cotton sheet around him and started to add a stick to his fire, for it was beginning to get chilly. But suddenly he stopped, dropped the stick from his hand and threw the cloth from his shoulders, proclaiming in a loud voice: "For the next five years I will have no fire at night, nor will I put more clothing about my body; but I will have a fire by day when the sun is hot. Moreover I will eat but once a day and but once a day will I drink water, no matter how parching the heat. And—and—I will hold my arms above my head all the night! Surely," his voice sank, "surely these sacrifices will bring me peace. Surely—they—will—bring—me—peace. To-morrow will be the day to begin my new vow, but," he paused, "perchance I can gain my desire sooner if I begin now. Now, to-night, I will begin to keep my vow."

In haste the holy man beat out his fire with the sacred tongs; he threw his cotton sheet towards a beggar shivering on a step near by; and with his eyes turned towards the waters of the sacred Ganges, just visible in the dim twilight, he raised his arms high above his head.

II

Shama Sahai

A little company of pilgrims were trudging along the hot, dusty road. Where a large tree offered a resting place, there for a few minutes, squatting in the shade, the little company would stop while the mother, taking her naked baby from her hip, astride of which he had been carried during the journey, would let him stand beside her, and the father would take a fresh chew of pan, spitting out the red juice upon the roadside. But the young girl of the party would sit apparently unwearied, with bright, eager eyes fixed upon the road and with caressing fingers fondling the bracelets which adorned her arms.

It was an unusual thing for Shama Sahai to be clad in a gay sari, to have necklaces of beads about her neck, a glass-set stud in her nose, pretty, brass rings in her ears, bracelets upon her arms, metal circlets upon her fingers, large anklets upon her feet, and rings even on her toes. But most unusual was it for her to be leaving her village home of mud huts and with her parents-in-law and baby brother to be taking a journey; for from early childhood Shama Sahai had been but a despised and neglected widow in the home of her dead Hindu husband. She knew that they were going to some place afar off to worship the god Krishna and that some special blessing was coming to them for making this journey. She knew that her father and mother and she herself had worked hard in the fields that they might earn the money needed to pay the visit to the sacred city. She knew, too, that a large portion of this money had been spent upon her own adornment. So she felt very proud and very happy, but most of all very eager to reach the wonderful place to which they were going. Shama Sahai was young and strong, accustomed for many of her sixteen years to the heat of the noonday sun in the fields. To make greater haste she would offer to carry the baby and settling more comfortably the bundle which she carried upon her head, she would take the baby astride upon her hip and start off at an energetic pace.



"SHAMA SAHAI WAS NOT HAPPY"

For several days they journeyed thus, at night sleeping by the roadside, each wrapped in an extra covering which Shama carried in the bundle on her head during the day. Often they met other pilgrims, or sacred fakirs who, each with a pair of tongs in his hand, would be measuring their length along the road with naked, ash-smear'd bodies, seeking by such self-torture to win rest for their souls. Sometimes they would meet ox-carts loaded with produce for the city market; at other times, bands of coolies carrying sugar-cane or bundles of fuel cakes upon their heads. It was all of interest to Shama Sahai, who, pulling her sari down over her face, would peep out between its folds and eagerly watch every passer-by. Sometimes, however, she would be frightened as a "chug-chug" would sound upon the air and a great motor car would whiz by and all she could see would be a cloud of dust whirling along before her.

On the long journey before they could reach Kamadabad Shama was afraid that her pretty finery would be spoilt, because her sari soon began to get wrinkled and one of the stones in her prettiest finger ring fell out. Therefore, every evening, when just at sundown they stopped in front of a little wayside temple, the names of whose gods she did not know, and lost an hour of travelling before dark while they put flowers upon the necks of the idols, poured a little oil upon their bodies, and lighted tiny lamps before them, she begrudged the time. She was not interested either in the terrible din, the beating upon gongs and the ringing of bells with which the Hindu priests awakened their gods for worship. Her thoughts were of Kamadabad and the wonders that awaited her there.

At last on a bright morning they reached the city with its narrow, black streets lined with dirty-white, plastered houses and tiny shops. As the streets were full of people crowding this way and

that, Shama Sahai kept as close to her parents as she could. At once the little company hurried to the great temple which was by far the most wonderful building that Shama had ever seen. It was enclosed by high walls and above the gate was a tower tapering upward many stories, on each story of which stood figures of gods, many of whom the girl knew and feared, but others whom she had never seen before. Passing under this tower they entered a court and from there went under another tower to another court and on until, entering a covered building in the centre, they found the god, a great black figure, reeking with oil and garlanded with flowers. All around were young girls, no older than Shama herself, who, with faces shamelessly uncovered, stood there alone, without their parents. Priests, almost naked, were going through ceremonies before the idol. So dark and weird did it all seem and so many strange looking people were passing back and forth that Shama Sahai was half frightened.

After the little company had presented its offerings to the gods and the father had spoken aside to a big fat priest who kept looking at Shama Sahai, the mother announced that they must bathe in the sacred pool. So they returned to the outer court of the temple where was a tank about two hundred feet square containing foul and slimy, but none the less exceedingly sacred, water. Into this tank they stepped and with prayers and the reciting of charms bathed with the throng of worshippers. Carefully they washed out their mouths with the filthy water and then drank of it. During all this time the fat priest kept close to them and it seemed to Shama that his eyes were always upon her. His were not attractive eyes nor was his face pleasing and the girl was thoroughly frightened when, after the cleansing ceremony, he bade them good-bye with a caressing hand upon her shoulder while a bestial smile distorted his face.

That night Shama Sahai was not happy although she had reached the place where she had so longed to be. The memory of the priest's face haunted her and she could not keep from thinking of those girls in the temple. Towards morning her mother was taken ill. And the groans of the woman kept her awake. She stole out upon the door-step, but the sounds of the city were so strange that, little country girl that she was, she drew back and preferred to lie down again beside her moaning mother.

The mother was no better in the morning. Then the man of whom they rented the lodging suggested that Shama Sahai should go up to the house of a white memsahib who could make people well and ask for help. The memsahib could do wonderful things, the man said, and without doubt would cure the sick woman. Although very timid, Shama could not refuse to go for her mother's sake. So, taking her baby brother on her hip and guided by the landlord's child, she took her way along the narrow streets until she came to a high brick wall with a large open gateway. Within she saw a number of people standing before a long, low building. The boy, her guide, having pointed to that building and by so doing having done his whole duty, set himself to the pleasant task of chasing some chickens which were running at large in the compound. Shama Sahai had to approach the building alone. As she came nearer the little knot of people, she noticed that every one of them looked ill and almost every one carried a little bottle in his hand. Through the open door of the building she could see a white memsahib in a blue striped dress, sitting at a little table, writing slips of paper and handing them out to the sick people. Occasionally the lady would touch one of the patients and he would run out his tongue. It was all very queer but interesting to Shama and even the baby watched quietly. When Shama's turn came to enter, she was so embarrassed that she could hardly speak, but, encouraged by the memsahib's speaking kindly to her in her own tongue, she finally stammered out a brief but none too lucid account of her mother's illness. But the lady seemed to understand. After writing in a book and speaking to a native woman who stood behind a sort of table near by, with more kind words she put a small bottle of medicine into the girl's hands. Assured that her mother would soon be well and with orders to come the next day and report the condition of the patient, Shama Sahai went home very much pleased.

But the mother did not get well at once and for several days the girl paid a daily visit to the dispensary, each time losing a little of her timidity and each time being more attracted by the white lady who was so kind to her and called her by name and who, one day when there had been but a few patients and Shama Sahai had lingered behind, had told her beautiful stories about a new god that was not an ugly black image.

However, after a while the mother did get so much better that she could go to the temple again and Shama Sahai's visits to the dispensary ceased. She hoped that they would soon go home. By this time so frightened had the girl become in the great city that she was almost as anxious to leave Kamadabad as she had been to reach there.

One night as she lay, apparently asleep, in her corner of the room near the outside door, she heard her father and mother talking as they came up on the door-step. She opened her eyes and listened.

"We'll go home to-morrow. I made final arrangements with the priest to-day. My, but he's a hard one to drive a bargain with! We will settle the money part in the morning so that we can get a good start before night," said her father.

Shama Sahai gave a sigh of relief at the prospects of an early start for home and was about to close her eyes so that she might sleep and be rested for the journey, when she heard her mother say: "Where are we to leave her?"

"The priest said to take her to the inner court of the red temple with the offerings. He will perform the necessary ceremonies in a short time and we can leave her there," answered the

man. "I wanted it done to-day so that we could get off on the road in the cool of the morning, but he would not have it so."

"Have you bought our food yet? We won't need so much rice without Shama, you know," said the mother.

"I haven't forgotten that when that's just what we are getting rid of her for, you may be sure. Yes, I bought it this afternoon. We'll miss the girl in carrying the load, I suppose, but you can carry it and the baby too just as well as not. How much better it is to get rid of a widow in this way and have one less to feed than to have the cursed creature always around in the way. We'll not go hungry now. A good business we've done here at Kamadabad, old woman, although you did waste a lot of time and money by being sick, for of course we had to pay extra for the longer stay. That old rupee-snatcher of a landlord wouldn't give in an anna because you had been sick. He said that he really ought to have charged more, for when people are sick they lie down longer and so wear out his floor more quickly. You were a fine one, you were, to get sick!" the man snarled.

"Yes, but you wouldn't have been here at all or have thought of bringing the girl, if I hadn't suggested it," snapped the old woman in her turn.

Shama Sahai lay perfectly quiet as the couple, still mumbling unkind remarks at each other, came in and lay down on the floor. She scarcely breathed for fear that they should find out that she was awake. But when she knew that they were asleep, she crept out-of-doors and darting around a corner sank down upon some steps. She knew from what she had overheard that her parents-in-law were planning to go home in the morning without her and that the priest was to have her. As she remembered the evil, swollen face of the man who had watched her that first day at the temple, she shuddered and, drawing her sari more closely about her, crept farther back into the doorway.

Only one thought would come—she must run away where the priest could not get her and she must go at once. Peeping out from the doorway, she looked up and down the street. No one was astir; only a quiet form here and there on the little porches could be seen in the dim light of the street lamps. She would go to the white memsahib. The memsahib and the new god would surely save her.

Like a spirit the girl took her flight through the streets, the lightness of her footfall awaking not the most restless of the sleepers.

When she reached the familiar compound, she did not hesitate, but, running up to the veranda, shook the sleeping chokidar.

"Where is the memsahib? Quick, tell me, quick!"

The watchman, ashamed at having been caught asleep and thinking it nothing strange that a girl should call the doctor in the night, hastened to show Shama Sahai the stairs leading to the roof of the bungalow.

"You'll find her up there. She always sleeps on the roof in the hot weather."

The girl was soon beside the doctor's cot and with frightened sobs was telling her story. "I've come to you and you must save me," were her final words.

Events happen quickly sometimes, especially when an energetic woman is helping them along. As the earliest morning train pulled out from Kamadabad for Mattera, a native Christian woman with a Hindu girl, disguised in the slightly different garb of a Christian, was on board, and the white doctor-memsahib was taking her chota hazri with fear in her heart.

What would be the fate of the poor young girl who had fled to her for refuge? That was the question which was troubling the doctor that morning. Although she was used to witnessing crises in people's lives with real, professional calm, this morning her outward calmness was assumed, for this was a case which her degree of M. D. had, perhaps, not qualified her to handle.

Throughout the long day the doctor waited expecting searchers for the girl, but no one came to make any inquiries of her. As she was leaving her compound gate towards evening for her daily exercise, she met a man and a woman, the latter carrying on her hip a baby whom the doctor recognized. The man was saying in Hindustani to the woman:

"The priest stole her. I know he stole her! Well, it's much the same after all, I suppose, for we're rid of her anyway. Of course he pretended he had not seen her and was angry because I had not brought her. Well, well; it's hard to deal with the priests."

"Whoever has her, may bad luck go with her!" exclaimed the woman.

But the woman's malediction did not bring fear to the doctor who, stopping short in her walk, could scarcely restrain a shout of joy. For this man and woman were Shama Sahai's parents-in-law going home without her, believing that the priest had stolen the girl. Instead of going on to the river for her usual evening constitutional, the doctor-memsahib hastened to the station where she caught the last afternoon train for Mattera that she might tell Shama Sahai that she was safe.

III

Old Sarah

"Here comes Old Sarah!" A shrill voice shouted the news through the open door into the mud house where the small boy's mother squatted at work, with one long, rounded stone crushing the curry seeds upon another large, flat stone that stood on the mud floor. At the call the mother dropped the long stone from her hand and, springing to her feet, hastily followed her naked boy out upon the street of the village. Old Sarah was a new friend who recently had come often to the village, telling the people stories and singing songs to them. But she never had come oftener than twice a week and she had been there only the day before. So the woman wondered what could have brought her back so soon.

The boy, meantime, had been running up and down the short street, clapping his hands and shouting, "Old Sarah has come! Old Sarah has come!" as Old Sarah herself had taught him to do at her arrival so that the people might know at once that she had come and she might not have to wait for an audience.

"Where is she?" called the mother after the running child, for she had looked up and down the road and failed to see the old woman.

"Why, there she is!" said the boy coming up. "Don't you see her sitting there by the road?"

"That's not Old Sarah! I never saw her sitting by the road like that."

"Yes it is! Yes it is!" and the boy danced off in the direction of the sitting figure, kicking up the dust with his bare feet in his eagerness to reach the side of the old lady who always had some sweet for him hidden away in her bag. His mother followed after him and several other people, also, who had come from their homes at his familiar call.

"Why, it is Old Sarah, sure enough! What can be the matter with her?" exclaimed the woman to a neighbour as they approached.

The exclamation was not unnatural, for the usually active old lady who, unwearied, had come trudging into their village week after week, after a walk of five miles, now sat all bent over on the ground with her sari-covered head bowed upon her arms.

The noise of the little crowd as it drew near aroused the old woman, who, letting the sari slide back from a head well sprinkled with gray, raised to them a face white and drawn. The people were astounded, for never in their acquaintance had she shown them aught but a face full of life and joy. Now she looked weak and haggard.

"I am sick," she said, answering the unasked question which she saw in their faces. "You are my good friends; so I came to you for help."

"Oh, let me help her!" cried one.

"Bring her to my house!" called another.

"I will care for her myself," said the child's mother as several women stepped up to raise the old woman to her feet.

They had helped her along some little way and the children were following close behind or crowding ahead to tell the rest of the villagers, when the head man met them.

Looking at the old woman, he said sharply, "What is the matter with her?"

The crowd stopped, out of respect to the head man, and each looked at the other, not knowing what to say. Then the old woman herself looked up. With a feeble attempt at the usual gay salaam with which she always greeted the chief, she answered his question.

"It is the cholera," she said.

"The cholera!" frightened voices screamed.

The hands that had so tenderly been guiding the woman's feeble steps were suddenly withdrawn. The women fled from her, dragging their children with them while the larger youngsters ran down the street, crying, "Old Sarah has the cholera! Old Sarah has the cholera!"

The cry was passed on from one person to another for miles along the road, for never are the roads of India, except in the hottest part of the day, without a throng of travellers.

The old woman, who, thus suddenly left unsupported, had fallen in a limp heap in the middle of the road, lay there for some time until the sun became unendurable and made its rays felt even in her acute suffering. She raised her head. Not a person was in sight. The little village was deserted. It consisted only of a few palm-leaf huts on each side of the street, shaded by cocoanut trees, and could be taken in at a glance. Old Sarah's head fell upon her hands. What could she do? If she stayed in the road her suffering would be more intense; although she expected to die now that her friends had deserted her, still she wanted to die with as little torture as possible.

About six feet away from her was the open door of a tiny hut. The shade within looked very

inviting. Summoning all the strength she had, Old Sarah crawled upon her hands and knees, slowly, painfully, to the door and dropped at full length on the hard mud floor. It was cool there but, oh, how lonely! No one to care for her! no one to supply her wants! no one to be with her when she should die! and no one to give her body Christian burial before the pariah dogs should tear it to pieces! She heard a noise at the door. With a flash of joy in her heart to think that some one had returned to help her, painfully turning her head, she saw—only the sacred bull of the village sticking an inquiring nose into the door. Perhaps there might be something within that he might feed upon, for he, according to Hindu custom, was privileged to help himself to whatever he could find anywhere. With disappointed heart, Old Sarah let her head roll back and closed her eyes, although the thought passed through her mind that the bull might enter the house and trample upon her in his search for food in the tiny room; but if he should, it would bring her only a quick release from her pain. Then the pain and suffering became so great that she could not even think. The bull, however, evidently seeing nothing to please his appetite within the hut, turned away from the door and went on down the street, nosing along the front of every house until he reached the last one where a woman in her haste to flee from the cholera had overturned a basket of pea-pods and left them in a heap on the mud floor of the porch before the house—a fine meal for a hungry bull.

The minutes flew by and became hours; only the moaning from the house near the middle of the street disturbed the hot hush of the midday.

A cat crept into the hut and sniffed at the woman's feet; a dog peered in at the dark object on the floor; but no human being came near.

When the sun was no more than an hour from setting, there sounded the rumble of wheels. A wooden ox-cart, driven by a scantily-clad, very dark native, and drawn by a pair of the gray, humped bullocks of the district, entered the street at the head of the village. The bullocks were brought to a halt at once and a woman's head appeared from under the rounded straw covering of the cart.

"Where is she? Do you see her?" she asked the man.

"There is no one in sight," he replied. "But, hark, I hear a moan!"

"She must be in that house there," he added after listening a moment, pointing as he spoke with a thin, black finger to the house into which Old Sarah had crawled.

He drove his bullocks on down the narrow street until he pulled up in front of the hut. Then the young woman, for it was a young Tamil woman in the cart, with beautiful face and straight, lithe figure, leapt to the ground and ran into the house, her pretty red sari fluttering behind her. The man in the cart sat still, watching the open door, the eternal sadness of the Hindu in his face.

The woman was gone for some time but, finally, looked out of the door. "I have done all I can for her. She is very bad. I think we had better take her to the hospital in the city, for there they may be able to save her life. Get the cart ready," she called.

As she disappeared again, the man got down slowly from the front of the cart and, having got in at the back, arranged some blankets so as to make it as comfortable as possible for the sick woman. Then he went into the house with another blanket in his arms. And in a few minutes the two came out again, carrying Old Sarah in the blanket between them, and they laid her as carefully as they could in the cart.

All this was not done in silence, for all of the time the young woman kept talking, sometimes addressing the sufferer, sometimes the driver, and sometimes herself. "Poor old woman!" she said. "To think that the cowards all ran away and left her like this after the kindness she had shown them. She has walked those five miles, really ten, there and back, day after day, to tell them about her new religion and to help them; for she never came that she did not help the women in their work, or bring the children some sweets, or teach the people something new. Dear old soul! And after all the love you have given them, just in your hour of need they all forsook you! Just wait until I get a chance and I'll tell them what I think about such actions; indeed, what every decent person would think! They pretended to be so fond of her too; she really thought they loved her as much as if she had been their mother. That's the way with these black heathen!"

"Why didn't she come to you?" asked the man as they got the old woman settled with her head on the young woman's lap and he had climbed up in front to prod the bullocks to a start.

"Poor old soul, I never gave her any reason to think that I believed her preachings although she has come faithfully every week to visit me. I liked to tease her and hear her funny answers. I liked to ask her hard questions about her new religion. She would pucker her face all up and think and think until she had answered every one. Alas, I never let her know that her religion touched my heart and that I believe in Jesus Christ! I never even let her know that I loved her. Of course she would not come to me for help. But I do love her. She was so funny and so full of life and odd sayings that I just had to tease her, that was all. Now, now I fear it is too late to tell her!" she ended with a sob.

"I don't believe she will live, do you?" she asked the servant a moment later as he had turned around to look at the old woman and they both were gazing down upon her face, drawn and haggard, with lips parted in a moan.

"I fear not," said the man. "Have you given her from the bottle?"

"Yes, the very medicine she brought me a month ago when the cholera threatened our village." She pulled a bottle from the bosom of her sari. "I'll give her another dose now; surely if one dose is good, two will be better."

She tipped the bottle to the old woman's lips who mechanically swallowed a very little. It seemed to revive her for she opened her eyes and murmured: "Who is this? Where am I?"

The other, bending over her, answered, "This is Jessa. Don't you know Jessa? I've come to take care of you. You will be all right soon."

"Jessa! Who is Jessa?" the weak voice asked while the big eyes stared up at the girl, unseeing.

"Don't you know Jessa, the girl at Bindy, the chief's daughter whom you go to teach every week?"

"Yes, but she wouldn't come to help me. She doesn't love me and she makes fun of my God."

"Sarah, dear Old Sarah!" the young woman raised the old woman's head from her lap and, gazing into her eyes, seemed to draw her back to sight. "Sarah, it is Jessa and she loves you, and—and—Sarah," the girl added softly, "she loves your God."

A brightness as of renewed life suffused the face of the old woman. "God be thanked!" she tried to shout, but the shout fell away into a murmur and the hands, which she had tried to clap as was her custom when overjoyed, fell back at her sides. But although she became again unconscious, the smile of joy remained upon her face and lighted up the thin, dark features surrounded by the straggling gray locks and made her face beautiful, as beautiful for the moment as the face, young and perfect of feature, that bent over her.

"She is dying!" said the man. Stopping his bullocks as he spoke he slid from his seat and began to fumble under the blankets.

"What are you doing, Nado?" called the girl.

"Here is a shrine. I will pray for the life of the old woman and offer a handful of rice to the god."

"Nado," a slim brown hand was laid on his big black one and prevented him from opening the rice bag, "Nado, she is a Christian. I, too, am a Christian now. We cannot pray for her life at a heathen shrine. Sit in your place, Nado, and I will pray to our God."

The man did not get up into his place but stood and with wide, interested eyes watched the girl as, laying the old woman's head gently back in her lap, she freed her hands and clasping them to heaven, raised her eyes and prayed. The words were the words of the young girl herself but the gestures were copied from Old Sarah as she had prayed many, many times in the girl's presence. One, not impressed by the solemnity of the moment, would have laughed at the grotesque motions of her hands and head as she prayed.

"Oh, most great God, most great of all the gods," said the girl. "Let Old Sarah live. She is a good woman. Never has she harmed any one. Her whole life has been given to helping others. Save Old Sarah's life, I pray. I will bring Thee an offering of the best I have, if Thou wilt spare her life and let her live. Take the awful pain away from her. Let her sleep and let her rest and do, oh God, let her live. I will bring Thee coconuts and sweets, rice and a young kid, if Thou wilt spare her life. For Jesus Christ's sake. Amen!"

The girl, unconscious of the absurd way that she had mixed the ideas of her old heathenism with the words and thoughts of the new religion she had learned from the old woman, unclasped her hands and with a smile looked down upon the face in her lap. Already it seemed to her that her prayer was being answered, for the sick woman's breath seemed to come more easily and the moaning had ceased. As the girl was absorbed in watching the effect of her prayer, the man took a handful of rice from the bag, without attracting attention, and slipped to the side of the road where under a tree stood a wayside shrine. Pouring out the rice before the ugly image and bowing three times in front of it, he hurriedly muttered some unintelligible words and climbed back into the wagon. There was a gleam of satisfaction on his face as he started the bullocks again, for he had done what he could to save the life of the old woman whom he, as a respected servant in the family of the chief, had seen often about their home but to whose preaching he had never had time to listen.

To the city and then through the city to the hospital was a long ride in the lumbering ox-cart but it was not a particularly hard ride to any of the three, for native Indians prefer hard seats and hard beds to springs and cushions. And already the old woman was resting so quietly that the girl thought her prayer had been answered and the man felt that his offering had been accepted.

At the hospital a nurse took charge of the sick woman but she would not let the girl enter. So the latter quietly placed a kiss upon the old woman's forehead and turned away, confident that in a short time she would see Old Sarah again in her own village, for she had prayed.

As it was night and the oxen were tired, the girl could not return to her village at once. Besides there was one thing more that she must do in the city. Therefore they turned aside to the marketplace where the farmers slept under their carts. There they made themselves comfortable for the night, after the driver had cooked them a little meal at a fire of twigs and dung-cakes. The girl kept in the cart with her sari drawn up over her face, for such was her custom in the big city.

But later, when she was rolled up in the blankets, she felt very secure with Nado asleep under the pole of the cart and the bullocks chewing their cuds beside him.

When morning came, when the bullocks had been yoked up again and all things were ready for the start, she said:

"Nado, we must tell Old Sarah's mistress. I don't know where she is but we must find her. She lives in a big house and takes care of a lot of little orphan children, for Sarah has often told me about them and her."

It was strange, but in only a few minutes they had found the place where the little orphan children lived, for the natives seemed to know the compound well. And a few minutes later Jessa stood before a sweet-faced English woman, but so embarrassed by the memsahib's presence that she scarcely dared raise her eyes. Only thoughts of Old Sarah and her love for this white lady gave her courage.

"Memsahib," she said in a timid voice, "Old Sarah is very ill with the cholera. We have taken her to the hospital."

"Old Sarah ill with cholera!" the English woman exclaimed in amazement. "She has been gone since day before yesterday. She never was gone so long alone before and we have been worried; but I did not dream of cholera! She is in the hospital?"

"Yes, Memsahib. But I think she will get well," the girl added hastily as she saw the lady's anxiety. "I am sure she will get well, for I—I—prayed," she faltered.

"And I gave an offering to the gods," said the man servant in a pleased tone to himself, for he was listening interestedly, having followed the girl to the door.

"Get my topi, boy, and order the gari quickly," the memsahib called to her bearer. "I must go to Old Sarah at once. Where did you find her, child?"

So while the memsahib waited for her topi and the gari, Jessa told her the story of how Old Sarah had gone to the village to her friends for help but how they had fled from her and left her to die; how one of the frightened people had come to the village of which her father was head man and had told them; and how she herself, because she loved Old Sarah on account of the loving teaching she had received from her, how she had taken her servant and cart and gone to save the old woman's life. She told the lady, too, of the condition in which she had found Old Sarah, of the journey to the city, and of the reception at the hospital. As she finished telling her story, she repeated her assurance that the old woman would live because she, Jessa, had prayed to God.

The memsahib praised the girl for her bravery and thanked her for her kindness to Old Sarah who was very dear to the English lady's heart. And as the gari came up just then she urged them to remain until her return from the hospital, but the girl felt that she must hurry back, since she knew that Old Sarah would be all right now. So they said good-bye and Jessa, having climbed into the cart, was trundled away by the faithful bullocks and the still more faithful Nado, whose gentle prodding of the bullocks was essential to their progress.

Meantime the memsahib had entered her gari and was being driven as fast as the ponies could take her to the hospital. There she was met by a nurse who said that she knew nothing of the case that the lady spoke of. Another nurse was called who knew nothing of such a woman as Old Sarah. The lady, however, would not be turned aside; the records must be searched. And searched they were. The nurses discovered that a cholera case had been brought in late the evening before, that the woman had died towards morning, and that already her body had been for some time in the hospital morgue.

"You must get her out at once," said the lady, "for she is not dead."

The nurses who had been uninterested until that moment then looked at the English lady in mild amazement, for how could a person who had been in the dead-house for several hours be still alive? But the lady was well known to them by reputation and they yielded to her wishes. At her demand they called the head nurse who, because she, too, knew much about this lady, revoked all hospital rules and permitted her to enter the morgue with them.

There lay Old Sarah's form, covered with a sheet, upon the floor with other corpses. The familiar gray hair drew the memsahib's eyes at once. She pulled back the sheet and felt for the heart.

"We'll work over her. I do not think she is dead."

With incredulity not only in their hearts but written plainly upon their faces, the nurses had the body removed to an empty room. And then, because the little memsahib was a woman of such mighty spirit, they fell to work.

Old Sarah was not dead, although she had been for several hours numbered among the dead. Gradually circulation was restored. When the signs of life became unmistakable the nurses worked zealously to make up for the awful wrong that had almost been done. In a big, busy hospital, especially during times of stress, things sometimes are done in a hurry and mistakes are sometimes made.

The memsahib did not leave for several hours. When the dear old eyes opened at last, they looked around in wonder until they rested upon the memsahib's face. Then a glad light shone from them

and an eager voice whispered: "Oh, Memsahib, is this heaven?"

"No, Sarah, this is not heaven. You are still on earth with me, thank God!"

"I didn't think it looked exactly like heaven," the old woman added a little later as she looked around at the bare walls, "but with Jesus and you, Memsahib, it would be heaven in any kind of place.

"I thought I was dead," she kept murmuring, evidently unable to get the idea out of her head.

"No, Sarah," the memsahib finally assured her, "you are very much alive and just to convince you I will scold you a little. Why, oh, why, Sarah, did you not come to me when you were taken ill?"

"Memsahib, Old Sarah knew she had the cholera and she could not expose the memsahib and the dear, little orphan children to it; so she just took her burial clothes and went away, thinking that her friends at Yenna, for whom she had travelled so many, many miles in her old age to tell them about Jesus, would take her in. But they ran away and left Old Sarah to die all alone."

"Were you not sorry then that you had not told me?" urged her mistress.

"No, Memsahib, not even then, for it was better that Old Sarah should die all alone than that the memsahib and the dear, orphan children should die too."

"You precious old woman!" The memsahib, sinking on her knees by the bed with her arms around the thin, brown shoulders, implanted a kiss upon the gray hair. "That is more than a white person would have done!" she said under her breath.

And as the English woman looked upon Old Sarah's happy face and remembered the happy, trustful face of the young girl who had saved this life and declared that the old woman would live because of prayer, the memsahib realized that no hearts in the world were whiter before God than those of these brown people who loved Him well enough to be willing to lay down their lives for others. In beauty of form and feature these brown people often surpass the white races and she felt that with the love of the true God in their hearts they might surpass the white races, also, in the beauty of their lives and of their love.

IV

A Son of the Law

On an afternoon in the early days of the British occupancy of India, Blackmore-Sahib sat alone at the big desk in his study, in his hand a report which had just reached him from one of his districts. At his elbow the tea tray was untouched, although at this hour of the afternoon he was usually stretched out in a rattan chair in the living-room with the punkah swinging over him, the latest magazine, three months old at that, in his hand, and the tea tray already replaced on the small table beside his chair by the cigar service holding cigarettes all neatly rolled ready for his match. It was not because the report was urgent that he had forsaken his accustomed ease to prove it up; nor was it that he was particularly interested in the task, for apparently he was forcing himself to go over the lines of type and up and down the columns of figures. As his pencil reached the bottom of a column it would almost drop from his listless fingers until, with a start, he would begin upon the next row as if in great haste.

The bearer, entering the room noiselessly, saw the untouched tea tray standing just as he had left it a half hour before and looked anxiously at his master's face. But without disturbing his master he removed it and turned to the side table where stood the tobacco service. Not a cigarette was rolled! He clumsily attempted to prepare some but none of his efforts were really successful. However, he put several bulky ones in a saucer and placed them near his master's hand. Still in silence but with many backward glances at the man bending over the slowly-moving pencil, the boy left the room.

As the boy closed the door, the man dropped the pencil upon the desk, put his hand to his head for a second, and then arose. He walked to the door into the living-room and seemed to listen for an instant; then he went back to the desk.

The servant, evidently having heard his master's step, entered with fresh tea and toast.

"Is she better?"

As the boy set the tray down he replied hesitatingly, "No, Sahib, she is still groaning."

"You fool, don't you suppose I can hear that? She has groaned incessantly since last night."

"What can I do?" The man asked the question of himself as he turned half around towards the veranda door.



"IT WAS ONLY A GLIMPSE"

"Won't the Sahib have some tea?" suggested the boy timidly, for like every native-born this man feared his stalwart English master.

Blackmore-Sahib held out his hand without turning back from the door. "Yes, I will take a cup. Perhaps it will steady me a bit."

"Poor little Nona!" he sighed as he took the cup.

He gulped down the tea hurriedly and reached for a cigarette. But as his eyes fell on the clumsy ones in the saucer, they filled with tears and he walked quickly out upon the veranda without taking one.

Up and down he paced unheeding the streaks of sunshine which found their way in through the vines and fell upon his unprotected head.

"Poor Nona! Poor little girl!" he groaned. How skillfully she had always rolled his cigarettes, just to his taste! how daintily she had served his cup of tea! and how quietly she had sat every afternoon beside him, never disturbing his nap or reading! "Poor little Nona!" he sighed, for she might never sit beside him again. He could hear her groans now from the bedroom at the other side of the great living-room. Pitiable, heart-breaking little groans they were! He could not trust himself even to go to the door and look in upon her.

And yet he did not really love her. Nona had made Blackmore-Sahib's life very comfortable for the last ten years and he could not bear to think that she was suffering and probably would die. He did not want to lose his little Indian wife and her affectionate care for him, though of course she was his "wife" only according to the customs of many white men in dark lands. As he paced up and down he remembered how, when he had been sent by the government to this city in the heart of India away from every European association, he had rebelled until, seeing a pair of black eyes peeping from the doorway of a certain mud house, he had become very much interested in that section of the city although it belonged to a low caste of Hindus. He remembered how for several evenings he had taken his evening walk in that locality and furtively watched that house door in which he again saw framed for a second a beautiful Indian face and a slender, lithe Indian figure in a red sari. After a few more visits he had several conversations with the men of the neighbourhood and had learned that the man who lived in that house was, as they all were, of low caste and desperately poor. Finally he had met the man himself whom he heard loudly lamenting because he could not afford to marry off his beautiful daughters. "Why, a wedding costs many rupees nowadays!" he had heard him say.

So the sahib by a little courteous inquiry had learned that the man had three unmarried daughters. By further courteous and diplomatic conversation he had conveyed to the father the idea that if he, the sahib, could have his choice of the three girls he would pay a dowry for one of them. After several evenings of discussion and bargaining the old man slowly and cautiously had consented, but the matter of giving the sahib his choice had been a trifle difficult even among the low caste. But, finally, having bidden the sahib stand at the other corner of the street where he could see without being particularly noticeable, on the evening the bargain was sealed, the old man had called his daughters one at a time to the door of the house on some trifling pretext. It had been only a glimpse, but as the third girl disappeared from the doorway, Blackmore-Sahib had been satisfied. On the very next evening, having promised to pay a sufficient number of rupees to marry off both of the other daughters, the Englishman had had the satisfaction of seeing a little draped figure enter a covered ekka and be driven away towards his bungalow.

He could remember, even after ten years, how the ekka had driven up to his door and how he, having reached the door before her arrival, would not pay the promised money until the girl's veil had been lifted and he had seen for himself that no trickery had been played upon him and that this was the one of his choice. She had been very young, very timid, and very beautiful. He remembered that, cross, burly chap though he was, he had delighted to tease her out of her shyness and teach her the little ways by which she could make him happy and his bungalow a home. She had been an ignorant native girl, as the majority of Indian girls are, but she had soon learned to love him and she had always been beautiful to look upon.

They had not been married. That was not necessary in those days in the East. He had given her a good home and in doing that he had done his whole duty. Yet he had never mentioned her in his letters to England, for "they would not understand." Indeed, he had half expected until the last two years to go back to England and marry a fine girl whom he had known in boyhood. But when the time had drawn near he had decided to stay here as he was;—for what would become of Nona? He could not keep her, too, for even he did not think that way of living right. He sometimes longed for the green meadows and the hawthorne bush and the skylark, nevertheless he remained in India, for he could not take Nona and he could not leave her.

But now it seemed as if Nona were going to leave him. If she should die, he would be free to go to England to marry his childhood friend, for a recent letter from his brother had told him that Elizabeth was still unmarried and mistress of her own estate. But now, of a sudden, he did not want to go; he did not want to marry. Indeed, he did not want anything but to stay here with Nona. He wanted Nona! She must not die! He needed her.

"Sahib!" A soft voice arrested his step and Nona's ayah besought him: "Sahib, she is no better. May I get the memsahib? I think she can help her."

"What memsahib?" he asked, his voice gruff with emotion.

"The missionary memsahib, master. Please let me get her."

"A missionary! Would a missionary come to my house?" he asked in scorn.

Blackmore-Sahib had seen the missionary lady often, for she was one of the very few Europeans in the city, but he never had spoken to her. He knew missionary principles and he felt that he and Nona in her eyes were worse than the Hindus "in their blindness." He had always avoided a missionary's path; now he would not ask for help! Even if he should humble his pride and do so, he felt that no Christian would come to him, for were not he and Nona without the law?

"No, she would not come," he said emphatically.

"Yes, master, she will come. I know she will come. See how ill my mistress is! Hear her moans!" and the faithful ayah wrung her hands in grief. "Oh, let me go to get her."

"Is she a doctor?" he asked. "Does she give medicine?" he went on, trying to make the native woman understand.

"No, she is not a doctor, but she gives medicines," the woman replied enigmatically.

There was no doctor within reach. If this woman could help Nona, had he any right to let his pride keep him from at least asking for her help? Blackmore-Sahib reasoned it out slowly.

Although he was sure that she would not come, he must do all that he could to help the sick woman and so he must ask the missionary to come.

"Go!" he said finally to the ayah and as she sped down the road he continued his pacing and his thoughts. His thoughts turned strangely, after the interruption, to his boyhood home and his boyhood days when even a lie, a wrong word, or an unkind deed had hurt him almost as much as his mother. But his mother had died when he was only a lad and after that had come school and then India and—Nona.

The change from the rigid morality of a well-trained boy living under the eye of a law-abiding people, to the moral thoughtlessness and neglect of a man far away from the reign of aught but the law of the conqueror among an inferior people; the change from the conventional obedience to the social customs of a Christian land, to the unconventional disregard of all Christian customs in a heathen land, had come so gradually that Blackmore-Sahib had never before realized how different he was in moral integrity from what he had been in that boyhood home and how different he must be in reality from what his mother had imagined that he would be in her fond dreams about the future. Had India by her enervating climate, by the ease with which she gratifies the sensual side of man's nature, and by the intellectual loneliness in which she makes her foreign rulers live—had India by these means warped his moral sense? Or had his good life in Christian England been a foolish fanaticism and was his life here the true living of a free soul?

Blackmore-Sahib was startled at the presence of such questionings in a mind which heretofore had accepted his conduct and life unquestioned. But at that moment there stole upon him the memory of a sweet white face, drawn with pain and the sound of a low but earnest voice saying, "My boy, I am going away—to leave you alone. Be strong and brave and good." These memories as they mingled in his mind and ears with the picture of a beautiful, dark face full of suffering into which he had looked that very morning and the sound of sharp moans still coming through the half-closed bungalow door, worked strange havoc within him.

Although his thoughts had carried him far, only a few moments had actually passed when, hearing quick steps beyond the compound wall, he came to a halt and saw an English woman hurry in at the gate, followed by the panting ayah.

"Good-afternoon, Mr. Blackmore," spoke a pleasant English voice. "I am not a physician, but I'll do the best I can."

Blackmore-Sahib followed clumsily, as a man does in a house of illness, after the energetic little figure that went straight to Nona's room. There the missionary spent much time examining her patient and it was with anxious eyes that she finally looked at the man as he sat near the door.

"It is a serious case. I have seen just one like it before," she said. "But since it is impossible to get a real physician I will do the best I can. Will you kindly send me a couple more servants and order several tubs of hot water got ready? Then, please, go away for a gallop and do not come back for several hours. I don't believe you know much about sickness and a good ride will brace you up, for you will have to watch with her to-night, I think." The last was said with a smile as she started quickly and quietly about her preparations.

At the end of two hours he met her at the bedroom door.

"She is more comfortable, but it will be a hard fight. I shall stay here to-night. I don't dare trust the case to any one else yet."

In the morning, when at five o'clock he was wakened from a fitful sleep by a rap at his door, the same voice said, "She is resting now. Will you come and watch her while I go home for a short time? I cannot leave her alone with the servants, for they are either too tired or too stupid to obey instructions this morning."

About seven she returned and all day long, sometimes by turns, sometimes together, they watched and waited, doing all they could to help Nature bring back peace to the poor suffering body.

About the middle of the morning he asked her how she had gained her medical skill. Then she told him of her life in India and how she had found that by helping the sick she could most easily reach the hearts of the people. She told of spending one furlough in a hospital at home for training. Seeing that the conversation did not annoy the patient and that it seemed to interest the man, she went on telling about her work and the joys and sorrows that she had experienced as a missionary. Not one word of preaching! She simply told of her life as if talking to an old friend. There was not a sign that she had recognized anything unusual in this household or seen anything to condemn. He began to wonder if she knew and yet he felt that she did know. She talked about England and the home she had hoped to go to the next year; but no one had been found to take her place and she could not go until there was some one to work for her people. He was surprised at the light in her eyes when she said: "I'll not leave them without some one to care for them even if I have to put off my home-going all my life."

She talked of Christ so freely and of her own religious beliefs so naturally that he felt that her speech grew out of her life and he did not resent the personal religious element in her conversation which he had always avoided and resented in others.

But while she was talking in low tones or listening to him as he, in turn, told of his home in England, she kept a keen eye on her patient. About eight o'clock at night a change came. The

moaning stopped; the restless brown hands grew still; the breath came regularly; and Nona slept a quiet, restful sleep. The memsahib, on her knees beside the bed, looked up at the big, burly, white man standing on the other side of the narrow couch. "She will get well," she said simply. "And now—now"—she stammered with difficulty, "you will marry her, won't you?"

As the astonished man gazed into her wistful, earnest face a slow resolve grew in his own. The coming of this strong, wholesome woman into his life, the revival of the memories of his boyhood, the face of his mother, never entirely forgotten, and now clear and vivid before his very eyes, and, more even than all these, the dawning consciousness of the Presence in which his life had been lived and was now being judged cleared away all his ethical confusion, revealed to him the evil of his past life and begat in him a great desire for cleansing and a high purpose to make amends for the past.

And so when the missionary memsahib said to him, "You will marry her, won't you?" his astonishment slowly gave way to a sense of high moral purpose. After a silence which revealed the struggle within, he replied in a firm voice, "I will! and may God bless you."

With these words the man dropped upon his knees on the other side of the bed and his head rested for a moment on the pillow very close to the beautiful brown face there. Then, without asking permission, the missionary prayed a simple prayer of thanksgiving for the life of the woman and a request for a blessing upon her English brother and herself that they might shape their lives after the character of Christ and live according to Christian laws.

Then the missionary slipped quietly out of the room, for the danger was over and the servants could take as good care of their mistress as could she. But she promised the anxious ayah as she went away that she would come in from time to time for a few days to see that all went well.

Two weeks from that day an Englishman stood with a Hindu woman by his side in a missionary's parlour and there a quiet wedding ceremony was performed. To the bride it meant nothing, but to the bridegroom it meant an entire change in his life and heart.

Several years later an English gentleman bore unflinchingly the embarrassment—and worse—of introducing an Indian wife to his English family at home. Tenderly he sheltered her from all annoyances and apparently with pride he took her from place to place in the homeland. Only one person, a missionary from India, home on a long-delayed furlough, guessed that the journey was one prolonged torture to the man who, from a high sense of duty to a woman who could not even comprehend it, was making her all amends in his power for a wrong which, also, she did not comprehend.

"I don't understand why he married a native," one of the Englishman's relatives remarked to a friend. "Otherwise he is a perfect Christian gentleman and an honour to the family."

The missionary, who chanced to overhear the remark, in her mind erased the "otherwise."

Mundra

"Mundra!" a harsh voice screamed from the door of the mud house. "Mundra, child of the devil, come here. Where are you, spending all your life in laziness and I working hard to put rice into the mouth of a god-cursed creature like you!"

There would have been no need for more than the first call, if the old woman had simply wanted the child to come to her, for at the first sound of the voice the little thing had started up from the dirt of the road where she had been lying and, gathering the sari, in which she had been wrapped, up around her hips and waist, had moved hastily towards the speaker. But the woman seemed to be giving vent to her own ill nature in an evidently customary and certainly vivid way.

"You vile object of the gods' wrath! To be sleeping when every decent creature is at work!

"Bring water," the old woman commanded fiercely and with a thrust of her foot sent the child, who had reached the door by that time, reeling in the direction of a large brass water pot which stood in a corner of the mud porch.



**"FOR A FEW MOMENTS SHE MANAGED TO
KEEP UP THE STRAINING MOVEMENT"**

Evidently too wise and too tired for words, the little creature, recovering her balance, quietly but not without great difficulty, lifted the big, brass jar and, putting it upon her head, started off down the village street.

The small, dark, thin figure walked very straight because of the jar on the head, not from any sense of pride, for what had Mundra to be proud of? Not a single ornament so dear to the hearts of India's women did the child wear; her sari was but a dirty cloth; and her head was shaven. Little girls of her own age with clinking anklets and glistening jewels drew away their gay garments from any possible contact with hers as she came near and stepped to one side of the street with their water jars. The men who came towards her along the road carefully turned away so as to avoid her shadow as she passed them. And no one addressed her except as a small boy now and then pointed a finger at her and called out the same words which the men muttered to themselves as she passed them—"Cursed of the gods."

As she paused to rest for a moment under the shade of the great peepul tree which protects the emblems most sacred to the Hindu villager, even the priest, who tended the various small shrines beneath the great tree, muttered a curse and moved quickly to the other side of the gnarled trunk where a coolie, clad only in soiled white loin cloth and dirty pink turban, was winding a garland of marigolds about one of the sacred stones. The worshipper's attention, attracted by the sudden movement of the priest, was drawn to Mundra and he in turn, muttering, paused in his acts of worship until the contaminating presence should be withdrawn.

When the child reached the well, she had to wait at a distance until all the others there had filled their vessels and gone. Then she filled her own and, without assistance, although it took a dreadful struggle, raised it to the necessary position on her head.

But the child was so accustomed to all this treatment and so tired that she scarcely noticed how the people acted. Her body ached all over, from hard work and blows, even to her very heart, which really ached hardest of all. Just one short year before Mundra had been one of the happy, bejewelled girls of this very town and everybody had smiled at her and passers-by had called her "Blest of the gods." But now how different! Her father had been of the weaver caste and when she had been about ten years old, no native ever knows his exact age, she had been married to a man in the same caste. And at that time, less than one year before, she had gone to her husband's home a welcomed bride, the very home to which she was now returning in disgrace, and her mother-in-law had been pleased with her and greeted her with kind words, the very same woman who but a few moments before had kicked her away with curses.

At the time of Mundra's wedding the people had been anxious because rain had not come and the crops were dying. Therefore, with grain still at famine prices from the year before, conditions had

been bad in the district where she lived. So it had not been a surprise when, soon after the wedding, among these ill-fed natives had come the ever-expected and ever-dreaded cholera. In the early days of the scourge Mundra's father and mother had died. At first their death had meant little to the child for she was no longer a part of their household. But soon death did take one whose going meant at once more to her, almost more, than the loss of her own life. One morning her husband, a strong man of about thirty, was stricken. By nightfall another body had been placed upon the funeral pyre and Mundra was a widow.

Mundra, and she alone, had caused the death of her husband; so thought every one in the village and so thought the child herself, brought up in Hinduism. Now she realized the death of her parents, for had they been alive she would have been sent back to them at once. But since they were dead she had to be kept as a despised member of the household of her mother-in-law, practically a slave there, with all the hardships and abuse usually attendant upon the lot of such an one. Her hair had been cut off; her pretty jewelry had been taken from her; her coloured saris had been sold to a neighbour; and in place of all these belongings she had been given a few yards of white cotton to wrap about her and part of a ragged blanket for a bed. But Mundra could have stood all this hard treatment, hard as it had been, and even gladly would have slept on the mud porch with the cattle or in the street with the dogs, if only every one had not hated her and shunned her as foul and unclean, if only some one had loved her, if only some one had even spoken kindly to her sometimes or smiled upon her.

"Late as usual, you foul creature of the dust! If you have touched that water with your unclean hands, may the next drop which you take into your accursed mouth choke you! To your work there at once, you abomination in the sight of all that's holy! May the moon blast you! May the sun smite you! May your food poison you! And may the gods damn you, you devil-bought murderer of men!"

This was the greeting the child received as she staggered upon the porch and almost fell as she set the brass jar in the corner. But not one moment's rest was there for her.

"To your work, I say!" shrieked the woman again, pointing a brown, bony finger towards the grinding-stones in the opposite corner of the porch where sat a strong young girl, about sixteen years of age, with her hand already upon the handle of the stones waiting for Mundra to help her. This girl was well dressed, an honoured daughter-in-law in the family, who must do a share of the household work, as all Indian women, except the rich, must, but who was well fed, strong, and able to work.

Mundra sank down on the floor beside the mill and, placing her small hand on the handle above the other's big one, threw all the strength she could muster into her thin arm to make the one great stone revolve upon the other beneath and crush to flour the grain which by handfuls with her free hand the older girl was pouring into the opening at the top of the stone.

Meanwhile the mother-in-law had lighted a fire in the tiny mud stove beside them, the home-made mud stove, found even in the kitchens of the rich, a small, hollow, semicircular mound of mud about eight inches high, upon which a kettle could be set and within which a fire could be lighted and replenished through the opening in front. Upon this stove, instead of a kettle, the woman had put a large, flat, iron griddle, upon which, after having patted and rolled out some flour, she threw a flat cake, about eight inches in diameter. This cake she turned with a pair of long, iron tongs. After it had browned a little, she thrust it over the coals in the fire to let it puff out and when it was just right to suit her Indian taste, with the iron tongs she tossed it, the hot chapati, the common bread of India, into a basket by her side. This process she had repeated until her basket was nearly full.

The old woman was not so busily engaged with this task, however, as to be unable to give her attention to other things. When Mundra's tired hand relaxed its hold upon the handle of the grinding-stones and the strength in her little body gave out, with one swing of the arm, down upon the child's bare back came the hot tongs.

"To work, you accursed creature!" screamed the mother-in-law.

A sharp cry of agony followed the blow, but Mundra, although her body was quivering with pain, resumed her work. For a few minutes she managed to keep up the straining movement of the arm. Then, in spite of all her gathered will, her fingers slipped again. Down came the hot tongs a second time upon the tender, though dark, skin and Mundra fell in a faint beside the mill.

When the child regained consciousness she was still lying beside the mill. She could hear the family within eating their evening meal of chapatis, rice, and curry. She could hear their talk of the coming rain, of the tiger that had been seen in the jungle near the river, of the preparations for the festival of Ram, and of the offerings of rice and flowers which must be taken to the god before the day of the great procession. Dimly she heard it all. No one mentioned her or seemed to have noticed her lying there in the corner of the porch. She hoped that they had not; if they would only forget her and torture her no more for a little while she would be so glad!

The smell of the fresh chapatis, however, made her long for food, for as a widow she had had no meal since morning and could have nothing more until the next day. The pain in her back almost made her cry out at times, but she restrained herself and lay still, unheeded, in the corner behind the mill, until darkness came and the lump of clay in the little shrine across the street under the red flag had been propitiated by offerings of rice and chapatis, and the people of the household had rolled themselves in their blankets and gone to sleep.

Then Mundra dragged herself to the edge of the porch and looked about. All was dark except a tiny spot in front of the shrine opposite, which was still lighted by a small wick burning in a shallow dish of oil. The priest had not yet come for the offering.

All was quiet.

An old blue rag, the remnants of a sari, lay on the floor near her. Mundra picked it up quickly. As quickly and silently she slipped across the street, and—unholy act! worthy of one "cursed of the gods"!—she emptied the dish of rice which stood there before the idol into the piece of blue cloth; then laying the chapatis upon the rice, hurriedly tied the whole into a bundle. For a moment she stood looking up and down the street. In both directions all was still quiet and dark. But she did not hesitate long. Towards the river, where the jungle lay, the tiger might be; down towards the well, where the village street joined the public highroad, there might be—the child did not know what, except that somewhere in that direction lay the great city.

She turned towards the highroad. Creeping along, half walking, half crawling, she reached the well. There beside it she tore off her own dirty white covering, and, having changed the rice from the blue cloth into a piece of the white, she wrapped the ragged blue sari around her and drew it up over her shaven head.

Having, with the shrewdness of the native, placed her old clothes on the brink of the well, Mundra, now no longer in the garb of a widow, turned down the main road towards the great city. She knew not what might await her there, but, childlike, she had faith to believe that even unknown people would not treat a beggar more cruelly than she, a widow, had been treated by her own.

VI

Of the Tribe of Haunamon

The great bungalow, set far back in the grassy compound and shaded by mango trees, looked peaceful and sleepy in the afternoon sunlight. The very roses in the carefully rounded beds in the centre of the lawn before the house were nodding as if resting in the shade after the blaze of an Indian noonday sun. The only human creature in sight, a dthersy, sitting cross-legged on the little side porch, was asleep over his sewing. Between the rows of potted ferns and palms along the front veranda appeared glimpses of white as if the occupants of the bungalow might be taking their siestas on the open rattan couches in preference to the warmer curtained beds within, one of which could be seen through an open bedroom door. A mongoose, tied to a post of the veranda, had, for a moment, ceased to fret at his bondage and gone to sleep. Even several lizards half-way across the gravel path from one grassy hunting ground to another had stopped as if too exhausted to pursue the never-ending chase. Only the shadows moved, little by little lengthening out, creeping towards the compound wall, as the never-sleeping sun continued his ceaseless journeying towards the west.

Still one hundred and twenty by the thermometer which on the wall behind the sleeping dthersy caught the direct rays of the sun! At three o'clock of an afternoon in India after a morning's combat with the heat how could Nature do aught but sleep in whatever shade she could find for her weary head? But even in sleepy, dreamy India there are the exceptions that prove the rules. Suddenly a wail arose upon the sleepy air and a most terrified cry broke up all quiet and repose.

The dthersy, startled from his stolen slumber, looking up guiltily, quickly began to turn the wheel of the hand-sewing machine beside him. The mongoose tugged at his cord. And a frightened woman started up from her couch on the front veranda, as a little white figure with flying feet and topless curly head came running from behind the bungalow with the usual cry of childhood's terror:

"Mother! Mother! Oh, mother!"

Even the ayah, who was trying to keep up with the child but having a hard time to run in her long, tightly-drawn sari, looked frightened. An ugly chattering, sounding from behind the house, kept up for some moments as the mother, having gathered the child up in her arms, sat down again with her, soothing and quieting her as only a mother can, while the ayah dropped panting on the floor beside them.

"There, dear, what is the matter? Tell mother quickly."

"Oh, mother! The monkeys! The monkeys!" sobbed the child.

"There, there, dear, don't cry. You are here with mother now and the monkeys cannot hurt you. Tell mother what happened."

However, before the little girl could calm herself enough to tell the story, the ayah began it for her.

"Baby woke early from her nap to-day, Memsahib, and would not go to sleep again and so I dressed her and brought her down for her bread and milk. She ate it like the good little girl that she is and so I gave her a piece of cake. I had just turned to put the plate back in the cupboard, when I heard a scrambling noise behind me and there was a monkey. He grabbed the cake from baby's hand and ran up a tree, chattering. He was a great, big fellow, the biggest one I ever saw. He looked very fierce and chattered terribly. Of course baby was frightened most to death and she ran at once for you." The ayah looked fearfully over her shoulder. "I'm afraid to go back there again myself."

"Hush, ayah!" whispered the mother over the child's head. "Don't frighten her any more. And you were giving her cake, too, when I have told you that she must not have any for a few days now as she really hasn't been feeling very well."

"Oh, mother!" interrupted the child, who had got the better of her sobs. "The monkey looked so ugly and grabbed the cake right out of my hand just as I was going to take a bite. His paw almost touched my face. Will he come again?"

"No, dear," replied the mother as she hugged the little girl close in her arms. "Father comes home to-night. We will tell him and he will send the monkeys away. Something has got to be done, for we cannot have the naughty monkeys stealing our baby's food right out of her mouth," she added playfully.

"Look, dear," she said in a moment to the child whose fright was soon over. "See how your curls are mussed! And, dearie," she looked at the little girl very reproachfully, "you ran all the way around in the sun without your topi. Go into the house now and let ayah fix your hair and wash your face. Then you can come out again and we will watch for father together, for he will surely come soon. Won't it be nice to have father home again?" And she kissed the child as she set her down on the floor. "A week isn't very long, but it seems a month since he went away this time."

"Yes, the naughty monkeys have been so bad!" nodded the little girl as she hopped along into the bungalow before her native nurse, forgetful of her fear, for her father was coming home and he

was to her omnipotent. Nothing, not even a monkey, could harm her while he was near.

For a moment after the child had gone, the mother remained standing by one of the veranda pillars, looking down the road in the direction of the railway station. But soon she retreated to a chair near the door, for the branches of the biggest tree near the porch had begun to sway and she could see distinctly at least one pair of bright eyes peering out from among the shining green leaves.

"Something must be done!" she said aloud as she sank into the chair, at the same time instinctively taking up in her hand a paper weight which lay on the table beside her. "We just cannot stand being thus bothered and frightened by these animals, and such horrid looking ones too!"

The Burbanks had been in Sindabad only two weeks and had scarcely got settled in their bungalow when Mr. Burbanks had been called away on business. He had felt very secure about leaving his family because of the location of their new home which was about half a mile from the native city and very close to the other few European residences. To him the bungalow had appeared to be far enough away from the native quarter to be free from all unpleasant sights, odours, and visitors, the usual unpleasant associations of too close proximity to one of the sacred cities of India. Disagreeable sounds he had expected they would hear, for the hideous sounds, especially of night in a Hindu city, carry far. But after a residence of five years in India he did not think his family would be particularly annoyed by them.

So Mr. Burbanks had been perfectly satisfied with his new residence and its location until just before he left he and his wife had been obliged to drive through the native city on some errand. It had been with great disgust that they had seen the filth of the place, the usual filth of a native city, but here augmented by a horde of hideous monkeys that, unrestrained, wandered about the streets, over the houses, in and out of the windows, apparently the most respected denizens of this most holy city. To kill a monkey is a most heinous sin in the eyes of a Hindu! Did not Haunamon and his monkeys help the great god Ram and rescue his wife Sita when she had been carried off by his rival? Besides, these animals are surely some Hindu's beloved dead. Therefore no one in Sindabad ever touched or harmed a monkey. When, however, the creatures got so thick that life became unendurable, the people would entice a crowd of them into a great basket and carry them off to the forest and let them loose there. But this did not happen often, because the native of India will put up with well-nigh unendurable conditions rather than break through established custom and perform an unusual task.

As they had looked upon the monkey-infested city, Mrs. Burbanks had wondered aloud if the animals would venture as far as their bungalow, but her husband had assured her that they were much too far from the city and the bazaars for that. But the sight of the animals had taken off the keen edge of their satisfaction in their new home and womanlike Mrs. Burbanks had worried about the matter until a week had passed without the appearance of any such company in the compound. Then she had felt better and both of them had forgotten all about the monkeys. However, the very next morning after her husband's departure a strange running and jumping on the roof had awakened Mrs. Burbanks, who, peering cautiously from the window of her roof-bedroom, a room which the most fortunate of India's foreign residents consider a requisite of their bungalows for the hot weather, she had seen a couple of big monkeys sporting across the roof. And from that moment it had kept up: monkeys here; monkeys there; monkeys everywhere, poking their inquisitive fingers and noses into everything in the compound except the house itself. Into the house they had not ventured and even on the verandas the family had felt secure from intrusion until now; but now one had actually jumped into the rear veranda and stolen a piece of cake from Marjory's hand.

"This is too much! Something must be done!" said Mrs. Burbanks again aloud but in a more decided tone, as she saw three of the brown creatures playing tag across the rose-bed.

Just then the sound of horses' feet upon the road came to her ears; the monkeys vanished; and Mrs. Burbanks forgot her annoyance in greeting her husband as he drove up in a covered gari, shunning the light even of the setting sun.

Mr. Burbanks looked tired as he superintended the carrying in of his luggage and the paying of the gariwala, who, of course, tried to insist upon a larger fare than the correct one handed him. He seemed glad to stretch out at once in a big chair and take a cup of tea from his wife's hand, while he listened drowsily to her account of the happenings of the week of separation. Little Marjory came out for her petting soon and clambered upon the arm of his chair. Smoothing his hair, she wove admiring remarks upon her father's appearance and her gladness at his return into an account of her recent experience with the monkey.

"Father dear," she said, turning his head with a chubby hand on each side of his chin. "Father dear, I'm so glad you have come home. Now you must look right at me for I've something very 'portant to tell you. Father, a monkey"—her eyes got big and round, "a monkey jumped down from the tree— Oh, father! What funny eyes you've got!" and she stopped her story with a little squeal to look at his eyes which he had made very round in imitation of her own when she had mentioned the monkey. Then not satisfied with just looking at such "funny" eyes, Marjory pulled them up at the corners to see how they would look that way. After a moment's critical survey, she shook her head and went on with her story. "The monkey jumped down from a tree. Ayah had just given me a piece of cake and— Why, father, what a pretty necktie you've got! I never saw that one before." With pats and pulls she spent some time endeavouring to arrange the "pretty

necktie" before going on with her story. "And"—she began again with a lingering look at her last twist at the tie, "that monkey jumped down from the tree right at me and grabbed my cake and ran away."

She paused again and inspected her sleepy looking father. "I b'lieve," she said as her eye ran slowly up and down her father's white-clad figure, "I b'lieve I'd like monkeys better if they wore white. Do monkeys ride on railway trains? Did they keep you awake last night as they did mother? You look so sleepy, father dear, that I am sure they did."

Mr. Burbanks, somewhat awakened by the incongruous remarks of his daughter, laughed and said, "I've never met a monkey on a railway train yet. But weren't you afraid of the one you saw?"

"Oh, yes. I cried and ran to mother but I'm not afraid any more now for mother said you wouldn't let them hurt me." And Marjory cuddled down in his arms.

"See, there is one in that tree there now and I'm not afraid," she said after a moment and, raising her head from his arm, pointed towards a tree a little to the right, where was a large monkey jumping from bough to bough with a tiny baby monkey clinging fearlessly beneath her.

The father and the little girl watched the monkey and her baby with great interest until the ayah came and took Marjory in to bed.

Throughout dinner and the evening Mrs. Burbanks told of their troubles with the monkeys during her husband's absence and urged him to do something to drive them away.

But at the close of the evening all the satisfaction she received was this very masculine reply to all of her urgings: "You are simply nervous over them. I don't believe they will do any harm. In fact they seem to me to be rather interesting creatures. That one out there on the lawn this afternoon appeared perfectly harmless and playful. Besides they are sacred animals and we might make the Hindus very angry if we should touch them." And with a yawn Mr. Burbanks started for bed.

When Mrs. Burbanks saw that all of her conversation had not impressed her husband with the urgency of the situation, unusual woman that she was, she said no more, but wisely left the matter to time. Even when they were awakened at an early hour the next morning, she did not say a word, but listened with relish to the remarks which issued from the curtained bed beside her own.

Since Mr. Burbanks' departure his wife had paid no attention to his office, as her servants could be trusted to keep things clean and in order. Therefore, when he came to her a little later in the morning with complaints about the condition of his desk, she was extremely annoyed. His inkstand had been tipped over; his blotting-pad was torn; his pens were lying scattered about the room; and the books on the table were all in confusion. The servants declared that all had been in perfect order the night before. The ayah said that Marjory had not entered the room. So Mrs. Burbanks, after inspecting the strange confusion, was about to leave the room in perplexity when she chanced to glance at one of the high windows. Quickly, with a smile upon her lips and a twinkle in her eye, she motioned to her husband to come from the veranda where he had retired after finding the disorder in his study. His eyes followed hers to the window and there he saw a monkey watching them intently from the small window sill.

"Don't stare at him or he may spring at you," cautioned Mrs. Burbanks. "Monkeys are just the opposite to most animals. You cannot treat one or control him in the same way, for it angers him to have you look him in the eye. The servants all tell me that."

As they turned away, the bearer entered the room. To his wife's amusement, Mr. Burbanks addressed him fretfully. "Boy, can't you drive these monkeys away? They are beginning to be a nuisance."

"Me touch a monkey!" The usually obedient boy raised his hands in horror.

During the dialogue the monkey had scuttled away. So the high window was closed by the long bamboo pole, for—"The monkeys must be kept out even if the ventilation is interfered with," said the head of the house.

After breakfast the post brought a package of home letters and, although it was the middle of the morning, Mr. Burbanks took a while off, after his week of strenuous work, to listen to home news. He laid himself in a comfortable chair preparatory to listening to his wife's reading, for he always preferred to hear her comments and exclamations as she read aloud than to read the letters himself. Mrs. Burbanks seated herself at the table beside him and, although a young woman, put out her hand to take up the reading glasses which invariably lay by her sewing basket.

"Why, my glasses aren't here!" she exclaimed in a tone of annoyance.

A search followed but no glasses could be found. After a while, in despair, Mrs. Burbanks handed the letters to her husband and prepared to be herself the listener, a situation which neither really enjoyed. But scarcely had Mr. Burbanks reached the second page of the first letter when an exclamation of surprise from his wife stopped the reading and he found her looking with laughing eyes at a spot high up on the wall. There, hanging by the bows from the moulding, were the spectacles. With one voice the two exclaimed: "A monkey!"

The boy was called and the spectacles were soon rescued from the dangerous place where they

had evidently been hung with great care, for they were uninjured.

Although this was but a trifling incident, Mr. Burbanks was disturbed by the impertinence of the "ugly beasts." But his wife made no comments on the encounters of the morning, going on with her work in silence, although she had to hang her head to hide her smiling lips at some of his muttered remarks when he returned from an attempt to clear up the papers on his office desk. One valuable document was badly blotted with ink and a letter of the greatest importance he had been able to read only after patching together the torn bits gathered from the rug.

Mr. Burbanks was plainly annoyed but his annoyance grew to fear in the early afternoon when, in passing by the dining-room door, he happened to look in. Marjory had slipped into her mother's chair and with a big napkin around her neck was about to eat a luscious guava which lay on the plate before her. Mr. Burbanks was just on the point of calling out something in play to his little daughter, when a quick motion on the wall behind her attracted his attention. Afraid to move or speak for fear of bringing greater danger to the child, the father watched in silence. An immense monkey slid down the wall and jumped into the chair beside the little girl, with his eye on the fruit before her. The child, frightened, shooed with her handkerchief at the beast, who, turning his eyes upon her, showed his teeth and snarled. The man held his breath; but the child, shoving the plate of fruit towards the animal quickly slipped from her chair and ran, unharmed, out of the room. In a second the monkey had seized the guava and was gone through the high window.

That was the last straw. No one could live in such danger! Mr. Burbanks went back to his study and called the boy, but he did not tell his wife what he had seen.

"Can you drive the monkeys away?" he asked the boy again.

"Me no touch monkeys. Me afraid. Monkeys belong gods," was the reply he received.

The gentleman could see that no help was to be had from his servants and he realized that he himself must move cautiously or he might bring the wrath of the Hindu city upon him. Therefore he thought the matter over carefully and decided that first of all after it had become dark he would fire off his pistol and perhaps frighten the monkeys away without harming them. So, as soon as night had come and all were in bed, he told his wife what he intended to do. She was overjoyed at his quick conversion to her views, for she did not know even then of Marjory's experience, as the child, soon forgetting it in her play, had not mentioned it to her mother.

Mr. Burbanks stepped out upon the roof and after a moment's pause fired his pistol into a clump of trees at a little distance from the bungalow. A sharp, shrill, almost human cry came from the tree and then all was still. Even the chokidar, already asleep, did not seem to have heard the shot.

"Well, I've killed one, I guess," Mr. Burbanks said as he came back into the room. "That is too bad! I hope the natives won't mind. But it is over now and we need not worry. If they do make a fuss we will just have to face the music, that's all. Probably it will drive the animals away effectually, if one of them is killed. I most sincerely hope so."

There was quiet throughout the night, although Mrs. Burbanks lay awake listening for trouble as women will. But in the early morning, just as she had at last fallen into a light sleep, they were both awakened by the usual noise of running and jumping on the roof. With an exclamation of great annoyance Mr. Burbanks sprang up and opened the shutters of the door. He stood there in silence for a minute before he spoke again and then he called his wife softly to come and look out. There, on the roof, stood a female monkey and before her lay a tiny, baby monkey, dead, with a hole in its breast. The mother patted it with her paw; she stroked it; then she ran around it and jumped up and down as if to attract its attention. Then she took it up and put its arms about her and started to spring away, evidently expecting it to cling beneath her as it had always done; but the little thing fell limply back upon the roof. Again and again the mother tried, with the infinite patience of a mother. But finally, with a cry of despair, she picked the baby up in her arms and, squatting down, rocked to and fro, moaning and moaning. The servant, bringing up the chota hazri, made a noise at the foot of the stairs. The monkey, with an almost human look of woe, glanced around at the sound and the Burbanks, watching from the shuttered door, saw the agonized expression on her face, as she sprang to her feet and with the dead baby still clasped tightly in her arms leaped away among the tree tops.

With tears in her eyes Mrs. Burbanks turned to her husband. "You won't shoot another, will you?"

"No, my dear, we'll move before I use the gun again. But it seemed to be a choice between her baby and mine and, of course, I am glad that it was hers," Mr. Burbanks replied. Then he told his wife of Marjory's experience.

But the Burbanks did not have to move, for the monkeys disappeared. Since her parents never told Marjory why they had gone, she watched for them for a long time and ate her cakes in haste lest "a naughty monkey might snatch 'em."

One day a short time after their disappearance Marjory received a present from her father of a little black dog. When she playfully asked him why he had bought her the dog, expecting that he would say because she had been such a good girl, he said, "Because monkeys are afraid of dogs."

"Why, how funny!" she exclaimed. "You bought me a mongoose because snakes are afraid of mongooses and now I have a dog because monkeys are afraid of dogs. What pet will you buy me next, father dear?"

"I will have to live in India a little longer before I can answer that question, my daughter." And, wondering what unexpected danger would next assail his child in this strange land, he swung her up on his shoulder and, as it was sunset, carried her tenderly into the house to her waiting ayah, followed by the dog—a tiny, but sufficient guard against the encroachments of the tribe of Haunamon.

VII In Ways Mysterious

I

The bare audience room of old Boyle Avenue Church was almost empty; only a few of those who had been present at the afternoon service still lingered, one little knot by the door, another near the altar rail. This is not the church where the real Europeans meet to worship God, you know, nor is it even one of the worshipping places of the semi-European population of Bombay. It is the oldest building of our mission property and belongs to our native church. It is, therefore, all the church home to-day that three separate congregations can boast, our Marathi, Gujarati, and Hindustani congregations.

It is a big, barn-like building situated in a thickly populated part of the city which, just now, is largely occupied by Parsis. But although it is old and bare and far away from most of our native converts, they travel the long distances from their various quarters and attend its services faithfully.



**"I HAVE A BEAUTIFUL
WIFE, AS FAIR AS YOUR
OWN, SAHIB"**

I tell you my heart glowed that afternoon as I sat upon the platform and saw that room filled to overflowing. Not only were the wooden benches crowded, but people sat in the aisles and stood around the walls. Our Sunday afternoon congregation is usually just the Marathis only, and does not occupy more than a third of the room, but this day it was a union service of all our people to be conducted in two languages only, as the Marathi and Hindustani languages are near enough alike to be intelligible to both. And why was this great meeting held? That was what thrilled me I suppose and broke me all up so that when it came my turn to speak, I really just couldn't and stood there like a big baby and cried. But the folk were kind to me and joined me in my tears and when all I could falter was, "Good-bye, God bless you all!" they just fell upon their knees and such prayers went up for my speedy restoration to health and return to India that by the time we rose from our knees I felt better already.

They did not ask me to say anything more from the platform, but at the close of the service men, women, and children gathered about me for a last personal word. You see my health had failed because of the climate of Northwest India and because of the burdens that each of our missionaries has to bear (this isn't complaint, but just fact) and so I had been ordered home. That part wasn't bad, for the prospects of seeing home again, that meant America, looked pretty good to me! Think of seeing a snow-bank after the one hundred and twenty degrees in the shade in which I had scorched for years! Think of drinking cool, unboiled water right from the tap, and all you wanted of it! Think of being able to eat fresh, uncooked vegetables without fear of cholera! Think of being able to do all those things which are so delectable at home but so foolhardy in India! The going home part was all right but the part that wasn't all right— It's hard to talk about that part. The doctors said that I probably could never go back to India! Never go back to India again! Never go back to the people and work I loved! I tell you it took all the manhood I had to meet that blow with a smiling face and turn the other cheek.

But I started to tell you, not about myself at all, but about Shama Bhana. As I sat on the platform that afternoon I singled out his face among those of the men standing by the windows at the right nearest the altar. Shama Bhana is a Brahmin and when I have said that I have told you that he is a man of proud, distinguished appearance and with an intellectual capacity of the highest order that India boasts. I have neglected to say that Shama Bhana is a rich Brahmin.

I had known this man for several years and we were good friends. I had talked religion with him by the hour and I felt that he believed in Christ and in our faith. But I had never been able to bring him one inch, as it seemed to me, towards forsaking his old faith and accepting ours publicly. As I saw his face there that afternoon and knew that he had come to say good-bye to me, perhaps forever, I longed to hear him confess Christ before I left India. I longed to know that he had thrown his wonderful powers upon the side of our warfare in that country where his influence would be so great.

The meeting came to an end at last and the crowd that had gathered to say good-bye to the sahib and to wish him "Godspeed" had done so and were gone to their homes, all but two little companies of people still gathered in the church, as I have said before.

In all my farewells I kept my eye on Shama Bhana and I noticed that he was still in the little group by the door. Finally I managed to separate myself from the company near the altar rail and started towards the door. Shama Bhana did not come to meet me but I saw him step a little aside from the others as if giving me a chance to speak to him privately. I availed myself of the opportunity at once.

I went directly to him, holding out my hand, and, Brahmin though he was, he took it, his eyes full of tears.

"Sahib, it breaks our hearts to have you go," he said simply.

"Shama Bhana," I replied, "it breaks my heart to go without having heard you confess the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour."

He looked at me without a start or quiver just as if he had been expecting me to say that very thing. "Shama Bhana," I went on, looking straight into his face and into his eyes, which steadily returned my look, "Shama Bhana, you do believe in Jesus Christ, do you not?"

"Sahib, no longer will I refuse to answer that question to you, since you are going away from us, perhaps forever. Sahib, I believe in Jesus Christ. There is nothing in Hinduism or Brahminism that can compare with His life and character. There is nothing that can compare with His teachings. I believe in God, the Father, and in Jesus Christ, the Son; and I love them, as you, Sahib, have taught me to do."

My heart swelled with joy and gratitude.

"Then will you confess your faith and your love?" I asked him, hoping that I might see him baptized before I sailed for I coveted him for the work in Bombay.

His face clouded. "That, Sahib, I cannot do. I have confessed to you, knowing that you will not tell what I have told you here in India. But I cannot acknowledge my faith to any one else."

Could it be that I had put too great confidence in this man's courage and strength? I was disappointed but I could scarcely credit my own disappointment and I probed deeper.

"Is it that you fear to lose your material possessions, Shama Bhana, that you fail to claim the spiritual ones?" I asked him.

He drew himself up and looked at me in righteous scorn. "Yes, if I should confess my belief in Christ, I would lose my wealth, and it is great; but what would I care for that! I am young. I am strong. I could earn my way and my family would not starve. No, Sahib, it is not the fear of the loss of money that hinders me." But as he saw the troubled look upon my face, he added, "I will tell all, Sahib, and then you yourself shall judge if I could act otherwise."

"Sahib, I have a mother. You have never seen her for you cannot enter our homes as your wives can, but the memsahib has met her. That mother knows that I have talked long and earnestly with you. She knows that I have read much of the doctrine. She knows, too, that I no longer make offerings to the idols, and she fears that my heart inclines to this new creed. Sahib, my mother a short time ago took me out into our courtyard and pointed to the well that is in the middle of the square. She said to me, 'Shama Bhana, my son, the day you become a Christian, that day I will throw myself down that well.' And, Sahib, she would do it!"

And I knew that she would. I could say nothing. I could only look at him with love and sympathy in my heart.

"And, Sahib, that is not all," he continued. "I have a beautiful wife and a son, as fair as your own, Sahib. I love my wife. I love my son. But, Sahib, the day I confess Christ publicly these two, whom I love more than life, will be taken from me and I shall never see them again."

"Sahib, would Jesus Christ wish me to cause the suicide of my mother and the separation from me forever of my wife and child? It is these two things and these only that keep me from public confession and baptism."

I could answer nothing. I could only hold his hand and say, "Pray, Shama Bhana; Christ alone can tell you your duty. And He will make it plain to you, if you leave it all to Him. I will pray for you too as long as I live or, if it may please God to permit it, until I see you again here in Bombay."

With the hand-clasp of brothers we parted: he, a Christian in heart but a Brahmin by profession, went home to his wife and boy and the old mother, strong in her faith; and I came to the homeland. I haven't told you his real name nor can I keep faith with him, for, although

Bombay is thousands of miles away, words when once spoken may travel far. But I have told you a true story. May I add a happy conclusion to at least one part of the theme? I am going back to India! Thank God! My health has been restored. When I reach Bombay shall I find Shama Bhana still a Brahmin or a confessed follower of Christ? That is the question that is on my heart.

II

Well, well, well! To think that I should actually have you with me here in Bombay! Why, I can hardly believe it is real! Don't I look well and strong? That doctor at home almost worked miracles for me with his medicines. My, but it's good to be back in the harness again! The pull has to be long and steady and sometimes the straps rub or the collar galls or the load drags heavily, but it's great work. I am keeping well, too, and I'm happier than three years ago I thought I would ever be again in this world.

What, man, you've only one day to give me in Bombay? And then you've got to race on or that business venture will fall through! Oh, these globe-encircling Americans who try to see the world and its sight as do birds on the wing! Why, this is only an aggravation, Dick! I'd almost rather you wouldn't have come at all than to give me just one day.

No, you aren't going back either! You know that I didn't really mean what I said, for just the sight of your face has done me a world of good already and before the day is over I will show you some sights which I dare say will do your heart good. But in the meantime, I warn you, I shall talk every minute of the time to make up for all the days that I can't have you.

Let me see—we'll go first to visit our day-schools and call upon our preachers; then we'll drop into Boyle Avenue Church for a prayer-meeting; then we'll go to see Shama Bhana; and this evening I'll take you to a street service. It all sounds prosaic, perhaps, because I've used hackneyed American terms, but for a man who has been but one day in India there won't be anything prosaic about it.

Do you remember, Dick, what I told you men back home last year about Shama Bhana, the man we're going to see this afternoon?

It will be quite a long story to tell you how it came out but I will, for we've got quite a little car ride ahead of us to reach Parel where we are going first to see such a school as you never laid eyes on before, half-naked children in a palm-leaf hut. But let me tell you, those children know more Scripture than your boy and girl do, I am sure.

Well, about Shama Bhana. You know I told you that before I left for home he had confessed to me privately that he believed in Christ but he could not be baptized because his mother threatened to commit suicide on the day he should become a Christian and because on that same day his wife and child would be taken from him forever. All I could do was to tell him to continue in prayer and that God would lead him.

About six months after I had left Bombay, very suddenly Shama Bhana's mother died. That very day, before the funeral rites had been performed, Shama Bhana appeared at Deal's door and asked for baptism. Of course Deal did not know much about the case, as his work is largely with the Marathis; so he had to go all over the situation with the Brahmin and make proof of his belief and sincerity.

His belief seemed genuine and when it came to a proof of his sincerity, Shama Bhana told his story. "Now my mother is dead," he concluded. "I could not come before, for it would have been murder and that is forbidden in the Bible. She died but an hour ago and I came at once."

"Will you lose your property now?" asked Deal.

"Oh, yes. I will not have an anna above what I now carry in my purse. But that is no hardship."

"Will they turn you out of the household at once?" Deal went on, needlessly probing deeper into the fresh wounds in the man's heart, but poor Deal did not seem to understand.

"That is practically done already, Sahib," the Brahmin answered. "As soon as I heard that my mother was dead this morning, I kissed my wife and baby good-bye while they still slept and came to you, for I know that when I return they will be withheld from my sight and I shall never see them more." Shama Bhana was overcome for a moment, Deal said, and then he went on quietly. "Christ says that whoever will not leave wife and child for His sake is not worthy of Him. I could not bring them with me for you know the way the Hindu oftentimes takes vengeance; for a few days all would have gone well; then suddenly they would have sickened and died a mysterious death. Sahib, I love them too well to bring death to them and so I left them. Indeed, I have left all for Christ, Sahib. Will you not baptize me?"

Deal baptized him at once and then asked what he could do to help him.

Shama Bhana replied, "Nothing, thank you kindly, Sahib. I will find work at once. I will not starve. Yes, Sahib, there is something you can do for me. Pray! Pray that some day I may get my wife and child back again."

Then Shama Bhana went away. He was a rich man, the son of great possessions, as I have told you. The news of his baptism spread fast and the fury of his father was unrestrained. Shama Bhana was declared to be dead and his effigy was burned with his mother's body on the funeral

pyre. His wife was proclaimed a widow and treated as such; her head was shaved and her jewels and beautiful garments were taken from her.

But Shama Bhana's Brahmin training stood him in good stead, for he went on his way apparently unmoved by all the indignities that were being heaped upon him and his. He is a remarkably bright man and so without much difficulty, for he procured it the very day of his baptism, he got a fair position as clerk in a big English office in the city. His family later did everything they could to get him ousted, by fair means and foul, but he had proved his worth before they began their work against him and so he was kept.

That was the situation I found when I returned from America. At my request Shama Bhana came to live with me, but we saw little of each other, for every moment when he was not in the office he was out preaching or teaching and with power. But in the brief intervals that I did see him I knew that his heart was sore. I had left my own family in America, you know, and he would look at their picture upon my dresser. "Your wife is a Christian," he would say. "And you will probably see them again in a couple of years. But my wife is a Hindu widow!" Then he would turn at once into his own room and I knew he had gone to his knees in prayer. I would pray, too, both for him and his and for my own. Though his case was, of course, immeasurably harder than mine, still I thought I was pretty badly off with thousands of miles of ocean rolling between my family and me and with no definite knowledge as to when we would see each other again, for the kiddies must be educated, you know.

Well, what if I am blowing my nose violently! Man, they aren't here yet and what's more, they aren't coming for another year.

Well,—then came the pestilence; not the plague or the cholera or any of those Asiatic diseases which you folk over there hear so much about and really know so little of; but the plain smallpox with which you are at least so familiar that you run away as soon as you hear the word pronounced. The smallpox is usually with us here, more or less, all the time; but somehow this season it was here in tenfold fury. It swept over the city, but was worst in the section where Shama Bhana's family lived. Several of our native church workers had tried in vain to get entrance into his house since the trouble had happened, but now they walked right in and took possession unhindered, for the father himself and every member of the family were down with the disease and the servants had all fled. Shama Bhana's wife, whom they found in a dark chamber in the servants' quarters, had the worst form of the disease because of the hunger and ill treatment she had suffered since she had become a mock-widow. Shama Bhana who had given up his place at the office as soon as he heard of the situation came at once to his wife's side, for there was no one to object. And as day after day our faithful Hindustani preacher and his wife worked over that household, they preached Christ as they worked whenever a mind was free enough from pain to receive the message.

Three of the sons died, but the rest of the family soon began to show signs of recovery. The old father, since his case had been the lightest, as he had been vaccinated once years before in an English hospital, recovered first. As he, in his weakness, lay and watched the loving ministrations of the two Christians and listened to their words, his heart seemed to be touched.

"Why do you do all this for me?" he asked one day. "Are you immune?"

The preacher's wife stood nearest him and she replied, "I have had the disease but my husband never has. We are doing it for Christ's sake, you know."

Later he called the preacher to him. "Where is Shama Bhana?" he whispered. "Has he had it yet?"

The preacher replied, "He is here just now with his wife who is very ill. The night that you were the worst he spent at your side. He has not had the awful disease yet. Shall I call him to you?"

The preacher wondered how his words would be received and feared that a violent rage would bring back the old man's fever. But he only smiled faintly and to the question shook his head and said, "It is the wrath of Shama Bhana's God."

He steadfastly refused to see his son and yet he did not seem to be angry nor did he order him from the home. In a few days when his strength had returned nearly in full measure, he called the preacher to him again and asked him to walk with him through the house. So, leaning on the patient preacher's arm, he went from room to room. In every room with his feeble hands he tore down every sign of Hinduism. The gods he took himself from their shelves and ordered them to be thrown into the well. When all the rooms except the servants' quarters had been thus cleared he turned to the amazed pastor and said:

"Now call my son Shama Bhana and let me be baptized in his presence, for now I believe as he has taught me and from now on we will stand as Christians together and our household shall be a Christian household."

But when the preacher went to summon Shama Bhana and to tell him the good news, he found that young man on the floor beside his wife's cot burning with a high fever and showing every symptom of the dread disease. So the baptismal service was postponed while they worked to save Shama Bhana's life. Two days later the pastor himself came down. But as soon as I learned that the old man had been converted I went at once to Shama Bhana. Before very long we had there a household of well people, and such a happy household! Words cannot describe it.

And so together since that time Shama Bhana, his father, and not of less importance, his wife,

have faced the Hinduism of Bombay in a small but solid phalanx for Christ. The influence of the conversion of that rich, strong Brahmin family has been marvellous, as you can imagine, and is increasing every day.

We will go there this afternoon and see them all. Even Shama Bhana's wife will greet you, for there is no purdah in that home now and she will meet you as modestly, graciously, and courteously as any lady in America. God's ways are wonderful, aren't they? But the most wonderful thing about it all in my mind is that He always lets us poor, insignificant men help in bringing His ways to pass. Had our simple, faithful Hindustani pastor and his wife not been willing to risk their lives for their love for Christ, probably Shama Bhana's father would still be a Brahmin, his wife, most likely, dead, and Shama Bhana himself still an outcast.

These are the romances of our work and they serve to throw out against the dark background of Hindustani life and social customs the capacity of our Hindu cousins for an appreciative interpretation of the Oriental Christ and their willingness to share His life of heroic sacrifice on behalf of others. The humblest of them frequently rises to acts of great courage and chivalry.



**"THE HUMBLEST OF THEM
FREQUENTLY RISES TO
ACTS OF GREAT COURAGE
AND CHIVALRY"**

Well, here we are! You didn't just expect to see grass huts under palm trees as a suburb of the great city of Bombay, did you? And there are the children gathered around the door of the schoolhouse waiting for us. Aren't they beauties? Hadn't you better take a picture of them to show to your boy at home? Their dress isn't exactly American in style, that is true; but it is comfortable, if it is rather exaggerated in abbreviation.

Salaam, boys! Salaam! Salaam!

VIII

The Way to Happiness

With a shrill whistle and a clanging of her engine bell, the train for Calcutta pulled into the station at M—. "Coolie, coolie!" with a decided accent on the second syllable, came the well-known call as scantily-clothed men, falling in beside the train, ran from the end of the platform to the station entrance, with hands upon the first and second-class carriage doors, lest other coolies might get the jobs of carrying the heavy trunks and earn the anna or two anna bits that they might have had.

With a cloth about the loins for decency's sake and a turban on the head as a pad for heavy boxes, otherwise naked, the brown coolie took possession of the upper class compartments and in a minute or so scores of them were filing away through the station with heads laden with trunks, boxes, hat-boxes, rolls of bedding, lunch-baskets, baskets of fruit, and every conceivable sort of parcel that an Anglo-Indian or a tourist carries with him in the compartment of an Indian train; for, although luggage vans are run on these trains, the charge for excess luggage is so great that people crowd as much under the seats, on the seats, and over the seats as possible. As an individual rarely travels with less than ten parcels the platform swarmed with carriers.

While the first and second class passengers in topis and linen suits were thus being taken out of their carriages and a fresh lot, also in topis and linen, were being put in, in no undue haste, for all Indian trains stop fifteen minutes everywhere; while that end of the platform, therefore, was in comparative calm, the other end where the third-class carriages stood was in an uproar.

Railroad travel is cheaper nowhere in the world than in India. The traveller can ride in a compartment for twelve persons by day, six by night, on leather cushions, with toilet conveniences including even a shower bath at close hand, for the matter of one cent a mile; or he can pay about two cents a mile and ride on cushions a little softer, with a trifle more floor space for stacking his bird-cages and bandboxes and with furnishings a little glossier—first class; or he can have a ride for almost nothing, if he will be content to herd with the natives in a coach with wooden seats, a coach that accommodates from twenty to fifty, the number depending on the packing.

Since the fare is so small and since the Hindu religion, as also the Mohammedan, teaches the efficacy of pilgrimages, the people now make their pilgrimages, as far as possible and wherever possible, by train. Their religions have thus so accustomed the natives to the trains that they seem to be always travelling. The richer ones may go first or second class. But the majority of them go third and, since the first person in gets the best seat in these third-class cars while others crowd in as long as there is an inch to spare, there is a mad scramble for first, second, third, fourth, and fifth place at the third-class carriage doors.

So it was as the Calcutta train pulled into M—. Men with bundles and women with babies, more bundles, water jars, and bags of food swarmed into the third-class coaches. In a remarkably short time, however, the people who had wanted to get off were gone with their bundles, trailing women, and dangling children, and the lot going towards Calcutta had stowed away inside the carriages, on top of each other or anywhere that they could, their bundles, their clinging women, and their crying children; and still there were several minutes before time for the train to pull out. Then the through passengers, since, as the newcomers were settled, their own seats were secure, could get out upon the platform. A bearded Mohammedan with flowing robes and turbaned head, spreading a mat on the platform beside the car and slipping out of his shoes, knelt three times and said his prayers towards Mecca, unmindful of the crowd around him. At the hydrant a good Hindu carefully washed out his mouth preparatory to partaking of his noonday meal; while men of all castes walked up and down beside the cars, resting their cramped limbs. From the car windows many a braceleted arm reached out a brass water jar to be filled by the Mohammedan water-carrier. And at other windows Hindu women waited for the Hindu water-carrier to fill their jars so that they might have water for the journey.

The sweetmeat venders were unusually busy, for it was just about noon and Indian sweets are to native Indians really a staple article of diet instead of a confection as in other countries. They are made of wholesome food stuffs; sometimes they are shaped like pretzels; sometimes, rolled into balls; sometimes, chopped into flakes. But all kinds are well liked and the boy, passing along the trainside with the flat basket of sweets upon his head, just in range of the carriage windows, was kept busy dealing out his wares until he had a light load left and a hand full of coppers. The baskets of the pretty green pan were also many packages lighter when the gong on the platform sounded.

At the sound of the gong the through passengers scrambled back into their places; all but the Mohammedan faithful, who, having deliberately slipped his feet back into his shoes, carefully folded up his prayer mat, and with no loss of dignity climbed slowly into his compartment.

The guard raised his hand.

The train started.

But in the ladies' compartment of the third class the confusion continued after the start, for three naked babies were climbing over their mothers and crying; an old woman was rummaging over

her treasures which had been tied up in a white cloth and raising a wild lamentation because she had lost an anna; and two young beauties in gay saris, with jangling bracelets, clanking anklets, and flashing necklaces, were chewing pan very vigorously and chattering in shrill voices, displaying as they did so mouths most beautifully reddened with the pan juice and teeth most artistically blackened by the same delicacy.

But after a short time the babies, either satisfied with their natural diet or at least appeased with cold chapatis or bits of sweets handed out by tired mothers, became quiet. The old woman, exhausted by her unavailing search and grief, was reduced to a quiet mumbling and a hopeless picking at her bundle. And the two young women became less noisy in a close comparing of jewels. There was enough of calm, therefore, so that the travellers could get a glimpse of each other and see what sort of company each was in.

It was a motley crowd and one that broke many of the laws of caste. It showed plainly how much the railroad is doing to rid India of that curse. In one corner sat a Brahmin woman, distinguishable by the refined features of her class rather than the caste mark upon her forehead, but too poor for the greater privacy of a second compartment. Next to her, a proximity which would have broken her caste at one time, sat a Chumar woman. Next was a lady with the white head-cloth and one-coloured sari of the Parsi. And beside the Parsi was a tiny high caste girl, most bejewelled and bedecked, wearing the necklace which showed that although she was but eight or nine years old she was married. Evidently the child-wife was taking the journey with her mother-in-law, for the woman next beyond her, apparently of the same caste, would occasionally jerk the little girl into her seat and scold her roundly when she ventured to lean over to look out of the window.

When the train approached a way-station, the blinds were drawn quickly lest a man should look upon the women within, for, although none of them were keeping purdah strictly, still most of these women were careful in public not to subject themselves unduly to the glances of men.

As the blinds were lifted after the train left the first small station, the light disclosed, huddled into a far corner seat, a young woman wrapped in the coarsest of white garments, with scarcely an ornament upon her body and no caste mark upon her forehead. Her face was shaded by the sari which she had drawn close over her head, but out of the shadow peered a pair of sad, wistful eyes. Her face was thin and her hands, which clasped tightly upon her lap a carefully wrapped bundle, were thin and rough as if with toil. Her eyes were anxiously examining the faces in the carriage. At every unusual noise or sudden jolt, they would look frightened and she would clasp still more closely the bundle in her lap. It was a bundle about eighteen inches long, tied and double knotted most carefully in a piece of coarse but clean white cloth. The girl's white sari was also as clean as most Indian white clothes ever look, washed in dirty water and dried on the ground as they are. She was evidently on some important journey and, as evidently, for the first time on a train. The bundle which she carried would not have been noticeable among such a myriad of bundles as the carriage held, had she not guarded it so closely, and, when any one changed a seat or passed by her, shielded it with her arms.

After comparative peace had reigned a little while, the frightened look left the young woman's eyes and, untying one corner of the bundle, which opening showed still another wrapping within, she drew out a cold chapati and ate it slowly as if to make it last a long time. As she ate, her eyes met those of a sociable looking, old, gray-haired woman, evidently of low caste, who, sitting opposite between two high caste women, was apparently longing to talk to some one. As their eyes met, the older woman leaned across the aisle and said to the young girl in Hindustani:

"Where are you going?"

The girl looked alarmed, as the question was addressed her, but answered timidly, "To Benares. Are you going there?"

"No, but I am going almost as far as that. You see I have been ayah to master's little boy and they moved away and now they have sent for me to come and I am going to be his ayah again." The old woman's face beamed as she chattered. "I might have gone long ago when they went, for they always called me a fine ayah and always praised me to all of their guests, but when they moved away to Allahabad I did not want to leave my family. But my boy went off to the city and—and—my little girl died; so now I am glad to go." Her eyes had filled with tears as she said that her little girl had died and at the words the young woman involuntarily clutched at the bundle in her lap.

Just then the Brahmin woman in the corner opposite got up to arrange her dress and moved about in the aisle so that the conversation was interrupted. And the two women got no further chance to talk until the train pulled into a station and some of the passengers getting out gave the old lady an opportunity to slip into the seat beside the girl.

"Where are you from?" she asked, resuming the conversation at once.

"From C—," the girl answered.

"Are you a sweeper?" the old lady continued her catechism. "Do you work at it?" she went on without waiting for an answer. "There is lots of money in that work, isn't there? I never had to work at it, you know."

The young girl looked at her frankly. "I don't think so. I got two annas a day."

"Oh, my! I get ten rupees a month!"

The girl opened her eyes in surprise. "And what do you do?" she questioned in return.

"I am an ayah, I told you. All I have to do is to take care of the little boy. He is a dear, good boy. I dress him in the morning and give him his breakfast and watch him at play. I get his tiffin and then put him to sleep. After he wakes up I dress him all up fine and take him out in the compound in the carriage and usually his mother walks with us a little and then I give him an early supper and put him to bed and sit in the room with him until his mother comes up-stairs. Wouldn't you like to do that? It just isn't work at all and yet I get ten rupees a month for it."

"Oh, I would like to! But I'd never get a chance to do that," the girl said sadly.

"Were you ever in a sahib's house?" the old woman ambled on, seeing that the girl was really interested and impressed. "It is a great, big place, as big as that station almost," and the old woman pointed out to a station at which they were just stopping.

"My husband used to go to one sometimes," said the girl, and, clutching at her bundle, her face grew sad again.

"You are a widow?" asked the other, although she must have known from the girl's dress that she was.

"Yes, my husband has been dead two years." She paused a moment and then as if she could restrain herself no longer, as if the flood of her speech had been loosened, she went on rapidly in a low but intense tone. "Yes, for two years he has been dead. He was not sick long. I was but a girl. I did not know very much about it except that he was sick and that they made offerings to the gods and did all they could to cure him. But one day my mother-in-law came to me and called me terrible names and told me that if my husband died I would be to blame and that awful things would happen to me. She frightened me terribly and told me that I must not let him die. So I crept away to the temple. I had no offering to make except as I stole a handful of rice in the bazaar and took that. I prayed and prayed. At one temple the priests said that they would cure him for ten rupees but I had no money and I was afraid to go and tell my mother-in-law. A priest at another shrine said that a little Ganges water might help my husband and, as I turned away in despair, for I did not know where the Ganges was, I heard him say to a man standing there, 'When I die I am going to the Ganges and die there so that my bones may be thrown into the river and Mother Gunga may hold them upon her bosom; then shall I be forever happy.' But I had done all I could by my prayers and so I crept back home to find my husband—dead.—But I remembered what the priest had said.

"My mother-in-law beat me. She took my jewels away from me. She shaved my head and drove me from the house. But I got work as a sweeper and for two years I have swept up the scrapings in the streets and made fuel cakes. I never went back to my husband's home."

Her story told, to which the old woman had listened with sympathy, the girl covered her face with her sari and, clasping her bundle in her arms, sat silent, shaking occasionally as with sobs.

Finally the other woman put her hand upon the girl's arm to soothe her. "What are you going to Benares for?" she asked.

"I am going to Benares," was the only answer the girl made.

Most of the women had left the carriage by this time and night was coming on. The old lady leaned over to the window and peered out through the semi-darkness.

"There is the Ganges River—Holy Mother Gunga!" she cried.

The girl started up and eagerly looked from the window, too. "Is that the Ganges River?" she asked and looked and looked until the last gleam of the water was lost as the train sped on.

"What are you going to Benares for?" the old woman asked again.

"I am going to Benares," the girl answered again with a frightened stare, clutching her bundle.

As there were but few passengers left, the two women soon lay down at full length on the hard benches and went to sleep. But the girl did not use her bundle for a pillow as her companion had suggested but lay with it in her arms.

Before the sun was up the next morning, the younger woman was awake and staring out with frightened eyes as the train ran through a country entirely strange to her. And when the old woman woke up and announced that soon she must be getting off, the girl's fear seemed to increase.

"Is the Ganges River near here, too?" she asked.

"Why, I think so," the old woman replied and her statement was confirmed by another woman in the next seat.

"Then I'll get off here with you," announced the girl with a brighter look. "If the Ganges River is here, this place should do as well as Benares, I think."

The older woman looked astonished but offered no objections to the girl's sudden change of plan.

In a few minutes the train stopped at Allahabad and again arose the mad confusion of a large railway station at train time. But the old woman got out safely, followed closely by the girl, holding her bundle tightly in her arms.

They stepped aside from the crowd and the old woman looked at the younger in curiosity as to what she would do here in Allahabad. The appearance of the latter had suddenly changed. Her face was eager and her eyes were bright.

"Take me to the Ganges River quickly," she demanded, "for I must throw these into the sacred river," and she held out her bundle.

"What is in it?" asked the old lady, eyeing the strange bundle with a frightened look such as the girl herself had worn until the excitement of being near her goal had driven it from her face.

"I must throw them into the Ganges River," repeated the girl. "They are my husband's bones," she whispered eagerly, lowering her voice. "When they burned his body I crept along and after all had left I picked them out of the pile of ashes and here they are!" she exclaimed triumphantly. "For two years I have kept them near me day and night and saved all my money to come to Benares to throw them into the Ganges River that I might be forgiven for his death and that he might have life and happiness as the priest said. But if the Ganges River is here, surely this place will do as well as Benares. I am so tired! I am so tired of being a cursed woman!" she sobbed, her excitement giving way to tears. "I want to be happy. Take me to the Ganges River!"

The old woman's expression had turned from fright to astonishment as she heard what the bundle contained; but at the girl's sobs her face grew sweet with a motherly tenderness. She turned away as if to think, murmuring to herself, "The memsahib will surely forgive me if I come a little late. She would like to have me help this poor child, I know, and perhaps she might make her an ayah like me if I take her with me. That would make the girl happy, indeed. Yes, I will help her."

Then she turned back to the girl. Tenderly taking her free hand, for one still tightly clasped the precious bundle, the old woman said, "Come, we will find the way to the sacred river."

Quickly the two went down the platform, now somewhat thinned of the earlier crowd, and passed through the station gate, the old woman still holding the girl's hand and the girl still tightly holding the bundle which was to be the price of life and happiness to her.

IX

Bachelor Dreams

Caldwell-Sahib, opening his eyes, let his head roll slowly over on his pillow. As the veranda door came within his line of vision the delicious drowsiness which had held him was suddenly disturbed, for there stood, looking out across the rows of potted plants to the dry lawn beyond, a woman whom he had never seen. For several moments he simply stared in weakness. Then, trying to brush away the strange, sickly haze which enveloped his brain, he let his eyes rove over the room as far as he could without physical effort. There in the corner was his desk. There, hanging above it, was the picture of the Taj which he had bought when Parsons had paid him a flying visit from England and they had gone to Agra together. Just to the right, out of the edge of his eye, he could see the foot of his steamer chair and, extending from beneath it, the hand-woven rug which he himself had spent a week in buying from a native dealer in Delhi, holding grimly to his first bid each day as he had passed the shop on his constitutional until a bargain had been struck the very day his train pulled out. Those things certainly belonged to him, but the woman did not. Where had she come from? For there she was still as his eyes again reached the door.

His strangely tired mind was just getting to the point of realizing what she looked like—that she was tall and fair—when the woman turned her face towards him and with a smile came to the bed.

"So you are awake and better. That's good! You will be all right now. Let me feel your pulse, please," and pulling the omnipresent mosquito netting aside, she laid a cool hand upon his wrist. "That is all right too. Your pulse is normal. Isn't that splendid!

"Now, listen to me," she continued after a deft fluffing of his pillows and a careful tucking in of the netting. "I'm sorry, but you've got to be your own nurse now. Your boy is frightened to death, but he'll stay with you and do your bidding. You'll be all right. I must go. Take one teaspoonful of this every hour," and she lifted a tumbler from the table. "At seven o'clock take half of this in the cup here," and she brought a flowered teacup into view. "Don't get up until you really feel strong enough to. Have your boy give you broths to-morrow, an egg the next day, and so on, getting back to your regular diet by degrees. I guess you are used to being your own nurse."

She turned towards the door. "I'll get your boy in but you will have to make him stay. I can't wait to do that."

She left the room, but soon returned followed slowly and reluctantly by his "boy," only a boy in Anglo-Indian nomenclature, for he was a tiny native man about forty years of age, who was bowing and salaaming but keeping as near to the door as possible.

"Come," said the lady in a low but compelling tone. "Come. Come along quickly," she added a trifle sharply as he lagged behind. "Aren't you ashamed to have left your master when he was sick! Now," for he had reached the bed by this time, "lift the netting and take hold of the sahib's hand."

"There!" she exclaimed as he touched the Englishman's hand and took his own quickly away. "There! You see it didn't hurt you. You haven't caught the cholera. Now, do as your master tells you; take good care of him and behave as a boy should," and she was gone.

Ah! Cholera! That explained it all to Caldwell. So he had had the cholera, he—Caldwell—who had served the government for fifteen years in India, had taken every risk, and had considered himself immune! That explained his extreme weakness, his befuddled brain, and the unusual soreness of his muscles. That explained the terror of his boy. But it did not explain the woman. Where had she come from? Who was she?

For some time Caldwell thought over this interesting matter, for it was easier just to think than to question the shivering boy who was still crouching as close to the outside door as possible. Who was she? She was tall and thin; her face was very fine-featured and intelligent. And she was an American. He knew that last fact from her speech and from her appearance, too, for although Caldwell never had looked at ladies in his life, especially American ladies, except when politeness absolutely compelled him to, yet even he could not mistake the something in the appearance that marks every American girl, and,—yes, secretly approve, although his English nature would not let him acknowledge it. And she wasn't very old either!

Suddenly a thought struck him, so suddenly and such a thought that he almost started up in spite of his weakness. There was only one other European in Baihar besides himself and that was a missionary, a woman,—a doctor, he had understood, and—an American.

"Boy," as strong a voice as a usually strong Englishman could command after a fit of cholera demanded, "was that the missionary?"

"Yes, Sahib, I got her. She's a doctor-memsahib, master."

"Boy, did you run away and leave me?" Caldwell continued, remembering the words of the woman to the boy and making his tone as sepulchral as possible in order to frighten the man still more.

"I ran to get the doctor-memsahib, master," shivered out the unhappy fellow, ignoring in his reply his later entire disappearance while the doctor-memsahib was left for five hours to struggle alone for Caldwell-Sahib's life.

But Caldwell-Sahib, although suspecting the truth, was in no state just then either by chastisement or preaching to teach the beauty of courage and self-sacrifice. So he sank back upon his pillow and gave himself to thought.

During the next few days, while his strength was returning, Caldwell-Sahib had plenty of time to think and, for the first time in his bachelor life, his thoughts centred about a woman—for he knew cholera and he knew that the doctor-memsahib had saved his life.

The boy, emboldened by feeling no symptoms of the dread disease in his own system, gradually took up his accustomed duties and cared for his master's wants in the quick, noiseless, and perfect way of the well-trained Indian servant that soothes a man's soul. So for several days with the punkah swinging over him the convalescent lay stretched out upon his steamer chair, the very picture of comfort and pleasant dreams. To have one's life saved by a woman and a good-looking one, too, touches even a crusty heart. But to find that this was the very woman whom for a whole month he had thought of only with contempt and disgust broke clear through the crustiness of Caldwell-Sahib's heart and added a little pleasurable anxiety to the tenderness engendered within.

One month before this time very suddenly the government had sent him up to Baihar to look after some matters which would consume about a year's time. So having taken possession of the bungalow built by the government for such official visits and having moved up enough of his belongings to be comfortable, Caldwell-Sahib had settled down for a "dead" year such as so many government officials live through in parts of India, as in duty bound. Baihar, a city of about ten thousand inhabitants, is a purely religious city, where no business is transacted but religious business and where no pleasures are indulged in but those of religion; those of the Hindu religion being so vile that "Baihar" is almost another name for Hell. Caldwell had expected to be the only European in that whole city of blackest Hinduism; so the prospects of a year alone in such a place had been, indeed, anything but inviting to an Englishman who despised the natives and who could find no pleasure in Indian life apart from the sports of a large cantonment or the resources of a well-stocked library.

However, after he had been in Baihar but a few days, he had heard that there was another European in the city, a woman, an American missionary, who for six years had lived alone in that horrible place in order to bring Christian, medical help to the poor women of that city, especially to the four thousand Hindu widows devoted to temple worship and the lusts of the priests. To say that Caldwell-Sahib had been horrified at the thought of a lone woman in that place would have put it too strongly, for he was simply disgusted. He said that she must be mad, certainly far beyond the realm of sense, let alone common sense, to have undertaken such a thing. This woman's presence in Baihar would not make any difference with the beastly dullness of the life ahead of him, that was certain, for he would have nothing to do with her and he did not even want to see her; for he hated women in general and this one must be an especially objectionable specimen of the species.

But now Caldwell-Sahib had seen her and she was sweet and wholesome to look upon. Now this very woman had saved his life. If she had not been there engaged in her foolish work, he would have died. Therefore, he was full of regret for his former unkind thoughts and he was, moreover, exceedingly grateful, for he put considerable value on his life, did Caldwell-Sahib, and to be less than grateful to her who had saved it would be to prove himself less than a man.

During the days of convalescence the Englishman's thoughts turned often to the probable experiences of the six years that this sweet American woman had spent alone in this "Hell." Even his stout English heart recoiled at the mental pictures his mind conjured up. He could see her threading her way alone through the crowded bazaars where vile Hindu priests, dirty shopkeepers, men red-faced with smallpox, or hideous lepers must again and again have jostled rudely against her. He saw her, unattended, with difficulty passing the frenzied religious processions which accompany the silver car of the great god as it makes its sacred rounds, or being pushed to the wall by a surging mass of religious devotees, eager to reach the sacred river to bathe in its holy waters. But the worst picture to him was of the nights of those six years when unprotected she must have crouched within her chamber in fright at the awful and unholy confusion of night in a Hindu city.

"My—!" He pulled himself up short. "I must not swear, for she is a missionary, but by—by—by Oliver Cromwell, I'll save her from all that."

The instinct of gratitude will assert itself and it is easy for gratitude to pass over into affection and enduring devotion. When the rescuer is a beautiful and capable woman, who can measure the consequences? All of Caldwell-Sahib's philosophy of life was thrown into confusion. His complex nature would no longer run according to his will. Staid, cold, hard, matter-of-fact Englishman though he was, his imagination played fantastic tricks with him and so through all these days while his body was regaining its lost strength, her face lived in his memory and the memory gave him a warm and comforting sensation about the heart, a sensation intensified in its delight by the thought that she was probably thinking about him, for so the old romance has run since the beginning of the human drama.

As soon as Caldwell-Sahib was able to get out, he inquired his way to her home. He had an easy time finding it, for everybody seemed to know where she lived and every face brightened at her name. But when he reached the compound and through the gate saw the plain but comfortable bungalow within, his courage gave way and he turned back home. However, he got into the habit of strolling around that way towards nightfall and standing a few minutes at the point of the wall nearest to what he thought her window and watching the people who came and went from her compound; but never on these occasions did he catch a glimpse of her. As a courageous and polite Englishman, he should have gone in and thanked the good American lady for having saved his life, but he had grown to feel that there was only one way in which he wanted to thank her and he had not yet reached the height of courage where he could tell her how she had wrecked his philosophy of life. So he lingered around outside the compound walls and watched the natives; "lucky beggars" he called them to himself, as they came and went from a small, low building at one side of the compound which he knew from appearance must be her dispensary. Those who passed him were lame and halt and, yes, even blind. But they were all "lucky" in his sight because they had been in her presence and had been speaking to her.

He overheard their remarks occasionally and now it was: "It hurt awfully but she put her hand on my head and took all the pain away;" or "She gave me the worst medicine to take, but since she said 'Take it!' I will;" and even the blind man said as he passed, a strange light in his face, "She says to come to-morrow and she will cut something in my eyes and then she thinks I shall see again. Since she says it will be all right, I am coming back to-morrow, but I wouldn't believe any one else."

Caldwell-Sahib's heart ached for the sweet, clean American woman who must touch, heal, and minister to such foul, dirty creatures. Every night as he watched them he felt that he ought to go in and tell her of his love and take her away from such a dreadful life at once. Possibly she was wondering why he had not come. How cruel he was to delay! But every night home he would go again and put off the visit, bachelor-like, until the next day.

However fate took a hand in the affair at last. One day a couple of months after his illness, as Caldwell-Sahib was standing in the narrow bazaar with, for a wonder, very few people about, he saw a lady's topi above some sari-covered heads turn into the street at the corner.

Caldwell-Sahib could not conceal from himself that his heart was beating with strangely quickened throbs. This sight of the woman who had saved his life and for weeks had filled his thoughts now brought to him an overwhelming consciousness that his bachelor dreams were at an end, that his hour had come, the happiest of a man's life; for when a man sees for the first time the light of love in the eyes of the woman whom he loves, that is the happiest hour of life. She came nearer. He could hear her voice, low in Hindustani, addressing a young native girl at her side.

For a blissful moment he watched her approach, saw the grace of her carriage, the pretty bend of her head as she talked with the girl, the slender, strong hands which had ministered to him and saved his life. He saw also, in anticipation, the light in her eyes and the blush upon her cheek when she should see him.

He stammered a good-morning. Strange how his lips seemed to tremble!

She glanced up.

With unrecognizing eyes turned upon him, slightly bowing a greeting in return, she passed on.

As Caldwell-Sahib stared stupidly after her, he heard the girl say: "That was the Inspector-Sahib whose life you saved when he had the cholera," for apparently the girl was astonished at the lady's uninterested manner in the presence of such an important official.

Caldwell-Sahib did not hear the lady's reply, as she and the young Hindu girl passed on.

"Oh, is that he? I had forgotten about him. I had such a good laugh afterwards at the surprised expression on his face when he saw me in his house the morning he regained consciousness that I ought to have remembered him. We must turn here, my dear, for I must get back to my work at once."

So the two turned down a side street which led to the doctor's office where at least thirty dirty, but well-remembered and beloved native patients were waiting for the tender treatments daily administered by the missionary's skillful hands.

The Englishman still stared.

X

The Cost

Yes, that is a Bible. Oh, yes, I speak English. I've spoken it ever since I was a young girl. Nearly every Parsi, you know, learns to speak English as soon as possible. We admire English people in a great many ways and try to emulate them in some things, although we are proud enough to think that we are superior to them in some others.

Yes, I'm a Parsi—that is—I'm a Parsi in race but not in religion. This Bible shows you what I am in belief. Yes, I'm a Christian, but not one of long standing, for I was baptized only one year ago.

You're an American, aren't you? I thought so, for in many ways you are like my dear Miss Miller. Won't you have this pillow at your back? Even second-class carriages are not any too comfortable. If you will let me pull that leather bag out a little from under the seat so that you can put your feet upon it, you will rest more easily. A second-class carriage is a luxury for me nowadays, since I became a Christian. I really can't afford to travel any other way than third, but I've been a little ill the last few weeks and Miss Miller insisted upon my coming second this time. You look so much like Miss Miller that you must excuse me, if I have stared at you a little impolitely since we left Grand Avenue Station.



**"YOU ARE AN AMERICAN,
AREN'T YOU?"**

Oh, an American is privileged to do that, you know, to watch us closely, for he is here to see a new people and to find out all he can about them. I don't mind that at all. We really expect it. We have so many Americans in Bombay that I have got quite used to it and don't notice it any more. At first I used to get embarrassed and think that they were looking at me, but I soon found out that it was only my clothes and my manners that they were interested in and that they couldn't distinguish me from any other Parsi lady; we were only a sort of curiosity to them. It wasn't exactly flattering to find it out, but still it made one feel more comfortable on the streets.

Oh, I've got quite accustomed to it now, I assure you. But you do resemble Miss Miller, if you don't mind my saying so; only she wears her hair quite plain and always dresses in gray.

She is my teacher.

Here we are at A—. I'm just selfish enough to hope that no other lady will want to get into this compartment. Since each of us has a whole seat to herself we can be pretty comfortable.

There is an unusual crowd of third-class passengers to-day, though there are always crowds here for that matter. I don't see where they get the money for all the travelling they do. Since so many pilgrimages are required in their religion the people seem to work very hard for a long time and then spend every anna that they have saved on a pilgrimage somewhere. But to-day is a special feast day at N—. That is another reason why Miss Miller insisted upon my coming second class this time, for the third was terribly crowded when we came down this noon. She is so good! She left her work just to come down and see me off, because I have been ill.

No, thank you. I don't care for a cup of tea now, for I shall reach my destination in time for tea. Oh, yes, the tea at these stations is quite safe. But I would not take the milk if I were you, for Miss Miller never does.

Oh, yes. We stop here about ten minutes. You'll have plenty of time to drink it and the man will come back with his tray and get your cup before the train starts. It is two annas a cup. Don't you want a piece of cake with it? Here, boy!

Yes, some of the stations have very good food.

The new passengers are nearly all located now and no one seems to be going to get in with us. I am so glad! Now we can be nice and comfortable.

Yes, they do keep the plants nicely watered and well taken care of at these stations. If they were not so dreadfully noisy and confused at train times, they would be pretty enough places to live in.

There goes the bell! Here comes your boy. I'll hand it to him.

Two annas. That's right. I suppose it is hard for you to get accustomed to our money; I believe it is quite different from yours, is it not?

Oh, is that some of your American money? How interesting! It is worth about three-quarters of a rupee, you say? I am so glad to have seen it. What do you call it?

A quarter! See, I'll use that word in speaking to Miss Miller some time. Won't that surprise her! She will wonder where I have learned it.

Now we are off and there isn't another station for half an hour at least. Isn't that nice? Now we can rest. Wouldn't you rather lie down?

That is very kind of you, for I do feel just like talking this afternoon. This little trip is a holiday for me, you see, and has quite excited me, almost as much as it would my little girl. But I expect that she is excited, too, this afternoon, for she knows I am coming to see her.

One little girl. I am a widow and have been so for several years.

She is in school down here at A——. And since I've been ill, Miss Miller had me come down to see her for a rest.

Indeed, I'll be glad to tell you about myself, especially about my becoming a Christian, if you would like to hear, for I love to tell that story. You Christians in America are so good to send teachers to us!

You are not a Christian! But I thought all Americans were Christians!

Don't you believe in God?

You suppose there is a God but you've never thought much about it! How strange! Don't you believe in Christ?

No? Why, how can that be possible when He has done so much for you people in America and is doing so much for us here?

Do I believe in Christ? Why, of course I do. Do you think I would be here, a penniless woman, going to see my daughter, kept in school by charity, if I did not believe in Jesus Christ; if I did not know Him personally and if I had not confessed my belief before my family and friends?

I can't understand why you do not believe in Christ, unless—yes, it must be so—you have been too busy to think about Him and you have not really needed His help yet. You never have had any trouble and felt all alone in the big world, without any one to help you, have you? Until that time comes I suppose people are too busy having a good time to think about religion. I have noticed that here in my teaching among my own people, but I did not suppose it was so in America, for I thought everybody believed there. Here I have seen that when people are kept quiet for a time because of sickness or sorrow, when they have time to think and when earthly friends cannot help, then Christ most easily makes Himself known to them. I know this is so for I have proved it myself. And I know Christ!

Yes, it does make me very happy!

Oh, I had forgotten this station. But we will stop here only a few minutes and as it is a small station I don't think any one else will get on. Here comes a gentleman to the window.

Thank you. An orange would taste good and refresh me. Although this is our cold season, it does get pretty warm in the middle of the day.

Your husband? You are taking a trip around the world for pleasure. What interesting things you must have seen! Your husband is a lecturer. Oh, I see, and he is taking pictures with his camera for his lectures, I suppose. He is going to take that boy with his pan of sweets. See?

There is the bell! He got the picture just in time.

Shall I go on with my story? But, please, don't let me tire you.

No, I'll save my orange a little while for I cannot eat when I have a chance to talk on this subject. Do you know much about the Parsis?

Well, I'll tell you a little so that you can understand my situation. We Parsis are Persians; but when the Mohammedans came into our country and began to persecute us, gained political control, and tried to make us accept their religion by force, many of us fled to India, most of whom are now settled around Bombay.

The women all dress about as I do with a little cotton waist, you see, and a one-coloured sari;

delicate pinks and blues are favourite colours, edged with fancy embroidered borders, often of pure gold or silver. We wear stockings and slippers, the latter usually more elaborately embroidered than mine. We wear, also, this peculiar head-binder, a white cloth drawn tightly around the head, covering the hair under the sari. Our men invariably dress as Europeans these days, for that dress is so convenient, but they may be recognized by an oddly shaped cap which Miss Miller says looks as if it were made of what you in America call black oilcloth, I think it is. Of course the sacred emblems of Parsiism are worn under the clothing and do not show, the shirt and the kusti.

Our people have lived in India for many generations, but they have kept themselves separate from the other peoples. There has been very little intermarriage; we have kept our own religion; and we are practically a distinct people. Of course in our religion and our social customs we have been somewhat influenced by the Hindus and Mohammedans among whom we have lived so long; but we differ from them greatly. We believe in education and begin to teach our children early in life. We believe in monogamy and a happy family life. We are industrious, keen, and honest in business; and I am not overstating facts when I tell you that we are the bankers and most important business people in India. Of course we are not many in number compared with the dense population of this great land, but we are scattered throughout the whole of it, and hold, as a rule, the places of greatest influence.

Let me throw your orange peel out of this window which is already open. You've let your husband take your satchel into his compartment and you haven't a towel? That's too bad! I have a perfectly clean one in my bag; won't you please use it?

Oh, please don't mention it. I assure you it is a pleasure to me. I suppose you are more accustomed to the first-class lavatories, but, really, our second-class accommodations are comfortable; don't you think so?

No, indeed. I don't mind interruptions in my story. I'll rearrange my bag while you are gone, for I packed in a hurry and I don't just know where my things are.

It is convenient to have a lavatory for every compartment. Isn't it so in America? You don't have compartments at all! Why, how funny! I can't imagine what your trains must be like. Miss Miller says that she will take me to America with her some time. But I don't believe I'd like to leave India even for a little while, interesting as America must be.

Yes, I'll go on with my story. Well, I was the daughter of a wealthy Parsi in Bombay and we had a beautiful home in a part of the city which is now not quite so pleasant, for Bombay as it has grown towards one million in population has changed very much. I had a governess and even at ten I began the study of English in connection with my regular lessons and music. When I was about thirteen, my father, who was really a little more advanced than the average Parsi, decided to have English only spoken in our household. Knowing the value of the language in commercial relations he considered it a very important part of an education.

But I must tell you about our, that is the Parsi, religion. We are the followers of Zoroaster, you know, and we believe that God is represented by fire. Therefore fire is sacred and in our temples a fire is always kept burning, with an order of priesthood to care for it. You can see how this belief might degenerate and become a worship of fire itself, as I fear it has with many people. Even the fires in our homes have to be cared for with ceremonies of various kinds. We are taught that one should be faithful to his wife; that every one should be charitable. But we do believe in demons and must go through all sorts of rites to keep them away. You see I can't give you more than the briefest account of our belief, for it is more or less complicated as all beliefs are, but I wanted you to see that in almost every way it is superior to the other religions of India, but still lacking the vital elements of Christianity. One strange thing about our teaching is that we are not told to try to get converts; indeed, the Parsis do not want any new believers. Isn't that strange? Really, I must confess that I think we are a very self-satisfied people in every respect.

At first we did not believe in early marriages, but in that respect we have been gradually influenced by the Hindus. So at fourteen I was married to the son of a rich merchant. Of course my husband was chosen for me, but he proved to be a fine young man and we were very happy together. Part of the wedding ceremonies took place, as our weddings usually do, in the large public wedding hall which probably you saw in Bombay. Really, the customs have got to be so elaborate that a poor Parsi can hardly marry off a child without being in debt for the rest of his life. Fortunately our family, as I have said, did not lack for money and everything was beautiful. It was, indeed, a very happy and joyous occasion, a prophecy of our life together. For we were very, very happy for eight years. My husband was an unusual young man and gave promise of surpassing his father in business sagacity and literary ability. Our little girl came after two years of marriage and she was dearly beloved by him, although, of course, he would have liked a son. We were happy, oh, so happy! After he died it used to hurt me so to think about it that for two years I never spoke of my married life to any one, but since I have found Jesus, I love to think about it and speak of it.

But one day our joy was turned to sadness and our gladness to grief, for my husband was smitten with enteric fever. You know how prevalent that is here in India and how often fatal. He had been overworking at his office and in the study. Our family was too enlightened to believe that the illness was caused by demons, as most of our people do, and he was not neglected as most of our sick people are, but he had the best of English medical attention and the most tender nursing from us. He was young and strong and we fought hard, but after six weeks of deepest anxiety and

all the devotion I could lavish upon him, I saw him sink away and leave me.

They took me from him while they prepared him for our peculiar funeral rites and while I myself had to go through certain ceremonies of purification. You have been to the Towers of Silence in Bombay? No? But you are going back next week. Well, when you stand upon the terrace and look across to those great towers, black around the tops with ugly vultures, think of me as on that day three years ago I stood and watched.—Please excuse my tears, but I don't usually tell this part of my story; it is too sacred; but I don't think you could understand the rest without knowing these customs of ours. You know that the elements, earth, air, fire, and water, are sacred in the sight of the Parsis and cannot be defiled by the dead; therefore we cannot bury our dead; we cannot burn them; nor can we throw their corpses into the river to be carried away by its current. So our ancestors devised the plan which we now use. Our dead are exposed upon high towers and vultures are allowed to tear away the flesh, leaving the bones to crumble. So we Parsis in Bombay have, upon a hill overlooking the harbour, really the most beautiful spot in the city, a park in which at the top of the hill are located five white towers between twenty-five and fifty feet high. The park is well cared for and contains a shrine where fire is always burning. A high terrace looks out towards the towers, about five hundred feet away, which are never approached except by the officers of the dead.

Yes, visitors are admitted to the garden by permit before nine in the morning. After that time the grounds are kept clear for funerals and mourners who come to pray for the dead.

I need not tell you of the long, sorrowful approach to the gardens on that day three years ago, or how, standing upon the terrace, I saw that dear body borne to the tower to become the prey of the ugly birds swarming about the gardens. I need not tell you either of my loneliness in our home or of my return to my father's house with only one desire in life, to bring up my child so that she should be an honour to her father.

For a year my life was very bare and my heart very heavy. I had plenty of money; I wanted for nothing; I was tenderly cared for by my family, for, you know, the Parsis do not treat their widows after the customs of the Hindus; but nothing seemed to make me even one tiny bit happier. Then one day a white lady called at our home. She was very pleasant and kind. She showed us a book of a new religion which she wanted us to read and she offered to come and read it with us every day; but my mother did not care to hear about any other religion than our own. Then the lady showed us some beautiful embroidery which we did not know how to do. When my mother expressed a wish to learn the new work, the lady offered to teach her if she might also read from the Bible at every lesson. I, too, liked to keep my fingers busy and when my mother, who excelled at needlework, could not resist the temptation and consented to let Miss Miller come, for it was indeed she, I was glad.

Once a week she came and for an hour at a time taught us various kinds of stitches and read and explained the Bible to us. My mother, after a short time, became ill and could not attend the lessons, but as I seemed to enjoy them and my mind was somewhat diverted by them from my sorrow, she still continued to allow Miss Miller to come. So I, who had become very much interested in the Bible, much more so than in the sewing, used to let my embroidery lie untouched while sometimes we would talk for a couple of hours of this Christ religion. What a beautiful religion it seemed to me! What a comforting religion! I would have something to live for and something to work for if I were a Christian. I thought of my husband's death with less bitterness, for this religion taught that I would surely see him again if I did God's will. Finally one day, one year ago, Christ spoke to my heart. I believed. I knew that Christ not only had lived but that He still lives. I cried for joy, but Miss Miller thought it was with grief and started to console me. But when I looked up with a shining face, her face shone too.

"You have found Jesus!" she said.

I answered eagerly, "I have."

And right there in my own chamber where she had been coming since my mother's illness, we knelt and prayed.

When we arose, I said, "I want to be baptized and become a Christian."

"You are a Christian now, my dear," she said.

"But I want the world to know it," I affirmed.

"That is right and brave," she answered, "but you must count the cost first."

Then she sat down beside me and gently told me what I would have to bear if I publicly took the name of Christ. She said that there were not more than twenty-five Parsi Christians in the whole world. She said that probably I would be turned out of my home, that my relatives would count me as dead, that all my wealth would be taken from me and that I would not have one anna for myself or my child.

"Think of your child! Think of yourself! I cannot urge you to do it. You must decide for yourself."

I answered quickly, "I have thought of myself. I have thought of my child. She must be a Christian and be brought up as such. Miss Miller, I have decided for myself. Jesus will take care of us. I know it in my heart for He tells me so."

So I made my decision and she said no more, but I knew she was pleased by the smile that she gave me. I would not wait for one instant lest influences might be brought to bear which I could not resist and I might be prevented from declaring my desire and fulfilling it. I took Miss Miller's hand and we went at once to my mother's room. She was not dangerously ill. When she heard my determination to become a Christian, she sent for my father from his study. Together they listened as I told all again.

"Is that decision final, my daughter?" asked my father at last, a man always of few words.

"It is," I answered with a heart yearning towards them but firm.

"Then you must go from our home, from our family. You and yours can no longer be a part of us in any way. You will receive nothing from us for your support.—You are dead to us.—If you repent of this folly," he added, turning back from the door towards which he had started with bowed head, "communicate with me and half of my fortune will be yours. But if you persist in this strange conduct," his voice grew very stern, "in ten minutes you and yours must be gone from this house."

I tried to kiss my mother good-bye but her face was turned from me towards the wall.

I returned to my apartment, took my child, my belongings and a few relics of my husband and our happy life together and within ten minutes I had left my home, perhaps forever,—but I don't think so. I believe that some day God will send me back to them at their own request; for they will yet believe as I do, I feel assured.

Miss Miller took me to her own home and trained me. I have been a Bible woman for six months now and Christians in America pay my salary. By a scholarship they also help me support and educate my daughter in a Christian school.

Am I not sorry? Look at me! I used to ride always in the first-class carriage; my saris were of silk and my borders embroidered with gold; but there was sorrow in my heart. Now, I may sit on a hard bench, crowded by dirty Hindus and my clothes may be of the cheapest cotton, but I am happy, for Christ has put joy into my life and into the life to come. He has also given me something important to do for Him. The lives of most of our Indian women are so empty! In the first-class carriage I used to have few fellow travellers; now in the third I have many, sad, needy women to whom I can tell the great story of which my own story is only a dim reflection. And to some of these women in the last six months God has given me the joy of revealing His love through Jesus Christ.

Well, if here isn't our station! Hasn't the time flown!

I hope I haven't wearied you.

Thank you very much! Kind words stay in one's memory such a long time and come back to strengthen in lonely or hard hours. I am so glad that you enjoyed my story. Won't you take time to think a little about Jesus yourself? I don't understand how an American woman, with all God has given her, can say that she does not believe in Him and love Him and His Son!

There is my little girl and here is your husband! Good-bye!

Oh, you are going to get off here too! Will I come up to the hotel some time and see you? Indeed, I shall be delighted to! And will I bring my little girl? How happy she will be to come! You must excuse my excitement for I haven't seen her for two months, you know. There, she sees me! How well and happy she looks! Will I bring my Bible with me when I come? Yes, dear lady, most gladly will I. Here, dear, this way! Good-bye! Good-bye!

Among the Clouds

The conversation had drifted by mysterious and unexplained associations of ideas from the unusual excellence of the sweets served at the end of dinner upon this line of steamers, to the most grewsome tales of adventure which the narrators themselves had experienced. Gladys, who by the most special of special permissions and the kind favour of the captain, because she was an only child, well behaved at table, and—because it was off season—had been permitted to take Sunday dinner with her parents, sat beside the captain in the gorgeous first cabin saloon with round eyes fixed upon the story-tellers.

There was present at dinner the usual shipboard mixture of society: at the captain's right, a man whose extensive business interests called him often into these waters; next, a gentleman and his wife, travelling for their united healths; third, a government official returning to India after a brief holiday; on the opposite side, two globe-trotters, an American lady from Southern India, Gladys' father, and finally Gladys herself. The chair between the little girl and her father was vacant, for Gladys' mother, who had been at dinner, feeling the slight roll of the boat, had retired early to her cabin, leaving the child to the father's care.

If her mother had been there Gladys would not have been permitted to listen to the stories which had been told and enjoy the delicious sensations of fear which she had experienced as she had heard the accounts of awful dangers and marvellous escapes. The merchant had obliged this little dinner company to spend five days with him without food on a desert island and, after a thrilling rescue, had made them watch him fall seventy feet from the masthead of a ship to become the ship-surgeon's pet patient with twenty bones to set. Gladys had felt herself wasting away with starvation as he had told of his sufferings and, when he had cheerfully reached his second story, she could hear her own bones grate as if broken asunder, as she moved her legs under the table.

Soon it came the turn of the lady from Southern India to tell a story.

"Well, I have had one thrilling experience which I don't mind telling you, if my courage will support me through the recital," she said.

Gladys listened with all her ears, for the lady from Southern India had become her best friend on shipboard. She did not want to miss a single word.

"You know that I have been a resident of Southern India for many years," the lady began. "I could tell many dreadful stories of pestilence and disaster in that region, but the most awful experience that I have ever had myself took place in Northern India, in Darjeeling. Of course you all know Darjeeling."

But in spite of her own assurance that they did, the lady did not seem to be able to resist, as no one who loves the Himalayas can, telling again of that city among the clouds, seven thousand feet above the sea, looking directly across the depths to where, when the sun permits, shine forth the snowy peaks of Kinchenjunga. The little city on the sheer mountainside is to the world only another proof of the audacity of man who dares to invade regions so exalted and, in the hope of drenching his lungs, parched by the heat of the Indian plains, with the cool air from the never-melting snows of the mountain peaks, dares to build his summer cottage on the overhanging rock and trust to Providence that it will not tumble headlong into the clouds below or, rained on from the clouds above, be carried down the mountainside and buried in unknown depths by the débris of an ever-possible landslide. Clinging to the edges of the crest of this mountain height or perched upon the very crest itself, the summer homes of the "sahibs" peer out through their enclosures of shrubbery and trees to the snow-capped heights where even their masters dare not venture, but from looking upon which these men gain courage to go down again to the plains to take up their heavy tasks, "the white man's burden."

In her ardour the lady from Southern India described even the ascent of the foot-hills to this resort among the mountains: the wide views appearing first on one side, then on the other, as the little train winds its way up the mountainside, sometimes making complete circles to reach the higher grades and at other times shunting backwards to save a long détour. The tea-gardens on the hillsides, the luxuriance of the vegetation in the wooded glens, the waterfalls, the odd little native villages along the road, descriptions of all these the table company listened to with pleasure, for they deserved attention, coming from the lips of one who was very familiar with the scenes of which she spoke and who loved them. Even Gladys, who was afraid of mountains, because "they look so big and black," wished she might have been there by the time the lady had reached the beginning of her story.

"It was on my first visit to Darjeeling, when I knew nothing of the place or the hill people, that I had the experience I am going to tell you about," the lady continued. "I had often heard before I started on the journey, and again on the way up, and yet again as soon as I reached the city itself, that there was one trip which every visitor must take in order to see the full glory of the Himalayas and to get a peep at Mt. Everest, the highest mountain in the world. As my stay there with an old college friend was to be brief, since Darjeeling is a long way from Madras and vacation days do not last forever, it was to my dismay that I found my hostess too ill to accompany me on any excursion. She could only plan my visit and direct her servants to carry out her plans.

"As clouds and mists are apt to hide the mountains and no one can tell when the 'sublime' heights will be visible, it is wise to take the trip I had heard so much about as soon as possible and to repeat it until one gets a clear view. Therefore I felt that I must take the first opportunity and, although I could find no one to accompany me, I decided that I must go the very next morning after my arrival, even alone. The plan of the trip was this: to leave at 3:30 A. M. and in a dandy, a sort of chair borne by four hillmen, to be carried five miles to Tiger Hill, one thousand feet higher than Darjeeling; to reach there just as the sun should rise and throw its morning splendours upon Mt. Everest. It was decided that I should take an alarm clock to my room and, arising at 3 A. M., be ready in all the heavy clothing I could assemble for my before-sunrise excursion. The dandy and dandywalas were ordered and a light lunch was set ready to serve as my chota hazri.

"It had not occurred to me that it would be a trying excursion as well as an early one until at 3:30 the next morning, lighted by my bedroom lamp as far as the outside door, I opened it and saw in the dimness of the light four figures emerge from the darkness beyond and stand about some object on the ground which I supposed must be the dandy. There was no one to say good-bye to me or give me a last word of counsel or warning. I put out the light, closed the door behind me, and took a few steps in the direction where I thought the dandy was. Then I stopped, for accustomed to speak to the natives in their own tongue, it had not occurred to me until that moment that these hill people spoke a different language from the one I was familiar with and so I could not hope to make them understand a word. I remembered, too, that they were of Mongolian descent, very different from the Indian people whom I knew. What were their characteristics? They might be treacherous and prone to rob for all I knew. But after a moment's hesitation I made up my mind that all these thoughts were foolish, for certainly my friend would not have planned this trip for me if she had not considered it perfectly safe. I saw that I must go on or that I should never hear the last of my cowardice from my co-workers in India who are very fond of a good joke on any of their fellows.

"My eyes had become more accustomed to the darkness while I had been cogitating thus, and so, taking my rugs and my life, as it seemed to me, in my hands, I stepped resolutely towards the dandy which was placed ready for me. I spread out one rug carefully and arranged my pillows upon it for comfort, just as calmly as if I had made the trip often. Then I sat down and pulled the other rug over me. When I appeared to be all ready, the four men, just black shapes in the darkness, with a queer united grunt, took hold of the chair poles, two in front and two behind, and, lifting the dandy to their shoulders, started at a slow pace up the hill behind the house.

"I was pretty high up in the world it seemed to me and as they were carrying me up backwards I had a view before me of all the mountainside that was visible in the starlight, for the stars were very bright overhead, and the street lights of the city twinkled here and there below. I tried to forget that my destination was five miles away and that the paths might lead through lonely solitudes. I tried to concentrate my thoughts upon the scene before me, the city, as it were, beside the sea; for so the clouds looked in the dimness with the lighted streets resembling long piers running out into the cloud sea. Near by an occasional house loomed up darkly in the shadows, and the overhanging trees from the slope above looked like impenetrable forests in the darkness. Far to the left a dim light, I felt sure, marked the spot where a terrible landslip had occurred but shortly before and several English people had lost their lives. I had been anxious to visit the spot since reading an account of the disaster, but somehow in the darkness, even at that distance, although I could not see the place, a sort of horror of it took possession of me and I seemed to see the white faces upturned towards the sky as they were being carried down the mountainside by the relentless torrent of rocks and earth. Just then I heard a noise as of a person moving stealthily along the narrow roadway and I positively shook with fear; but a nearer approach revealed to me that it was only a night watchman aroused by our passing. The gleam of a policeman's badge in these mountain wilds relieved my anxiety for a moment and made me ashamed of my fears.

"I tried to forget my foolish thoughts and to feel soothed by the gentle motion of the dandy as the men swung up the hillside by a circuitous roadway. I tried not to remember what strange, stolid faces the hillmen had had whom I had seen at the station the day before. I tried not to see as we passed under a street lamp, outlined under the coat of the right hand man in front of me what certainly looked like a revolver. I tried, as I looked up at the tall trees almost meeting over my head, to imagine how beautiful this road would appear by daylight. Once one of the front bearers missed his footing by stepping into an unexpected hole near the edge of the road. That gave me a shock; but the physical shock was not so great as the mental one I received when, as he recovered himself, I thought I saw a knife at his belt.

"Soon, at a low call from one of them, the four men fell into a trot and I found myself being borne, none too smoothly, along a bit of down grade. In a moment the grade became still steeper and, apparently at another signal, I was whirled about in my chair and carried face forwards. As they toiled up another slope and we appeared to have passed out of the city, they began a weird antiphonal; the men in front would chant a few words and the men behind would finish the phrase. Over and over it sounded—the same tones. It seemed to me that the first two were saying, 'Kill her now. Kill her now!' and the others were answering, 'It is not time yet. It is not time yet!'

"On we went with the stars watching overhead but clearly at such a distance that their presence gave me but little comfort. 'Of course these men are not saying such awful things,' I tried to reassure myself.

"My teeth were chattering both with fear and cold, for it was cold at four o'clock in the morning seven thousand feet above the sea. Suddenly the thought came to me to bribe these men with money, but my shaking fingers discovered that I had left my purse at home. So I could do nothing but just wait and let them take their will.

"On we went, up and up, away from the city, farther and farther away, at the same swinging pace and to the same accompaniment of murderous refrain. Before long I could see that we were approaching a fog and very soon we were in it. At another time I should have rejoiced at the experience of passing through a cloud on the mountainside, but now my only joy was in a light that shone through it. It might be a street light and we might be coming to a village! We were; but so small was the village and so quickly did we pass through it that I had no time to think of getting help there. And to cheer me on my way, from the last dark house I heard the wail of a suffering child.

"We were soon again in the deep woods and we must have been about an hour from our starting point—it had seemed a century to me and I knew that my hair had whitened with the passing of those years—when we came to a spot where the road broadened. There, in silence, the men set my chair down and withdrew to one side of the road. I could see their figures close together and I could hear their voices as if in discussion. I knew very well that my time had come. Oh, why had I ventured alone on this journey, just for pleasure! What would become of my work and my dear people in Madras, if these men murdered me, as they surely would when they found I had no money at all!

"I thought of running off into the dark woods, but how could I hope for safety there where the wild beasts preyed? I thought of shouting in the hope that my voice might reach the village which we had passed, but before help could come from there I knew that I would surely be dead. So I did nothing. My eyes remained fixed upon the men and, although I thought it would be pleasanter not to see death coming, I could not turn away. I could see the men motioning with their arms. One man who was walking up and down behind the others, stopped once or twice and pointed towards me. I sat frozen, but not with the cold.

"At last this man stepped out from behind the others and came towards me. He came straight to the side of the dandy and, raising his hands to my throat— Why, look at that poor child!"

At that exclamation the company turned towards Gladys whose eyes were fairly popping out with terror.

"Gladys! Dear child! I should not have told such a thing when you were here to frighten you so. How wrong of me! Mr. Bixby, you should not have allowed the child to hear all this nonsense."

The good lady from Southern India was out of her chair with the little girl in her arms by this time.

"What—what did the man do?" sobbed the child.

"Why, dearest, he did nothing but pull my steamer rug up around my neck and tuck me in nice and warm. They were good, harmless men and had only stopped to rest after their long climb. I was a foolish, easily frightened woman. And do you know, dear, the song they had been singing? I found out afterwards that it was simply this, variations of which they chant to every passenger: 'Such a big lady! Such a big lady!' the first two sang and the answer from the other two was, 'Such a big present! Such a big present!'

"And I did give them a good big present when I got safely home, you may be sure, because I was so greatly pleased to find all my trouble had been in my own mind, as almost all of my troubles have always been.

"Now, for bed, little girl, and I'll tell you a really nice story to go to sleep on."

And the lady from Southern India bore Gladys away to her stateroom before the rest of the company had time to make any comments upon her narration.

XII

The Infidel

"Night is coming! The wildness of desolation will soon be upon us! Oh, Allah, Allah, hear the cry of the faithful!"

The old man, in Arab dress, arose unsteadily from his knees, stuck his feet into his heelless slippers, and stood with scraggy, gray head bowed upon his hands.

"It is not the hour for prayer. Why do I thus involuntarily fall upon my knees and call upon the sacred name of Allah? What nameless fear is this which has clutched at my heart all this day and finally brought me to my knees in the guest room of a stranger to whose home I have come on a message for the Faith?"

"I cannot explain it," he continued in a quavering voice as he straightened himself up and began to walk back and forth in the narrow guest room. "Something terrible will soon come to pass. I know it! I feel it! But I am bound. If I could but leave this city to-night and start back to my home, I feel that I would be safe. But I am bound! By the law of the Prophet I am bound and I cannot go."



**"OH, ALLAH, ALLAH, HEAR THE CRY OF
THE FAITHFUL!"**

"Night is coming! The wildness of desolation will soon be upon us!" he repeated over and over again as he walked back and forth from the edge of the court to the plastered wall, back and forth.

The old man's voice had sunk to a murmur but he was still repeating the same words and walking restlessly to and fro when a noise beyond the door across the narrow, stone-paved court attracted his attention and he sank down upon the reception cushions on the floor in the conventional attitude of the Arab guest. A sackcloth curtain was lifted at the doorway across the court and a man entered, a native of India, with the clear-cut features of the Aryan, but the heavy black beard and rich robes of a prosperous Mohammedan. Every step as he crossed the court betrayed the pride and dignity of this follower of the Prophet. On his head was the green turban marking the successful, faithful pilgrim to Mecca.

The old man arose to prostrate himself before his host, as with "The peace of Allah be thine!" upon his lips the younger man stepped up from the court into the open guest room and came towards him. But although his lips murmured the conventional words of greeting, the old man's eyes did not seem to be looking at his host but out across the court as if he saw something startling there and his figure seemed to be all a-tremble. It was only after the host had politely urged him to resume his seat upon the cushions and had himself sat down, that the old man seemed to recover himself. Without accepting the proffered seat, however, he spoke.

"Ben Emeal, I come to thee as a messenger of the Prophet."

"And as a messenger of the Prophet thou art most welcome, oh, brother, whose name has not been revealed to me," quickly responded the other, rising as he saw that the guest would not be seated.

"My name does not matter, oh, faithful Believer, so long as I come on the business of the Faith. Ben Emeal, I have something to tell thee which I know will fill thee with amaze and thy heart with anger and thy mind with plans of cunning." As the old man talked his fear seemed to leave him and he became the proud, fearless messenger of the Faith.

"Ben Emeal, I have come, I have come all the way from the land of the Holy Prophet himself, to warn thee that the infidel is rife in the land, that the infidel has entered the very strongholds of the Deccan, that the infidel"—the old man stepped nearer and fairly hissed into the face of the other, "approaches—thee!"

The old man drew himself erect and looked with the proud superiority of wisdom upon the other who was gazing back in evident bewilderment.

"Brother, what meanest thou?" the host asked. "I am faithful, as thou must know. No man in this great city has been more faithful than I and I hate the infidel with the hatred of the Prophet!" At the word "hate," Ben Emeal's strong hand had dropped to the sword hilt at his side.

The old man again brought his face close to the other's and the words came whistling from his toothless mouth. "Yes, thou, oh, Ben Emeal, art faithful, but watch thou thy household! Watch thou thy household! Watch! I shall be at the crossing of the Sidar Ways; for three days only I shall be there. Watch and come to me for help. I have delivered my message; now I go!"

As the last words fell from his lips and he turned towards the courtyard, all the proud fearlessness left his face; the expression as of one doomed returned; and with his hands raised above his head, the old man staggered from the court, crying, "Night is coming! The wildness of desolation is upon us! Oh, Allah, Allah, hear the cry of the faithful!"

The younger man, left alone, sank upon the cushions of the guest room and seemed lost in thought. What meant this strange warning? His women were faithful, Ben Emeal knew, for they had not the brains nor the courage nor, indeed, the opportunity to listen to the preaching of any faith but that of their master and lord. His servants—they really mattered not to him—but he knew that they were faithful, too, as he had but recently taken them to account on the subject as a true follower of the Prophet should. His children—? They were too young, all—but— He did not even repeat the name to himself, for from the first word of accusation his mind had guessed the one involved, but his heart had sturdily driven his mind to seek in every other direction before it should turn to the one being in all the world whom Ben Emeal loved, but no less the one being in all his household who, he knew, would dare to question or oppose the established order of things. This was a serious charge and no one realized the seriousness of it, coming from one of the wise men of the Faith, more than did Ben Emeal; yet his love for his only son and his confidence in his own ability to deal with such a subject in connection with that son, led him to have little anxiety, in spite of the warning.

It was not possible that Ahmed could have met the infidel! Where could he even have heard of anything different from the doctrine of his father's Faith? It was absurd! Of late Ben Emeal had noticed a tendency in his son to question him upon subjects of life and religion; and, too, he had seen the boy several times sitting quiet as if in deep thought, an unusual attitude for a healthy, hearty youth; but he had supposed these things only the passing freaks of young manhood. For some time past Ahmed had sought to avoid marriage and he had never seemed to care for the pleasures of the harem; these things, too, were unusual, but Ben Emeal recognized in his idolized son the beginnings of an unusual man and was proud of him accordingly.

A merry voice just beyond the purdah suddenly interrupted the father's thoughts and the curtain was lifted to admit a young man about eighteen years of age, of striking build and comeliness. With a gay and winning greeting the young fellow dropped upon the cushions beside the older man and soon Ben Emeal had forgotten his doubts in a lively discussion of the approaching durbar and the ceremonies attendant upon that function.

But, after a pleasant hour together, just as they were about to separate for a brief siesta, Ahmed turned to his father with a slight frown and said:

"Just before I came in this afternoon I met out here in the street before our house the strangest old man! He wore that dress that you call Arabian, I think, and he had on the green of our Prophet's kin, but he was staggering along the street muttering, 'The night is coming! Desolation is coming upon us!' or something like that. I went up to him to see if I could help him, and, also, to see if a kin of our Prophet could really have been drinking of the accursed cup; but I found no signs of intoxication about him, only signs of intense fear as he cowered against the wall, repeating his cry of desolation. Adjed, the silversmith, came up just then and took him in charge or I should have found out more about him. Strange, wasn't it? It really gave me an uncanny feeling as if it were a premonition of some danger," and the young man shook himself as if to shake off a lingering feeling of fear.

Ben Emeal's face, as his son spoke, resumed the troubled expression which had been driven away by Ahmed's former lively conversation and he said to the lad very solemnly as they both rose and he put a hand on the youth's shoulder:

"My son, you never forget, do you, that first of all in this world you are a follower of the true Prophet and that your first business in life is to convert or destroy the infidel?"

The son did not reply except with another question. "Father, can I not go to the university at Aligarh to learn more of our Faith?"

"I will see; I will see, my son," replied the father genially and his face cleared as if the question had put his fears at rest.

"I will see, my son," he said again as he turned to the door leading to his own apartment where he would take a few pulls at the hookah before he should give himself up to his afternoon rest.

Ahmed went to his mother's chamber where with his head upon her knee, her proud eyes gazing down upon the handsome face of her son, the dearest possession of an Indian woman's life, and her loving fingers smoothing his rich, dark hair back from his brow, he fell very soon into the refreshing sleep of youth.

When Ahmed awoke from his restful sleep, he found his mother still supporting his head and still gazing fondly down into his face. For a few moments he lay, returning her smiles. Suddenly his face clouded.

"Mother, why is it that you can never leave this house, this walled-in courtyard; why is it that you cannot ride out with me in the open and look upon the trees and the grass and the blue sky? It does not seem right that I should be allowed to look upon all these things and you not."

"Hush, my son!" answered his mother. "It is the law of the Prophet. What he commands must be right. But, see, there is the blue sky, and here are my green tree and my grass and sometimes I even may ride out in an ekka and peep through the curtains, and once, my son, many years ago, I rode on a railway train and saw through the shutters miles and miles of green grass and flowers and so many, many beautiful things that I shall always be happy because of that sight."

Ahmed looked from the beautiful but sad face of his mother up at the patch of sky bounded by the four gray, brick walls; he looked at the lone, gray-green tree trying to grow in a foot or two of garden in the middle of the paved courtyard, and at the grass, already giving up its struggle for life, about its roots, and his heart ached for this lonely woman. For he knew that although she was his father's only wife at present, because she had borne him, Ahmed, to Ben Emeal, he knew that she saw little of his father, for there were many concubines in the home who not only usurped her place in her husband's life but who, also, in many, many ways made her life far from happy in the home. He knew that really he himself was her only joy and comfort and he rebelled. Ahmed had been taught that a woman has no soul. Did he doubt the words of his teachers as he gazed into his mother's eyes?

"Mother, why are you called 'Ahmed's mother' instead of your own name when the people of the household speak to you? Why are you so 'blest in' me as they say?"

"Because, my son—surely you must know by this time that a woman is no better than a beast; 'a cow' the Prophet calls her; and that she can only enjoy life through the son that she bears. Ah, how rich I am in you! But suppose you had not come to me, Ahmed, my son!" and her face became drawn with the thought. "Suppose I had been as my sister who has no son!"

The youth could not bear to add to his mother's unhappiness by having her dwell upon such thoughts and so he playfully pulled down her face and kissed her and teased her to show him the wedding garments which she was embroidering for him.

"When is it to be?" he asked.

"After the month of fasting, my son."

"Is she beautiful?"

"I know not, my son. But surely she must be for such a handsome man as thou art."

"Dost thou want me to have a wife, mother?"

The mother's face was crossed with a spasm of pain at the question, for when his wedding came, she felt that she would have lost her son, her only joy in life. She knew that she had such a son as few mothers in all India and she knew that their loving relationship and companionship was very unusual. But he must marry and as a woman she must not show grief; in fact, being a woman, she had no grief. So she mastered her pain in a second and replied, but not so quickly that it deceived Ahmed:

"Yes, my son, as every true follower of the Prophet must, so must thou marry and beget sons. But thou canst still love thy mother a little," she added shyly.

"That I will," affirmed the son blithely. "But," he went on crossly, "I don't want to marry and be bothered with a wife. Mother, I'll tell you what I really want to do. I want to go to our university at Aligarh where I can learn all about our Faith and about everything else, mother. I want to be a great man."

"Not a great man, my son, but a great follower of the Prophet! Why, the sky has clouded and there comes some rain!"

"Oh, ho! I must get me up and away, for I promised a friend I would come and read with him for a time."

"Is it The Book, my son?"

"No, mother, it is something new which some one gave him one time on the train. We have been reading it together for months now. It is very beautiful, all about Jesus who is coming at the end of the world, you know."

"Yes, I know, my son, for I have read The Book——"

"It is strange, mother, that you can read, for Elid's mother cannot, nor can any woman in Ajar's household, he says, nor can any other woman in this," interrupted the son. "And besides, mother, the other young men I know never seem to spend any time with their mothers at all or talk to them or even love them, it seems to me."

"Yes, my son, it is strange, for ours is not the ordinary life, nor has my lot been the ordinary lot of

woman here. My father taught me to read when I was a little child, for he became blind and then I could read to him, for I was quicker and more willing to do it than the boys. My father was a great scholar and I know The Book by heart, but little joy has come to me since my marriage for my knowledge," she sighed. "Your father respects me no more than he does his latest concubine. I have respect here only because of you, my son," and her eyes feasted upon his fair countenance. "Go now, my son, to thy friend, but beware of new things, for what is new often offends the Faith." With these words she left Ahmed as he lifted the purdah, having followed him as far as her woman's feet were permitted to go.

But Ahmed trod on through the narrow streets, although the rain was pouring, for he did not want to miss the reading which was giving him such a different outlook upon life. Why, really, it was a "blasphemous thought," but this new book seemed to him to be greater than the Koran. It had given him such a new vision. Never had he thought much about his mother's life and position before reading this book, but now his mind was quickened to understand her condition. This book said, "Honour thy father and thy mother," and it did not seem to exclude woman from any joys, even those of Paradise. He was so eager to know more, especially since the conversation with his mother that afternoon, that he wondered if his friend would let him take the book home with him to study by himself.

As Ahmed went on in the rain his thoughts turned from the new book to a man whom he had met several times the past year outside the walls of Hyderabad on the big bridge. The man's peculiar bearing of kindness towards any one in trouble and his happy face had attracted the youth. They had talked together once or twice and the man whom Ahmed supposed to be a Hindu had told him that he was a Hindu no longer, but a follower of the "Jesus Doctrine." The boy had wondered what it could mean, for never had he been so drawn to a stranger as he had to that man whose whole thought had seemed to be how he could help some one else. One day Ahmed saw this man actually help a woman place her water jar on her head and a moment later get down in the dust of the road and help a coolie pile up again a mass of fuel dung-cakes which had been knocked over by a passing cart; and yet this man was a scholar, as Ahmed knew by his conversation, and no outcast. The boy wondered as he thought it over now if the new book which he had been reading could have any connection with what this man had called the "Jesus Doctrine." The more he thought about it the more it seemed to him that that man's actions had been the carrying out of the precepts of the new book.

Ahmed had not paid much heed to his steps as he had splashed along in the rain, trying as far as possible to keep under the protection of the buildings from the rain which seemed to be coming in torrents from the south. He was wrapped in his thoughts.

But suddenly his steps were stayed, for he heard a weird, awful cry, and in a corner of the porch of the house that he was passing he saw a figure on its knees in prayer. The attitude was conventional and in no way terrifying, but the words and voice had startled him.

"Night is coming! The wildness of desolation will soon be upon us! Oh, Allah, Allah, hear the cry of the faithful!"

The voice was that of one whose soul was in mortal agony, and as Ahmed stooped to look more closely, he recognized the old man whose voice he had heard a few hours before in front of his own door. He recognized, too, that the place where he was standing was the crossing of the Sidar Ways, a place a long distance from the road he had thought he was taking.

He wondered what could have alarmed the old man, but, really frightened at the repetition of the awful words and the tone of the agonized voice, the young fellow did not go to the man's side, but hastened to find a return way to his friend's, whose home he had missed in the rain and the preoccupation of his thoughts. As he turned, for the first time he noticed that another man was standing close behind him. In the semi-darkness, he did not recognize him, but gave him the greeting of the Faith and hurried on. As he reached his friend's door, it gave the boy a queer, uncomfortable feeling to perceive that this same man was still behind him.

An hour or so later Ahmed emerged from the house with the precious book concealed in his clothing, for his friend had warned him that he feared that a good Mohammedan would not read it and that he believed that it was the book of another faith. As such his friend had decided that he would read it no more. But Ahmed had said that it mattered not to him what faith it was, he thought it beautiful and he wanted to read it still more. So instead of permitting his friend to burn it as he had wanted to do, Ahmed had insisted upon taking it to his home for further study.

He did not notice as he left Elid's house that a man slipped out from the shadows and followed him to his own door. Nor did he know that this man turned as soon as he had entered the house and made haste back to the crossing of the Sidar Ways where he aroused the strange old man from his paroxysm of fear and talked earnestly with him for some time.

Within his mother's room by the light of the oil lamp Ahmed read and read, while his mother watched him and sewed on the wedding garments. Too engrossed to read aloud or even talk about what he was reading, he read on and on. Long after his mother had given up her vain efforts to get him to go to rest and had rolled herself in her blanket, he still bent over the book. He read until sleep finally blurred his mind and closed his eyes and the lamp burned out at his side.

But Ahmed had noticed before he slept a name on the first page of the book, "Mission Press, Bangalore, India." It must be that those people could explain to him what this book meant. If he

could only go to them! Never had words written or spoken stirred his heart as it had been stirred by this book. It must be of Allah and yet in all he had read he had found no mention of the Prophet. Since Elid's warning Ahmed seemed to feel that perhaps in reading this book and thinking these thoughts he was betraying the Faith, and yet, if all this he had been reading were true, it was better than the Faith and he could no longer believe as he had before.

Could he in any way get to that "Mission Press" in Bangalore? Ahmed had never been but a few miles from Hyderabad; indeed, that was one reason why he had wanted to go to the university at Aligarh and another reason was that in the last few months he had begun to be dissatisfied with the Faith and thought that there they could certainly explain all to him. But now he preferred to go to Bangalore. It seemed as if he must go there: but instinctively he felt that he must conceal his reason for wishing to go. And so with his mind confused by these thoughts and the new ideas which the new book had brought him, ideas utterly foreign to all he had known before, he fell into a restless sleep.

It seemed to Ahmed as if some unseen force were ordering events when early on the next day he was called to his father's presence to find him unexpectedly ill and so ill that it would be impossible for him to leave the city and go to Bangalore on a very important matter of business. Ben Emeal could trust the business to no assistant and yet it had to be attended to on the next day. The only person whom he could trust was his son and that son until then had been not only ignorant of all business matters but also of travel, having never made a journey alone on a railway train. But when Ben Emeal saw that there was no other way to save to his name several thousands of rupees, he decided to give his son a rather hurried and, indeed, trying initiation into commercial life. The old Arab's warning against the infidel had not been forgotten, but the father did not think the risk too great to send his son away alone for the first time, as he thought the novelty of the journey and of assisting in business affairs for the first time would keep Ahmed's mind from dangerous thoughts, and besides,—it was a matter of much money.

So Ahmed had been summoned to his father's presence and instructed in all the matters needful to the transaction of the business. When Ben Emeal saw the delight and eagerness with which the boy undertook the journey and the task given him he did not consider it necessary even to warn him against the possible meeting with the infidel in Bangalore.

So Ahmed had started for the very place of all others that he wanted to visit, sent by his father—such a strange answer to the longings of the night before that he was filled with a feeling of awe. So impressed with the religious importance of this journey and with a divine ordering of it was he that he scarcely appreciated its novelty. Because of his ignorance of travel, his father had directed him to go first class; therefore, he had the compartment to himself for the whole journey and, since this was so, instead of gazing from the window and enjoying the new sights as he would have done a few days before, now he pulled out the new book and read the whole journey through.

Although Ahmed had but one desire when he reached Bangalore, that of finding the "Mission Press," he went first, as he knew was right, and transacted the business entrusted to him. When that was over, then he began his search for the people who were responsible for "The Book." No longer did that title in Ahmed's mind belong to the Koran and for some reason or other he did not seek these people to be told that what The Book said was true; for he seemed to know himself that it was true, but he sought them for more knowledge and for an explanation of many things that he could not understand, and especially to find out the relation of the Prophet to it all, as Mohammed was not mentioned in The Book.

Ahmed found the Mission Press to be a large brick building set back in a grassy compound. When, with a desire for secrecy which he could not exactly explain, he dismissed his gari at some distance from the gate and made the approach on foot, he was surprised to see another Mohammedan stop at the gate, but he did not recognize in him the man who had followed him from the crossing of the Sidar Ways to his friend's house the night before in Hyderabad.

So without anxiety other than that which possessed him to learn of the new book, Ahmed entered the big building. Never having seen a press and not exactly knowing what the word implied, he was amazed at the whirring machinery and the offices of busy clerks. At a window he told his errand in a simple, straightforward way, pointing to the name of the press on the title page of The Book which he had drawn from under his clothing. The converted Hindu at the window at once led the boy to a small room within, where sat an American gentleman literally buried in manuscripts, proof sheets, and correspondence. But a quick resurrection took place at the clerk's whispered words and the American, a missionary, arose to greet the youth.

For several hours they talked and prayed, each moment separating Ahmed farther from the faith of his father and drawing him closer to the faith taught by a stranger. Since the boy was not to return to Hyderabad until the next day, when the press closed for the night he went home to the mission compound with the missionary. And so engrossed was he in conversing with his new friend that he did not see that a man followed them all the way from the press building, indeed, the same man whom he had seen at the gate.

It was not late in the evening when in the midst of their conversation, Ahmed turned abruptly to his missionary host and said, "I believe. I want to be a Christian. What must I do?"

The missionary explained to him that the next step after belief was testimony, a testimony usually given by baptism, but that Ahmed could not think of being baptized until he had prayed long and earnestly over the matter. Indeed, it might mean death to him, for he himself must surely know the bitterness of the Prophet's followers. It would probably mean at the very least disinheritance and banishment from his father's home.

"But I believe," cried Ahmed, "and if testimony is necessary for believers of this 'Jesus Doctrine,' then I must testify; I must be baptized."

But the missionary was firm and although his heart glowed at the courage of the young man, little more than a boy, he would not yield but sent Ahmed to the guest-chamber with the counsel to pray about it.

And for hours that night did Ahmed pray.

When, in the early morning, he met the missionary in the drawing-room, his resolve was unchanged and his request of the evening before was repeated. "Baptize me now. I must be baptized for I must testify to the world that I believe," he said. His face shone with such a happy light as he pleaded that the missionary felt that no longer could he refuse to administer the sacrament asked for.

"But it may mean death," again he urged.

"Jesus died for me; you yourself have told me," replied Ahmed.

"You will certainly lose your inheritance and be an exile from your family."

"He gave up His inheritance in the skies and took exile upon Himself that He might bring life to me; can I not do as much in testifying for Him?"

How the lad had learned so much of the Gospel and the very words of the Bible in such a short time was a marvel to the American preacher, but he did not know with what intensity the hungry heart of the youth had been studying the sacred pages.

It seemed to the missionary, therefore, that it must be God's will that the young Mohammedan should be baptized. But he wanted it to be done in the presence of the congregation.

"When could that be?" asked Ahmed.

"Not for three days," replied the preacher.

"But I must go to my home to-day!" exclaimed the young man.

"Ahmed," the missionary's eyes were filled with perplexity and suffering, "Ahmed, it will be sure death if you go back to Hyderabad, I know. Will you not let me send you north where you can probably escape from notice until you have studied and are ready to preach the Gospel? Then you can come back and perhaps preach in safety to your people," he urged. "Wait here in secret in my home until the Sabbath. Then after the public service and public baptism before the congregation, I will spirit you away and you will be safe."

The young man drew himself to his full height and his eyes glowed. "My father expects me to start for home to-night. I must obey. He has given me his trust. But more than that, I must hasten to tell them of what I have found—to tell my mother of a God who loves her and that she is not lost, but can be saved by believing in Jesus. I know that I shall die, but before then I shall have lived enough, if I succeed in taking the message to them. Can I not be baptized now, at once?"

It was not in the missionary's province to detain such a messenger. With a tap of the bell he assembled the family for morning prayers, the heathen as well as the Christian servants attending, and in their presence he baptized Ahmed, the young Mohammedan, no longer a follower of the Prophet but of the Christ.

As the missionary with his hand upon Ahmed's bowed head repeated the words in Hindustani, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," a Mohammedan glided from behind the draperies of a side window, through the half-opened shutters, and passed quickly and noiselessly down the driveway and through the compound gate.

Just before the gates of the city closed for the night the train from Bangalore deposited Ahmed at the station and he was safe within the walls of Hyderabad. He hastened through the narrow, dark streets to his own home, shunning the crowded bazaars and picking out the winding byways that lead between the high walls of the residence portion of the city near the river. A foreigner would not have imagined that the walls confining the dirty lanes within their narrow limits were the walls of the homes of some of the rich and influential Mohammedans of the great city. But so it was, for the barren, outward appearance of an oriental residence does not reveal the luxury within; and, besides, many of these Eastern people seem to prefer the luxury of costly jewels and raiment to that of beautiful surroundings and live on in the plain ways of the poorer natives with only the number of servants, the elegance of their dress, their indolence, and their indulgence in pleasures showing their wealth.

Such was the home of Ahmed, plain, satisfying only the requirements of a simple native life. It

covered much ground, for the number of servants and concubines demanded considerable room even for plain housing. But there was little display of wealth within except in the wearing of gold-embroidered robes and precious jewels. Only a succession of bare paved courtyards, with open and closed rooms at the sides, made up the house all practically unadorned except one in the centre of the house which was gorgeous in carving and inlaid work and faced a tiny, open mosque, also richly ornamented. The mosque was a most beautiful example of Indian skill in carving and stone work and about the niche which pointed towards Mecca were many passages from the Koran, inlaid in the marble with precious stones in a most delicate and marvellous way. Before the niche upon the marble floor were spread prayer rugs of great price. This was the private mosque of Ben Emeal and his household and he had thought the expenditure of thousands of rupees not too much for the adornment of his place of prayer.

When Ahmed reached home, the servants told him that his father was at prayer in the mosque and did not wish to be disturbed before morning. Ahmed wondered what unusual happening could have called his father to a whole night of prayer. When he asked the servant more particularly about his father's health, he found that Ben Emeal had seemed much better until in the afternoon a strange old Arab had been admitted to his presence and since then he had been much worse, depressed in mind as well as body, and at times greatly agitated.

Ahmed, feeling that he must not interrupt his father at such a time and wondering if it could be possible that his father's agitated condition could have come from a premonition of what he himself had done, hastened to his mother's apartment. Finding her asleep, he spent several hours in prayer for help and guidance for the coming day, for he knew that he could not and would not put off the revelation of his break with his father's faith longer than that, unless Ben Emeal's illness should grow more alarming.

Meantime the rain had come again, even harder than upon the night that Ahmed had been abroad. In floods it was pouring down upon the city of Hyderabad and brimming the banks of the river. In a small house near the great bridge that spanned the river at the crossing of the Sidar Ways two men were sitting. One was the man who had been following the doings of Ahmed; the other, the old man from Arabia, whose face now reflected no terror, only the glow of a fanatic Faith.

"He was baptized?" As he almost shouted the question, the old man leaned forward in his excitement. "I warned the father again this day in a manner that stirred him to the depths, but I did not really expect this so soon. Are you sure? Have you told our brothers of the council?"

The other replied, "Why, of course I am sure, for I saw the act myself. Yes, I have reported to Ben Isah and he bade me tell you that just before noon we are to assemble with Ben Emeal and support his arm and his faith as followers of the Prophet. Of course the boy will recant and repudiate all this nonsense, he says, but he must be taught a severe lesson. 'There must be no trifling with the infidel,' were his very words."

As the man ceased speaking a gust of wind bore the rain like sleet against the door of the house and the old man looked up with a hunted expression and his lips moved as if in prayer. The younger man looked at him in contempt and without another word threw himself upon a charpoy in the corner of the room and fell asleep, but the old man sank on his knees and remained in that position until dawn.

Ahmed's first thought with the coming of the new day was to tell his mother the good news and bring joy to her sad heart. Then he had determined that he would face his father and leave the rest in God's hands. His mother might lose her son, but she would gain far more in what this Jesus Doctrine would bring. So he greeted her with a happy heart.

He told her all: of his own experience, his growing dissatisfaction with Mohammedanism, of his growing belief in the religion of the new book which he had studied for so many months, of his occasional meetings with the Christian man at the bridge, and, finally, of what he had done at Bangalore. Words could not come fast enough as he went on to explain the new faith to her and told her what it would mean for her, if she should believe. But, although it sounded very beautiful to her, she could not accept any doctrine in such a short time and she was listening to his words as yet with only a glad wonder in her heart, when a messenger suddenly summoned him to his father.

Ahmed had almost forgotten his father in his eagerness to talk to his mother and bring her the good news; so he was remorseful when suddenly he realized that he had not even asked about his father's health since the night before, nor gone to him to report on the business matter which he had arranged in Bangalore. He went quickly after the messenger, for the moment again forgetful of the unwelcome news that he must bring to his father soon. He was surprised when he learned from the servant that Ben Emeal was still in the mosque and awaited him there. But his surprise became amazement when on entering the mosque he perceived a circle of the most influential Mohammedans of Hyderabad seated about his father on the floor. So accustomed was Ahmed to the habits of the faithful that without thought of its being a violation of his new faith, he slipped his feet from his shoes as he entered the mosque.

As Ahmed approached the group he noticed at one side of his father the old Arab whom he had

seen in such terror upon the street and at the other side the man whom he had met at the gate of the Mission Press in Bangalore. In a flash, as his eyes met those of the man who had spied upon him and saw the light of success in them, Ahmed understood the reason for this assemblage and for his being summoned thus as it were before a tribunal of the faithful. Instinctively his eyes sought his father and the drawn, haggard look upon that face, usually so strong and firm, rent his heart. Their eyes met and in a second each had read the message that the other loved him, come what might. Then the eyes of both fell and the lad awaited the charge.

"Ben Isah," the voice of the man who had dogged Ahmed's footsteps demanded, "is it seemly that an infidel should stand within the sacred precincts of a house of prayer?"

"Ben Idrahi," replied the most dignified and grave gentleman of the company as if he were a judge in a court and repeating the formulas of that august body;—and, indeed, he was a judge in a court that controlled life and death; "Ben Idrahi, whom accuseth thou of being an infidel? Are not all of us before you true followers of the Prophet and upholders of the only true Faith? Whom accuseth thou with such a terrible accusation?"

"Ben Isah," the man rose and said slowly, "I have proof; I have proof, I say, that the youth, Ahmed, son of Ben Emeal, is no longer a follower of the Prophet; that in the city of Bangalore yesterday in the early morning he was baptized into the hell-filling creed, the name of which I will not defile my lips with. And now, Brothers of the Faith, he stands before you an avowed infidel."

As the man announced the fact of his baptism in Bangalore, although Ahmed dared not look at his father, he felt that an involuntary shudder passed over Ben Emeal's frame. But at those words his own heart leaped and yearned towards these men. Then and there he longed to tell them the wonderful story of the God revealed through Jesus Christ, but he restrained himself.

Ben Isah had turned towards him and all eyes except his father's were upon him, as the older man said:

"Ahmed, son of Ben Emeal, is this, that this man accuseth thee of, is this true?"

Ahmed could restrain himself no longer. This was his opportunity to testify and to men who probably would never hear the message from other lips. He took the opportunity with a skill and wisdom beyond his years.

The words poured from his lips, even as the rain was pouring from the heavens into the courtyard of the mosque. His face glowed and his eyes shone with a light brighter than that of the clouded sun. Not a man moved. They listened, held by the fascination of the youth, as with a tempestuousness that seemed born of the very storm without and with a courage not born of man, he told them the truth as they would never hear it again.

As he spoke his eyes were upon his father's face, who looked as if he were beholding a miracle. When he had finished, his hands still outstretched, his voice still ringing in their ears as he said,—"All that this man says is true. I am an infidel, as you say, for I have been baptized. I am a Christian,"—Ben Isah stumbled to his feet and with shaking hand held out, cried in agitated voice: "Stop! Stop him! This must cease! This must cease! Lay hands upon him! Take him from the mosque!"

Confusion reigned as a couple of men seized Ahmed's arms and dragged him from the mosque while the other men raved at him in rage and hate because in spite of themselves they had listened to a blasphemer and the teachings of the infidel. The lad was carried to a side chamber where the two men stood over him, giving him no chance to escape. But Ahmed was not seeking that; his head was bowed in prayer.

As they watched and waited the two men talked of the storm without, for the rain still fell in torrents and the wind blew; while above the sound of the wind and rain could be heard continuously the voice of the gorged and angry river.

"If this continues, there will be trouble," said one, "for this morning the water was five feet higher than yesterday, they told me."

"Yes," replied the other, "when I crossed the bridge a few hours ago the river was up to the first buttress; but there can't be any real danger, can there?"

"It must be a warning to the infidel," answered the first, looking significantly at Ahmed, but he was unconscious of what they were saying.

Soon the summons came and the lad was led into a large guest-chamber where his father received visitors of state. The men sat as before in the mosque, but their faces were dark and their eyes downcast.

Again Ben Isah spoke, "Young man, because of thy youth, and for thy father's sake, we will give thee one chance, one only, to recant and unsay all thou hast said. Wilt thou take back thy words, repudiate this infidelity, and once more accept the true and only Faith?"

Before Ahmed could reply Ben Emeal was upon his feet. "My son," he said in slow, restrained tones, "think well before thou speakest. Remember thou art my only son; remember that all my fortune will be thine. Thou canst go to the University at Aligarh; thou canst have thy heart's desire in everything, if thou wilt only recant!" He ended hurriedly.

"If thou dost not, Ahmed, son of Emeal," shrilled the old Arab, rising to his feet, "thou shalt die. Choose thou and choose quickly!"

The son looked at the father. Just then in the distance, through the downfall of the rain, there sounded dimly:

"Allah is most great! Allah is most great! Allah is most great! Allah is most great! I bear witness that there is no god but Allah! I bear witness that there is no god but Allah! I bear witness that Mohammed is the Apostle of Allah! I bear witness that Mohammed is the Apostle of Allah! Come to prayer, come to prayer! Come to the Refuge, come to the Refuge! Allah is most great! Allah is most great! There is no god but Allah!"

It was the Moslem's call to prayer and every man in the room fell upon his knees except Ahmed.

Ahmed remained standing with bowed head. He made no effort to escape while the others were upon their knees. But as soon as they had finished their devotions, he stepped forward and in a clear, full voice said simply, "I choose death."

A silence as of death itself fell upon the company. No one spoke. The boy remained standing with his hands out as he had spoken. At a motion from Ben Isah a servant stole to Ben Emeal's side and noiselessly placed a cup in his hands. The latter arose and stepped towards his son.

With a stern, tense voice Ben Emeal broke the silence: "The infidel must die! This is the cup of death. Drink!"

As he touched the cup to his son's lips a thunder as of mighty waters rose.

"Night is coming! The wildness of desolation is upon us! Fly, fly!" shrieked the voice of the old Arab. But even as he cried a wave of water burst into the room through the open door.

The river rose sixty feet above the bridge they say and at least ten thousand of the inhabitants of Hyderabad were drowned in that one day.

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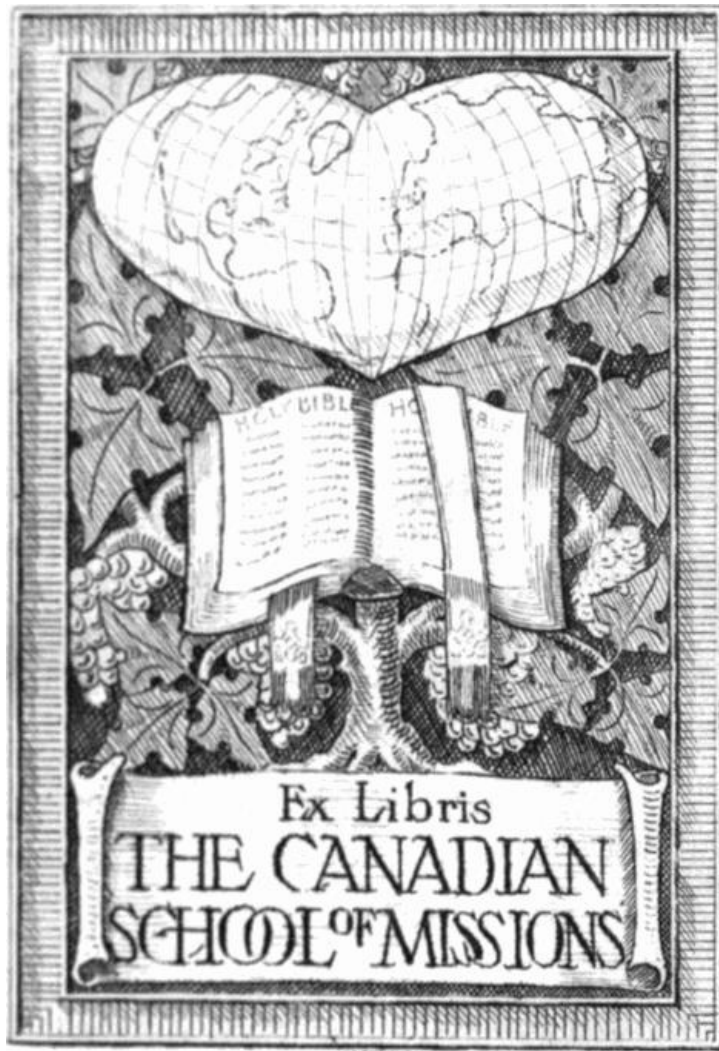
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Transcriber's notes:

Minor punctuation errors have been corrected without note.

The phrase 'dung cake' was changed to 'dung-cake' in The Infidel: "mass of fuel [dung-cakes](#)" to make it consistent with Old Sarah: "at a fire of twigs and dung-cakes".

Where the use/non-use of the hyphen is either not clear, or used in a consistent way, these have not been changed. These are 'dirty-white', 'well-known', 'first-class', 'second-class', 'third-class'.

Changed '--' to ',' in "[beautiful wife, as fair](#)" in the list of illustrations for consistency with the caption and the text.

Inserted 'the' in the notes relating to The Continent of Opportunity: South America-"of importance in [the](#) South American continent".

Replaced Krisha with Krishna in notes relating to the Modern Missionary Challenge-"India's Problem, [Krishna](#) or Christ?".

James Stewart's qualifications were actually D. D., M. D., F. R. G. S., see: The Romance of Missions in Africa told in the Life of James Stewart, [D. A.](#), M. D., F. R. G. S. (not corrected).

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