

A Novelist's Tour  
of the World

VICENTE BLASCO IBÁÑEZ





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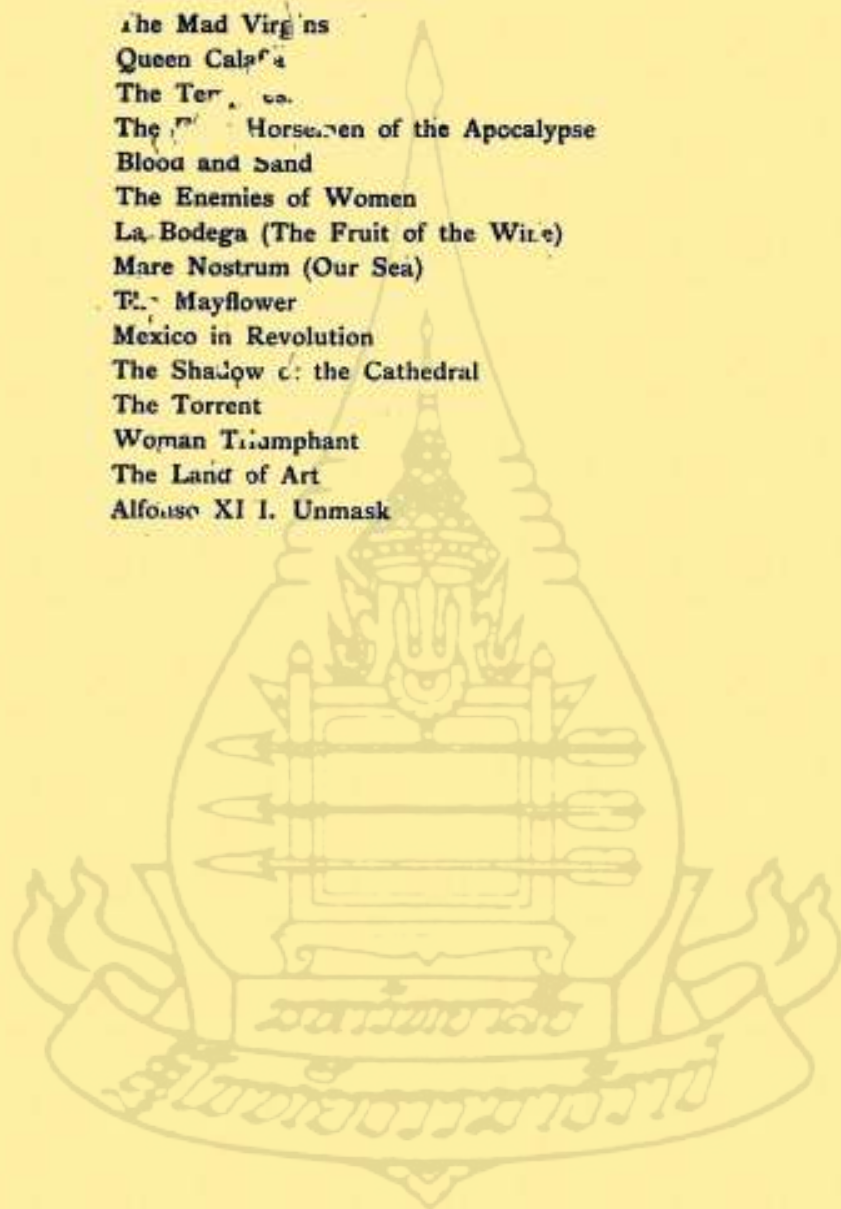
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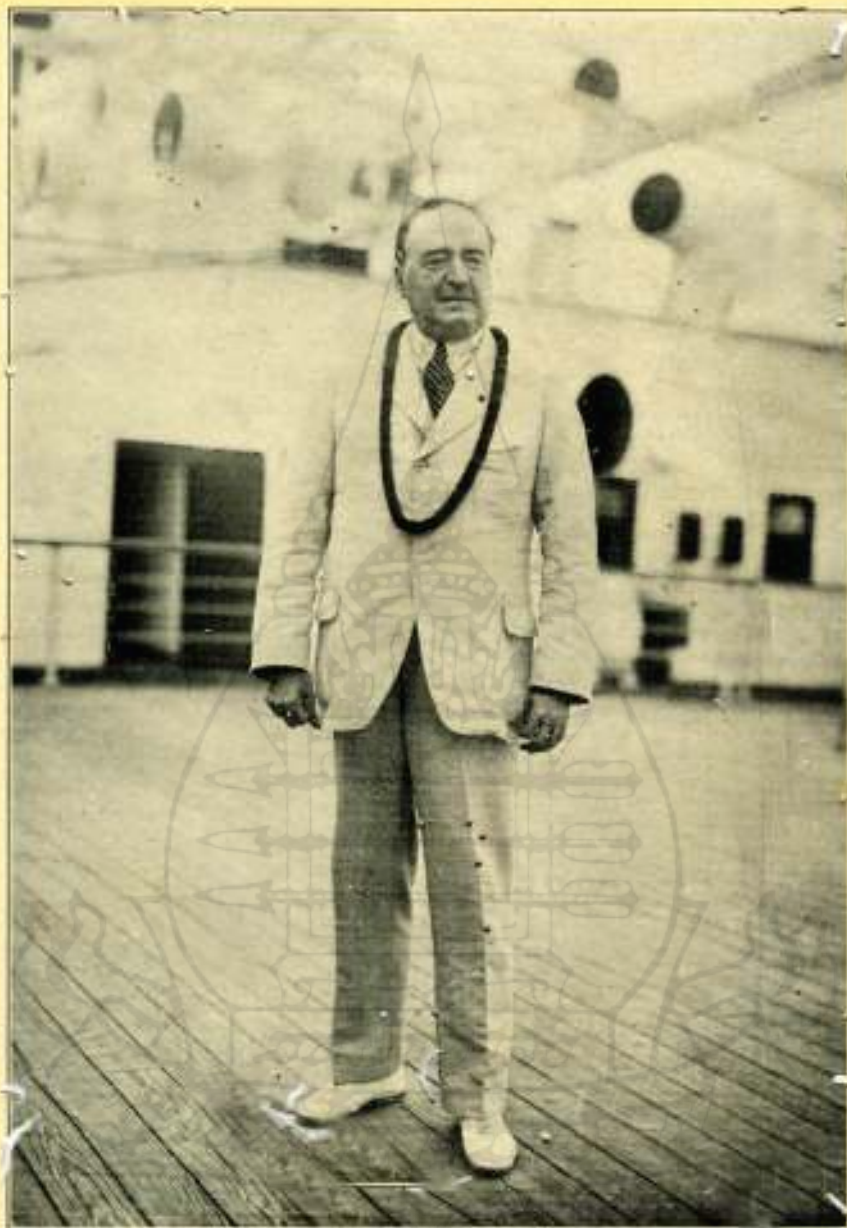
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By the Same Author

The Mad Virgins  
Queen Calafia  
The Terra Incognita  
The Horsemen of the Apocalypse  
Blood and Sand  
The Enemies of Women  
La Bodega (The Fruit of the Wire)  
Mare Nostrum (Our Sea)  
The Mayflower  
Mexico in Revolution  
The Shadow of the Cathedral  
The Torrent  
Woman Triumphant  
The Land of Art  
Alfonso XI I. Unmask





THE AUTHOR WITH A FLOWER NECKLACE ON HIS DEPARTURE FROM HONOLULU  
*See p. 62*



# A NOVELIST'S TOUR OF THE WORLD

By

VICENTE BLASCO IBÁÑEZ

Author of

*The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, &c.*

Authorised Translation by

Leo Ongle and Arthur Livingston



THORNTON BUTTERWORTH LIMITED  
BEDFORD STREET, LONDON, W.C.2



FIRST PUBLISHED . . . 1927.

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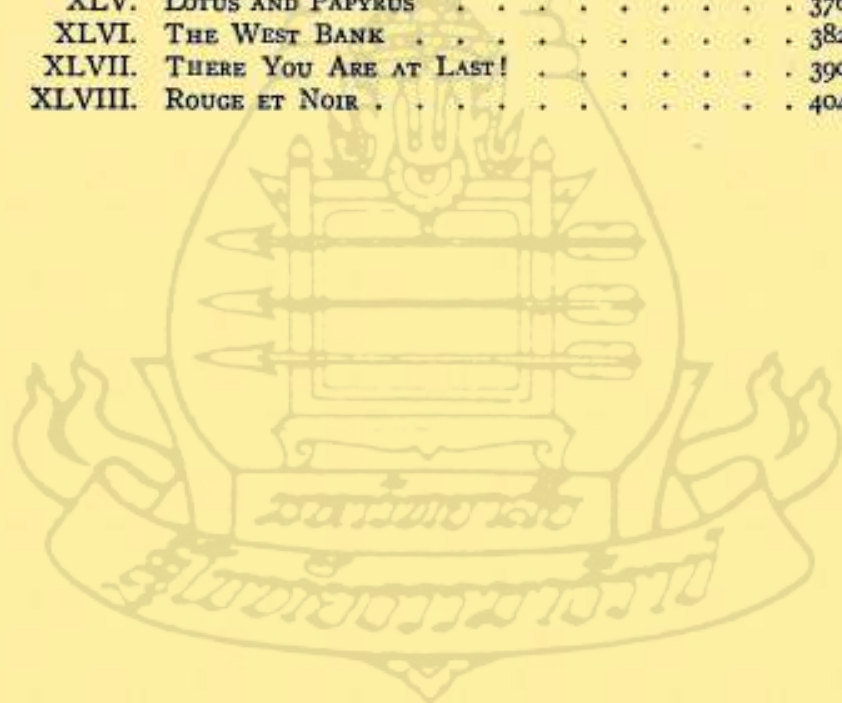
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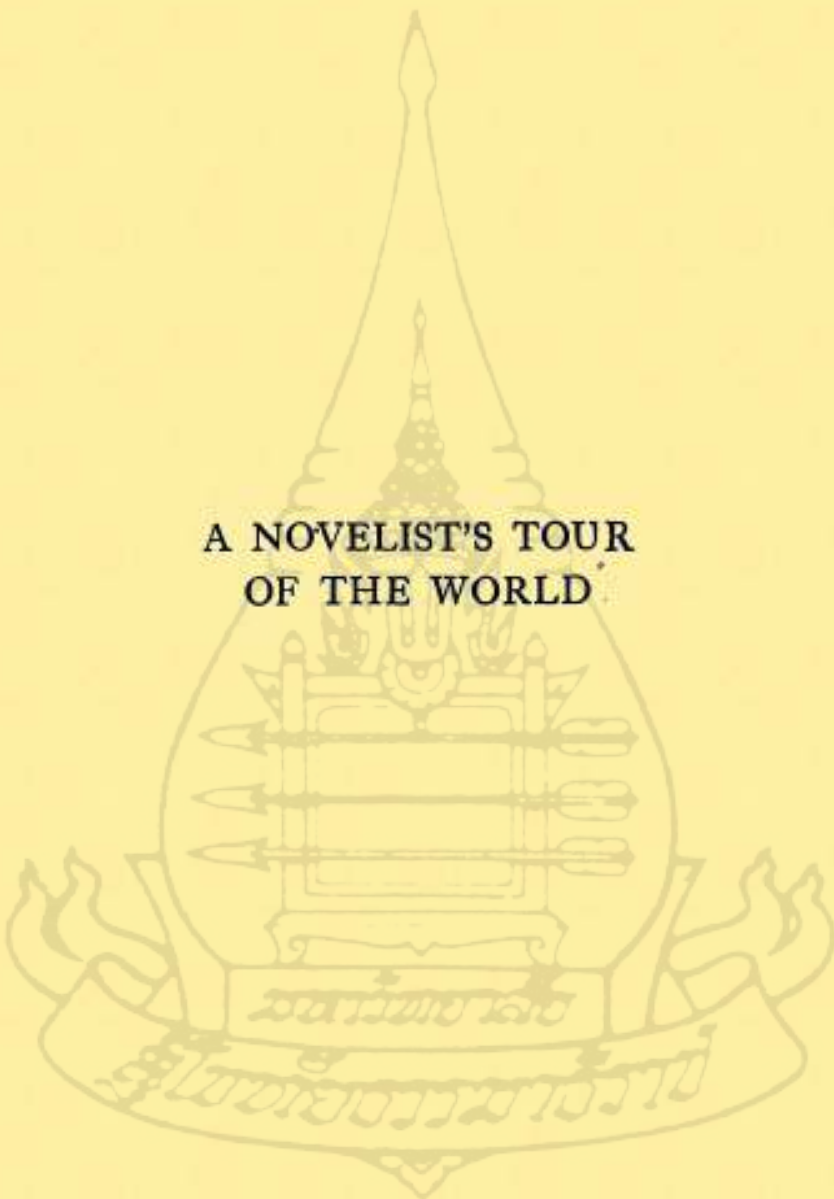


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OF THE WORLD

# A NOVELIST'S TOUR OF THE WORLD

## CHAPTER I

### IN THE GARDEN AT MENTON

MORNING in the early autumn of 1923 . . . I am sitting as I have sat so many times before on a bench in my Menton garden; but everything that meets my eye—trees, fountains, flowering shrubs, birds and fishes—seems quite different today from what I have known in the past; these are trees, fountains, shrubs, birds and fishes I have never seen before. . . .

The rhythm, the values of life, seemingly, have changed over-night. My surroundings have grown animate. The garden has found its voice and is speaking to me just as, sometimes, in rooms that have been locked up a long time, old pieces of furniture suddenly speak to us at critical moments in our experience. For we inevitably extend our own lives to the inanimate objects or the beings of a more rudimentary form that we look at or think of daily. Then when the strength of some emotion makes us feel how small and weak we are, or when we need advice or help, we turn instinctively to this world that is both familiar to us and strange; and at a stroke it gives us back the life we have lent it from day to day. . . .

On the rose-trees, the buds of the autumn flowering sway at the touch of the soft breeze, and in the leafy heights of the mimosas and limes innumerable birds are engaged in a lively contest of trills and warbles, jubilant at the security of this oasis of the air, where they are safe from the eagles and hawks that seek their prey by daylight and the still more terrible birds that hunt by night, but that now are perched sleeping in their ceries in that gigantic red fortification wall yonder—the Maritime

Alps. The fish swim restlessly about in the sun-illuminated water, seeming to pursue their own shadows as they glide through the green-gold depths of the pools. The murmuring fountains are tossing into the air cascades of lucent pearls. Along the edges of the dark green fan-shaped leaves that spread from banana and palm, drops of dew are still gleaming. And all this shining verdure, all these different aspects of a nature, as childlike as dawn, keep asking me in chorus:

"Why are you going away? Aren't you happy here with us?"

By way of answer I turn my eyes toward the violet sea that lies quivering, beyond the smooth columns of the tree trunks, under the showering darts of the sun.

Voices murmur persistently around me, voices from the air, from the water, from the plants nearby; and though each has something different to say, they all blend and become as one, like the themes of a symphony.

"Stay here with us," urges the murmurous orchestra of the garden. "You are going to miss all our flowers and fruits and the sweet afternoons of autumn, and the serene and enlightening companionship of your books. You know that the tropical banana tree consents to bear in only a few parts of Europe. Look at the great bunches of this fruit that have ripened here for you, in this sunny spot between mountain and sea. They will dangle in vain from the bough, or others will eat all those green crescents when they have turned to gold, as the sun slowly ripens their flesh to the sweetness of honey.

"Even now the sheaths of the camelia buds, no longer able to contain all the lambent colors within them, are on the point of bursting open. Soon they will be pushed aside to make way for these scentless flowers, as dazzling in their majestic beauty as goddesses whose lips have never learnt to smile. But you will not witness this miraculous flowering and the spectacle that has been preparing for you during a whole year will pass, unseen by you.

"The winter festivities that all happy people attend, Nice with its carnival, and Monte Carlo with its operas, concerts, and regattas, its balls in hotels vast as the palaces of legend, its battles royal fought with flowers—you are abandoning all this!



"And are you really going to give up those pleasant twilight hours in your library—when the light, filtering down through the dense leaves, takes on the green tints of sea depths, and, in order still to see the words of the book you are reading, you have to draw close to the windows where almost invisible wire screens slightly soften the outlines of everything beyond them, admitting the perfumed breeze, and keeping out the insects that nature, in her unwearying fecundity, persists in creating? . . . Why are you going away? What is this restlessness that is driving you towards the unknown, and making you turn your back on the smiling peace we bestow upon you? . . ."

And now someone is approaching me with noiseless step . . . someone is sitting beside me on this tiled bench with its gay pictures of ancient Valencian dances. . . .

You could not see him, reader! But I can. And I know him well. He has always followed me, sharing my sorrows and illusions, like a slave with one foot caught in the shackles of my chain.

We all have felt ourselves becoming two people at difficult moments in our lives. That is my other self sitting there beside me . . . an aggressive self, prompt to voice doubt and scorn.

His first words are nothing more than a repetition of the question all the sounds of the garden are persistently repeating. "Why are you going away?" But this self of mine speaks to me with far less consideration for my feelings.

"What good will it do you to satisfy your childish desire to go around the world?"

"Are you so curious about distant countries and the manners and customs of their peoples? You have only to step into your library here close at hand. In its twenty thousand volumes, your imagination aiding, of course, you will find enough material to make you see cities and scenes far more interesting than the reality.

"Easy enough to understand why people liked to travel in past times—Tudela for instance, or Marco Polo. They were going to discover something no one had ever seen before, an enterprise well worth the painful adventures they had to face. But nowadays a man who knows how to read has no need to move out of his chair to learn all he wants about every country



in the globe. Hundreds of other human beings have endured for him all the discomforts of travelling, and in addition have taken the trouble to leave a full account of their journeys."

In vain I endeavored to answer this phantom of myself. He went right on in a tone that grew steadily more disapproving.

"Think of the risks! You're no spring chicken, as well you know; but like everyone else who lives on his imagination you try to forget how old you are, and persist in upsetting the established periods of life, and in endlessly prolonging the enthusiasms, illusions, credulity and passions of the twenties!

"It is true, of course, that human progress daily provides greater safety for those who wander over the earth's surface; we have learnt to avoid shipwreck and collisions on land, generally speaking. But what of all the infinite variety of diseases, abrupt changes of climate, and epidemics such as are almost always present in the ant-hill communities of Asia—cholera, the bubonic plague, the black vomit? . . . Remember too the blind and cruel catastrophes prepared for us by a nature which takes no account of mankind. Only a month ago an earthquake almost annihilated the chief cities of Japan, the very ones you are going to now, and more than a million lives were snuffed out in just a few minutes. . . .

"And who are you that you plan to cross oceans and continents with the same tranquility you would feel in walking past the flower beds of your garden? A few pounds of muscles, blood and bone, bearing a label to distinguish it from other packages of the same sort, a provisional accumulation of cells that calls itself Blasco Ibañez, and is possessed of a memory which allows it to recall past events and make deductions from them to serve as a guide for the present, and a basis for weaving fancies concerning the future! But the earth does not know you exist, just as it is in complete ignorance of the other billion, eight hundred million parasites of your same species who live on its crust. Yet a slight shudder, the barest contraction of the earth's epidermis in those spots where it is sensitive to the least chill, suffices to change the whole political equilibrium of the world. And yet you trust yourself to the good nature of this globe that, when it feels now and again the prick of disturbances, wars, or the ambitious undertakings



of human beings, scratches the itching spot with the comb of catastrophe!

"Don't forget that there are fewer years of life lying before you than behind, and that it is prudent to stay quietly in that corner of the planet where the greater part of your personal history has transpired, since there the tranquil continuance of your life is relatively assured you. The wisest thing a man can do—whatever you may think—is to lengthen his life by every means, defensive and conserving, within his reach.

"And don't think you are going to leave your trouble behind while you are gone! Remember what Horace had to say about 'black care' always keeping up with the rider and always getting aboard the boat first, so to speak!"

My unfriendly companion paused here and I made haste to reply.

"But this is just the moment for such a journey! If I put it off indefinitely, old age will come along, bringing with it the illnesses that weaken our vital organs and paralyze our muscles with rheumatism.

"Besides, one ought to know the house one lives in before death comes to put us out. I've always wanted to see this world of ours, ever since I was a little boy, and I don't want to leave it until I have seen for myself that it is really round! And think, too, of the delight of rapid motion, the excitement of action, the pleasure of satisfying with our own eyes the curiosity awakened in us by things we have read. Oh yes, perhaps I will be disappointed, and will discover that what I imagined as I dreamed over the printed page was far more beautiful than the reality! But at least I will have had the fun of wandering about the world like a nomad.

"Why, I am going to cross seven oceans from end to end—the Atlantic, the Pacific, the Japan and China Seas, the Indian Ocean, the Red Sea, the Mediterranean—I shall sail down the three most famous rivers in history, rivers whose waters were the suck that nourished three of our earliest civilizations—the Yellow River, the Ganges, and the Nile. I want to see races, customs, and cities entirely different from those of Europe, where the nations are as like as peas in a pod and you know one from another only by its hatreds, carefully cultivated as



'patriotism' and stimulated by war and by politics. But if I delay even a few years, I shall never be able to accomplish this journey. Come, how can you sit there exaggerating all the possible dangers, and opposing a project formed to gratify a desire that has tormented me all my life?"

My other self bestowed on me an ironical smile, and I saw the greenish hue of envy steal across his face. If he already desisted from his plan to fill me with doubts, demoralize my will and make me give up the project I was so firmly set on, I saw that it was only to begin a far more severe criticism of my purpose.

"Your trip is going to be too short anyway," he insinuated with hypocritical meekness. "If you proposed to spend several years in travelling round the world, I would have some respect for your project. But go round the world in a few months! Why, what can you see in that short space of time? What will you have to tell about it when you get back?"

"I know perfectly well that the development of means of communication has greatly increased the potential value of time. A day means as much to you as a month did to Columbus. When Jules Verne wrote his tale about going round the world in eighty days he thought he was describing an extraordinary achievement. It could be done in less time than that today. You propose spending six months on your travels, but even so people and places will flit across your range of vision just as they do in a movie film. You will see nothing but the surface of what you are looking at. You will not learn to know the nations you pass through, you will not succeed in catching even the smallest glimpse of their souls. . . . Why tire yourself out for such a meager result?"

But now I thought it my turn to speak plainly.

"Time is valuable or not according to the observer. For some people, one day of travel is worth more than several years to others. You remember Chateaubriand's journey to America? Critics have proved, from a close study of the dates he gives, that he could not possibly have travelled farther than to New York and Philadelphia, cities then in their early youth. He could not have seen Niagara nor sailed down the Mississippi. But this fact did not prevent him from leaving descriptions of



both which can scarcely be improved upon. In addition he found there the inspiration for his novel *Atala* which not only inspired thrills of emotion in several generations but gave the Romantic movement its initial impulse in southern Europe. And the methods of description he developed in this work are still, after more than a century, being used by many an author of the present time!

"The artist needs to see only a portion of the truth. The rest he can divine; and the filigree towers his fancy builds are almost always stronger and more lasting than the massive concrete buildings erected by drab reality. Besides, who can determine the limits of exact observation? Very often it is when we are leaving a country we have been living in a long time, and know thoroughly—so we suppose—that it presents itself to us in the most unexpected and novel attitudes.

"The 'few months' you sneer at are enough to make my trip an interesting one. Anyway, a man of our time is sure, if he reads at all, to know a great many things about the countries he is going to visit before he arrives there and needs only to verify from his own individual point of view what he has already so many times gazed at in imagination on the printed page.

"You seem to forget, too, what most novelists are like. Our observation is really instinctive. We observe against our will, you might say. We are cameras with the shutter always open, we take account in a purely mechanical way of what surrounds us. And whatever we miss seeing at the first glance we never succeed in seeing afterwards, no matter how hard we may try.

"In some of my novels the action develops in cities I have observed for a few days at most. But many of my readers conclude from my descriptions that I have lived months, years even, in these places. We are like some of those 'crack shots' who cannot hit the bull's eye if they take aim carefully. They must shoot without looking, by instinct, letting their wills guide them rather than their eyes.

"Not all those who describe life use the same methods to break through the invisible armor behind which reality conceals itself from us in its persistent endeavor not to be captured. Some of us proceed slowly, and laboriously bore our way



through. I happen to be one of those writers who produce explosively. My work is always more or less like a torpedo. It flies off at breathless speed, sometimes reaching its mark, and sometimes going completely astray without accomplishing anything. But when it explodes, it is with immediate and tumultuous effect.

"And you must remember that it is as a mere novelist I am going round the world. I do not expect to write either political or economic articles on the countries I shall pass through. And so I can relate what I have seen in my own way, as though I were describing the scenes and characters of a novel, except that scenes and characters will have the same names they bear in reality.

"As to the soul of nations and individuals, you must allow me to give very small importance to this outworn and affected objection. Who can tell how many months or years it takes to know the soul of a country or of a race? Can a lifetime suffice for such a study? . . . Yet hasn't it happened more than once that some chance observer, passing through a foreign land, has genially divined some trait that other travellers would succeed in discovering only after the most arduous and myopic studies?

"After all souls are so complex, whether those of collectivities or individuals, that even their owners don't succeed in knowing them very well!

"The great American novelist Lafcadio Hearn, who loved Japan best of all the nations in the world, left descriptions of that country so admirable that a number of authors have paid him the compliment of stealing them. Yet after living fourteen years in Japan, learning its language, taking a Japanese wife, and teaching school for the express purpose of studying the psychology of the yellow races as it expressed itself in their young. Hearn had to confess on his death bed that the soul of the Japanese was still a mystery to him.

"Let us rather respect the mystery of other people's souls since no one of us will ever succeed in understanding the mystery of his own soul. How many times it startles us by making decisions totally unexpected, contradicting all our supposed knowledge of ourselves! It is this eternal mystery which gives inexhaustible interest to life. If the day should dawn when the



white and black races, the yellow and red, knew one another's souls perfectly, life would lose some of its best emotions, and our experience would bore us beyond bearing, since it would be devoid of all element of surprise.

"A word more and I am through, my grouchy friend. However long, or short my trip may be, it cannot help but be more interesting than staying at home in this pleasant corner of the globe. It is better to go around the world in a few months than never to go around it at all.

"I will confess that in this circumnavigation I am planning, there is not a little literary vanity. A few of our Spanish naval officers and diplomats have sailed around the world, but these trips were of a 'diplomatic' nature, and the observations made, and the curiosity satisfied in their course, were always of a professional sort. Since the Spanish Jew Benjamin de Tudela started out in the twelfth century to explore the world known to the men of the Middle Ages only by hearsay, and wrote down an account of the wanderings that took him as far as India, very few Spanish writers have followed his example, although in doing so they would merely be accomplishing what a large number of English and American writers and innumerable ladies of both nationalities do every year. The book I write is to contain in its pages the seething and stir of the overflowing populations of the Far East, the majestic loneliness of the oceans, those guardians of the planet's powers of renewal, and the melancholy history of great civilizations now either dead or at this very moment in their death agony."

A long silence. . . . Little by little the sounds in the garden cease, hushed by the oppressive heat of the sun, riding high by now. The figure on the bench is silent too.

"Have you anything more to say?" I ask.

But frowning, angry, he refuses to speak. In his silence I read the confession of momentary discomfiture. But underneath it lurks the confidence that events will prove him right.

"Well then, stay where you are! I'm going to leave you sitting on this bench, for you'd be nothing but a hindrance if I took you along. . . . And now 'All aboard!'"



## CHAPTER II

### THE CITY THAT CONQUERED NIGHT

As the ship's orchestra began the national anthem, playing it in the slow religious rhythm of a hymn, the sound of laughter and chatter ceased, heads were bowed, and the throwing of streamers from the decks of the ship to the crowd gathered on the three tiers of the dock, came to a sudden stop; even the weaving of the multicolored girdle stretching from the steel flank of the ship to the solid wall of iron and stone that plunges its feet deep down to the river bed below, was interrupted for a moment. . . .

A courtyard of water, immensely deep. A courtyard enclosed on three sides by an enormous steel structure that juts out several hundred yards into the river. The fourth side of this great rectangle is open, and through it, as through a door or window at the back of the stage, gigantic liners with huge smokestacks are seen gliding by, five- and six-masted ships, their sails all furled, patiently following black screaming tug-boats, indefatigable ferries, floating caravanserais, their double tiers transporting great multitudes and enormous accumulations of automobiles and trucks from shore to shore of this stupendous Hudson, one of the two great arms of the fabulous port of New York which is now the point of convergence for the shipping of more than half the earth!

Mile after mile, the shores of the river are hidden by the steel and concrete palaces of world-famous navigation companies and enormous ware-rooms that swallow up the cargoes of several great liners at a time. Here moving stairways carry cases, trunks, and bundles tirelessly up and down, and elevators huge as the floor of a house bear great crowds from pier to street. Into other similar courtyards innumerable boats are passing, to discharge their cargoes or to go through some process of rejuvenation. Even the largest of the famous transatlantic liners succeed

in showing only the very tops of their masts and chimneys above the roofs of these stupendous piers. In these great watery enclosures the great fleets of commerce might pass totally unobserved, like great herds of cattle gathered into the corral of the farm buildings.

The final notes of the hymn die away on the air, heads are covered once more, and suddenly there is a great outburst of shouts along the ship's flanks. Some ladies just arrived from the Middle West to see a number of their friends sail away on a tour of the world, have suddenly produced the national emblem of the Stars and Stripes from their handbags, and spreading it out with both hands are waving it in the breeze. Once more ribbons of colored paper stream through the air and the web of colors uniting the ship to the three tiers of the dock grows thicker and wider. . . .

I take leave of the numerous newspaper representatives, mostly women, who have reserved an astonishing collection of unexpected and diverse themes for this final interview, and of photographers industriously working their machines in order to record how I look in travelling clothes.

And now an outburst of fox-trots and other American dances from the ship's orchestra. Excited by the rhythm, the crowd on the boat is shouting, the crowd behind the iron gratings opposite is shouting too. On every deck now a few impatient couples are dancing. And the huge armchairs lined up along the promenade spaces of the ship groan under enormous bouquets of flowers, huge as wheat sheaves, and candy boxes larger than suitcases.

Free for the moment, I climb to the hurricane deck to see once more, above the roof of this vast pier, the airy pinnacles of New York, for me one of the most extraordinary sights to be enjoyed anywhere on the surface of the globe. . . .

My first glimpse of New York gave me distinctly the feeling that I had fallen into another world, on to a planet where the inhabitants had succeeded in conquering the laws of gravity, and made them their playthings. As I gazed for the first time on her skyscrapers, those soaring edifices whose summits are often veiled in mists, I felt for a moment that this must be the



work of giants, something extraordinary and fantastic, something quite beyond the limited powers of our human kind. And then, as I reflected that they had been created by poor mortals just like me, subject to the same failings and illusions, I felt a great, warm wave of pride at being a member of the human race, which, in spite of its physical short-comings, can through its intelligence accomplish such marvels!

New York—for me there can be no doubt about it, New York must be numbered among the world's most beautiful cities. Its beauty is strangely its own, the beauty of a Colossus, with all the pride of a Colossus and the bold scorn a modern Colossus can well afford to have for many of the aesthetic canons venerated in the Old World and there held to be as immutable as the creeds of an accepted religion.

I do not say that this art, so essentially American, ought to be imitated by the rest of the world, nor would I like to see other cities growing to look like New York. Life is variety, as we say in Spanish, not being satisfied, as you pretend to be in your English proverb, with making of variety merely a spice. Life is variety; and how depressing it is to find imitation-Gothic cathedrals, and pseudo-Parthenons in latitudes that refuse to adapt themselves to these forms of architecture! Simply as a member of the human race, I am proud of New York and of its audacious structures that triumphantly surmount obstacles which for centuries defied the architects! And how stirring are these gigantic towers that strike their roots down to depths never reached by trees, even centuries old, and then boldly soar skyward—and nearly reach the blue!

In the Old World there are structures as tall as those of New York, but they are few and far between, they are exceptions. What in Europe passes for a height so extraordinary as to become an object of pilgrimage, is in New York nothing but the average height of the principal buildings of the neighborhood. The Eiffel Tower is still higher than the skyscrapers of North America. But the Eiffel Tower is no more than a steel scaffolding, and looks like a temporary structure. It entirely lacks the imposing majesty and substantiality of the New York buildings.

The great metropolis of the modern world has created an art



SIMPLY AS A MEMBER OF THE HUMAN RACE, I AM PROUD OF NEW YORK AND OF ITS AUDACIOUS STRUCTURES (See p. 11)



that faithfully reflects its conception of life, an art that is magnificently daring, that boasts of its straight lines—that makes one think of the super-human strivings of inventors who can only achieve their discoveries by trampling under foot the discipline and conventionalities that act as a check on their contemporaries!

Those artists who abominate railroads because they are so ugly, but who would burst into tears if anyone made them walk two or three miles, who praise the charms of the simple life lived without the frightfully prosaic devices of electric light, central heating, and the hideous ingenuities of modern plumbing, always mention New York—which most of them know only by hearsay—when they want to sum up in one word all that is most horrible in the life of our time. And our snobs, straining to simulate aesthetic refinement, can also be heard condemning an art that is vigorous and frank and thoroughly characteristic of the nation which through its desire to improve our material existence has performed the most stupendous miracles of the modern age.

This city, built seemingly for some other race larger than the human, makes one think of Babylon and Thebes and all the enormous cities of ancient times as we imagine them to have been—and such as, indubitably, they never were!

There are in New York streets that would in Europe pass as wide; yet here they look like humble alleys, crevices in the rock, to which the sun will never penetrate. So great is the height of these walls that one is forced to throw back one's head to see the top, at the imminent risk of inducing an attack of vertigo, or at the very least losing one's hat.

It is really difficult at first to conceive of these buildings as being the work of human beings. It is easier to believe that some race which preceded ours on the planet left them behind; and they remind one too of the mountains that in some obscure epoch of our history were burrowed through and hollowed out by the troglodytes to serve as subterranean temples or cavities.

At nightfall, there is no agglomeration of human beings, nor has there ever been, which presents or ever has presented, such a magical spectacle as this city as it lifts up on its breast the



conquered and impalpable form of electricity, forever subdued now to the needs of man. . . .

The towering structures with their thousands of glowing windows are like huge chessboards lifting their red and black squares toward the clouds. The wildest fantasies of the Orient's story tellers become realities in this city, so often accused of being impervious to any impression of beauty. Above the rooftops, the ingenuities of advertising experts create a strange glittering world that is a challenge to reality and the tranquil sequence of the hours. The night genii of New York, flying to altitudes that only eagles frequent in other parts of the world, bring together from the velvety depths of space, designs and arabesques of fire, royal peacocks of rainbow plumage, troops of imps and goblins, the latter gesticulating as they peer up at the stars, or winking a mischievous eye, while women, formed all of dazzling light, sit in garden swings, their hair streaming out to the stars as they sway; and all the fauna and flora of the *Thousand and One Nights* come to life regularly at the first pulsations of starlight, and fade away again at dawn, while the crowd far below streams through the deep clefts of the streets outlined by the little white dots of the street lamps.

Until a short time ago London was the largest city in the world, but New York has overtaken it now. The hub of history, which throughout centuries has travelled from one nation to another as it revolved, always keeping within the confines of Europe however, has at last crossed the ocean, and is at this very moment on the western shore of the Atlantic.

Both the wealth and the activity of this great center of human life are astounding. The Customs of New York take in more money than many a European government of importance. The Port Authority has a wider field of action and greater powers than many a ministry of marine.

Talking one day with a representative of the New York City government, I noted a smile of commiseration on his face as he commented on certain stupendous enterprises accomplished by the United States government in Panama. The municipal government of New York is actually engaged in undertakings more difficult and costly even than the famous canal, but all this work is being done quite as a matter of course and without



and publicity, just as though it were one of the every-day tasks of the city police.

The river bed of the Hudson—the depth of this famous stream provides anchorage for the largest ships in the world—has been bored through repeatedly so as to make it possible for subway trains to connect New York, in spite of the obstacle presented by this river, with the shore opposite, the easternmost boundary of the adjoining state of New Jersey.

On the other side of the island of New York there stretches an arm of the sea, separating the old city of New York,—now the Borough of Manhattan of the present city, from the district known as Brooklyn, itself as large as many a famous capital of Europe. Years ago the famous bridge was built which at the time seemed the final triumph of human ingenuity and industry. Now numerous subways join the rocky island of Manhattan with the adjoining island on which Brooklyn flourishes, and several other bridges stretch from bank to bank over the incessant and breathless river traffic, almost as feverish as that of the streets.

Brooklyn Bridge is no longer the marvel it was. To the north of it swing bolder, bigger bridges, their several tiers black with the continuously moving line of vehicles and foot-passengers. In this country where everything changes in the space of ten years, the famous bridge is already a relic of the past.

But for him who wishes to enjoy one of the unforgettable sights of the world, its platform offers an extraordinary vantage point. Here one can see the two water-ways that flow to one side and another of Manhattan Island, pressing it into a triangle, and then merging, beyond its apex, into the enormous bay that makes New York so majestic a port. The boats of all kinds plowing their way up and down these waters are as numerous as the humming insect swarms of summer; ceaselessly they weave the web of their foaming vanishing wakes. . . .

From here the several bridges more than a mile long that spring out over the gray-blue water look like bars of China ink suspended on slender threads so that a whole microscopic world may glide across them. Out in the bay, bounded by shores that jump up from the water line as abruptly as the shoulders of



a whale, the isle that serves as a pedestal for the Statue of Liberty looks like a mere toy, a paperweight floating on the surface of the water.

Dozens, sometimes hundreds, of ships of different draught and masting come riding in from all the points of the globe, the courses they have traversed opening out fan-shaped behind them and leading toward mysterious horizons where other coasts and harbors lurk in the mist and fog. But now it is hard to believe that there is any other dry land on this planet of ours save this rock island of New York; and seemingly all that remains of mankind has taken to its ships and is coming now to rest on the only fragment of solid ground that is left.

From this height one can see miles and miles of the earth's surface; but nowhere in this expanse are there pastures or anything to remind one of the life of the fields and the farm, which is the life the great majority of the earth's population lead. Here and there are great stretches of woodland, but these are parks, or garden communities, and these isles of verdure are surrounded by a sea of roofs that stretches away toward the horizon and from which emerge, like reefs from the sea, the great quadrangular masses of the skyscrapers.

Every one of these edifices is a world in itself, larger and more complex than the world of the ocean liner. As if to complete its resemblance to one of these floating microcosms, each one has an enormous engine designed to supply heat and light and contributing its torrent of white smoke to the neighboring clouds. Even on clear days, when the sky is limpid and the bay blue as the Mediterranean, the city is veiled with a light mist that the sun turns to gold—a mist made by the skyscrapers with their transatlantic smokestacks. When night closes down, the topmost roof, or it may be, the small temple that serves as the pinnacle of these immense structures is illuminated with blue or green or red lights, turned on from lamps concealed from view. The great masses of the edifice rise unlighted through the darkness, their rows upon rows of windows are closed soon after nightfall. But way up there on top, like fantastic islands floating above the dark abyss of dreams, are the luminous summits of these great modern towers, bathed in a shower of light from

some mysterious sun that is hidden from the short range of our vision.

And now the gang-planks have been drawn up, the great ship has torn asunder the girdle spun by many hands that bound it lightly to the dock. Fragments of bright-colored paper drop to the liquid surface below, arms are waving, and handkerchiefs and flags. Every moment widens the strip of water that lies between the steel sides of the ship and the motionless pier.

The music rises louder and louder, hundreds of couples begin to dance; and as I watch the multitude that has embarked on this great ship to tour the world, a thought tightens my heart in the very midst of this loud rejoicing; who of all this happy throng will be missing at the return? Of such an agglomeration of human beings, the cruel goddess of adventure is sure to demand some tribute. . . .

And now the most interesting part of New York is unrolling before my eyes, the apex of the triangle, the so-called "downtown" New York, where the most famous of the city's banks and office-buildings are to be found.

Structures of numerous storeys, which anywhere else would be admired as large and handsome edifices, shrink together here with all the humility of a rustic hovel clinging to the foot of a palatial mountain!

Great city, in which everything is measured on a scale far larger than any we know, where all things are incessantly renewed, and generous heroism follows on the heels of brutal selfishness as surely as triumphant truth follows obstinate error. . . .

City of miracles, mother of a mighty race of magicians, creators of the most stupendous inventions of our century, and poets of action, workers for whom the word "impossible" is only a challenge, who strive with all the ardent faith of the old alchemists to transmute fantastic dream into luminous reality. . . .

New York, city that conquered night—farewell!



## CHAPTER III

### THE LAND OF SUGAR

WHEN I was a boy and the island of Cuba was still a Spanish possession, the mere mention of the name Havana filled me with a curious feeling of wonder and terror.

"Havana" meant the land of sugar. It meant an enchanted region, a fairy-tale city, where the houses were all made of caramel and chocolate, and where small boys had only to lie flat on their bellies to get a mouthful of candy, for the very streets were paved with toffy and lemon sticks. And as though that were not enough, everyone who came back from that wonderland brought home pocketfuls of gold and told marvellous tales about black men—like the "blacks" or Negroes I had already seen with my own eyes!—who danced and sang in the theaters and cafés there. But alas! The gates to this paradise were narrow and guarded by terrible monsters, and the most terrible of them all was the one called "*vomito negro*" or yellow fever. So many, many times I heard people say about some person or other I had seen starting off full of life and hopes for that distant isle, "so and so is dead—yes, of the *vomito negro*."

It is many years now since this ghastly toll-keeper has been slain, but the riches he guarded still exist, and are still multiplying as though Cuba were a province of the Arabian Nights.

Now, thanks to the Americans who exterminated the mosquito fever-carriers and drained the swamps of the island, thanks to the aid of foreign and native doctors who joined in this great crusade against death, the traveller is as safe in this largest of the Antilles as in any city of Europe or America. In fact Havana is one of the healthiest cities in the world.

If we were going to write a Homeric poem about the Cuban capital, we would call it "the happy city," for it has a smiling aspect of which one is immediately conscious as one approaches,



though it would be difficult to say where the smile comes from precisely

Havana is still in many respects an Andalusian city, for the old Havana of the colonists was built after a plan sent out from Madrid by the Council of the Indies. Not even the influence of the adjacent United States, nor the comforts and conveniences of modern life that have poured in with Cuba's material progress have been able to change its serene and lordly aspect, the evidence of a land rich in history and the traditions of its race.

It is not in Havana's new monuments honoring Cuban heroes and adorning the squares and promenades that I would seek the secret of the city's charm, for with a few exceptions, they are lamentable structures, half-baked or worse. But the parks and garden suburbs surrounding the city are magnificent, and seem to record the successive showers of gold that have poured down upon the island in the last thirty years.

No, Havana's smile is to be found, not in its walks, its buildings, nor in the animation of its streets, but in the temperament of its people, in the Cuban frankness and exuberance which sometimes cause the visitor a shock of surprise, and in the beauty of its women, with their enormous eyes and startling pallor.

More than by the beauty of the city, I was struck both times I visited Cuba by the peculiar aspects of its public life, for there is nothing like it anywhere else in the world.

The newspapers and casinos of Havana are in a class by themselves. Some of the newspaper plants are installed in enormous colonial houses that are almost palaces, others in modern buildings, but the newspaper plants are as elaborate as those of the leading New York dailies. There are beside numerous magazines and periodicals of various kinds published in Havana. As the population of the island has not yet reached three millions, one wonders where these various publications find their readers, for the total press production of the island is sufficient for a country of ten times the Cuban population.

The earlier hostility between the Islanders and the Spaniards of the Peninsula are forgotten now in the general effort



to advance the prosperity of the island. Besides, the children of the Spanish colonists are all Cubans.

The colonial-tropical atmosphere of Cuba has been favorable to a dense growth of clubs, associations, societies, etc., the *Circulo de Dependientes de Comercio* swelling to a membership of 40,000, perhaps the largest club membership in the world.

And there are societies formed originally to bring into closer association the colonists or descendants of colonists deriving from the same region in Spain—the *Circulo Andaluz*, the *Circulo Gallego*, and the *Casino Español*, all of these societies combining the useful with the ornamental, and maintaining in addition to palatial rooms, adorned with marbles and mirrors brought from Europe and vying with the throne-rooms of old monarchies in their splendor, hospitals and similar institutions, some of the latter models of their kind.

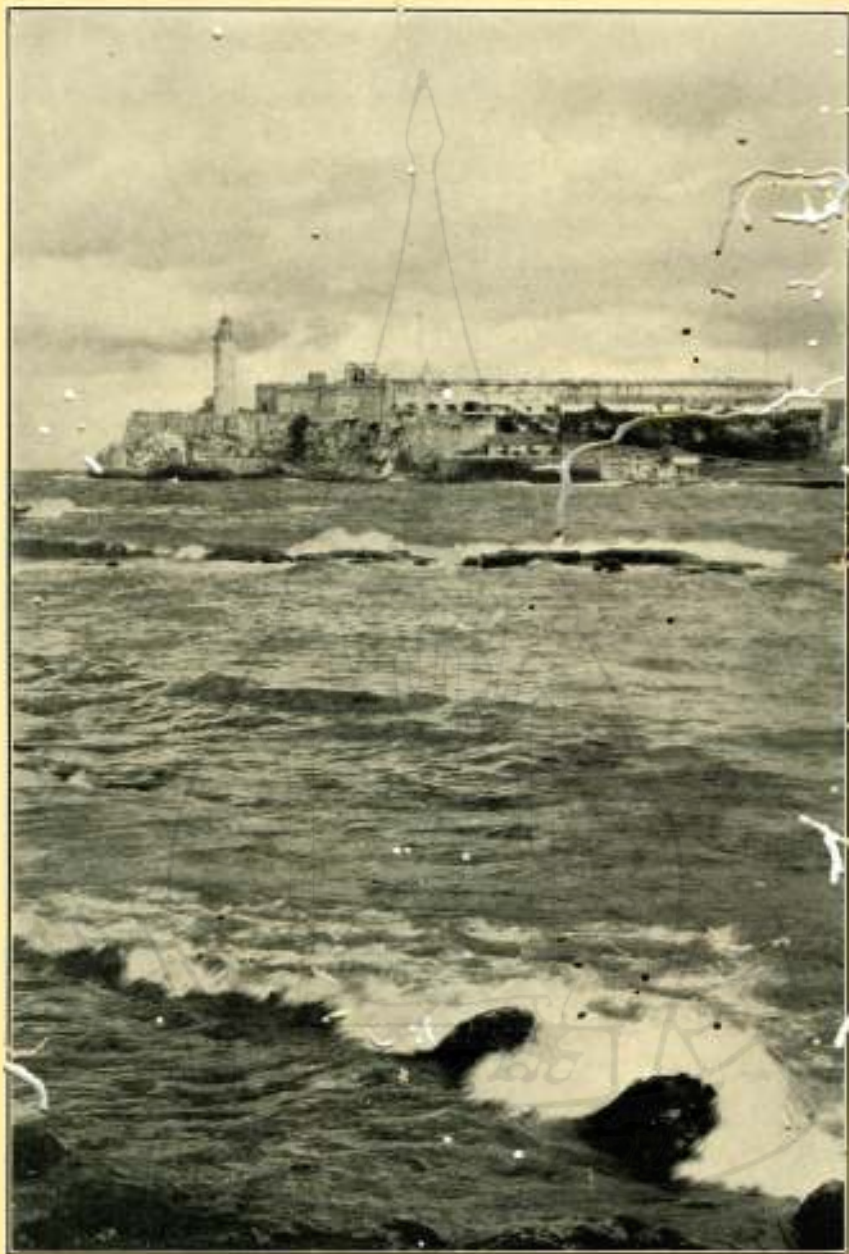
One does not have to be in Havana very long to discover that it is a place where money abounds. Many another city is as rich, but not every city is so agreeably rich. Besides having plenty of money, Havana spends it with an easy imperturbability. That imperturbability, however, is unruffled in the real *cubano* even when he is forced to part with his last penny. The many theaters of the island capital are well attended, the cafés and dance halls are always crowded. Havana has set the record in the prices paid to opera singers, and on one occasion the orchestra seats at the opera sold for a hundred dollars a piece. However, this exorbitant price irritated some of Havana's citizens to such a point that they threw a bomb at the opera house in the very midst of the performance.

Sumptuous materials are exhibited in the shop-windows, and the *cubanas* dress with a luxuriousness that for all its tasteful simplicity is extremely costly.

On the outskirts, the villas, "chateaux" and small palaces are innumerable, most of them examples of Spanish architecture, but containing all the modern comforts of life. The "*Jardinería del Trópico*" in quite original fashion reminds us at one and the same time of Sevillian patios and the wooden palaces of Long Island.

For the American citizen who is not yet reconciled to certain laws frequently invoked in his native United States,





MORRO CASTLE, HAVANA, FROM THE NARROWS

*(See p. 25)*

Havana offers special attractions. Here at the very gates of his native land is a handsome city where the "dry law" is unknown. All the discontented American has to do is to get on a boat at Cayo Hueso at the southern extremity of Florida, and in a few hours he can disembark at the Cuban capital where there is a bar on every street-corner. No delays and inconveniences here before he can satisfy his thirst, no need of swallowing imitation drinks and wood alcohol in carefully guarded bar-rooms. If he wants to get drunk he can do so frankly, freely, and continuously. But, as Havana is a city where money is measured out in large amounts, and prodigally spent, hotel prices are high, rates of travel are high too, and it is only the very rich American who can afford the luxury of getting drunk under the Cuban flag.

One o'clock in the morning, after a day that has included all the feverish activities of sight-seeing, meetings with newspaper men, conversations with aspiring and indefatigable young authors, a beautiful tropical sunset and twilight in the garden of a villa in the suburbs, a banquet and many speeches. Shall I sleep ashore in the palatial suite the city has placed at my disposal in its finest hotel? Or shall I go back to the ship? Cuban hospitality is growing insistent, when suddenly a young American from the *Franconia* appears on the scene. He is a charming young American, well-mannered, a tireless dancer, and, on shipboard, of an exemplary sobriety. But he has just been making a valiant effort to convince himself that he is really in a free country, and as a result he now lurches toward me as though his feet and legs had suddenly recalled every lurch and heave of the ship's deck for a week past. With pathetic joy he throws his arms around me, tries to kiss me, fairly weeps with emotion at the extraordinary coincidence which has brought us together! Everyone else from the ship has already gone aboard, for the *Franconia* is to sail early in the morning and not at ten o'clock as had been announced. . . .

We drive down to the harbor, and a launch finally carries us out to the sleeping liner. . . .

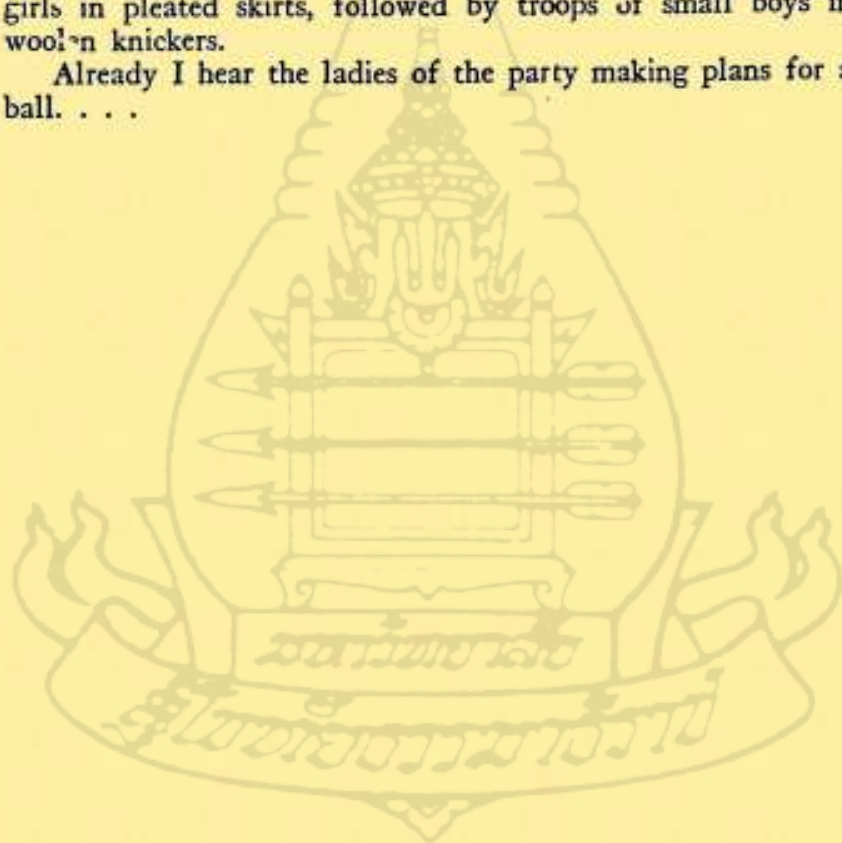
By the time I wake up next morning, the Cuban coast has



turned to a mere puff of smoke on the landscape. Around us lies the beautiful sea of the Antilles in which the sun penetrates to a great depth, giving a golden clarity to the blue water.

After their day ashore my fellow travellers seem to have discovered new charms in ship life. On the top deck young women dressed in white, rackets in hand, are playing a game of ball, breaking out into bursts of silvery laughter. Farther on a game of shuffle-board is in full swing, and beyond that the hempen circles of the quoit game are flying through the air. The boards of the deck shake under the galloping feet of small girls in pleated skirts, followed by troops of small boys in woolen knickers.

Already I hear the ladies of the party making plans for a ball. . . .



## CHAPTER IV

### THE DITCH BETWEEN TWO OCEANS

AFTER three days steady forging ahead, the *Franconia* slows down a bit. The cause is there before us, a green coast line reaching out toward the starboard side of the ship; and I divine on our port side another similar one narrowing in as it recedes, like a funnel.

One of the most stupendous works ever accomplished by the hand of man is coming into view; we are about to enter Panama Canal. Our ship puts on steam again, and we glide from between tree-shaded banks to a region of strong rubble-work breakwaters, bearing numerous machinery sheds. Electric cables of enormous lifting capacity dangle from the arms of a series of cement columns that remind one of the columns of Egyptian architecture, they are so robust. This is the force that is going to carry us through the ditch that cuts a continent in two. These are the muscles that are going to bear us from the second largest ocean in the world to the largest. Briefly described, Panama Canal is a water stairway—a far more interesting and complicated mechanism, therefore, than the monotonous Suez Canal. Besides, its banks, verdant with the dense vegetation of the tropics, and the virgin forests of Panama, have far more to offer the eye than have the dusty sand-wastes of Egypt.

The passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific consists of three stages; first, climbing the stairway of the locks; next, passing through a lake high above sea-level—a sort of mountain plateau—and then, coming down the stairs again on the opposite side.

Arriving from the Atlantic we approach the ancient port of Colon, which enjoyed great importance when there was no canal. Travellers used to disembark here, and cross the isthmus by train, reaching Panama City in a few hours, and re-embarking on the Pacific side. But now our big ship, like most of the



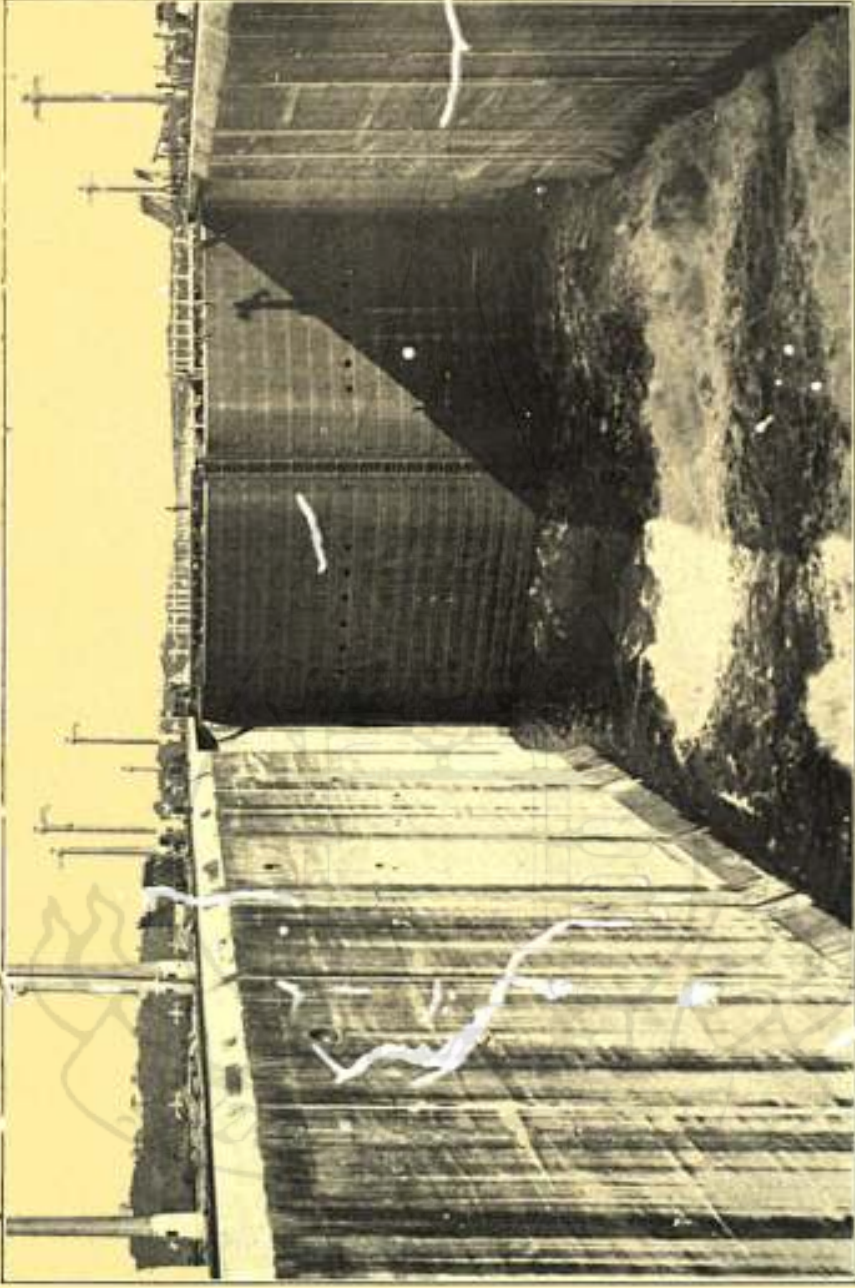
others nowadays, sails right past Colon. Thus ignored by modern travel, the old railway that formerly enjoyed an inter-oceanic importance has become a mere inland road, used only by the residents of the region.

And now the *Franconia* is going to climb the flight of stairs on the Atlantic side, the stairs known as the Gatún locks. These locks are constructed one above the other in three double flights, so that two ships can ascend at the same time. As our great ship glides into the first lock, a smaller vessel, its destination a port in New Zealand, glides into the lock that pairs with ours. From deck to deck the passengers of both craft, bound, once in the Pacific, for such distant quarters of the globe, talk to one another without the slightest effort. For the time being there are only a few yards between them.

The speed with which the locks are worked is nothing short of miraculous. In fact it has the instantaneous quality of the scene-shifting at a modern theater. The ships come up through a trap-door just like the characters in the fairy play. The level of the water rises swirling in the closed quadrangular pockets, and both ships are lifted above the level in which, a few moments ago, they were still floating; and still they rise, from the second trap-door and the third, until finally they are some twenty-five yards above sea level!

These locks, three hundred yards long, thirty-three wide and twenty-one deep, are big enough in dimension to allow the passage of even the largest ships that have been built up to the present. From the bank, electric motors tow the great ships and guide them through the locks. The latter, as we have said, consist of three flights, and the little electric demons dash up the embankment, defying the laws of gravity as they leap about, clinging to the ground like insects, and climbing almost vertical inclines as they dash from one level to another. No smoke, nor bellowing and hissing steam here. But one divine the near presence of a silent irresistible force, like the energies that lie hidden in the earth. The handful of cables, running from one side to the other of the canal, store up and regulate the electricity produced by the enormous power-houses.

These structures loom up from the banks, and others as well, built to give shelter to the enormous supplies of coal and oil



THE LEVEL OF THE WATER RISES, SWIRLING IN THE CLOSED QUADRANGULAR POCKETS OF THE GATUN LOCKS  
(See p. 24)



required by the continuous passing of ships to and fro. Here are arsenals too, and foundries and repair shops, and ship-supply stores, and cold-storage plants, and slaughter houses, and ice plants, and enormous laundry sheds. Several groups of buildings are near the steel and concrete piers. Others loom from the background, partly hidden by palms and cocoanut groves. Before plunging into one of the two great oceans, any ship that passes through Panama can have repairs made if needed and during the process lay in all manner of supplies.

In what have been selected as strategic positions there are groups of houses with wide porches. The American flag floats above the roofs of these structures, the garrisons where the officers of the United States Army live with their families, and all the comforts and privileges that the great republic bestows on its defenders, in addition to munificent remuneration. Eight thousand men guard the canal. During the War the number reached thirteen thousand. In the sunken batteries defending both approaches guns of the largest caliber known up to the present time have been mounted. The troops garrisoned on both Atlantic and Pacific gateways never leave the United States zone, which extends five miles in each direction. The small republic of Panama leads an independent and dignified existence, unmolested by intrusion or arrogance on the part of the American authorities, who confine their activities to guarding this inter-ocean waterway, so important to the safety of their country, and never step beyond the territorial boundaries established by treaty. And let me say that, current impressions to the contrary, the proximity of this neighbor has been distinctly advantageous to the Panamanians, for the poor man always profits by having interests in common with the rich. Continuous relations with Americans have visibly exerted an influence on the culture and progress of the smaller nation.

From the third of the Gatún locks, the *Franconia* passes on to the lake of that name. The famous Chagres River, which the Spaniards made such good use of during three centuries of travel through the isthmus to Peru and Chile, was dammed by the canal engineers so as to raise the level of its waters sufficiently to allow ships of deep draught to pass through. The lake stretches out at a varying width for about thirty-eight



miles, until it reaches Gamboa. This part of the canal required the least effort of all to construct for here no excavation was required, merely inundation. But it is at Gamboa that the most difficult and impressive part of the work begins, it is here that the mountain range forming the spinal column of the isthmus is pierced; here is the famous and terrible Culebra Cut where so many men have perished. The narrow water trail extends to the locks known as the Pedro Miguel locks—the name of a town near-by—and here the plateau ends and the stairs down to the other side begin. Our ship descends the flight from the Pedro Miguel locks, to Lake Miraflores, sixteen yards above the sea. The locks at the end of this lake bring us down to the level of the Pacific. Continuing on our way for thirteen unbroken miles, we pass the modern city of Balboa, where the Americans have concentrated the most important centers of canal activity, and the ancient city of Panama, and at last our prow dips into the waters of the largest ocean. The crossing has taken us exactly eight hours.

So minutely is everything that concerns the traffic through the Canal regulated that not a minute is lost nor a motion wasted, and the flow of water vehicles through this inter-oceanic avenue appears to continue incessantly and in great volume. When the United States fleet—rivalled now only by the British—passed through the Panama Canal recently, twenty-four hours sufficed for dozens of enormous war-ships, with accompanying cruisers and torpedo-boats, to move from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Formerly, of course, it would have taken many weeks to accomplish the same result, as the only route then available led around South America and Cape Horn.

We advance slowly but continuously through this enormous fresh-water ditch that is like a broken between two oceans. We are a part now of the double line of boats passing from one coast to the other just as carriages in procession pass slowly down the street, grazing the curb. The names of the craft, their ports of origin and destination, all testify to the importance and the need of this human achievement, which has changed the geography and the commerce of the world. Ships as big as ours go directly from London or New York to the South American republics of the Pacific Coast, which formerly could be reached



only by making the enormous detour through the Straits of Magellan, or by the painful land journey across the still unbroken isthmus.

The great islands of the ocean spaces are also following this road that by its mere existence brings them so much nearer to Europe. Ships from New Zealand, Australia or the scattered archipelagos of Oceania move along in the lines near us.

One has only to look at the great gash cut in the mountain to let the waters through to be reminded of all the dramatic and tragic incidents that accompanied the execution of this colossal operation. Everyone knows, more or less, the history of this enterprise, first directed by the Frenchman de Lesseps, who hoped to repeat the magnificent triumph of his Suez Canal on the American isthmus. Unfortunately what should have remained a geographical exploit was converted into a financial scandal. Mentally exhausted by his years and his labors, the great Frenchman became the prey of unscrupulous financiers, and the very word Panama became synonymous with "gigantic swindle," and "corruption in public office." Nevertheless the enterprise which had served in Paris as a pretext for criminal exploitation of confidence in a great name was actually carried on sufficiently long to accomplish some important parts of the work, though the lack of foresight and the utter disregard for human life, that the directors of the enterprise displayed won for it an unhappy celebrity.

The city of Panama has raised a monument to de Lesseps and the several learned Frenchmen who were his forerunners and collaborators in the project. But the Panamanians have not yet forgotten the fatal heedlessness with which the French engineers set about their work. Apparently the latter, with the vehemence sometimes described as "Lafayette," were intent only on accomplishing their special part of the undertaking and entirely neglected the precautions necessary to insure its being carried out to completion.

The human material to be used in the scheme was plentiful and easily replenishable. Attracted by high wages, laborers arrived from all regions of the globe, crowding into camps newly set up on what a short time before had been virgin soil, with a climate in which only natives could hope to survive. Of the



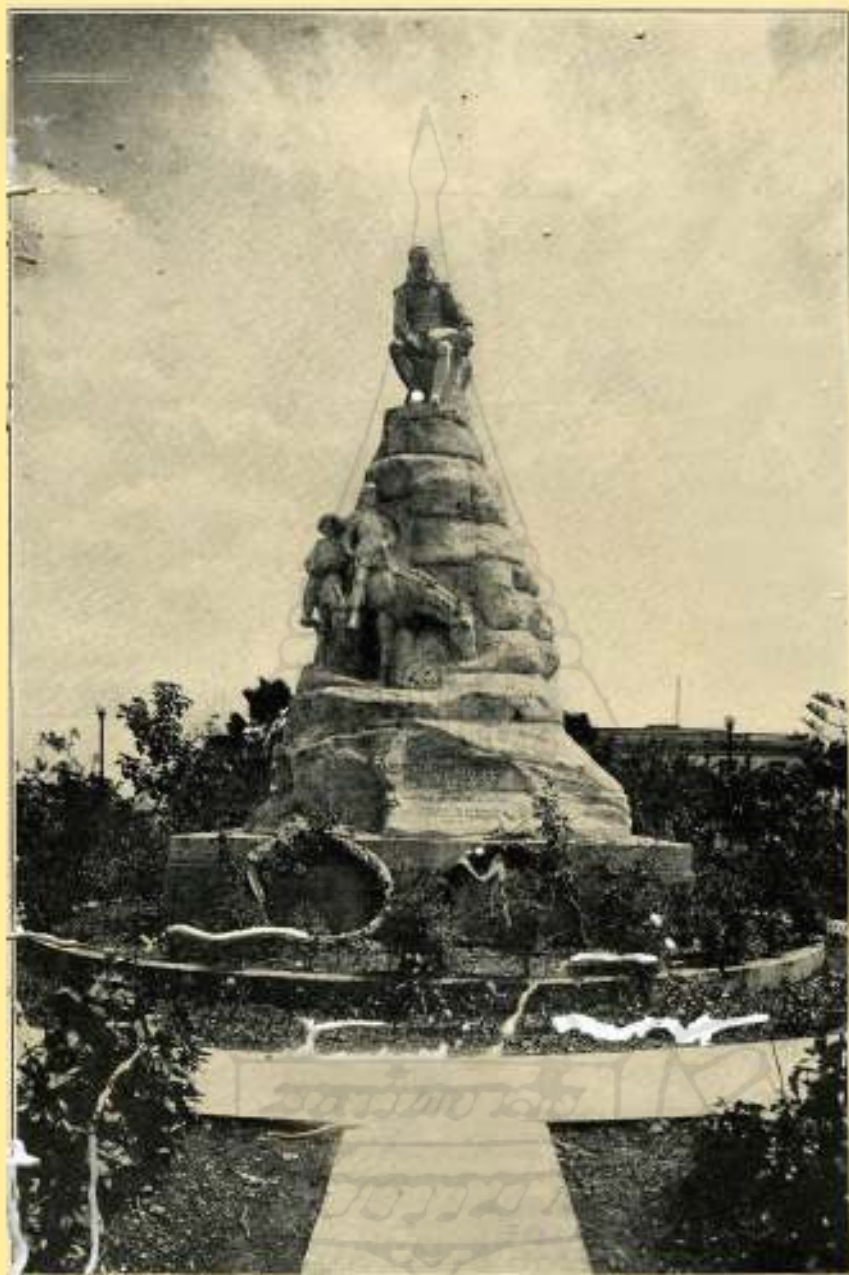
foreigners who flocked to Panama at this time many were Spaniards, the overflow from the immigration to the neighboring Spanish-American republics.

The more the workmen crowded in, the more frightful the mortality. Today the statistics of the losses seem fantastic. Yellow fever and other tropical diseases battered on this human mountain. The cut made in the spinal column of the isthmus could be filled in again, so it has been said, with the bodies of those who perished during the first attempts made to hew a way through that great mountain wall. Culebra Cut acquired a ghastly fame that travelled round the world.

Finally the work begun in 1882 by the French Company was paralyzed by bankruptcy and attendant scandal. In 1904 the United States took up the task of opening the canal, and bought up at bargain rates the materials assembled there by its predecessor. Powerful dredges dating from the French period of the works are still to be seen at Culebra Cut.

Apparently the last thing the Americans were thinking about when they took over the job was opening up the canal. The pressing problem, from their point of view, was to discover the means of making the conditions of work safe for the workmen. This meant transforming the entire region. As they had done in Cuba, the Americans set about destroying the mosquitoes that are the carriers of yellow fever. Then they took up the tremendous task—and this was the most important thing they did—of purifying the water supply, so that their workmen need no longer drink the poisonous contents of streams and ponds as they had been forced to do before. It was only after "wasting time" in these expensive preparations that the United States Government took up the task of building the canal, bringing it to a successful termination in a comparatively short period and without any conspicuous loss of life. It took two years of preparation and eight of actual work to accomplish this achievement of world-wide import. In the first days of August, 1914, this roadway, destined to change the world's courses of travel, was opened to commerce. But the event passed almost unnoticed in those feverish days of the outbreak of the World War. And yet, as the centuries roll on, it will undoubtedly figure as the greater event in the history of human progress. Many of the





MONUMENT TO CERVANTES AT PANAMA. ERECTED BY THE SPANISH COLONY OF PANAMA THROUGH POPULAR SUBSCRIPTION (See p. 28)

war's most famous battles will be forgotten, as so many battles of the past have been forgotten. But the relations of man to man, and his political affiliations, will in the future revolve around this canal, which has cut the New World into halves, and is now drawing into its two mouths the ships of all the nations of the earth.

The financial success of this enterprise, now actually only four years old—the canal was officially inaugurated on the 12th of July, 1920—is the clearest evidence of its importance. The work was financed, not by a commercial company, but by the government at Washington. As the canal is of obvious political importance to the United States, and of great value as a part of its defences, the government undertook the carrying through of the work without the slightest thought of making the enterprise pay for itself. It did not seem probable that the canal would be a source of income. At any rate that is not what interested the United States Government. The only thing that did interest it was the prospect of being able, no matter what the cost, to transfer the United States fleet quickly from ocean to ocean, and bring the states of the Atlantic seaboard, where the life of the nation is concentrated, into closer communication with the still adolescent Pacific states.

But for the rich everything prospers. The government at Washington poured approximately three hundred and fifty million dollars into the financing of the canal, and then was amazed to see ships stream in from all quarters of the globe, the moment the canal was opened, to ask permission to pass through. Today, after the first four years of its existence, the canal brings in two million dollars monthly or twenty-four million a year—a very respectable interest rate on capital invested purely for defense purposes and with no expectation of financial returns!

Every ship passing through the canal pays for the privilege at the rate of one dollar per ton. It cost the *Franconia* \$20,000 to carry us from the Atlantic to the Pacific, brief though the journey was. With incidentals the total fee came to about \$25,000.

In spite of this huge toll fee the number of ships that crowd in asking for passage is constantly increasing. Our friends the North Americans, for all they keep one eye on the future and



its needs, and plan everything on a large scale, fell short in their calculations this time. Panama Canal is already beginning to appear far too small and "insignificant," to use an Americanism for a nation as fond of moving about freely as the United States. Steam-plows, derricks, and all manner of engines will soon be at work again, widening the locks and the narrow passages of the canal; and instead of moving forward and back in double row, the ships will pass through the canal four abreast and the traffic of this great ocean avenue will be exactly double what it is at present.

Along the flanks of the mountain where the cuts have been made, the red compact earth, that looks so like rock fallen asleep in the midst of its solidification, is still slipping and sliding. The frequent landslides are bound to continue until the slopes have acquired the stability that can come only with time. Meanwhile battalions of Negro laborers, under the direction of white overseers and engineers, keep constant watch from locomotives and dredges, ready to rush instantly to clear away the rock and soil that have come sliding down from the mountainside.

We are in the middle of Gatún Lake when word is sent us that our passage through the rest of the canal will have to be postponed a few hours. There has been a fresh landslide at Culebra Cut and a ship of the *Franconia's* deep draught cannot safely go on until the dredges have scooped out the bottom of the narrow passage.

We sit down to lunch, more or less resigned to waiting a long time on the lake, which seems pleasant enough so long as the ship continues to move forward, stirring the air to a slight breeze. But when it stops, and the sultry calm of the tropics descends upon us, now that sheet of lake water burns under our steel flanks!

The novelty of a sea voyage through forests and mountains draws me to the deck where some of the more energetic passengers are watching the saw-toothed alligator backs pierce the smooth surface of the water. Some planes from the United States garrisons pass us, flying so low that we can see the observers waving in reply to our cheers. . . .

An hour later the *Franconia* is on her way again. Everything is in order once more. Slowly we make our way between



two files of enormous dredges which have just cleaned out the channel for us with the quickness of long practice.

We sail on between banks densely covered with vegetation and so high that often they tower above our top deck. Along the shores run troops of Negresses, some monstrously obese and, flat-nosed, a lustful fire in their eyes. On their heads they balance large baskets piled high with fresh coconuts and buntios or bananas; and as the ship slowly moves forward they keep up with it at a grotesque run, throwing their fruit to us and shouting out, in their negroid English, "Money! . . . Money!"

On the bank below, also thickly overgrown with the lurid green of the tropics, swarms of little pickaninnies are pattering along a path that their bare feet have worn by the water's edge. Their large heads, to which the crinkly wool fits close, like a neat cap, bob comically up and down, and their enormous bellies protrude in front of them like little balloons.

Creatures of ebony and marble, good-natured, noisy and active, their white teeth constantly flashing from the dusky red of their lips. . . . Above the thick foliage of the woods the tops of their cone-shaped huts are just visible. These are not Panama Negroes. Their fathers are for the most part Jamaica Negroes imported to work on the canal.

In its exuberant verdure Panama baffles description. Through the infinite shades of green that cover it, the soil, now red, now grayish like an elephant's hide or the trunk of a fig-tree, shows only in a slender outline like the threads of a net.

In the midst of these luminous greens, that include every hue from the gold green of water to the hard luminous green of stone, enormous red flowers spread their petals, flaming stars in the mysterious deeps of this primeval verdure.

Born of the swamps of the forest, thousands of butterflies fluttered in clouds about the ship, alighting like fly swarms on every object and, in the artless languor of their innocence, letting themselves be caught by the handful.

Parrots flutter and spring through the foliage, and monkeys shake the boughs of the out-spreading trees, as with invisible leaps they follow the slow progress of the ship through their jungle.

Panama, home of eternal verdure!



## CHAPTER V

### THE COASTS OF THE PACIFIC

THE serene and luminous splendor of the tropical Pacific envelops us for a week after we leave Panama. The whole world is reduced to three colors here, no others exist but blue, green, and white. The sky is perpetually blue, the sea of a clear golden green, transparent to a great depth, and the crests of the waves, as they rise in upward streaming cascades over the reefs, are of the same spotless whiteness as the clouds, a whiteness that seems to belong to the early days of our planet before animal life had contaminated creation's first experiments. The shores of the mainland, and the isles bearing the graceful Spanish names bestowed by the discoverers, add no new color to the scene. They, like the sea, are green but darker in tone, as dark as metallic oxide.

Lianas and groves entirely conceal the soil, holding it in the close embrace of their twisting limbs, and above this dense growth, airy clumps of palm and cocoanut outline their blade-like leaves against the sky in war-like pantomime. Along the shores, promontories and islands are festooned with double rows of banana trees.

Elbows on the rail, we spend hours gazing at the free and exuberant nature before us. It is only at rare intervals that, with the help of a pair of binoculars, we succeed in making out something that looks like an ant standing on its hind legs—a human being—the sight of whom awakens in us all the desire to be the Crusoes of these lovely isles where winter is unknown, where the trees are loaded with fruits of a sweet and nourishing pulp and where crystal waters leap in silvery threads down the steep hillsides! . . .

But I who know the waste spaces of America, and the difficulties of the colonist, am not quite so ready to yield to the blandishments of the scene as the wealthy ladies around me who suddenly feel a yearning for the primitive stirring in them,



THE SERENE AND LUMINOUS SILENCE OF THE TROPICS

ENVELOPS US FOR A WHILE. AFTER WE LEAVE PANAMA.

See p. 379

100,000,000



and a fanciful desire to stop in this enchanting scene and experience the delights of gentle savagery. I have already found out by bitter experience that nature is a mother to man only when he has conquered her and made her his slave. Wherever on the earth's surface she has not been trodden under foot by human beings in great multitudes and yearly beaten and torn by thousand upon thousand of arms and implements, she becomes a step-mother to us human beings, and ignores or deliberately crushes us under her cruel exuberance, treating those of us who have progressed a little in the road of civilization far worse than the less complex human beings who are able to cope with her violence.

I turn away from these luxuriant islands to continue gazing at the sea, for me the most fascinating spectacle of all, with its countless creatures seething in its depths. It is easy enough to convince oneself by personal observation when one is in the Pacific that the life of the sea is far more intense and prolific than that of the land. There where life began, in great Ocean, there life is still most plentiful. Those of us who little by little accustomed ourselves to the fluid sea of air and are now treading the irregular surface of the earth's crust, so recently cooled, are less numerous than those who remained behind forever in our original element.

In the seas of Europe, where marine life has been impoverished by centuries of exploitation, and where the bottom is growing constantly more barren, it is not so easy to think of the sea as the origin of animal life. But in the Pacific of the tropics, near the Central American coast, the ocean seems fairly to seethe and spark like some great battery as vast swarms of fish flee before the ship's prow, some of them leaping into the air, and showing their white bellies as they somersault back to the water, plumping into it sideways with ludicrous grace. All afternoon great herds of tortoises have been crossing this green and golden plain, moving their grotesque flippers with the tranquillity that accompanies complete ignorance of peril—enormous creatures, their great shells just even with the surface, so many floating islands on which the wandering sea-birds rest a moment, unaware of the rough lizard-like flippers and stupid reptile heads moving underneath.



Attracted by the novelty of these marks, some of the officers who are on deck take a few shots at them with revolvers and rifles. At which numerous lady passengers belonging to societies for the protection of animals at once protest energetically, and the rifle practise ceases.

As I watch the useless butchery it seems evident that here is another result of the World War. Every man serving on the *Franconia*, from the first officer to the last cabin boy, has a military decoration of some kind, won in the late world struggle. Everyone of these men fought either on a warship or for five years was daily and hourly exposed to destruction while serving in the Merchant Marine. The waiter who attends to my wants at table was twice shipwrecked during the war, two boats having been sunk under him by German torpedoes. His comrades in the dining room have similar tales to tell. We are just emerging from a period in history when men hunted men, just as in pre-historic times, and killing was a daily and natural business. And now, in this tranquil, luminous, gentle ocean, no sooner does a great procession of enormous and peaceable sea creatures begin to file past the ship than the first idea to occur to these male onlookers is to reach out a hand for their firearms, all for the vain satisfaction of showing off their skill as marksmen!

As soon as the shooting stops, the tortoises resume their slow journey, plodding along on both sides of the ship with the tenacity of ants reforming their line of march after the catastrophe of a careless step in their midst. The sea reflects the sky like a smooth azure mirror, the faint clouds above showing in its depths like blemishes on the glass.

To shorten our course we leave the coast and for a few days see nothing but sea and sky. But we know that we are sailing past Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala, more than a hundred miles away.

At last, one morning, mountains begin to rise out of the sea before us—the coast of Mexico. The land glides out to meet us. With but a few eclipses, it will lie there on our starboard side until we reach California. The lofty range seems all the loftier because its flanks, barren of timber, descend directly to the sea. In front of us two small mountains,



rounded and graceful as a woman's breasts, rise gently from the shore. They are, actually, of a no mean height, but they look young and fragile compared with the *Cordillera* that rises behind them and shuts off a large part of the sky.

On one of these mountains there is a spindly telegraph pole. On the summit of the other an old castle. This is Acapulco.

To some who read these lines the name may mean simply a humble Mexican port—if it means anything. But to many it will have no significance—which is not so remarkable, for many Spaniards of culture would not be able to connect any fact with the name. Yet for three centuries Acapulco was one of the most important ports of the Spanish colonies, and the *Nao de Acapulco*, as it was called, was the most regular, most extensive, and most daring maritime service in the world.

No sooner had Magellan found the straits that bear his name and reached the Pacific than he went in search of the famous archipelago, called the Isles of Spice, or *Maluco* by the geographers of the time—now the Moluccas, a Dutch possession. In those days it was the Portuguese who laid claim to the Spice Islands, but Charles the Fifth sent Magellan with the cosmographer Rui Falero to convince the Portuguese that these islands were rightfully his, because the old line of demarcation drawn by the Pope across the globe giving the new discoveries in the Orient to the Portuguese and those in the Occident to the Spanish had, with Portuguese consent, been moved three hundred leagues farther westward.

But Magellan died fighting the chieftain of one of the islands later called the Philippines, his captains were nearly all assassinated at a banquet treacherously offered by another chieftain, and the last boat of the fleet had to return to Spain, circling the globe to do it, for the first time in human history!—but without taking possession of Maluco.

Years later Legazpi organized and carried out the conquest of the Philippines, and although Spain was never mistress of the Spice Islands, she was able to establish a market near them at Manila. It was then that the port of Acapulco reached an inter-oceanic importance. The Spanish ships could not carry on regular trade with the Philippines if they had to go all the way around Africa and Asia. Neither was it practical for com-



mercial purposes to go through the straits that bore Magellan's name. It took two years to make the trip, and even then it was the sort of voyaging that could only be undertaken by an explorer or a pirate. It was imperative to shorten the route by establishing a colony somewhere on the course, and the government at Madrid made use of the means of communication it already had with Mexico, and extended this route across the Pacific.

The first galleons to start off for Manila sailed from Peru because the prevailing winds were favorable to ships sailing from Callao on this course. But, on the other hand, the voyage home was difficult because the winds then were contrary. The route was changed, the galleons transferred to the vice-kingdom of Mexico, and henceforth sailed from the port of Acapulco, as the atmospheric currents of the Northern Hemisphere made this a more favorable port for both the journey out and the journey back.

The government and the merchants of the Spanish capital sent their official and business correspondence to Mexico, and the mail was transported across country from east to west—not always easy with bandits and Indian braves about—to the port of Acapulco on the Pacific. There lay the famous "Nao," usually one of the largest ships of its time, a galleon of 1500 tons—as extraordinary in that age as a dreadnought or a great transatlantic liner in our own.

The vice-roy of Mexico had two or three ships of this sort under his command. One galleon left yearly for the Philippines, and sometimes two, according to the requirements of trade.

But little by little they ceased carrying home spices from the ocean colony, for the Portuguese and Spanish were getting these commodities in Europe through the Oriental route. The riches of China were supplying the Manila market. More than twenty thousand Chinese merchants, metal-workers, and silk weavers, were living in the Philippine city. The famous "Nao," arriving from Acapulco, took on a cargo of India muslins, and prints, embroidered shawls, silver ornaments, and—more than anything else—silk stockings, fifty thousand pairs, on every voyage. In the rich cities of Spanish America silk stock-



ings were the most sought-after of luxuries, for the ladies of Mexico and Lima, who shaded their faces with the artfully draped mantilla in order to enhance the mystery of their dark eyes, and wore their full skirts as short as a ballet dancer's, were accustomed to change their stockings three times a day!

On the return from Manila to Acapulco, the "Nao" was so heavily laden that a good many of its cannon were dismounted and stowed away in the hold in order to give more deck-space. It carried fewer soldiers and artillerymen on the return voyage. Besides there was little chance that pirates would be tempted to attack a ship laden with articles which took up so much room in proportion to their value, and the like of which could more easily be stolen in any Asiatic port.

It was on the voyage from Acapulco to Manila that the famous galleon offered too tempting a bait to the sea-robbers. It had only a small cargo on this journey; but all its cannon were mounted, it carried a numerous crew, and in addition the government always availed itself of this opportunity to send troops out to the Manila garrison. The "Nao from Acapulco" on these occasions carried six hundred fighting men, and more at times. Its passengers were merchants and traders who had business relations with firms in Manila, and took the long voyage in order to discuss new arrangements with the heads of these companies.

The galleon went about its business just like a man-of-war. When it reached the archipelagoes it was informed by signals from watch stations on the islands of Guan and Batan as to whether the way was clear or whether some English freebooter lurked in adjoining waters. In the latter case the captain, who was also the general in command, cast anchor in some safe bay of the Philippine archipelago, sent his cargo ashore with some of his soldiers and cannon, and in this defensive position waited until he received word that it was safe to continue on his course.

This light cargo, that occupied so small a part of the hold, consisted of two or three million dollars sent by the American traders to the Philippines in payment of the goods they had purchased. These millions were in the form of chestfuls of silver coins, all shining and newly minted in the Mexican *Casa*



*de Moneda*. No wonder that some of the pirates spent two whole years wandering about the Pacific in the hope of surprising the "Nao"! One of them actually succeeded, becoming a millionaire in a few hours' time.

This navigation enterprise lasted until the eighteenth century. The "Nao" left Manila in the month of July and reached Acapulco in December or January. This was the longest lap of the voyage. In March it started out again for Manila, arriving there by the middle of June. So that the voyage outward and home took about a year all told.

It was this commerce with the Philippines, carried on through the Spanish colonies in America that for three centuries filled the palaces of Mexico and Lima with precious silks, gold and silver plates and ornaments, and porcelains.

Many of the Spanish captains, on the return from the Philippines, remained in Mexico and Peru—half-way, that is—as though they had all of a sudden felt unable to leave the New World and return to the ceremonious and regular routine of life in their native peninsula. In the city of Puebla, Mexico, the memory still survives in church annals, of "*China poblana*," a Chinese princess who came from Manila in the "Nao de Acapulco," was converted to the Catholic faith and died in the odor of sanctity.

With the half-breed's affection for tales of witchcraft, miracles, and magic, the illiterate populace of Mexico, whenever it wanted to make up some improbable story, always placed the scene of action in the remote city of Manila whence the Acapulco galleons had once brought such marvellous embroideries and silken stuffs.

One morning in the last years of the seventeenth century the people of the City of Mexico, assembling to hear early mass, saw a soldier bearing a musket, pacing up and down the Plaza Mayor, as though on sentinel duty. This was something foreign to the city's customs, and the governors summoned the soldier to appear before them. When he was brought into their presence, he looked about him in utter astonishment, as though just waking out of sound sleep, and not knowing where he was. Then he calmly told his questioners that he belonged to the garrison at Manila and that the previous night his sergeant had



assigned him to sentinel duty on the walls of that city, so that he didn't at all understand how it was he found himself within the space of a few hours in Mexico!

Of course what had happened was that those few hours had sufficed for the witches and demons of the air to whisk the poor fellow from one end of the Pacific to the other, across a good half of the globe.

But when the people of the town, perfectly convinced of the truth of this strange incident, tried to see the sentinel from Manila, they failed of their object. The Inquisition had seized the impostor and packed him off to the Philippines with the first detachment of soldiers it sent out so that he might continue his sentinel duty on the walls of Manila, and perhaps, repeat his amazing flight across the Pacific!

But now the mountains of Acapulco are fading from view, the land is retreating, and before us lies the wide gulf of California, which, when it was first discovered by the pilots of Hernan Cortes, was called the Vermilion Sea—sometimes the *mar de Cortes*. So wide is the mouth of the gulf that it will take us a whole day to reach the other end, that is to say, the apex of the peninsula known as Lower California.

When at last we see land once more we are a great distance from shore, for this is what sailors call a "dirty coast" because of its shallows and reefs.

Bays, capes, and islands all around us still bear the names given them by the mariner Sebastian Vizcaino who discovered them and founded Monterey near San Francisco. Most of the names, however, are those of saints, for so numerous were the new lands being discovered at the time that the Spanish explorers had to resort to the calendar, and named the places they found in honor of the saint on whose day they made each new discovery. Of course, they sometimes gave names descriptive of the place, of its vegetation, or their own state of mind. Far away on the horizon, I make out two mountainous islands, blurred by the distance, but still bearing the names Vizcaino found for them—the "Isle of Cedars," and "Bonita."

And now we are leaving the tropical zone; the sea is once more of a leaden blue, and the horizon densely gray. At noon the sun succeeds in breaking through the clouds, streaming out



through a triangular opening, and looking strangely artificial in this gray world. The waves break against our flanks tossing off clouds of liquid dust that gleams with rainbow tints in the brief moments when the sun shines through it.

In spite of its majestic stability, the *Franconia* is dancing like a cork on top of the livid water. In the distance we make out other ships that disappear suddenly as though swallowed by the waves, springing up into view again with the leap of a frightened animal, the whole length of their bows pointing up from the water and showing their red-tinted bellies.

A storm is coming. Way off there in front of us lies the city of Los Angeles, surrounded by its orange groves and Moorish villas, its palatial hotels, and tunnels of shining porcelain tiles that carry the streets up into the hills. As we toss up and down like a disjointed puppet rudely shaken by gigantic waves, I see the famous city in my mind's eye, at the height of its winter animation now for it is the first of December. Just so, from the midst of a Mediterranean tempest off the *Côte d'Azur* I might gaze out across the heaping waves toward the spot where Monte Carlo, or Nice, unseen, was carrying on all the gay activities of its winter season. . . .

And now as we emerge from the bay of Los Angeles the sea grows quieter. A promontory with a small town perched on a hill appears in the distance. It is Point Arguello, the first part of the United States that we have seen in the Pacific; and it bears a Spanish name.

The antennae of a huge wireless station, and a pyramid-like scaffolding reminiscent of the Eiffel Tower stand outlined against the sky above the promontory, with various buildings grouped around them, very different structures from the long low buildings only one story high that we left behind us eight days ago on the Central American and Mexican coast.

Here the buildings are not horizontal but boldly perpendicular, numerous storeys high, with roofs of flaming red tiles, and white walls; a happy union of American daring and the fresh youthful grace of California. We are in the midst of another civilization, of a wholly different attitude towards life. . . .



## CHAPTER VI

### THE SECRET OF THE BLUE-FACED SPHINX

FOR the traveller who does not know Asia, the most unique feature of San Francisco is its famous "Chinatown." Before the earthquake in 1906 the Chinese quarter of this "capital of the American Pacific Coast" was an unknown region of mystery, one of the favorite haunts—in imagination at least—of the writers of lurid melodrama and hair-raising romances. The earthquake revealed that the Chinese quarter was a far more elaborate underground city than had been imagined even, that it consisted in fact of two cities burrowed out one under the other and connected by an intricate network of passage-ways leading out laterally as well as up and down—a fantastic antheap, in short, designed to foil the most astute police supervision. As a matter of fact, however, its intricacies were due, not to the desire to carry on unmolested the most elaborate and horrible crimes, but simply in order to conceal the opium-joints and gaming-houses required by the celestials of the old régime for the satisfaction of their two dominant passions.

Today, Chinatown has been built up again, but it has lost its mystery. The graceful lines of its façades have been preserved, fortunately, and the Oriental splendor of its bazaars are as numerous and as richly stocked as any to be found in Peking.

But nowadays the Chinese inhabitants of San Francisco dress like their American neighbors, as the new régime in China does not require its citizens to wear the traditional clothes or the queue. The women of Chinatown still wear the Chinese costume, however, the simple jacket and trousers being too practical and convenient, I suppose, to be lightly given up. Only the oldest of these women, I noticed, had the disfigured and diminutive feet that I was to see many other examples of in China. But on gala days, when the ladies of Chinatown go out with their yellow-skinned, almond-eyed escorts, they all wear hats and fur coats, and a great many of them sport large shell-

rimmed spectacles, doubtless because this gives them a certain resemblance to many of the lady professors of the United States.

A large number of the young Chinese who were born and brought up in San Francisco's Chinatown are generals and persons of political importance today in the Republic of China. It was in this American-Chinese city that they learned to know the democratic institutions which they later crossed the Pacific to implant in their own land. Had it not been for San Francisco's Chinatown, the old Chinese Empire, the most absolute and the most faithful to tradition of any to be found in the world, would never have been able at one bound to become a republic.

And now any evening you may see nervous-looking young Chinese, in American clothes, with a fountain pen in their breast pockets and a button decoration on their lapels, their hair as long and brilliantly pomaded as that of the typical male exponent of the dance, going to teach their yellow-skinned fellow-countrymen after work hours.

I saw one of these meetings taking place one night in the middle of the street. With that winning charm that is so irresistible in the young of the yellow and black races, three plump and smiling small Chinese were carrying banners, representing the United States, the State of California, and the Republic of China respectively, while a well-dressed Chinese mounted on a soapbox was addressing a hundred or so of his compatriots, toil-stained laborers from the wharves and factories, who were dressed just like their American confrères, but who doubtless had cut off their queues only a short time before.

After I had grown weary of the eloquent gestures and unintelligible words of the orator, I inquired of one of his listeners the subject of the address.

"He's proving to us that we Chinese are superior to the Japanese. Japan is an empire where there's no freedom, and we have a republic now in China."

It isn't for nothing the Orientals go to school to the white races!

In spite of the progressive and revolutionary tendencies of Chinatown, the shops selling the necessaries of life to the Chinese population are of a singularly squalid and unprepossessing ap-



pearance, reminding the visitor of the odd tastes the Celestials were reputed to cultivate when he was a child. In the shops where food is sold one may find dried and smoked birds, and other similar "edibles," stowed away in boxes covered with dust and fly specks. One comes away from these places reflecting that only an olfactory and gustatory system the exact opposite of our own could prepare one to appreciate these delicacies.

Drug-stores abound in Chinatown. They are the clubs of the neighborhood, and all of them provide sitting places for their patrons, who chat and smoke while the apothecary, with enormous spectacles on his slanting eyes, like some alchemist of old in his laboratory, reads or ponders the secrets of his profession. These Chinese drug-stores may be recognized from the outside by the dried snakes displayed in the windows. Grated and reduced to powder, snakes are, it appears, in great demand as ingredients of Chinese pharmaceutical preparations.

While the members of the "club" are chatting and smoking their long, narrow-bowled pipes, the apothecary's apprentices are busy chopping up green and white chicory, an article for which there is also great demand, apparently, for towards night-fall the clerks in all the apothecary shops of Chinatown begin industriously preparing supplies of this commodity to be ready for their customers the following morning. This particular herb sells at a high price as it is imported from China direct, for that is the only place in the world where it can be found growing on the mounds of the graveyards. As these plants derive their sap from the rotting mould of the "ancestors" they possess marvellous curative powers in the treatment of tuberculosis!

\* I am content, however, simply to learn about these miraculous drugs, I do not venture to smile at them for I know that it is only three centuries since nothing was considered a more efficacious remedy in Europe for a harquebus or cannon-shot wound than a roast rat applied as a poultice. We, too, once fervently believed in the curative powers of snakes. The Emperor Charles the Fifth sent to the Americas for a "bezoar," a stone found in the skulls of certain large reptiles, and possessing extraordinary virtues in the treatment of poisonings and various maladies.



Even today in many countries of Europe there are witches and quacks of one kind and another who secretly brew their remedies out of still more loathsome substances. So let us leave the Chinese apothecaries to pursue their calling in peace. Their odd prescriptions merely indicate that in China medical science stopped short at the place our own had reached but a few centuries ago. . . .

And now we are leaving the American continent behind us as we sail into the greatest of all the oceans. For two weeks we shall be traversing this watery waste with no stop other than the one at Hawaii.

Already the first night out the ship begins to move about uneasily, with a kind of suppressed anxiety it had given no signs of until then. This is a different ship, noisily alive, writhing and twisting like some great animal under the continuous impulsion of the waves. It pants, it moans, it cries aloud. The wind whistles through shrouds and masts and roars down the great craters of ventilators and smokestacks. Inanimate objects seem suddenly to have become the habitat of restless spirits. My cabin, silent until now, is suddenly invaded by four impish sprites, who lodge in each of its white corners, and take a monstrous delight in rapping on the wood and metal work, making it squeak and rattle with a malicious persistence that rasps the nerves and makes sleep impossible.

Next day this ship of ours—that had once seemed as large, as solid, and as stable as a cathedral—is still swaying and staggering. The sea, without in the slightest losing its serenity, continues to pound and cudgel it. Wide, smooth waves pile up under our flank, roll onward under our huge hulk, lift us high in the air and pass on, opening a blue abyss which leaves our great ship's belly exposed a moment before the succeeding roller comes to bury it in countless tons of heavy water.

The Pacific wave this, that moves about in this immensity with no perceptible goal, a wave that has no precise destination and traverses the planet from pole to pole without a single fleck of foam to mark it, without noise, and without encountering any obstacle, for the Pacific archipelagoes, forgotten in their soli-



tude, are like grains of dust swept together by a whirl of wind, or like stars scattered across the sky.

The blind energy, and ferocious silence, the dumb unconsciousness of natural forces—all these are in the waves of the Pacific. They roll along beside us unaware of our existence. They know nothing of man. The undulations of the salt Mediterranean are entirely different, as are the currents of the Nile and the Ganges, which rocked the cradle of our first civilizations and gave them the suck of their breasts. This Pacific wave is a wave that has survived from the early days of our planet, before man was born. And even now, in our modern times, it has seen only small aggregations of human beings, primitive races, camping on islands prickly with volcanoes, and still in the first stages of infancy.

The waters of the great ocean, of a bluish and metallic gray until now, begin to grow lighter in color until they are green with the emerald brilliance of tropical seas. The movement of the waves has diminished. There are hours when the Pacific looks like a vast plain with no other undulations in its surface than the slight markings inevitable in such an immensity. And yet the ship is still heaving in the most extraordinary fashion, tossed and shaken by hidden forces.

In these long days of monotonous sailing, the ocean has only two spectacles to offer, the rising and the setting of the sun. One afternoon we all rush to the bow to see land—a sight totally unexpected in that latitude. No land should be in sight for we are still far from Hawaii. But our eyes seem bent on belying the truth. Another of the sunset's prodigious illusions. . . .

Straight before us, at the very farthest reach of the horizon, rises an island, of a brilliant red, as if made transparent by some inner fire. And in this burning land we see a city, of high gray buildings edged with molten gold—a sort of apocalyptic New York. Stretching above it, as though about to envelop it, a great cloud, alight with the reflected glow of the city, like a fiery dragon. And then, with the almost instantaneous rapidity of the tropics, the island and its phantasmal city vanish, breaking up into tangled strands of cloud which the horizon swallows up. The sea, before giving itself up to the night, turns a dark rose



color, seemingly a reflection of the vast coral stores hidden in its depths. And in this immense purple plain, darkening moment by moment, the propellers leave a green and white wake, a furrow of molten emerald and foam.

Days pass, and not a sign of ship or land. Apparently we are straying without any purpose through this ocean waste, as though human life had come to an end on our planet, as though we were the only survivors of some catastrophic deluge.

We spend hours gazing at the map that reveals the vast spaces of the ocean in which it seems we shall wander forever. Around the enormous stew-pan of the Pacific runs a circle of volcanoes, the chimneys that pour out the heat of the earth's inner fires—along the coasts of both Americas, from Tierra del Fuego to Alaska; in the Japanese archipelago, on the coast of China and the archipelagoes of the Pacific.

The earth stirs and trembles frequently along the edges of this great body of water. Other earthquakes, greater perhaps than any we have known, shake and destroy the ocean bed, their havoc hidden from our eyes under miles of ocean depth. The isles that rise above these lonely plains of ocean are cones of fire, perpetually boiling over, or craters that have been slumbering since before man discovered them. But at any moment they may begin vomiting their hidden fires, since centuries count less than seconds in the life of our planet.

This at least seems evident—that the Pacific Ocean is contained in a depression on the earth's surface by no means uniform and solidly scooped out, but irregular and itself partially liquid; in short, the Pacific Ocean bed is like a mosaic of cold volcanic ashes set in a dense globe of the fiery substance that forms the nucleus of our globe. It was perhaps the shrinking and breaking of this crust, as it subsided and formed the ocean bowl, which strained the strata soldering the ocean frame to the encircling coast; and now great masses of water flowing into these cracks and seeping through to the central fires cause accumulations of steam, which, as they explode from time to time, occasion the earthquakes so frequent along these shores.

But who can know the mysteries of this ocean, who can guess the secret of this blue-faced sphinx, that rests its claws on one pole and the other? Who will ever divine the history of those



peoples once inhabiting the lands that today lie sunk under ocean depths, and who will ever measure the inverted heights of those mountains that, growing downward, formed as they collapsed, the funnels and in-growing peaks of the ocean bottom?

Here in this level liquid plain where one may sail on, week after week, without sight of anything but water, and where the few scattered fragments of land are the summits of volcanoes rising many thousand meters above the ocean bottom, there existed in earlier times, if not continents, at least great island chains that served as bridges to the migratory peoples of Asia. That, we cannot doubt.

The lost Atlantis has really far more basis in fact on the Pacific than in the Atlantic Ocean. The nations of Europe give no evidence of ethnic resemblance to the aborigines of the Americas. Never, apparently, did the tribes of the so-called "New World" mingle with our tribes of pre-historic times. But the resemblance between many of the American aborigines and certain Asiatic peoples is astonishing.

When one has travelled through Asia and America it is difficult to understand how the question of the origin of the American Indians can have occasioned such prolonged discussion. The traveller is convinced at a glance that the majority of the races indigenous to America came originally from Asia.

In China, in Japan, in the Malay archipelago, I have found the same smile, the same instinctive gestures, the same expression of the eyes as I had seen in Chile, in Mexico, and in those parts of the Argentine where white immigration has not diluted the native characters.

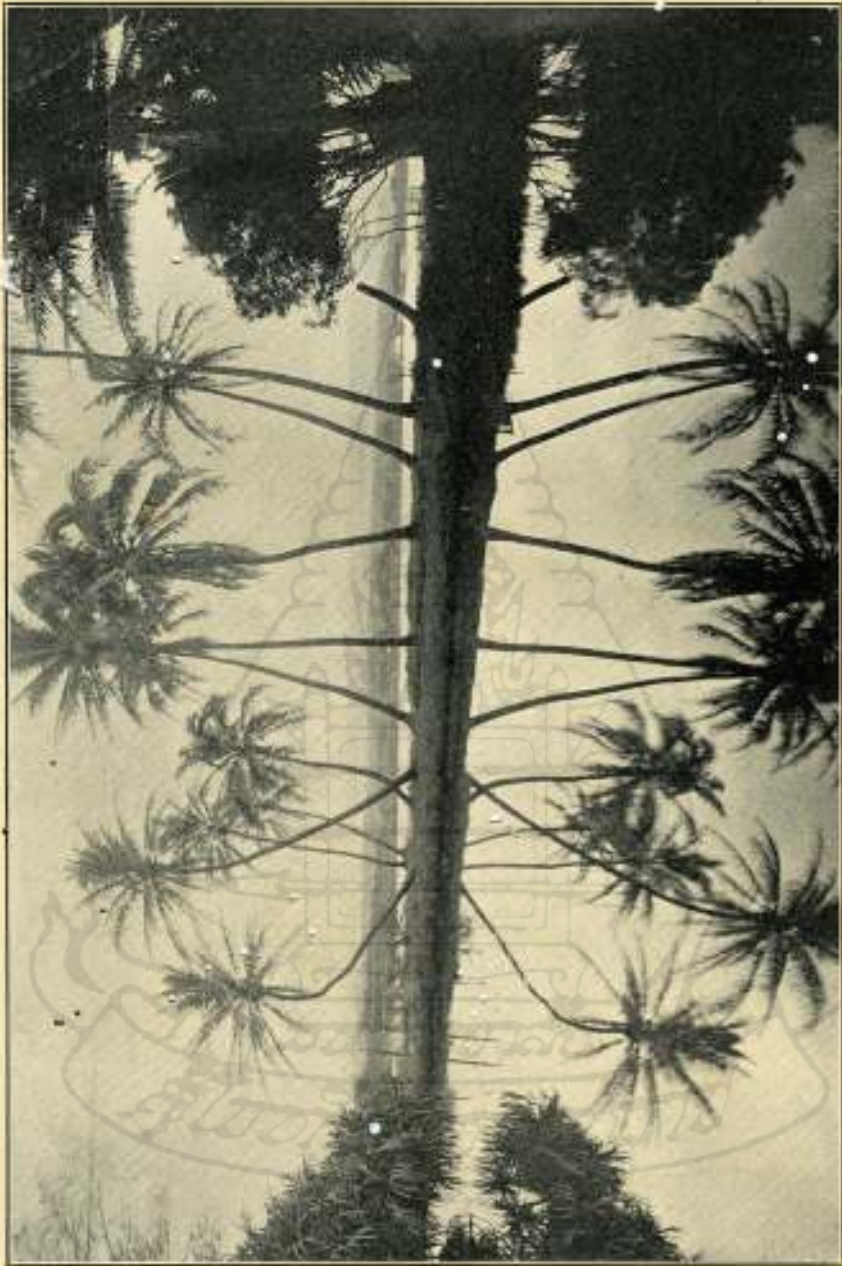
One type alone of American Indian—he is to be found particularly in North America—the type marked by a singularly aquiline nose, long equine face, and high cheek-bones, I have never found elsewhere in the world, and he is perhaps the real American aboriginal. But the other American peoples, with their slanting eyes and copper-colored skin, and that strange smile that so well deserves the adjective "mysterious" are the remote descendants of Asiatics who migrated from Asia. How, we do not know, but unquestionably it must have been across the Pacific.

It is not for nothing that the first Spanish *conquistadores*,

with the sure instinct of ignorance, which often makes short cuts to the goal otherwise reached only by a long and difficult road, as soon as they laid eyes on the aborigines of certain regions of America began calling them "*el chino*" or "*la china*" as the case might be. And "*chino*" or "*china*" they are called to this day. . . .







NO WONDER THESE ISLES OF LOVE, RISING OUT OF THE MID-PACIFIC, SEEMED AN EDEN OF PEACE AND PLEASURE TO THOSE WHO  
CAME UPON THEM. (See p. 99)

## CHAPTER VII

### THE ISLES OF LOVE .

If you examine the map of the Pacific, your eye will probably be caught by a network of black lines running through the upper end of it—something like the spokes of a wheel or the threads of a spider web. These are possible courses of navigation and the center toward which they converge is the Hawaiian archipelago.

The lower part of the chart is strewn with black dots, islands, as lavishly scattered over the ocean spaces as stars in the sky. Above, the blue waste of ocean is uniform, absolutely uninterrupted. For thousands of miles there is no break in the sea's immensity but the one made by the few black dots that represent the Hawaiian archipelago. More than two thousand miles separate it from the coast of America, and more than three thousand from Japan. To reach Australia and New Zealand—the most important regions lying to southward—one must sail five thousand miles, cross the tropics and the equator, and dip far down on the other face of the globe.

These lonely isles require a brief period of enforced rest on the part of all ships sailing from the coasts of America, Asia or Australia, and ships from all these regions of the earth meet in the harbor of Honolulu, the principal port of Hawaii. All of these islands, with their various dependencies, are nothing more than the summits of volcanic mountains thrown up from the ocean depths below. Thanks to the chemical elements of the soil and the tropical climate, these mountain peaks, resting on a pedestal extending some twenty-four thousand feet into the sea, are extremely fertile.

Undeniably beautiful, they always leave a deep impression on their visitors, an impression heightened perhaps by the fact that the traveller comes upon them after monotonous days of sailing through the unbroken expanse of the Pacific. Hardened old sea-dogs always keep a tender memory of this lovely resting-



place, and even now, when the archipelago can be reached in a week by up-to-date ships offering every comfort to their passengers, the islands never fail to be welcomed with enthusiasm. What must they have meant to travellers who reached them only after long weeks and months of voyaging on sailing vessels! No wonder these isles, rising out of the mid-Pacific, seemed an Eden of peace and pleasure to those who came upon them first!

Honolulu, on the island of Oahu, is the usual port of call, and the only part of this Polynesian archipelago that travellers see during their stay. Instead of stopping at Honolulu, however, we make for the island of Hawaii, the largest of the group, and yet the least frequented by ordinary travel. It contains the highest craters of this volcanic region, as well as Kilauea, the seething lake of fire, the most remarkable natural phenomenon of the entire globe.

The re-discovery of the archipelago is due to Captain Cook's explorations in the eighteenth century. The British, who were only a century or more late in making their discoveries—the Spanish and Portuguese had already explored the entire circumference of the planet—lost no time in exaggerating the undeniable importance of Captain Cook's voyages, and began to talk of his "discoveries" as though they had been the first of their kind in Oceania.

The famous Captain was, however, much more honest than many of his compatriots as to this point, and in the accounts he left of his travels he several times mentions the Spanish explorers who anticipated the discovery of a number of the Pacific archipelagoes by more than a century and a half. He even mentions finding in the possession of some of the natives a few old swords that had belonged to Spanish sailors, members of an earlier expedition.

As a matter of fact it was the forerunners of this illustrious Englishman who gave many of the islands and straits of Oceania the names they still bear. Though the English writers of history have not yet discovered the fact, Alvaro de Mendaña, Quirós, Torres, and others of the Spanish and Portuguese mariners left this living record of their earlier presence on the islands of the South Pacific.

The same is true of the Hawaiian Archipelago. Its discovery



is invariably attributed to Captain Cook. A few authors, more scrupulous, on this point, go so far as to allude vaguely to some ship-wrecked Spaniards who reached Hawaii long before the British explorers. But they add nothing to this fragment of information.

I must confess that when I landed at Hawaii I knew no more about the matter than these authors appear to, and that I was amazed to discover in the traditions and museums of the islands numerous records of the early arrival of the Spaniards in these regions. The present inhabitants of the archipelago, in spite of their being of British or American descent, like to push the history of their adopted home as far back into the past as possible. And a few archeological discoveries have made it possible for them to reconstruct something of the history of the islands prior to Captain Cook's arrival in 1778.

It was two centuries before that date, according to a tradition handed down from generation to generation, that the first white men set foot on Hawaiian shores. They were of Spanish blood, and came with Hernan Cortes, who had been dispossessed of the governorship of Mexico by his sovereign Carlos V, and was exploring the Pacific in the hope of finding a new continent. Under his direction the first ships ever built on the American shores of the Pacific were constructed, a large part of his fortune going into these preparations for future discoveries.

Of the three ships he sent out in search of the famous Isles of Spice, two were sunk by the storms of the Pacific. One of the Spanish captains and his sister were able, with some of the ship-wrecked crew, to reach the Hawaiian Islands, where they were hospitably welcomed by the inhabitants.

Feeling certain that their friends and relatives would never look for them in these distant and indeed unknown regions of the earth, the shipwrecked Spaniards tried to adapt themselves to their new surroundings. They married natives and became powerful chiefs. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, during the rule of the Emperor Kamehamea I—the "Napoleon of Oceania"—some of the chiefs who supported him in his conquests based their claims to the highest rank of nobility on their descent from the Spanish captain or his sister who had been cast up on Hawaiian shores centuries before.



Hawaiian tradition makes no further mention of the arrival of Spaniards in the islands. Twenty years ago, when the foundations of a building in the outskirts of Honolulu were dug up, a curious and significant statue was found. Minutely elaborated in detail, and slightly grotesque in quality, like many of the images of Polynesian divinities, it was obviously the work of a native sculptor. This valuable find was at once acquired by the German consul at Hawaii and is now to be seen in a Berlin museum.

There is, however, a plaster copy in the Bishop museum at Honolulu. Though I was in complete ignorance of its source and significance, it at once aroused my attention, and indeed my amazement. For here among the numerous Hawaiian divinities, all flat-nosed and heavy-jawed, and closely resembling in grotesqueness of outline the famous images of Easter Island, was a statuette representing a man wearing his hair in ringlets, with a mustache, goatee, and a fluted ruff. The piece is coarse and primitive, naturally, and the features exaggerated, but it seems oddly like the reflection, in some sort of deforming mirror, of one of the *hidalgos* painted by el Greco or Velasquez.

The museum catalogue confirmed my observation, by describing the statuette as "Captain of a Spanish ship; the work of a native artist."

Tradition affirms that the captain represented by the artist is the very one who was ship-wrecked on the Hawaiian shores. This seems highly improbable however, as it would be difficult to keep the flutings in one's ruff while one swam a mile or so to shore, to say nothing of taking along the rest of the regulation equipment of the Spanish gentleman, including the heavy cape. Besides, the original of the carved figure wears his hair in a style far more suggestive of the seventeenth century than of the time of Cortes.

The gentleman thus portrayed was doubtless one of the numerous captains of galleons who were forced to stop at the Hawaiian archipelago on their way to the Philippines from Acapulco, or vice versa. For the prevailing winds, on an outward course from Manila, would tend to blow the navigators farther to northward than they intended to go. By sailing north of west from Hawaii it would be difficult not to strike Japan,



and we know that the governor of the Philippines, don Rodrigo de Vivero, as he was returning home to Spain, was blown out of his course by a tempest and tossed up on the coast of Japan. He was the second European mariner to reach these islands. The first to do so was the Portuguese, Mendez Pinto.

Certainly it does not seem probable that Acapulco's galleons could have sailed yearly to Manila without stopping at the Hawaiian Islands when it suited their convenience. Juan Gaetano, a Spanish navigator, is known to have been in several of these islands in 1555. In the following century an English pirate, after overtaking and robbing one of Acapulco's galleons, carried off to London with him a chart he had found in the captain's cabin. On this chart the Hawaiian Islands are indicated as being very near the route Spanish vessels would normally follow voyaging to the Philippines. There is a slight error in the latitude assigned to them but they all bear the names Captain Gaetano had given them on his first expedition.

In that age of wars and pirates it was customary for the mariners who had made discoveries to keep them secret, so that their respective countries could profit by them. That, I suspect, is why the Spaniards were for two centuries silent on the subject of Hawaii, preferring to reserve the archipelago as a refuge, conveniently situated on the route to the Philippines, even though a little off the course.

Spain's colonial empire was at the time, we must remember, so extensive that a few island clusters, lost in the immensities of the Pacific, could be of little interest to her. She already owned most of America, and the Philippines. Neither did the other maritime powers of the epoch, in spite of their burning desire to acquire colonies, take the trouble to establish a claim to the various archipelagoes, those far-flung islands as diminutive and scattered as fistfuls of sand. It was only towards the end of the first half of the nineteenth century that the civilized world began to be aware of the Pacific Islands; and the erroneous belief that they were discovered by Captain Cook, and that they had not been visited by other discoverers before him, gained a wide circulation.

In honor of the British minister, Lord Sandwich, Cook bestowed the name "Sandwich Islands" on the archipelago. The



natives, who were at the time divided into numerous hostile tribes, received him with veneration. He was, they believed, an emissary of their god Lono. This did not, however, prevent their killing him when he intervened in a quarrel between his sailors and the natives.

Before his demise, however, he had made the acquaintance of a young warrior named Kamehamea, who was just beginning his career as a chieftain. The youth was destined to become the national hero, and you may see his statue in one of the promenades of Honolulu. The remarkable series of military and civil enterprises this prince engaged upon between 1784 and 1819 strikingly parallel, in the miniature oceanic world, the heroic adventures that the generals of the French revolution, and Napoleon and his lieutenants, were engaged upon on the opposite side of the planet.

With a fleet of war canoes he swept on from island to island, conquering kinglets, and finally making of the Hawaiian archipelago an island empire. Convinced of the white man's superiority in so far as the arts of war are concerned, he endeavored to gain the support of Vancouver and others of the English who were exploring the Pacific, and bought cannon and an old war-ship from them. He enlarged and fortified Honolulu, which had become his capital, and when he died in 1819, he was contemplating nothing less than carrying his entire army across the Pacific and the equator, and conquering Tahiti and the other archipelagoes of the Southern Pacific.

His long reign was an amazing mixture of hastily acquired civilization and old customs that refused to disappear. While the personages of his court endeavored to wear the same clothes and use the same customs as Europeans, the priests and witch-doctors of the island continued the practise of human sacrifice. At the emperor's death, the chief dignitaries expressed their grief in accordance with ancient rites by pulling out their teeth and scarring their faces.

Kamehamea's widow, a sensual, energetic woman, who had caused the emperor much annoyance by her frequent infidelities, became regent, and promptly brought about a revolution in island customs, sadly modifying their unique and original char-



acter. Not only had Queen Kahumano in her earlier years extremely capricious in her amours—not in itself so extraordinary, in view of what I shall later explain—but in addition she invariably bestowed her affections on the kings and warriors who were her husband's particular enemies; and however fast the victorious Kamehamea killed them off, his royal spouse was equally prompt in finding others to take their place. Vancouver himself, during his stay at Hawaii, had to intervene amicably between the royal pair in order to restore passable relations between them.

Kahumano, however, was already an old woman when she came to the throne. Her passions were cooling, and, besides, the white men who were coming to the islands now were no longer sailors as in the past, but English and American missionaries, who vied with one another for the honor of converting the queen to Christianity.

Up to that time the Hawaiian Islands had been a land of perfect freedom between the sexes, just like Tahiti and other regions where our moral scruples are unknown. For every Hawaiian woman it was a matter of pride to make the list of her lovers as long as possible. The men of the islands sought as their brides beautiful creatures who would be praised and courted by the husbands' friends, for the intensities of admiration felt by the latter required no secrecy, nor did any sin attach to physical relations in this primitive life. Love, in the more special sense of the word, was free to run its course untrammelled, to an accompaniment of songs, dances, poems, and crowns of flowers. Public festivals ended up in general love-making, over which not the slightest veil was cast, just as though it were a rite in honor of Nature.

Kamehamea's widow, depressed by physical decay, and surrounded by missionaries, took a violent dislike to all that had endangered and beautified her youth, and issued one edict after another against adultery and related practices. First she punished the guilty by confiscating their goods and imprisoning them for one year; then she decreed that the culprits were to be whipped in the public square. In case they erred again they were ducked and only taken out of the water when they were



on the point of death. And if, after this, they should again be tempted of the flesh, they were to be decapitated "according to the law of God," to quote the edict.

The result of this draconian attempt to instill morality into the archipelago at any cost was an immediate falling off in population. The government had to import Chinese and Japanese labor so that the fields need no longer lie untilled. The Kanakas, for whom life meant wearing a necklace of flowers, and playing the guitar for an almost naked dancer swinging her hips to the rhythm of the *hula*—the Kanakas, being deprived of freedom and variety in love, preferred to die.

Along with the stern morals of the Christian world, other white innovations were making their way into the islands—alcohol, venereal diseases, money hunger, all of them accelerating the mortality. Today only a small part of the inhabitants of the archipelago are the descendants of the ancient Kanakas, the subjects of Kamehamea. The greater number of the present population comes from America and Asia. Together with the Chinese, Japanese, and North Americans, there are many Portuguese and a small number of Spaniards from South America, particularly in Hawaii, where sugar plantations abound.

The only thing left the Hawaiians from their Garden of Eden period is a love of flowers and music. At present, one might say, music is their principal export, and in all winter and summer resorts one is sure to find orchestras of nutmeg-colored musicians, in white trousers and shirt, with a necklace of red and yellow paper flowers hung over their chests, a symbol of the ancient flower necklaces that are used now only in celebration of great festivals.

Hawaiian music has made its way round the world, but it should really be heard in its native home, where it preserves its ancient and passionate melancholy, unspoiled by the requirements of the modern dance hall. Every Kanaka of any cultivation at all is a musician. Some of the island queens were famous for the romances they improvised, as were some of the ladies of their courts.

When Kamehamea II, emerging from the tutelage of his austere mother, came to the throne, he wanted to visit the world of the white people his father had so greatly admired. He



thereupon formed the bold project of going to London. This was in 1824, remember, when the voyage by sailing vessel, of course, and around the Horn, took at least a year to accomplish.

All Honolulu came down to the quays, weeping, terrified by the adventure the island monarchs were setting out on; but it scarcely recognized its king and queen in their travelling clothes for Kamehameha's son was attired in the uniform of a British hussar, and his spouse wore a red velvet dress with a very long train, and an enormous hat of the same material, a costume which caused her majesty to sweat profusely.

As everyone was overcome with grief at the royal departure, the queen asked for silence, and began to sing a ballad she had composed expressing her sorrow at leaving her beloved subjects, and her confidence that she would see them again. But neither one of the royal pair ever returned to their islands. Several months after their arrival in London they died of helpless melancholy bred of cloudy skies and fog. Little by little, gently and humbly, their life flowed away from them, as it might from a pair of tropical birds rudely transported to a land of snows and bitter cold.

And anyone who has looked upon the enchanting scenes of their native isles can imagine how the two exiles must have yearned for the home they had left.

From the prow of the *Franconia* I watch a sheer wall of rock rise and spread on the sea, filling the horizon with abruptly soaring pinnacles of rock, and jagged volcanic cliffs. This is the island of Hawaii rising before us, the godmother of the one-time "Sandwich" Islands.

The ocean is of a luminous blue on this soft tropical morning. Green patches show here and there on the island, the bright green of cultivated fields; but for the most part, in spite of the splendor of the morning, the land before us is wrapped in dusky silvered mists, the vapor of the great volcano Mauna Kea, pierced by the sun's rays.

The mountains, that from a distance seemed to be of the gray hue of lava, are turning green as we approach; and now we leave Mauna Kea with its dim winding-sheet to one side, and discover the island as it really is.

Its slopes are ancient cascades of lava petrified where they



fell, but the winding furrows of its ravines are filled with dense groves of trees. Between these rows of dark green stretch wide slopes of an emerald tint—the sugar-cane plantations. And at this season some of them are flecked with the rosy white of the sugar cane blossom.

We sail as near the shore as is prudent in the vicinity of a volcanic island where reefs and small islands are constantly being tossed up from the ocean depths and swallowed again, before they can be marked on the charts. In some places, the coast is perpendicular to a height of several hundred yards, at others it thrusts out into the water in a series of small promontories, now hump-backed, now saw-toothed. The snows from the mountains of the interior slide down to the coast as they melt, and pour into the sea like so many white foaming cables perpetually whirling. From a near view, these torrents must be of tremendous volume, the source of vast potential power that is entirely unused. There are so few people living on these islands, that in spite of their belonging to the United States—the world's greatest industrial power—no one as yet has ever thought of utilizing this energy.

At the very edge of the coast many of the rocks have been carved into caves and porticoes by the waves. The rock, black here as on the summits, can scarcely be seen. Farther in-shore the tropical climate has covered the sharp-edged lava with a vegetation eternally spring-like. From a distance it looks like soft green down, with here and there spots of delicate tan, and it is only when we discover that the diminutive insects we see moving about in these meadows are vehicles and horses that we become aware of the real nature of the supposed turf.

The mountain barrier opens out into triangular valleys level with the sea, where there are wooden houses among palm-groves. But, if we look with the naked eye, the buildings appear to be mere cobblestones, and the trees no more than bushes. A railway runs along the coast, passing over the deep cuts of the valleys and mountain torrents by means of viaducts and suspension bridges. A double line of gigantic breakers rolls in ceaselessly to shore, dashing here and there against walls that are not the handiwork of man but fragments of coral rock broken by the merciless battering of the waves. In endless repe-



A GROUP OF NATIVE HAWAIIAN GIRLS, DRESSED IN WHITE, PINK, AND BLUE, AND CARRYING WREATHS OF WOVEN RED AND YELLOW FLOWERS, CAME TO WELCOME THE TRAVELERS AS TRADITION REQUIRES



THE WHITE-CLAD, FLOWER-ADORNED MUSICIANS CAME TO PLAY "ALOHA" TO US, THE "WELCOME" OF THE ISLANDS (See P. 39)



tition the great combers rise, rush forward, lift their green mass until the sun shows through as through a wall of emerald, and then melt again into the sea in a swirling mass of foam.

As we advance, in search of the still invisible capital of Hilo, towns begin to appear along the coast, parks rather, for thick groves surround the houses, whose curving roofs make one think of Japan.

White vapor wreathes the island on every side. Above, the cones of the volcanoes are shrouded in steam, and below, a white exhalation is rising from the coast where the sea has gnawed its way into volcanic fissures. The thin, almost transparent mist, that is like breath on a frosty morning, is an unexpected ornament on the strange and beautiful scene. But the total effect of these spurts of steam girdling the island is disquieting and alarming and offers a harsh contrast to the soft gold-tinted velvety green that covers the sloping contours of the island up to the lava fields surrounding the high craters.

At last we round a cape and along the curving shores of a bay we descry house-roofs, shaded by cocoa-palms.

A small boat is approaching; a sound of singing, and of instruments accompanying the song, is wafted through the air toward us, a sound as clear, fragile, and innocent in this immensity of sky and ocean as the tunes of an old music box. Hawaii, the old Hawaii of flower necklaces, of love-songs, voluptuous dances, and poetic improvisations, is coming out to greet us.

Up the steps that have been lowered from our ship come the white-clad, flower-adorned musicians, moving with the measured gravity suitable to those who are about to perform a patriotic rite. They have come to play "Aloha" to us, the "welcome" of the islands, or the "farewell" as the case may be.

The music begins, and with it there is cast over us the sweet, dreamy spell that is to last all the time we are in the islands.

Even now as I write I feel the influence, the haunting power, of the Hawaiian music that these words have awakened in my memory. He who has heard the *Aloha* and the "Necklace of the Isles" will ever afterwards hum them in moments of day-dreaming, and feel ill at ease if they elude his memory.

This is not the energetic, violent music of many primitive

racés; neither is it the quavering monotonous lament of Oriental peoples. There is a delicacy of sentiment about it that one might almost describe as literary; it is the languorous, nostalgic music of a race gifted to a high degree in musical art. Extremely simple in notation, it yet avoids all monotony, and one desires to reach the end of it just so one can commence it all over again from the beginning.

Of all the composers of the civilized world, the only one who comes to mind as one listens to these love lyrics of old Hawaii is Franz Schubert.





## CHAPTER VIII

### HILO'S LAKE OF FIRE

As we sail into port late Sunday afternoon, all Hilo is at the dock to greet us. The arrival of a ship of the *Franconia's* tonnage is something of an event in Hawaii. The large trans-Pacific steamers make no stop except at Honolulu, which is only twelve hours away for them, but two or three days distant for the inhabitants of old Hawaii, who have to make the journey to the capital on small steamers which make numerous stops among the islands before reaching their destination.

In the port of Hilo the only ships at anchor are some five- and six-masted sailing vessels of deep draught such as can be found now only in the out-of-the-way places of the Atlantic or Pacific or their respective island colonies. These ships are here to take on a cargo of the sweet-smelling sandalwood that in the days of Kamehamea the First was one of the principal sources of wealth of the region, and the only article exported. Whenever that belligerent ruler needed money for his wars, he would order a slaughter of sandalwood trees, and at once great fleets of Chinese junks, the same in structure and cut of sail as those of the Middle Ages, would bear down on the islands to secure the precious wood.

The wharves and streets near the port are black with a seething multitude of people and automobiles. How amazingly easy it has proved in many of the island groups of the world for the natives to adopt the most elementary signs of progress! The ancient inhabitants of Hawaii, while they were not cannibals, did occasionally offer up human sacrifices; but of some others of the Pacific isles it can truthfully be said that the natives have jumped from roast missionary to Ford cars and fountain pens. In Hilo every merchant, employé, and shop-keeper has an automobile; and there are besides the numerous taxi and jitney drivers who own their cars and make of them a sort of public service.

Here, in this first stopping-place since we left the American continent, Oceania comes out to meet us with all its Malay races, and Asia with all the variety of its migratory peoples; but everyone here wears American clothes, light in weave and color—Kanakas, Chinese, Japanese, Americans, Europeans of one nationality and another.

The police push back the crowd so as to leave a free space along the pier the *Franconia* is approaching. Slowly the great ship stretches its length along the dock, shutting out everything with its high steel wall perforated with port-holes.

In the middle of the space that has been cleared, there is a group of girls, dressed in white, pink, and blue, and carrying hundreds of wreaths woven of red and yellow flowers. These are native Hawaiians who, to do honor to the customs of their country, have come to welcome the travellers by placing a wreath of flowers around the neck of each guest, as tradition requires.

They are slender, light of foot, moving freely and gracefully, these young Hawaiians, and it is easy to divine their agility and fine muscular development from the way they walk, and the attitudes they take when they stand at rest. Some have the bronze-tinted skin of the ancient Kanakas, others are lighter in color, almost fair because of the inter-marriage of their mothers and grandmothers with white men.

When I use the word "bronze" in speaking of the Hawaiians, as later, of the women of Java, I mean a luminous light bronze, clear and liquid, of almost the same tone as gold—not at all the dark green-tinted metallic hues that the word sometimes evokes. Some of these young women have a skin that glows with the brilliance of a metal surface recently polished, and their light clothing covers muscles as perfectly trained as those of the Greek girls who took part in the Olympic games.

They walk about the pier coquetting with the men as they pass by, and then come on board, casting gracefully bold glances at everything around them. Then they throw their necklaces over the heads of the travellers, treating them all, men and women, as though they were friends they had known all their lives.

In Hawaii, women have always been held superior to men,



perhaps because in the old days of natural and free sex relations, women were much sought after, and could choose, and give their orders. We have already mentioned how even the heroic Kamehamea was deceived and dominated all his life by his spouse. But every one of his subjects found himself in just the same situation, in this respect, as the emperor.

Today the women of Hawaii are as conventionally proper in their customs as the women of other countries, neither more nor less, but they still maintain over the men some of the superiority tradition accords them. Besides, the energizing education given to women in all countries where the United States establishes its schools, has tended to increase this original tendency.

Three of these young women, after consulting with the newspaper representatives on hand to meet the boat, come towards me and throw three flower necklaces over my shoulders, greeting the author of the *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* with exaggerated encomiums. Some of their companions, not venturing to come nearer, smile at me from afar.

"But surely all these young ladies have not read my novel?" I exclaim to one of the reporters. It seems, however, that public libraries abound in Hawaii and that what had struck me as the height of improbability is not so improbable after all. The two absorbing pre-occupations of the American are sanitation and education, and the first thing he does when he takes possession of a country is to wipe out contagious diseases and establish schools and libraries.

"You may be sure of one thing anyway," the young reporter assures me, "every girl on the island has seen the film of the *Four Horsemen!*"

The cinema is Hawaii's great diversion. It is only now and then that some theatrical company from the United States makes its way out there, or some theatrical troupe from Japan. (There are many Japanese scattered about in the archipelago.) Nightly the silent screen brings out to these islands lost in the immensity of the Pacific the same films that are shown in cities of Europe and America. The Hawaiian maidens copy the clothes and manners of the screen heroines, the Hawaiian youths likewise imitate the manners and appearance of the cinema heroes.

As night approaches we go to the city of Hilo to attend the



Hawaiian fête prepared in our honor, and celebrated in a long, narrow Japanese theater.

A fine warm rain is falling, the daily refreshment of tropical countries and their exuberant vegetation. The asphalt pavement shines like a black mirror, reflecting the street lamps with their globes of milky radiance, and the double row of palms that lines the avenue. From the soil rises the pungent smell of guano, the crude perfume of a fertile earth in which vegetable decay is constantly going on with great rapidity, under the combined influence of sun, rain, humus, and minute particles of lava, and ceaselessly engendering new lives and new deaths.

We arrive at the theater prepared to endure a dull evening as courteously as possible, and we come out, after a three-hour performance, both pleased and interested by what we have seen.

The real Hawaiian Hula dances cannot be given in public now as they used to be. The costume formerly consisted of a girdle of fibers that fluttered about the performer's belly and legs as she danced, a necklace of flowers on her naked breast, and a wreath on her hair . . . nothing more. Now, however, in the interests of Christian morality, the police authorities require a silk slip reaching from neck to ankle to be worn under the original Hula costume. But even with this unaesthetic addition, the dance is interesting.

The Hawaiian dancer moves her hips and the rest of her body with a voluptuous grace that is natural and distinguished, and very different from the contortions of the imitation odalisque attempting to give a *danse du ventre*. The Hula dancer emphasized the movement of her hips much as many of the tropical birds repeat the movement of their tails as they flutter from bough to bough. Her fiber skirts swing out around her as she whirls, suggesting the fan figures of certain bird dances, and the leaps she takes as she weaves in and out are strikingly reminiscent of the steps of the royal peacock. In the fluttering grace with which she balances on tiptoe, in the movements of her hips and torso, there is a distinctly erotic quality, but it is an eroticism of the open, reminiscent of the means nature herself has devised among plants, animals, and human beings, to incite them to the holy task of reproduction.

Several troupes of expert musicians appear on the stage in



the course of the evening but it is plain that they have travelled in many countries, adding a touch of Hawaiian amenity to the restaurants and cabarets of the world's great cities. Naïvely they intersperse their program with fox-trots and other modern dances, confident that we will enjoy these numbers. Alas! These are fat, shining, well-dressed musicians who have doubtless consumed a great deal of champagne in their wanderings about the world.

How much better was the music offered by the troupe which came to meet us at the boat, and which is now sitting in the orchestra pit, or what corresponds to it! These musicians are melancholy, over-sensitive, modest young men, who play their music without once coming out of the dream that envelops them. When there is no one on the stage they play, and play again, always coming back to their favorite song, "The Necklace of the Isles." The audience applauds, but the musicians remain silent, as though deaf, with no bow of acknowledgment. . . .

When they finish playing, they prop an elbow on their knees, and lean their heads on their hands, dreamily indifferent to their surroundings. One might take these young men as a symbol of old Hawaii, which insists on falling asleep to the sound of its melancholy music. Their silence is their only protest against the foreigners who transformed the life of the country, robbing it of its wholesome independence. Like the majority of their compatriots, these slim fine-featured young men all look as though they would rapidly succumb to tuberculosis.

Out of the old Hawaiian songs two operas have been composed, one of them celebrating the deeds of the youthful Kamehamea. . . . The nine islands of the archipelago, represented by nine dancers who perform the various Kanaka dances, pass in procession before the king, and cover him with flowers. The second bears the title "An Afternoon in Queen Liliuokalani's Garden." Poor Liliuokalani was the last queen of Hawaii. She lived many years after she had been dethroned, almost surviving to our own epoch.

When the last descendant of Kamehamea died in 1874 without leaving any heirs, the Hawaiian Islands elected as their king David Kalakaua, one of their greatest nobles. The new king went to the United States to study its institutions and



bring back new ideas to his country. But he died very young and his sister Liliuokalani was elected queen.

With the intrepidity natural to the Hawaiian woman, she rebelled against the dominating influence of the foreigners who had come to live in the islands. As a matter of fact the country was controlled by evangelical missionaries. Liliuokalani, partly out of natural inclination, and partly in order to strengthen the national spirit, encouraged the restoration of the old traditions and native festivals of the archipelago.

Queen Liliu wrote verse and composed songs. In her court were many women who loved poetry and the dance. Wherever she went a troupe of beautiful Hula dancers went with her. Queen Liliu's afternoons in her garden at Honolulu were one long series of dances, which of course served as a stimulus to numerous love episodes.

The missionaries thereupon broke into vociferous complaint about this revival of Hawaiian paganism, and, as they were the real masters of the country, they had no difficulty in dethroning the gentle Liliu, who moreover offered no resistance. For many years she lived in her palace in Honolulu, now the residence of the governor appointed by the president of the United States. Travellers of importance passing through Honolulu never failed to visit the queen who lived to the day of her death surrounded by her faithful court of dancers and poet-musicians. Rarely has a ruler been so loyally followed in misfortune as Queen Liliuokalani.

It is in Hilo especially that the memory of the old independence is cherished, and the queen who championed it has there become the object of a special devotion. Everyone in Hilo knows the melancholy song Liliu composed after losing her throne. The sad young musicians play it several times during the performance, and finally they stand up and begin the Hawaiian national hymn. At once the audience, composed almost entirely of Americans, rises to its feet out of respect for the anthem of a nation that no longer exists, and whose territory the United States has taken possession of for good and all.

As the musicians play, with their backs to the audience, they seem to be saying:

"We are weak, and daily we are growing weaker. We are



of a race that is doomed to disappear from the face of the earth; but so long as there is life left in us we cannot forget what we have been in the past."

The Americans look on with sympathy and interest.

The occupation of these islands was not an act of aggressive interference merely. After Liliuokalani was removed from the throne, the archipelago became a republic. But as the new rulers were all Americans, either by birth or education, they finally asked for annexation. For the islands could no longer maintain their independence. There was danger of occupation by another power. Yearly the number of Japanese in the archipelago increased enormously. Even now, with a restricted immigration, the Japanese population there is very large.

Today we are going to visit one of the most interesting things in Hawaii, the volcano of Kilauea, that boasts the strangest crater of all the volcanoes in the world, a lake of fire.

We leave behind us the plantations of sugar-cane, the forests of cocoa palms, and flowering vines, the villages of Japanese in American clothes, and climb for hours toward the temperate zone above us, and the snows of the mountain peaks. The roads are good, but innumerable zigzags are necessary to scale these heights. The vegetation is constantly changing as we rise above the heavy air of the coast, laden with the perfume of innumerable plantations, to the heights where a light fresh breeze is blowing.

We pass through the cool temperate region of the National Park, where the vegetation consists chiefly of ferns, enormous, gigantic growths, springing up on every side with the exuberance proper to the tropics; but this is a tropical region of high altitude, wind-blown, and constantly humid. As the sunlight filters through the interminable archways formed by the tender leaves of these monstrous ferns, it turns to the lambent green light of sea-depths. The pulverized lava soil beneath our feet has here the consistency of clay because of the hot-house humidity distilled by this vegetation.

And now, passing out from under these verdant tunnels, we come to an arid mesa, several miles wide, a lava field deposited by the overflow from the volcano—a sea of petrified black waves



with a shining metallic surface. Small placards placed at intervals indicated the date at which various layers, barely distinguishable, were deposited.

Lava everywhere; yet we cannot discover the volcano that is its source. Here there is no cone-shaped mountain vomiting flames, and we cannot divine the whereabouts of the crater in this lofty plateau. A road has been scooped out of the lava with picks, but the automobiles sway and struggle in the soft bed. At times the black crust breaks through and the wheels fall into cavities around which the lava, preserved from the air as it cooled, has kept the reddish rusty hue the substance had as it poured out of the crater.

At last we reach the mouth of Kilauea, an enormous gash nearly a mile long.

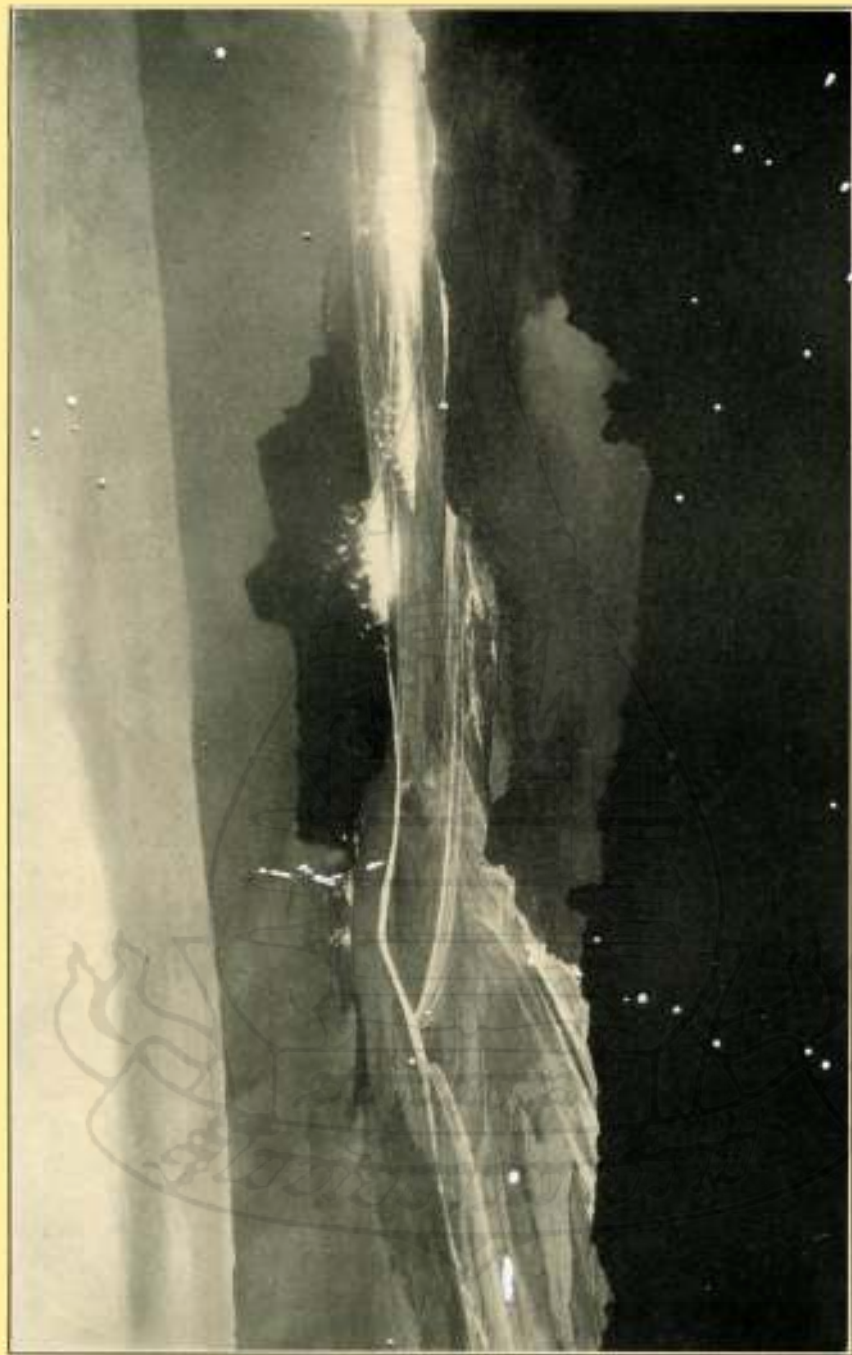
It is a lake buried in the rock, a sunken pool with perpendicular sides. There is no smoke nor smell of sulphur. Six yards below us a black mud-like substance is moving with the ceaseless wave-motion of the sea. Black—it is black only under perpendicular rays from the sun—and not even then unvaryingly so, for in the restless surface great holes appear, suddenly puffing out into bubbles that collapse in a spout of flame. Here and there the burning clay is streaked with bands of fire that glide across it like glittering purple eels. Now and then a bubble swells and tumefies until it bursts, throwing off its black skin made of liquefied volcanic ash, and revealing a red abscess below, which throbs a moment and then collapses.

At times the surface grows so restless it seems as though some grisly monster, lurking in these fiery depths, were kicking and struggling to rise out of the burning lake, splashing about and straining to lift his huge bulk out of the fiery liquid.

Only slight streaks of steam now and then veil this enormous trough, of the same kind that may be found anywhere in these islands. Along the shores the ground is burning a little, and the soles of one's shoes grow too hot if one remains long in the same place. If you lean for a moment on one of the rocks near the edge of the lake a deep, muffled, sullen trembling will shake you through the rock.

But everything is quiet around us just as though we were by a lakeside in a quiet garden. Only the heat rising from the





THE WHOLE SURFACE IS A SHEET OF BILLOWING FLAME. FIERY PYTHONS RAISE SHOWERS OF SPARKS AT EACH MOTION OF THEIR UNDULATING LENGTH. (See P. 67)

enormous cavity reminds us that the substance moving in its depths is not water but fire. It is hard to believe that this lake is a crater in which the level of the molten lava often rises to overflowing; and that in its moments of frenzy it hurls a column of steam and burning rock and mud three hundred yards in the air, and inundates an area of nearly forty miles with its scorching vomit. . . .

As complacently as a proprietor showing off the beauties of his estate, the guardian of Kilauea takes us round the lakeside. He is a wizened little fellow, his face so disfigured by the heat to which it has been exposed that it is hard to tell what race he belongs to. He might equally well be a white man or a Kanaka. For forty-two years he has been watching the volcano and he knows the course its thunderous rages take, and all the variety of its caprices, and the hypocritical gentleness of its long periods of inactivity. This mountain Nibelung is white-haired, his eyes seared and red, and his face so deeply furrowed that it seems to bear the scars of deep knife-cuts.

He watches zealously over us, telling us where it is safe to stand, for the banks of the crater are constantly changing. In some places the walls are sharply perpendicular, in others sloping because of recent landslides; and again they jut out in unstable equilibrium, gnawed underneath by the flames tunnelling their way outward from the lake. At any moment these weak spots may cave in, carrying along the unwary who do not know what they have underfoot.

The old man speaks with affection of the beauties of his volcano, the only active one in the world which allows itself to be viewed from so close, and which refrains from breathing out sulphurous fumes and asphyxiating gases.

"She's not so interesting in daytime," he observes. "The sunlight dims the flames. But you should see her at night!"

We determined to see Kilauea in all her splendor, and spend the afternoon in the gardens of "Volcano House" listening to Hawaiian songs, and watching the light streaks of vapor that rise from invisible fissures everywhere on this island, and play about the leafy fronds of the foliage. Strange that in this land of eternal springtime, where the trees are never stripped of their leaves, and all the most delicate beauties of nature flourish as



nowhere else in the world, the inner fires of our planet should have broken through to the sun! And equally strange to reflect that this earthly paradise might, in a few minutes of subterranean anger, disappear forever from the surface of the ocean, and live on in the memory of men only as a dream!

At midnight we go back across the lava fields. The salients of the black petrified waves glitter like streaks of quicksilver under the headlights of the automobiles as we make our way towards the lurid aurora borealis that guides us through the darkness. The automobile lights fade as we approach until they are no more luminous than circles of yellow paint. But we and everything else around us, on the other hand, are enveloped in a purple splendor as radiant as the full light of day!

For all the volcano has not changed since we left it, the surrounding darkness makes it seem more menacing. It is easy to imagine that this flaming lake is on the point of exploding, and sending great sheets of fire hurtling across the lava fields.

Now the whole surface is a sheet of billowing flame. A red glow shows through the blackish shores as through a veil, which tears here and there apart, letting fountains and domes, larger and more luminous than by daytime, push their way through. The fiery eels are now as large as pythons and raise showers of sparks at each motion of their undulous length.

A hellish heat rises from the lake. The walls of rock too seem to be on fire within, and the cluster of white clouds hanging motionless over the crater is as red as tufts of cotton soaking in blood. Above this vivid reflection, that shades out to rose-color on the edges, the dark blue depths of tropical night, punctured by innumerable stars; and a young moon, with a twinkling star in tow, gently sailing over the sea of the sky. . . .

Guided by an islander of Portuguese descent, I start off in search of the rock on which I had rested a moment that afternoon. Suddenly the gnome who mounts guard over the region appears waving us away. Neither the rock, nor that bit of the shore near it on which we had stood a few hours earlier exists any more. . . .

An hour passes with the rapidity of a few minutes as we yield to the hypnotic attraction of the flames. An enormous

effort is necessary to tear ourselves away from this absorbing contemplation. . . .

I drop in at "Volcano House" to say good-by to the tall, rugged young American who is the director of the National Park, and who spends his time riding through groves of gigantic Koa trees, humid forests, barren craters, and the smoking, spouting volcanoes that constitute his domain.

"By the way," he exclaims, after showing me his office, ornamented with pictures of Washington and Lincoln, maps, drawings of craters, statistics, specimens of tufa rockets, etc., "I have something rather unique I want you to see."

Near the stairs leading up to his door there is a deep cleft between two rocks, a sort of natural chimney running straight down into the ground.

"I plumbed it to a depth of over a hundred feet without reaching bottom. It's one of Kilauea's breathing holes. A lot of hot air used to pour out of here without doing anyone any good. But now look here!"

He pulled a rough wooden lever that raised a cover fitted over the cleft in the rock, and we returned to the office.

Moment by moment the temperature was rising, and it was soon sweating hot. The heat pouring out of the subterranean crevice was being carried under the house by a wooden conduit, and running out finally through a brick chimney in the roof.

"My invention, that," he said proudly. "It's not so pleasant now, but in winter-time, in the snow squalls and hurricanes that blow down off the mountains, it's fine to have this heating system!"

Awed, I gaze admiringly at this man who makes volcanoes heat his office, and who slumbers tranquilly every night on top of the gigantic furnace that is providing him with inextinguishable heat, free of charge!



## CHAPTER IX

### THE ENCHANTED ISLE

A RIPPLE of music runs over the turquoise surface of the sea. Before us is Oahu, by some called the Enchanted Isle, by others, *Islz Florida*.

The high white buildings of modern Honolulu lie in the background, and beyond them the suburbs of the garden city, with its highly colored vegetation, even more plentiful in flowers than in leaves.

Beyond the pineapple orchards, the volcanic mountain rises abruptly, its slopes covered with verdant growths. In the barren crags of the summits—and each mountain here is an extinct volcano—clouds are entangled, stopped short in their course across the sky. The lower part of the island is lighted by the golden afternoon sun, but a cluster of leaden clouds darkens the mountains. Through a curtain of mist that is sprinkling the mountain tops with a light rain, the sun's rays trace a wide rainbow that runs from one end of the island to the other, like a dome of iridescent glass placed over a precious object to protect it. . . .

As we near port, swarms of swimmers dive into the water and bob up again under the prow, making the onlooker uneasy lest one of them be cut in two by the great fender-beam. Other swimmers appear alongside, and shout to the travellers on deck, at the same time keeping up with the advancing liner, which, for all it is proceeding slowly, has yet considerable headway. Yet not a single one of these dolphins is left behind.

Many a port has flocks of swimmers who make a business of drawing money out of the pocket of the idle traveller by exhibiting their skill in diving, but they are usually children, more agile than speedy. The swimmers of Honolulu are nearly all men, Kanakas for the most part, with a few Japanese, athletes with ugly faces and magnificent bodies, their too-promi-

ment muscular development compensated by its beauty of line. As there are always ships coming into the harbor at Honolulu, these swimmers spend the entire day in the water, greeting new arrivals, speeding the departing, and in all cases urging the on-looker to empty his pockets of coin.

Nowhere else in the world have I heard voices like those of these amphibious barbarians. The first time I heard them I could not account for them. Where did these sounds come from? It seemed impossible that roars of such metallic vibration could possibly issue from the human chest. It was as if a great bell, abruptly ceasing its pealing and chiming, had suddenly begun to roar!

Outwardly Honolulu bears the marks of American influence—high buildings, an enormous post-office, worthy of handling the mail of three continents, straight wide avenues, large shops—in short, it might be an American city. But the capital resumes its Polynesian aspect in so far as habits and customs are concerned. In the shops, big and little, the clerks and salesmen, often the shop-owners, are Japanese, Chinese, Malay, or East Indian. The signs are all written in the languages of the East as well as in English.

But there is none of the confusion and noise of the Oriental bazaar here. The traffic is carefully regulated by the police. From a sort of pulpit shaded by a huge parasol, they wave their arms like the directors of an orchestra, stopping or accelerating the flow of vehicles. But under their uniforms, which resemble those of traffic police anywhere in the United States, they are all Kanakas, with faces like idols, and so obese it seems a miracle the buttons do not fly off their bulging coats!

Honolulu is a city of gardens, in fact, the garden here is the most important part of the house, one might say. Enormous windows everywhere, the rooms opening on three sides, with nothing but columns on the garden side, to support the roof. Everywhere flowers in profusion and of the most brilliant hues. Even the trees lining the avenues look like enormous bouquets.

In Europe, one of these small dwellings with its walls of twining roses and starry climatis, where even in the corners vines hang down from baskets, would seem a veritable paradise to the poet or artist possessing it, for it could only be a poet



or an artist who would be found living in such a place. But here most of these houses are inhabited by bank employés, factory foremen, or artisans, who, in any other land, would be forced to live in the detestable quarters in which people of meager salaries are wont to lodge.

Are they happy, I wonder, in their gardens of eternal bloom? But it is better not to ask. Even in Honolulu, probably, human beings are convinced their happiness is to be found only somewhere where they are not. . . .

Many of the most splendid creations of the deep are to be seen in the Honolulu aquarium, creatures drawn up from the unfathomed abysses of our planet, and never before seen by man. Nor has man ever before laid eyes on such colors as those developed by the plants and fishes of the abysmal depths of earth. Strange that the somber ocean spaces hidden from human sight should have bred the most exquisite colors in the world, miraculously delicate, eternally fresh, vivid with an inner light, like a painting that has not yet dried and darkened at contact with the air.

Here are fish striped like the zebra, or bushy maned like the lion. Some float about like green or golden plumes, some imitate the rugosities and immobility of stone, and some move their voluminous lace-like skirts as though they were dancers on a stage to which the sun never penetrates, but which is illumined by monsters with luminous tentacles glowing with phosphorescence. Some have the backward-thrusting head of a neighing horse curvetting through the water, like the chargers ridden by the Nereids in the pagan myths; and some, peculiar to the Pacific, make me feel frightened and humble both, for they have human faces—yes, literally! No need of imagination here. Like our own, the noses of these fish stand out from the rest of the head and they have chins like our own, but receding—the chins of degenerates. As they draw near the glass they look at us with an expression which seems to reflect the brutality of rudimentary consciousness. They are like creatures who will some day be men, but are for the moment immobilized in the form of fishes, and unable to continue their evolution; men with ferocious faces and cold cruel eyes, with selfish destructive instincts, who live only to pursue their prey, to kill, to eat, and



reproduce their kind. They remind us of those remote human ancestors of ours who passed through innumerable centuries before the dawn of history, hurling rocks and dealing blows to right and left with great tree-trunks in order to inaugurate the supremacy of the human kind over the rest of creation!

Watching these multicolored creatures of the deep as they swim about with the grace of their native element, one cannot help being somewhat sceptical for the moment concerning human superiority. Man has always been ready to assume that the universe was created for his pleasure, and the satisfaction of his needs. But these inhabitants of the Pacific, infinitely more numerous than we, are as unaware of our existence as we are of theirs; they hunt and fight, and procreate; but for them, man, with his vanities, his ambitions, his yearnings and torments, does not exist; and how small is the human scene—a few bubbles of solid matter risen from the sea—compared with the immensities of their watery world!

At Waikiki, most glorious of beaches, we watch the experts of the surf-board. From a distance they seem, like Jesus, to be walking on the water. Then they approach, riding their slender craft over the breakers, bearing down on us with the crashing speed of the great rollers. Standing erect, with extraordinary equilibrium, they look like statues—statues of flesh and blood—placed on a pedestal of foam; they run without moving their feet, they cut through the air impelled by the force of the huge wave that supports them, until that force is spent, and they tumble from their boards to the sand.

As I sit in the garden of the famous "Moana Hotel" watching the gay animation of the scene, ladies in the thinnest of bathing-attire venturing out into the water, assuring one another that the water is "very warm," young women, paddling *pirogas* through the breakers, the nearly-naked brown Kanaka bodies of their attendants contrasting with their own white flesh—as I watch the stir and color of the scene, a bewildering, intoxicating perfume begins to assail my nose, an aromatic odor, more subtle and penetrating than the flower scents pervading the air. It is, I learn, the delicate perfume of the sandalwood tree, the majestic *koa* yonder, that spreads its boughs over sev-



eral dozen little tables placed beneath it. The tree is, in fact, an agglomeration of trunks, like the sheafs of pilasters joined together to form the columns of a Gothic cathedral; and its leafy boughs reach out on the one hand to the windows of the hotel, some distance away, and on the other, to the shore of the ocean. . . .

Great animation at the hotel, singing, the plaintively sensual music of the ukalali, the arrival every few moments of distinguished guests, government dignitaries and officers in full dress, driving up to participate in the festivities planned for the evening. But I prefer to remain here in the garden, alone, watching the luminous phosphorescent waves rolling in from the black horizon, dashing themselves to pieces on the humid sand of the beach, and the twinkling lights that now dot the dark masses of the sandalwood tree; it is so pleasant to rest here for awhile in the tranquil fragrance of this giant growth. . . .

Suddenly a boy, nearly naked, squats down at my feet. His rather frail limbs are of a rosy nutmeg color. He greets me with a smile that brings a flash from the dark pupils of his eyes, and his brilliant teeth. Then he points to his hat, a striking contrast, both in size and ornamentation, to the poverty of the rest of his attire—nothing more than a simple breech-clout. It is easy to guess what he is proposing. For half a dollar he will, on the spot, make me a hat like his own.

Now this hat of his is a work of art worthy of all respect. It is woven of green palm, its meshes patterned into a succession of little shells that run from the top of the crown to the tip of the brim, and instead of a hat-band, a pattern of points with radiating lines encircles the bottom of the crown.

I accept the young Kanaka's proposal, and, still sitting at my feet, he begins at once weaving a green palm strand, singing a Hawaiian song between his teeth. Nothing breaks into the continuity of that one long strand. It serves for every link of the rapidly growing hat.

I watch the boy's skillful hands with delighted wonder. Here under the glow of electric lights, in an air laden with the sounds of banqueting and dance music that float through the open windows of the hotel, those swiftly moving fingers are



HEARING DOWN ON US WITH THE CRASHING SPEED OF THE GREAT ROLLERS THEY SILLI-STATUES OF FLESH AND BLOOD PLACED  
ON PEDESTALS OF FOAM (See p. 72)



renewing before my eyes the art evolved in the heart of primeval forests by our remote and savage ancestors. . . .

Ten minutes have elapsed, when the young artist smilingly holds out my hat in one hand, reaching out the other for the half-dollar agreed upon. With its memories of a phosphorescent ocean, a garden swimming in the dreamy fragrance exhaled by the sandalwood tree, and a smiling Kanaka boy, that hat has accompanied me round the world. . . .



## CHAPTER X

### MY FELLOW-TRAVELLERS

TEN days of uninterrupted and concentrated ship-life, following the equatorial current that flows from the coast of Japan to California, returning again to its source, and known in Japanese as *Kuro Sico*, or "Black River," because of the color of its waters.

Before setting our helm on Yokohama, we sail through green, luminous waters, crammed with sea-life. To northward, however, the sky is gray and misty. Behind that somber veil we sense the storm that is raging, pursuing the ships that are obliged to follow a fixed course, and cannot as we have done, turn southward to escape dirty weather.

Meanwhile the activities of my ship-mates multiply in a crescendo that makes the *Franconia* hum and vibrate from morning almost to morning again. All in vain Old Ocean offers us the alternating spectacle of sunrise and sunset. His most flaming effects are unnoticed. He cannot compete with the more varied diversions and occupations of the great liner. Concerts and balls follow one another in never-ending round. The orchestra seemingly never sleeps; illustrated lectures occur nearly every hour; the professors provided by the American Express to instruct the passengers, and give them all the information necessary to make the tour a success for even the most inexperienced traveller, are working feverishly to prepare us for Japan and Korea. We feel at times that we are back in school again. Every morning we receive instruction in the Chinese and Japanese words and phrases considered indispensable for the comfort of the tourist. Nearly every day under the auspices of the director of the tour himself, there is a *Forum*, a kind of meeting designed for the asking of questions, where the anxious traveller can lay bare his worries as to some prospective difficulty, and reassure himself as to the kind of under-



wear he will need in Tokio, memorize the names of stores where the tourist may safely buy his souvenirs, and learn what particular maladies he must guard against, and what particular pills he had better carry in his vest-pocket.

I am more and more impressed by the intensity with which Americans aspire to know everything, and with their extraordinary capacity for asking questions! Every morning the inhabitants of this floating city file through the saloon, absorb the bulletins of the lectures and meetings of the day, and proceed to join their respective groups, according to their tastes in sports, or the color of their religious preferences. The bridge tournaments are innumerable, and the wooden horse races on the top deck arouse as much enthusiasm in this simple people as a race of the world's most famous thorough-breds.

The Masons on board proceed to organize a "lodge" for the duration of the voyage, and at once set about making a collection for the men who are toiling in the entrails of the ship, feeding its fires.

Several of the travellers are ministers of the various Protestant persuasions, who are planning to visit missions in China and Japan. We have also a young Catholic priest, a tall, robust youth, who looks like a good-natured pugilist. He is on his way to Rome and Jerusalem and has evidently decided that the simplest way to get there is by going round the world.

A fervent, sincere young man, with no slightest trace of intolerance, this representative of American Catholicism, which, because of the great numbers of immigrants in its congregations, has become extremely democratic, not to say demagogic in the United States. I am extremely impressed also by the manner in which the chaste young boxer met the request of some of the ladies on board that he celebrate mass a little later in the day so that they could attend without the discomfort and annoyance of getting up so early. "So long as I stay on this ship, I am going to say mass for the sailors and stewards and they can attend only early in the morning before they begin their work. But come, ladies, you have nothing to do, why don't you get up early also? For it's certain I'm not going to leave the fellows who work without mass just to please you!"

There is on board the *Froconia* a still more surprising rep-



representative of the religious spirit in the United States. This is a young man of twenty-eight, nearly two yards high, with a fine head, full eyes, somewhat feminine in expression, and long, curly hair. His body, however, is deformed by an obesity not in accord with his years, a sagging belly, and flabby hips, yet in spite of this excess of adipose, he takes part frequently in violent sports, his curling hair shaking about his head, and the large jewelled cross he wears sliding about on his chest.

This young man is nothing less than the founder of a new religion—a fact which, however, fails to arouse the slightest wonder in his fellow travellers, for few are the years in which several new brands of religion are not sprung on the inhabitants of the United States; but these new sects for the most part disappear as easily as they come into existence, though a few survive, and some acquire a considerable influence.

No religious doctrine could possibly surprise an American, who is taught from early childhood to be tolerant of all forms of belief, even to the point of never making fun of them. The only thing the American cannot understand is the total absence of religious belief. Even the most grotesque seems to him easier to understand than the tolerant and smiling scepticism that prevails through so large a part of Europe.

This particular Messiah we have on board ship began his career as a student for the Catholic priesthood, but he abandoned this way of life in order to devote himself to the stupendous task of uniting all religions, by extracting the best from each—a kind of religious Esperanto, with Christianity as its basis, but including the doctrine of reincarnation, and several other tenets of the religions of the Orient. He confesses a special cult for Buddha and is now making a sort of pilgrimage to the chief representatives of Buddhism in Japan and China.

And when, one morning, he gives a lecture on Buddha and his teachings in the main saloon, the Protestant ministers and the Catholic priest are all present, and occupying front seats—a spectacle characteristic of American life, but very strange to Latin eyes.

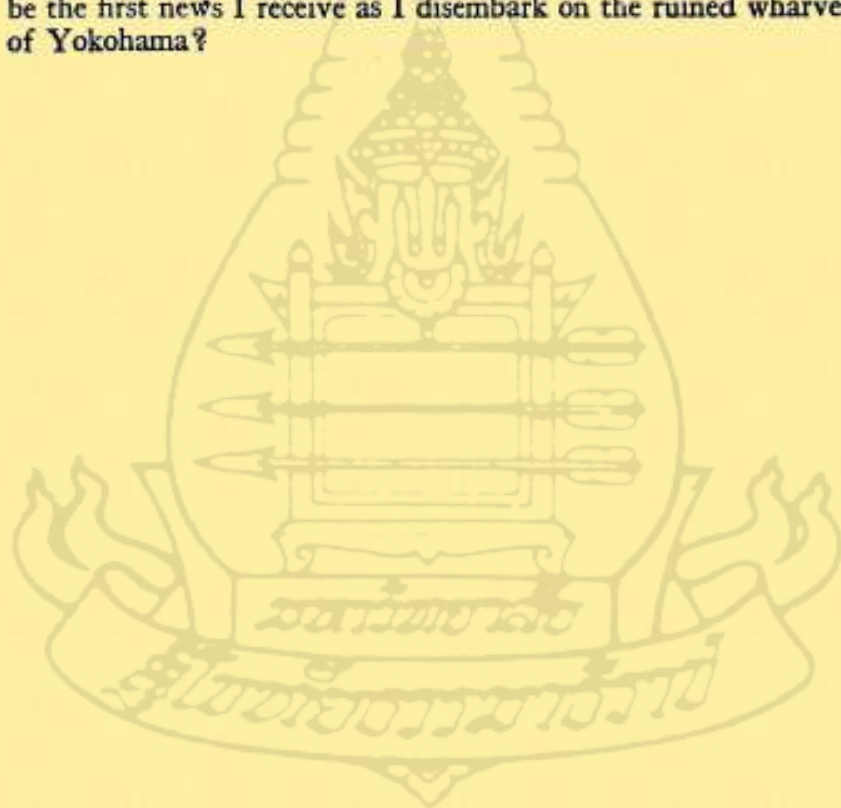
In vain I try to discover the limits of the Catholic priest's tolerance by offering my own criticism of some of the teachings advocated by the founder of this new sect.



"So long as he believes in God and morality," replies the muscular young priest, "what does the rest matter?"

As we approach the coast of Japan, the weather grows colder.

What will I find there, I wonder, and are my Japanese friends among those who perished in the frightful catastrophe of September first? No news of them has reached me since that terrible day, and it is now December. Anxiously I scan that part of the horizon where I believe the islands of Japan will loom up presently. Shall I find there the men who have painstakingly translated my books and won for me new friends among the peoples of the Orient, or will the confirmation of their death be the first news I receive as I disembark on the ruined wharves of Yokohama?



## CHAPTER XI

### THE REMAINS OF THE CATACLYSM

WHEN finally a ship appears on the horizon line, it is hailed as an extraordinary event. For ten days nothing has broken the monotony of the sea's expanse. But now this liner, which belongs to a regular service between Japan and Canada, is proof that humanity has not ceased to exist. The life of the human species, human history, and experience are coming out toward us to claim us once more.

In our childish eagerness to feel solid land underfoot, we are counting the hours that separate us from the craggy coast of Japan. The next day we are out on deck at dawn trying to catch the first glimpse of land. It is very cold, and the change in temperature has transformed the ocean, dark now with a mist of spray blown off the waves by the sharp wind. The sun pierces through at last, making a great arc just ahead of the bow—a rainbow reminiscent of the one we have seen in many specimens of Japanese art.

The waves are running out from land to meet us, and then rolling on toward the solitary spaces of the Pacific. Under the nearly perpendicular rays of the sun, the concave part of each wave shines like gold, while the convexities of their backs are of a dark and stormy green.

And suddenly the mists of the horizon are torn apart, the sky shows through, and at an enormous height above us we see a kind of rosy triangular cloud that catches and reflects the sun. A cry of wonder and admiration rises from every deck, for we all recognize great Fuji, the truncated volcano, that with its cloak of eternal snows, appears on so many Japanese prints and screens, and fans, the symbol of all that is beauty in Nippon.

I know of no other mountain in the world which gives one such a sense of overwhelming immensity as this volcano, rising as it does out of a land where everything has the grace of the



small, where the houses are like toys and where the scene appears to have been arranged as a setting for dolls. The most famous mountains of the Andes and Himalayas fail to be as impressive, for they are surrounded by lesser mountains that diminish the effect of height. Mount Fuji stands alone, the lines of its slopes clear-cut against the horizon, from the base up to the truncated cone of its summit, that was formerly pointed, but is now flat, the upper part of its crater having been blown off in some remote eruption. The mountains encircling it, and the adjacent coast, seem very low. The giant lives in proud isolation, in serene possession of the greater part of the horizon, enveloped in a mantle of snow that grows shorter or longer according to the season, as one undulating fold after another is added or taken away.

We sail into the wide bay of Tokyo, where Yokohama is situated, that former fishing village, transformed by the changes made necessary for ships of deep draught into one of the centers of the world's commerce. Outside the western end of this bay, that is like an inland sea, with the capital in the center of its curve, lies the old capital of the empire, now the ruined city of Kamakura, famous for its old temples hidden in the dense vegetation that has taken possession of the former avenues and parks. Behind Kamakura rises the huge mass of Fuji, climbing to a height of over twelve thousand feet above sea-level, and topped by its hood of linked snows, that the Japanese poets have so often likened to the petals of the lotus flower.

Now we can make out small islands, almost level with the water, like the rounded backs of tortoises, and fortified with circular batteries. We make our way slowly through fleets of smaller boats. And as we draw near, the picturesque and striking contradiction that is to startle us everywhere in this land comes out to meet us—that mixture of the past and the present, of a proud tradition that will not die, that still considers itself superior to all the foreign innovations that have come into the country, and a skillful eagerness in appropriating and imitating everything that this same despised foreigner has produced in the past or can produce in the future.

Most of the boats are sailing craft of archaic pattern, with high sterns and low prows like our ancient caravels. Some



even carry the high fan-shaped sails that fold up like blinds and that have become familiar to us in Japanese prints. Some of the crews wear dark kimonos, their hair piled high on their heads, woman-fashion. Others have hats like parasols, and short, sleeveless coats, their legs bare, and a simple handkerchief by way of breech-clout. But all these sea-farers of another age have gasoline engines on their fishing and pilot boats to supply power when the wind fails. In some little white steamers, of modern construction, the captain standing on the bridge in a fluttering kimono looks as though he had just escaped from a print illustrating an ancient pirate story.

We pass near the Yokohama arsenal where eight huge warships are belching out clouds of black smoke, and again we are startled at the anomaly of finding these formidable engines of war copied from those of the western nations in a land where men still wear clothes identical with those of past ages, and still use the customs and gestures of their remote ancestors.

The sky is blue now, and clear of clouds, the sun brilliant, but as we draw near the coast, the wind blowing from it like an icy breath grows more and more cutting.

Over the green-yellow waters of the bay float wide white bands that seem at first to be the foam of the waves, set, and crystallized. But they are flocks of gulls, feeding on invisible schools of fish. Fishing boats in great numbers pass close beside us, their shutter-like sails, sometimes black-striped, opening or closing, many of them laden with the spoils of this teeming sea.

Clusters of ships at anchor form islands of masts and smokestacks. We glide through winding avenues left open by this huddling together of motionless boats. In and around these watery suburbs ply smaller craft that cling to the sides of the larger ships to receive their cargoes or to supply water and coal.

As we leave behind us this floating city nodding over its anchorage, Yokohama from end to end is revealed to us, with nothing intervening to prevent us from measuring at a glance the immense desolation that has overtaken it.

I saw Rheims after it had been bombarded for months, and during the recent war I visited towns that had been systematically destroyed by the German invaders; but there is about this great city, shaken to its foundations by the tremors of the





GREAT FUJI, SYMBOL OF ALL THAT IS BEAUTY IN NIPPON

(See P. 82)

ground it is built on, and then consumed by flames, a horror that surpasses that of the destruction compassed by mere man. In spite of his knowledge of explosives and the power for evil science has placed in his hands, man cannot accomplish even in years the destruction that natural forces bring about in the course of a few minutes' time.

Interminable rows of store-houses and factories, once covered by a roof, but now nothing more than ruined enclosures. Against the sky-line not a single perpendicular, whether tower or two-storeyed house. Everything has been knocked down; nothing dares remain standing that is higher than human stature. A few walls seared by fire, nothing more than corrals, attract the attention of some of the tourists who knew Yokohama before the earthquake. These were the banks, the stores, the hotels, whose numerous storeys made them closely resemble the high buildings of New York.

The "Grand Hotel" of Yokohama was one of its finest buildings, but those who saw the catastrophe always use the same image to describe its destruction. It "crumbled away like the pyramids of ice-cream served at a banquet." As the earth's crust writhed under it, an invisible knife sliced it into pieces that tumbled in one on the other, each segment carrying along inside it aggregations of poor human insects howling with fear or mute with horror.

Those who knew Yokohama of old recall the brilliant animation of its great thoroughfares, embellished by commerce. The best shops of Japan were here, the richest displays of jewels and silks. As it was the port of destination of several large steamship lines, some districts of the city displayed the noisy picturesque animation that has been characteristic of famous ports since remote antiquity. Entire streets of theaters, cinemas, tea-houses, with their dancing and singing girls, other establishments where painted women in flowered kimonos stood in the door-ways, awaiting the moment of sexual servitude with all the tranquillity natural in a country which, until a few years ago, considered prostitution a useful industry, not at all dishonorable to the families of the women who practised it.

The Europeans and Americans established in Yokohama had filled its suburbs with graceful houses and gardens, and on the



surrounding hills rose numerous Buddhist and Shintoist temples, as serenely venerable as those of Kamakura. The Japanese themselves, always eager to surround themselves with flowers, had made miniature gardens in every fragment of soil within reach, and the girls of the city, the *musmes*, fragile as dolls, with enormous head-dresses, and a small pillow forming part of their dress behind their shoulders, smiled at the passer-by, as they sat singing in their thin little voices in the doorways of their toy-houses, while they twanged a small, long-handled guitar. . . . But all the prosperity and wealth of its commerce, all the flowers and smiles and songs that made the setting of its life were, like Yokohama itself, blotted out within half an hour. . . .

The fire that broke out almost instantaneously in every part of the city was carried by a cyclonic wind to a tremendous distance outward to the districts where the buildings were structures of paper and wood. But even great edifices of steel and cement, tottering from the earthquake, fell into the furnace. In this tremendous flaming mass huge deposits of oil and gas caught fire, ships flamed in full daylight like moving torches, while such craft as had succeeded in extinguishing the fire that had broken out on them fled at all the speed they could muster from the deadly proximity of other drifting fire-brands. Blinded by flames and blackened by smoke, thousands of people jumped into the sea, seeking refuge in the launches and tugs that were weighted down almost to the water line as they tried vainly to rescue the too numerous fugitives.

And those who had known Yokohama, in the past, gazing at its ruins, all spoke the same words;

"It is worse even than we imagined. . . ."

Several launches are hanging on to our side, and a group of Japanese, most of them newspaper men from Tokyo, some of them professors from the University, come on board to look for me.

They bring the good news that no one of my friends perished in the catastrophe, which occurred in September at the time when everyone who can get away and has the means to do it is at some mountain or seaside resort. It was among the working



and the shop-keeping classes that the most frightful mortality occurred.

As I step ashore I am overwhelmed once more by the immensity of the catastrophe. The old piers have survived only in fragments. Between the twisted iron of their frame-work we can see automobile tires and wheels, portions of trucks, and cranes, and water-soaked flattened substances of all colors that have grown into a kind of unity in the sheath of vegetable life contributed by the water. With characteristic impassivity, and the perpetual smile and soft voice that gives a child-like simplicity to their words even when the latter are most terrible, our Japanese escorts describe the horrible scene that occurred on the pier where we are standing.

For at the fatal moment, this pier was crowded with passengers who were going on board a ship bound for a South American port, and the friends who had come to see them off. At the first shock, many fled, instinctively, without knowing what they were doing. Others sought refuge on the boats. Those who stayed on the pier, believing it the safest place, all perished in the most frightful manner.

Under the green lapping water I see shapeless masses that hang heavily on the shattered foundations of the pier, showing through its ribs. Around this solid mass of corpses, swarms of fish dart hungrily with a greedy persistence that indicates the extent of this ghastly feeding ground.

Moreover, it has been impossible as yet to do anything to remedy this frightful condition. The catastrophe was more than human resources could cope with. Thousands of bodies were heaped up in the streets of Yokohama, soaked with oil, and burnt. The bodies that make up the grisly mass below us are perhaps well off in their watery grave.

"Besides," says one of the newspaper men, "there are still frequent tremors, and who knows whether it is yet time to set about clearing away the ruins?"

A few weeks later, safe in China, I was to remember his words; for a new earthquake had completely destroyed what remained of the pier. Not a fragment of it now remains.

We go about through the town in *kurumas*, man-drawn, one-



seated, high-wheeled vehicles, *jinrikishas* or *rickshaws* as the Americans and English call them. At first I cannot overcome a feeling of embarrassment at being hauled around by one of my own kind, and seeing him trotting along there in front of me like any beast of burden. But little by little I grow used to the Asiatic custom of substituting human energy for that of animals or machines in its traction systems, in fact I discover that it has certain distinct advantages. Not only can I talk with this intelligent horse who gets me about from place to place at amazing speed; frequently he extricates himself from his harness, accompanies me into temples and shops and serves as guide or interpreter.

It would be more difficult than ever now to get about Yokohama without *kurumas*, for the streets are still torn by deep gashes, or made impassable for automobiles by great mounds of debris. In some places the ground yawns in wide funnel-shaped openings as though enormous shells had burst there. The earth's undulations left deep traces of its inexplicable caprices. In some streets the ground opened, and after swallowing the fleeing multitude, closed again, like a stage trap, without leaving a sign of the meal of flesh it had devoured. A little farther on it opened only in narrow cracks, but when these closed, they snapped to like wolf-traps on their human prey; and the unfortunates, caught in the noiseless fangs, watched the flames sweep toward them, and were consumed like so many wax candles.

But life is stronger than nature's tantrums, and, determined to survive, renews itself even in desolation. It does not take vegetation long to creep over the ruins brought about by great cataclysms.

Masses of people flocked back to the vanished city, and camped on its ruins. If the government had been willing to give its consent to building operations, the city of Yokohama would have been rebuilt, three months after the earthquake, for the Japanese wood and paper house is very easily set up. Furthermore, the Japanese, deft and practical, waste no time in lamentations, but with fine courage set about the business of making their surroundings liveable.

The suburbs of Yokohama still survive, though much dimin-

ished, and the public services were restored with a speed that has its comic side in spite of the tragic aspect of the surroundings. There are no more houses, but there are still people. And for their convenience, the streets are lighted, and the trams run on schedule.

We return to the city by night, after a tour of its outlying districts, and from a distance it seems as though all the terrible stories we have heard, and all the ghastly sights of the earlier portion of the day must be a dream. The sky is intensely red, not with the lurid light of conflagration but with a glow which is the reflection of the miles and miles of street lights that are turned on nightly, and that seem to have suffered no damage whatever. From the heights about the city it is easy to trace the course of the lights, and the width of the avenues.

But after half an hour spent in riding in my *kuruma* through the town, I feel horribly depressed. This is a cemetery full of people, but a cemetery without grave-stones or flowers, its walls seared and scarred, heaped with debris, and over-run with ditches of putrid water.

My guide, a professor commissioned by the Minister of Foreign Affairs to look after my comfort while I am in Japan, divines the weariness and gloom I can scarcely hide, and understands that it is time now to show me the real Japan.

He engages an automobile, no easy matter in this city of ruins, and I hear him say to the driver:

"Take us to Kamakura. . . ."





## CHAPTER XII

### KAMAKURA AND THE GREAT BUDDHA

THE Japanese people are of divine origin,—hence the immutable pride that has characterized them for twenty-five centuries.

The first of their gods to be clearly characterized—the beginnings of Japanese mythology are obscure and complicated—were Izanagui and his spouse Izanami. This divine couple was as innocent as Adam and Eve in the garden, and knew nothing of earthly love until its mysteries were revealed to them by the birds around them. In Japanese art this couple is always represented attentively gazing at the winged pair.

The results of the love Izanagui bore his spouse were sometimes geographical, sometimes fleshly. The divine Izanami gave birth to several gods, but islands also issued from her womb, namely the eight large islands with their girdles of smaller islets that make up the empire of Japan.

Upon giving birth to the god of fire, Izanami died, and her husband, to get her back, like the divine singer Orpheus, sought out the kingdom of the dead. Finally, after accomplishing many feats, the valiant Izanagui rescued his-mate; but he thereupon embraced her with such fervor that he broke one of the teeth of her comb, at which the majestic goddess fell to the ground, a mass of putrescence. To purify himself, the unhappy god bathed in a torrent, and from each piece of the clothing he threw down on the bank a god arose. In addition, from his left eye was born Amaterasu, goddess of the Sun, and from his right eye, the goddess of the Moon, and from his nostril, Susanoo, the Hercules of Japanese mythology, more violent even than this Greek god in his warlike deeds and amorous exploits.

It is from the progeny of the fair Amaterasu, and the aggressive Susanoo that the present rulers of Japan are descended. As these two were brother and sister, this ancestry may appear

extremely immoral to western eyes even though it be divine. But it is well to remember that in the accounts of creation contained in the holy books of Christianity and the other old religions of Europe, incest also plays a part. The sons of Adam to perpetuate their species, had to espouse their sisters, the daughters of Eve. The gods of northern legend were also obliged to marry the women of their immediate family.

The loves and quarrels of the Sun goddess with her brother, the Japanese Hercules, play a large part in Japanese mythology. Susanoo possessed such a violent temper, that once when he was quarrelling with his sister, he threw a dead horse into the frame in which she was weaving, destroying the web. Amaterasu, in high indignation, rushed away and hid in a cave, and the gods were thrown into utter consternation by a flight which left the mortal world in total darkness. But one of them, god of Shrewdness no doubt, a connoisseur of feminine vanity at any rate, persuaded a lesser goddess of surpassing beauty to accompany him to the walled-up entrance to the cave. Here all the gods began to praise the new arrival, and the young goddess began to dance to the music of this praise, taking off her clothing piece by piece. As each garment fell to the ground, the gods grew louder and louder in their encomiums of her beauty until Amaterasu, unable to bear the thought that another woman might be more beautiful than herself, took down the stones she had piled up in the doorway of her cave and peered out to see. The god of Shrewdness seized her and dragged her out, placing her face to face with the naked goddess. With bitter grief she found her rival surpassingly fair, but when a mirror was placed in her hand, she took comfort, for one glance had convinced her that she was after all more beautiful than her rival. Her good-humor restored by this assurance, she returned once more to her task of lighting the world.

Susanoo, however, was expelled from heaven so as to keep him from annoying his sister any more, and was given the empire of the ocean, which he proceeded to clear of eight-headed dragons and other maleficent beasts. A grandson of Susanoo and Amaterasu was the first mikado or emperor of Japan recorded by history. From him the rulers of Japan have descended in unbroken line for twenty-six centuries.



European dynasties consider themselves very old if they can trace their history back a few hundred years. They are nothing but upstarts compared with the royal family of Japan that has ruled without interruption for twenty-six hundred years. Besides, other monarchs have a purely human origin. The founders of our royal families are either heroic adventurers or astute and lucky politicians. It is only the emperors of Japan who can claim the gods as their ancestors. Their first human ancestor had the goddess of the Sun as his grandmother and the god of Valor as his grandfather.

It is easy therefore to understand the unshakeable veneration, the blind faith, beyond all reach of reason, that the Japanese people have had for centuries in their emperors. This faith still persists in the army, among the peasants, in all the classes that have not been touched as yet by the spirit of criticism and scepticism that came in with material progress and the science of the western peoples. As the French dramatist Brieux once put it, the devotion of the Japanese for the Mikado is what any nation of Europe would feel for its ruler if he could claim direct descent from Jesus Christ.

The Japanese do not worship their ancient gods because they believe them to be omnipotent, as other nations do. They venerate them because they created Japan, and this divine origin of their country is proudly cherished by the entire nation. In deifying their emperors, the Japanese deify themselves.

For twenty-six hundred years not a single Mikado has been dethroned. His authority grows or diminishes according to the internal revolts and coalitions between his feudal subjects, but always the person of the Mikado is respected as something sacred even though he may now and then fall into temporary oblivion. Osaka is the oldest capital of the country, now the center of Japanese industry. But because his palace was there the Mikado fell under the influence of the daimios or feudal lords, the owners of the rich rice lands, who lived in their castles with troops of faithful samurai around them.

This feudal age lasted until our own time. It was only in 1870 that the predecessor of the present emperor put an end to the feudal system in Japan.

The samurai, as everyone knows, were poor but war-like



FISHING (TOP) AND RICE CULTIVATION (BOTTOM) ARE VITAL INDUSTRIES IN JAPAN  
(See p. 84)



nobles in the service of the rich daimios. Their emblem was the cherry blossom, "fair, and short-of-life." The samurai desired above all things to live a life rich in glory and pleasure, but brief. "The brave should not live too long!" Every samurai made a pact with death, and looked upon old age as a shameful fall from high estate.

In times of peace these nobles travelled through Japan seeking opponents for their steel. When the renown of some other samurai, living in another province perhaps, reached their ears they went to challenge him to a duel to the death. If they thought they had so much as lost the esteem of their master or their fellow samurai, they committed suicide or *harakiri* by slitting open their bellies in a full assemblage of their peers, the best friend of the hero striking off his head with a single blow of one of the pair of sabers every samurai wore in his belt.

The imagination fails at trying to picture the wars and battles, the noisy, confused fighting that the daimios carried on century after century, as they marshalled their troops of samurai. Every fiendish caprice a delirious painter might conceive of was realized by these warriors in the adornment of their armor. Coats of closely fitted blades of steel, glinting black or green or blue, like the corslets of insects; on their heads, helmets ending in antennae, and on their faces masks of steel reproducing the snout of tiger or hyena, or again metal masks with mustaches, frightful leering demons. . . .

They were short of arm, these warriors, but extremely powerful, and in their battles they inflicted terrible wounds. Their weapons of skillfully tempered steel had the cutting edge of the razor and the weight of the axe, and could at a stroke cut a human head from its shoulders, or an arm or leg from the trunk. The battles these warriors fought were violent clashes between opponents, and impetuous advances of cavalry and archers; they crossed the country like a swarm of monstrous crustaceans crawling over the land of the enemy.

The daimios, in spite of their pride, never dared supplant the emperor, as he was of divine origin, but frequently they attempted to impose their will upon him. To free himself from their interference, the Mikado left Osaka, and established a second capital at Kyoto.



This move inaugurated the greatest eclipse ever suffered by the Japanese ruler. To counteract the all-absorbing feudalism of the daimios, he conferred on one of them the executive power, reserving to himself nothing but the historic majesty of the sovereign. This powerful minister who wielded the power of the emperor was designated by the title "Shogun," or General-in-Chief. On him was laid all responsibility, including that for whatever disasters and catastrophes might befall, and thus the Mikado's divine person was saved from implication in any difficulty that might arise.

The Shogun system began in the twelfth century, rose to its greatest height in the sixteenth, and lasted until our own time, for it was not abandoned until 1868. The Mikado had no other duties to attend to in his new palace than those connected with religious matters. It was at this period that the second Japanese capital assumed its theocratic character, and that enormous temples were built in its environs, until it became known as "Holy Kyoto."

Surrounded by numerous court, the emperor came little by little to have nothing to do but follow up the intrigues of his palace and harem. The Japanese rulers, besides the empress and twelve secondary wives, possessed a countless number of concubines. The flatterers and parasites of the court finally persuaded the ruler that he should not show himself to his people, since he was of divine origin, and it is only in our own age that this custom of absolute seclusion was abandoned, Mutsu-Hito, the Innovator, being the first to break this long tradition. But even now it is only on rare occasions that the Japanese have an opportunity of seeing their ruler at close hand.

The ancient imperial palace at Kyoto finally ended by being a city within a city. Its gardens and groves and lakes finally spread over a territory fifteen leagues in circumference. No less than forty thousand persons made up the emperor's suite. Nevertheless, the Mikado, having abdicated his authority in favor of the Shogun, intervened only in theological quarrels.

The Shoguns soon found it impossible to remain in intimate proximity with the emperor. Victors in war, possessed of great powers in peace, masters of the once rebellious daimios, they



needed a court of their own, and transferred themselves to Kamakura, which for three centuries they built up and developed. There were then two capitals in Japan, the imperial, religious capital, Kyoto, and the seat of government Kamakura, where the real rulers of the country were to be found, and situated at the entrance to the bay that was then called "Bay of Yeddo."

The two courts of the rulers lived side by side without rivalry. The Shoguns developed the country by a method which in other countries has invariably proved fatal—namely, by isolating it from the rest of the world. The greatest of the Shoguns, Yeyazu, who might be called the Japanese Pericles, so glorious was his reign, closed the gates of Japan to all foreigners, and they remained closed for two hundred and fifty years. Not a single war marred this period, industry prospered, and Japanese art assumed an individuality that marked its emancipation from Chinese influence.

But when, in 1853, Commodore Perry, in command of a squadron from the United States, ordered the Shogun then in power to open the gates of the Empire to him, the Japanese civil ruler was forced to obey. The daimios however, who looked upon themselves as the guardians of the national tradition, rose against the Shogun, holding him responsible for the foreign invasion. In the civil war that followed, the Shogun system was destroyed after a career of seven centuries. The Mikado, who had lived in the seclusion of an ornamental divinity during this period, now emerged from his palace, intervened in the political strife that was tearing his empire to pieces, and at one and the same time reduced the nobility to obedience and regained his ancient prerogatives.

Mutsu-Hito, the last emperor but one, who ruled for half a century, accomplished the most stupendous of revolutions in his country, transforming ancient, feudal Japan into a modern nation, obliging it in the short space of a few years to adopt the customs of the West and many of its ideas. This new period, which might be called "the resurrection of the Mikado" required a new capital, and the progressive emperor selected the huge city of Yeddo as his seat of government, changing its name,



however, to Tokyo, in honor of the holy city of Kyoto where the Mikados had held court for seven centuries. Tokyo is simply Kyoto, with the syllable transposed.

Japanese cities were in the past as easily destroyed as they were built up. Wood, cloth, and paper were the only materials used until foreigners began coming into the country fifty years ago. When Kamakura's guardians abandoned it, it was never built up again, and nothing now remains of its ancient splendor but the ruins of some pagodas scattered about in the wooded hills on which the ancient capital was built.

But it is here that the Great Buddha, or *Daihutsu*, the most beautiful and best preserved image of the divine Gautama, is to be found.

Our automobile takes a road that winds along the irregular coast and then through the garden-clad hills. Not a foot of soil that has not been turned to some use. For centuries Japan has had to consider the problem of production, on a comparatively small territory, for a constantly growing population.

Ravines and miniature valleys serve for the cultivation of rice, and are laid out in small terraces that rise one above the other like stairs, water trickling slowly from one to another. The hill slopes are covered with groves.

Almost everywhere there are signs of habitation, and town runs into town, with very little interruption. All along the road there are clusters of houses, and again houses on the crests of the hills.

As one travels through Japan, one is constantly obsessed with the impression that children spring from its soil like swarms of insects—double children, two-headed children, for every one of them, the minute he reaches the age of six or seven, is given a little brother or sister to take care of; and this small charge is attached to his brother's or sister's back, and there he sleeps or bawls or looks out at the world, while his little guardian works or plays. The women carry the latest-born hanging from their shoulders in the same fashion, as though it were an integral part of them; and with this burden, removed only at night, they go shopping, or calling, and even, on occasion take a hand in a game of ball. Everywhere, signs of this over-flowing fecundity



surround the traveller from the moment he arrives in Japan until he leaves.

Like the prow of a ship plunging through dense shoals of fish, our automobile opens a way through yelling swarms of *muskos*, fat-bellied and chubby-cheeked, their slanting eyes no more than slits, like streaks drawn with India ink, unable to open. . . . Some wear their hair in a bang, and loose straight locks lap about their heads like large ears. Others wear it in a sort of halo of innumerable tight braids that stand up hard and straight like the quills of a porcupine. They all shout their greetings at us, waving small Japanese flags, or bowing and smiling, for in this country children are meticulously trained to be polite from earliest babyhood. And yet in the smiles of these little creatures there is something that makes one suspect they have already in their schools been imbued with the secret conviction that the Japanese nation is superior to every other, and will some day obtain the supremacy that should belong to it by right of its divine origin.

And now we pass through a double row of small houses, shops where one may buy tea or holy pictures—poor little shops that find customers only on the days when there are pilgrimages to the shrines. This is all that is left of ancient Kamakura.

The Great Buddha, once surrounded by a temple that was later destroyed, is in a garden, with the declivities of three cedar-shaded hills at its back. The image rises fifty feet above the ground and is made of bronze. The divinity is seated, with legs crossed and hands joined in the traditional Buddhist attitude of meditation. If this Great Buddha should rise to its feet, it would be higher than the hills immediately adjacent; and, if one could look out through its eyes, as it sits there, one could see the ocean beyond the gardens and the little houses that dot the road to the coast.

It is late afternoon, and the dying sun is gently gilding this colossal figure along one side. There is a real beauty about this great image, and the calm features never fail to communicate something of their smiling serenity to the observer.

The Great Buddha is not a Japanese work but was made four centuries ago by artists who came from China. This fact is

recognized by the Japanese as being one of the particular merits of the image, for Japan admits that it owes its first lessons in civilization to its great continental neighbor and that Japanese art in particular is for the most part imitation of the art of China.

The head of the great Buddha shows a few traces of Oriental sacerdotalism. The ears especially are long, exaggerated, and somewhat drooping. But from the rest of the figure emanates a spirit of peace and mystery that inspires respect, and even awe. How remote we are from the vulgar western world that glibly calls any image from the Orient, "Buddha," even the fat-bellied jovial gods of China!

There is something sphinx-like too about this god of green-tinted bronze as his smile flows down upon us from his towering height—a gentle and melancholy sphinx, who seems to be guarding a tragic treasure, the melancholy secret of our destiny.

Twilight now; we climb a neighboring hill to visit the venerable temple of Kwannon, goddess of Mercy, crowning its summit.

The attendants of this temple—a wooden structure that survived the city below it, but frail and worm-eaten nevertheless—startle the visitor by the roundness of their small heads, the size of their shell-rimmed spectacles, and the pallor of their emaciated cheeks. Every one of them has an expression of fanatical fervor, and at sight of them one can understand why the Shoguns took such vigorous measures against the Buddhist priests who were constantly causing disturbances by inciting the populace to rebellion.

Outside the temple on this high hill it is still possible to see in the bluish light of dusk; but once inside the building, for all the world like the abandoned hulk of a ship, we find ourselves in utter darkness.

We advance through the gloom, following the wavering glow of the lantern carried by one of the priests. Gilded altars rise out of the darkness for a moment and vanish again. Finally we reach an inner temple, where, on a gilded table, we make out the fantastic outline of two gigantic feet, each the length of a man's height. The priest hangs his lantern on a hook



dangling from the end of a rope, pulls the other end, and the red eye of the lantern, as it slowly rises, throws a beam of light on, first, the ankles, then the legs, the belly, the breasts, and finally, thirty feet above our heads, on the lifeless features of the goddess.

The image is painted, and roughly carved, like those representing Saint Christopher that were made in the Middle Ages in Christian countries. It has the merit at least of size, although it is not as huge as the seated Buddha; but this image makes one smile, it is so childish, whereas the bronze Buddha inspires profound respect.

We purchase a few rolls of rice paper covered with miracle-working prayers—an excuse this, simply, so that we can place a yen in the bony hand of our guide, who, perhaps unconsciously, has not for a single moment ceased calling it forth with convulsive movements of his claw-like fingers.

We take tea in one of the tea-houses, after carefully removing our shoes so as not to soil the fine mats that serve as chairs, table, coverings, and bed, as well as carpets, in all Japanese dwellings.

But I cannot leave without another visit to the Great Buddha, for I shall never see it again, and unmistakably this is one of the few works of human hands that one wants to keep clear in one's memory as long as one lives.

Again I enter the portal, passing the two monstrous gods of Thunder and Wind that guard the entrance to this among many other Japanese temples. The human god rising behind these grotesquely furious images dwarfs them until they appear no more than absurd caricatures.

Stepping as lightly as possible, I make my way down the sand-strewn avenue that leads to the foot of the huge figure. The base, of solid granite, shows the effect of the recent earthquake, the granite blocks having been rocked until great cracks appear between them. But the man-god remains motionless, meditating, and smiling, his back curved forward, and his triangular eyes fixed on infinity.

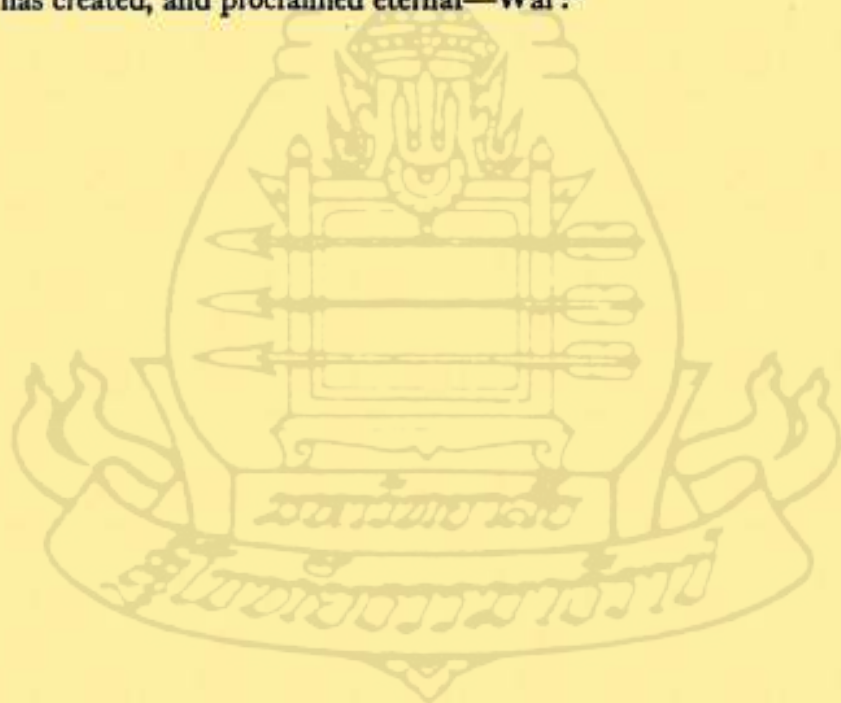
From shoulders down the great image is concealed in the murmurous coolness of the garden; the splash of an invisible waterfall, the murmur of a streamlet that is playfully gliding

through the miniature windings of a Japanese garden, passing under bridges made for dolls, dashing along in toy rapids. The soil and its cypress trees, rising like clusters of candles, its dwarf trees and bushes trained to almost human forms, seem to breathe the serene and measured happiness of peace.

The great bronze face stands out against the dark sky, reflecting a mysterious light that comes perhaps from the sea, invisible to us here below, or that perhaps, floats down from the stars, now beginning to glow in the sky.

And as I gaze up at the Great Gautama, it seems to me that I divine the secret of that smile, the mystery of that serene face:

"Live in peace, poor human slaves of Pain, of Old Age, and of Death," it seems to say. "Love one another! Above all, do not add to the world's too numerous sorrows by declaring that it cannot exist without that fatal divinity man in his vainglory has created, and proclaimed eternal—War!"







THE GREAT BUDDHA AT KAMAKURA, A GENTLE AND MYSTERIOUS SPHINX GUARDING  
THE MELANCHOLY SECRET OF OUR DESTINY

*(See p. 97)*

## CHAPTER XIII

### TOKYO

A SPECIAL train was to take us to Tokyo, but it was no easy matter to find it in the Yokohama station. In the morning hours an enormous throng crowds into the trains that run to the capital, thirty minutes away. A great many employes and clerks "commute" to Tokyo, coming back to their seaside cottages after the day's work.

Following the mis-directions of a man with gold braid on his cap, we get into a first-class coach, which soon fills up with Japanese going to Tokyo. This is a way-station train, and we discover when we try to get out of it, that there is absolutely no way of getting through the compact mass of men hanging on to white rings dangling from the roof of the car, leaning on their neighbors, and clutching at whatever offers support.

One cannot but admire the agility of the Japanese, however, as it displays itself in this most banal of the vicissitudes of modern daily life. With patience, perseverance, and an amazing elasticity, he balances himself, he hangs on, he shrinks, he makes his way through an apparently solid and massed wall of human beings, and there he is, safely installed in some spot where, one would have sworn, not another mouse or flea, much less human being, could possibly find room.

Meanwhile the train starts, my neighbors start too, and wavering, lurching, reflecting the motion of the train, they manage to unfold their newspapers, and placidly begin to read. With absorbing interest I watch these modernized Japanese who are living the life of the Occident here in their Oriental home. They are a likable lot, but it would be hard to find an uglier assemblage of people, or a crowd more grotesquely dressed. For in adopting the apparel of the white race they have neglected to study its lines and possibilities of color harmony. Apparently their choice of garments is determined by whether the article



in question will add to the dignity of their appearance or not. The result is often an extremely curious combination. Most of them wear soft hats, but pulled down over their ears, and without any of the modifying creases and curves that add grace to this form of head-gear. Some, however, prefer the hard round derby, but in spite of this European touch, wear the national kimono with it, sometimes partly concealing it under an English ulster or an overcoat of American cut. After this mixture of garments, some of them display a western touch again on their lower extremities, wearing heavy laced boots; but for the most part they are bare-foot or else wear Japanese socks, with their separate toes—like glove-fingers—and the sandals consisting of two flat pieces of wood supported by two perpendicular strips, like two diminutive wooden benches, fastened by a strap that passes between the big toe and the one next to it, the heel remaining free, so that every step, on hard pavements at least, is accompanied by a noisy *chop-chop*. . . .

Even those whose clothes are most completely Europeanized move about in them clumsily and with constraint, as though conscious of an uncomfortable disguise, and it is easy to guess that, once within their own homes, they shed their western jackets, vests, and trousers, put on their comfortable kimonos, and dine squatting on the floor, just like their ancestors; and it is possible that the change makes them appear far more interesting and spirited than they do in public.

There are at least two physical defects that, along with their remedies, the Japanese have taken over from the white races of the middle classes as personal adornments; eye troubles and caries. Nearly every Japanese wears spectacles with enormous shell rims, rather difficult to wear on their flattened noses; and they take a somewhat childish satisfaction in displaying numerous gold fillings, so that one wonders if they really needed to avail themselves of the services of dentist and oculist.

In recent years another invention of modern hygiene has contributed to the ugliness of the modernized Japanese. One of the things that struck me from the moment I arrived was the number of men I saw wearing a black or a white mask fastened over their noses and held in place by two elastics attached to the ears. I soon grew alarmed at the number of unfortunates



whose noses had been destroyed, I assumed, by cancerous affections, and who took this means of concealing their deformities. But later, when I found the whole nation wearing this hideous contraption, I concluded that there was something wrong with my theory. All Japan could not be suffering from cancer. I discovered that these antiseptic masks were intended to ward off the grippe, and are a customary part of the Japanese costume in winter. Thus protected against infection the Japanese go about their business, or fulfil their social duties with perfect indifference to the grotesqueness of their appearance. One could scarcely carry disregard of aesthetic considerations in personal matters any further.

But for all the absurd contrasts of this ill-assorted attire, Japanese courtesy persists, not yet submerged by the invasion from the west. The exquisite politeness of Japanese salutations, the friendliness of the Japanese smile, prove irresistible to the foreigner from the first. When the Japanese want to express affection or admiration, they are totally unaffected by the fear of appearing ridiculous which so often chills the expression of our feelings. One of the strap-hangers who is engaged in reading a paper suddenly looks at me with interest, and then peers down at his newspaper again, as though comparing me with something on the page before him. I had seen a photograph of myself in the papers, and suspected that my observer was trying to identify me with the Spanish author whose picture he carried in his hand. At last he smiled with childish satisfaction, and letting go of the ring he was clutching, laid both hands on his knees and bent as low as he could in salutation. The other strap-hangers, without a word from the Japanese who had discovered me, by a kind of telepathy became aware of me, and all consult their papers, all of them repeating the smile and salutation of the first, while I reply with similar gestures to these extreme manifestations of Japanese courtesy.

In spite of numerous traces of the recent catastrophe, Tokyo is in holiday attire. The New Year is approaching, and the streets are gay with vine-covered trellises, banners and flags, and paper lanterns. The extraordinary signs and advertisements displayed by the Japanese shops at this season also contribute to the general air of festivity. The Japanese alphabet



displays the beauty of its hieroglyphics in the shop-windows until one begins to believe that it was invented chiefly for the pleasure of the eye and for the purpose of ornamenting placards and banners.

The crowd is picturesque, though not so brightly colored as the Occidental expects, for the brilliant flowered kimonos are worn only on the stage, or in the houses of public women in the district called "Yoshiwara." Three colors have played a part in the history of Japan—black, worn in the palace ceremonies by the emperor and his courtiers, and still worn by the upper classes, red, the color of the lesser nobility, and blue, the color of the middle and lower classes.

Blue is still today the color of the crowd. Cart-drivers, porters, the laborers at work mending the streets, or hauling vehicles like beasts of burden, all wear blue wide-sleeved coats with a white figure on the back. Not a single working man but wears a hieroglyphic on his shoulders like the distinguishing marks likewise displayed on the shoulder during the Middle Ages by the people of western countries. But these figures, for all they look to us like artistic designs are simply signs giving the name of the company the man is working for, or the district he lives in. The police are endeavoring to keep up the use of this ancient costume which makes it easier for them to follow up any working man who commits a criminal act. Even while he is running away, the white brand on the blue shoulder of his coat betrays him.

There are very few draught animals. Horses are to be found only in the army, and the automobile has proved invaluable to the industries dependent on traction facilities. The Japanese ox, small, graceful, and somewhat frail in aspect, is seldom seen in the streets of Tokyo. Yoked together, these little toy oxen draw small carts that do not make it necessary for the driver to urge his charges to great efforts. These little beasts of burden are well cared for, and even wear charming sandals of reed held up by a strap that passes through the cleft in the hoof—foot-gear not so very different from those worn by their human brethren.

The men wearing heraldic devices on their shoulders do all the work that in other countries is reserved to beasts of burden.



Tandem fashion, they haul great carts, sometimes harnessing themselves to the pole or shaft. Beside them one sees dirty, sweat-streaked women, deformed by rough work, and scarcely distinguishable, so far as their persons go, from the men. Gliding between automobiles, street-cars, omnibuses, and heavy trucks staggering under their burdens, the *kurumas* scurry along, pulling their light, one-seated vehicles that are swung between high, light wheels, and that look like spiders with unusually emaciated legs. These human *kuruma* horses keep up a constant shouting to announce that they are coming—which does not prevent them from many a collision with the cyclists who abound in these streets. But these incidents bring forth neither foul language nor blows. The victim of the encounter picks himself up from the ground and makes haste to bow and offer excuses for his mishaps to the other party to the accident, who has already been bowing and scraping for some time past.

The streets in Tokyo, for all the size and wealth of the city, are so badly paved in some sections that one suddenly discovers mud means far less to the Japanese than to the European—naturally enough, since the Japanese is protected by his foot-gear. He can safely pass through puddles and mud holes that would hold all but the most reckless Europeans or Americans at bay. Then too, Japan pouring three fourths of her income into her army and navy, has very little money left for the sanitation and improvement of her cities.

On the asphalt streets of the capital, the constant stream of the Japanese wooden shoe keeps up a steady clatter that underlies all the other street sounds, the noise of traffic and the cries of the throng. Thousands and thousands of feet, each as it moves, lifting up the little wooden stilt, and letting it fall again on the pavement. . . . The sound is all-pervasive, it fills up all the interstices of city life in Japan—clop, clop, clop. It begins at three o'clock in the morning in Tokyo and keeps up far into the night hours. It is only where the streets are unpaved—that is to say in the outskirts of the city—that this sound, symbolic of the clash between old and new, does not persistently assail one's ears—little wooden stilt-like shoe of the past, clattering and shrieking on the modern hard pavements Japan has adopted from the modern world. . . . Women and children of



the poorer classes pass through the crowd carrying the inevitable *musgo*; wherever there is an open space, one sees women, still carrying *musgos* on their backs, playing ball, and small children flying kites shaped like strange flowers or monstrous dragons.

When two Japanese women of the middle class meet in the street, one has a fine opportunity to observe traditional Japanese courtesy in all its splendor. Their arms crossed on their chests, they each begin to bow, doubling up their bodies in exaggerated fashion and each bending to one side so as not to bump into the other—and so they continue their bowings, repeating them, ten, fifteen, twenty times. At last they decide to put an end to this exchange of civilities, and each starts off in a different direction, but suddenly one of them turns her eyes, the other does the same, and both of them revolving on their heels, are once more face to face, repeating, but at a greater distance this time, the doublings up and bowings of the first greeting, while the passers-by, naturally, pass on without paying the slightest attention to this interminable but every-day ceremony.

The coiffure of the Japanese women is an index of her station, and a saving of time for the men, who need never be misled as to the social position of the woman they are looking at. Japanese etiquette devised five styles of dressing the hair, precisely to avoid the social complications that might result from a mis-directed interest. There is the style devised for girls from five to seven years of age; then that for girls from ten to fifteen; the *sokuhatsu* style, the style affected by the intellectuals, one might say, for it is used only by students and artists; the *shimada*, that of unmarried females past sixteen, and the *maru-wage*, or married woman's head-dress, the most frequently seen in the streets. As to the monumental quality of the Japanese head-dress, it is too well known for me to pause to describe it.

It is the holiday season, and banquet follows banquet as the New Year approaches. I cannot say, however, that Japanese cooking is particularly pleasing to my palate. Besides, sitting with my legs crossed soon becomes a positive torture in spite of my endeavors to become absorbed in the quaint dishes that

the pretty little waitresses put down on the small lacquer table beside me. All the dishes are so tiny and contain such a small quantity of food that it all seems like a doll's tea-party.

In front of each of the banqueters a *musme*, graceful as a kitten, is seated on the floor, and smiles at us as we eat. She places her little paws on the tabouret, to keep it in order, and with gentle mewings asks her companions to bring whatever may be needed. Her special duty, however, is to pour out the *sake*, a kind of rice-brandy, the wine of the Japanese.

Finally the screens on one side of our banqueting hall are removed and we see another room beyond where a number of women in flowery kimonos are waiting to begin playing the music that is to accompany the dancing.

These young women all wear a thick white paint over their faces, a sort of mask, that gives them a uniform appearance. In this whiteness their long slanting eyes look like the tracings of a black crayon. A blood-red circle like a cherry, marks their mouths, and above these doll's faces an enormous shining coiffure rises like a helmet of black lacquer.

The instruments they carry are small guitars with very long handles, and little timbrels that they strike with agile swift-moving sticks. At first this music sounds very strange, as do the strident songs sung to this accompaniment; but in a few minutes I begin to get my bearings in this new sound world, and discover the exotic melodies it contains; and the sensation is like that of one passing from daylight into darkness and there gradually becoming accustomed to the absence of light until one can make out all one's surroundings.

From a door at the side six dancers in blue and silver kimonos come out, moving their fans in time to their slow little steps. Their smiling immobile faces are startlingly white, with two black slits and a deep red circle, much more vividly marked than on the faces of the musicians. Slowly they move to the right and to the left with a timid childish grace, but at the same time one senses in them a refinement that makes one suspect them accomplished in exotic perversions. These are the celebrated geishas, the subject of so much mis-information. But what I admire most in the blue and silver dancers is their stature.



I am accustomed now to the diminutive size of the Japanese woman. In the streets they all seem like undernourished children, they are so thin and small.

But the famous dancers of Kokoyan seem taller and remind me of European women—until I remember that I am looking up at them from the floor, just as the Japanese see their actors in the theater, a fact distinctly advantageous to the dignity and impressiveness of the latter. Perhaps one of the reasons why the geisha exercises such an influence over the men of her country is that he always has to raise his eyes to look at her, as he sits in front of her on the floor of the theater. When the dancing is over and I finally get up on my feet, I discover that even the tallest of these scandalously painted beauties, with their feline graces and purrings do not reach even to my shoulder. . . .





INCREDIBLY HEAVY LOADS ARE DRAGGED THROUGH THE STREETS BY THE JAPANESE, WHO Seldom MAKE USE OF DRAGUGHT ANIMALS  
(See P. 104)



## CHAPTER XIV

### THE PARADISE OF MEN

As I watch the people around me, and listen to the comments of my Japanese friends on their fellow countrymen, I begin to understand the spirit of Japan—a complex spirit and full of contradictions, for it is imbued with the traditions of twenty-six hundred years, overlaid by the violent changes accomplished in the half century during which Japan, at a single stroke, copied the material progress of the western world.

The Japanese character is rigidly positivistic. It turns naturally to practical undertakings, of immediate utility; but at the same time it worships,—with all the fervor of the romantic poet,—the splendors of nature.

The flowers of Japan have scarcely any perfume, many of them have no trace of it; yet in no country in the world are flowers cultivated with such passionate zest as in this one. Everyone knows that the arrangement of flowers in a vase is as indispensable a part of the Japanese girl's education as playing the piano used to be not so long ago in the world of the west. But we are apt to accept this bit of information about Japanese customs and not to see all its implications. There is practically no Japanese who, at sight of a cluster of flowers in a garden or a vase, does not come to a stand-still and gaze at it reflectively, as we would stop to look at a famous picture in a museum. Even the least educated Japanese has an opinion as to the color and arrangement of a bunch of blossoms and leaves, for the meaning attached to flowers and their arrangement is one of the first things he learns in school.

The Japanese venerate all flowers, but the blossoms of trees and shrubs, almost unnoticed in other countries, are the object of their special devotion. The feast of the cherry blossoms is a commonplace of Japanese travel books. But the traveller usually sees this celebration as a surface manifestation of a

quaint, and greatly exaggerated love of flowers. What he does not see is the roots of this tradition that run down to great depths in the history of the Japanese race. We, too, once had our festivals in honor of spring and fertility, but our instinctive veneration for nature's creative powers has been overlaid by the Christian tradition. In Japan, however, *sake* flows as freely during this festival as May-wine once did in pagan Europe in the festival of spring, and the populace gets drunk in honor of the intoxicating life force streaming through all nature just as the celebrants of Apollo's return used to do in Greece and Rome.

First of all these festivals comes that of the plum blossom that flowers when the winter snows are melting. Then comes the feast of the cherry flower. May brings the celebration in honor of the rose-scented Japanese peony. Then the graceful wistaria is honored, and the azalea, a common flower on the Japanese country-side. During the summer, the iris and lotus have their festivals, and finally comes the feast of the chrysanthemum, which might be called a national holiday since this flower has come to symbolize Japan to the rest of the world.

But there are other celebrations too of this nature, those in the autumn for instance in honor of the new colors taken on by the foliage of certain trees. And there are other trees still, which in Europe are fruit-bearing, but which in Japan are cultivated merely for their blossoms. They never bear, and are grown simply to display their virginal beauty, which will never be bent to the purposes of procreation.

Everyone who arrives in Japan suddenly remembers all he has read about the geisha and asks to see what he erroneously supposes to be the representative *par excellence* of the Japanese feminine nature, in this specialized form, just as foreigners arriving in Spain always ask to see gypsy girls, expecting to find Merimée's Carmen in person, or just as certain rather simple-minded visitors to the French capital naïvely imagine they know all there is to know about French women because they have drunk champagne with the cabaret dancers of Montmartre.

Too many European writers, after living with some hired *musme* in a Japanese port-town, have written a book in praise of her artistic genius, until, for the rest of the world this type



of woman has come to be representative of the woman of Japan.

I say "too many" because, unfortunately for the credit of the literary profession, the picture thus presented of Japanese life is entirely false. Japan is full of wives, mothers, daughters, and women of resigned and virtuous life. The geisha too is to be found there, but in constantly decreasing numbers. Moreover she has fallen from her once high estate and is now little more than the dancer or singer of places of amusement.

But she was once a national institution, and satisfied a need that was psychological rather than physical. With Japan's adoption of western customs she has been dragged down to the level of the French *cocotte*.

To understand the rôle of the geisha in Japanese life of the past, we must remember that love between the sexes as we understand it exists only outside the home, outside the social framework of marriage. This institution is in Japan entirely controlled by the older generation, by the parents, who arrange the marriage of their children often without consulting them, just as their own marriage was arranged for them, and just as marriages have been arranged in the past, century upon century.

In the traditional Japanese family, the wife is ruled by her husband, and submits to him in all things without the slightest protest. There exists between them a calm companionship, a tranquil, fraternal affection—but not the love described in our novels and plays. Our western literature cannot be understood by the Japanese unless he is quite Europeanized. But for the most part, the Japanese, if he takes the trouble to read some of our famous novels, where the theme is almost invariably one of love between a man and a woman, shrugs his shoulders and smiles; as at something utterly childish and unworthy of respect.

For the head of the Japanese family, the geisha has always represented poetry, the poetry of the unforeseen and the complicated, of suffering and joy, in a word, of sexual passion. The Japanese head of the family has numerous women in his home, for polygamy gives him this privilege, but they are modest, hard-working bees whose duty it is to attend to the household. The geisha is simply the Greek hetaira in a kimono. Like the Athenians of the age of Pericles, the daimios, samurai, or mere



merchants of Japan, have neglected the quiet obedient wives of their hearths and homes for the educated, clever dancing girls, accomplished in the art of good manners, and trained to sing and recite the verses of the Japanese poets by the hour.

It is not so easy to become a geisha. There are special schools provided for training in this career, which the girls enter at the age of seven. From that time on they are thoroughly drilled in all the arts and graces which can charm the senses of men. They learn to play the guitar, to sing and declaim, they memorize hundreds of Japan's famous poems, and in particular they are taught the art of repartee—more specifically, skill in giving a prompt, graceful, and ingenious reply to the demands of their patrons. Their chief training, however, is in the art of the dance as developed in Japan. This does not mean leaps and contortions. It means gestures and attitudes, all of a ritualistic character, transmitted through the ages, from generation to generation. At the age of fourteen or fifteen the geishas leave the severe discipline of their schools to grace banquets with their presence and accomplishments.

The geisha has never in any sense been a prostitute. Her real function has been to provide pleasure by her beauty and entertainment by her wit. She knows all the fine shadings of Japanese courtesy, and association with her has kept alive among Japanese men the courtly etiquette and language of the Japanese age of chivalry.

While the Japanese man spent his hours of recreation in tea-houses with the geishas, the Japanese wife has always remained close within the confines of her husband's home. If on occasion the women of the household are present at banquets attended by geishas, the Japanese husband and father is not at all embarrassed by their presence, and caresses the dancers just as freely as on other occasions. This strikes no one as being in any way extraordinary.

The champions of tradition in Japan assert that the geisha is an honest professional, that she does not go beyond the limits of her art to please her patrons, that, in short, her relations with them are such as would be approved by the most strait-laced western notions of propriety. Moreover, they also assert, her patrons ask for nothing more than her presence and conversation.



This may be true, and it is quite possible that we westerners are incapable of understanding revels so pure and disinterested. Nevertheless, it does frequently happen that a Japanese man falls in love in the most approved modern manner with a geisha, and as she is well-versed in the art of exciting a man's interest and at the same time holding him at arm's length, these relations may last for years. Many a Japanese man has poured out a fortune on his geisha beloved, and suicide has sometimes been the end of these absorbing love affairs.

If the United States might fittingly be called "the paradise of women," so important is the rôle women play there, Japan might with equal propriety be called "the paradise of husbands." Laws, customs, the whole organization of the family and society were all designed for men. A Japanese wife is her husband's slave. For centuries husbands have been placed in such a position of authority over their wives that the whole psychology of the Japanese woman bears the imprint of this age-long domination. The Japanese woman feels with respect to her husband the profoundest gratitude for the fact that he confers on her the favor of allowing her to spend her life by his side, and she makes every effort to divine his wishes and comply with them before they are even spoken.

To the Japanese woman in whom ancient tradition is still strong, her husband is a god, and she obeys him in the minutest detail, convinced that he can never err. Besides, complaint, or even criticism of him is equivalent to sacrilege. It is the Japanese wife's highest happiness to have her every sacrifice *accepted* by her husband.

The tradition of man's superiority has determined the special character of Japanese married life. In their efforts to please their god-husband, the several Japanese wives of one husband were as united, as undivided by individual jealousy, as the zealous worshippers of a divinity. This attitude toward the husband has given Japanese polygamy a stricter discipline than was ever known among the Mohammedans, and prevented the disturbances that are not unknown in the Turkish harem. Nevertheless, in the code prescribing women's duties, written in the seventeenth century by the moralist Kairbara, they are described as "being born with the defects of total absence of docility, of eternal dis-



content, complainings, jealousies, and lack of intelligence." And this being the case, it was of course only natural that these inferior beings should be guided and directed all their lives by the wiser members of the human family.

"Let the husband be woman's only god," says Kaibara, "let her worship him even while she serves him. Her husband should be a wife's heaven. . . . Let her dress modestly, and adorn herself only to arouse his desires; let her be the first to rise in the morning, and the last to go to bed, and while her husband slumbers after his meal, let her be diligent in work."

But the subjection of women to husbands and mothers-in-law is a part of old Japan, and is found today, not in the big cities, but in the small towns and rural districts.

The influence of western ideas on the subject of women is noticeable in those classes which have direct contact, especially social contact, with the west. Japanese officers, diplomats, and high officials, wearing the formal dress of our own social world, take their wives to the balls of the court and the legations; and of course their wives wear the clothes our women wear. This change, tolerated at first by the Japanese husband as a requirement of etiquette, and a compliance with the emperor's orders, was the thin end of the wedge that has opened wide the door by which Japanese women are becoming emancipated from old restrictions.

There are already a good many women in the upper classes who refuse to tolerate polygamy, who are as subject to jealousy as any woman of the white races, who admit it frankly, and who refuse to accept the resigned servitude in which their grandmothers found happiness. In the course of time this conflict—the theme of many modern Japanese novels—will permeate all classes, but it is inevitable, now that Japanese women have learned to know what the lives of their more independent white sisters are like, especially those of North America. As Brioux puts it, "slaves find their condition tolerable only if they associate with slaves. They become aware of their misfortune when they see at close hand those who possess full freedom."

And then there are the economic agencies of woman's liberation—factories, offices, shops, government employment. Man is no longer her "only god." Of course in cases where a woman is



financially dependent on her husband she is forced to be more conservative in her conduct, as the world over, for Japanese courts rarely fail to satisfy the male applicant for divorce, who may win his decree on the complaint that *his wife failed to obey her mother-in-law, that she was jealous of her husband, and that she spoke to him discourteously*. One wonders if there would be a single marriage left intact in the world if these laws were in effect in other countries.

In matters of morals, the Japanese offer some curious contradictions. When geishas appear in public they are carefully covered from head to foot. The evening dress of the European woman is unbelievably indecent to the eyes of an old-fashioned Japanese. In the famous Yoshiwara districts of the large cities—that is, the districts given over to pleasure resorts—where, until quite recently, the prostitutes exhibited themselves in show-windows, these women with their painted mask-like faces were always carefully swathed from head to foot in long thick garments bordered with silver and gold, and always preserved a modest demeanor.

At the same time Japan is a country where men and women bathe in public. The shop-keepers keep a bath-tub, similar to a barrel cut in two, under the counter, so as not to be obliged to leave their business when they want to take a bath. And there they squat, soaking in their little tubs. If a customer comes in during this operation, they emerge from the bath to attend to him; and if the shop-keeper happens to be a woman, her one concession to our notions of decency is to hold a small towel no bigger than a hand, in front of herself. And in the native hotels the chamber maids come and go with the utmost unconcern while the traveller takes his bath.

One consequence of the assumption that women were inferior to men, and accordingly of a lower moral plane, is the attitude toward prostitution. This institution was, until recently, nothing more in Japan than one of the woman's industries, in no way affecting the honor of the family.

Fathers used to sell their daughters to the large establishments of Yoshiwara, and respectable families, taking a walk in the evening, would stroll through this quarter where streets were always animated, and brightly illuminated, where there were

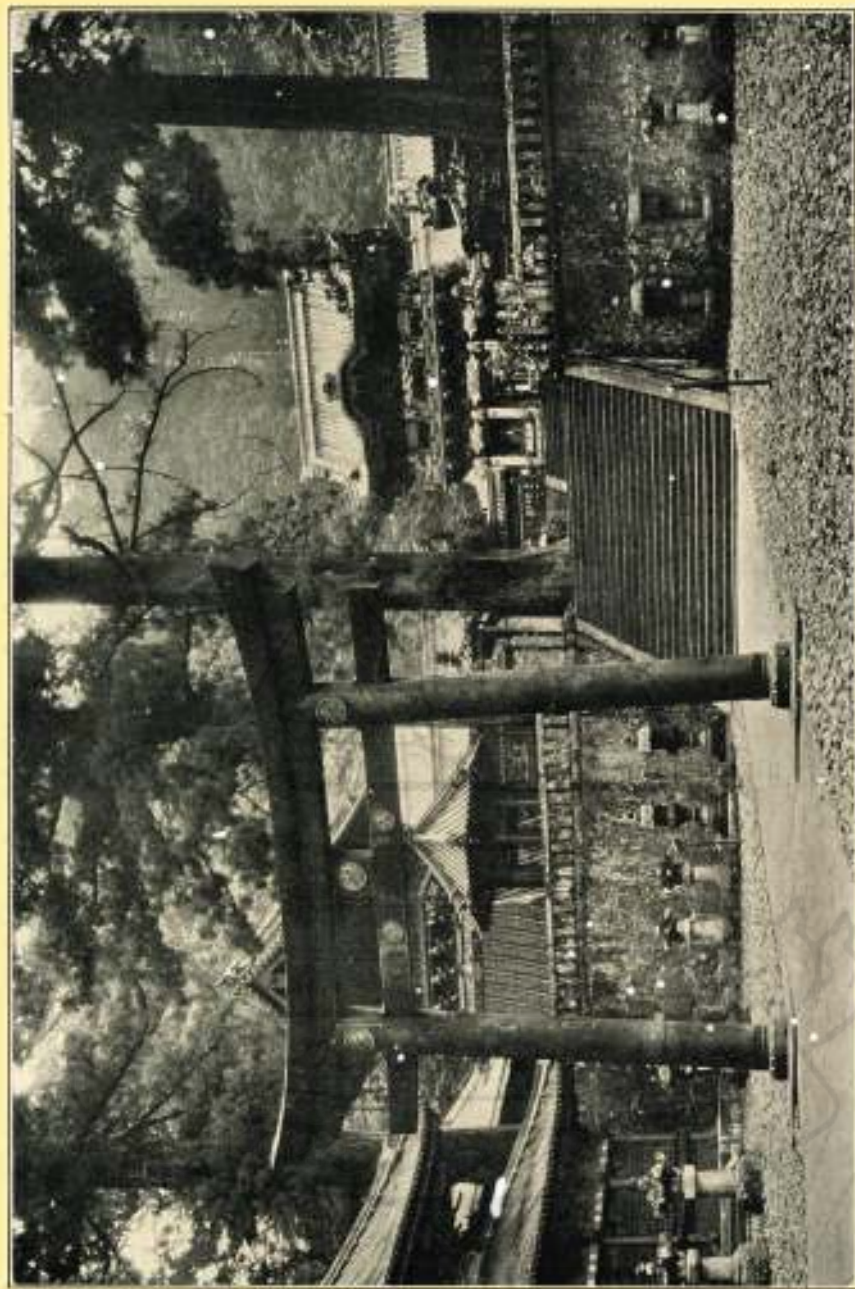
quantities of theaters and dance establishments crowded with apprentices in the profession of pleasure. The daughters of reputable families would greet their friends sitting in the show-windows, arrayed in sumptuous kimonos, and waiting for a customer, or would stop and talk to them, without any indication of surprise or embarrassment at this change in situation.

It was in 1870 that the emperor who preceded the present one, and who, in his half-century of rule brought about a great many changes tending to modernize his country, issued an edict to the effect that fathers were forbidden henceforth to sell their daughters to the dealers in women of the Yoshiwara. Nevertheless it is intimated that the relations between certain families and houses of prostitution have not been brought to an end by the emperor's decree.

There were fifteen thousand "guests" in the Yoshiwara district of Tokyo at the moment of the earthquake and fire. Words fail me to describe the photographs that were shown me of the ravaged district—pyramids of bodies of both sexes, heaped up outside the charred remains of pleasure-houses—pyramids where only the eye accustomed to the extreme slenderness and small stature of Japanese women is able to detect their forms, so slim and undeveloped, in most cases, as to look like young boys.

But there is a fine decency preserved in the practise of this industry. The Japanese women wait quietly for the arrival of a customer without making a single gesture, or saying a single word to arouse attention, without showing so much as a foot to the masculine gaze. An unchanging smile on their painted faces, they remain wrapped up in their gorgeous thickly padded kimonos, like images in a shrine. And even if they wanted to unbridle their tongues, they could not, for the Japanese language itself is the backbone of the courtesy and good manners of this people, and contains no words with which to insult an enemy, or express obscenities. The whole vocabulary of the Japanese is a manual of etiquette in the broadest sense—of his education, in short.





THE BEAUTIFUL TORIEMON GATE AT NIKKO

(See p. 179)

## CHAPTER XV

### THE TWO SHOGUNS OF NIKKO

THE sacred mountain of Nikko must receive my homage before I can leave Japan; I must see this most famous of its monuments to the dead. . . .

Everywhere on this landscape there are temples and shrines. A random glance out of a train window at a grove of trees reveals the roof of Buddhist or Shinto temple; and all these shrines are pleasing to the eye, chiefly on account of the trees and flowering shrubs surrounding them. Shorn of this setting, many of them would be no more than wretched shanties.

This abundance of temples does not mean that the Japanese are religious by nature. Through a contradiction somewhat complex in character, the Japanese have the greatest number of temples and are the least religious of all the peoples of the world. This multiplicity of shrines may even be due to nothing but their extreme courtesy, which leads them to take part in all public manifestations of respect in honor of a personage of importance, whether god or man.

The Japanese of the upper educated classes, like their teachers, the Chinese intellectuals, always have been followers of Confucius; that is to say, they are rationalists, inclined to scepticism, and professing none of the positive religions. But the great mass of the population, on the contrary, venerates all religions, without regard to the differences that may exist between them.

The original religion of Japan was the worship of the *kamis*, or ancestors—and this cult is the basis of modern Shintoism.

For many centuries this religion simply accepted the gods of the Japanese myths as the object of its worship, because these gods were the ancestors of Japan. But when the Mikado surrendered his political power to the Shoguns he devoted himself in his retirement at Kyoto to developing his religious authority to its extreme limits, finally becoming a sort of high priest who conferred the dignity of priestly office on his courtiers.



In the modern period the worship of the *kamis* has taken on a more definite character, becoming specifically the patriotic religion of Shintoism, the only one, as a matter of fact, to which the Japanese accord real veneration. I have seen whole families break into gales of laughter at sight of some of the monstrously ugly Buddhas that are to be found in the temples of certain cities, and I have seen them laugh at old superstitions with equal levity; but no Japanese would allow the slightest joke to be made on the subject of the altar to his ancestors or at the expense of Shintoism, the national religion of Japan.

Buddhism, which came into Japan in the middle of the sixth century, along with other manifestations of Chinese influence, has been corrupted by the avarice and extravagance of its priests until it has split up into thirty-five different sects. The Buddhist monasteries in the course of time became centers of prostitution, and many of the Buddhist temples were until recently surrounded by so-called "tea-houses." The Buddhist pilgrimages were a sort of carnival, the occasion of wild orgies. On more than one occasion the Shoguns were obliged to check the scandalous conduct of the priests, and the disorders arising from them.

When Japan took over the outward and visible signs of western civilization, she felt the need of reviving the ancient national religion, as a means of self-defense, and the somewhat neglected ancestor-worship of the past assumed the name of Shintoism. This religion is superior to all other religions in Japan, and includes them all.

A Japanese can be a Buddhist, a Christian, even an atheist, and at the same time observe all the forms of Shintoism. "Shinto" means "the road of the Gods," the road on which every Japanese starts out when he dies, in order to acquire divinity.

Shintoism is the worship of the dead. The spirits of the Japanese do not leave this world at death, to inhabit regions of expiation or bliss, as in other religions. In the Shintoist conception, the souls of the dead, though invisible to mortal eye, are as material in substance as air or fire, and live close to their descendants, inhabiting their houses, and occupying more particularly the altar dedicated to the ancestors. The Japanese offer them rice and *sake*, salute them every morning, and consult them in the solemn crises of their lives, firmly convinced that "the



dead command," since the departed are more numerous than the living, and the sum total of their experiences must make them wiser than their living descendants.

Those who believe that our acts are determined by our will deceive themselves. Without our knowledge, we are controlled by the dead, and subject to promptings from the latter. According to Japanese moralists, devotion to the memory of the ancestors is the source of all virtue.

When Admiral Togo sank the Russian fleet, assuring victory to his country, the old emperor sent the following message to the crews of the Japanese battleships: "Thanks to your loyalty and courage, I have been able to give worthy answers to the questions addressed to me by the spirits of my ancestors." And the Japanese sailors wept with emotion at hearing these words.

The religion I have just described in so summary a fashion, with little regard for the subtleties and complications read into it by the Japanese, is interpreted in much more material terms by the lower classes, always inclined to superstition. The Shintoist temples, with their official priesthood and forms of worship, adopted many of the Buddhist ceremonies. On entering a Shintoist temple, the Japanese clap their hands to summon the gods, who may be absent, or absorbed in some other business than that of listening to their supplicants. Or the latter may pull a bell-rope for the same purpose. But whatever they may be, peasant or sailor, bringing childish offerings and prayers to their gods, or highly educated Japanese imbued with Confucian scepticism, the real object of their worship and devotion is their country, the only nation in the world that is of divine origin, and ruled by the grandchildren of the gods; and in worshipping their country, the Japanese worship themselves.

Not a single Japanese but believes himself on the road leading to divinity, for he is certain that when he dies his children will worship him on the family altar. The policeman regulating the traffic in the teeming streets, the fruit-vendor or the peasant passing balancing two baskets on either end of a large bamboo pole swung over his shoulder, the wizened old fellow pulling a *kruma*, the army cavalryman, the fisherman hauling his nets in the Inland Sea from a boat of ancient design—they will all be gods in the course of time, and after their death will still live



in our world, near their families, influencing their future acts, just as their own lives were influenced by their ancestors in turn. Even their remote descendants, before starting on a journey, will pray to their invisible presence, imploring their protection, and on returning will give them thanks for a safe journey's end; and incense will burn in their honor on the altar, just as it is burning now in honor of far-away progenitors whose very names are unknown, but whose existence no one doubts for a moment. . . .

The Sacred Mountain of Nikko is covered with the temples of different sects, but the multitude of pilgrims that visit it yearly feel absolutely at one in religious sentiment, and climb the slopes of Nikko chiefly to honor the spirit of two great heroes, two Shoguns of the Tokugawa dynasty, Ieyasu, and Iemitsu, the artisans of Japan's greatness.

Ieyasu, the more famous, subdued the rebellious feudal barons, and inaugurated an era of peace and progress which lasted two hundred and fifty years. This was the Japanese Pericles. Under his rule, in the sixteenth century, Japan's greatest poets and painters flourished. He established commercial relations with the other nations of Asia and the merchant republics of Europe, keeping an eye on events in America and the progress of Spanish exploration and conquest from Mexico to Cape Horn.

This warrior, who had proved strong enough to conquer the aristocracy of the daimios, was a philosopher as well, and his maxims are current in every Japanese family:

Perseverance is the foundation of eternal happiness.

He who has seen only the splendor of the mountain tops, and knows nothing of the darkness of the valley, cannot call himself a man.

Life is a heavy burden; but even though it dislocates your shoulder, do not complain.

He who turns sick at human vanity is a fool.

We should lay the blame for our misfortunes at our own door.

Excess is always an evil; better too little than too much.

And Lafcadio Hearn relates of the hero that, after his victories had made him absolute master of the empire, a servant

found him one morning carefully shaking out an old silk kimono to see whether it could not be saved.

"Do not think that it is the value of the silk that concerns me," he remarked. "I am saving this garment out of respect for the work of the poor woman who spent long hours making it. If we use things without reflecting on the time and trouble it has cost someone to make them, we are no better than dumb beasts."

When Ieyasu died he was buried in the Sacred Mountain, which the Japanese henceforth venerated as a national monument. Temples have climbed its slopes until now they form a veritable guard around the tombs of Ieyasu and his worthy successor, Iemitsu. Every year great multitudes of pilgrims come to do honor to the two heroes.

Their legend has grown until the Japanese now look upon the epoch of these two rulers as the golden age of their nation. Yet it was during this time that Japan closed its doors to Europeans, remaining isolated from the rest of the world for two hundred and fifty years. It was also during the time of the second Tokugawa that the cruel persecution of the Christians began, in the course of which a great many missionaries perished after frightful martyrdom.

The first to carry the Christian faith to Japan was the Spaniard Saint Francis Xavier, who had learned from the Portuguese explorer Mendez Pinto of the existence of this idolatrous and mysterious empire, which the latter had just discovered. The Navarrese missionary felt convinced that God had appointed him to convert this empire to Christianity.

No one made any objection to his wanderings through the archipelago, and the Shogun who was then in command of the government accepted the arrival of the apostle of a new religion with sceptical amiability.

"One sect the more in Japan," was all he said.

The educated Japanese of the time, in accordance with their traditional courtesy, listened attentively to the preachings of the future saint, and then some of the learned men of the empire said to him with characteristically Confucian tolerance:

"Our teachers are the Chinese. Our art, literature, philosophy, and religion have all come to us from China. Don't waste



your time preaching to us. Go to China, and if you succeed in converting the Chinese, we will accept your religion from them also and there will be no need to send us missionaries."

Saint Francis Xavier was profoundly impressed by this advice and his sole thought from that time on was to accomplish the spiritual conquest of China. He devoted himself to extensive preparations for this undertaking, but on the voyage to China, fell ill, and was put ashore to die on one of the islands in the bay of Hong Kong.

Other missionaries now began to arrive in Japan and made many converts, for the Japanese were already familiar with Buddhist doctrines, and the change to Christianity seemed to them a slight one. In a few years there were two hundred thousand converts in Japan. One of the missionaries even prevailed upon the Prince of Sendai, feudal subject of the Mikado, to send an emissary to the Pope. Not only in Rome, but in Madrid also the latter was received with splendid ceremonies, for he was believed to represent the Emperor of Japan, so confused were the notions of geography at the time.

But then came the period of great wars between the unruly daimios and the Shoguns, the latter fighting for national order and unity; and the wise Ieyasu, the conqueror of feudalism, sensed a political peril in the new religion. For the daimios were attempting to use this means of spreading dissension in order to keep the war smouldering. Moreover, the vain patriotism and religious zeal of the missionaries themselves and their endeavors to break up the unity the Shogun was trying to achieve, aroused the latter's hostility. The Shogun also viewed with increasing uneasiness the expansion of the Spanish empire which now included the greater part of America, and even the Philippines, at Japan's very door. Some of the boastful prophecies uttered by the missionaries and navigators of the time, to the effect that the Spanish rulers would some day send a fleet to take possession of Japan itself, did not then seem so improbable.

The Shogun had other fears besides when he learned that the head of the newly imported religion—the Pope at Rome—wore three crowns, and was possessed of a power so great that he

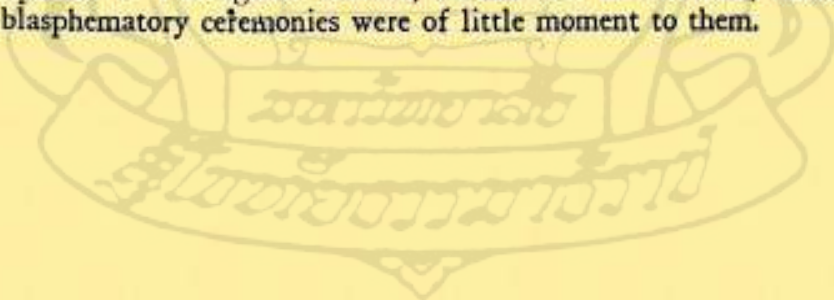
could deprive monarchs of their kingdoms at will, for proving false to the papacy.

Added to this, it was evident that the Christian missionaries, Spaniards for the most part and zealous proselytisers, were far more dangerous to the civil power than the corrupt Buddhist priests. Indeed, many of these missionaries were imbued with the same bold energy as the men who had gained the mastery of America. The only difference was that they used their powers of eloquence and capacity for martyrdom where their brothers in the New World used the sword.

And so it came about that in the reign of Iemitsu, the second Tokugawa, the missionaries were expelled, Christianity suppressed, and Japanese ports closed to any ship not Japanese. The Empire was cut off from the rest of the world. No Japanese was allowed to leave his country, and the study of European languages was forbidden under severe penalties.

Yet the missionaries returned to Japan secretly, dauntlessly facing the perils threatening them, and the long rôle of Jesuit, Franciscan, and other Christian martyrs in the cause of Japanese Catholicism, began.

The Dutch were the only whites allowed to carry on a slight amount of commerce with Japan, and at the cost of enormous humiliation. They lived cooped up in the small island of Decima near Nagasaki, and were allowed to trade only after giving proof that they were not Christians, the proof consisting of various acts of blasphemy against the most sacred symbols of the Christian faith. As most of these traders were Jews of Spanish or Portuguese descent, naturalized in Holland, these blasphematory ceremonies were of little moment to them.





## CHAPTER XVI

### AT THE FOOT OF THE HOLY MOUNTAIN

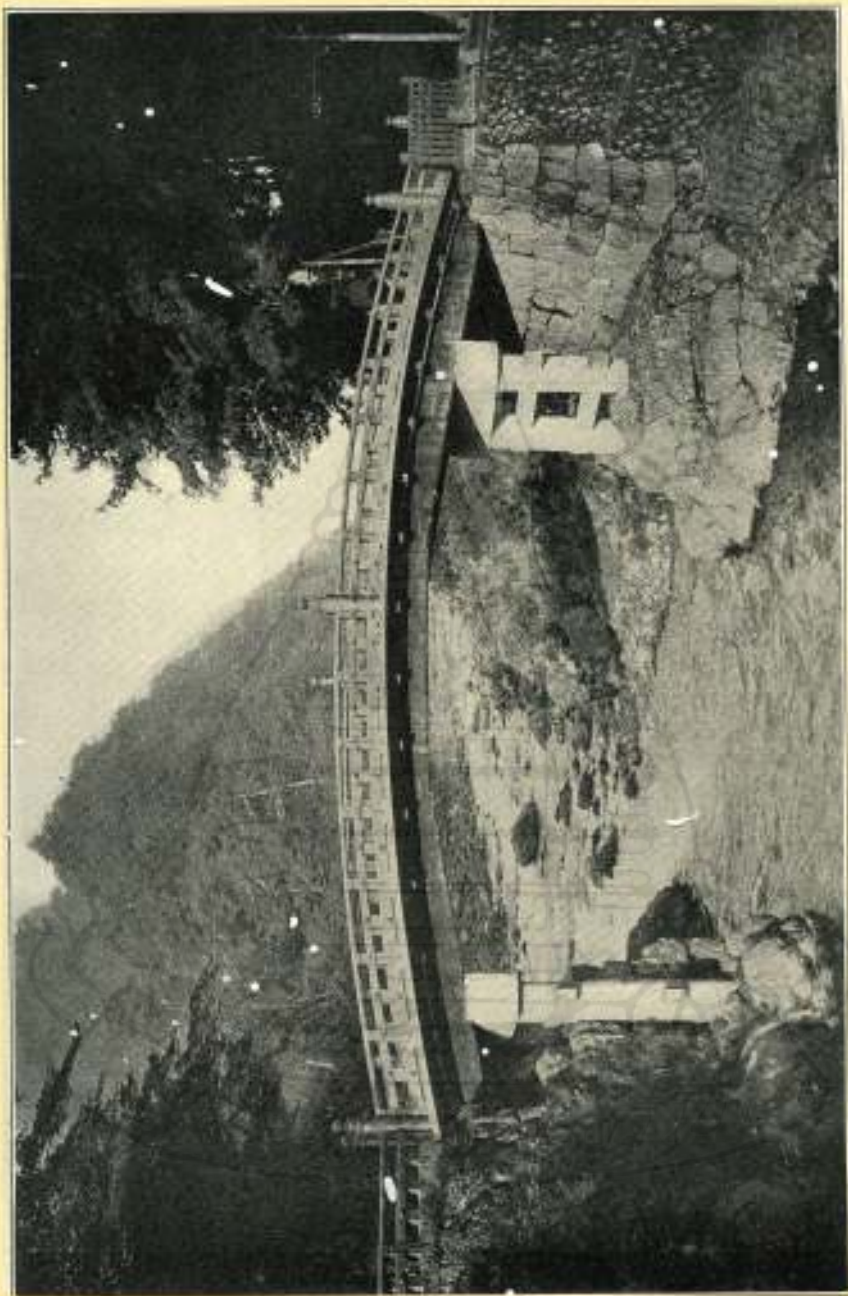
WE reach Nikko in the thick darkness of night.

From the train window we had noticed a high ebony wall extending as far as the eye could see, the famous avenue of three-hundred-year-old cedars that stretches its somber length for nearly forty miles and is one of the most impressive sights in the world. The Japanese cedar reaches a great height, and the road that approaches the national shrine between these two banks of evergreens is of an indescribable solemnity.

Nikko—the name is constantly recurring in Japanese—is simply a village, or less than a village, a street, with a row of houses on each side of the road that passes on to the Holy Mountain. The houses are simply Japanese inns for the use of the numerous travellers who come in spring and summer, inns unmodified as yet by western ideas of comfort, and where the guests are expected to squat on the floor when they eat their meals, and to sleep on a mat with a wooden pillow under their necks. Some of the buildings are nothing more than souvenir shops; but as there are not many tourists in winter-time, the shop-keepers eke out a living by selling the pelts of the black bears that are hunted in the mountains of the region.

It is ten o'clock at night; the shops are closed. We follow our guide through the blue twilight of a night gently illumined by a crescent moon; but it is only the upper part of the scene that is radiant. Below are walls of compact shadow, the century-old trees of the Holy Mountain. Between these two black masses looms a sort of white motionless cloud. It is a snow-clad peak, shining in the blackness like a mass of silver. Above this mountain top, tremulous stars. The murmur of water everywhere. Always, the memory of Nikko will be accompanied by the music of streams running down a mountainside.

We follow between two rows of gigantic trees, along the bank



ACROSS THIS GOLD AND LACQUER STRUCTURE THE MIKADOS OF OLD JAPAN USED TO PASS

(See p. 128)



of a small rivelet that dashes past on its bed of stones in a continuous cascade. The starlight lends a blue phosphorescence to these waterfalls; and now, to the deep roar of this icy water pouring down the mountainside in great masses, is added the gentle gurgle of the little streams that trickle their way through the pine-groves, and the muffled murmurings of hidden brooks, gliding along in delicate traceries under the moss, for there is on the summit of the Holy Mountain a large lake concealed in thick forests and its overflow is constantly pouring down to the valley below. It is this constant trickling and seeping of water that covers the mountain with its royal mantle of verdure, at the same time soothing it with the crooning of its running waters.

The Holy Mountain sings in the mystery of night-time, and sings in the green twilight of the day, when the sun barely succeeds in sending a few darts down through the evergreen covering of its cedars. A chorus of a thousand liquid voices accompanies the twitterings of the birds that live in its dusky boughs.

It is cold, the kind of cold that one might call Japanese. Not an uncomfortable, discouraging cold like that of other countries, prompting one to take refuge under a roof; on the contrary it arouses the desire to walk, it stimulates the skin with a delicate electrical prickling. One cannot wonder that the Japanese have developed habits which make it possible for them to expose a large part of their epidermis to such air, even in the coldest weather. Accustomed to icy ablutions from childhood, and to very light clothing, they have made it as easy for the skin of their entire surface to adapt itself to extremes of temperature as it is for the skins of our faces. The Japanese who have not yet adopted European dress are still "all face" one might say, in this respect.

We follow the solitary road on the outskirts of an unknown village, and now and then a figure in kimono and ancient style of head-dress, looking as though it had escaped from an old print, flutters by. But there is not the slightest sense of uneasiness. The Holy Mountain, with its murmurous century-old growths, and its unending chorus of stream-voices, gives one a sense of security, of innocence, of mystic peace. Violence could not live in this atmosphere.

In one of the houses along the river bank we notice the glow



of lights coming through the paper window. This shop, it seems, is still open. Silks, hangings, carvings, are brought out for our inspection from chests and coffers, and the fragrance of sandal wood fills the air. Kimonos of every color of the rainbow, and bordered with fantastic flowers and animals, are heaped up on the clean matting of the floor, under the glow of the paper lanterns. The serenity of the night outside, with its rustling curtains of waterfalls and brooks creeps through the walls of the shop. And still the shop-keeper produces new treasures.

As I am not purchasing kimonos, the shop-keeper's wife devotes her attention to me, piles up two cushions on the matting, and makes me sit down beside a glowing brazier supported by three bronze dragons. A ceaseless stream of chatter of which I understand not a word flows from her gold-toothed mouth, and it is not difficult to understand her hyperbolic gestures of humble gratitude for the honor I have bestowed upon her shop by entering it—the same gestures, of course, that are bestowed upon every European to pass that way. Still, there is no doubting the sincerity of the smile that accompanies them.

But finally her monologue gives out. She fills her small pipe once more, smokes up its contents in two puffs, and repeats the operation several times, striking the bowl on the edge of the brazier to expel the ashes.

The ceaseless clatter of wooden slabs is now a part of the sounds that permeate the darkness outside. It begins far away, then passes close to the house on the other side of the canvas, wood, and paper partition, and is finally submerged in the distance and obscurity. The sharp little eyes of the shop-keeper's wife note my curiosity and she turns to the guide to interpret for her. The sound I have been following comes from the night watchman who, in the interior of Japan, far from the influence of the Europeanized coast cities, still announces throughout the night hours that all is well by striking two little wooden slabs held in his right hand one against the other, much in the manner of castanets. And at the click of these pieces of wood, the inhabitants who are still awake feel the comfort of security, and evil-doers are warned that they had best take to their heels.

Next morning I am somewhat astonished to see the door of my room open as though I had never locked it and a small



Japanese servant girl come trotting in like a little rat. She seemed to be little more than eight years old, judging by her stature, but her expression and manner were those of a full-grown woman.

"*Oh hayo!*" says the little doll, smiling at the confusion of the sleeper so suddenly awakened by her arrival. Then she pulls aside the wide hangings covering two walls and I discover that I am lying in a sort of glass-enclosed room with nothing but some shades drawn across the lower part of the panes to prevent the guests of the other rooms from having a full view of me. All kinds of servants begin coming and going—a boy to light a fire in the chimney, a little serving maid with some tea, chamber maids with mops and brooms. I discover then that there is no way of getting rid of these morning attendants in a Japanese hotel and they go about their business with perfect composure even when the baffled guest emerges from his bed and begins his morning toilet.

The Holy Mountain is on the other side of the river I had been following the night before. In the bluish half-light of the early morning the voices of the falls sound happier and less mysterious, and a column of white vapor rises joyfully from each of the basins into which the icy water is streaming.

Two arched bridges run from shore to shore. The larger one is of stone and was built by pious pilgrims to the mountain. The other is the Holy Bridge used only by the emperor. The red and gold of its lacquer seem to absorb the light. It was built centuries ago in honor of the red serpent who on this very spot made a bridge of himself so that a holy man who stood on the bank of the river lamenting that he could not reach the other side, might complete his pilgrimage to the Holy Mountain. Across this graceful airy structure, so fragile seemingly that a puff of air might swing it like an inverted hammock, the Mikados of old Japan used to pass preceded by a body-guard of chosen warriors, each carrying two swords, with which they slashed off the heads of all who were so imprudent as not to throw themselves down on the ground before their ruler and hide their faces from his sublime Majesty.

On the other side of the bridge of the pilgrims, the incom-



parable solemnity of the Holy Mountain's forests begins to reveal itself. Here enormous trees lean one against the other like the saplings of a younger wood growth that have been crowded together and are trying desperately to win their way out to the light.

How this forest looks in summer when the great pilgrimages climb these wooded slopes I do not know; but in winter the sun penetrates to the bottom of only the very widest of the roads. In the rest of the Holy Forest, its rays are lost in the eternally fresh verdure of trees much more ancient than the three-hundred-year-old cedars of the road to Nikko. The paths branching out from the road are illumined by a green light like that of ocean depths. Far above, the boughs form domes and cupolas. Wherever, here and there, one catches a glimpse of the sky, it is as though one were looking up at it from the bottom of a deep well.

The tall straight Japanese cedars are like obelisks or like the columns of the holy gateways known as *torii*. As one goes up the gentle slopes, one discovers little by little the splendors that piety has assembled in this spot. The top of the tower formed by a series of small pagodas built one on the other shows through the green; farther on is a group of granite lanterns covered with ivy or a solitary image of Buddha with an aureole shaped like an almond behind his shoulder and looking like the back of a chair.

In this forest that is eternally damp, two notes are constantly repeated—the song of water, and the velvety green of the moss that covers stones, tree-trunks, the granite base of pagodas, the tiled courts, the paving of the roads, and the steps of the stairs. This natural tapestry, woven by time and humidity, is taking possession of everything. Nothing resists its slow invasion. The priest guardians of the Holy Mountain respect it as though it were a part of their ritual, and help to conserve it, freeing it of insects, brushing and raking it with all the devotion of an English gardener for his lawn.

Before we reach the mausoleum dedicated to Ieyasu, we pass a number of sanctuaries that are like the advance guards of the buildings below hidden among the cedars. The sound of singing and the clash of the kettle-drum rise toward us; the



priests are celebrating their services; but we climb on, past the dwarf pines and cedars sheltering small images of Buddha and the goddess of Mercy.

In the branches of these small trees I notice numerous little pieces of rice paper, skillfully folded, and looking like very neat and firmly twisted curl papers. These are prayers, and my companions assure me that most of them are from girls who take this method of imploring the divinity to provide them with a good husband.

In this way, timid youths, or those who have no parents to find them a wife can discover the names and addresses of the *musmes* who are looking for a husband; and thus the sacred bushes serve as matrimonial agencies.



## CHAPTER XVII

### THE FOREST OF GOLDEN PAGODAS

Two horrible red- and blue-faced gods mount guard over Ieyasu's tomb, the gods of Wind and of Thunder. The Door of the Elements opens on a circular enclosure of shrines, with rows of *torii*, made not of granite, but of bronze, prodigiously carved and painted.

The reader must not imagine that these Japanese temples reach imposing dimensions as compared with the religious edifices of the western world. Like the palaces, the temples are one storey high, and these pagodas are built of wood on a granite base that rises barely one yard above ground. Even the polychrome pillars of the interior are beautifully rounded tree-trunks, but so covered with carvings as to look like the lightest of window screens, or like lace. Or else the surface is lacquer in numerous colors and ornate with gold.

The temples of the Holy Mountain can all be described briefly as distinguished by columns and walls of dark red lacquer, the red of dried blood—polychrome figures in greens, blues and rose tints, and everywhere gold, gold, more gold. . . . All the conceivable gradations of color this metal can display are here in these temples that have been erected by the enthusiasm and gratitude of an entire nation. Green golds, red golds, bright yellow golds, and rose and bronze golds, out all of a density and firmness that defies the tooth of time.

As we pass pagoda after pagoda, priests in green and white vestments come out to offer us rice papers with pictures and indecipherable inscriptions. Near the doors of the temples there are great bronze urns full of water, serving equally well for religious ceremonies and for putting out fires. On cold mornings a thick sheet of ice floats about on top of these enormous painted vases.

We pass through the famous Door of the Day, the most



extraordinary piece of sculpture to be found in Japan; we see the Temple of the Monkeys, those famous monkeys that neither see nor hear nor speak evil; the Temple of the Elephants, and temples in honor of other dumb beasts. Everywhere our eyes feast on brilliant fresh colors with the luminous surface of lacquer. At first the temples themselves seem childish, as though made for dolls, but little by little one is captivated by the charm of Japanese art.

And finally, after passing through the largest temple, the "Splendor of the Orient," where there are no holy images at all, nothing but a gold table to receive offerings to the ancestors, we go up some granite steps that lead through the forest to the summit. Here there is another temple, and behind it a bronze door set perpendicularly in the rock. On the other side of this metal plate, in a simple vault, lies the man in whose honor all these splendors have been accumulated.

Weary of so much gold and glitter, and the frailty of walls so exquisitely carved as to make one fear the slightest breath of wind will sweep them away like cob-webs, I feel an irresistible desire to lose myself in the murmurous green of the forest. The sunlight rests on the very summits of the trees, but below is the diffused soft luminousness of sea depths. Following the restless silhouettes of two playful stags which had emerged from the inner densities of the woods to trot along fearlessly by my side—it is easy to see they are accustomed to the respect of visitors!—I soon emerge on a still clearing.

No doubt but this is one of the least frequented parts of the forest; and the huge old temple rising at the far end of the clearing attracts me with the charm of ancient things, its decrepitude a sign of past glory. No glittering gold and lacquer work here, but worn frayed columns revealing the rough wood underneath. Beside it a building that serves as the living quarters for the priests, young, most of them, with the hawk-like profile of the fanatic. Surprised and annoyed by the unexpected arrival of an Occidental, they take refuge in their house.

This, I divine, is one of the real temples of the Holy Mountain, far from the beaten track of the tourist. Here the priests are less courteous and smiling than those one finds in the temples on the way to the Shogun's tomb. These servitors of the gods



are poor and unbendingly haughty. For them the foreigner must be an object of hatred. None of these priests will hold out his hand for a coin like those in the pagodas we have visited.

The paper panes of a window slide back and I see a woman's plump face, lines strongly marked around eyes and mouth. But these eyes, large, expressive, almost straight set, are not like the eyes of other Japanese women. Her face makes me think of a round winter apple, darkened and wrinkled by time. Being a woman, she smiles, whether to express surprise or annoyance I know not, but revealing teeth covered with a gold that has turned dark as copper, thanks to the betel she chews.

I stroll about the clearing, feigning an interest in the trees surrounding it. I mount the steps of the temple, but I do not dare cross the threshold. The interior is visible, however—some white screens with Japanese inscriptions and a gilded table in the center, on which rest certain objects of a ceremonial nature doubtless.

I come down the steps and continue my slow promenade, for instinctively I feel that this is a place where I must linger, that something out of the ordinary is about to occur. . . . And I feel that there are eyes watching me from the other side of the paper windows, eyes eager to see me retire.

Time passes. At last a sort of gigantic insect, with a white body, green wings, and a black head, appears in the far end of the temple—a priest who has just emerged from the underground passage-way that connects the shrine with the house of the priests.

He is moving about evidently preparing for the performance of the rite. Suddenly the metallic clang of a gong announces the celebration of the service to a congregation which will never appear in the flesh. Nevertheless the gong rings out the same summons daily, exciting the birds of the forest to new outbursts of song, and arousing the innocent curiosity of the deer.

I feel all around me the indignation my person is provoking. My arrival coincided evidently with the hour set for the temple ceremonies. Perhaps, even, they have been delayed from moment to moment in the hope that I would remove my hateful presence. At last, however, convinced that there is no hope of getting rid of me, they determine to ignore me; and from that



moment on I admit my inferiority. I cease to exist; and the priests go through the daily ritual just as though they had no listeners but the birds and four-footed creatures of the forest.

The gong sounds again, and two priests enter the pagoda that lies wide open in front to the breezes and perfumes of the surrounding woodland. The celebrants wear white vestments like the priests of the Catholic faith, a green square-sleeved dalmatic over it, and a little black two-pointed cap with a tassel in front. They take their places on the floor, sitting cross-legged facing the table that serves as altar.

Taking advantage of the complete indifference with which I am now treated, I begin to ascend the steps of the sacred building with slow, gentle step, but before I have proceeded very far I stop short in surprise. The woman I had seen in the window enters the temple, dressed in such an extraordinary costume that there can be no doubt she too is one of the celebrants. She wears a red cassock, like those of the acolytes' in our cathedrals, and over it a white lace-trimmed rochet, also very similar to the garments of the Catholic ritual. But the exotic note is contributed by her head-dress. Over her lustrous Japanese coiffure this fifty-year-old priestess wears an enormous bow like that of the Alsatian feminine costume, but it is entirely white; and over her shoulder she carries a stick strung with strips of paper, and looking for all the world like a home-made fly-flap.

She too sits down on the floor in front of the table, turning her back upon me as I stand motionless on the top step where the fine sand of the temple begins, and where none but bare feet may tread.

The older of the priests wears enormous spectacles, and his sharply aquiline nose is very similar to that of many of his European confrères. His expression too, is the same, in its unbending severity, and he has the same ascetic emaciation, the sunken cheeks and the sharp nose conspicuous in the portraits of famous monks. In his right hand he carries a palette of curved wood that in form and size could serve as a shoe-horn for a race of giant's. The second priest, flat-nosed, and with high cheek-bones, recites a long prayer.

Suddenly he breaks off and rises to a squatting posture; and in this position, fairly dragging his posterior along the ground,

he disappears behind a screen. Almost at once he returns, carrying a golden fruit-basket which he places on the table. He continues his recitation, again squats on the ground as he walks, lays a goblet on the table, and a third time brings out still another offering to the ancestors.

I know now that I am observing a ceremony of the Shintoist ritual in all its original purity and such as could never be seen in any city. Here these rites are being performed, not for any public but in honor of the august shades of the two Shoguns in whose honor this temple was built centuries ago; and doubtless the offerings on the table are rice, and *sake*, and perhaps perfume.

When he has finished the offertory, the officiating priest puts his palette away in his sash, and takes from the folds of the latter a sort of wooden fan, really a series of wooden tablets strung together like diminutive shutters. The surface is inscribed with characters, and now the priest is reading aloud from this holy book. A long silence follows, in which the twitterings of the birds sound louder than ever. Some of them even fly into the temple or flutter about its eaves, undisturbed by ceremonies that occur in their forest every day.

The sense of a new presence behind me in the clearing makes me turn my head, and I see my two stags, who have come back to enjoy the freedom of the unobstructed space, and are playfully pursuing one another, rearing and gently clashing their horns.

The priestess stands motionless during the long offertory; and I am reminded of Parsifal watching the slow ceremony of the Holy Grail. But now the praying priest is silent; he tucks his fan-book away in his sash, and continues monotonously clanging his gong. The other priest has begun to strike a kettle-drum with both hands. I feel certain that the best part of the ceremony is about to take place.

The priestess gets up from the ground, slowly, with an undulatory movement like that of cobras when they coil their bodies under them, at the same time swaying their heads to the music of the snake charmer.

Now she is standing, and begins to move rhythmically



around the pagoda floor, to the monotonous beat of the kettle-drum.

Only a few hours ago, in one of the temples of the Shogun, I had watched the sacred dancers perform quite mechanically and solely for the tourist's money. But this dancer asks no reward, and will receive none. She dances alone, with no eye but mine to watch her, and that she ignores.

She takes a white fan from the folds of her white rochet, and moves it rhythmically as she sways from one side to the other of the enclosure, her face grave, her eyes ecstatic, her feet moving with the lightness of a child's.

I do not know the symbolic meaning of this dance in honor of the ancestors, but I can hear the galloping of horses as the kettle-drum beats faster and faster, I can hear the tramp of generations; and now the priestess lays her stick over her shoulder, like a pilgrim's staff, and moves her left arm backward and forward, and her steps grow longer as though she were walking through hours, years, centuries—the dance perhaps of the "Way of the Gods," the basic central feature of the Shintoist religion, that promises divinity after death to every Japanese.

The kettle-drum beats faster and faster, and the dancer accelerates her movements until she is running, leaping, drunk with her own dizzying speed as she whirls, until suddenly she collapses like a brilliant insect falling to the ground with out-stretched wings. As she lies prostrate I can see her back lifting with the strain of her panting. The priest gets up, and, suddenly calm, she also rises, and the three pass out in single file through the entrance to the passage-way that leads to the priests' house.

I turn around. I am completely alone. Not even the deer have stayed to escort me to the road. I take the path that, I believed, had led me to this spot, and follow it for awhile. But it is not long before I become aware that I am lost in the Sacred Forest, and that I shall not be able to get out of it without aid.

On every hand I notice little shrines, closed and silent, that I had not seen before. The other paths that cross mine all look the same. There is little to choose among them. The wide avenues at the end of which one can see signs of approaching

sunset are but slightly humid, and one can walk here comfortably enough. But the narrow paths branching out from them are still drenched with last night's rain, and the sticky soil hangs in great clumps of grayish clay to one's shoes.

Obviously I can only go further astray if I continue on the wrong road. I determine to wait beside a time-worn stone Buddha resting on his moss-grown pedestal until some passer-by takes pity on me. . . .

It is an ancient inhabitant of Japan who comes to my rescue, wearing a dark kimono with white lozenges and the traditional wooden shoes.

He smiles as I speak the name of my hotel and in pantomime gives me the most explicit directions; first a path to the left, then a path to the right until I reach the river. . . .

I feel impelled to express my gratitude as emphatically as possible. Besides, being so completely ignored by the Shinto priests I have just left has reduced me to a humility closely resembling Asiatic politeness. I lay my hands on my knees, bend over as though about to pitch headlong to the ground, and repeat:

*"Arigato! arigato!"*

My rescuer, agreeably surprised at hearing himself thanked in his own tongue, breaks into a burst of laughter that in Europe would be considered highly offensive. But laughter is habitual with the Japanese. To look solemn when one speaks to a stranger is for a Japanese the height of bad manners. Laughter accompanies the most varied and contradictory forms of expression. I have seen Japanese laugh while they were telling me about the horrors of the earthquake. The laugh was a courteous consideration for my feelings.

But this passer-by is laughing now with satisfaction, flattered at finding a foreigner who, he believes, knows Japanese. He replies with deep bows, accompanied by a rapidly increasing flow of observations, which he is convinced that I understand. I can do nothing, however, but repeat my bowings, and my one word of gratitude. Finally he is convinced of the limitations of my vocabulary, but does not for that cease his bows.

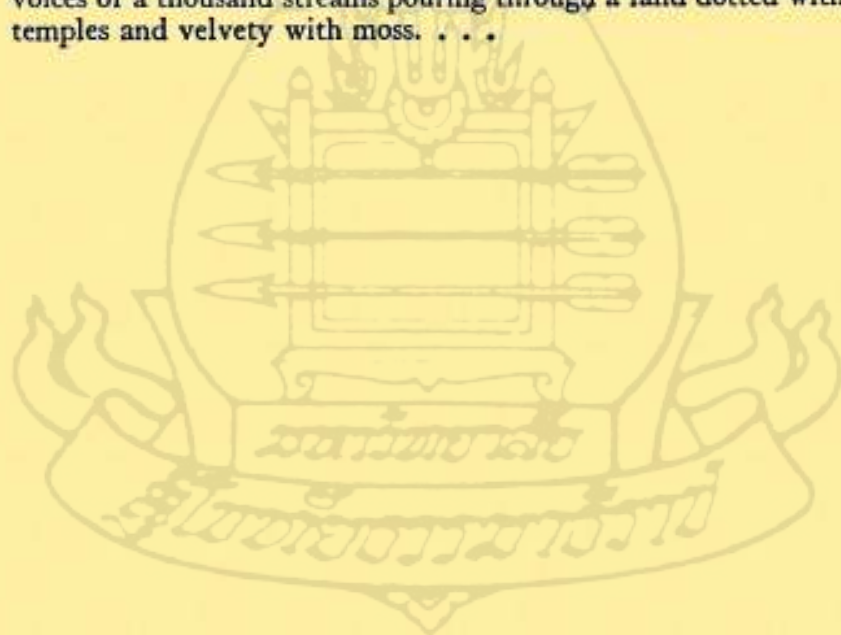
Which one of us will be the first to have a crick in his back? . . . At last I turn in the direction indicated. And I turn to



look once more at the laughing, childishly merry individual who so courteously came to my assistance, and whom I shall never see again: . . .

He is standing motionless in the middle of the path, and as soon as he sees me looking he begins his ceremonious salutations all over again. I do the same. . . . And so, each of us endeavoring to be the last to give a mark of esteem to the other, we exchange another dozen bows.

And now, as I recall the scene, it does not even occur to me to smile; for the things our eyes rest upon in this life strike us as comic or grotesque only in relation to their surroundings; and the gestures I have described, and all these indications of a good breeding refined to the point of exaggeration, occurred in the heart of the island of Nippon, on the slope of the famous Holy Mountain, in Nikko the marvellous, with none to witness it but great trees centuries old, and none to comment on it but the voices of a thousand streams pouring through a land dotted with temples and velvety with moss. . . .



## CHAPTER XVIII

### KYOTO THE SACRED

WE cannot leave this holy region without seeing the last part of a road that is unique among all the roads of the world. Dismissing our automobile, we get into *kurumas*, and the bare, muscular legs of our nearly naked runners, fly along in front of us.

The centuries have deepened the road between the double row of cedars that make an archway far above our heads. Their gnarled roots reach out from the high bank above us like strange sea-monsters caught by the deep-thrusting tree in some subterraneous sea. In spite of their gigantic proportions, the venerable growths tremble like teeth in aged shrunken gums at the slightest stirring of the air.

Many of them have fallen, and there are great clear spaces in the double column, like windows opening out on the golden country-side, aglow in the late afternoon sunshine. Here and there the fallen giants are still present in all the length and breadth of their pulpy mass, and one is obliged to pass under them as they lie stretched like bridges across the road. Many of these are the victims of the tornados that yearly devastate the Japanese archipelago.

Now and then the rows of verdant obelisks stop abruptly and we emerge from the twilight gloom that prevails unrelieved at their base to find ourselves crossing small villages where great flocks of ducks swim happily about on the irrigation ditches, or we pass old shrines protected by tiled roofs with their horn-like protuberances, and cemeteries with their odd oven-shaped graves.

A sense of insecurity and danger accompanies us among these ancient cedars and their earth-stripped roots, an anxiety such as one might feel in an old crumbling palace where the floor trembled and curved in like melting ice sheets under one's feet.



But the majestic spectacle presented by this road, guarded through the centuries by its double file of dark-clad cedars for a distance of nearly forty miles, mounting hills and descending into valleys until finally it runs off into the infinite, is so extraordinary that it is worth more than one risk to see it.

But soon this magnificent road-way will be no more. No effort is made to replace the trees once they have fallen and already the gaps are numerous. As one passes them troops of children appear on the top of the bank waving the Japanese flag and yelling "Banzai!" Within even half a century the road of the Shoguns will be nothing but a memory, living only in prints and poems.

I spend another day in Tokyo for the sake of visiting the tomb of the forty-seven Samurai who after waiting twenty years for the opportunity avenged their feudal lord, prince Akao, of an injury done him by the Mikado. For murdering in his palace the traitor who caused the injury, these heroes were condemned to death, but the very judges who sentenced them, out of respect for the fidelity the Samurai had shown to their chief, allowed them to commit *harakiri*, instead of inflicting on them the disgrace of delivering them into the hands of the hangman. Years afterward these Samurai were pronounced saints and heroes by the Mikado, and now their story is learned by every schoolchild in Japan. Whole families make pilgrimages to the tomb of these heroes, and the ancient time-battered temple beside it.

It is a night's journey by train to Kyoto, the holy city of Japan. My fellow-travellers soon divest themselves of their western clothes and put on kimonos. Obviously it is as hard for them to sit the way we do as for us to sit cross-legged. Everyone in the compartment except myself ends by shedding his shoes and drawing his legs up under him, until the seats look like shelves on which someone has placed large-sized porcelain figures.

No sooner is it dark than the guard begins to discharge his duties toward the feet of his passengers, providing each traveller with the pair of clean white woollen slippers that are a part of every sleeping-car reservation in Japan.

I awake to find myself in the outskirts of Kyoto. The level



ground on every side is divided into small carefully cultivated rice-fields. The water in the ditches gleams, laughing in the clear sunlight. Farther on there are orchards but all on a diminutive scale, and the rows of trees are as carefully tended as a garden-bed. This Japanese agriculture is as perfect and exquisite as the art of miniature painting. Here and there in the distance blue lakes nestle between grove-clad hills. Everything is small, graceful, fragile, at the same time revealing a tenacious will that for centuries has been learning how to get the greatest possible returns out of this soil.

There are numerous Buddhist sects in Kyoto, which does not prevent the most important interpreters and commentators of Buddhist theology from being found here also. At one time the Buddhist temples in this city numbered nearly four thousand. There are also twenty-five hundred Shinto temples and shrines.

The largest of the Buddhist pagodas, the cathedral of Buddhism, one might say, was here when Francis Xavier visited the city. It is really an agglomeration of pagodas in an enclosure, but separated from one another by wide granite-paved courts.

The buildings are all of wood, cut in great beams that remind one of the ribs of a ship. The roofs look like inverted keels that for centuries have been painted and carved by patient artists. Enormous tree-trunks support the super-structure, and they are truly gigantic if one compares them with the small graceful buildings found elsewhere in Japan.

Everything is covered with gold lacquer, but the centuries, the smoke of the city, and the wear and tear of pilgrim multitudes have dulled the original splendor of these temples, which have nevertheless maintained an air of aged majesty. Underneath the veneer of their surfaces, however, the wood is worm-eaten and the stucco of some of the pilasters has crumbled away showing the hollow rib-work.

The priests are celebrating Buddhist rites in one of the larger temples, and as I stop to observe the ceremonies I feel exactly as though I had suddenly stepped into a Catholic church in Spain or Italy at some early service when a large part of the congregation consists of women on their way home from market. Housewives are squatting on the floor, their overflowing market



baskets beside them, and praying very low in words that are unintelligible to my ear.

On the other side of the railing that surrounds the main altar, where Buddha sits with a lily in his hand, I see two rows of priests chanting the service. The way they stand, all their gestures, remind me of the Sunday High Mass I had often witnessed as a child. The rhythm and modulations of these Buddhist chants are in no way startling to the ear of the Occidental, on the contrary we recognize them at once as something we know. They remind us of music we have heard in our western world much as certain musical phrases will remind us of some half-forgotten composition we once knew.

Facing the altar are three priests in white robes, a fold of gold cloth embroidered in colors about their necks, and identical in weave to the short capes worn by the Catholic clergy. The only difference is in the shape, the garments of our western clergy being cut and sewn in conformity with an established pattern while about their shoulders the Buddhist priests wear pieces of material, just as it comes from the famous looms of Kyoto, without attempting to shape it.

• Again, as at Nikko, I am struck by the physical resemblance between these Buddhist priests and our European clergy. Many of them, of course, are characteristically Japanese in feature, and to our eyes startlingly ugly. But many of them also have the aquiline nose, and the pallid oily obesity of the male who lives a sedentary life sheltered from all inclemencies of weather. I have noted this same appearance among the Brahmins of India. Apparently there is a priestly type that is common to the whole world!

While the Buddhists are chanting their offices I look about at the decorations of this impressive temple. In the cornices are sculptured figures pink-fleshed and playing musical instruments. These are the "*tomines*," the angels of Buddhism, and they have the same wings, the same appearance of effeminacy, that distinguishes the angels of the Catholic creed, save that the Buddhist angels are less ambiguous in gender, and frankly feminine in form.

Something is moving up there among the sculptures and images. My eyes are accustomed to the semi-obscurity of the

nave, and I distinguish numerous small eyes glowing at me like diamonds from the darkness. Then some little bundles of fur come trotting out along the salients of the ceiling. The rats inhabiting these ship-temples are legion and doubtless they have been drawn out of their holes by the smell of the food in the baskets of the devout housewives, or perhaps they have been disturbed by the chants of the priests at the altar.

And now the officiating priest stands with his back to the congregation, both hands held out on a level with his head toward the altar—a gesture identical with one of those in the Catholic service. Then he turns to face his congregation, and now the gesture is one of benediction, though I cannot make out the words.

But I retire. The spectacle before me has no charm of novelty. . . . The surprises of Asia. . . . Have these priests adopted some of the ritual gestures of Catholic missionaries? But, I reflect, their religion is six centuries older than Christianity, and when Saint Francis Xavier arrived in this city, the ceremonies I have just been observing were ceremonies that had been customary for nearly two thousand years.

In the court-yard of the temple, great flocks of doves, start up, with a loud cooing and a great flutter of feathers, at my unwelcome presence, and the whole of a dark worm-eaten pagoda turns white as they alight upon it.

Kyoto is one of the largest cities in the islands, but it is on the edge of modernized Japan, and not yet fully committed to western ways of living. It is in short the most Japanese of all Nippon's cities, and the last refuge of all the old arts. It is here that one finds assembled in small family work-rooms all the most skillful embroiderers, weavers, metal-workers, and painters of silk and china. Whenever some other city wants to purchase an object representative of the art of Japan, they send to Kyoto for it.

Some of the streets are crossed by canals on which various kinds of craft, all engaged in commerce, pass up and down, under high-arched bridges. In the shops the shop-keepers all wear black kimonos—as great a mark of respect for their patrons as it would be in Europe or America if the clerks in the shops should put on dress-suits to wait on customers.



There are very few foreigners in Kyoto, and the people one sees on the streets all wear the traditional Japanese costume. Here the traveller feels very far from home, and distinctly sensible of his inferiority. What though the Japanese he meets smile at him out of courtesy? There is no doubting their own sense of being superior.

It is growing dark, and in the numerous crowded streets adorned with electric signs and fluttering flags we lose our way. On every side theaters, cinemas, tea-houses, dance-halls! Over some of the doorways are pasted huge photographs of girls. . . We have strayed into the heart of the Yoshiwara district.

The crowd is growing more dense moment by moment. Everybody when work is over comes here in search of amusement, and remains until midnight. No one in sight but Japanese, who look at us with wonder, or with a curiosity not always friendly! It is not that they are surprised to see us in this particular quarter of the city, for there are a great many very respectable Japanese families here beside us going to the theater; but they are surprised to see us a-foot. Foreigners in Japan invariably go about in automobiles or *kurumas*. Even the dogs expect that of them. There are not many dogs in Japan, but one of them, catching sight of us on this walk through Kyoto, began barking at us furiously, snapping, growling, showing his teeth. Only the intervention of a smiling Japanese prevents the animal from leaving the mark of his teeth on our calves. Obviously the mere sight of us infuriates him. He is not accustomed to foreigners, our rescuers explain, especially not to foreigners a-foot, except in front of national monuments. The sound of guitars and subdued singing from the houses of the geishas pervades the air. In front of the theaters enormous signs, like those in front of our picture-houses, give samples of the most irresistible scenes from the play being given inside. Usually the hero of these pieces is a Japanese youth dressed up as a cowboy, and invariably his deeds of prowess leave all the forty-seven Samurai in the shade!

Although the hero's adventures must by this hour be drawing to a close, since they began shortly after sunrise, new arrivals keep entering the theater and taking their places beside the spectators, who have breakfasted and lunched there without leaving



their seats and are now preparing to take supper, for never a single moment losing track of the hair-raising episodes in which the hero single-handed puts to flight dozens of murderous brigands, tames wild horses, takes possession of an entire railway train as it dashes along at full speed, makes a slumbering volcano break into eruption!

In front of every one of these theaters enormous banners, some of them as large as the entire façade, and covered with Japanese characters, are hung out for the edification of the passer-by. Here, every famous actor has his own banner bearing his name and coat of arms, and wherever he is acting this banner is suspended in front of the theater so that his admirers may know where to find him. Naturally each actor tries to have his banner correspond in size to his own idea of himself and some of these multi-colored sheets of bunting reach dimensions that are a serious menace to the front of the theater on windy days.

The actresses inspire more enthusiasm even than the actors. The reader doubtless knows that in Japan, feminine rôles are acted by boys, who, if they make a success of acting in their early years, keep right on taking women's parts regardless of their age; and thus it frequently happens that the heroine whose misfortunes stir the audience to tears and sighs and thrills is in reality an effeminate old man, painted and enamelled within an inch of his life. At this very moment one of the most important persons on the Japanese stage is a man-actress whose earnings amount to some ten thousand dollars a month.

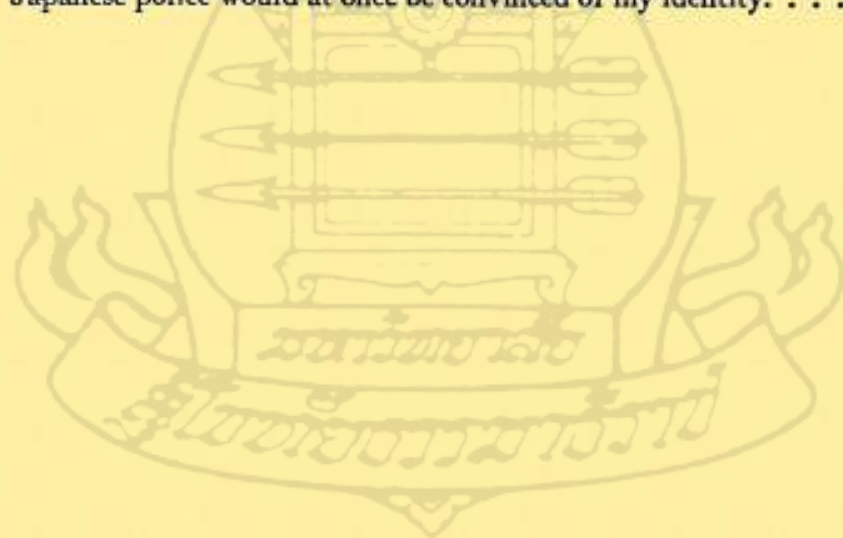
Shoved about in the crowd, and stared at none too kindly by most of the faces we see, elbowed and jostled by a throng in which a good many individuals smell strongly of *sake*, I begin to wish I had kept my guide with me on this excursion. Among these thousands of human beings, streaming past under waving banners, and electric signs in an air that hums with singing, playing, strange words and street cries, I feel far more alone and helpless than in the dark and ancient forest of the Shoguns. . . .

Suddenly my eye falls on some sign boards so enormous that besides covering the entire front of the theater, they climb up onto the roof, and cut off a large piece of the sky-line. Under pictures of strange wasp-waisted beings, leaping about in front



of fire-welching bulls I discover some Japanese characters with a translation into English alongside. "Blood and Sand"—this is the Japanese version of a Spanish bull-fight! But the hero, the Rodolfo Valentino whom so many feminine admirers in the United States have voted the handsomest man in the world, has been translated into Japanese also. For our notions of beauty are not theirs. They have shortened his nose, and raised his eyebrows and squared his jaw with the laudable intention of softening his startling white-race ugliness to Japanese eyes. And then beside the hero's portrait I discover another, vaguely familiar, where, in spite of the short straight nose, upward slanting eyebrows, and ferocious expression worthy of a Japanese wrestler, bestowed upon me by some well-intentioned artist, I recognize a Japanese version of my own person! . . .

And at once the sense of perilous loneliness has vanished. I find myself safe under the wing of the cinema. At need the cinema could protect me! For I have only to stand beside the impressive portrait of the author and indicate by pantomime that I am he. If even I have discovered a faint resemblance between that fierce-eyed personage and myself, the chances are that the Japanese police would at once be convinced of my identity. . . .



## CHAPTER XIX

### THE TEMPLE OF THE THIRTY-THREE THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-THREE GODS

It would require a great effort of the imagination to find any particular interest in the imperial monuments of Kyoto. Viewed from the outside they look like fine stables, such as one might find in England. Inside one is depressed by the emptiness of the rooms, where not a single cushion or vase relieves the general air of abandonment.

But it takes another kind of effort to leave the silent, and majestically simple gardens of the royal domain. The gnarled and twisted cedars of its walks are centuries old, and at the foot of each is a bed of moss as wide in circumference as the top of the tree.

Some working women are sweeping the pathways, and they smile at us, revealing numerous gold fillings in their teeth. For the Japanese, a mouthful of gold-patched teeth is a real distinction and even the poorest classes are willing to endure privation in order to achieve it. . . . To the Japanese eye gold is beautiful anywhere!

Since I was a child I have dreamed of visiting the temple of the Thirty-Three Thousand and Thirty-Three gods. I find it to be a large wooden pagoda, as battered and worm-eaten in outward aspect as are nearly all the Japanese temples.

Some priests with close-shaven heads, and saffron garments wrapped around them toga fashion, come out to meet us, collecting a small fee for admitting us to their shrines, and offering to sell us pictures of the gods, prayer-papers, and small souvenirs of the famous pagoda.

At the very entrance one encounters a large image presiding, so to speak, over this assemblage of divinities, and occupying what might be called the main altar, while on both sides extend



flights of steps on which, symmetrically arranged in rows, stand two thousand images of the goddess of Mercy, every one of them six-armed—a stupendous total of limbs!

In the various minor shrines of the temple are other gods, of all sizes, from that of the average human being to the smallest insect, and made of gold, bronze, marble, wood, Chinese jade, lapis lazuli from Siberian mines, or plain brass. Some are of pleasing shape and smile at their worshippers with god-like benevolence. Others are monstrously ugly, staring out at the world with the menacing, terrifying expressions which the Japanese image-makers seem to have considered a particularly desirable attribute of the gods they represented. Some, more like animals than divinities, fairly bristle with their multiple arms and legs, looking like mythical versions of the octopus.

It is this temple's sacred duty to keep the tally of its divine inhabitants up to the number of five threes. No matter what calamities may overtake the world, the population of this temple must never fall below that thirty-three thousand three hundred and thirty-three. It has happened in the course of centuries that flame and sword have at various times destroyed the temple, and with it some of its gods. But the priests who guard and serve this celestial hostelry have always set about restoring it as quickly as possible after these accidents.

Beside the temple there is a work-shop where every day gods and goddesses are brought in for repairs. The image-makers—some of them are extremely aged—look like old alchemists, their caps fitting close under their sparse stringy white beards, large spectacles perched on their noses. Now they glue an arm to one of the small marble gods who has inadvertently shed one of the six or eight limbs springing from his breast, and now they file off the bronze with which they have grafted a bicep to some metal or wooden torso.

There is another famous pagoda in the heart of Kyoto, situated on a hill from the summit of which one obtains a very fine view of the various quarters, gardens, and canals of the sacred city. At certain seasons of the year large numbers of women pilgrims come to this temple, which is built above a miraculous spring. Any matron who drinks of this water becomes a mother within the year. And sometimes—strange to relate—the same

miracle occurs in the case of young girls who drink these waters, in spite of their maiden *coiffure!*

But there are no pilgrimages in winter-time. Nearly all the buildings in this vicinity are occupied by dealers in religious objects, and the ordinary small porcelain figures are to be found everywhere.

It is a motley population that is assembled in the show-windows and shelves of these image-venders, sometimes obscene grotesques, elbowing images of the gods, or equestrian statuettes of the present emperor's predecessor. One has difficulty in determining, in these shops of the Far East, where religion ends and where caricature begins, who is a god, and who is simply a caricature intended to amuse the beholder.

The hotels of Japan contain innumerable signs in Japanese characters hung up everywhere—wise maxims and sage advice provided by the hotel management for their patrons. In a number of these establishments my eye had been caught by one of these signs, which in addition to some characters showed a tree laden with blossoms and surrounded by flocks of birds. Here again in Kyoto I find the same picture, but explained at last for the benefit of the mystified traveller.

The characters accompanying this sketch are a poem, it seems, entitled "The Ballad of the Japanese Hotel Association!" The hotel-keepers of Japan, having evidently heard of the advantages of advertising, ordered a poem, celebrating the excellencies of their hostelries, from one of Japan's famous poets. Here is the fragment of it as translated into English by the solicitous management of the Grand Hotel, Kyoto:

A hotel is a plum-tree  
Laden with succulent fruits.  
The guests that take to shelter in its boughs  
Are nightingales . . .

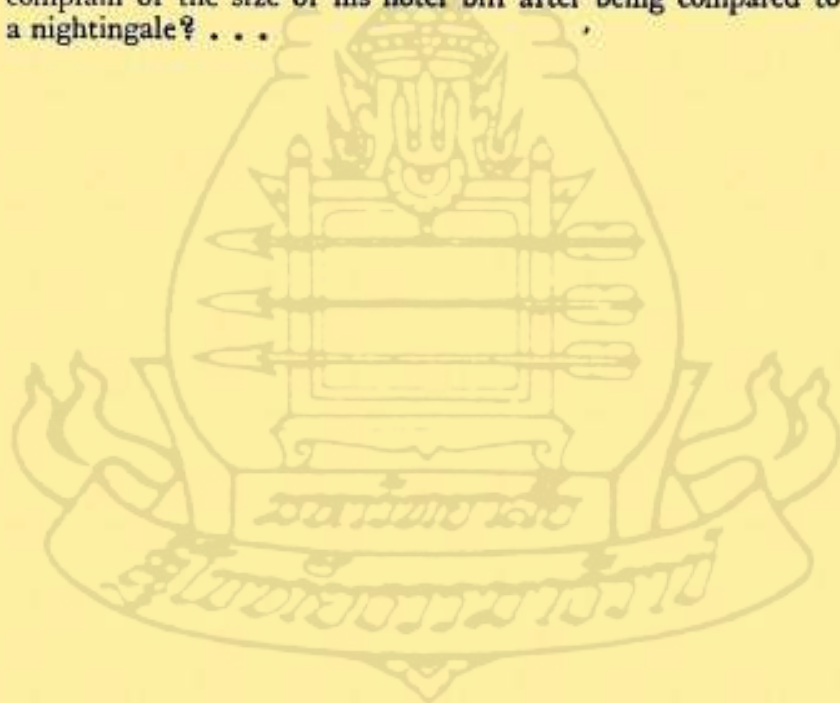
It is only a few years since Japan has had modern hotels. In the Japanese provinces remote from the coast, the inn-keepers show hospitality to the traveller in much the same style that the nobles of the Middle Ages practised. There is no set price for lodging and meals, and it would injure the inn-keeper's feelings to discuss payment with him. When the guest departs, however,



he discreetly, almost secretly, entrusts what he considers an adequate compensation to the host's wife or chief servant, with the assurance of his undying gratitude for the hospitality he has enjoyed.

Apparently it has been as easy for the Japanese to adopt the modern version of the big hotel as the modern version of business and trade. But the leaders of the hotel enterprise in Japan, for all they were imitating western styles to the best of their ability, evidently felt the need of giving their "Palaces" a touch of the traditional, of the patriotic.

But who can deny that these enterprising Japanese in frock coats who are managing "plum-tree" life in Nippon are better psychologists than the managers of equivalent institutions in Europe and America, who treat their patrons with the haughty aloofness of a crowned head. For who would have the heart to complain of the size of his hotel bill after being compared to a nightingale? . . .



## CHAPTER XX

### THE TWO JAPANS

ON the way to Nara, an ancient capital of Japan, we pass numerous tea plantations, most of them protected from the wind by hedges of bamboo. Almost the entire crop, of a harsher flavor than China tea, is consumed at home, and some of it, that of Uji, is reputed to keep anyone who drinks two cups of it awake all night.

The countryside we see from the train is gay with signs of the New Year celebration. Flags and lanterns adorn the streets and everywhere there are troops of children surrounded by clouds of paper dragons. Everywhere the blue of the sky is streaked with the long tails of kites.

Nara is the oldest city of the archipelago. It dates from prehistoric times when the gods and the ancestors of the Mikado were still very intimate in their relations.

It happened that one of these divinities arrived in Nara long ago mounted on a stag. Ever since that remote event, stags have been venerated in Nara, and hundreds of them roam in the park sacred to them. The creatures are fond of visitors and no sooner does one's *kuruma* stop in the shade of some great tree than, with a tremendous crashing of branches, a deer springs out from the thick groves to welcome the visitor, who will, of course, make the traditional offering of a bran and molasses cake, which he will purchase from one of the pretty little *musmes* who spring up around the visitor as promptly as the stags themselves.

As one jogs along in the *kuruma* the stags follow hopeful of other offerings, and if one steps down to continue the promenade through the park afoot, they stretch out their necks sniffing and poking at one's chest with their long sensitive upper lips. But they never forget their manners so far as to snatch at the package containing the bran and molasses cakes specially baked for them, but wait courteously until they are served, gravely



accepting the cakes held out to them, and bobbing their antlers in acknowledgment of the offering.

One of the sights Nara has to offer the tourist is the roundup of the sacred stags, when to the martial strains of the bugle all the seven hundred deer of the park come out of their groves and meadows, pouring into the open space from all sides, until all one sees is a great stream of these red and white-furred creatures, their branching antlers eddying around the bugler and his aids; and underneath the strains of the bugle one hears a sound as continuous as that of rushing water—the sound of thousands of hoofs scuffling the sand of the assembly ground.

The spectators on these occasions buy up all the stock of the *musmes*, stepping down to the parade ground to feed the stags, who frequently follow their generous visitors for a long distance poking them in the back with snout or forehead stripped of antlers—only the young ones are allowed to wear their horns—by way of persuading them to turn around and make another offering.

Nara is also famous for its avenue of lanterns, small tower-like structures of granite, that line the pathways in the park leading to the Buddhist and Shinto temples perched on its slopes.

These little street-lamp pagodas are some of them very old, as it was formerly the fashion for rich families in Japan to build them in the park at Nara in honor of their ancestors, and yearly they came to pay their respects to this monument on the occasion of the Feast of Lanterns. Once a year the three or four thousand lanterns under the trees of Nara are lit and travellers come from even the most distant provinces to see this national spectacle. Miles and miles of these little stone chapels glow through the night with a soft vague luminousness, a light as of other worlds, giving a supernatural aspect to the dark slumbering forest.

Here one may watch sacred dances in the Shinto temples, but the performers we saw were less mindful of their holy office than the dancers of Nikko, revealing a quite feminine coquetry in their attire.

Here too one may see, in a stable belonging to one of the temples, a little blue-eyed white horse, a sacred animal guarded

by the priests, because, it seems, the god of the adjoining temple once arrived in Nara on a white horse and should he take it into his head to visit this city again he will find his steed there ready to take him back to the lands whence he came centuries ago.

But we have not yet exhausted the resources of the Sacred Park. Besides the stags and the white horse there is a lake full of gold-fish, the latter sacred also, and of a monstrous size, thanks to the vast quantities of food that have been offered them for generations.

While I am admiring the swords and poignards in the forge of a famous smith in the out-kirts of the city, I am distracted from my purchasing by a great commotion in the adjoining building, where I hear men shouting and stamping as though engaged in the most arduous labor. I look into see what is going on, and find a crowd of laughing, sweating Japanese punching and slapping great masses of dough that is to be baked into New Year's bread. They are almost naked but wear a handkerchief around their necks like our Spanish peasants in Aragon. Five of them slap the dough in rhythm while the sixth, raising a heavy mallet above his head, brings it down with all his strength on the spongy mass.

A dangerous sport evidently, this kneading! The man with the mallet does his best to bring his weapon down on the hands of the others. That is the game evidently, and from the roars of laughter with which his efforts to smash a hand here and there are greeted, it is evidently relished. As this work makes a man sweat, he has to drink a good deal to keep it up. These jovial workers are by now steeped in *sake*, and, growing more and more reckless under the influence of fermented rice and their own singing, they take turns at swinging the mallet, aflame with the estimable desire to prove more skillful than the rest, and smash a fellow-worker's hand. . . .

In the station at Nara we see trains covered with snow come in from the north. No snow as yet in Nara, but an icy wind! In spite of it nearly naked peasants pass quietly up and down alongside the icicles dripping on the cars; and the eternal school children, wearing nothing but a light, white-spotted kimono, go by bare-legged, their flesh roughened and blue with cold.

On the platforms I see Japanese that look as the Mikado's



subjects must have looked before he commanded his country to adopt western customs—old men with tufted beards, their long hair high on their heads, a strand of it hanging down like a pen-wiper on the back of their necks in the style of the ancient Samurai. At the same time in the windows of the trains I see Japanese dressed like our working men, soldiers in European uniforms, women of independent mien, who know how to earn their rice and have emancipated themselves from feminine servitude.

There are two Japans, the Japan that has gone full steam ahead with respect to progress, and the other which clings to the traditions of the past, or which remains as it was out of sheer inertia. But this contradiction cannot last. It has persisted for several years just as the trays of a scale in which unequal weights have been placed remain level for the fraction of a second. But the fifty years during which Japan has been absorbing western civilization are but a brief moment in her history.

No, Japan cannot keep scales of unequal weight on the same level. If she wishes to preserve her traditional organization, she will have to turn backward. If she would continue in the path of western progress, she will have to advance with confidence in the unknown, for it indicates a childish simple-mindedness to expect to enjoy all the advantages of progress without running its risks and enduring its discomforts.

The Japan of ancient cities, sacred groves, pagodas, and legends is still a reality; but so is the Japan of the great industrial centers, with their millions of workers who imitate the organization and repeat the demands of the working classes of other countries. Socialism is steadily gaining converts in Japanese centers of industry. What, one cannot help wondering, does the future hold in store, if the Japanese working man devotes himself to revolutionary teachings with the same tenacious enthusiasm, the same disregard of his own life, the same indifference to his own needs and comforts that his ancestors displayed in their devotion to the Mikado?

The traditional organization of the country is still strong, and its roots run deep, but there is no doubt that those who guide and direct this organization have lost the confidence and tranquillity that was theirs in former times. The Japanese govern-

ment and its functionaries frequently give evidence of this insecurity by stooping to acts unworthy of a country which has emerged from barbarism. Propagandists of Socialism have been hanged by the Japanese police, and their families persecuted and even done to death.

When a famous Japanese Socialist was shot a few years ago by a captain of police, the judges who condemned the murderer to a light sentence excused their leniency on the grounds that he had committed a murder in a moment of moral confusion, in the belief that he was performing an act beneficial to his country.

But there are also Japanese who attempt to murder the Mikado. In spite of his magnificent record as an enlightened ruler an attempt was made to assassinate the predecessor of the present monarch. And while I was in Nara, a workingman attempted to shoot the Prince-regent, who is in reality the emperor.

To understand what such acts as this mean, one must have lived in Japan. The Mikado is the great-grandson of the gods; he holds frequent converse with divinity. Up to a few years ago he never appeared in public, but observed the customs of his ancestors who went about with an escort of two-sworded warriors; and any Japanese who presumed to approach the emperor, even with the innocent desire of looking at him, was deprived of his head at short notice. Even the present Mikado appears in public only at rare intervals . . . and on these occasions some Japanese is apt to shoot at him.

And when a Japanese attempts to shoot his Mikado, it is as though the son of a pious Basque peasant, whose ancestors had bled and died for the Catholic faith, were to shoot at the Pope. . . .



## CHAPTER XXI

### THE ISLAND WHERE NOBODY DIES

OSAKA is the second largest city after Tokyo, and is full of modern buildings and people dressed like Europeans. A network of wires runs along above the railway track, and hundreds of chimneys pour out smears of smoke on a sky which only fifty years ago served the artists of the country as a background for flocks of flying storks.

The principal avenues are separated by wide canals along which pass *sampans* of archaic shape and spick-and-span tug-boats taking merchandise to Kobe, in reality, the port of Osaka.

Enormous crowds of workers pour out from the factories into the streets of Osaka at night, many of them women workers from the silk looms. Between this type of woman and the *musmes* of a few years ago there is a world of difference. There is very little difference, however, between them and our European working woman. Even in dress they are similar. And there are the same workingmen's organizations here that one finds in the more progressive countries of Europe.

One effect of this vast working population is to fill the city with theaters and cinema houses. The Japanese needs to spend very little money on his food, and saves a large part of his wages for recreation. The chief ambition of the Japanese working woman is to go to the movies, and dress like a European woman. We are very far away here from the old Japan of the books and the prints!

But before leaving the islands of Nippon we wish to see something more of the original Japan that is still in love with its traditions. By rail we follow the shores of the Inland Sea and spend a whole day passing through the landscapes that the great masters of Japanese art spent two centuries and a half in reproducing.

The Inland Sea has none of the bleak monotony of ocean

scenes. There is always in the background some promontory or solitary mountain peak or group of islands. As the ocean waters forced their way into the land, they gnawed out the coast in a succession of small gulfs, almost landlocked bays, and straits narrower than many a medium-sized river, but deep enough to admit ships of considerable draught, and even ocean liners.

Before us pass wide bays of slumbering green water on which the *sampans* of the coasting trade rest, motionless with their shutter-like sails and their high poops. Yonder, gliding away from us over the surface of the water are groups of black isles and sharply salient volcanic peaks. In other small bays, the surface of the Inland Sea is tossed about by a capricious deviation of the wind, and green waves alternate with frosting white ones, the parallel rows as closely joined as the folds of a garment. This is the sea of the Japanese prints. What seems so exaggerated and unnatural, as it is depicted in picture and screen, is in fact an exact copy of reality!

The shores are dotted with little fishing villages where boats with sharp-pointed bows and sterns lie drying in the squares, the promenades, and the gardens. In front of houses with black concave roofs and walls of unpainted wood, flocks of *muscos* are running about, waving their arms and shouting as the train passes by, with the somewhat impudent exuberance of Japanese children. Apparently the Japanese acquire their smiling, concentrated and somewhat disquieting amiability only on reaching manhood, when the exigencies of life require such a change. It is for good reasons that civic and special agencies in Japan are fond of offering prizes to "virtuous widows" and "respectful children."

When we come back to the shore after a short excursion inland to visit Himaja Castle and other strongholds of the ancient *daimios*, we find salt-water canals gliding like rivers between coast and islands, and great ships slowly steaming up these watery passage-ways, in the midst of which small islets, and rocks, and tree clusters, make the path-way still more narrow.

A great wealth of marine fauna and flora is to be found in this labyrinth of green canals. Countless fishing boats, nets, and fishing implements of all kinds, are strewn over the shores for miles. It is easy to see that here life centers on this sea



in which the sunlight produces such an extraordinary number of effects according to the configuration of the shore. In some of the bays where the mountains seem to enclose a portion of the sea in a cup, the light is green, red, and blue, all at once, as though a rainbow were about to take shape. It is snowing now but the sun is still shining and the rice fields are glittering like mirrors in a white frame.

And now we leave the train to visit the famous island of Miyajima, the Japanese Arcady, "the land where nobody is born and nobody dies."

Miyajima, with its cedars and its fruit trees that bear only blossoms, is an open-air temple dedicated to the gods. In its sacred groves are stags as unacquainted with fear as those of Nara. No one would think of doing any harm to these creatures, who are the lords of the island.

The Japanese of ancient times tried to show in this chosen spot how beautiful life would be if there were no such thing as pain, or death, or the need of working for a living.

As the traveller approaches the island a sense of profound peace takes possession of him. The deer trot towards him to lick his hands in expectation of some tidbit. Along the paths through the woodlands and meadows one meets *musmes* whose frank smiles bear no trace of calculating coquetry. Apparently these young women belong to a world of innocence where sin and the sense of sin do not exist. Here and there in the groves of the sacred forest one comes upon little time-worn shrines, built of stone, and dedicated to Buddha, and at night small granite light-towers glow in the darkness of the trees in memory of the Ancestors.

Everything suggestive of modern life, with its noise and discomforts, is forbidden in Miyajima. No dogs are allowed lest they annoy the deer. There is not an automobile on the island, and even *kurumas* are forbidden. Everyone must walk on his own two feet as in the garden of Eden. Gasoline is contraband, and so are such modern annoyances as the telegraph, the telephone, and electric light.

Up to within fifty years ago it was also forbidden to be born or to die in the island. Any woman about to give birth to a child, or any sick person, was carried over to the shore



of the mainland opposite. The sweetness of enduring peace was thus preserved to the inhabitants. There was never a harsh word nor the sound of quarrelling in Miyajima.

Today this isle of peace is still an isle of murmuring groves where the sacred stags are as safely guarded as in the past. But the human inhabitants have changed. Now people are born here and die here just as anywhere else. Invalids and rapacious hotel keepers have made the sacred island similar in many respects to the watering-places of Europe.

The most original of Miyajima's religious monuments is a pagoda built on piles over the water. A huge *torii*, or gateway, rises above the quiet surface of the enclosed pool reflecting its every line in the water below—the most impressive of these beautiful structures to be found anywhere in Japan.

The interior of this sea temple is dedicated to Peace; but no sooner does one enter within its gates than one stumbles upon mementoes of war and the dangerous vanities of patriotism. Many of the soldiers of the Russo-Japanese war left their spoons here in honor of the goddess, and the walls of the temple are hung with pictures representing the chief naval battles of this conflict and depicting the effects of modern shell fire with lurid detail.

Must peace be forever one of humanity's vain dreams? Certain men of the yellow race tried centuries ago to bring into being a place where the pains of birth and death would be unknown, a place so imbued with the spirit of peace that human beings and all creatures living there should forever remain in ignorance of fear. But now patriotism comes in pilgrimage to this shrine to deposit before it souvenirs of war, and paintings crammed with details of slaughter!

On the way to the train which is to take us to Shimo-no-seki, where we are to embark for the continent of Asia, we encounter an unexpected travelling companion whose mere presence suffices to draw a great crowd of officials to all the railway stations we pass through. The crown prince of Korea is going to visit the capital of the country ruled by his ancestors. "Heir to the crown of Korea" is an empty title now, since Japan definitely annexed that country in 1910.

On the station platforms we see groups of officers who have



come to discharge a duty of courtesy and salute this forgotten prince, towards whom they feel not even the slightest twinge of curiosity. The crowd, however, pays no attention to these monotonous and pompous ceremonies but goes about its business, buying tickets, eating lunches, and washing up at the white tiled wash-stands that provide boiling hot water at every station platform. No matter how cold the weather, there are always Japanese taking a bath unprotected by the slightest screen or curtain while waiting for their trains.

Through snow ankle-deep we make our way aboard the long narrow ship that is to take us to Korea, and from the upper deck I watch a procession of lanterns like those one sees in old prints. The prince with his escort is coming aboard!

First a long detachment of police march down through the snow, carrying round paper lanterns, and between the two rows of red and yellow lights flickering over the whiteness, comes the prince, of unmistakably Asiatic appearance, in the uniform of a Japanese general.

He looks about him with an anxious timid smile. In front of him stalks his wife, a Japanese lady of high rank, swinging one arm in military fashion, and holding herself very straight so as to appear taller. She is attired in a long coat, and wears a hat, European fashion. An official close by her side holds a brilliantly colored paper parasol over her head. Obviously all the attentions are for the wife, and the poor prince comes trotting along after her as though he were simply a member of her retinue.

As we sail away from the Flowery Kingdom in the darkness and snow, I feel more forcibly than ever how dual and contradictory is the spirit of Japan. I cannot but admire the enormous capacity for effort of a people which in half a century traversed the distance separating our Middle Ages from our modern period, and in this fabulously short space of time assimilated all the material progress accomplished by the western nations. I admire also her fine educational system, and am amazed at the discipline which made it possible for this nation, at a word of command from the Mikado, to change its customs, its manner of dress, its habits of thought, all at a moment's notice.

Some people see in all this nothing but a great talent for



imitation, a simian's genius for mimicry raised to the *n*th degree. It is true that the Japanese have copied other nations, without producing anything original. But half a century is a small measure of time, and it is too much to ask of a nation that in addition to absorbing several foreign civilizations in two generations it should also produce something original of its own. It remains for the future to show whether the Japanese are simply imitators or whether, after completing the cycle of imitation, they can make some original contribution to the world's progress.

The future of Japan is even more enigmatic than that of other nations. One cannot divine at present whether Japan will continue to move forward, accepting progress with its ruthless destruction of the old order, or whether it will grow frightened as its rapidly multiplying hordes of workingmen begin to make the same demands as the workingmen of the white races. In the latter case there is nothing to do but shut the gates of Japan as in the time of the Shoguns.

But of one thing I am certain and that is that the Japanese have been unduly praised. They are neither the "yellow monkeys" their disparagers once called them, nor the supermen they became in popular estimation after the Russo-Japanese war. There is reason enough to be amazed at the material progress achieved by this nation and at the way in which, in so short a time, it succeeded in assembling and in organizing means of offenses and defense. But Japan had extraordinary good luck. To gain additional territory, Japan naturally turned to the continent at her door where she found a disorganized China, little disposed to fight. Beyond China was a more important enemy, the Russia of the Czars, rotten to the core by the corruption of its bureaucrats, weakened by the hatred of its own masses, and at the same time obliged to maintain armies almost on the opposite side of the planet, with no other means of transportation than the incompleting Transiberian railway.

The great powers show no little severity in dealing with Japan, which continues silently to nurse its dream of dominating the greater part of Asia, that England, Japan's old teacher and ally, has let slip out of her hand. The United States, installed in Hawaii and the Philippines, extends over menaced China a pro-



tection which finds expression in words rather than deeds. Japan feels a silent rage that is daily growing in volume. It is made increasingly clear to her that she cannot make the slightest move forward without feeling the arm of one of the white nations pushing her back.

Who knows? When Magellan gave the name Pacific to the larger of the two world oceans, he perhaps, all unconsciously, hit upon the most cruelly ironic name of all history. . . .



## CHAPTER XXII

### THE SUMMER PALACE

ARTISTS who paint scenes of Peking always show caravans waiting outside the great wall. This detail, far-fetched as it seems, is nothing more than an exact copy of reality. I always had to slow down my automobile as I went through the gates of Peking, so as to let numerous squadrons of these "ships of the desert" pass by, their heads thrust forward like prows, and flanks swaying with the motion of a sailing ship. The Asian camel is not at all like the African camel. The latter has numerous bald spots and callouses, and is so thin that it seems his bones will thrust through the tightly-stretched hide. The camels of Chinese caravans are jovial or majestic; they move with a rhythmic motion, and the expression of their protruding eyes is alert and intelligent. In addition, the patches of reddish wool marking chest and back have something of the splendor of the lion's mane. These woolly markings hang down from both sides like the trappings of the medieval charger, and at times fall so low over the legs as to look absurdly like pantaloons. The camels go through the city single file, each attached to the tail of the camel in front, so as not to interfere too completely with the traffic. In the market places, as soon as they are free of their burdens, they double their legs under them and lie motionless on the pavement, waiting for their masters to sell their merchandise.

The Mongolian wind is blowing mercilessly this wintry morning; the puddles in the streets are frozen, and here and there, wherever the sun has not penetrated, are remnants of the winter's snow. The camels, their fore-paws doubled under them, look like heaps of red wool from which their long necks emerge like the necks of some antediluvian reptile. In the icy air the breath streaming from their nostrils makes fantastic patterns



of mist. We are going through one of the great gates of Peking, that are all of them surmounted by fortresses of a color so modified by time it is impossible to classify it anywhere in the scale.

The ancient wall of Peking is the most magnificent, and the most useless fortification ever built on our globe. Its proportions exceed anything one can imagine. Actually it consists of two walls which have been joined together by filling the space between them. As a result, the gates are as deep as tunnels, and notwithstanding their great height, look like mere rat-holes in this tremendous structure. As one goes through one comes upon a second semi-circular wall around an open square, in which an entire battalion would find ample room for manoeuvres, and a second fortress to oppose any assailants who might have captured the first. Nevertheless, the fortifications of Peking never withstood any siege whatsoever, and invaders always walked through them with the utmost ease.

In the fortresses, which, with their curving eaves, are poised above these gates, there are great loopholes for the artillery, but it is more than a hundred years since a cannon's mouth has spoken from any one of them. The bases of the upper batteries are of a wood that is by now almost reduced to powder by the ravenous wood-tick. Ancient Chinese artillery needed extraordinarily massive platforms in order to function. This nation of admirably skilled smelters, who cast gigantic Buddhas when the metal workers of Europe were incapable of making a statue above natural size, produced cannon of dimensions as great as those of modern artillery. These weapons were uncertain and short of range, but, in order to strike terror into the hearts of the enemy, the mouths of the cannon were always made to represent the frightful jaws of dragons and other discouraging monsters.

We cross the suburbs of Peking, and drive out into the country to reach the Summer Palace, which is about eighteen miles distant, in a place which was completely transformed from its original character by a succession of emperors, who changed this enormous stretch of land into a sort of earthly paradise, just as Louis XIV, by means of fountains and pools, transformed the arid plain which is now the garden of Versailles. But the work of the Chinese sovereigns is far greater in extent than that of



the French ruler. Besides, the several celestial monarchs who carried on this enterprise had countless and tireless multitudes of workers to use in executing their ambitious plan.

We are following the banks of a canal which runs from Peking to the Summer Palace. In ancient times it was along this watercourse that the Son of Heaven proceeded in a golden barge, whenever he elected to leave the Violet City for the delights of his Summer Palace.

The extent of the garden palace is so enormous that one can see only a small part of it in a day. As it is far from the capital, there are few visitors, and the guards on duty there live a quiet country life, much as though they were assigned to service in some distant fortress on the Tartar frontier. An indescribable melancholy envelops this vast abode of monarchs, whose dynasty, in spite of their celestial origin, has now forever come to an end.

First we visit the audience chambers, that part of the Summer Palace which the emperors assigned to the outside world, and to which ministers, ambassadors and the viceroys of the provinces came, disturbing the monarch's peaceful life with their complaints and ambitions. In one of the halls two enormous bronze statues, representing a phenix and a dragon, with wide-open jaws, soar above us on pedestals of jasper. In olden times, it seems, a cloud of perfume poured from the nostrils of these beasts whenever the emperor gave audience. Great vases of green and gold tinted bronze, and strange fauna of scaly monsters, are scattered about everywhere through the halls and courtyards. Every one of these receptacles contains water, as the Chinese thought it wholesome to keep water in their rooms, in the belief that it purified the atmosphere.

Beyond the reception halls, and before one reaches the buildings formerly occupied by the emperor, is the theater—an enormous courtyard, surrounded by low palaces of gold-lacquered wood built on platforms of marble. In the center of this courtyard is the stage, three storeys high, from which the actors used to shout their parts, ascending from one storey to another, according to the requirements of the action, which usually lasted an entire day. Between the acts the servants of the imperial kitchen served refreshments to the audience. Three sides of the court-





SUMMER PALACE, PEKING

(See p. 264)

yard were occupied by the officers of the court, by the emperor's guests, and by the mandarins renowned for their wisdom or their prowess as warriors. The remaining side was reserved for the women of the imperial family and their ladies-in-waiting. Screens, skillfully arranged, allowed them to watch the stage without being seen.

Leaving the theater, we climb a succession of small hills with steps cut into them, and paved with tiles. These terraces were formerly graded. Now they are overgrown with dry grass, but in the time of the emperors they were brilliant with peonies and all manner of showy flowers, arranged like a pyramid, above the top of which showed the red gilded roof of pagoda or temple.

Suddenly the landscape opens up before us, and buildings, columns, mountains, all make way for a blue and white plain that stretches out before us. This is the famous "Sea" of the Summer Palace—a body of water which has no equal in any garden of the globe. The fountains and pools of Versailles, and other famous parks, fall into insignificance compared with the size of this artificial sea, the limits of which can be descried only from a height. Miles and miles of sculptured marble, with balustrades as delicately carved as jewels, surround its banks. The splendor of all this carving is nothing less than bewildering, and yet the wide sweep of the view, and the freshness of the air, and the luminous motion of the water, relieve the overwhelming solemnity of the scene. An apparently endless succession of covered ways and galleries of painted wood runs along the banks. On the ceilings of these galleries are painted scenes representing the most famous cities of China. All manner of processions run along the friezes. A glance at the extent of this work indicates that hosts of artists, toiling generation after generation, were necessary to complete it. There is something characteristically Chinese about this work, apparently so simple, and yet so impressive by its diversity, if one stops to examine it in detail. The Son of Heaven, walking through these galleries year after year, ultimately must have come to know his empire very thoroughly, even though he never saw the original; for the entire fauna and flora of the Chinese Empire are depicted on these walls and ceilings.

Several rivers flow out of the lake and, spanned by boldly



arched bridges, wind about through the gardens. All the little artificial mountains made by hand, by countless armies of workmen, are crowned by palaces and temples of sculptured marble, with walls of green, white and blue porcelain, and curving wooden roofs painted with yellow gold, and ornamented with dragons and monkeys.

Beyond the banks of the lake there are leafy woods and gentle slopes, and over the landing-steps rise graceful arches. The marble bridges almost always lead to charming little pagodas, where the emperor's servants were always waiting to serve tea.

The entire center of the lake is white, hard, frozen by the bitter cold of mid-winter. But along the banks the icy sheath has broken, and one can see the green depths of the water and the silken fibers of weeds slowly swaying. Now and then strange fish, with wide lacy tails, flit by—flashes of purple and gold. Some white swans swim to meet us in the hope of an offering. Gilded skiffs of ancient aspect sway gently along the banks in the broken ice-floe, like memories of the past.

Suddenly I discover a much larger craft, apparently jammed in the ice. It is an island, shaped to look like a ship by one of the later emperors, who built a marble palace upon it. A bridge crosses from the shore to the motionless ship, that was built by a Chinese monarch who had never seen the ocean, but who wanted to have the illusion of possessing an ocean and an ocean-going ship in his palace garden.

On the summit of one of the artificial mountains is the temple of the Ten Thousand Buddhas. Here and there on others of these hand-made hills, rise other temples and palaces.

On the stairs and platforms one is constantly meeting soldiers, apparently in the last stages of dropsy, so grotesquely obese are they in their uniforms stuffed out with raw cotton. For all they are as unmolested in their ownership of this immense park as though it had actually been bequeathed to them by the Sons of Heaven, every one of these guards seems to be suffering acutely from cold and loneliness.

From the top of the western mountain, where we find a pagoda which has been turned into a restaurant, we look down on the white expanse of the frozen "sea" below, and discover



that even from here we cannot see the limits of the imperial garden. It will be night before we have traversed even a third of this strange world, that was created for the most powerful and the most secluded monarchs the world has yet seen. Perhaps no other beings in the history of our planet knew so well as these Sons of Heaven how to enjoy the serenity and sweetness of life. They were the shepherds of great flocks, destined by birth to rule over multitudes of the world's children. Yet they lived apart from their fellow-beings as though they belonged to some other race, and they spent their entire lives in an artificial paradise, shaped in accordance with the successive whims of generation after generation of these monarchs.

But some of the emperors did, at times, feel a longing to share the life of their subjects, to lose their identity for a moment in the multitude, and to experience the bitter struggles their fellow-mortals endured in order to gain the handful of rice necessary to sustain life. Bored with their own majesty, they were eager to cease for the moment being Sons of Heaven; they were eager to live like mere men.

At such moments, the directors of the imperial pleasures improvised a seaport on the banks of this lake, with numerous merchant "junks" riding at anchor in its waters, and all the motley buildings of a trading city. The courtiers disguised themselves as merchants and shop-keepers, and the ladies of the court as tavern wenches, or worse. The Son of Heaven, dressed like a vagabond, committed petty thievery in the market place of the mock city, and wandered about through its lowest dives without anyone's venturing to recognize him. Suddenly an uproar among the pretended sellers and shop-keepers, and the flash of knives and women's screams: then the hurried arrival of the police—and so the emperor and his court amused themselves, reproducing all the scenes that might daily be found anywhere in any of the crowded and corrupt Chinese seaports.

Few of the diversions of the Emperor's court were so well liked as this carnival. For weeks at a time it would provide amusement for the eighty to one hundred thousand people who lived in the vicinity of the Son of Heaven. . . .

In the distance we see the tree-tops of the imperial hunting



preserves, deserted now. But in the time of the emperors thousands of trained doves fluttered about the leafy boughs of this woodland, a tiny flute under each wing. And so, as they flew about, a wake of soft music followed them, and as each of the little flutes had a different note, the winged musicians of this wandering orchestra filled the air with curious harmonies.

Again some covered stairways with ceilings depicting an infinite variety of dragons. It seems as though the Chinese imagination had conceived of every possible variation of this fabulous beast. . . .

On our way back to the capital we pass the ruins of the other Summer Palace—the ancient royal abode which was destroyed by a careless and perhaps willfully malicious explosion in the powder magazine of the Anglo-French troops. But I pay little attention to it, for I am absorbed by a more immediate interest. I know that although China has been a republic for twelve years, there is still an emperor in Peking; yet to my repeated enquiries as to where he is to be found, no one has given me any authoritative information.

The Chinese, who for some curious reason, have been stigmatized by the white races as fiendishly cruel, are often thoroughly incomprehensible to the European, precisely because of their extraordinary gentleness and tolerance. Thanks to these virtues, they are able at times to find an agreeable solution to conflicts of the most complicated order.

In Europe, when a ruler is driven from his throne, he is also, in most cases, driven from the country over which he ruled, and on some occasions, in order to make a clean sweep of the past, his former subjects go so far as to cut off his head. In China the republicans, after their victory, allowed the young emperor to go on living in exactly the same manner as before, and as the monarch had never set foot outside of the Forbidden City, nor exercised his authority over anything beyond his household—his ministers governed in his name—he must by this time have reached the conclusion that the republic is not very different from the old régime.

It seems that the deposed emperor is still living within the confines of the Forbidden City in the very center of the Violet City. So vast is the former imperial capital, that the dethroned



monarch can occupy several palaces and an enormous garden without anyone's knowing exactly where he is living. As a matter of fact, he had not an inch more territory for his own private uses when he was the recognized emperor, than he has at the present moment.

It really seems as though this youthful ex-monarch must enjoy life more now than before, since he is relieved of the irksome duty of receiving countless visits from his subjects, and of having to listen to the advice of his ministers.

As a boy he was married to a little princess of his own age, and now the royal couple go on playing in their pagodas and gardens with the same irresponsibility that they enjoyed as children. It is rumored that the ex-emperor is very much in love with a friend of his wife's—a member of one of the important mandarin families. The Chinese have only one legitimate wife, but custom allows them an unlimited number of mistresses, who all live in the royal palace. Thus the imperial triangle lives on, hidden in a garden in the very center of Peking—and no one is any the wiser!

Every now and then the emperor is called upon by the president of the republic, who also lives in a palace within the confines of the ancient Forbidden City. At times that functionary is a mandarin of letters, at times a "doctor in military science," or perhaps a general. The Chinese Republic is still going through the abrupt transitions characteristic of all rapidly developing organisms, and many of the crises of adolescence still lie before it.

The last Son of Heaven must have a rather confused idea as to what the president of a republic is really like. He must think of him as a sort of general minister, a kind of favorite like those who, in other days, exercised a despotic authority over China while the Emperor remained invisible to all his subjects in the majestic peace of the Summer Palace.

Perhaps at times it occurs to the former emperor that it would be extremely pleasant to be able to bestow several dozen bastinadoes with a hard bamboo rod upon the president, so as to impress upon the latter the desirability of being somewhat more generous in the matter of the royal stipend. But one glance around him must suffice to remind the royal personage that the



eunuchs who, in the ancient court system, were in charge of this function, are nowhere now to be found. . . .

Nor are any others of his former attendants and courtiers with him. As he walks about through his gardens, he meets no one but blue-coated soldiers, who look at him face to face with the impudent assurance of rebellious peasants unable to understand how it happened that a man who walks upon the ground like any mere mortal, should have been called throughout fifty centuries, the "Son of Heaven!"



## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE GREAT WALL

IN this extremely ancient country, now the oldest of all the nations in the world, there are not many old monuments. Temples and palaces cannot survive beyond a few centuries. But China itself, with its history and traditions, is eternal, and the soul of China remains changeless throughout thousands of years. But on the surface this tremendous country has experienced a great number of changes.

Its most venerable and famous monument is the Great Wall, which occupies in Chinese history much the same place that the pyramids occupy in the history of early Egypt. The pyramids are several thousand years older than the Great Wall, and at the time when Emperor Hoang-ti had it built, 240 B.C., were already venerated as monuments of a distant past, and the object of pilgrimage. But as an engineering feat, the Chinese wall is a far greater undertaking than that of the early Pharaohs. The pyramids are more impressive, for the simple reason that their whole extent is revealed to the sightseer at a glance. The Great Wall is so vast in extent, is so like the work of a race of giants, that one cannot view it as a whole. To build it the Chinese used a far greater quantity of materials than the *fellaheen* of Egypt used in constructing the pyramids.

The Great Wall is six hundred leagues long—extending, that is, more than twice the distance from Madrid to Paris, or almost twice the distance from New York to Chicago. With the materials that were used in its construction, so someone has calculated, it would be possible to build a wall that would twice girdle the globe. When the Emperor Hoang-ti ordered this great fortification to be built so as to protect his empire from the Tartars and Manchurians on the north, China consisted merely of the so-called Eighteen Provinces. China must not be confused with the Chinese Empire, which includes the Tartars and the Man-



churians, for in spite of the Great Wall, they ended by invading Chinese soil, adding ten million square miles and hundreds of millions of inhabitants to the empire. For centuries the Great Wall has been completely useless, for instead of being on the frontier, it has stretched its vast length across China from end to end. When it was first built, however, it did actually serve as a fortification, defending China from her most dangerous enemies.

This great structure stretches on and on over mountain summits and through deep valleys, and sometimes its weight rests on piles that support it in marshy and swamp regions. The emperor who had it built commanded his engineers to leave no smallest part of his empire outside the wall. And so the great stone monster undulates back and forth, following the irregularities of the old Chinese frontier.

It seems impossible to conceive that this vast enterprise was completed in less than eight years. If historians are to be believed, more than four hundred thousand human beings perished in carrying it out.

Every visitor to Peking succumbs to the attraction of the Great Wall, which presents a constantly varying aspect, according to the nature of the region it traverses. One of the most picturesque of these regions is a few hours distant from Peking.

As we cross the capital to reach the railway, I am again struck by the enormous extent of the Chinese capital. Endless series of avenues, passing innumerable side streets, countless shop-windows filled with gaily colored signs and flags, market-place after market-place crowded with merchandise, vociferous merchants and statuesque camels.

At the station we take a train that will carry us into Mongolia, and while waiting for it to start, we watch a regiment of soldiers running, throwing themselves flat on the ground, and going through various manoeuvres in a field near-by.

Chinese make excellent soldiers if they are commanded by foreign officers, who can impose on them the severity of military discipline. But when they are commanded by Chinese generals, they are less warlike and more disinclined to follow their officers in an attack than any soldiers in the world. This characteristic, incomprehensible in men who value life far less than we do, and who seem far more accustomed to physical pain, can be explained



only if we take into account the fact that the Chinese as a general rule is more intelligent than his white brother. He knows too much to be a good soldier; he has several thousand years of civilization behind him, and the resounding words, "Motherland" and "Glory," which in other countries are still able to lead men to the grave, cannot stir him to any great enthusiasm. He is enough of a realist to observe that the fruits of victory will always go to his superiors, and that there will never be any left for him. He knows that the maimed soldier never receives any recompense in any degree commensurate with his misfortune. But the future contains many surprises, and who knows what it holds for this nation of five hundred million beings?

The Chinese peasant is brave, temperate, cruel, and makes a fine soldier if animated by some enthusiasm for the cause he is fighting for; and this enthusiasm can only be awakened if his pride of race is appealed to. At the present moment—so it is asserted by those who have some knowledge of the Chinese army—it is incapable of being of much service, even as a defence in case of invasion. The Chinese, like all nations with a long history behind them, look down upon the countries which were once under their sway, whether politically or intellectually. The Japanese, formerly their pupils, only thirty years ago whipped their teachers very thoroughly. The only vengeance the Chinese have been able to take has been to call the Japanese "dwarfs" ever since. But there is no question that if the European powers and the United States did not take a hand in maintaining the independence of the Chinese Republic, these so-called "dwarfs" would already have found some pretext for marching on Peking—only twenty-four hours by rail from Japan—and sweeping the whole Chinese army out of the way with the greatest ease.

Our train is gliding slowly past the open fields surrounding the capital. Clumps of trees blackened by the winter season, and fields full of graves, pass by in never-ending succession. Some of these graves apparently are those of the well-to-do, and have been carefully ornamented by the relatives of the deceased. The sculpture to be found in the cemeteries of the rich always represents the same subjects—a large stone tortoise, bearing on its back an obelisk or a pagoda tower. The tortoise—symbol of



long life—and the imperial dragons with the phenix, are ever-recurrent Chinese symbols.

We pass canals frozen between snow-covered banks, and there is nothing in the monotonous scene to distract the traveller from the melancholy thoughts aroused by these endless fields sown with the dead.

The Taoist religion gives an extremely important place to burial ceremony, and the most humble of Chinese coolies begins early in life to save up for the coffin he will occupy when he dies. The most important establishments in the crowded districts of Peking are those of the undertakers. Each has a large carpenter's shop attached, where mountains of pine coffins are heaped up, the more valuable coffins being deposited in these white pine boxes.

A magnificent funeral is the supreme ambition of every inhabitant of this vast country. That is the final glory of a man's life. The families of the deceased often contract debts that devour all their property, and frequently are ruined by the magnificence of the funeral they bestow upon their dead. Sometimes the preparations are so elaborate that the funeral can only take place several months or perhaps several years after death. In the case of an individual possessed of wealth, his furniture and most cherished pets are burned. While the older régime still prevailed, whole palanquins, with their carriers or coaches and the horses that drew them, or perhaps automobiles of famous makes, were burned also. Whatever constituted the chief luxury enjoyed by the deceased while he was still alive, must follow him into the tomb.

But this nation, so competent in all manner of commercial relations, has discovered a means of providing its dead with all earthly comforts without losing the money represented by these various objects; for the furniture, weapons, automobiles, domestic animals, and other things offered up to the flames are all made of cardboard, constructed by skillful artisans who reproduce the original with characteristically Chinese scrupulousness, omitting not a single detail.

When the deceased belongs to a family of importance, his body is placed in a temporary coffin, while preparations are made for the funeral ceremonies. The death of a personage always



provides the stone-cutters with a large amount of work, and sometimes the funeral is delayed for years so that a suitable monument can be carved. The whole neighborhood takes a profound interest in the number of objects prepared, the faithfulness with which the details of the original are reproduced, and the cost of the numerous articles to be reduced to ashes on the tomb of the defunct.

We leave the train half-way to the Great Wall. It is nine o'clock on a beautiful winter morning, and the sun is warming the ground; the icy sheaths on the puddles are melting and the snow remaining in the crotches of the trees is running down their trunks in little streamlets. The ground here is higher and the air, no longer thick with the yellowish dust that pervades the atmosphere in the vicinity of Peking, is keen mountain air. On the horizon the lofty summits of Mongolia, which seem suddenly to have moved toward us.

We ride on horseback to the mausoleum of the Ming emperors. These tombs are far more ostentatious, and occupy a great deal more space, than those in the vicinity of Mukden, which contain the remains of the dead dynasty of the "very pure." But the general effect of both is the same; white avenues leading to many-colored temples, gigantic sculptured animals mounting guard along the borders of the road: elephants, horses, unicorns and lions. The most notable feature of this park is the forest, which covers mile after mile, forming a sacred grove in which the silence is never broken. The ground is covered with fine slippery turf. Again and again we cross the steep archways of a bridge. The landscape artists of China take infinite pleasure in making streams and brooks wind in and out in such a way as to provide excuses for building bridges, which are the supreme achievement of the Chinese artist.

The more bridges there are in a landscape, the greater its beauty from the Chinese point of view. This affection for curved lines is evident, even in the case of funeral avenues, which are straight only for a very short distance, breaking into a great number of twists and turns, and then for a length of a few rods straightening again, to run on once more into a series of curves. Apparently these cemetery roads were constructed



with the pious end in view of wearing out and discouraging evil spirits who, it seems, can fly only in a straight line. It would therefore be only too easy for them to fly to the tombs at the end of the avenues, if the latter were traced on straight lines. But not only are they protected by the labyrinthine twistings and turnings of the road—each is given the additional protection afforded by a grove of trees intended to hide the abode of the dead from the demons of the air.

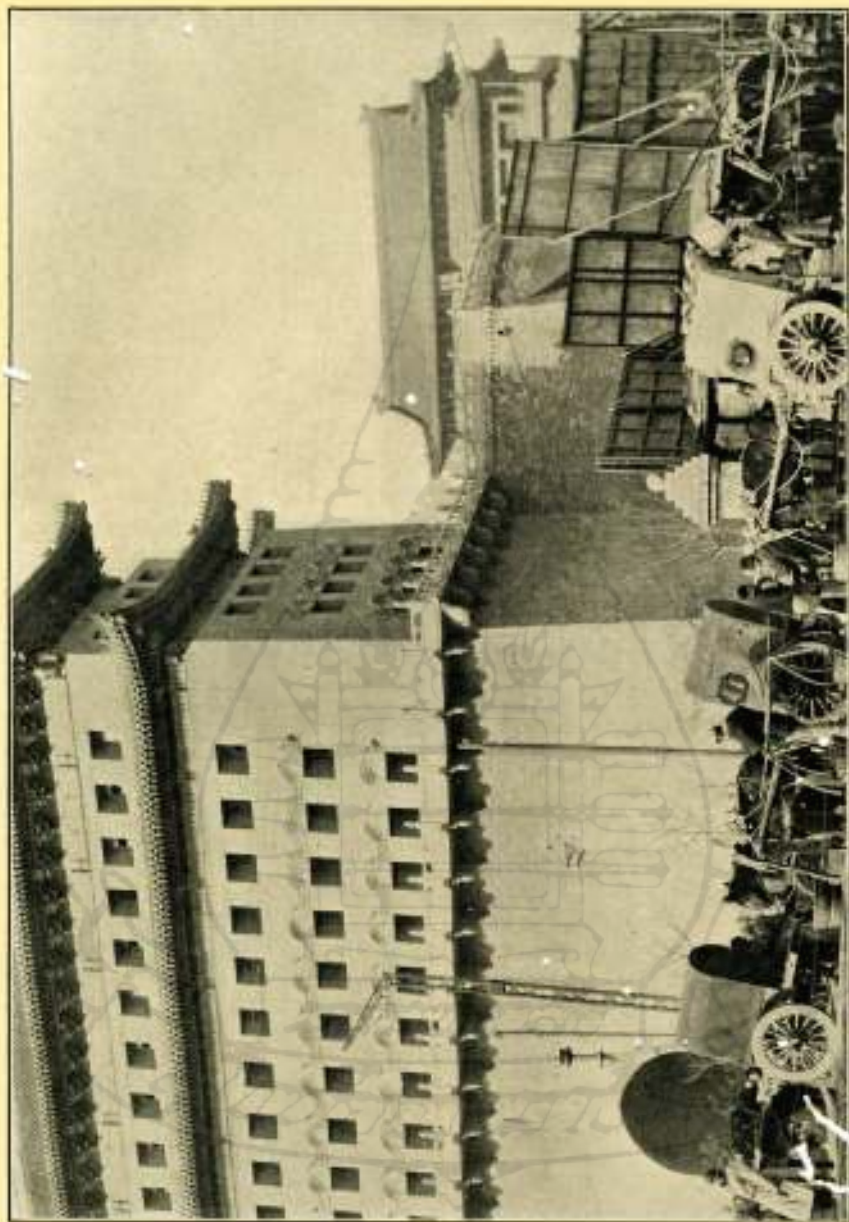
The Ming emperors—a thirteenth century dynasty—ruled China between the time of the Tartar monarchs, whom they drove from the throne, and the Manchurian invasions, by means of which the Mings were in turn driven from the imperial power.

The first of the Mings was a real hero, a leader of the people, who rose from the ranks and became emperor through his own achievements. As a child he was an acolyte in one of the temples, and as a youth earned his living by sweeping the temple and serving the priests. When China rose against the last descendants of Genghis Khan, the young neophyte threw himself with fervor into the war resulting, and revealed great talents as a warrior and statesman, uniting about his person the various groups of his subjects, who, up to that time, had had no ideal of unity presented to them. He defeated the Tartars for good and all, and established his family on the throne with the title of "Luminous" or Ming Dynasty.

The Mings ruled their empire not from Peking but from Nanking—a city created by them, where they now lie mouldering in their tombs.

Returning to the train, we continue our approach to the Mongolian mountains, now filling the horizon with their reddish contours, for the vegetation is dried and seared by the cold, giving them a harsh fierce aspect, as though they were all strewn with the hides of gigantic lions.

Finally we begin the ascent. Wherever there is a light covering of soil the ground is carefully cultivated by the peasants, who are of pure Tartar blood here. The Chinese who accompany us as guides and interpreters are foreigners in this region. A great many of them, in groups of four, are carrying poles from which are suspended cane seats, which the travellers are invited to occupy, the carriers emitting the most exaggerated puffs



17. N.—SOUTH GATE IN THE GREAT WALL, THE MOST MAGNIFICENT AND THE MOST USELESS FORTIFICATION IN THE WORLD  
(See p. 176)



and groanings when they have a fare, in order to impress upon their patron some idea of the extent of their efforts. Every thirty yards they stop, and the leader emits a howl, at which the other carriers suspend the poles on adjustable supports, lift it onto the other shoulder, and go their way once more.

Finally we reach one of the gates of the interminable fortification, the gate leading to Kalgan, one of the important cities of the Mongolian desert. Like the soldier of the Son of Heaven in ancient times, we climb up one of the fortified stairs until we reach the top of the Great Wall, where we walk along on a space where troops could easily advance ten men abreast. From this vantage point we can see only a small portion of this enormous structure, which equals in length the frontiers of several European countries put together. Yet even this fragment is singularly impressive, and gives us a vivid sense of the vast dimensions of a structure the greater part of which lies beyond the limits of our vision.

The Great Wall stretches over mountain slopes and summits, to disappear in a valley and reappear again many miles farther on, coiling about remote mountain heights to hide again in valleys, and to emerge again at the farthest limits of the horizon, becoming finally nothing more than a red streak, barely discernible against the blue of the far-away mountains. At regular intervals above the wall are square towers from which the emperor's archers once showered their arrows on the invader.

We follow the road on the top of the Wall for a long time. Seemingly it has no end. Scarcely a break in the dense mass of stones and brick.

On the other side lies the arid Mongolian plain, like an ante-room leading into the Gobi Desert, and diverse other mysterious regions inhabited by the demon guardians of fabulous treasure, by nomad robber tribes, and where, in remote valleys, there are sacred cities still governed by living gods—Ourga, for instance, where Buddha allows himself to be worshipped in the flesh. When the holy lamas of Thibet, who govern their religious empire from Lhasa, deem that the flesh and blood Buddha has lived long enough, they poison him and appoint a more submissive successor. In this fantastical region are the burning naphtha lakes, which make the dark night of the desert animate

with all the splendors of the inferno. There, too, are the warlike tribes, who, though in name a part of the great Chinese Empire, have been independent for years, and are now allied with the Soviets of Siberia.

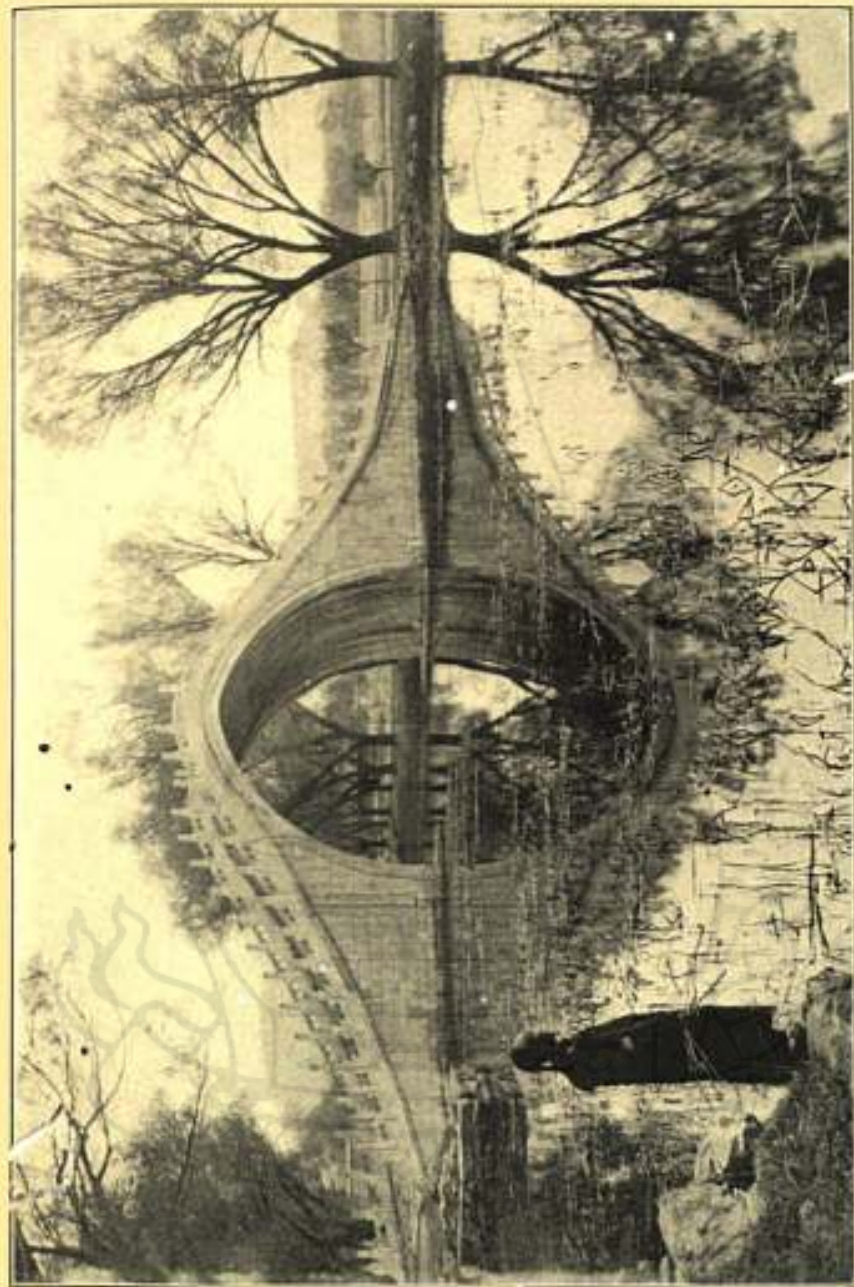
The sun is setting, and a biting icy wind, the terrible wind of the Mongolian wastes, is moaning through the towers and turrets. Even the inhabitants shiver at the change in temperature, and thrust their hands into their mittens. And now the wind is blowing with the merciless persistence of a polar hurricane, and helter-skelter we run along the Wall toward the stairs to escape the murderous blasts.

In a recess of the gateway two old Tartar beggars are crouching. They are both blind, with the frightful blindness so common in Oriental countries, where not only sight but also the whole eyeball is destroyed by this relentless affliction. Nothing remains of this feature, in either of these faces, but two red and bleeding sockets, tormented by the flies. The two old beggars are muttering their prayers, holding out their hands for alms with a mechanical gesture, indifferent, apparently, as to whether they receive any or not.

Now and then the name of Allah occurs in their mutterings—Mohammedans, evidently, waiting here with the fatalistic patience shared by all the beggars of Islam. Their fingers close on the money we put in their hands, and they go on with their invocations, their eyeless sockets turned on infinity. These two inhabitants of the Great Wall never leave the niche that provides them with miserable shelter, in which they sleep and eat, when it so chances that they have something to eat.

Why do they mutter their prayers all day long, when travelers are so few and far between? Who is there in this desert to give them alms? What do they see in their eternal night, kneeling in a crevice of this gateway to the wilderness?





JADE BRIDGE, SUMMER PALACE. BRIDGES ARE THE SUPREME ACHIEVEMENT OF THE CHINESE ARTIST

(See p. 450)

## CHAPTER XXIV

### TOWARD BLUE RIVER

NOTHING but the Pullmans that carry millionaires across the North American Continent to the Pacific Coast can be compared with the Chinese trains that are to transport us toward the south. They are of American make, as a matter of fact, and recently purchased by the Chinese government. The station is full of European or American sightseers, some of them inhabitants of the foreign quarter and members of the legations, who have come to while away the time. There are soldiers everywhere, but we are accustomed to this. The nature of the country we traverse is very different from the great Mongolian plain we visited yesterday. Here every inch of soil is cultivated. Graveyards and gardens compete ceaselessly for every single foot of ground. In this winter season the earth shows yellow in the furrows swept by the wind. Occasionally a tall column of dust goes whirling by. But in spring and summer these market gardens must provide great plains of green and tender yellow. The most exuberant animal life flourishes in these carefully cultivated fields. Troops of domestic fowl wander about in pursuit of the innumerable parasites infesting this carefully enriched soil. Nowhere else in the world, I am sure, are feathered flocks to be seen in such profusion. The ground seems to have become suddenly animate and to move and undulate, so numerous are the hens and chickens flocking about on it. On the ponds and canals great swarms of ducks and waterfowl swim and splash about. This vast China produces more eggs than any other country in the world. In some of the railway stations there are great metal funnels, like those used in Europe to pour wine and oil into the containers of the freight cars. These huge funnels are used to load a thick paste made of thousands of eggs, beaten up raw, and giving out an intolerable smell. This product serves as the base for numberless highly perfumed confections that take



the place of candy in these regions. Everywhere in this part of China there are great factories where eggs are dried and ground to a powder, which is then exported.

At every stop, even in the smallest villages, groups of women come to sell eatables to the travelers. In most cases, these thrifty housewives have prepared the dishes themselves. The chief ingredient is usually chicken or pheasant; for the latter, such a rarity in Europe, is as common as the ordinary hen in all the barnyards of China. Again and again I am reminded by the round faces, yellow skin and slanting eyes of these women, of little stations in Mexico, where women resembling them in every one of these respects come at train time to sell tamales or chicken, thickly dusted over with paprika. The food these Chinese women have to offer is of the same brilliant red, but it is not the spicy pepper known as Chili. The red exterior of these roasted pheasants and fowl is simply red lacquer, which, the Chinese consider, gives a neat finish to roast poultry.

Along the dusty roads a great many riders are passing up and down, apparently rich peasants, who are going towards their mountain farms, mounted on gaily caparisoned mules.

One of the most singular sights I have ever seen presented itself on one of the dusty Chinese roads. Along came a woman one fine day—a woman in trousers and a silk blouse of that greenish-blue, like the color of the electric spark, which is one of the traditional secrets of Chinese dye-makers—a tall woman, of somewhat arrogant bearing, riding bare-back and firmly holding on to the animal's flanks with her long legs and well-developed feet, which had never suffered the slightest compression. The front of her blouse was completely hidden by the necklaces and many-colored amulets she wore, and she rode bare-headed, her hair dressed in the traditional fashion, a short bang covering the upper part of her forehead, and the rest arranged in a towering structure. But her mule, on the contrary—a nervous, rapidly trotting little beast—wore a great blue plume between its ears, and its flanks were covered by trappings of embroidered silk. And so these two beings advanced, completely alone through these deserted regions. Our guides and interpreters seemed as much amazed by the encounter as anyone. Not that the lady was a great beauty. It is difficult for us to appreciate



the charm of a face marked by high cheek-bones and a flattened nose, even when the eyes have an agreeably mischievous expression. But this woman, so unusually tall, muscular, and slim, riding about the deserted countryside with the ease of a young athlete, in a country where women never leave their homes unless accompanied by servants or with a number of their friends,—such a woman could not but haunt our imagination for a long time afterwards.

She was perhaps the widow of some rich farmer, and on her way, in good vigorous man-fashion, to look after some of her property. But there was something about her appearance that reminded me of the Chinese novels written thousands of years ago, in which pirates and bandits play the heroic parts. Invariably in these romances there is a woman of extraordinary attainments, a kind of slant-eyed Valkyrie, who wins obedience from the ruffians around her by dealing the most stupendous blows with her sword.

She did us the honor, too, of casting a glance in our direction, though it was only after she had trotted along the road beside us for several rods without paying the slightest attention to her fellow travellers. But I caught our yellow-skinned Diana looking at us out of the tail of her eye with an expression of cold curiosity—and then suddenly, as though tired of these "white devils," she dug her heels into her mule's flanks and disappeared among the trees of the Ming tombs.

A strange encounter—especially on the outskirts of these groves dedicated to the dead. I began to explain the vision by the theory that one of the ancient Chinese empresses had left her tomb for a little while, to wander about present-day China, now turned into a republic. But our heroine came back no more. Plenty of women on horseback passed up and down the road within sight of the train, but they were all rough peasant women, trotting along behind their husbands or accompanied by laborers going afoot beside the mule.

During the night we go through the region most likely to prove dangerous of all those we shall visit—a mountainous district, where bandits could very easily take possession of the train. The landscape on both sides of the road-bed is illumined by the powerful lights turned on it, in order to discover whether



it holds an enemy, and at every station there are groups of officers who come aboard to give the latest bulletins, and to receive orders.

And as, hour after hour, the night runs on without any signs of activity on the part of the bandits, some of the lady travellers begin to give signs of discouragement. This well-guarded train is, alas! going to cheat them of the experience of a lifetime! They will have to admit to their friends that they crossed China from end to end at a time when that country was in the most alarming state of political disorder, without experiencing any incident worthy of mention!

And now everyone is in his sleeping quarters, except the sentinels on the platforms, and the guards, who are smoking and shouting remarks at one another in the passage-ways.

Unquestionably this young Chinese Republic is in a condition close to anarchy. The Peking government asserts itself, and that only with difficulty, in a very small part of the national territory, and the little authority it enjoys would fall away from it entirely were it not for the support of the United States and England. For there are two Chinese republics—the Northern republic, which we are now leaving, and the Southern republic, with its capital at Canton. Revolutionary China has not been able to escape the fate of most young republics, which inevitably take a step backward after the first plunge forward into a new state. When the empire crumbled away, the officers of the Chinese army suddenly found themselves in a much more important position than they had ever enjoyed before. I have mentioned that for thousands of years the mandarin of letters was considered far more important than the doctor in military science, and that it was the former who played an important part in the government. But China today, under the new republican régime, is very like Mexico in this respect, that its president, whoever he may be, is always represented in his photographs with quantities of gold braid and the famous military hat from which dangle plumes that trail down over his brow with all the dismal abandon of the weeping willow. This general and president is really just a bit of decoration, and depends entirely for his support on the other generals, who rule



the provinces with all the cruel rapacity of pro-consuls. But the state of anarchy this vast nation is suffering at the present moment, is little likely to prove fatal. In her fifty centuries of history China has passed through more tremendous crises, and has come nearer to perishing, torn to pieces by civil wars lasting over a hundred years, by exterminating famines and numberless other plagues than in the recent upheavals. Yet her prodigious vitality made it possible for her to emerge from these conflicts with renewed strength, and to continue in the pursuit of her destiny.

Nothing is as simple as people given to generalization like to imagine. Everything in our lives is extremely complex, and often inexplicable. Some of the complexities of the Chinese situation are due to the fact that there are two Chinas—one the tradition-loving country we all know, the China of lacquered screens and elaborate ceremony and grotesque superstitions, and the other, the great Chinese people, that magnificent aggregation of the most diligent, even-tempered and knowledge-loving people that has ever lived.

The chief desire of the Chinese is to earn a living, even though he has to work fourteen to sixteen hours a day to do it. But no sponer is his work-day over than he sets about using his leisure in order to educate himself. There is no merchant in the world who can be compared with the Chinese merchant, as to intelligence, breadth of interest and ingenuity in overcoming difficulties. There is no workman in the world superior to the Chinese workman in manual skill and smiling persistence. For five thousand years the highest positions in the state were open to the humblest subjects of the empire provided the success of their studies had made them eligible. The biographies of the most famous of the learned men of China are full of illustrations of the heroic tenacity with which the Chinese pursue an education. In some of these accounts the ambitious youth, after working all day, studies at night by moonlight; in others the hero ingeniously makes a small hole in a neighbor's wall, so as to profit by his light.

It is this intense desire to know, and ability to assimilate, that have produced the present republic. The young Chinese, educated in North America and Europe, returning to China, won



over their old teachers by their preaching, and persuaded them to help in the attempt to transform the most autocratic and moth-eaten of empires into a fine new structure, which they proposed to call the great Yellow Democracy.

There is a tremendous abyss between the generous illusions of these inexperienced young apostles of political salvation and their surroundings that are rotted through with corruption, routine, and age. The generals in the service of the republic carry on their stealing on a scale quite as lavish as did the former vice-roys of the emperor. The weakness at the core of Chinese life is due to public graft, for Chinese government officials have always looked upon the public money as their own private property, and have always kept the greater part of it, sending only a small proportion of the tribute levied to the distant invisible ruler in Peking.

The new republic, of course, suffers from the administrative immorality of its government, and from lack of solidarity among the Chinese. The old empire was too vast a unit. There are few Chinese who can feel loyalty for more than their province or the town in which they were born. But "China will begin to live when the Chinese discover China," as Anatole France once said. The republic is making every effort to discover itself, but that is no easy task in a country crowded with hundreds of millions of beings. Formerly the Chinese used to hear about a mysterious emperor living in royal seclusion in Peking. Now they hear even less than before, and it may even be that in some regions, the inhabitants conceive of the so-called "republic" as a new kind of empress, very like the one who was ruling in China only a few years before the revolution.

But similar situations, as confused and apparently lacking in any principle of order, have occurred frequently enough in European countries, and can still be seen any day in America, without arousing gloomy prognostications. China will emerge from this crisis; for at the same time that it is very old, China is also very young, and has tremendous powers of renewal, thanks to the vitality of its multitudes. Even the bitterest detractors of the Chinese admit their temperance, their heroic endurance of poverty, and their enthusiasm for work. No nation on earth is better adapted to extreme variations of climate,



from the frigid temperatures of Siberia to the heat of the tropics. "The two peoples who, because of the variety of their respective countries, are best fitted to colonise the world," said the great geographer Reclus, "are the Spanish and the Chinese."

The Chinese merchant—the best merchant in the world—proves this statement, for he establishes himself on every continent, as though he were in his own home. Work cannot frighten him. He devotes himself to his occupations as though they were an end in themselves, and not the means of livelihood. He produces, and produces again, with a smile, as though his activity were a never-failing pleasure. And indeed, it is amazing to watch the ease of it.

The great powers of Europe have set their eyes covetously on China, but as each hopes to gain the most desirable part of it, their rivalries counterbalance one another. So long as this is the case, the new republic is safe. It is extremely important for China, however, that this delicate equilibrium should be prolonged for a great many years, if she is to accomplish the slow evolution necessary before she can attain her full strength.

The policy the United States pursues in China is an odd mixture of selfish commercialism and democratic romanticism. American industry sees a magnificent market in this country of five hundred million inhabitants, and the United States Government is not unwilling to gain Chinese gratitude by protecting it openly from Japanese imperial ambitions.

Apparently the men in the government at Washington believe that the great Yellow Republic is entirely possible, and are convinced that if the other countries will let China develop quietly by herself, she will live through the maladies inevitable in a young democracy, and within half a century become a real republic, firmly established on a solid basis and worthy of calling herself the United States of Asia.

We are drawing near to the Yang-tse—the famous Blue River. The entire region between Peking and Shanghai consists of the two valleys containing the Hoang-ho or Yellow River, and the Yang-tse, or Blue River—both of a size that explains their celebrity. These two valleys are the original China, and up to the time of the old Roman republics, the



Chinese developed their civilization in this region without stepping beyond its confines. It was later that the Empire of the Sons of Heaven enlarged its boundaries by conquest, or by absorbing the territory of the barbarians who invaded Old China, until today the Empire includes the original nucleus, and Mongolia, Manchuria, Turkestan, and Thibet besides.

The Yellow River winds in and out, frequently changing its bed, inundating whole provinces, changing others into useless swamps, condemning millions of human beings to the tortures of famine, and obliging whole cities to migrate.

Now, on the banks of the Blue River, we gaze out on vast rice-fields, stretching as far as the eye can see, countless flocks of white and red ducks swimming about on the irrigation ditches. Occasionally we run into a wide artificial river, with straight banks and enormous watery squares that play the part of ports. Hundreds of junks crowd together along the banks under a small forest of masts. Many centuries ago the empire carried out an undertaking as vast as the building of the Great Wall, although far less famous. This was the construction of the great Canal, which crosses most of China, running north from the southern ports to Peking. This great canal is out of repair in some points of its tremendous length, but a great many miles of its course are still navigable. The Sons of Heaven demanded this waterway of their engineers so that the rice tribute paid by the provinces of the south might reach the capital more easily, for the great multitudes of North China were dependent for their subsistence on this food supply.

The tiny and scrupulously clean rice-fields of Japan sink into insignificance compared with these great watery plains we cross hour after hour on the way to Nanking. The world knows two civilizations, that of wheat, and that of rice; but it is a mistake to imagine that rice is plentiful in Asia. For the yellow race these little white kernels represent the most desirable of foods, but the majority of these populations eat it only now and then, or, if they eat it every day, it is only in very small quantities. As in the Hindu Olympus curried rice takes the place of ambrosia just so, among the yellow races, the rich enjoy this gift of the gods, but mere ordinary mortals, the hundreds of millions who make up this vast population, eat their rice with

little sticks, so as to prolong the pleasure. For the low-caste Indian a handful of rice, eaten grain by grain, is nothing less than a banquet; for since the most remote epochs of their history, the nations of old Asia have lived in bonds of indissoluble wedlock with Famine.





## CHAPTER XXV

### SHANGHAI, THE PROSPEROUS

THE opalescent Blue River stretches out its amazing width before us as we steam into the station of Pukow. This vast waterway, like several of the great American streams, we accept as a river, simply because it is so called, but so great is its width it seems more like an arm of the sea, or a strait. We are within two hundred miles of its mouth, and yet a great number of ships of deep draught pass up and down this part of the river—ocean liners on their way to ports in the heart of China. It is hard to tell where the shore ends and the river begins, so numerous are the *sampans* along the banks, these craft being now house-boats, and now freighters.

This swarm of river craft entirely blots out the water, which remains invisible under the pointed keels of these tubs that constitute a sort of floating tenement. Men, women and children run up and down this mobile bank, jumping from one *sampan* to another. A continuous clamor and a sickening smell of vile cooking rises continuously from them. In all the large cities of Southern China we shall find these river towns, which disintegrate overnight to form again next day, and house a population nearly as numerous as that of the land cities.

A white steamer, carefully eluding collisions with the bows of the heavy freight craft going up and down the majestic stream, carries us across the Blue River to Nanking opposite. From the projecting piers a multitude of nearly naked savages—we are still three or four yards from shore—jump on the steamer deck, which groans under their united weight.

Just so must the decks of ancient sailing vessels have groaned in other centuries, as pirate crews, so frequent in old Chinese novels, leaped aboard with cutlasses upraised, the lust of gold in their eyes.

They all leap together, without any apparent order seem-

ingly, grasping at the man in front while they are still in the air, hastening the latter's landing. Some of them tumble into the space still remaining between the boat and the dock, plumping into the water like stones, and raising a great splash. Bursts of laughter hail this mishap. What matter if there are a few Chinese the less—there are so many! But the Chinese is more skillful than his white brother in eluding the clutches of death. In a few seconds we see one after another of the plungers emerging from the watery courtyard that is momentarily growing narrower as our boat edges in to the wharf. But finally every single one of those who had fallen into the opening succeeds in scrambling up to the deck, escaping at one and the same time the peril of drowning and of being crushed against the piers.

And now these husky navvies take possession of everything in the boat, from the smallest handbag to the most enormous trunk, and in a twinkling, like so many yellow genii, transport all our baggage to the station.

Nanking, the capital of the first Ming, is little more than a ruin. It was built on a great scale to provide room for two or three million inhabitants, but now contains only 390,000. As in Peking gardens occupy more space within the city fortifications than do the houses.

The principal industry here is the weaving of that fine yellow cotton cloth known as Nanking, which became famous in the world at the beginning of the eighteenth century, when Europeans began to use it in summer-time as a pleasant relief from the weight of their woollen clothing. Moreover, this old decaying city preserves the same sort of prestige that is enjoyed by some of the aged university towns of Europe. The mandarins of letters, who acquired their degrees in the literary city of Nanking, look upon themselves as superior for that reason, and it is here that the best Chinese ink is made and the finest paper, and here that the most handsomely printed books are to be found.

Night is falling, and we are still five hours away from Shanghai. Constantly we are passing through stations crowded with people, and behind these dark masses of humanity on the platforms we divine great cities. The most important industrial centers of China are in this zone. From here great bolts of



silk start off on their journey across the world, and here also the raw silk is prepared that makes its way into the looms of Lyons and the other great weaving centers of Europe.

Through openings in the platform railings we catch glimpses of the multitude which has assembled, apparently, to see our train. Hundreds of lanterns move above their heads like fireflies. Most of these lights are made of glass attached to long poles. Some of them are of paper, round like fruit, or long in shape, and resembling various kinds of fishes. Here and there in the distance, a soft warm glow is projected against the velvety darkness. The New Year celebrations are not yet over, and the protruding roofs of temples and government buildings are still festively illuminated.

Shanghai is the greatest port of the ancient Celestial Empire. Hong Kong rivals it as to tonnage, but the latter is simply a junction, so to speak, whereas Shanghai is a great terminal. Besides, Hong Kong belongs to England, and Shanghai belongs to all the world. It is counted among the Chinese cities, but actually only a part of it is governed by officials appointed by Peking. The rest of the city is divided into two great districts, managed by the white inhabitants according to their notions. One of these is the French Concession; the other large one, the International Concession, the Shanghai of commerce, is controlled by the councils of all countries. In this council, naturally, the influence of the nations who wield the greatest power in China, England and the United States, is strongly felt.

The owners and representatives of the great silk looms of Lyons live in the French Concession, for it is here that they obtain their raw materials. There are, besides, more than one hundred thousand Chinese who have come to live in this part of the city, under the French authorities, so as to escape the petty tyranny of their mandarins. On account of the World War, the streets and avenues here have recently been re-named, and the visitor finds himself now on Avenue Joffre, now on Avenue Foch, Avenue de Verdun, and so on.

In the International Concession, the real nucleus of Shanghai, the buildings are occupied by banks, the offices of trading corporations, and enormous bazaars or department stores in the



American style, established and managed by Chinese. These high structures, quite like those of New York, run along the banks of one of the world's widest rivers, but so numerous are the steamers and warships riding at anchor in this stream, that its whole surface remains invisible, except for a small gap here and there. Bearded and turbaned Indian police, brought in by the English, keep order in the streets of this international city.

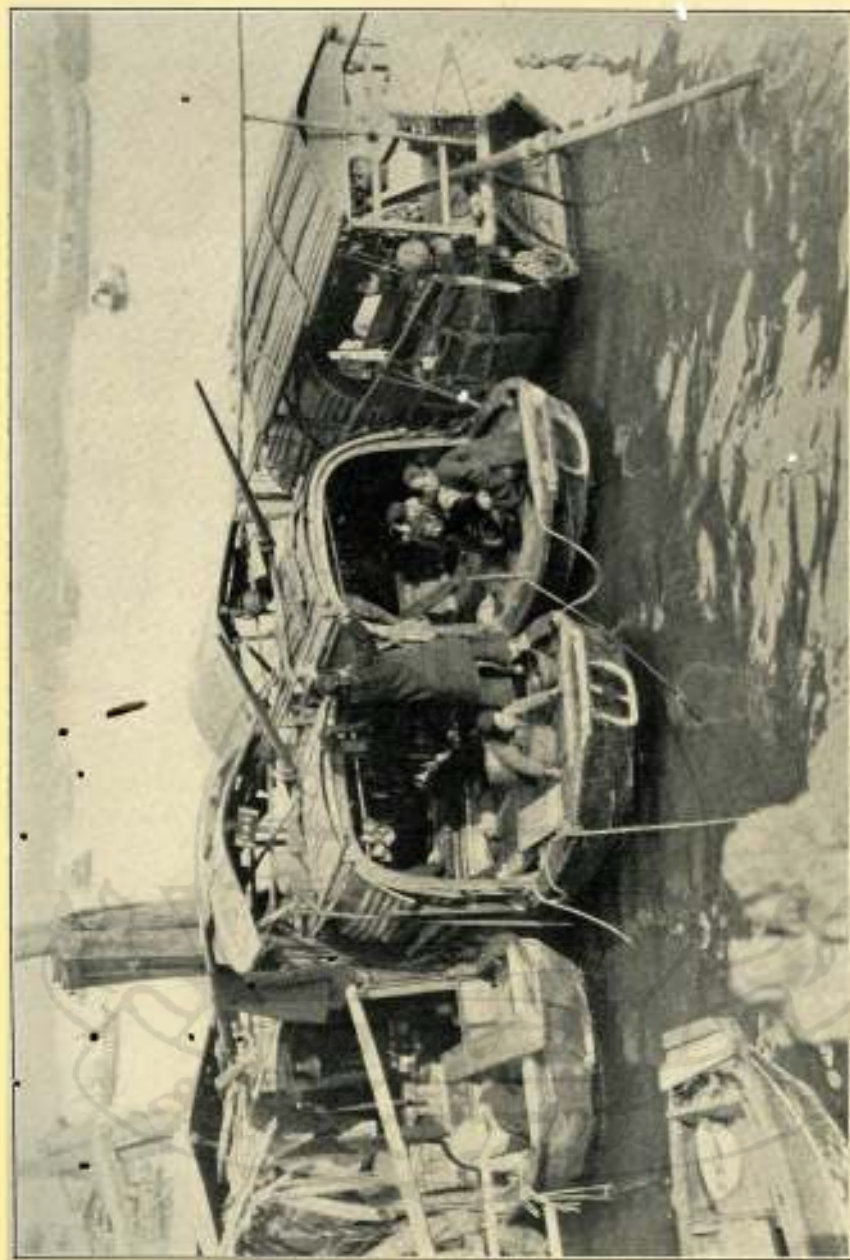
Violently contrasting wealth and poverty are immediately noticeable. The English have invented two words which need no explanation, for they give an exact picture of the state of affairs of the country by their very sound. When prices are soaring, and money abounds, the general condition of business is described as a "boom." But if everything is slumping, money scarce, and business enterprises failing one after another, then the word is "crash."

Shanghai is in the midst of a boom today. Everyone here is rich. People who, a few years ago, were nothing but petty clerks, now have millions. Conditions in this Chinese port are, in this respect, quite similar to those in California in the middle of the nineteenth century.

One has only to make the tour of Shanghai's pleasure resorts to become aware of its wealth and the newness of its prosperity. Besides being famous throughout the Far East for its industries and the activity of its port, Shanghai represents to those who know the East a city of pleasure and reckless spending. The electric lights of its Fou-Tcheou Road shine brilliantly until dawn, and all night long its restaurants are open, and its cafés, and gambling houses, and other houses which I need not describe.

Chinese women enjoy greater liberty here than in the rest of China, and the courtesans of Shanghai are famous, and play a rôle in many of the novels and comedies of Chinese literature. At night they pass down Fou-Tcheou Road in their rickshaws, arrayed in showy flowered kimonos that cover them from head to foot, their faces painted like those of a doll, their eyes elongated by patches of black paint in the corners. They go from restaurant to restaurant, to take part in the banquets, for no Chinese dinner is quite complete if, during its course, a number of courtesans do not pass through the banquet hall to converse graciously with the banqueters, flirt a little, recite verses and





COUNTLESS THOUSANDS OF CHINESE FAMILIES MAKE THEIR HOMES IN GREAT FLOATING TOWNS OF SAMPANS (See p. 109)

sing songs, after which they move on to lend the animation of their presence to other banquets. For these brief visits to the banqueting hall they are paid by the restaurateur.

The great Chinese merchants who like to imitate European customs, patronize the other less lively restaurants with their wives and daughters, invariably dressed in Chinese costumes of showy magnificence. Apparently everyone in Shanghai is a millionaire, and able to spend money lavishly, whether an English or American merchant, a French silk manufacturer, or a business man from the other foreign colonies. But the most important capitalists of this region are to be found among the Chinese, the finest merchants in the world, who, in a port like Shanghai, can find ample opportunities for their skill, and who control the import trade, as well as the national silk production.

The missionaries who are carrying on their work in the interior of China are worthy of all respect for their disinterestedness and self-sacrifice. But as to results, it is not the Catholic missionaries who are the most successful. The Protestant missionaries have been more effective, not because of a superior personnel, but simply because they have received more financial support than the Catholics. Moreover, the United States has developed the practical and scientific side of its missionary work. A great number of the American missionaries are either not members of a religious order, or else are only temporarily so.

Catholic propaganda in China is directed primarily by French priests, whose chief support is the Society of St. Xavier of Lyons, which thus honors the Spanish saint who was the first missionary to Asia. This Society disposes of about seven million francs annually, the greater part going to the Chinese missions. Another French society, that of the Holy Infancy, has succeeded in spending eighty millions in the course of half a century, for the purpose of baptizing pagan infants, and most of this sum has been poured out in China.

The Protestant missions, English and American combined, have about one hundred million dollars at their disposal yearly, without counting the gifts they receive of agricultural machinery, school equipment, and so on.

Besides serving as a residence of the the directors of all this



Christian propaganda, this animated and wealthy city, governed by a committee of consuls, and known because of its commercial activity as the London of the Far East, is also the center of the most notorious dives in Asia. Shanghai could well be the scene of one of the most vivid and interesting novels of the modern world.

There is nothing anywhere to be compared with a night on the famous avenue known as Fou-Tcheou Road. Here one may find women from all countries, and every language known. The Russian upheaval sent to Shanghai a great flood of red-haired, green-eyed women, emotional, neurotic, and semi-savage, all at the same time. European courtesans are here in great numbers, side by side with their Chinese competitors. The millionaires of the recent boom are throwing banknotes about by the fistful. A theater supper in Shanghai far exceeds the wildest fancies of the *Satiricon*. The Chinese theater flourishes here more than in any other city, and as the women's rôles are played by soft-voiced youths, the "Chinese Princesses," so-called, rival the women seekers of masculine attention.

The European succumbing to the influence of his surroundings, usually takes up opium-smoking with all the enthusiasm of a neophyte, and ends by becoming an *habitué* of the luxurious mansions of the "Chinese Princesses." The latter, by dint of absorbing a certain intoxicating herb administered by the managers of these establishments, acquire a languor and pallor considered particularly alluring.

The Chinese quarter of Shanghai . . . viewed from this florid city, the tall, taciturn, bravely smiling Chinese of Peking seems to belong to another race. The Chinese of the South is small, animated, a great chatterbox, irresistibly addicted to lying. No, the Chinese city of Shanghai is very different from anything one may see in the north. Its winding, narrow and humid streets are like those of the poorer districts of a Mohammedan city. The ground feels elastic under the foot, so thickly overlaid is it with layers of filth. In the small shops, more like caves than structures built by human industry, the most confusing diversity of business is carried on. Carvers of ebony at work on handsome pieces of furniture, bird vendors, old clothes men selling mandarin tunics lined with precious



zibeline now infested with moths, aquaria with fish of fantastic shapes, coffin factories, and butcher shops filled with meats impossible to identify. . . . Jostling through the narrow alleyways, crowds and again crowds, multitudes such as can be found only in these ant-like cities of Asia, with their century-old squalor and poverty. . . .

As it is much less cold than in Peking, a great many of these Chinese are half naked. Others proudly display their upholstered but unfastened rags, strings of the white cotton lining dangling from the worn places in the silk. One has to fight one's way through the hord of beggars, human creatures horribly disfigured by disease. Lepers hold out their right hand, usually a mere stump, all the fingers gone. Others thrust their noseless faces before one, the inside of their skulls visible through the two black nostrils. And this great horde of human beings is bargaining, shouting, pushing, begging alms, singing. . . .

Groups of beggars chant a kind of ballad in front of the bakeries and meat shops, all moving forward together at the chorus, and holding out the crock in which they gather up the crumbs and scraps offered in the name of charity. We are in the land of the world's most amazing jugglers, and going up and down the alley-ways are numerous youths, apprentices in the art of juggling, who balance on their noses a reed with a dish at the top or a spinning wheel.

Crossing this "Court of Miracles" we come to the famous Mandarin Garden. But here let me pause to explain that "mandarin" is a word totally unknown to the Chinese, just as, until a short time ago, the name "China" was also unknown to most of them.

The word "mandarin" is of Portuguese origin. The Portuguese were the first mariners of Europe to visit the Chinese ports. As they lay at anchor at Canton, they invented the name "mandarin"—from *mandar*, to command, and applied it to all Chinese in an official position, that is to say, in a position to *command* or give orders. I may also mention at this point that until the recent innovations of the republic, China paid not the slightest attention to the names of the European nations, but gave them names of their own. No one in China ever heard of



a country called *Spain*. As the Chinese have been trading for three hundred years with Manila, the capital of the island of Luzon, the Chinese have always spoken of Spain as "Great Luzon" and the mandarins of Shanghai and the other ports of China still use this title in addressing our Consul.

The Mandarin Garden in the center of the Chinese city of Shanghai has been invaded by dwelling houses, and the only part that remains is the small lake, which reflects the worm-eaten caves and shining lacquer roofs of the pagodas surrounding its circular banks.

In the middle of the lake is an island, entirely occupied by a tea-house and a weeping willow, that dangles its green veils over the darker green of the water. A bridge connects the island with the farther shore. Not a straight bridge,—that would be too simple for the Chinese taste. The arch proceeds in a series of angles, lengthening the journey from shore to shore, and providing a far greater number of points for enjoying the view. This little island, with its pagoda, its weeping willow, and its fanciful bridge, means as much to the Chinese as the Parthenon, the Pyramids, the Alhambra, the great Gothic cathedrals, or the Capitol at Washington mean to us.

You, my reader, are perfectly well acquainted with the island of the Mandarin Garden. You know it nearly as well as I who have seen it with my own eyes. Yes, I repeat, you have known it since you were a child. It is the island with a pagoda, a weeping willow, and a bridge, that is depicted on all Chinese tea-cups and dishes, on all Chinese shawls, lacquer boxes and fans!

For four centuries the artists of China have been copying the island of the Mandarin Garden, and they will continue to copy it for as many centuries more. In spite of its frail and frivolous appearance, this is the best known of all China's monuments. . . .

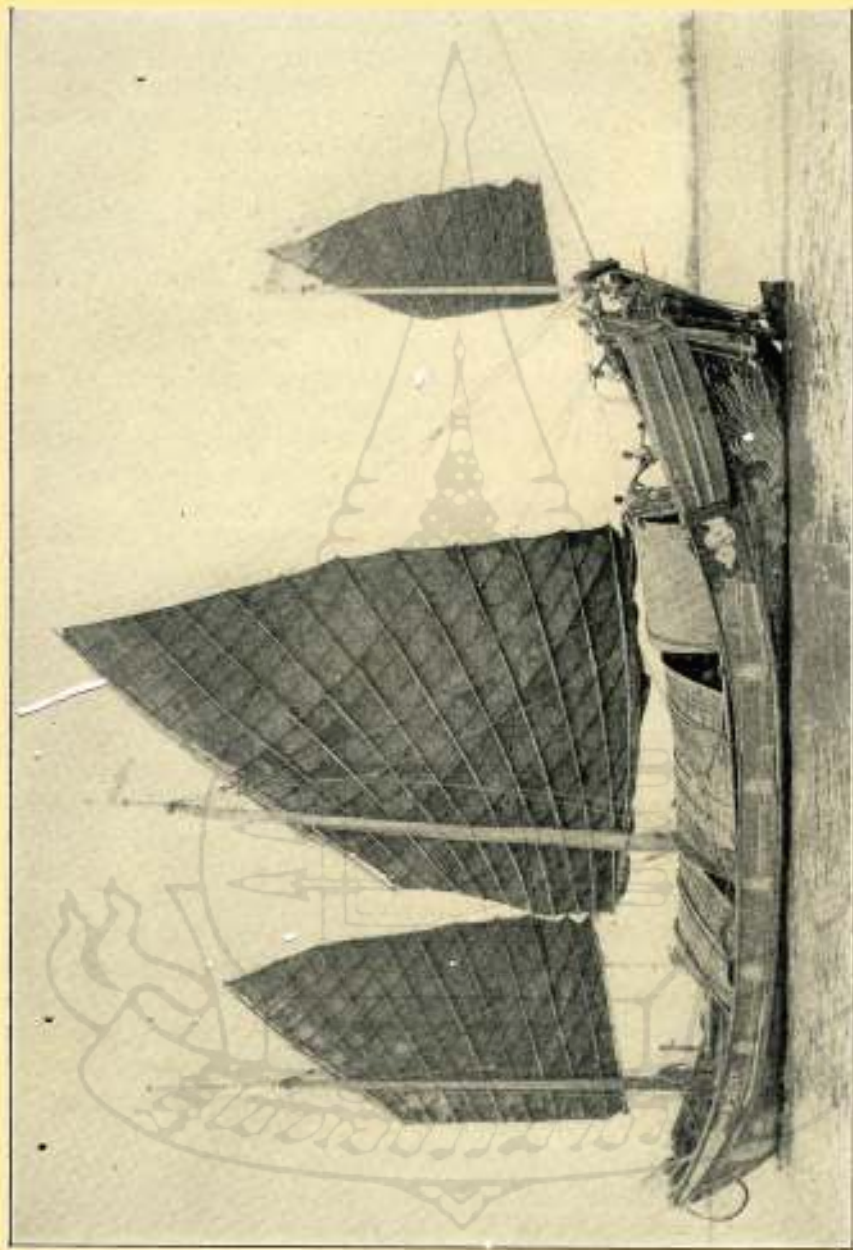
## CHAPTER XXVI

### IN THE YELLOW SEA

OUR good ship, the *Franconia*, is waiting for us fourteen miles below Shanghai at Woo Sung, the port at which the great liners weigh anchor, for only ships of medium draught can go up the Whangpoo to the docks of the "London of the Far East." A tug takes us down stream towards the estuary of the Blue River into which the Whangpoo flows. Our little boat threads its way through the crowded river traffic, dodging ships of constantly increasing girth. Craft of all nations glide in and out between fat-paunched junks with square sails, and *sampans* on which the crews are the nearly naked families of the owners. We all of us return to the *Franconia* with a complex assortment of newly acquired baggage. I find myself perched on top of a mountain of suitcases and bundles, most of them recently acquired property of my own, and clutching two porcelain vases containing several dozen of Chinese goldfish—fascinating little monsters, with interminable lacy trains of crimson and gold—to which I had succumbed in those dangerous alley-ways adjoining the Mandarin Garden.

But my fellow-travellers too have been exposed to the fascinations of the Chinese bazaars. The *Franconia* is fairly swamped with their trophies. Passage-ways and saloons are given up to a fluttering, floating fauna that has come aboard in every kind of receptacle. Birds, taught by skillful and patient Chinese trainers, are splitting their little throats, pouring out their songs from the cages in which it is proposed to transport them to Europe and America. Some of the passengers are proudly exhibiting the fish they have purchased. All the wash-stands or bath-tubs on board are filled to overflowing with fantastic varieties of the finny tribe, more or less resembling my own acquisitions. But there is one kind of creature toward which





FAT FAUNCHED JUNKS WITH SQUARE SAILS THAT SLAGGER ALONG WITH THE GROTESQUE GAIT OF THE INEBRIATED  
(See p. 67)

the ship's officials show no mercy. Orders against dogs are stringent. The women members of these round-the-world tours invariably succumb to the charms and the cheapness of the small Pekinese; but not one of these pets ever reaches the end of his journey. The mortality among them is terrific. The tragedy occurs most often in the port before sailing. For there are always a few American ladies who, with the intrepidity for which they are noted, and a persistence and astuteness worthy of a movie film, manage to smuggle a dog or two into their cabins. But that is as far as ingenuity can take them. The deception is unfailingly discovered, and the animal confiscated.

Once more we are sailing through strange seas in all the comfort of our great ship. To go from Shanghai to Hong Kong through the Yellow Sea is very like taking a walk in your own house, if you have a large family with someone occupying every room. There is no sea in the world more thickly populated than the China Sea. Everywhere, freight junks and fishing craft! The *Franconia's* horn is ceaselessly blowing a warning to the caravels clumsily plunging across her bows, seemingly unaware of their peril. Our progress is very like that of an automobile on an avenue full of deaf and absent-minded pedestrians. Maritime life has always played an important rôle in China. The naval architecture of this craft, for the most part, resembles that of our ships in the Middle Ages—high sterns with low bows and square rigging. The enormously rounded hulls of small draught depend for their balance on their width, and, having practically no keel, roll around in the waves so frantically as to make the observer feel certain that a catastrophe is imminent. But when one has said this, one has said the worst there is to say about the Chinese navy.

No nation in the world possesses so many sailors and so many boats. The Chinese junks and *sampans* are simply uncountable. The number of Chinese living on the sea, or on rivers and coast waters, runs up into millions. As they take their families with them, generations of sea-born Chinese follow one another uninterruptedly, and a large portion of the total population is, one might say, amphibious, with an innate dislike for land life, to which it can never accustom itself once it is used to living on these ancient craft.



Our steamer moves cautiously onward, surrounded by junks that stagger along with the grotesque gait of the inebriated, though there is very little swell. The traffic is all in the same direction, for these Chinese mariners take advantage of the periodic winds that blow from north or south. By night the sea is a mass of twinkling lights, as if a festival were being celebrated. Every junk carries its lantern, and inside the poop cabin there is always a smaller altar, dedicated to the spirits of the deep, before which the crews offer lamps or burn perfumed tapers.

For sheer indifference to danger there is no better sailor than the Chinaman, as all captains agree. The Chinese will put to sea in anything that will float. In a kind of trough made of four boards, propelled by a sail made of fiber, they will start out for a port far beyond sight of land—over a sea frequently swept by cyclones from end to end and one of the most perilous on our planet. Yearly tornadoes annihilate hundreds of junks and *sampans* within the hour. But the murderous hurricane interferes with the sea activities of these sailors for only a few days. They are so accustomed to catastrophes, and there are so many Chinese! Against the fury of the ocean, against the homicidal floods of great rivers, against epidemics and earthquakes, this race struggles on—and always to victory. The loss of a few hundred thousand human beings is to this teeming multitude but an ordinary episode, all in the day's work.

A day's sail off Hong Kong I saw one of those sights that are so extraordinary the observer has to pinch himself to make sure he is not dreaming. We were half-way between Formosa and the Chinese coast, near a small archipelago known as the Pescadores. This strait is constantly disturbed by tornadoes, and even when the air is calm, the chop is extremely rough for small boats. A little after sunrise, some of the *Franconia's* sailors ran to the port rail and peered out at something I was able to see only after some moments. Three Chinese, half naked, were coming toward us, apparently walking on the water. Huge waves with overhanging white-caps now hid them in their cavernous furrows, and now lifted them high in air, to swallow them up once more. It was only when they passed very close to us, or rather, when the *Franconia* caught up with them, that



I saw that these Chinese were in a small boat, better described as a coffin—a craft some three yards long. The gunwale rose only a few inches from the water, so heavy was the craft from the water it had taken in. The rowers were working frantically, and every now and then one would throw down an oar, and begin to bale.

Whither was this strange embarkation bound? There was no land in sight. Neither the Chinese coast nor the shores of Formosa could be made out on that misty morning, and even under better conditions we would have been able to see only the mountain peaks of one or the other, so great was the distance separating us from both. Perhaps these navigators had come from one of the junks passing up and down, and were quietly making their way to some other vessel?

The officer of the watch greeted these bold navigators with a smile, exclaiming that the Chinese would be the best sailors in the world if they had captains who knew how to manage them. The three oarsmen meanwhile passed our ship without even turning their heads to look at us, rowing on with contemptuous indifference. We saw them bobbing up and down, at the mercy, apparently, of the restless mountains of water. Each time they came up on a comber they seemed smaller. We were going in the opposite direction, and the distance between us increased rapidly, as though the oarsmen's strokes had a magic potency. Now the three men in their coffin-like craft were nothing more than a small cork bobbing on the top of the waves, as the latter arched over to break . . . and now they were just a point on the horizon . . . and at last, nothing at all as though the sea had swallowed them up! But when one has seen such an example of bold indifference to the sea's power, one can understand the hair-raising exploits of the yellow pirates of other centuries who, on so many occasions, threatened the life of the Empire itself.

Three days after leaving Shanghai, we reached Hong Kong. This English possession occupies one of the many large islands that emerge from the great estuary of the Pearl, or Canton, River. Between this island and the Peninsula of Cowloon opposite, there is a bay, famous throughout the world for its beauty, which vies with that of Rio de Janeiro, or of Sydney.



I have already mentioned how the English obtained possession of Hong Kong in 1841, as a consequence of the so-called Opium War, brought about because the British insisted on keeping their opium market and declared war on China when the latter, attempting to protect her subjects from the use of this fatal drug, had caused several bales of opium, smuggled in by the English, to be thrown into the sea. The English victory was assured, of course, and the London government demanded, as indemnity for the cost of the campaign plus that of the opium thrown overboard, the island of Hong Kong, which is a magnificent port of great strategic importance.

One must admit that Great Britain has improved her acquisition which, in 1841, was a barren mountain of rock, but today supports a prosperous city, full of palaces and gardens, with broad avenues, fine business buildings, and luxurious shops.

One enters the bay as one would a drawing-room, approaching it through various ante-chambers. I saw it first in the violet light of early dawn, its coast of steep hills and dark or reddish rocks spotted here and there with vegetation. Meanwhile the square-sailed Chinese craft around us had grown more numerous than ever. They were all making for the same point, like a flock of sheep that narrows its long line into a triangle so as to slip into the pasture more easily. And now among the fat-paunched junks we could see small *sampans*, a man at the rudder—the father or husband—and a crew of yellow women. These Amazons of the sea wear nothing more than blue trousers and their heavy breasts are completely naked, as, streaming with sweat and plying their strong muscles, they handle the sails or the oars.

Finally we cast anchor in front of Hong Kong, alongside the docks of the Cowloon Peninsula. The English have made Hong Kong a city of gardens and parks, so that viewed from these docks it looks like a great estate, stretching along the banks of the bay, its green slopes sometimes hidden by low-hanging clouds. A funicular railway ascends to the summit of Pico, the mountain on which the city of Victoria is located.

The population of Hong Kong consists of 300,000 Chinese and 15,000 whites. Most of the handsome buildings are of stone from the mountain—a contrast to the usual Chinese house



which is of wood. Here, too, as in Shanghai, order is maintained by Indian troops—warlike Sikhs, with wide black beards and dark turbans, Hindu mountaineers serving England either as soldiers or as police.

On the well-paved avenues running parallel with the shore, the popular mode of locomotion is the rickshaw, as in all Asiatic cities. But here the rickshaw runners are far more vigorous of frame—athletes with leg muscles extremely well developed. The ambition of every European resident of Hong Kong, especially if he be engaged in business, is to have three rickshaw runners—one to carry the shaft and the other two to give speed, so that the light vehicle with its single occupant seemingly flies through the air. When the rickshaw stops, the three husky and half-naked runners snatch their master from his seat, and deposit him on the ground as easily as they would a roll of paper.

With its fine hotels and palaces and parks, Hong Kong might be described as a traveller's paradise. But none of its attractions is for me so alluring as the ceaseless traffic of the bay, with its strange mixture of the medieval craft of the sea, and the most recent inventions of our white civilization. Here, as on the rivers of China, there are great floating towns, made up of *sampans*, which serve as the homes, and will later serve as the graves, of the families living on them and getting their living out of them. The sailor women, naked from the waist up, with ornaments of imitation jade in their bristling hair, stare with fixed insolence at the white traveller who is so curiously eyeing their living quarters.

This world is so different from ours—above all, these human beings are so different from those we know, that one cannot but wonder as to the future of the Chinese Republic and the liberation of the ever swarming peoples of this old world.

The peoples of Asia, peoples eternally enslaved, who in their thousands and thousands of years of history have never lived a single hour of liberty, and have always looked upon democracy as an absurdity contrary to the rhythm of life; these peoples who preserve the semblance of virtue only under the influence of fear, and who, if they are not certain of immediate punishment, lose all sense of respect and behave with the insolence of rebellious school children—how will these races—we must except a



chosen minority—ever attain to greatness, when they have so little sense of the intrinsic value of the individual?

The ports of the Far East are fragments of Europe that have fallen into the ancient Asiatic world—new Londons—Londons with sunlight and blue sky—for the smoke of soft coal and streamers of fog will never succeed in conquering the luminous splendor of Asia. Its piers are mountains of hard coal, with steel towers that guard lakes of oil, and heaps of exotic products of a sweetly putrid smell. Here, too, is the saccharine odor of brackish water, of drugs, of tropical fruits and fragrant woods. Swarming like worms, here are men of all nations and races—yellow, red, copper-colored—scarcely aware of the tropical heat, and with nothing but a loin-cloth to cover them. The Indian police does not deign to speak to the native, but simply raises a lash and strikes. The children spend the day swimming, and the women rowing. Along the rail of the great liners appears a procession of heads, the turbans of Indian servants, and of stokers, also Indian—men who seem to be convalescing from fever, such is the pallor of their skin, and so frail are they, with such burning eyes! A thin beard marks each sweating face, like the beard of a sick man who has not shaved for several months. Everything is huddled together in the waters of these ports. Great liners, as big as cities, junks that have not yet emerged from the Middle Ages, *sampans* that are floating hovels, where families are born and die, and cruisers that have come to demand indemnity, or to watch over the collection of customs duties. . . .

On the docks palanquins, carried by coolies with wide-brimmed hats, pass up and down, as though thousands of silk screens had come to life; rickshaws carried along by heavy-limbed runners, men-horses and men-scales, carrying every sort of object in the pair of fiber discs hanging from a thick bamboo staff, swung across a shoulder; women who toil even harder than the men, stopping every now and then from their beast-of-burden labors to give birth, resignedly, to yet another child. . . .

The police are hustling back to the ships the various lifeless sailors they have collected on the docks. They always pretend that the sailors they have picked up here and there among the

dives of the waterfront are sleeping off a drunk. But they are wrong sometimes. The sailors are not always drunk. Sometimes they are not even alive, and those who do regain consciousness are sent by way of punishment to the inferno of the stoke-hole.

Vendors of all kinds are shouting down below the bulging steel side of the great ships that are tied to the docks. An extempore market stretches along below the rows of round portholes. From the white decks of these floating palaces the tourists are staring curiously down at the motley objects the yellow multitude is offering for sale: reed chairs, amulets of false jade, parasols of painted paper, feather fans. . . .

Ships are starting off for the American coast that lies "across the way," but for all that, on the opposite side of the planet. Other ships are coming in from the remotest corners of the Pacific Ocean, the great meeting ground of that humanity of the future, of which Europe, for the most part, is still in total ignorance. Before the world of the white races can become aware of the existence and importance of the Pacific, another war will be required.

It was through a war that the white world first became aware of the existence of a country called Japan!





## CHAPTER XXVII

### HONG KONG AND CANTON

HONG KONG, like Shanghai, is enjoying a "boom." A great many of the young men I met were low-salaried clerks and employés a few months ago. Now they have capitals of one hundred thousand dollars or more, acquired in speculation. Some of the older business men smile sceptically at these indications of prosperity. They have lived long enough to discover that for every "boom" there is a crash, and that in countries rapidly evolving, fortunes are lost as quickly as they are made.

Hong Kong's prosperity seems to have made the city's domestic affairs more complicated. This is partly because of the proximity of Canton, the most revolutionary of the cities of the old empire, which exerts a disturbing influence on nine-tenths of the population of Hong Kong. The Chinese of this English port are not syndicalists—they do not even know the meaning of the word. But they find it extremely pleasant to have their day's pay doubled and tripled every so often, and, in addition, derive a particular satisfaction from making the life of the "white devils" as difficult as possible. The revolutionary committees of Canton devote their energies to organizing strikes in the adjoining colonies, governed by Europeans; and so far the strikes have resulted in complete and resounding victories for the strikers. These yellow men have an undeniable talent for passive resistance, and there is never any danger of their failing to observe the secret orders of their leaders.

The life of Hong Kong has, at times, been paralysed for several weeks running. Even the palanquin and rickshaw carriers on occasion vanish away, as though the ground had swallowed them up, leaving the streets of this handsome city as deserted as the driveways of a cemetery. The real cause of the British defeat, according to some opinions, is the prosperity

of the city. The one desire of all those who have an interest in business here, as elsewhere, is for a normal state of affairs which will allow profits to pour in without interruption. So the merchants under present conditions are willing to compromise on almost any terms.

The merchants of Hong Kong live as luxuriously as those of Shanghai, but there are fewer pleasure resorts in the former city. The rich Chinese give banquets frequently enough to keep a whole street full of restaurants busy, some of these occupying buildings several storeys high. All night long the waters of the bay reflect the lanterns of the balconies, and the curving roofs outlined with electric lights. In this quarter of the town the noise competes with the illumination. The banquets often last all night, and cost thousands of dollars. Feasts of this nature are always accompanied by public exhibitions of the host's generosity. In front of the door there are bands playing the several characteristic Chinese instruments, and between courses fireworks are set off and all kinds of devices used to make as much display as possible. The white inhabitants follow the Chinese custom to a certain extent, giving their banquets, European-fashion, in the luxurious hotels of Repulse Bay, or in their own handsome palaces on the slopes of Pico.

A man's wealth is measured here by the number of his servants. Everyone with any social pretensions whatever has a whole army of coolies at his disposal. As a matter of fact, it is only through an absurdly large number of servants that housekeeping can go on at all, for no Chinese will deign to do any other household work than that falling strictly within the limits of his special domain. It is only fair to say that nowhere in the world are servants so cheap or so little exacting in other respects. The coolie receives a fixed sum monthly, and his master has no responsibility as to his meals or sleeping quarters. The coolie finds his own food, and as for a bedroom, he is quite content with a gateway or a closet under the stairs. For that matter no one is really sure that a coolie ever does sleep, nor how. He is always prompt to answer his master's call, and very often answers without being called, taking in everything that is going on in the house through slit-like eyes with lids drawn so tight that they seem stitened together.



"Don't go to Canton," I am constantly advised. "There is fighting there daily, and at any moment there may be a flare-up against the Europeans on account of the Customs situation."

I know well enough that for some time the capital of Southern China has been in a state of disorder, but I suspect that there is some exaggeration in these warnings.

Canton was, for several centuries, the only metropolis of the Far East known to Europeans and Americans. Peking was closed to the white world until the last third of the nineteenth century. The Sons of Heaven consistently followed their policy of isolating their vast empire from the rest of the world, and appointed Canton as the only port to which the ships of Christian nations would be admitted.

When the Portuguese of the sixteenth century came to anchor for the first time in this port, they saw that other navigators, not Europeans, however, had preceded them. These forerunners of the European discoverers were Arabian mariners, who, since that distant time, had maintained in Canton a depository for their merchandise, and had constructed a mosque there. For a hundred years the Portuguese captains monopolized trade with Canton, carrying its silks and porcelain to Europe by way of the Cape of Good Hope. The Spanish acquired the same articles in Manila, whither they were sent by Cantonese merchants, and the famous Mexican packet, the *Nao de Acapulco*, transported them across the Pacific to New Spain.

The seventeenth century was well on its way when the English began to visit the Canton River and take on cargoes of tea, a product which was growing more and more popular in Europe and America, and which ultimately gave rise to the well-established tea trade in which the markets of Liverpool, Salem, Boston, and New York, all played a part. This constant coming and going of European and American ships stimulated Chinese emigration. It is due to the tea-trade established at this time, that the Chinese now scattered throughout the world are almost invariably from the southern provinces, and look upon Canton rather than Peking as their real capital.

After these emigrants had acquired considerable fortunes in America, they usually returned to Canton, to enjoy their wealth,



incidentally increasing the prosperity of that city. Those who did not return to their homeland nevertheless kept up a correspondence with their families, and all these factors together brought it about that Canton kept in touch with the liberal tendencies of our epoch, and that a wide breach was created between this Southern city and the rest of the Empire.

The most distinguished Chinese of these latter times have been Cantonese. For half a century now the young men and women of the intellectual class of Canton have been in the habit of completing their education in the United States and in Europe. By temperament these Southern Chinese are more restless and less long-suffering than those of the north. Their ancestors were, in many cases, pirates or rebellious mountaineers. In the last years of the Empire, the Cantonese went so far as to sing songs full of insults for the Son of Heaven in their streets. The Peking rulers and the imperial authorities of the city did not in a single instance dare take measures against such irreverence.

Logically enough, the republican movement which put an end to the dynasty of the "very pure" had its source in Canton. But the republic once established, the sons of the aforementioned city refused to go on being governed, as in the days of the Empire, from Peking, declared their independence, and set up the so-called Republic of South China.

This separatism is not a matter of politics or diverging policies. There are really two Chinas, each distinct from the other. The inhabitant of Peking—tall, serene, sparing of words, half Tartar and half Manchurian—in no wise resembles the exuberant, imaginative uncontrollably individual Chinese of the Southern provinces, who so often emigrates to America, proudly proclaiming himself a Son of Canton.

Dr. Sun Yat Sen, the creator of the Republic of the South, and its perpetual president, is a Cantonese physician, educated partly in the United States. While the Empire was still in existence, he devoted his energies to the republican cause. But now he is struggling with numerous enemies within his own house, enemies who make it extremely difficult for him to pursue his domestic policies, and, at the same time, to offer a bold front to the foreign nations which support the Peking govern-



ment and refuse to recognize the Republic of the South. At the present moment he is carrying on an out-and-out struggle with all the foreign powers who collect the Chinese customs, keep a part of them according to the indemnity terms, and deliver the rest to the Peking government. At the present moment warships of all the nations having an interest in China are riding at anchor in the Pearl River, for the express purpose of intimidating Sun Yat Sen.

"Don't go to Canton," I hear repeatedly. "The street mob there may break out at any time against the whites, and there will be a general slaughter. Of course, there will be armed intervention, and punishments, and new indemnities—but that won't do you any good if you are dead."

Just the same, I am going to Canton. There is a railway running down from Hong Kong, but for a year it has been out of commission. The company is English, and as the president of the Canton republic has repeatedly confiscated its rolling stock, the directors decided to suspend service. So we will travel in comfortable river boats, American-style, with several storeys of decks, and looking much like floating hotels.

As we approach, we thread our way through the numerous islands of the estuary, following a canal that is gilded now by the rising sun, its dark green banks still in obscurity.

In spite of the fact that Europeans have been living for three centuries in Canton, they still occupy a separate quarter called Shameen, cut off from the rest of the town by a canal. Shameen, formerly the site of the Canton factories, is today a city of the American type, with buildings several storeys high, and a great number of hotels. A fourth of the residents of this white Canton are French, and the remainder English-speaking. The Christian College—a large institution supported by American missionaries—plays the part of university for several hundred of the Canton youths, and provides an education in modern style. The rest of Canton covers an enormous area, and is inhabited by more than two million Chinese. Here and there the old walls, like those of Peking, were cut through to allow the city to expand. In addition to its land dwellers, Canton has a river population of more than 150,000.

This Canton river population has always been an object of



curiosity to the traveller. The boats are grouped together much like buildings on land, their gunwales touching, so that the inhabitants can walk along from one deck to another. Between these clusters of motley craft there are narrow canals, that serve as alley-ways, along which small canoes make their way. Some of the *sampans* are shops selling such articles as are indispensable to this amphibious population. Other craft, very old specimens, usually, of the shipbuilder's art, serve as temples. Wandering priests mingle with the other denizens of the Canton River, and there are beggars and smugglers, and all the types that invariably play a part in any social upheaval.

For centuries also, the famous "Flower Boats" have floated along the banks of the Pearl River. Doubtless the reader knows the purpose of these aquatic establishments, that are tied to the land by a light bridge, and along which run balconies overhung with vines and baskets of trailing plants. The crew—to call it so—consists of women with painted cheeks and tunics of brilliant hue. These "Flower Boats," in which the lanterns burn until dawn, fill the black water with glittering reflections and the darkness with light-hearted tunes. From the balconies rise innumerable rockets, cutting through the blackness of the night with the hiss and flash of a knife-thrust.

These resorts, where one may eat and take one's pick of women, are frequented by the libertines of the country, but the European who boldly ventures inside these curtains of vines and flowers emerges with a knife wound bestowed by the other customers. Only too often the white visitor has disappeared for ever in the mud of the river bed.

The Chinese of Canton appear less educated and far more insolent than those of the other cities. At sight of the foreigner their voices grow aggressive, and often they make remarks to the rickshaw runners, apparently taking them to task for serving the "white devils." One senses a feverish excitement in this crowd, due doubtless to the presence of the warships in the harbor—English, French and American, with one Italian and one Portuguese cruiser, all pointing their cannon on the city, and cleared for action.

We have scarcely finished our lunch at the hotel, as a preparation for an expedition through the Chinese quarter of the city



and a visit to its famous porcelain factories, when various envoys from our Consuls arrive, to urge us to return promptly to Hong Kong.

It seems that for several hours Dr. Sun Yat Sen's troops have been engaged in one corner of Canton with some insurrectionists. The motives of the latter no one seems to know, but doubtless this is their way of criticising the doctor for not being sufficiently revolutionary, and for not destroying the warships of the "white devils" with sufficient speed!

The next day, when I mention that I am going to Macao, the announcement produces even more alarm than the projected trip to Canton. "Don't go to Macao. The pirates always attack the mail boat whenever they feel like it. Only a few months ago they captured all the passengers on the boat."

Pirates are a frequent subject of conversation in China, but in the southern provinces, and especially in the vicinity of the Pearl River estuary, the pirate's profession is the object of general respect and sympathy, for apparently it is one of the traditional institutions of the region.

In Chinese literature the novel is as ancient a literary form as lyric poetry. For thousands of years three types of novels have flourished in China—the historical novel, the novel of adventure, and the novel of social customs. The most famous of all is the one written by Chinai Ngan, a novelist of the twelfth century, who lived under the Kin dynasty. Chinai Ngan is the Walter Scott of China, but in spite of a fecundity as remarkable as that of the famous Scotch novelist, he left only one work, entitled "History of the Banks of a River." I ought to add that this famous novel, which has been read for eight hundred years by all young Chinese, consists of no less than seventy volumes, and that its chief characters number a hundred or more, to say nothing of the secondary figures, of which there are over a thousand. Every chapter consists of two parts, and in the course of this stupendous work at least one hundred and forty different intrigues and arguments are introduced, developed, and brought to a close.

This literary monument is nothing more nor less than an account of the interminable deeds, historic or imaginary, accom-

plished by pirates in the tenth century, under the Soung dynasty, in their wars against the emperors.

At that time, China was torn by civil wars and banditry, and devastated by long famines and frightful pestilences. It was this anarchy which prepared the way for the invasion and conquest of the Mongolians, and, compared with the state of affairs that prevailed at that time, the present difficulties of the republic sink into insignificance. As all young Chinese read Chinai Ngan's famous novel, they start out in life with the firm conviction that the pirate's profession is an interesting adventure, which can by no means cast the blight of dishonor on a man's life.

As I persist in my intention to visit Macao, a young compatriot of mine attempts to dissuade me, by recounting a recent adventure of his with some of the pirates.

He was on his way to Macao in one of the mail boats belonging to an English navigation company, when, one day, while he was at lunch in the main dining room, a sound of rifle shots startled the passengers, who had no time to leave the saloon, however, before the door was thrown open, and a woman appeared before them—the eternal woman leader of all Chinese pirate novels! She was a young female dressed in European style, looking like any film heroine in a blue skirt and a white blouse. My friend noted, however, that the revolver the young Amazon carried in each hand was tied to her wrist by two leather thongs, shaped like bracelets. Thanks to this device, she could drop her revolvers in order to take possession of the traveller's pocket book, and instantly have her weapons in hand again, in case of need.

My young Spaniard was forced to hand over his bill-roll and his rings, which, fortunately for him, slipped off his fingers easily. To one of the travellers, who was vainly endeavoring to remove his rings, the pirates lent ghastly assistance, cutting off his fingers with one slash of the knife, and calmly going on with their inventory. As the captain and the chief engineer were stretched out on the deck above in pools of blood, the young woman with the revolver bracelets was forced to take command of the ship. One of the passengers—a prosperous manufacturer



—was forced to go down to the engine-room and, with his companions in misfortune, took his turn in the stoke-nole.

These pirates were not of the sea-going variety. They had come on board as passengers at Hong Kong, shipping in various classes according to their dress, and, on a signal agreed on in advance, each group executed the orders it had received.

For several hours the boat pursued a crazy course through the channels of the estuary, threatening to run down many a peaceful freight-junk, the latter only escaping catastrophe by a hair's breadth, thanks to a lucky turn of the wheel. Even so, the boat, staggering along as though drunk, scraped the sides of boat after boat, with a brutal wrench carrying away everything that rose above the victim's decks. Finally, after midnight, the pirates ran it aground on a deserted bit of the coast, several leagues out of Hong Kong, and made off, leaving some fishermen to spread the news of the event. A warship then proceeded to rescue the imprisoned passengers.

In this instance the pirates were content with booty, and did not trouble to carry off any of the travellers as a pretext for demanding ransom. But on several occasions, armed junks have attacked steamers, taken the passengers prisoner, and then sent demands for ransom to the families of their captives. Sometimes when the money demanded did not reach the pirates quickly enough, the latter would send an ear or a finger, removed from their hostages, by way of hastening the arrival of the money. . . .

"But these things don't happen every day," I reply. And this is literally true—they happen only every six months! Of course the British authorities, after one of these events, adopt severe measures, and armed cruisers appear instantly in the waterways of the estuary, and the police search the islands, and the courts of Hong Kong display unusual severity and condemn to death all Chinese who have committed any offense whatsoever, even though the crime in question has nothing to do with piracy.

Then the pirates lie low for a time, and do nothing to attract attention. The city authorities grow less vigilant, assuming that the evil has been rooted out, and then, just as people begin to embark with greater confidence for Macao—a pleasant city,

where one may gamble freely, where the rich Chinese daily risk their vast fortunes at fantan, and where the white tourist finds various forms of amusement—a new pirate band, led once more by a woman perhaps, strikes another blow.

For all of that, I cannot leave the Orient without visiting the city where Camoens, poor and in exile, composed his immortal poem in honor of his distant fatherland. . . .

I am going to Macao.





## CHAPTER XXVIII

### MACAO

WE take ship for Macao in the early morning hours. At the dock we find numerous knots of Chinese, who are allowed to cross the gang-plank only one by one. The police examine each carefully from head to foot, and it is only when the East Indian representatives of law and order are quite convinced that a Chinese has not so much as a penknife in his pockets, that he is allowed to go on board. As these yellow men all look exactly alike with their blue coats and their undifferentiated features, it is difficult to tell the difference between a peaceable coolie going to Macao to attend to his private affairs, and a pirate who, with his accomplices, is plotting to attack the ship in mid-voyage.

This mail boat is like all the other boats of its class that sail up and down the estuary and the adjoining rivers; but, as a consequence of the attack described above, stringent measures have been taken to add to the boat's means of defence. Heavy iron gratings divide its deck space into various segments as in a prison, and an Indian policeman, in a blue uniform and a wide turban, with a rifle and a revolver besides, mounts guard over the entrance to each one of these divisions so long as the passengers are coming on board. As soon as the boat gets under way, the entrances to the cages are closed from the inside, the sentinels remaining behind the bars, their rifles resting on one of the iron cross-pieces.

The upper deck has also been divided into sections by stout bars, which, to prevent assailants from slipping around the ends, have been carried out beyond the rail in a semi-circular grating rimmed with sharp spikes. The captain's bridge is armored with painted sheet iron, like the shields set up over modern artillery. Through these precautions, it is assumed, the pirates will be unable to injure those in command of the boat. However, the

passengers who witnessed the last attack are not particularly impressed by all these defences. They seem to be quite confident that Chinese ingenuity could easily find means of overcoming them.

The island of Hong Kong is slipping away from us, melting into the morning fog that is torn only here and there by the sun. But on the summit of Pico this turban of mist is, moment by moment, losing its opaque grey, and beginning to sparkle like a web of golden filaments.

Outside the bay, the water of the estuary is as smooth as a lake, and its blue tints have the milky transparency of porcelain. Countless junks! . . . The boats that swarm in Chinese coast waters are here, at the mouth of the Pearl River, so numerous that our boat has to keep up a constant signalling in order to avoid collisions.

In spite of the calmness of the water, the junks sail along at angles which, to our eyes, seem ominous, for their passengers. The prows of these medieval craft are sunk low in the water, while the sterns rise high in the air, as though the junk were about to plunge to the bottom at every forward lunge. The canals, however, are growing wider, turning into arms of a shining and tranquil sea. Floating on the mirror-like surface are small archipelagoes of refuse, swept along by the tide from ships or shore.

The water traffic does not diminish as we increase our distance from Hong Kong. On the contrary, it seems to grow more dense as we thread our way through the islands. Frequently, on board the junks, we see short stout women sailors, with enormous biceps, heavy breasts, and green ornaments on their bristle-like hair.

The islands, too, grow more and more numerous. Rising now against the horizon, is a group of mountain summits, christened *Nove Illias*, the "Nine Isles," by their Portuguese discoverers. . . .

Some of the Chinese travellers, residents of Peking, are persons of importance, on their way to spend a few days in their Macao villas. These rich Chinese wear handsome tunics of blue silk, with jewelled buttons. One of them has the title of Baronet from the king of Great Britain. They occupy an im-



portant position in the financial world. Their constant dealings with the whites, however, make them extremely unpopular with their fellow-countrymen, who consider them traitors to their race. In Hong Kong there are numerous Chinese societies, greatly feared for their ferocious vengeance in matters of so-called "treason"; and as a result these personages live like prisoners in their palaces, going now and then to Macao for a few days of relaxation, since the Portuguese authorities, somehow, can offer these visitors greater security.

And now we have left the islands behind us, and are crossing a space of open sea. Along the horizon stretches a promontory, with a fortification and a light-house at its extremity; and now, as we round this promontory, the ancient and interesting city of Macao comes slowly into view.

Macao unites the brilliant color and grace of line of a Far Eastern city with a stability bequeathed by its Portuguese founders. The buildings here are of masonry, for the most part, not of wood, as in the other Chinese cities, and most of them have an upper storey, with arcades or covered galleries, and above their roof tops peer the belfries of Catholic churches.

Macao, which was once called the city of "The Holy Name of God in China"—a name which gave way later to Macao, of native origin—would, if one came upon it in the environs of Lisbon, strike the visitor as magnificently exotic. But just here, after visiting the chief cities of the Chinese coast, this old settlement reminds us of an ancient Portugal and of our own far-away Spanish world.

The old port is far more Chinese than the city, and in no other harbor of the Far East can anything like the quantity of merchant vessels be seen that frequents the waters of Macao.

We sail past a series of great junks—fat-paunched galleons, seemingly conceived by a delirious artist rather than by men devoted to the science of navigation. At the prows, great scaly gilded dragons threaten sea and sky with fire-belching jaws. The sails fluttering on the masts are woven of bamboo, and shaped like the wings of giant moths. The sterns rise high in the air, like fortresses, and a dozen cannon thrust their necks out over the rail—short artillery pieces of enormous caliber, ancient muzzle-loading guns, incapable of sending their balls



THE BUILDINGS IN HONG KONG (TOP) AND MACAO (BOTTOM) ARE OF MASONRY FOR THE MOST PART, NOT OF WOOD AS IN OTHER CHINESE CITIES, AND MOST OF THEM HAVE UPPER STOREYS  
*(See p. 216)*



to any great distance, but making up for their shortness of range by an infernal noise!

The crews also have an archaic appearance, by no means reassuring—yellow half-naked athletes, many of them wearing queues dangling from the backs of their heads down over their sweat-dripping shoulders. From the poop-cabins of some of these galleons rise columns of perfumed smoke, revealing the presence on board of an altar in honor of the goddess of the waves. Before her effigy tapers of sandalwood are burning. All of these prows have round holes on both cheeks, painted to imitate eyes; for Chinese sailors can embark with confidence only on a ship that can see its way! They are certain then that while they sleep, or during the darkness of the tempest, the ship, which has a mysterious life of its own, like all craft that sail the earth's waters, will be able to discern the reefs and shallows, and avoid them with the prudence of a wary animal.

The prospect of being forced, by some accident of travel, to embark on one of these extraordinary craft, is not attractive. Such junks as these are rarely seen in Shanghai and Hong Kong. This armed merchant marine navigates the labyrinth of the great estuary and sails up the rivers for hundreds of miles to cities of the interior—and on a special purpose, it seems. These old ships keep their ancient cannon under pretext of fighting pirates, but actually they are smugglers, buying cargoes of opium from the Chinese merchants of Macao. Frequently the residents of that city hear an exchange of shots between these junks and the Government ships which are trying to capture the smugglers and put an end to the opium traffic. This warlike sound, increased by the sonorous quality of the canals, fails entirely to arouse any thrill in the residents of this free port. The opium has been sold and paid for. If people want to fight about it, let them do so!

Macao is a peninsula like Gibraltar, though its mountain is less lofty. An isthmus unites it to the territory of the ancient empire. Before the English founded Hong Kong, three quarters of a century ago, this port was the best in the country. A city of eighty thousand inhabitants now covers the peninsula—an extraordinary population, considering the small amount of space available, and due entirely to commerce.

In the sixteenth century the Chinese Government gave these



few miles of territory to the Portuguese as a reward for help lent the Canton authorities in their struggle against some pirates who were trying to gain possession of that city. The Dutch tried to capture the new colony, but were less fortunate in their efforts than in Ceylon, Java, and the other possessions in the Far East, which they were able to snatch from the Portuguese.

For some time, Macao led a precarious existence, and in the nineteenth century its garrison with difficulty withstood several attacks of the Chinese, who wished to regain the peninsula. But now it yearly increases in importance, and, thanks to its port, will in a short time rival Hong Kong. Its present governor, through careful administration, has been able to execute some of the preliminary improvements of this magnificent port, in which eventually ocean liners of the deepest draught will be able to anchor. And then in a short time Macao will be transformed from its present state—that of a quiet canal, in which a few squadrons of freighters and smuggler junks cast anchor, to a modern port of vivid, tumultuous life, frequented by ships from all quarters of the globe.

What an unforgettable panorama unrolls before the visitor to Macao! In front of us, on the isthmus side, a mountain chain fills the greater part of the horizon—the far-famed mountains of Cathay—the name the illustrious Marco Polo gave to the whole of China, so that for centuries the Christian world knew the vast empire of the Grand Khan by this name, which by rights belongs only to these mountains of South China.

Below us, as we look down on the city from the ancient Jesuit cathedral, we see a mass of pointed dark roofs, like those of Europe, here and there giving passage to the soaring curves of a Chinese pagoda or a Buddhist temple. A great many of the façades are painted pink or blue, and the old buildings seem rejuvenated by these cheerful tints.

Beyond the city, islands and canals in unbroken succession—a kind of infinity, as though the world were an endless series of arms of the sea embracing the barely emerging summits of sunken mountains! Along these high-banked canals, with one half of their watery surface as black as ebony and the other gilded by the sun, dozens and dozens of junks nod in the after-



noon breeze, their sails protruding with the bold curve of a pagoda roof. Beyond, one sees the dark back of a mountain, and seemingly that is the limit of the horizon. But beyond this oblique line there is something that shines with the brilliance of fusing metal—still another canal of the estuary, navigable for the junks and *sampans* that shrink to toy size in the distance; and farther, another mountain or island, and then a fragment of canal, and then beyond that again, new islands, until at last all this submerged and emerging world melts away in the distance, and the blue of the far-away mountains mingles with the blue of the water and the sky.

Finally, we turn our attention to the real object of our pilgrimage—the grotto in which Camoens used to meditate and write, his refuge from the heat of this almost tropical country. The garden surrounding this historic spot has the pleasing atmosphere of furniture that is beginning to show age. In its groves and alleys the melancholy of an old Chinese garden softens the majesty of the Portuguese park recalling the gardens of Cintra. Here and there rise statues of mandarins, with porcelain heads and hands, the rest of the body consisting of plants shaped by the gardener's pruning shears to resemble the human form. Alas! The favorite refuge of the poet has been disfigured and cheapened by excess of admiration! The grotto is nothing more than a passage-way between great stones, and is now occupied by a bust of Camoens, while all the adjoining rock has disappeared under memorial plates inscribed with fragments from the *Lusiad*, or verses in praise of it by celebrated authors! The spot might, with good reason, be called poetic; but all these marble slabs give it the gruesome aspect of a cemetery.

Apparently this is a favorite picknicking ground for the residents of Macao, especially for young couples, who bring out a gramophone with their lunch, and dance in front of the laurel-crowned bust. Never mind! It is easy for the imagination to transcend all this present ugliness, and to see the old garden such as it was, with its overhanging verdure, its small grotto free of ornaments, and, meditating there, under the fresh green boughs, the Portuguese nobleman whom war had blinded in one eye—a soldier as heroic as the one-handed Cervantes, but exiled



by his country (then the mistress of colonies on both coasts of Africa and the Indian Ocean and the archipelagoes beyond the Straits of Malacca) to one of its remotest possessions. . . .

At nightfall, we turn aside from the principal street of Macao and its Chinese bazaars, to explore the adjacent alleys. Macao enjoys no great fame for its morals as a city, but should not, for this reason, be considered any worse than the other ports of the Far East. It is distinguished from other Chinese cities in that its vices are regulated, and, for that very reason, more easily observed. Under police protection, the traveller can, with greater security than in other parts of the East, observe Oriental "night life" in all its aspects.

The small peninsula of Macao, possessing no territory beyond that of its promenades, and no industry but that of its port, has been able to make a living only by exacting tribute from the vices of the Chinese population. These vices were inevitable. In Shanghai, in Hong Kong, and in all the cities of the Far East, they are to be found on a far greater scale, and those who exploit them systematically secretly pay tribute to the authorities for their tolerance, increasing the fortunes of private individuals thereby. In Macao a tax is publicly levied, and it is used, not to make money for some official, but to carry on public enterprises such as the construction of the port.

The greatest of all Chinese vices is gambling, and gambling is unrestricted in Macao, which is sometimes called the Monte Carlo of the Far East—a name it would deserve in all seriousness if the cities of Canton and Hong Kong were a little nearer!

It is hard to choose among all the resorts devoted to satisfying the national vice, there are so many of them, all bearing electric lights and Chinese streamers across the fronts! In the same streets are numerous opium dens, with their little funereal lights, and the hard mats that serve as beds. But there is nothing interesting about an opium dive in this city, now the chief depositary of the drug.

The Portuguese in Macao do not deserve the hypocritical aspersions cast upon them by other European colonies in Asia. Portugal never inflicted the use of this narcotic on the Chinese by violence, as England did in the so-called Opium War. The merchants of Macao sell the drug to the ships that come in search



of it, a commercial transaction which provides revenue for the public treasury. The Chinese can buy opium in other colonies controlled by Europeans, but the traffic is kept secret, and whatever profit is realized must be credited as "graft."

The game of fantan is a slow emotional, long-drawn-out debauch of the Chinese, who likes to take all his pleasures in a leisurely fashion. Speed is contrary to all his notions of enjoyment.

The enormous gambling table is on the lower floor, and surrounded by "puntos" of the lowest class—coolies, sailors and longshoremen.

We go up a well-lighted stairway to the floor above, from which, through a large oval opening in the floor, we can look down on the gambling table below. Around the railing of this balcony are cane chairs, occupied by gamblers of distinction. In some houses there are tiers of galleries, so that the number of persons taking part in the game is sometimes three or four times the number we saw participating. Employés of the establishment seated at the rail-way of each gallery take the money of the gamblers on their floor, and lower it to the table in small baskets suspended on cords, murmuring the number chosen and the amount of the bet in a thin, squeaky voice, far more suggestive of the vocal organs of a cat than of a human being.

I look with amazement at the people standing around the table on the first floor, for nowhere in the Chinese cities I have visited have I seen anyone like them. I find myself sitting between old gentlemen who look like mandarins come upon evil days—scholars, of exquisite manners, whose promising careers have been ruined by the vicious whims of the gambling table. In spite of their small eyes, little more than black slits between tightly drawn lids, and their yellow wrinkled faces and long drooping mustaches, they remind me of many a ruined gentleman I have known at Monte Carlo.

The gambling table also provides a good opportunity to observe Chinese women at one's leisure. Those who are taking part in the game wear trousers and blue silk blouses, with a bit of fur on the well padded front, and numerous jewels sparkling on breasts and wrists. They are puffing away at cigarettes held in long tortoise-shell holders. Their legs are crossed, and from



their loose trousers thin calves emerge—not at all in harmony with their wide faces. Playing considerable sums and handling their money with Oriental indifference they are constantly laughing an insolent sort of laugh, and murmuring to one another as they stare at the European women who have just come in. Most of them are well-known courtesans who live in Hong Kong and Canton. They have been given permission by the rich merchants supporting them to come to Macao for a game of *fantan*.

Presiding over the table is a sort of mandarin, with a stringy white beard, who majestically sets the pace of the game. Beside him is a great heap of *sapeques* (metal discs with a hole in the center). Without looking, he draws a handful of these coins toward him, placing them under an over-turned tin receptacle. The game consists in lifting up this cover when all the bets are in from the different floors, and with a very long stick—to avoid all suspicion of cheating—to divide the *sapeques* into groups of four, until finally there remain, it may be, four pieces, or three, or two, or one, the numbers on which the players have staked their money.

This division into groups of four is accomplished with maddening slowness; yet it cannot be too slow for the public taste. The Chinese, apparently, does not divide his time into hours. Besides, there is no fear that the establishment will close at any given moment. *Fantan* houses have no doors, and the games continue day and night, the gamblers coming and going as they choose. Some of the *puntos* have their meals brought in from near-by cafés, and when they can no longer keep awake, they go to sleep on a mat-covered bench nearby, and it may be, do not leave the establishment for weeks at a time—at least, not until they have lost everything they brought with them.

Some of these gamblers display an extraordinary keenness of vision. Scarcely does the venerable *caissier* raise the cover and begin to count the pieces, than these experts, after one eagle-like glance, can tell what will remain from the huge and scattered mass of discs, and announce the winning number in advance.

Macao, like all other seaports, has its "Street of Felicity"; but it differs from those on the mainland in being frequented exclusively by Chinese on their return from long voyages. Nar-



row houses, with a door stretching the whole width of the lower story. . . . Through this door one sees a sort of vestibule, with a stairway leading to the upper rooms, and a few Chinese chairs occupied by the mistress of the establishment and her friends, stout women, with large heads, thin limbs, heavy trunks, and noses so flattened to their faces that they are scarcely visible in profile. These middle-aged, yellow-skinned females, having withdrawn from the competition around them, placidly converse together, smoking fat cigars. Some of them are combing one another's hair by the light of the lamps placed before their favorite idols.

Tiny pupils of these houses are playing in the middle of the street, like a lot of school children at recess—and that obviously is what they should be doing, to judge by their extreme youth. These little Chinese girls, scarcely claimed as yet by puberty, are running after one another like mischievous kittens, uttering little meows of delight. Some of them come capering toward us, first taking the precaution, however, to place over their little faces masks representing frightful dragons and genii such as only the Chinese can imagine, and the small creatures behind the masks do their best to utter roars in keeping with their characters, so as to terrify us.

Every house has its altar, decorated with pictures of gilded and vividly colored paper, and devoted to the gods or goddesses of the waters, the wind, happiness, and so on. It may be that in some of these resorts the proprietors have not had money enough to acquire divine protectors, but this does not prevent their having an altar. In one place I saw an advertisement of the Japanese Transatlantic Company, showing a four-stacked liner in the middle of an ocean of green waves, carefully set up on the wall under colored banners. Before this "altar-piece" lamps were lit nightly, just as in the neighboring houses. Such improvisations are in no wise startling to the Chinese mind.

The steamer that brought us from Hong Kong left early in the afternoon on her return trip, so as not to be overtaken by darkness. Our friends in Macao, anxious to provide a safe return for us, had engaged a tug-boat to take us back to Hong Kong. The waters around the Portuguese harbor are safe enough; for the watch in the tower of the Castle can follow the



course of ships leaving the harbor for a very long time, since they move away on an open horizon. If he observes anything unusual he can give warning to the Portuguese gunners. The dangerous part of the journey is the labyrinth of canals and islands just outside Hong Kong.

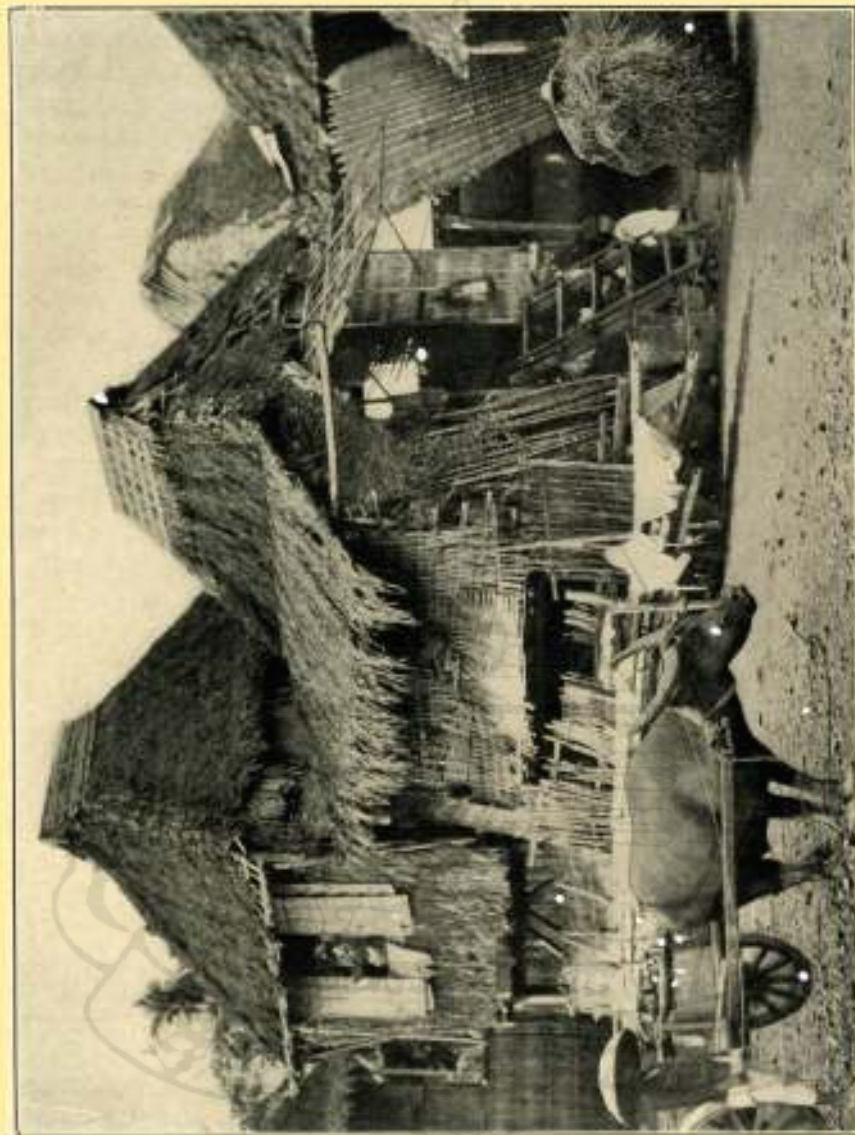
Our little boat carries us off after the banquet and concert provided in our honor, and we find that, small as it is, our tug has a rapid-fire gun in the bow, and the members of the crew are apparently armed. But there are so many junks on our course! We are constantly passing boats that look enormous compared with our small craft, and from their high decks a shower of yellow, half-naked devils could descend upon our decks in a twinkling and take possession.

But as we sail on over the smooth waters of the estuary, suspicions and anxieties melt away into the darkness that envelops and subdues us. There is so much sweetness in the present hour, and a beauty that perhaps we shall never find again so long as we live. . . . If anyone were to ask me for the deepest and most enduring impression of my trip around the world, I would probably say it was this trip from Macao to Hong Kong, over a sea as smooth as a lagoon, under the velvety dome of night, enfolded in mystery and perhaps just eluding peril, on a boat so small that we could trail our hands in the water. . . .

The moon has risen above the dark mass of one of the islands . . . a mere crescent as yet, but its faint light makes a wide path of luminous white on the dark plain that is spotted with red from the lanterns on the junks. The stars are so numerous in this warm sky that when one looks up at them, one cannot help blinking as at a shower of light. Behind us the moon's path, darkened here and there by the black streak of our distant wake, a triangle of radiance, its apex the farthest limit of the horizon . . . and at the point, at regular intervals, a red diamond throwing a shower of sparks, always the same number, and always vanishing in instant eclipse—the Macao Light!

But the most extraordinary spectacle of all is in the waters cut by our prow, or churned by the flanks of the boat. Who can describe the phosphorescence of the China Sea? . . . Some time before, on the Bay of Hong Kong, I had noticed a greenish glow in the water near the ship, a glow due, I thought, to the port





THE NATIVE HUTS ARE BUILT ON PILES WITH WALLS OF WOVEN MATTING.

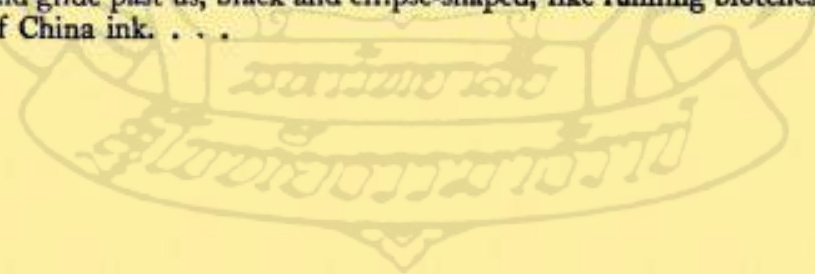
(See p. 206)

light on the bridge; but on discovering that there was no such light, and that the water continued to glow with the same greenish brilliance, I realized that this was a phosphorescence such as I had never seen in any other ocean.

But now, on returning from Macao, the amazing luminousness I had noted in the Bay of Hong Kong seemed insignificant. Here in the middle of the estuary, where the fresh waters of the quiet canals and of the Pearl River meet the salt tides of the ocean, the phosphorescence attains an inconceivable brilliancy in the swarming of animal life.

Alongside the boat the waters sparkle and gleam with the strange, mirror-like brilliance of cats' eyes, a brilliance I have so many nights noted in my wanderings off the coast of the Americas. And then, suddenly, a silent explosion of light on the surface, as if our prow were shattering thousands of electric bulbs in its forward plunge. Countless tubes of mercury seem suddenly to be thrust upward from the depths, as though great bags full of light had burst, enveloping our tug in an aurora of greenish splendor.

Seated in the bows, we go forward through the darkness without being able to see one another, and then, suddenly, we are revealed from head to foot, but in the weird glow of a lightning flash. Scorning the shelter of the only cabin, we remain on deck, shivering with cold, our clothes dripping with moisture. But we cannot lose even a fraction of this super-earthly scene! Every moment may bring a new explosion of magic splendor on the breast of the waters . . . and again and again by this mysterious light, we must see the fish that are startled by our prow, and glide past us, black and ellipse-shaped, like running blotches of China ink. . . .





## CHAPTER XXIX

### THE PHILIPPINES

Two days later, at sunrise, we are threading a strait between dry land and the so-called "Isla Del Corregidor," around us a tranquil sea as luminous as the lakes sung in romances of old, and seemingly as endless as the ocean—for a thin mist obscures the horizon. We sail on for a long time still, and then, out of the fog-draped plain of blue, come docks, roofs, warehouses, the arbors of gardens, houses white, yellow, pink, and church towers! We have crossed the bay of Manila and the city lies before us.

The Philippine archipelago, with its twelve million inhabitants, and its three thousand islands, large and small, is almost a world in itself. One's first impression, after visiting the varied, swarming, brilliant (but how dirty!) cities of the Orient, is that of entering a clean, well-kept house. Manila has an air of its own, an air of stability and distinction, quite in contrast with the temporary, provisory aspect of the majority of Far Eastern cities for the most part built of wood and woven bamboo. The buildings, though not high, are well constructed. The churches and fortifications erected by the Spaniards give Manila a feeling of quite respectable antiquity. Even the huts, built on piles and with walls of woven fiber—the characteristic dwellings of the natives outside the city limits—are arranged methodically in straight lines, suggesting that the Filipino must have an inherent sense of orderliness. He also has a past—it is little more than an infancy—and he aspires to attaining full manhood without losing any of his racial distinctiveness.

The cleanliness of Manila is simply a reflection of the cleanliness of its inhabitants. Of all the capitals of Asia, including the best of the European colonies, Manila has the greatest claims to beauty and elegance. The women wear a national costume, as graceful as it is distinguished, its outstanding feature a silken

skirt—the color varies according to the taste of the wearer—with a long train, reminiscent of the ceremonial attire of royal courts. This train the Filipina gathers up in one hand with a quite aristocratic grace. Down over the skirt falls a waist of delicate Philippine lace, low cut over the bosom, the points carried back and out over the shoulders, till they look like folded wings. A group of Filipinas is like a flock of butterflies about to spread their pinions and rise fluttering in the air.

The men, too, have what one might call a tropical elegance. Nowhere else in the world are crowds so white and so immaculate to be seen. And this in spite of the heat, for the Filipinos change their clothes several times a day.

The beauty of the Manila Gardens contributes a great deal to the general air of cleanliness. Many of the trees are clipped into shapes that seem odd to European eyes. On the outskirts numberless varieties of palms shoot spouts of verdant plumage high in the air. Bushes as large as trees combine with red flowers of incredible size to make these gardens look like the enchanted vistas of a fairy tale. Even in the city cemetery, a marvellous vegetation has succeeded in concealing any suggestion of gloom and death.

The fruits of this fertile land are not different in variety from those of other tropical countries, but they have a savour unequalled anywhere else. It is the sweetness that fruits must have had in the Garden of Eden!

The most extraordinary feature of the Philippines, doubtless, is its schools, superior, in equipment and management at least, to those in a great many states of the American Union. The teachers are sons and daughters of the islands, who, as a rule, wear the ceremonial attire of their country—the men, a white dinner jacket and a black cravat, the women the customary silk skirt and lace waist. A spirit of fervid nationalism demands that they appear before their classes in the traditional Philippine costume.

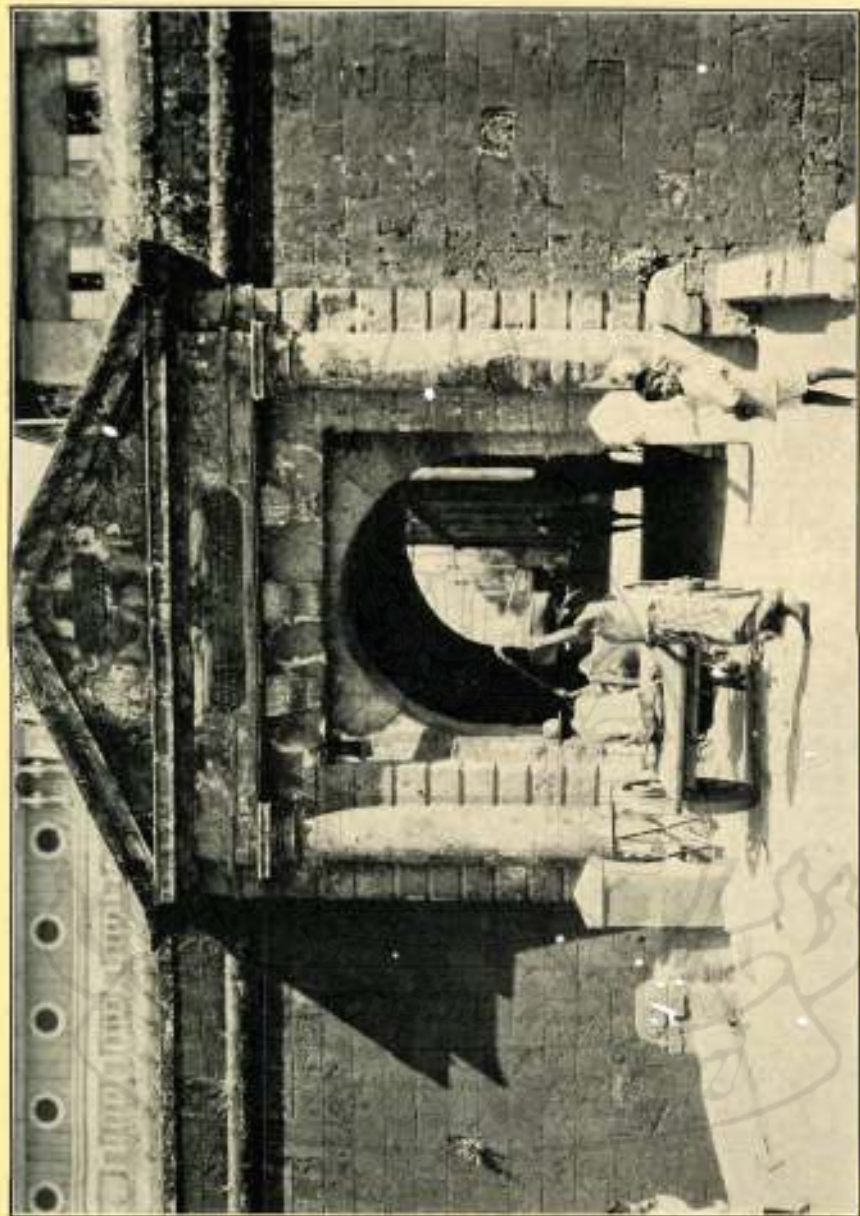
The modern Filipinos are distinguished from other Orientals by an insatiable desire to add to their store of learning, an enthusiasm which often inclines them to give far more attention to latest fads in the realm of thought than these deserve. School buildings are not only numerous, but very large, covering a great



deal of ground. As a rule they consist of one storey only, since the frequent earthquakes make higher structures dangerous. Vast armies of boys and girls throng these buildings every morning, apparently with delight, and absorb the day's lessons with an exemplary attention, an exaggerated docility, known only in the East. The young Filipinos, regardless of sex, display admirable dexterity at weaving, and to this native art the play hours at school are usually devoted. This kind of manual skill seems, I might add, to be general throughout Asia.

It would not be fair to speak of the Philippine schools without a word of appreciation for the country which built them. All the American governors have paid particular attention to education in the islands, thus carrying on the tradition of the United States as an educator of less fortunate peoples. But it would be equally unfair to forget that Spain, in the days of her colonial empire, fulfilled her duties toward this colony according to the lights then prevailing in such matters. Three centuries of Spanish civilization have left a mark that will endure for ever on the history of the Philippines. Many things were done which should not have been done, and many things neglected that should have been attended to; but, at the same time, the Filipinos owe a very definite progress to the Spaniard. Christianity was established in the Philippines by Spanish priests who taught the natives to read—no small matter in those days of slow sailing vessels, when the sandy wall of the Isthmus of Suez was still intact. But for the era of Spanish colonization the Filipino would have come down to modern times in a condition of primitive culture similar to that prevailing among the tribes of the neighboring archipelagoes, or, at the very best, like that of the Mohammedan peoples, who so often threatened Manila with their piratical fleets.

Spain performed for the Philippines much the same service which she performed for the American republics that speak her tongue. It was Spain who dealt with the primitive barbarism of these islands, establishing a firm basis for civilization in the face of the initial obstacles. On reaching the Philippines, America found the rough work already done, the foundations already laid. Her task has been to provide the decorations for the facade of an edifice already under way—the columns, the



OLD CITY GATE OF MANILA. THE SPANISH-BUILT STRUCTURES OF MANILA GIVE THE CITY A FEELING OF QUITE RESPECTABLE ANTIQUITY (See p. 288)



capitals, the cornices, and all that spells refinement, all that spells finish.

Americans may well be proud of what they have done; but they should not forget the work of the mason who sweated and labored with the first raw materials, only to see his work superseded and hidden from view. And they should remember that there comes a time when an edifice, in order to face the wear and tear of use, has to look to its foundations. Some day all these peoples, civilized by Spain in other ages, will have to deepen their foundations, if they wish to grow to truly modern stature. When the American rulers of the Philippines come to this task, they will learn to appreciate the virtues of the first builder. They will learn then to give due credit to Spanish patience and Spanish faith!

Manila is in a state of political effervescence, the sign of an agitation that is deep and lasting, and which will, I am certain, continue for years. The Filipinos want independence.

The Filipinos rose against Spanish rule, just as the now flourishing republics of America did, when they thought they had learned how to steer their own courses by themselves. Their conduct was determined by that natural law which causes children to leave the parent's house at a certain stage in their development. When the United States cruisers disembarked their troops at Cavite, a Philippine republic and a Philippine army were already in existence. The United States helped the young Filipinos to carry on their war against the Spanish monarchy, and that struggle was satisfactorily settled. But the United States has not yet withdrawn from the Philippines.

The great American republic is not a rapacious empire. It has never worshipped the law of the stronger. To my way of thinking, the federal republic as evolved and established in the United States, is, with due regard to human imperfections, the least imperfect of governmental systems. And I am ready to declare, so far as the American people is concerned, that it is the most orderly and conscientious democracy known to history. I do not believe that America ever took possession of property belonging to the weak simply to take advantage of weakness. On the contrary, the history of the American democracy abounds in enterprises in favor of liberty for other nations, and of inde-



pendence for the humble. There are, it is true, dark spots in American history, as there are in the history of all nations. But let us not forget that the United States faced the dangers of internal dissension, and carried on the most frightful of civil wars, in order to put an end to Negro slavery, and that, only a few years ago, she came to Europe to take her part in a war "for the freedom of the world!"

It is absurd to suppose that the American democracy intervened in the Philippines and then retained the archipelago for its own selfish purposes, cynically adopting the bandit's principle that this world's goods belong to those who can take and keep them.

The United States has never clearly expressed its intention to remain in the Philippines. On the contrary, the Filipino desire for independence has won a great deal of sympathy among Americans. But the United States, as a government, has not been willing to admit that this archipelago, a great part of which is still at the very dawn of its civilization, can live the life of a free people without any guidance. Furthermore, the proximity of Japan is to be considered, a factor more important, so far as present-day opinion on this matter is concerned, than the ultimate economic value of the islands.

The Philippines therefore become the battleground between a generous American tradition of sympathy and aid to young peoples in search of freedom, and the more selfish purposes of a government which is forced to consider the imperialistic policies of other nations, and which, in so doing, may have to develop imperialistic policies of its own. It is always easy to say that a nation is not yet ready for independence. It is equally easy to prove that a nation is not sufficiently wise to direct its own destinies. Unquestionably, in the eyes of some Americans, the Filipinos will never be ready for independence, no matter how high a level of civic spirit the inhabitants of the archipelago may attain. These sceptics believe that, given time, and the daily pressure of the school system, the sentiment for independence will die down, and that the Philippines will end by meekly joining the American union as a territory.

English is the language of the elementary school. Spanish is studied in the secondary school and in the university as a "for-



eign" language. This fact is significant. American rule in the Philippine Islands has created a marvellous school system—a system designed to supply the poorest Filipino with the best education that can be provided for him, and, at the same time with an education designed to make of him a citizen of the United States. The partisans of independence, being powerless in the schools, make what headway they can outside the scholastic domain. Never has Spanish been so widely spoken in the islands as now. Under the Spanish domination, the Filipinos clung by way of protest to their native Tagalog, a language now known only to the most cultivated of the inhabitants. The rising sense of nationalism has brought it about that the children, who are forced to speak English at school, are taught Spanish at home, and Spanish is the language they use in their street games.

It is interesting to observe how freely the Filipino lovers of liberty recognize the benefits bestowed on them by Spanish civilization, and how Spanish has become one of their strongest weapons. More than twenty vernacular languages are spoken in the archipelago, the Tagalog of Manila being only one of them. But Spanish is spoken by a part, at least, of the inhabitants of all the islands. It is, moreover, the language of twenty nations in the New World, and of one hundred million human beings. It results that the Filipinos who speak Spanish are no longer spiritually isolated in their distant corner of the world, but can communicate with the great multitudes of Spanish speaking peoples of the Americas.

I see the future of the Philippines in the terms of a race between two tendencies. An official school system is turning out Americans. Filipino nationalism is waiting at the school gates to take these young people in hand, and inspire in them the idea of independence, awakening in every young Filipino that burning love of country which is one of the signs of the vitality of a people.

On both sides patience goes hand in hand with tenacity, and the peaceful struggle gives every promise of lasting throughout many years. Nevertheless, if the enthusiasm the Filipinos now display is not an emotional storm of the moment, this island nation is sure to win in the end. But to achieve victory, the Filipinos will have to defy leg-weariness on the long road they will

have to traverse. They will have to renew their courage from time to time. They will have to convince the American people of their capacity for self-government, obtaining their independence through one of those rapid, spontaneous outbursts of high-minded and generous public opinion so frequent in the life of the United States. As the cow-boys of the South American pampas say, when two men are racing neck and neck each bound to win: "It's just a question of whether the rider gives out before the horse."





## CHAPTER XXX

### OCEANICA

WE are sailing due south across the equator, in one of the loneliest parts of the Pacific. None but ships bound for China or Japan to Java follow this course.

The sea is of a blue so intense that its water appears a solid mass. The clouds that wander in the dazzling sky are white and thick, as though carved in marble, like the clouds in our sacred altar pieces. Flocks of flying fish leap from our bows, fluttering their wings for a few moments, and falling back into the sea, seeming to cut their way into it. On one side of the ship, the water is of a smooth and compact blue. On the other, it sparkles like a great field sown with the bits of a broken mirror.

Two whole days pass, and from the immense circle of which we are the center, we see not even the tip of a sail nor a puff of smoke. The ocean displays a majesty without purpose in this desert calm. I know, as I sail over these waters, that I shall never pass this way again. The vast liquid plain of the equatorial ocean seems created solely for those who remain hour after hour on our deserted deck, their elbows on the rail, their chins resting on their hands, intoxicated with the blue below, the sunlight above, and the silence! In a moment we shall be gone. But the waves will continue to swell into an infinite number of salients. The fish will continue to leap and fly and dance, and sunsets will foilow sunsets in endless succession. We in our human vanity imagine that this spectacle was created for us, poor reasoning animals that we are, vainly endeavoring to find our way through a labyrinth; but when in the course of centuries not even two molecules of the matter of which our bodies are formed will still be clinging together, the splendors of sunrise and sunset, and the dazzling brilliance of moon will still be here, as they are at this hour!

The day before we "cross the Line"—an occasion properly celebrated by solemn rites in honor of Neptune—we spend picking our way between some of the thousand nubbles that form the border of the great Asiatic island mass known as Oceanica. It is only a small proportion of the isles that we can see, as we sail on, but behind the spots of land that die within reach of our eyes, we can imagine all the infinite variety of the sporadic continent of Malaysia.

Here are peaks of a dusky rose, rising from the sea with ruffs of foam; others spread out over the ocean surface in horizontal lines of mountain chains and beaches, the latter invisible unless close at hand, so that the hills in the background would appear as solitary peaks, were it not for the rows of cocoa palms that mark each sandy shore, their slender trunks melting into the blue of the sky, the dense foliage of the crowns floating like black barques on the sea.

Farther inland, and more intensely blue because of the distance, there is always a cloud-draped mountain, looming enormous in its solitude—a volcanic cone that has perhaps slumbered for a thousand years. The inhabitants of the island invariably people its inaccessible heights with gods and demons, and have offered them human sacrifice since the earliest days of history. Centuries of warfare and murder have passed over these fragments of earth, all because of the counsels and commands of the inhabitants of these Holy Mountains; for Oceanica is a world just like ours, only on a smaller scale.

The island shrinks in size as we sail on. Now it is nothing but a dark stain, a cloud resting on the surface of the blue waters. Now it is blotted out from our gaze for ever. New mountains rise before our bow, their summits wreathed in mist. New low-lying palm groves float toward us from the horizon. New perfumes are borne to us on the breeze, warm with the sun, and salt with the breath of the ocean.

We enjoy this island world with the serenity and divine superiority of an intelligence that stoops from its lofty height to measure the stature of all created things, and then passes on without yielding to the influence of surroundings incessantly changing. If we were to disembark on some one of these islands,



we would in a few months be nothing more than a group of human beings, subject to the limitations of circumstance, and inevitably we would feel the weight of the past, and of the persons and things we dealt with. But we ride on in an iron cage, with round holes through which to see and breathe, with a furnace in its bowels, and possessing the power each moment to conquer the enslaving influences of time and space.

We pass through human societies that are living our remote past in the isolated circle of these oases of rock, hidden away in a watery desert. These island peoples are, for us, nothing more than an incident of the voyage. We see them much as Gulliver saw his pygmies, and this momentary advantage of ours gives us a basis of comparison enabling us to see more clearly how monotonous and barren the history of our human species, in general, has been.

All these islands now living for a few brief hours before us, have had their gods who spoke with voices of thunder from the clouds of the great mountains, saints who wrought miracles, and despots who made their peoples suffer the torments of a falsely paternal authority. In every one of these islands the memory of some victorious chief who hurled multitudes to their death is cherished with pride. Each isle has its Napoleon, and the inhabitants of every single atoll naturally look upon themselves as the finest representative of the human race, despising the inhabitants of that island opposite—an inferior sort of creature, for whom slavery is a law ordained of Nature!

We too are proudly conscious of the superiority of our floating island, in which are gathered together all the marvels of civilization. Certainly there can be little comparison between us and those motionless islands yonder, bound to the ocean bed by roots of granite and coral, and in which are to be found only the most rudimentary forms of human society. . . . But then a confused sense of justice makes us suspect, after the first thrill of pride, that we are not the semi-godlike navigators that for a brief moment we felt ourselves to be. What, in truth, are we? . . . Eight hundred human beings, some of us masters, and some of us servants, thrown together in an iron box, and carrying along with us a whole graveyard full of animals kept on ice, so



that we can feed ourselves with their corpses, while gay music quickens our digestive processes and stimulates those of us who dance to new efforts after each of the five meals of the ship's daily routine.

Above, we fill the blue of the ocean sky with cheerful sound waves, and blacken it with smoke, the residue of the conquered forces that have transformed our parasitical life on the surface of the globe. A wake of boxes and tin containers, once filled with the means of exorcising our eternal malady, hunger, marks the ship's course over this mobile and deep plain, that is at one and the same time both as old as the world and as young as the first moans of life on our planet.

The ship's bell interrupts my meditations, telling me that it is ten o'clock of a Sunday morning, the hour for divine service. In the main saloon an officer in full dress is reading prayers, and the majority of my fellow travellers, prayer-book in hand, are chanting the responses. Before us lies the coast of Borneo. The slow and solemn melody of Protestant hymns floats out over the sea, now of a dark blue marked by small triangular salients, as though in this radiant sunlight an invisible rain were pouring into it. Here and there streaks of a lighter blue, perfectly smooth, wind over the surface, like rivers, revealing the course of ocean currents.

Inevitably our thoughts turn to those Europeans who first navigated these unknown oceans, and first set foot on these countless isles of mystery. Java, like the Moluccas, Sumatra, Ceylon, and a great many others of the islands we are rapidly approaching, once belonged to the Portuguese. But in the seventeenth century Holland, seizing the opportunity furnished by her war with Spain, captured almost all the Portuguese possessions in the Orient.

It is only by sailing through these waters that one can gain some conception of the courage and enterprise of the Portuguese explorers, worthy competitors of the discoverers and conquerors of America.

One of the most impressive scenes of all history had this ocean for a setting. One day, when the Portuguese in the Molucca Archipelago, near Java, were loading their ships with





PASSING RIVER BOATS—MANILA

(See P. 212)

spices—next to gold the most valuable of cargoes in those times—they gazed in profound astonishment at a ship making towards them, and bearing a painted Holy Cross on each of its billowing square sails. Looming up out of the immense and unknown ocean, the ship was approaching, not from the west, but from the east!

It was one of the survivors of Magellan's fleet, a Spanish ship commanded by Sebastian del Cano, who had just traversed the unknown wilderness of the Pacific after circumnavigating the globe. The two nations of the Iberian Peninsula, each starting in a different direction, had met on the opposite side of the planet.

The history of the discovery of this part of the world is an epic in many cantos. Perhaps one of the least known of them is the one which tells how Alvaro de Mandana, with a small fleet purchased from his private fortune, set out to explore the Pacific, and how, after great hardships and many narrow escapes in the waters of Polynesia, where islands are as numerous as grains of sand on the seashore, he came upon the Solomon Archipelago, so named by him—an interesting indication of the extent to which the navigators of that time were obsessed with the thought of gold and memories of the Oriental splendors described in Holy Writ. Mendana actually believed that these islands adjoining New Guinea were those to which the fleets of King Solomon sailed to take on great cargoes of gold. Repulsed by the inhabitants of the islands, who are cannibals even today, Mendana returned to Peru. Later, the king of Spain gave him the title of "Developer of the Solomon Islands," whereupon Mendana assembled another fleet, married a Galician lady of masculine temper, and with her started out on another expedition. Other women went along with their soldier and sailor husbands, for the purpose of starting a colony in Oceanica. This second fleet never found its way to the Solomon Islands, but Mendana this time discovered the Marquesas, christening them the Marquesas de Mendoza, in recognition of the help received from the Marquis of that name, once Viceroy of Peru. He also discovered the island of Santa Cruz, northeast of the New Hebrides, and founded there a colony. But Mendana and many of



his companions fell victims to one of those epidemics which, even today, blot out whole populations in this ocean world.

As a result of the explorer's death, the management of the fleet and the government of the islands it discovered fell to his wife, Doña Isabel, who thus became the only woman admiral known to history.

She tried to maintain the colony of Santa Cruz established by her husband, but so great was the mortality among her people, that she had to give up this enterprise and, embarking with what remained of the expedition, took refuge in the Philippines. The ships were almost useless after their long wanderings through unexplored seas, and their crews were crippled and sick. Every day numbers of corpses were thrown into the sea. Food and water gave out, and the relentless energy of the admiral, and her strict discipline, provoked numerous protests and attempts at mutiny. Nevertheless, Doña Isabel maintained her authority throughout the voyage. One of the chief complaints of the crew was the scarcity of drinking water, which was distributed with the utmost parsimony. Meanwhile the admiral, so the crew murmured, was using up many a caskful of good drink to wash her underwear. Finally two of the ships reached the Philippines; the third was lost. As the *San Jermonimo* sailed into Manila Bay, it was greeted with a salvo, and all the people ran down to the shore to see Doña Isabel and her unhappy companions. Ever thereafter this woman mariner, who was also governor of the Solomon Islands, was known as "The Queen of Sheba."

But Doña Isabel was not the only celebrity honored in Manila at this time, which happened to be a period of festivity due to the arrival of a new governor. Two other personages competed with the "Queen of Sheba" for the interest and enthusiasm of the crowd. The king of Cambodia, in gratitude for military aid lent him by the Philippines, had sent two elephants to Manila, the first creatures of their kind to be seen in that city. The populace, welcoming their arrival with the most intense enthusiasm, bestowed on them the names of "Don Pedro" and "Don Fernando."

Eventually the Portuguese made their way to the coasts of New Guinea and Australia, the passage between these two vast

islands being known to this day as Torres Strait, in honor of one of the explorers. Thus, a century before the Dutch "discovered" Australia and christened it and adjoining lands "New Holland," the Spanish had already sailed these seas and landed on these shores, there to trade with the natives and take on cargoes of spices.





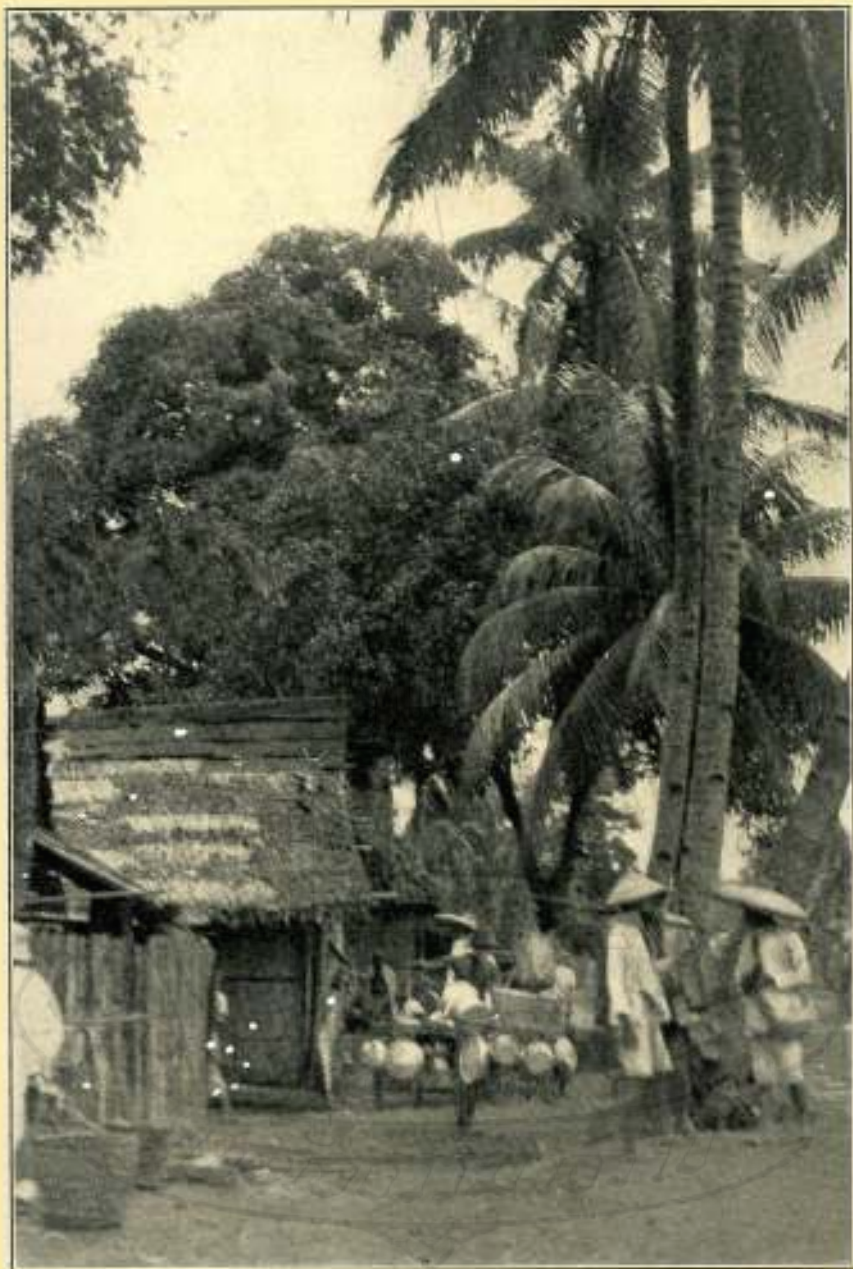
## CHAPTER XXXI

### THE LAND OF SPICE

WE land at last in Java, a few degrees from the equator. The humid heat of these low-lying lands, swimming, not to say drowning, in their exuberant verdure, descends upon us with all its crushing weight.

I have always wanted to see this inexhaustibly productive island which, as I have related, was stolen from the Portuguese by the Dutch in 1600. The native kings, who had complained of Portuguese rule and allied themselves with the Dutch, lending the latter decisive aid in their battles, soon were convinced that their new masters were in no wise preferable to their predecessors. Holland turned over the development of her ocean colonies to a business corporation, which acquired a famous name in history as the "East India Company." The present government of Java is tolerant and progressive, and has carried out numerous improvements, but the period from 1600 to 1860, during which the "East India Company" and its successors were in control in Java, may be described as the most terrible example known to history of rapacious and inexorably commercial colonization. All the defects, real or alleged, of Spanish colonization in America sink into insignificance when compared with the brutal exploitation of these oceanic possessions by the famous "East India Company."

The islands were, in those days, ruled by a governor sent out from Holland. He reigned as an absolute monarch, and never appeared in public except in a golden carriage drawn by six horses, and attended by an escort of officials and an advance guard of Negroes armed with silver maces which came down with a murderous crash on the heads of all spectators who did not pay sufficient reverence to the governor's dignity as he passed by. Even the rich creoles and Dutch colonists who rode, in more modest carriages, had to step down from them with their



THE LOW-LIVING LAND OF JAVA WITH ITS EXUBERANT VERDURE

(See p. 24)



wives and their children to add their *salaams* to those of the native crowd.

Every one of the Dutch East Indies was organized as a branch office of the company. The army, officered largely by foreigners, was subject to the company's directors, who gave commercial titles to all their employés. Those of lowest rank were called assistants, and, ascending in the scale were the titles of bookkeeper, assistant buyer, buyer, chief buyer, and governor. All these civil ranks were distinguished by uniforms, and military privileges were accorded with them. The position of chief buyer corresponded to that of lieutenant-colonel, that of assistant buyer to the captaincy, and that of bookkeeper to the rank of lieutenant.

In no country in the world has money ever been poured out as in old Java. Even the streams of gold that flowed from Mexico and Peru at the time of the discovery of the famous mines of these two countries dwindle in comparison. The employés of the company yearly received "bonuses" not carried on the company books, but representing twenty times the amount of their salaries. The company had little need to supervise the morals of its personnel in order to keep its earnings up to a certain figure. There were years in which the stockholders received dividends of 60 to 100 per cent.

The wealth of the country lay chiefly in the spice industry. When the Dutch remained absolute masters of the Moluccas, they obtained complete control of the world market, so far as such commodities were concerned, for they held the entire production of spices in their hands. No one else had any spices to sell. The English had not yet seized Ceylon nor attempted the cultivation of spices in their other colonies.

The Company pursued a policy designed to insure the scarcity of these products, and stopped at no brutality in so doing. Every year it loaded the amount of spices it considered sufficient for European consumption on its ships, and burnt whatever remained in the storehouses. For the purpose of insuring its monopoly, it assigned one particular product to each island. Ceylon, for instance, was to cultivate cinnamon only. The Banka Islands were the only ones allowed to grow nutmeg. Amboina and its near neighbors had the monopoly of the clove.



Yearly the company's commissioners, accompanied by detachments of troops, scoured the islands, tearing up and burning any spice-bearing trees found in places not authorized to grow them. A cinnamon tree discovered on an island appointed to grow cloves was immediately uprooted and consigned to the flames. As European consumption of spices did not require large amounts of these products—they were luxuries, sold at enormous prices—the work of the company, over many years, consisted chiefly in destroying the sources of these articles, to prevent their multiplication and a consequent lowering in price. The exact location of the centers of the spice harvests was a state secret. The employés of the company, upon leaving Java, had to give back all maps and records bearing the different spice groves. No longer ago than the first decade of the nineteenth century, an inhabitant of Batavia was flogged, seared with a burning iron, and left to die on a deserted island, because he had shown an Englishman a map of the interior of the Moluccas.

Batavia, the capital, grew rich for other reasons besides. The traders and company officers, into whose pockets gold had flowed for a number of years, found it extremely difficult to return to Europe with their fortunes. Drafts could only be transmitted through the company, which taxed each inhabitant whatever sum of money the latter had sent out of the island. Furthermore Javanese money was coined by the company, and could be exchanged for European currency only at a great loss. It is easy to imagine what life must have been like in this colonial city, abounding in millionaires, who did not know how to spend their money, and at the same time were in subjection to a despotic government. Up to the beginning of the nineteenth century, every traveller returning from the region waxed eloquent on the subject of Batavian wealth. Today, the capital proper is a dying city. A century ago it cut itself in two; one part becoming the city of Weltevreden, a short distance away, which, in turn, sent out an offshoot, called Micer Cornelius. These three cities, together covering an enormous area, constitute the great Javanese metropolis. One must be familiar with the peculiarities of the country to know whether one is within a city, or in open country. The sightseer's automobile may be bowling along wide avenues lined with magnificent trees, such



as can develop only in these fecund equatorial regions. On both sides stretches a sea of foliage, breaking here and there into a foam of flowers. But if the tourist inquires how soon he will reach the city, he is likely to hear that he has been riding about in town for an hour or more. These enormous avenues are the city's streets, and these vast gardens are its homes. Every inhabitant lives in the center of a great sweep of land beautified by tropical flora with bouquets of heady fragrance.

Java is a land of earthquakes, and the houses cannot have more than one storey, which, though erected on a platform, keeps low under the tree boughs and is hidden by the foliage. Even the shops are tucked away at the back of gardens. It is only in old Batavia, which was constructed with some respect for the conventional ideas about cities in earlier days, or in the center of Weltevreden, a busy, modern metropolis, that one finds houses running into one another without an intervening garden.

Old Batavia, described in such glowing terms by travellers of a century ago, and now a decaying metropolis, is built on low land adjoining the sea, and divided into segments by the natural canals that flow across it. Nevertheless, the Dutch, homesick for the canals of Amsterdam, opened other artificial canals in the principal streets of the Javanese capital. Needless to say that these canals, in the middle of a large city, and in this tropical climate, provide ideal conditions for the propagation of mosquitoes. It was not for nothing that Batavia acquired the reputation of being one of the most unhealthy cities in the world. In it the Dutch grew rich with amazing rapidity, but they died off with no less startling speed.

The Chinese constitute the larger part of the population of Batavia, and all the amusements are concentrated in the winding streets of the Chinese quarter, where the façades are painted with golden dragons, and silken banners droop from blind-covered windows.

Perhaps no city in the world is built on such a spacious scale as Weltevreden, where every street runs on for miles, and crossing a square is like taking a long journey. The traveller knows that he is in one of the city plazas because the guide tells him so; but all he sees in front of him is a great park. If he walks until he is weary, and has finally decided that he is lost in a



tropical forest, he will at last discover, by peering through the tree trunks, the roofs of some pavilions surrounded by other gardens. This means that he has at last reached the opposite side of the street.

The largest square in the world to be found within city limits is the so-called "King's Square," in the heart of Weltevreden. There, at any time of the day, one may find soldiers training cavalry horses and Dutch cows pasturing on the green grass of what looks more like a meadow than an urban concourse.

The houses of the well-to-do in Weltevreden indicate prosperity, besides revealing the scrupulous cleanliness inherent in the Dutch; but in some other location, and without the embellishment of the profuse vegetation, these buildings would be less effective. They are lightly built and frail, in no wise resembling the solid old dwelling houses of Batavia in the Netherlands, built of great blocks of dazzling marble. The bungalows of Weltevreden have another peculiarity which makes them appear even less secure as dwellings. They none of them have façades. Only the inner rooms, those used for sleeping, have walls and doors. The roof is supported in front by light columns, and the dining room, the reception room, and the living room are all roofless and without walls, open to the view of anyone who goes by. The trees of the garden serve, of course, as curtains, as do the numerous trailing plants and flowers that hang down from the cornices of these wall-less "rooms."

The most extraordinary thing to be noted in Java is the appearance of its inhabitants—their physical beauty. The tropical splendor of the island's vegetation can be found just as well in the environs of Singapore, or in Ceylon. But the natives of these latter places cannot be compared with the Javanese for texture of skin, nor for infinite variety of their attire.

There is a metallic quality about the epidermis of the Javanese, especially of the women, which reminds one of bronze that has been rubbed and polished until it has the brilliance of gold. The skin of these people seems to glow with an inner light, and their bodies, those of the men as well as the women, are of a graceful slenderness which leaves the traveller speechless with admiration.

As everyone knows, Java is the home of *batik*. Even the



beggars of Java are clad in this elaborately tinted fabric. But the national costume really consists of a piece of *sarog*, a cloth, worn by both men and women, wrapped about the loins like a short skirt. The men wear a shirt besides; and, for that matter, so do the women, but in the latter case the shirt is very short, and leaves a wide area of bare flesh between its lower extremity and the *sarog*. This upper garment is usually shed by the women when they are working in the fields or in their homes; and they move about with perfect unconcern, bare from the waist up, and showing the full up-pointing breasts which seem to be characteristic of the women of Oceanica.

Arrayed in *batiks* of brilliant color, with some designs representing the most improbable flowers, and some reminiscent of heraldic coats-of-arms—reptiles belching flame, or lions with manes and tails of a glaring green—a crowd in Java reminds one of the peasant throngs of our Middle Ages, which gathered in the market-places arrayed in emblazoned coats and kilts of vivid colors. The Chinese, always dressed in blue, pale into insignificance beside the natives of Java.

Turban also are frequently seen here, and, I might mention at this point, that the Javanese are now almost all Mohammedans. Java was first converted by Hindu priests in a remote antiquity. Then it turned Buddhist, and ruins of temples built in that marvellous epoch of Java's history are still to be found in the interior. But long before the Portuguese came, the Malays and other peoples who had turned Mohammedan through contact with Arabian sailors, had reached Java, and now practically all the Javanese profess that religion. But Mohammedanism here has a peculiar quality of its own. It seems a far more gentle faith than it is among its originators—in Java everything undergoes a similar transformation. Religious fanatics have not the influence they possess in other Mohammedan countries. There are few mosques, and they are all poor. The Javanese women enjoy perfect liberty, and go wherever they like with uncovered faces, undressing from head to foot whenever they feel so inclined with an Eve-like simplicity. The men, unlike the orthodox followers of the Prophet, have no scruples against alcoholic drink if it is offered to them gratis!

At certain hours of the day along the canals of the principal



streets in Batavia, where these waterways are deepest, one may see numerous groups of women slowly descending the stone steps for a dip in the water. They wear nothing more than a strip of one of those Asiatic materials so finely woven that the pink of the skin shines through. Squatting on the submerged steps of the stairway, so that the water will come up to their necks, this bit of cloth suddenly vanishes, moulded to all the curves of these golden-skinned maidens. Then calmly they climb the stairs again to the spot where they left their clothes.

These street baths attract no attention whatever from the white residents of the city. They are a daily occurrence. Moreover, they are a religious rite, and are so respected by the authorities. These women are Mussulmans, and the ablutions they perform in the canals are a rite of the faith they profess. Besides, the temperature of Java, sometimes called the "Isle of Sweat," makes this act of devotion a very pleasant duty. Most of these women would deserve to be called beautiful if they were not all addicted to betel chewing, and constantly expectorating the blood-red juice of this weed of the devil.

Housekeeping is simplified for the women of Java by the custom of selling a great deal of food already cooked in the streets. Besides melons, bananas, mangoes, and other native fruits, the Javanese housewife can always carry home for supper several banana leaves full of curried rice. Squatting at the foot of the trees are women who sell tea already steeped, and other refreshing drinks.

The Javanese, like all peoples, have superstitions which even the East India Company was forced to respect in order not to arouse a general rebellion. The Company was in the habit of inflicting penalties of extreme severity on the natives, even for misdeeds of slight importance; and the stoicism of the natives, under such barbarous penalties, is noted by many travellers who witnessed them, as indescribable. The Java native has always, apparently, been willing to accept the sentence of death without much protest, on condition that he be allowed to wear white pants when he is killed, and that his head be not removed from his shoulders. The harshest of the Dutch tribunals found it expedient to comply with this requirement. For a Javanese death has no particular terrors, but he objects to arriving in the



next world with his head under his arm, and without the costume required for admission into his particular heaven.

But all this is now an old story, and ought to be forgotten. The present régime is very different from that of the old Dutch Company of days gone by. Nevertheless, there still remains in Batavia a monument, kept in careful repair, which records the cruelty of the early colonizers.

Few travellers in Java fail to visit a stone which bears the name of the "traitor" Erberfeld, in an inscription which reads:

*In perpetuation of the execrable name of the traitor*

PIETER ERBERFELD

*It is for ever prohibited  
to build or plant on this site.*

*Batavia, April 14, 1722.*

The Erberfeld in question was a rich half-breed, son of a German colonist and a Javanese woman, who, in the eighteenth century, attempted a revolution with the idea of driving Europeans out of Java. He and fourteen of his Javanese conspirators were condemned to death as traitors, although it was suspected that the conspiracy did not threaten Java with any serious danger, and that Erberfeld's chief crime consisted in his possessing rich properties that aroused the envy of the Dutch masters of the colony.

Erberfeld and one of his Javanese fellow-conspirators, also a leader of the proposed revolution, were accorded the honor of special punishment, which is thus detailed in their death sentence:

The criminals to be stretched out and tied on a cross, and their right hands cut off. The muscles of their arms, legs and breasts then to be torn loose with burning tongs till the ends of the flesh hang down. Whereafter their bellies to be cut open, and their breasts, and their hearts to be drawn out and dashed into their faces; their heads then to be cut off and set up on a pole, and their bodies to be quartered and exposed outside the city limits, and given to the crows.

Above the stone execrating the memory of the "traitor"

there is a plaster head, pierced by a long nail or lance-head. It has all the appearance of a death-mask, and is supposed to contain the skull of the hero. Behind this gruesome monument are the fragrant boughs of a tropical garden, and the banana groves make a bower of wide polished leaves over the martyr's head.

And to think that it was the old Protestant Holland which printed and published the greater part of the books, often fantastically untrue, relating the cruelties of the Spanish in America, more than a century before the ghastly execution of Erberfeld and his fourteen Javanese companions!

Such executions have occurred in the history of all nations, that we know. France repeated with Damiens the frightful cruelties suffered by Erberfeld, and within a few years of the latter's martyrdom.

These barbarities are of the past, to be sure. But the least we can do is to distribute the guilt for the past with some semblance of equity among all nations, without distinctions determined solely by fanaticism and ignorance!







ONE MUST BE FAMILIAR WITH THE PECULIARITIES OF  
JAVA TO KNOW WHETHER ONE IS WITHIN A CITY, OR IN  
OPEN COUNTRY. ENORMOUS AVENUES ARE CITY STREETS  
AND VAST GARDENS ARE ITS HOMES



"IN PERPETUATION OF THE EXECRABLE NAME OF PISTER  
EBERFELD IT IS FOREVER PROHIBITED TO BUILD OR PLANT  
ON THIS SPOT."

(See p. 207)

## CHAPTER XXXII

### RAIN

WE go to Garust, a pretty valley in the interior of Java, located at a high altitude, and a favorite resort therefore of those who weary of the muggy climate of the low-lands bordering the sea. To the hotels and sanatoria of Garust health seekers come from as far away as Singapore.

Lying due east and west, Java is a long narrow island, with a chain of extinct volcanoes forming, as it were, its backbone. But this mountain barrier never proved an obstacle to the intercourse of the natives. It is broken at almost regular intervals by numerous passes which furnished the primitive Javanese, and the Malay pirates who eventually spread along the shores, with ready communications from north to south and south to north. Favorable topographical conditions, a warm climate, and unsurpassed richness of soil, have made of Java at all times in history the most thickly populated land on earth. Today thirty-five million human beings live in Java, and many of its districts count more than eight hundred inhabitants to the square mile—a density of population attained by none of the nations in Europe. The Dutch East Indian colonies, which were formerly the property of the historic company and today belong to the Dutch nation itself, have a total population of more than fifty million. This explains the economic and political power of the Netherlands in Europe where they have such a relatively insignificant territory and comparatively few inhabitants. The overpopulation of Java strikes the eye of the traveller the moment he leaves the cities. In other countries the farm lands are for the most part deserted: only from time to time one sees some peasant bending over a furrow or driving a pair of oxen. In Java the country roads are as crowded as city streets and some of the fields seem as busy as the market-places of large towns.

The journey to Garust gave us a first-hand impression of the



wealth of Java—fruit of the toil of laborious multitudes that go and come on every hand like ants in procession. Most of the land is given over to rice, and flat fields of mud spread away in all directions as far as the eye can see. These vast areas of half-liquid ooze are worked by pairs of caribou—a sort of yak, with white, almost perpendicular horns, and a black shiny skin like the hide of the elephant or the hippopotamus. Slowly, persistently, the lumbering animals drag themselves forward, dripping with sweat under the torrid sun. As they reach a pond or a puddle, their driver stops, dips up some reddish water in a pail and throws it over their backs and sides till they shine like images cut in lacquer. The men are naked save for a cloth drawn tight about their loins and between their legs, their shoulders and backs burned to a golden bronze, their heads shaded by straw hats the size and shape of the Japanese parasol. Marshalled in long lines they bend down and straighten up in unison, working at the mud. The women are as numerous as the men, and their skirts of red, blue, pink, or yellow *batik* make these lines of hard-working people look at a distance like endless rows of flowers.

The roads along which we were travelling were of the dark red color of clotted blood; the brooks flowing to our right and left of the brighter more luminous red of blood freshly drawn. All this flamboyant scarlet is in sharp contrast with the greens—the trembling green of the rice plants, the muddy green of the bananas and other fruit trees clustered around the dwellings, the yellowish metallic green of the palms and wild shrubs that cover the untilled soil. In most tropical countries the forests are marked by strong woody trees with scanty foliage and twisted, gnarled branches. Here all growing things are perennially fresh and tender. Leaves are ever dripping with moisture and the thick shade beneath them keeps the earth soft and spongy. Not an inch of soil in this warm climate but is pregnant with life. Verdure overwhelms everything, changing the landscape into a maze of waving, beckoning, stirring tufts of color. Only the highways and the beds of the railroads show the red of the underlying soil, and these must be raked from day to day to keep them free from the virulent growths.

In Java the bamboo attains colossal proportions. The cabins



of the natives are almost always built in the shelter of tall canes that rise majestic into space. Each dwelling has groves of coconuts and bananas, also, to provide for the needs of the home. In front of each door stands a lofty staff that looks like a flag pole; but what the Javanese peasants float at its peak is not a banner but a cage for one or more birds—parrots, apparently, of brilliant plumage. These family pets must be kept high in the air to be out of reach of the many beasts of prey that roam through the wilds and come down to the ponds in the rice fields to drink. Java is the land of the famous black panthers and other wildcats not less to be feared. Still abundant in the interior, these felines stray down from time to time to the civilized regions. In days gone by one of the favorite sports of the Javanese was the organized fight between men and tigers or panthers; but the Dutch have suppressed such bloody amusements: now the native can imitate his ancestors only as the news goes abroad that a tiger has appeared in the farm lands, and he can take his crude weapons and join his neighbors in the hunt.

Before settling in the quarters where we were to pass the night at Garust, we decided to take an automobile ride of some thirty miles into the country to see the numerous lakes which have formed in the craters of the dead volcanoes. The automobiles of our party started rapidly away in line along a broad boulevard flanked with gigantic trees. We stopped at some of the small villages sprinkled along the road to see specimens of the native architecture. The houses are built of boards made from trees of tough fiber, and the floor is raised on piles some feet above the ground to escape the rank moisture of the soil and the reptiles and insects which are so abundant in these warm countries exuberant with animal life.

I was sharing my automobile with a lady and her maid and all three of us were soon weary of following the line of vehicles that was advancing along the shore of a rather monotonous lake. We decided to go back to Garust. Our chauffeur was a native, perhaps seventeen years old, barefoot, with a round cap and white pantaloons. At his side sat an assistant of about the same age and in the same costume. How make them understand? Neither of the two could express himself in anything but his native tongue. The ancient Hollanders not only took



good care not to teach their language to the native of Java, but made it a crime for a native to know Dutch! Who can say whether this barbarous precaution, creating an impassable gulf between governors and governed, was successful in preventing the growth of the rebellious spirit which rises in all subject states the moment the half-breed learns to speak the language of the master and comes to consider himself the latter's equal? At any rate, only in recent years have the Javanese been allowed to study European languages.

By dint of many repetitions of the word "Garut" with gestures toward the horizon, we made ourselves understood and the young men seemed to be glad of an opportunity to go on a ride under their own auspices. We turned off the main highway into a road that soon became more leafy and more deserted than the one we had left. I could see that our drivers were engaged in an animated discussion, looking around them questioningly, though without slackening the speed of our car. In a half hour or so we came to a little railroad station. The two natives read the sign on the wall with great surprise. Another discussion! Were they blaming each other for their mutual mistake? The automobile was turned around and we were soon back at our starting point on the main highway: It was all clear now. We had been driving in the wrong direction; but since the discussion still continued we could be sure our boys were not yet certain as to the way we should really be going. We now began to understand our rashness in having left the guides and interpreters of our group to plunge into the interior of Java under the protection of two copper-skinned natives whom we could not understand.

On issuing from one of the green tunnels formed above our heads by the branches of the trees along the road, we noticed that the sun had disappeared and that the sky was growing darker every minute. Perhaps I should not say darker. Darkness is impossible in Java, where even the murkiest nights shine with a bluish phosphorescent radiance. Nevertheless the gold of afternoon had turned to a reddish amber and from the nearby mountains came claps of thunder much intensified by the echo. In any tropical thunderstorm lightning flashes come so close together that the successive thunder claps unite without inter-



ruption into one continuous detonation. Through the intricacies of the endless colonnade of trees we could see the zigzag of flashes following one upon the other and cutting their winding snaky courses across the sky. A tropical tempest was advancing upon us with almost instantaneous rapidity. A few moments before a glaring sun had been shining. Already the horizon was thick with clouds that threatened at any moment to burst over our heads! I had seen many storms in South America. There the rain seems to fall not drop by drop but in compact masses, as though the blue sky were the bed of a lake and had suddenly given way. I had thought it impossible for storms to attain greater violence. Now I must confess that rain in Java surpasses anything that I had ever seen or could possibly have imagined.

The air actually tingled with electric current, though meantime it was in such dead calm that we had difficulty in drawing our breath. Our car was running at high speed but perspiration stood in great drops on our faces. The trees along the road were motionless, not a breath of air stirring their leaves. The two natives seemed now to be sure of their road. They had ceased talking and sat looking eagerly ahead at the stretch of red earth visible before us.

Suddenly, and all of them at once, the great trees to either side bent over till they touched the ground. With a crash as from some gigantic explosion the storm came breaking through them in a howling, shrieking hurricane. The yellowish sky shone green under a terrific flash of lightning that struck in our neighborhood, and as the deluge hit us we felt a thud as though a great hammer had been brought down upon the top of our car with the intent to demolish it. After all, . . . nothing! It was only the beginning of a Java rain, of that aerial turmoil, of that celestial cascade, which accounts for the luxuriant vegetation in that earthly paradise. However, its momentary violence was awful indeed. The aspect of the landscape had completely changed. From each leaf on the trees bent low before the wind streams of water were pouring. The fields, in the twinkling of an eye, had turned into vast lakes. The road before us shone like a strip of polished metal.

The top of our car was not a new one but anywhere else it



would have served as adequate protection from a mere rain. I am sure that even a metal covering would have been of scant service in such a storm as we were facing. Our drivers slowed down for a moment and then came to a stop. But it was worse than before. The water streamed in upon us as through a sieve. It was dangerous furthermore to remain just where we were under tall trees that made excellent marks for the lightning. Indeed, another bolt soon struck near us, and we started forward along the slippery road as though the fact of being in motion could free us from such a terrible bombardment. Suddenly to one side of the road we came upon a kind of shed such as are to be seen scattered through the rice fields of Java. It was not a dwelling, but just a place where the workers might gather on occasion and find some protection from sun or storm. We were safe at last, we thought!

However, the shed was full of people. It was a rough affair—a thick roof of matted straw propped on poles and tree trunks. Under it, seated on the ground, were perhaps a score of Java natives, who, on seeing us enter, began talking among themselves and smiling with a purport I could not quite divine. Was it ridicule, or sympathy? I had not even a cane in my possession, should it become a matter of defense. My two companions had good reason to be alarmed. Here we were miles from civilization in a half circle of twenty faces that, for us, were twenty mysteries. Some of the men were chewing betel, spitting the red blood like juice from time to time upon the ground. The lady in our company thought of turning up the collar of her coat to conceal her pearl necklace, and she revolved the rings on her fingers so that the jewels would be out of sight inside her closed hands. An old man among the natives noticed the gesture, and opened a fleshy toothless mouth in a broad grin. A few feet away beyond the frail covering over our heads raged the tropical deluge with its chaotic accompaniment of lightning and thunder.

"Ah no, we must go! It is dangerous to stay here!"

Our two drivers seemed relieved when we were in the automobile again. Doubtless they had shared our fears. Farther along the road we came upon a dwelling of more respectable appearance, the property evidently of well-to-do farmers. Step-



ping out again into the down-pour we reached the house, ascending a flight of twelve wooden steps before reaching the main floor. The front part of the structure was scarcely more than a roof supported on wooden posts—a sort of deep verandah open on three sides to the air and serving as dining and reception room for the family. At the moment it was full of parrots and other wild and domestic fowl which had taken refuge there from the storm. In the semi-darkness we could see the gleaming eyes of two monkeys walking about on all fours or jumping from one pillar to the next. A venerable old man, naked from the waist up, stepped forward from one of the rear rooms, followed by a number of youths, more lightly dressed even than he, who were apparently his sons. Finally the women of the family appeared, in their light wrappers of *batik*, chattering with a fluency quite lost on us, who understood not a word, and smiling at their men and at our two chauffeurs. I could gather that they were much amused at our plight and were trying to make us understand that in Java European raiment was quite out of place. Soaked as we were we must in fact have offered a ridiculous appearance, while these natives seemed even more attractive from the rain which gave a sort of luster to their naked skins.

The moment the storm had somewhat abated we went back to our car and started off again along roads which, as the town was not far distant, soon began to grow wider and wider. The rain was falling gently now. The thunder had all but ceased, and the lightning was just a play of light on the distant horizons. The land around us seemed drunk with its recent refreshment, the flowers sending out in compact waves, as it were, all the fragrance they had been restraining during the storm. Voluptuously we opened our lungs to this riot of sweetness, which gave us an unforgettable sense of the tropical paradise that lay around us. The raindrops, that now seemed jewels of amber falling through a crystal globe, struck our faces from time to time like dashes of liquid perfume.

We were now on a broad avenue lined on either hand by houses built in quite European style, and there, on the outskirts of Garust, I saw one of the most curious spectacles of my life. Rain is always a delight for the native of Java and the human ant-hill that surrounded us was beginning to send its denizens



out into the open. Half-naked Javanese were walking in slow moving files along the side paths, sensuously exposing their skins to the gentle rain. Children with no clothes whatever were gathering under the eaves-troughs of the houses to enjoy a "shower." Here now was one of the factories of Garust where *batik* is made. The shop was just closing for the day and a great swarm of young girls was pouring out of its gates. How many were there? Two hundred? Three hundred? One could not be sure, but the street as far as the eye could see ahead was crowded with them. The girls were walking arm in arm, singing and shouting under the stimulus of the electric air and the warm caresses of the rain; their backs and shoulders agleam, the drops of water clinging to their dark hair like natural diamonds. They were all wearing *batik*; but lest the bright colors should be soiled in the puddles along the road, they had calmly gathered their skirts up above their waists and were walking along without the slightest embarrassment in the world. As our car sped past some of them called to us laughingly but without taking the trouble to adopt more conventional attitudes. The rain meantime continued falling, bounding off their shiny backs like glistening pebbles from smooth stones.

On reaching our hotel I found that my room was at the far end of the building and to get to it I had to cross a court which during hours of sunshine must have been wonderful indeed with all its flowering gardens and shady trees. At this moment it was a veritable lake. A whistle from the manager brought a native porter, barefoot, in a *batik* turban and a white coat, to show me the way. He was holding up in his two hands a huge umbrella—or rather cupola—of varnished canvas, under which six or eight people might easily have walked without getting wet. The wind had ceased and the rain was falling gently, but the native had to use all his strength to keep this unwieldy shelter erect. Under it I could not have been more secure, though my feet sank deep in the reddish puddles through which we were compelled to wade in crossing the garden.

I was taken to an enormous room furnished in Dutch antiques that must surely have gone back to the time of the East India Company. The bed was almost as vast as the room,



though the impression of comfort it gave at first glance vanished as I touched it. Despite the thick mattress, it was as hard as a rock. People in Java say that in view of the climate a bed is much better hard. For the same reason there was only one sheet—the one drawn tight over the mattress. The traveller is expected to sleep without covers; in case he is cold, he can find a light coverlet—mine was a patchwork of blue and white squares—that lies neatly folded at the foot of the bed. On the other hand, I found a wealth of pillows of different shapes and sizes, the uses of which I could hardly guess. A long one, as hard as a log of wood, was, I concluded, to be used for the head; another seemed designed to keep the feet apart; while two smaller ones were to be placed between the arms and the body. According to Javanese views it is more comfortable to sleep with the limbs extended in the figure of a St. Andrew's cross, much as criminals were placed in years gone by for drawing and quartering!

As I stopped over to open my bag I noticed that I would undoubtedly have many room-mates for the night. Here was a toad hopping unconcernedly across the floor, while green and black lizards, with wrinkly skins, were crawling spiritedly up the walls and across the ceiling. The native porter—he had left his umbrella outside—was much amused at my astonishment and began to explain. I had heard the same story at other hotels in the tropics. These visitors should not be disturbed—the toads make war on the insects that infest the walls and floors, some of them addicted to the ingenious habit of laying poisonous eggs under your finger-nails while you are asleep! The lizards take care of the mosquitoes.

Beyond my bedroom a little parlor, reached by a flight of three steps, had been placed at my disposal. A small-sized riot seemed to be going on in there. We had reached the hotel in advance of our other fellow-travelers and the whole army of Javanese peddlers had descended upon us. The men and women had not been allowed to pursue us to our rooms but the wily venders had sent on their children in their stead. The tiny tots in *batik* skirts were offering for the most part "types"—dolls and puppets—from the Javanese folk theater, to which they were giving comical movements and strange poses, imitat-



ing the whining voices attributed to them in the plays. They indicated prices with their fingers, crowding around my feet, and looking up into my face. At first I could make out the Dutch word "guilder," but when they decided I was not from Holland, they began screaming "dollar."

All the Far East today is converted to the worship of the American monetary unit. In China, Java, and India, even in Japan where the United States is not very popular, all business men, whether shop-keepers or peddlers, have an almost mystical respect for the dollar. The pound sterling itself has been forced to take second rank in the countries controlled by the English. The merchant will reduce his price for the privilege of being paid in American money, whether silver or bills. It is the only currency that inspires confidence in the Far East. Furthermore, it is the only money of general circulation. The banks of the important cities issue paper notes; but these can be used only in the localities where they are printed. The moment one goes to another region, they must be exchanged at a discount. The financial prestige of the richest nation in the world had reached even this remote corner of Java, and the boys and girls swarming at my feet kept repeating in chorus, "Dollar! Dollar!"

Two racial types were clearly distinguishable in the confusion of diminutive brown-skins before my eyes. Some of these little tots were native Javanese, but others were Malays. The genuine natives of Java are a submissive, hard-working people that have always served such rulers as have happened to own the island, yielding with fatalistic humility to orders from above. In the course of two thousand years Java has been Brahminist, Buddhist, and Mohammedan. If the island had remained to the Portuguese, the natives of today would all be Catholics. As a matter of fact, the Dutch East India Company, depending to a large extent upon the Javanese nobles, was always more interested in money than in souls, and it never felt the need of converting its subjects to Christianity. This fickleness in the matter of religion does not mean that the Javanese are not a devout people. On the contrary, like all humble beings that live under everlasting oppression and have no hope of freedom, they find their one consolation in the practice of devotions and in the certainty of a future life which will be happier than this



one. Needing a religion, they take whichever one the laws of their conquerors permit.

With the Malays it is a different matter. They are much more independent. Descendants of pirates and courageous seamen of old, they founded their villages at first along the coasts of Java, making a livelihood by fishing or by piracy. As they scattered into the interior they took over the manual industries or devoted themselves to wandering, adventurous lives. In ages past the Malays constituted a sort of military nobility in Java. They were the only ones to resist the invader, laying serious obstacles in the way of Portuguese colonization, and, later on, disturbing with their frequent revolts the mercantile exploitation of the island by the Dutch. Even today the Malay, from the white man's point of view, is the least trustworthy of the Javanese. Offended, he watches for his chance, and then gets satisfaction in blood. Malays tend particularly toward employment in the government services, seeking positions in connection with public works and in the police force. Some of them become soldiers and embrace Christianity as a means of making themselves the equals of the Dutch invaders. Their war-like spirit, their thirst for blood—an inheritance of long ages of piracy and warfare—are easily re-aroused in them. Not infrequently a Malay, whether from some offence he may have received from a white man, or from hatred of the social order around him, is seized with a deadly intoxication, and drawing his *kris* rushes out into the streets to kill anyone and everyone he meets until he is himself killed. It is a kind of madness such as the Spaniards used to know among the Moros of the Philippines—the *juramentados* or "Legion of Death." In Java this homicidal tendency is called *amock*, hence the phrase "to run amuck." The authorities have made special provisions for prompt dealing with this national madness—a task left for the most part to Malay officials. The police stations have each a hollow tree trunk which, on being beaten with the fist, can be heard at great distances. This "bell" is sounded as a general alarm whenever any native "runs amuck." The peaceful inhabitants, from the security of doors and windows, throw chairs and stools and other objects to impede the progress of the terrible lunatic and bring him to the ground; but he usually avoids



such obstacles and rushes on his way brandishing his threatening knife. The police have a special and never-failing weapon for bringing such a person to terms. It is a sort of huge fork which catches the fugitive between its two prongs and pins him against tree or wall. Unable to move, he is then killed at leisure, an outcome that is inevitable since such a lunatic has never been known to surrender.

The Malays who live in the country are great hunters. One of their traditional amusements, as I have said, was to witness prearranged struggles between men and panthers. In relatively recent times, men on horseback were still fighting with each other, often to the death—a form of chivalric sport invented by the Mohammedan conquerors of Java.

This dominance of the Malay was observable even in the swarm of urchins scrambling at my feet. The Malay boys would push the natives aside and prevent them from making their sales, or even snatch the puppets from their hands to sell them on their own account.

After dinner that night we were invited to a great ball, in which the best dancers and the most famous orchestra in the region were to take part. The dining room of the hotel was, as usual, a vast hall, or verandah, without walls on three sides, the roof supported by rows of white-washed arches. The heavy rain had set in again. Under the glow of the electric lights, just beyond the protecting roof, streams of crystal could be seen pouring from the leaves of the trees. Everything about us meantime was soaked with water—our clothes, the tablecloths, the napkins. In my bedroom later on I was likewise to find sheets, towels, and pillows rank with moisture. The air of the ballroom was much like a mist pregnant with the fragrance of flowers.

The dance I judged to be something quite unusual, since the richest natives in the neighborhood could be seen driving up in their cars. Most of the land on the island still belongs to its ancient nobility or to native merchants more recently prominent from their wealth. Out of deference to a suppressed national pride they continue to adhere to their Javanese customs; but, for all of that, they adapt themselves very well to the more costly conveniences of life introduced by the Europeans.



The instruments of the orchestra were as original as the tunes that were to be played. The musicians sitting cross-legged on the floor had, in some cases, a sort of violin which rested vertically against their knees, after the manner of the cello; others had drums and metal cymbals on which they beat with their hands. A very aged artist sat in front of a wooden frame which supported a large keyboard, each key controlling a different note. The most important of the instruments was a sort of box with large holes, or niches, cut in its sides, in each niche a metal jar shaped like the amphora of the milk-vendors. Touched with maces covered with sheepskin, these jars gave out soft crooning tones, much prolonged.

The orchestra struck up a sort of prelude which, for the first few seconds, grated on my ears as something unintelligibly discordant; but gradually out of the confusion of sounds something definite seemed to take form, and I judged the piece they were playing might have been called "A Jungle Symphony." Those first disconnected notes were intended, doubtless, to represent the laughter of sun-flecked brooks, the rustle of green foliage, the stirring of animal life in the thickets. The strains from the stringed instruments were to suggest the persistent humming of insects. The whole harmony was a naive imitation of the cries and groans and songs of joy that issue from the bosom of Nature. Thus at the dawn of all civilizations does primitive art, each time in its own fashion, try to mimic the animal and vegetable life that surrounds it.

Seated on the floor on mats of twisted reeds were a number of dancers, men and women. They were the only ones who sang—in shrill high-pitched discordant voices that reminded me of the cackling of so many hens. In the cleared place in front of the orchestra a man and a woman were executing the symphony in a sort of dance. Their feet never left the spot on the floor on which they were standing; it was an affair wholly of the arms, or even more of the hands, which were opened and closed and moved about in rhythm with the music.

Conspicuous among the native guests were four young nobles who attracted attention from the splendor of their costumes. About the head they were wholly Javanese; from throat to waist they were Europeans; Java reasserted its claims on their



legs and thighs. To be specific—they wore *batik* turbans of black and gold which rose to two little points, or horns, above their brows. Next came black smoking jackets with our regulation white vests, and starched shirts, stiff collars, black neckties, and diamond studs. The trousers were of a black *batik*, of a very special quality, with broad stripes of gold. Their noticeably tiny feet were fitted into black silk socks and patent-leather slippers. The young men had their mustaches clipped in the most fashionable European style and all their manners showed the influence of a European education. Each, as a symbol of noble rank in Java, carried an old-fashioned *kris* hung obliquely from a belt under the vest, the point lifting the flaps of the jacket behind. They had come in their cars, attracted doubtless by the news that many beautiful American girls would be present. However, they preserved the grave, dignified bearing of the Mussulman aristocrat, sitting at a table together drinking weak lemonades, and gazing with black flaming eyes about the room at all these women of the white race who seemed to be bringing them intoxicating perfumes of a distant world. Our host explained that these youths were members of the most ancient Javanese nobility, living at the palace of the Regent, as his friends, attendants, or "peers." (The Regent is the native governor in whose hands has been concentrated control over the ancient native kingdoms.) Our host also expatiated on their marvellous skill as dancers. As a matter of patriotic tradition they had faithfully preserved the ancient dances of their island and even professional performers were eager to recognize the superiority of these amateurs. I need not say that at this information a number of American girls, with the eagerness characteristic of their nation, began insisting on an immediate demonstration. They gathered about the table where the young gentlemen were sitting and begged them to dance. Apparently embarrassed at so much attention they finally consented, though no one of them would volunteer to be first. Eventually one of them took off his slippers. Before he could do the same with his socks a native valet, stepping forward from the group of nondescript Javanese ranged along the garden balustrade, performed that humble task for him. The young noble now threw a broad strip of green silk over his shoulders, the two ends hang-



ing down behind his back, while the rest formed a deep curve across his breast. I was soon to see that this green veil was quite as important for the dance as the body of the dancer. The nobleman stepped forward, his bright chocolate feet shining under the bottoms of his rich *batik* trousers, and began opening and closing his hands as though concerned to restore to his fingers the suppleness of his remote ancestors. His companion, the leading danseuse of the professional company, placed herself before him and began to sing. During his dance the man did not move from the spot he occupied on the floor. It was all a matter of hands and arms, of various positions progressively given to the body. The woman, for her part, did little more than accompany the gestures of the dancer with a song. Sometimes she seemed to reflect his graceful movements, but always with the modesty of a clouded mirror; her intention not to compete with the man in any of his sculpturesque attitudes was obvious. The dance itself suggested the haughty, dominating supremacy of the male in the free life of the jungle—a monotonous long-drawn-out affair it seemed to me on the whole, though never have I viewed a human body fixed in more noble, more commanding, postures.

In the other wing of the hotel, which we reached by a long corridor that barely sheltered us from the pouring rain, was a sort of marionette theater to which we were invited after the ball. The Javanese have a genuine native theater acted by living artists, but their favorite spectacle is the puppet show—perhaps because these automatic dolls with all their stiffness and unreality leave a freer play to the primitive imagination. The first peculiarity that I noticed about the theater was the absence of seats; one had to stand or sit on the floor. One side of the hall was reserved for the orchestra manned by the same musicians who had functioned at the ball, though now they were playing in a wholly different mood—a certain sense of weariness or languor which they expressed by keeping their eyes closed. In fact, they all seemed to be sound asleep; but when the turn came to anyone of them to strike a note on his instrument he was always ready, though still he played his part without opening his eyes and without rousing himself from his apparent slumber. I later gathered that this demeanor was not a trick to impress the audience, but a device to intensify the artistic



enjoyment of the musician himself. He kept his eyes closed to sharpen all his faculties, to shut himself off wholly from present reality, in order to live more intensely in his imagination the various vicissitudes of the drama of a prehistoric past. In front of the orchestra, his back turned toward the musicians, sat an old man who was talking slowly and incessantly without once looking up at the spectators. In front of him was a framework perhaps a yard high, flanked by two porcelain jars, within which, in apparent disorder, lay the characters of the drama to be played—mannikins with monstrous green or purple heads, tunics of flowered *batik*, and arms and legs stiff-jointed like the claws of a lobster. The puppets, which represented princes, warriors, ladies, slaves, each carried two long canes, or batons, fastened to their hands.

The aged director was, one might say, "the whole show." Some of the mannikins he fitted into holes in the frame and there they stood like a chorus ready to join in at the proper moment; others he held in his hands supporting them by the back or by the two batons at the ends of the arms. There was a key under the clothes of the mannikin and, as the operator rubbed the key between his fingers, the head and limbs began to work.

These operators of the marionettes are called *dàlang*, in Javanese, and they enjoy the greatest respect among the native public, preserving from centuries gone by a prestige very like that of the modern priest or the pre-historic bard. They all are poets, with great facility at improvisation. Sometimes they give shows with living actors in masks, doing all the talking themselves, however, the actors simply accompanying the words of the play with their pantomime. The plays are called *topeng*, whether executed by living actors or by marionettes. They all treat subjects from the mythology or heroic history of Java. Perhaps they should not be called plays in the strict sense of the term—they have no restrictions of space or time, they are indifferent to a stage and to stage decoration. They are rather novels begun one day and taken up where they leave off on some following day, each time with new variations, and illustrated now by puppets, now by masked actors, but always accompanied by music which is never omitted, and which never ceases for a mo-

ment, serving as an eternal setting to the monotonous chant of the *dàlang*.

The play before us was explained to me: two knights fighting for the possession of a princess—battles, victories, abductions, pursuits, but especially many knocks, and hard ones. In these Javanese plays there is a certain trace of plot, a certain dramatic structure, but nothing is ever written. The old *dàlang* embroiders his traditional "matter" with all the spontaneous embellishments of his own imagination. Holding the two mannikins before him, one in each hand, he brings them together, he moves them apart. Rarely, however, do they strike each other—that would wear their frail bodies out! And yet, one can see that it is a battle to the death! Never have I heard a combat more vividly expressed in music, though the musicians sat there with their eyes tight closed, striking their sharp notes with mathematical precision, never a second too soon, never a second too late. Every so often all the natives in the audience opened their mouths—old men, young men, women, and children—and gave voice to a certain subdued groan. Was it, I wondered, the pant of nameless multitudes echoing down from distant ages and playing its humble part in the course of history? Finally, I closed my eyes myself in order not to see the crude mannikins hanging on the framework, or the two that were kept grotesquely in motion in the hands of the *dàlang*; and then, favored by the same voluntary blindness as the musicians, I too could see the picture evoked by the Javanese bard—a horde of naked, copper-skinned, human beings, acclaiming triumphant heroes with their shouts; ancient Malay warriors in gilded armor, heroes who lived before the landing of the Portuguese and the advent of the Dutch, in times when the inhabitants of the island did not yet know the existence of Mohammed and were raising colóssal images of Buddha along their mountainsides in cyclopean temples which the exuberant vegetation of the tropics for long centuries was to shroud in the mystery of its green night!



## CHAPTER XXXIII

### WHERE EAST MEETS WEST

THE crossing from Java to Singapore was over a sea as smooth as a sheltered river, the *Franconia* plowing her way through green waters strewn with islets of floating seaweed. To the right of our course lies Banka, and to the left the great Sumatra, which, along with Borneo, is one of the most extensive possessions of Holland in the Far East. So vast are these island masses that portions of their interiors still remain in a state of primitive savagery and the Dutch have to hold themselves on the defensive against many of their tribes. Native head-hunters still regard the skull of a white man as the most prized of trophies; nor has cannibalism been entirely stamped out, despite the efforts of the Dutch authorities to propagate the manners and customs of civilization. These lands lie virtually on the equator and the European colonist—it is a case of “plants” or “factories” rather than of colonies—is only a transient figure on the landscape. No individual of the white race can resist the heat and the disease for more than a certain number of years. He never really settles there, never establishes a family, nor creates a tradition.

In the so-called Strait of Banka the shores of Banka and Sumatra are so close together that the sea has all the appearances of a river. A belt of yellowish foam reaches from coast to coast, as though all the waste and flotsam borne by the currents of the free ocean had been caught in a strainer between the two islands. The water, moreover, is very shallow and our steamer picks her way forward with great caution. Once beyond the Strait, we enter other passages between islands or groups of islets. The water is of a bright green spotted with areas of milky white—the reflection of fields of sand on the ocean floor.

Singapore is the western boundary of the Far East; on leaving it behind us we have turned our backs on the part of the

world which is most different from Europe. Beyond the Strait of Malacca lies India, a land which may better be described as Eastern rather than Far Eastern. To be sure, the divers peoples of India differ in customs and beliefs from the inhabitants of Europe; but they did not live for thousands and thousands of years entirely unknown to us, as was the case with China and Japan and the racial groups of the Malay Archipelago. Alexander brought Greek civilization to the Nearer East of the Hindustanees. Of India and of the different civilizations that developed on the banks of the Ganges ancient Europe knew a great deal. Then, later, during our Middle Ages, the Arabs maintained connections more or less direct between the European and the Hindu. It was just here, at the end of the Strait of Malacca where Singapore now rises, that darkness settled for our ancestors on the peoples of the Far East. They knew that a Cathay and a Cipango were there, but nothing more definite about them.

As we get nearer to Singapore we find the straits and channels more and more crowded with little sailing craft belonging to the Malays. These ancient sailors of the deep sea are now imitating the rigs of Western shipping; but the hulls, though built in modern shipyards, still bear traces of Malay tradition in their high poops and low bows, which make them look like caravels of old masquerading as schooners of Gloucester or brigantines of Liverpool.

Just as our world at large was left centuries and centuries in ignorance of what was taking place on the Asiatic shores of the Pacific, so most of the Westerners living today are still ignorant of the rôle the Malays played in history as navigators of the great South Sea. When Vasco de Gama, after coasting along the deserted shores of Africa, broke at last into the Indian Ocean, he was astonished at the fleets of strange Asiatic boats that kept coming into view. The ancient Malays seem to have had sufficient markets for their commerce without leaving the waters about them. If at times they made their way through the Straits of Aden into the Red Sea, they eventually met a solid barrier that turned them back to the old routes. Nevertheless the Malays were the Phoenicians of the Pacific. Who knows how many *Odyseys* might have been written on their wanderings? Some scholars insist, for instance, that the tale of Sinbad



the Sailor, and other maritime adventures recounted in *The Thousand and One Nights*, are only narratives of Malay prowess long ago appropriated for themselves by the Arabs, the pupils and heirs of the Malays. In the absence of any authentic history we may still form some conception of the ancient wanderings of Malay sailors from the extent to which peoples of their race are scattered throughout the vast expanses of the Pacific. These little chocolate men built their first primitive fleets on these very shores of Sumatra that now lie before us. Thence they sailed out on voyages of piracy or trading over the whole spread of the South Sea at a time when Europe was plunged in its primeval savagery. South and west they went to Madagascar, whose peoples are of Malay origin. A strong stripe of Malay blood is present in Japan, the northern limit of their peregrinations. Hawaii is more than half-way across the great ocean between Asia and America—and yet the Malays are there! Why may these vagabonds of the greatest of the seas, who reached these distant islands and settled there, not have gone a little farther on and disembarked in America to found one of the various racial strains which, according to American tradition, spread from north to south in what we call the New World, thousands of years before the arrival of the Spanish *conquistadores*? The sailors in these little craft of pre-historic times that are pitching and tossing just beyond the swash of our great modern liner, live in complete ignorance of the achievements of their ancestors. Up to a half century ago they were still pirates; but the modern man-of-war has reduced them to peaceful drudgery as sailors and stevedores without spirit of adventure, without ambitions.

Singapore is the creation of Sir Stamford Raffles, an energetic officer of the British Navy, who early in the nineteenth century took possession of all the islands belonging to the Dutch and ruled at Batavia in the name of England (his wife has a tomb in Java in the famous Gardens of Buitenzor). When Napoleon fell, Raffles was required by diplomatic arrangements in Europe to restore the former Dutch possessions to the government of The Hague; but he could not allow his country to abandon these lovely regions altogether. On a spot dominating the Straits of Malacca he founded the City of Singapore. Two



centuries before Raffles's time, the great Portuguese admiral, Albuquerque, had also seen the importance of the Straits and had sought to found there a Portuguese colony which would assure his country control of the sea route to the Far East.

The strategic and commercial value of Singapore is visible, one might almost say, to the naked eye, the waters in this neighborhood almost vanish from sight so closely packed are the native boats which, moored one to the other, stretch across its channels from shore to shore. Two worlds, two completely different Orients meet, moreover, and mingle in its squares, its market places, its streets (which cross the navigable canals on suspension bridges), all crowded with the three hundred thousand inhabitants of a modern city of skyscrapers. As a matter of fact, the different racial groups live quite apart from each other in this hybrid cosmopolitan meeting-place. There is a European quarter to be identified, characteristically, by the statue of Governor Raffles. The so-called "English city" is really Chinese—the most numerous element in the population. As in Java, the tireless hard-working Chinese has a monopoly of manual labor. Besides he is a great penny saver and eventually goes in for money lending. The wandering "Chinee" is the Jew of the Orient—he is just as intelligent and just as grasping as the Jew of the West, and equally unpopular. But it is at Singapore also that we begin to see the Hindustanee with his bronze chest, completely naked, and his long hair falling loose over his shoulders or coiled at the back of his head after the manner of the old-fashioned woman of our West; or coolies from Ceylon (the Zingalese) with painted eyes, and combs in their hair, which for us gives them an intolerably effeminate appearance; or Arabs in flowing robes, with a slow, majestic gait; or women of Malabar with silver rings on their fingers and toes, and precious stones set in their nostrils. On the sidewalks we again see the Chinese female trotting along in noiseless silken slippers—more of the fat dwarf than she usually is because of her loose blouse and her puffy bloomers of black cambric.

Singapore, like other markets in the Far East, is in full "boom," a result of the development of the automobile industry in the West. The cultivation of the rubber plant is one of the most important branches of modern agriculture, and it has one of



its principal centers about this town. Not so many years ago rubber was simply one of the precious products of Nature which adventurous men went seeking in the virgin jungles of the countries about the equator. In my days in South America I met many of these energetic men who led lives of hair-raising adventure in the unexplored forests of Bolivia and Brazil, whither they had gone in search of the rubber tree, wresting it from its secret hiding-places after battles with savages, with wild beasts, and strange mortal diseases. But such casual methods of procuring rubber could not furnish a supply equal to the demands of the modern automobile trade. The rubber tree is now cultivated scientifically in all the Asiatic countries of the torrid zone. Our excursions in the neighborhood of Singapore took us past great fields planted with rubber, and factories where the precious substance is made ready for market. Rubber, to be sure, is not the only thing that is grown; a tropical vegetation beautifies with exuberant green all the plains and mountains and gullies about this new city. There we may find the banyan covering acres and acres of ground with its self-reproducing branches; and broad fields planted with tapioca, one of the principal foods of the masses; and, along the beaches, grove after grove of cocoanut trees.

Singapore, as an English possession, occupies only a point of the long and narrow peninsula of Malacca. Beyond the city lies the Free State of Johore and other independent countries grouped in the Malay Federation under a British protectorate. Our party went on to Johore where we visited the palace of the Sultan, a mosque, and the casino which is advertised as "the Monte Carlo of Asia." At the casino, however, things were "very quiet." In spite of the prosperity of the region gamblers were few and the wheel was for the most part inactive. We did all our travelling in automobiles. To go anywhere on foot is nowadays, in all Asia, to lose prestige. The modern street-car is for people "of color"—a white man would lose caste if he should ever get into one; and even the natives would be likely to take offence at such failure to respect social distinctions. The rickshaw is only a step higher—barely tolerable in a social sense. A white man begins to count in the European colonies only when he can keep a car. I attended a ball at the Hotel Raffles,



and the crush of traffic about the entrances to that hostelry, though surely "different" in view of the crowds of Oriental lackeys barefoot in their white coats and turbans, reminded me very strongly of the theater jam along Broadway.

In the garden of my hotel in Singapore I saw my first exhibition of Hindu legerdemain—marvellous tricksters who took living birds from divers portions of their naked bodies, made a plant grow before your eyes, and then, after putting a companion in a bag, pierced him through and through many times with a sword, only to take him out again safe and sound and smiling. All this was done, not at night, on a stage equipped with lights and more or less machinery—but on the naked lawn in an open garden at four o'clock in the afternoon. There, too, we met for the first time an amusement that was to be with us everywhere we went in India. Snake charmers deposited their round wicker baskets on the same lawn and with the plaintive notes of a flute enticed their snakes from the little holes in the tops. The snakes I saw here—snakes with triangular heads and slender necks—were quite different from those familiar to me in Africa or America. Here was the cobra, whose bite brings death in a few seconds—the dread *naja trepudians* with its bloated throat that looks like a collar and its twisted neck and head which spreads out and flattens till it is as thin as the leaf of a banana plant. Some of the snakes before us, attracted by the cool shade under the bushes, would occasionally crawl off in the direction of the ladies and gentlemen who were witnessing the spectacle. Great commotion at such times! The women would scream and the spectators would shrink back, tipping over chairs and jostling each other with their elbows. But the snake charmers seemed never to be concerned. They would seize the fugitives by the tails, drag them back into the ring and coax them once more to go on with their dancing.

The thought of getting into evening clothes for a ball at the hotel in Singapore was almost terrifying to me. In that torrid heat, a suit of broadcloth must surely have been like an armor of hot steel. I was advised, however, to apply for a new outfit better adapted to conditions at one of the Chinese tailor shops in the neighborhood. I was surprised at the suggestion, since it was already five o'clock and the ball was scheduled for nine in



the evening. How could a tailor possibly turn out an evening suit in three hours, more or less? I entered a shop, however, and found perhaps a dozen Chinese sitting on the floor, sewing with little machines in front of them, and singing in chorus, or laughing and chattering in shrill nasal voices that reminded me of the jabber of so many monkeys. The proprietor of the place, a fat broad-faced jovial soul, noted my desires with a condescending smile and a certain vibration of his sleepy half-open almond eyes. These foreigners were always in a hurry!

"How many suits do you want?" he finally asked. Again I was surprised. I thought that one suit was more than enough in view of the time at my disposal.

"I need it for tonight," I answered. "Do you think you can get it done?"

"What do you say if we make it four?" he continued. "The trouble is with the first one. After that it makes little difference whether it is one or a dozen. You see the weather is very hot—you will probably have to change before the evening is out. If you can give me a suit you already have I can deliver the whole four within an hour; if I have to take your measure, I ask for two hours."

In the circumstances I had him take my measure, which he proceeded to do in rhythm with a good-natured gossip, wholly unintelligible to me, but which kept his "Chinesery" in paroxysms of mirth. I guessed that they found my girth about the waist not as moderate as it might be.

I went away taking it for granted that I would have an excuse for not going to the ball and that at best I could look for the clothes the following day or the day after. In the course of my strolls that afternoon I passed two or three times by chance in front of the same tailor shop. Behind the show window I could see the proprietor cutting and cutting at a piece of white cloth, and his Chinese squatting on the floor and sewing and sewing in the din of an unending jabber. As they caught sight of me they beckoned with signs which I did not understand but which I took to be further joking at my expense. At seven o'clock on my way back to my hotel I stopped in front of the shop with the intention of showing my temper in case there

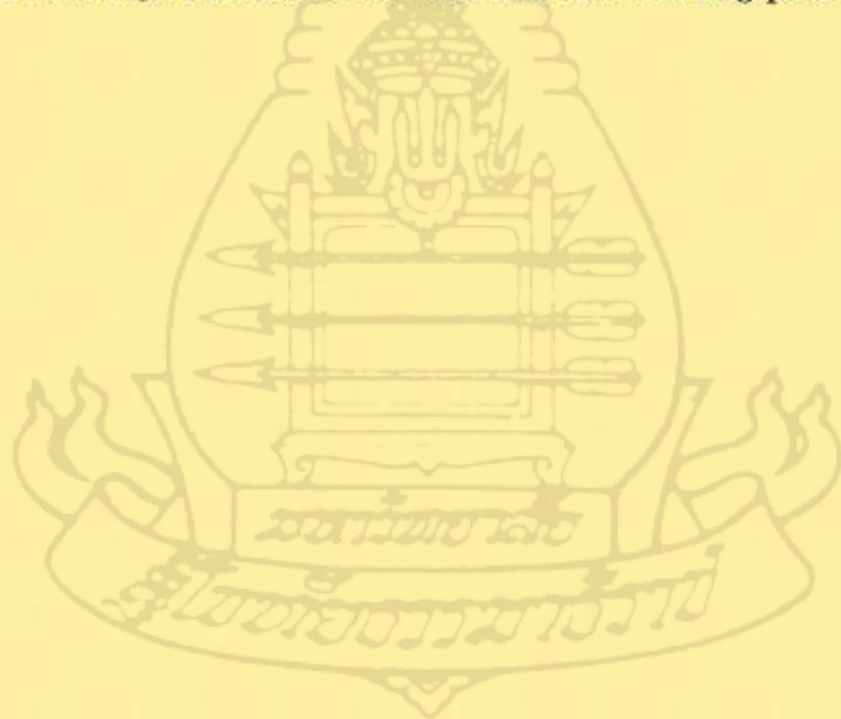
should be a new outbreak of mirth concerning my person. The shop was closed.

"Just as I supposed," I said to myself. "Well, I will come back in the morning."

But in the doorway of the hotel a boy was waiting for me with two small packages. He was one of the Chinese whom I had seen squatting on the floor of the tailor shop.

"Here are your four suits," the clerk said. "The boy has been here waiting for you more than half an hour. He could not leave them because he did not know your name. Don't pay the boy, step into the shop and pay your bill sometime tomorrow, if it is convenient."

At nine o'clock I appeared in the ball room in a brand new smoking jacket that seemed to fit me to a "T." At any rate, it was a replica of the most fashionable to be seen in Singapore.





## CHAPTER XXXIV

### RANGOON

HEADED now toward Burma on the eastern shore of the Gulf of Bengal, we are plowing the narrow channel of the Strait of Malacca, the longest reach of the kind on our planet. Before us, at last, lies the Indian Ocean in one of its most important prolongations. For three days the *Franconia* has been skirting the long Malay Peninsula, picking her way through the numerous archipelagoes spread out like a bulwark before it. Many passengers have been buying birds at various ports in the Far East entrusting them to men of the crew to keep in quarters below decks where thousands of cages may be seen hanging from hooks in the ceilings. Our liner is over-flowing with music—the endless trilling of canaries, thrushes and other birds which Chinese patience has reared into indefatigable songsters.

Up to the third day of the voyage the sea has been a yellowish green. Now it has turned red and seems so muddy that our boat might well be skimming a ploughed field. The fact is, we have, without knowing it, entered the estuary of the Irrawaddy (or River of Rangoon) which we must follow up-stream for many miles till we reach a point where steamers of deep draught can go no farther. The navigable channel is marked by two lines of buoys and our steamer makes frequent twists and turns in order to keep between them. The low shore line, in sight at last, is of a yellowish hue broken here and there by a fresh green. Every so often we can see groups of trees that betray the locations of invisible houses. Sometimes beyond the tree-tops we may discern the thatched roofs of a village with a pyramidal mass towering above them. Such pyramids are the central adornments of all Burmese pagodas. Often, in the large towns, they are covered with gold; here they are white-washed with coats of lime that are kept in scrupulous repair.

We drop anchor in the basin at Hastings, some distance from

Rangoon, whose modern buildings and golden cupolas shine faintly through the mist over the foliage of distant gardens. The city is reached in steam tenders which carry us between rows of sailing ships and cargo vessels anchored farther inland because of their lighter draught. All around us are boats checkered in black and white, their crews, half naked, moving long sweeps with circular flanges at the ends.

We perceive immediately on landing that we have entered a world quite different from the countries we have left behind. Here we are in India, but an India much more colorful and much more cheerful than the famous India of tradition which we shall meet some days hence. Burma is a recent acquisition of England in the Indian East. Only a few decades since, the Kingdom of Burma was enjoying a flourishing existence. In those days the capital was Mandalay. But under the English occupation that town has lost its former importance, the life of the surrounding country passing to Rangoon, the principal seaport of the east coast of the Gulf.

There is no such mixture of races here as we found at Singapore. The inhabitants are pure Burmese. However, the celebrated pagoda of Shwe Dagon brings to Rangoon many pilgrims from all the Buddhist countries, even from districts lost in the interior of China. Buddhism is a religion in full decadence. It has still some millions of worshippers, since China and Japan came to embrace the doctrines of Gautama; but though the Reformer was born in India and his doctrines were at first accepted there, his sect was finally vanquished by the Brahmins who recovered from their first defeat and resumed sway over the larger part of the country. Only two centers of Buddhism still remain in India. In Ceylon the pagoda of Kandi preserves a tooth of Buddha. At Rangoon, in Burma, the Shwe Dagon is built over three hairs from his head. The pilgrims, though numerous in the streets of Rangoon, are nevertheless scarcely noticed in the overwhelming multitude of native Burmese—a talkative, communicative, gossipy people interested apparently in everything. The Burmese love showy colors and use them profusely in their costumes. Fanatically Buddhist, they regard the priestly state as the sum of human perfection; and every Rangoonese tries to be a monk if only for a short



period during his youth. Many young men before their marriage pass some time in the Buddhist convents under a discipline quite similar to that of the novitiate in our Catholic monasteries of the West. The children of well-to-do families, most of them with tortoise-shell glasses, wear neat costumes in imitation of the monks—tunics of a bright yellow, which look from a distance like pure gold. The mendicant monks offer a strangely grotesque appearance. Extremely lean about the chest, they have enormous abdomens which they uncover in front of the doors of the shops in appealing for the alms which constitutes their only means of livelihood.

A peculiarity of Burma, wholly unique among the peoples of the East, is the supremacy which the female enjoys over the male. This feature of Burmese life has developed a keen and wide-awake woman not without a certain shrewd attractiveness and with great skill in the management of business. Many of the shops in Rangoon are owned and controlled by women, who habitually address their mates in loud, authoritative tones. On the streets the wife walks in front and the husband behind. I was told that in many families the woman is the only person who is allowed to earn money—a trait that stands out in strong contrast with the rest of Asia where the woman is completely absorbed in the individuality of her husband. Even in India proper, the wife was so much the slave of her mate that it was considered impossible for her to continue living once he had died. The cremation of women on the funeral pyres of their husbands is no longer permitted under English rule, but widowhood is still the greatest calamity that can come upon a female Hindustanee. Women in Burma have black, slightly slanting eyes, much larger and much more expressive than those of other Asiatic women. They are free to talk when and as they wish and the brightness of their eyes gives their words and gestures a certain bold aggressiveness not without charm. To me they seemed a bit top-heavy, perhaps from the way they wear their hair—in thick braids coiled high under round velvet caps with large white rosettes of mother-of-pearl hanging down on the right side. For that matter, they are short, stubby creatures, their slender ankles ill proportioned to their ample busts.

Since Burmese women do not chew betel, which discolors the



AT THE PAGODAS "THE MEN OF THE YELLOW ROBE" SPEND THEIR QUIET LIVES AND TEACH THE VILLAGE BOYS AND GIRLS THE WAY TO EARTHLY KNOWLEDGE AND SPIRITUAL REPOSE. (See p. 274)



teeth and the gums and distorts the lips, they seem much less repulsive than other Asiatics of their sex. But if they are free from this vice they have another almost as bad. The women of Burma are heroic smokers, an indulgence at which they are rivalled by no man. The cigarette, and even the double pointed cigar familiar in the West, are unknown to them. What they smoke is a cylinder of tobacco leaves pressed tight together and equally thick at both ends. It is, I should say, a foot long and about as thick as one's wrist. However large the mouth of a Burmese woman may be, she has to open it wide to admit the end of this instrument of pleasure. This gives her a very comical appearance. One never knows whether a Burmese woman, as small as she is, is pushing her cigar along the street, or is being pulled by it.

Of the freedom she enjoys, she makes, I am told, occasional abuse. In view of the authority the wife has over the husband, and her contempt for him, girls in a family grow up believing the male to be their utter inferior; and later on in life they change their husbands about with a nonchalance that Occidental Puritans might find excessive. All of them love music, dancing, and singing, and the dream of every Burmese girl is to join one of the companies of performers and jugglers that circulate through the country.

The principal industry of Rangoon is lumber, especially the hard woods, which come down from the interior of Burma. The heavy logs are handled almost entirely by elephants, which may be seen about the lumber yards arranging them in piles or dragging them from the banks of the river to the sawmills. Such work could never be done with the same rapidity or with the same skill by man power. For the work of transportation the elephant wears a sort of belt about the middle, to which is attached a long chain with a hook at the end. When the logs are to be placed in their piles the elephants lift them with their trunks, executing this complicated task without the slightest hesitation or apparent effort. Though the intelligence of the elephant has been somewhat exaggerated by those who would consider it equal to man's, it really does seem to be superior to that of other animals. The elephant is a sluggish slow-moving creature—there is no sparkle about anything he does; but there



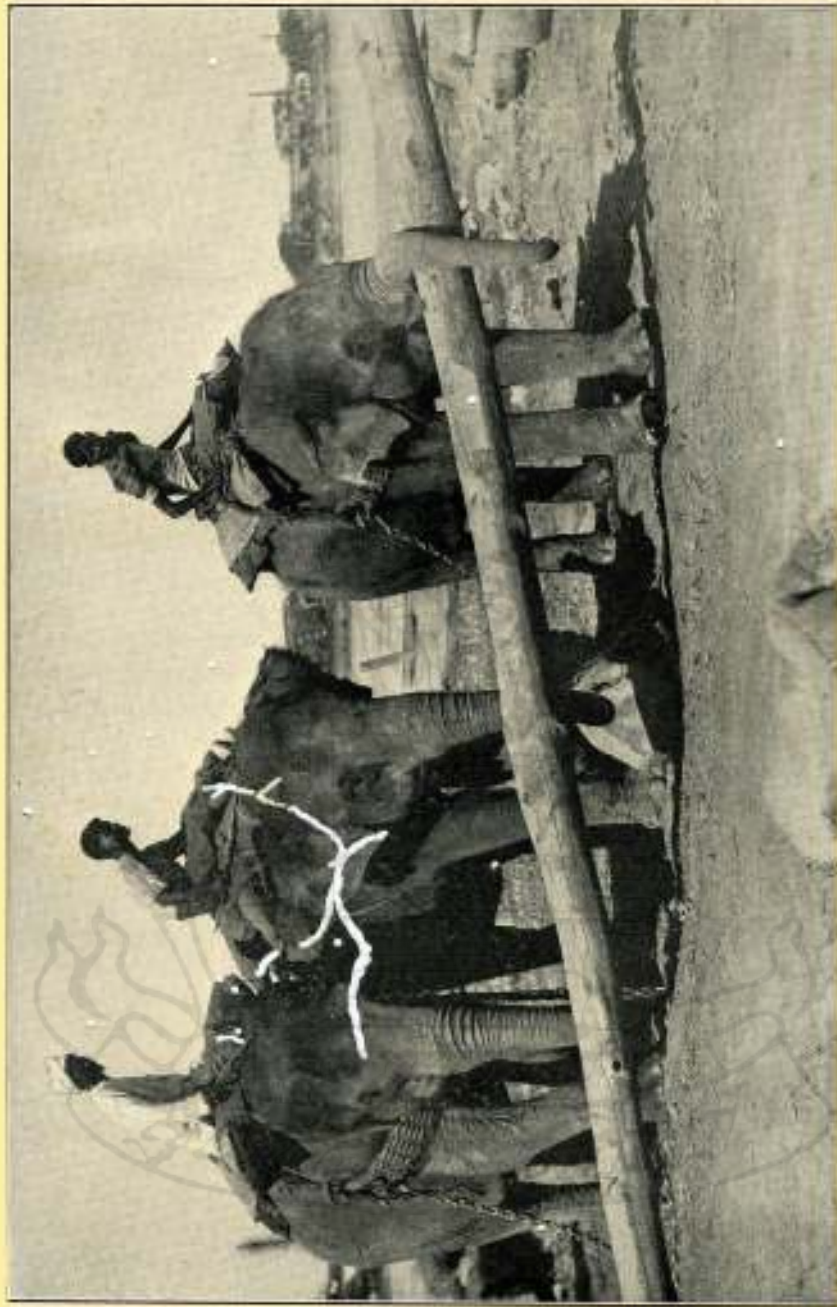
can be no doubt that in performing certain complicated tasks his mind goes through very definite logical processes.

On a visit to the Public Gardens in Rangoon we were treated to an exhibition by two pairs of elephants noted for special attainments as compared with the hundreds of ordinary elephants employed in the lumber yards. In the first place the Hindu drivers they carried on their backs gave their orders in soft affectionate tones and never used the whips that ordinary elephant drivers seem to require to have themselves obeyed. A football was tossed into the middle of a field and the elephants began to play a game, throwing and catching the ball with their trunks without once dropping it and moving about with a speed that was extraordinary in view of the great weight of the ungainly animals. To follow all the details of the game we had to run from one side of the field to the other, taking good care not to be hit by one of those great round hoofs which are so heavy that they leave deep tracks in the ground. Then the elephants were taken to some wood piles nearby and at commands from their drivers took the piles down and set them up again, working now in pairs one at each end of the log, and now singly. A log weighing several hundred pounds could be brandished as lightly as a cane by one of these powerful animals.

The exhibition seemed to have the greatest fascination for the natives of Rangoon who must have witnessed the same thing hundreds of times before, but who gathered around on this occasion and looked on with chattering curiosity (I am speaking here of the men particularly, an idle, gossipy lot; as for the women, they had no interest in elephants and went serenely on their way puffing at their huge cigars).

In Burma one begins to meet the Asiatic white man—that descendant of the mythical Aryan, who is scattered throughout India mingled with the copper-colored or rankly black Hindustanees. In their white cotton tunics which they wrap around themselves like a toga, they remind one of the sculptures that have come down to us from ancient Greece. For pendants of various kinds they have a mad passion and insist on hanging something from every protuberance of their bodies. Each ear has two ornaments at least, one suspended from the lobe, the other from the top. Not content with that much jewelry they are likely to





WITHOUT THE SLIGHTEST HESITATION OR APPARENT EFFORT, ELEPHANTS FILL HEAVY LOGS IN THE RANGOON LUMBER YARDS  
(See p. 488)

wear rings in their noses, hung either from holes pierced in the septum or through one or both of the lobules of the nostrils. Otherwise there is no trace of effeminacy in these well-formed white men whose aquiline profiles have about them something that suggests the Heroic Age of man.

In their eagerness to follow the evolutions of the elephants the natives pressed in upon us and even jostled us with their elbows. Such a violation of the racial code did not long escape the attention of the Anglo-Indian police. Armed with clubs they advanced upon the crowd, shouting and striking out about us. The natives fell back obediently but not in time to escape some of the blows that the police continued to deliver with the idea of accelerating the general retreat. There were a few whimpering protests, much as school children might reply to unjust reproof from a teacher, and there was something comical about all those white togas fluttering like shirt-tails in precipitous flight. At a certain point the natives stopped running and turned about in childish hesitancy, torn between fear of more whacks from the police and a desire not to lose anything of the spectacle. My republican blood was stirred at the outrage—Hindus beating Hindus in the name of a foreign power!

One peculiarity strikes the attention the moment a traveller from the Far East enters the streets of Rangoon. There is no trace of the rickshaw. Singapore seems to mark a line to the westward of which the human being no longer serves as beast of burden for his fellowmen. One reason for this, perhaps, is that the Hindustancee is of frail physique, and four or five of them are scarcely able to do the work of one good Chinese coolie or Japanese. But Rangoon, also, is a Buddhist city and Buddhism does not regard lower forms of life as sacred. Draught animals, therefore, are abundant in the city, the horse and ox, especially, offering a cheap substitute for man power. Oxen are used for all kinds of transport and are even driven in pairs on a sort of light tilbury with a painted top that is used as a pleasure vehicle by Burmese families. The horse-drawn public "hack," which is fast disappearing before the "taxi" in Europe, is common in Rangoon. These public vehicles have a peculiarly Hindu appearance; the wooden frame is not painted but keeps the color of the natural wood under a coat of varnish. The



driver, who usually wears a heavy beard and a helmet like that of the native police, sits on a high seat with bundles of hay for his horse piled on the top behind him.

One of our first excursions was to see the Royal Lakes and the sacred fish of Burma. The lakes lie in a park outside Rangoon in gardens formerly belonging to the kings. One of them has a little island with a kiosk and a bridge like the Mandarin Garden at Shanghai. The waters of the lakes teem with a big black fish that looks less like a fish than like an eel with wings. The present denizens of the lakes are direct descendants of the sacred fish belonging to the ancient kingdom of Burma. Time was when the penalty of death was inflicted upon anyone who caught one of these fish; now the native custodian, gathering the fish about him with handfuls of round seeds tossed upon the water, showed us several empty jars and suggested that we buy one or more of the animals to carry off alive as a souvenir of our visit.

With an eagerness amounting almost to an obsession, I had been looking forward to a visit to the pagoda of Shwe Dagon. Many Europeans resident for long years in Rangoon had never thought of visiting the temple, which contained nothing remarkable so far as they could see. The English, for their part, were inclined never to go there because they could enter only with their naked feet and to submit to such a regulation seemed to them incompatible with their dignity as rulers of the country. However, I thought it would be unpardonable to have come from such a distance and leave without a close view of the luminous temple that rises from its sacred platform on the top of a high hill.

As we made our way one day along the dusty roads to the pagoda our path was blocked by a procession of naked white men who stopped with raised arms in front of our automobile and signed to our native chauffeur to halt. Hitherto such naked Orientals as we had seen on the streets had been men of yellow or chocolate skins. It was difficult to grow accustomed to the sight of men as white as ourselves going about in the scant costumes of the tropics. In the eyes of the men before us—men with long hair gathered in a braid at the tops of their heads and falling to one side over one of their shoulders, like a horse's



mane—there was a wild disturbing look. Behind them came a group of noisy musicians beating cymbals and drums of various shapes and sizes. Still farther along came other white men likewise naked and dancing, to the music, a sort of Pyrrhic dance, throwing one foot and one arm forward, and then drawing them in, in poses such as may be seen pictured on ancient Grecian vases. The wild gleam in their eyes seemed to be due to the influence of some drug. This crowd of lunatics that filed past our automobiles was only a vanguard. After them came a hearse, painted white with glass sides. In full view within lay the corpse, resting naked on a bed of green leaves. Other green leaves, with bunches of flowers, were fastened to the outside of the vehicle. This, as our chauffeur explained to us, was a burial according to the Madras rite. The white lunatics leading the procession were members of a religious fraternity which was accompanying one of its brothers to the sepulcher.

As we drew nearer to the Shwe Dagon our road gradually filled with natives who came in upon us from the side streets on their way also to the temple. The famous pagoda occupies the whole of its hill, its entrance beginning in a flight of a hundred and twenty steps that rises from the foot of the eminence. There, in fact, the shoes of the pilgrim must be removed and the whole ascent made with the feet bare.

The Shwe Dagon is the oldest church in the world. No religion at present existing can boast a temple which first opened its doors to its faithful two thousand four hundred years ago. The story is well known. Among Buddha's disciples at the time of his death were certain Burmese who cut three hairs from the head of the great Founder and brought them to their native city which was then located at the foot of this very hill and only in later times came to be known as Rangoon. This slender wisp of hair was placed in a golden reliquary and buried on the spot over which the central cone of the pagoda now rises to a height of some three hundred and fifty feet. The cone, which, in some of its aspects, suggests an Italian *campanile* and in others is more like an Asiatic parasol, is made of brick; but this humble material is entirely hidden under a plating of gold. The topmost pinnacle is inlaid with some five thousand precious stones—diamonds, rubies, emeralds. No human being can see



them from the ground. Only the birds of the air and Spirits of Heaven can enjoy their magnificence. However, the devout worshippers of Buddha know that they exist and that is enough for them. Could any tribute be more sincere, more free from worldly ostentation? The topmost portion of the cone is a series of seven circular blocks, the one above smaller than the one beneath; from them hang a hundred bells of gold and fourteen hundred bells of silver. These also are a homage to the Divinity free from any trace of selfish interest. They cannot be seen by the naked eye; but when the wind blows the bells all begin to tinkle in unison and upon the ears of the faithful falls a silvery music which turns their thoughts to the songs of the angels (the *tomines* of the Buddhist Heaven).

Taking off my shoes I slowly began the ascent of the steps that lead up in a straight line to the temple; and so great was my emotion, I confess, that at times I seemed to stagger with the vertigo of a drunken man. What a sense of time! Two thousand years ago, when Marius, Sulla, Julius Caesar, were not dead heroes but men in their prime, devout multitudes like those rubbing elbows with me were going up this very stairway, among them perhaps mere sightseers as sceptical as I! From the first steps I could see that the temple, like all architecture in Asia, is a confused jumble of venerable antiquity and modern frailty. There is a solid framework which has lasted hundreds of years; the rest is a crusting of delicate forms which must be renewed every half generation. Fortunately the long climb is broken by several landings where the pilgrim may rest—otherwise he would grow dizzy before reaching the top. The steps themselves are made of different materials; there are marble treads, which still bear traces of sculptured relief worked into them a thousand years ago; others are made of brick, or rough stone, or even of asphalt, according as the repairs have been more or less recent. They are also of different heights! Some can be negotiated by barely raising the foot; others, the majority, require an operation as complicated as mounting a horse. The stairway is protected by a wooden roof adorned with religious paintings. Under the shelter to either side are lines of shops (often managed by Burmese women with their inevitable cigars), where diminutive idols, sacred pictures, glass castings



representing scenes from the life of Buddha, tapestries with the face of the Man-God, and other objects of devotion, are offered for sale.

The architectural scheme of the sacred plateau is very simple; in the center rises the major sanctuary, which preserves the three hairs of Buddha in its foundations. Around it has sprung up a veritable city of minor pagodas of different sizes and of differing importance, along with statues, images, and colonnades. The platform must be two thirds of a mile in circumference, yet so numerous are the donations made by wealthy Burmese or by worshippers from foreign countries that it is more and more crowded with buildings. There seems to be no particular order in their arrangement and they are frequently torn down to give place to new ones. The general aspect of the plateau varies thus from year to year, the one permanent feature being the glorious cone that stands in the middle. On the slopes of the sacred hill rise a number of images—elephants, painted to the life and twice the natural size, with a gilded tower on the back of each. The towers are places of worship. That its magnificence may never be tarnished, the pagoda, which may be seen for many miles across the country, has its gold plating renewed every twenty or thirty years. Furthermore, its lower courses, as high up as the arm may reach, receives from day to day numberless sheets of goldleaf from the hands of the pilgrims. Everyone tries to offer at least a bit of gold to the sanctuary. Some of the poorer worshippers will go days without eating in order to affix some little offering of the precious metal to the walls of the temple.

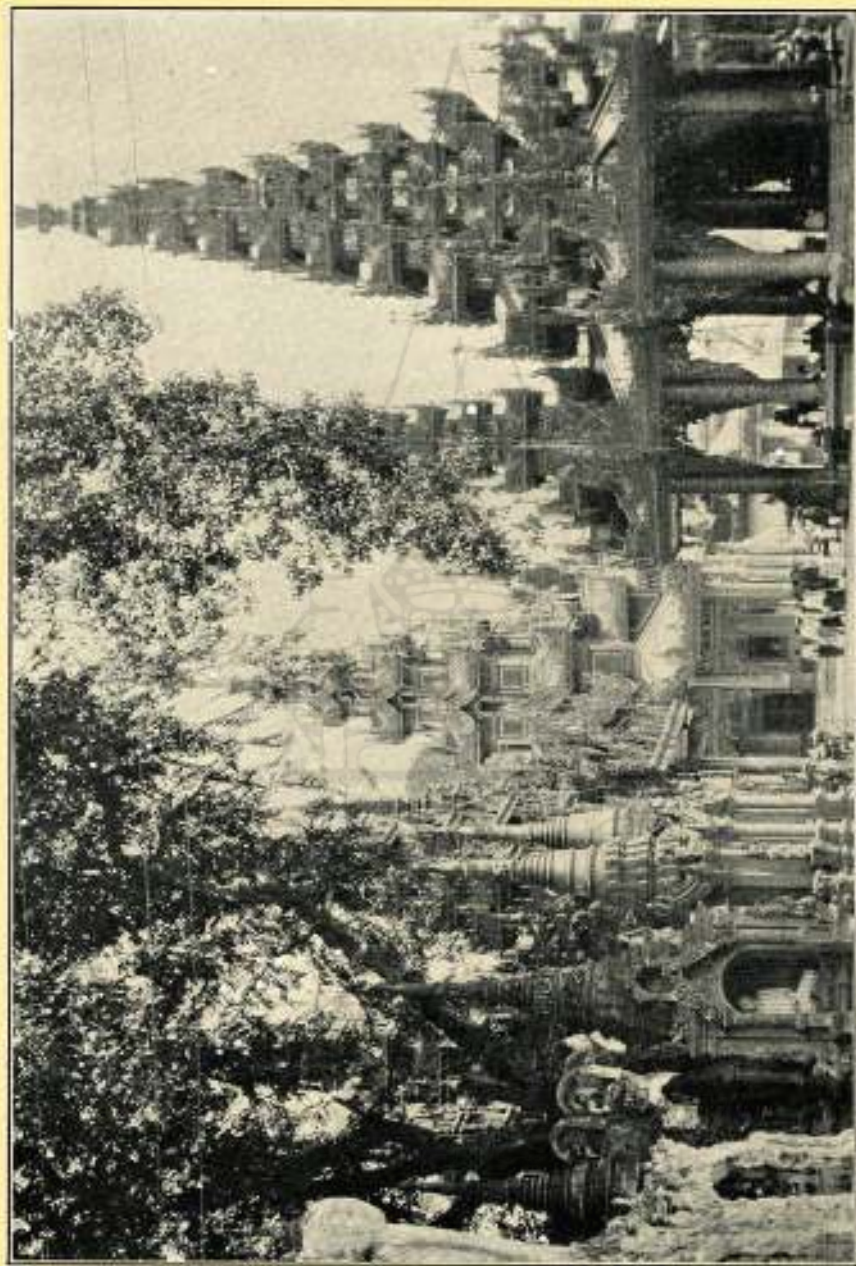
There is not in all Asia a shrine which enjoys such universal esteem as the Shwe Dagon. All the peoples that live under the doctrines of Buddhism have raised sanctuaries on this plateau—China, Thibet, French Indo-China, Japan and even provinces of Siberia. These chapels have columned façades and conical tops rising to a point like the central mass of the great temple. The walls are worked in great detail with the miniature relief common among the Asiatics who will devote generation after generation of workmen to one task. In all the shrines the first courses of stone are covered with lacquer and gold. The spaces free from pagodas are crowded with golden trees bearing



glass fruits, arrow-shaped urns, isolated columns inlaid with marbles, statues to the *Nats* (the primitive gods of the Burmese with which Buddhism had to compromise in order not to offend deep-rooted native sentiments); images of elephants with temples on their backs, and "dogs of Heaven" (like the lions in the pagodas of Tokyo and Peking).

The sacred tableland has an air of noisy festivity about it, reminding one of a Western country fair. In the Buddhist rite the musical instruments consecrated by tradition are the bell and the drum, and like the side-shows in our fairs at home, each pagoda makes all the noise it can to attract as many worshippers as possible. Monks (*bonzes*) of different races stand in front of the various chapels beating with their closed fists on sacred cymbals, or with batons on sacred bells. Children and women crowd around us offering wreaths of red and yellow flowers which they expect us to offer to the Man-God who is the genius of the place. Great armies of crows have their nests among the projections of the temple and keep the air vibrant with a noisy chatter, their black plumage standing in strident contrast with the white of numberless doves—the inevitable adornment of any Asiatic sky. Long-haired dogs with dripping mouths run in and out between the legs of the thronging pilgrims looking for something to devour. Most of the worshippers are pious mendicants who have come begging their way from all parts of Asia and are continuing their industry within the doors of the temple. Some of them are lepers; others draw aside their tunics to expose gaping wounds or raw sores to the eyes of the visitor. In front of the sanctuaries sit gray-cowled monks with slanting eyes. They accompany their prayers with regularly timed movements of their bodies, throwing themselves violently forward till their hands and foreheads touch the ground and then slowly coming erect again, an obeisance which they repeat incessantly and without variation till they fall unconscious from sheer exhaustion.

Outside where the tropical sun strikes full on the marble pavements we have to walk rapidly in order not to burn our naked feet. Inside the shrines the floors have the damp chill of rooms which have not been warmed with sunshine for a thousand years. An astonishing number of Buddhas people the



NOT IN ALL ASIA IS THERE A SHRINE WHICH ENJOYS SUCH UNIVERSAL ESTEEM AS THE SHIVE DAGON  
(See p. 261)



various pagodas—Buddhas of gold, of marble, of alabaster, some as big as giants, others of natural human size; some standing on their feet, some stretched out on their backs, some kneeling in prayer. There are Buddhas with soft, humane, intelligent expressions on almost European features; others seem cruel, malignant, truly Asiatic with their slanting eyes and their tight-drawn half-closed eyelids, through which the god seems to be peering with hostility at everything different from himself. Each Buddhist people has created a Man-God after its own image and worships him with its own special ritual. In all the temples, however, there are flowers and lamps, and censers smoking with sandalwood. Over all this contradiction and variety, so noisy and so uncouth, the central cone rises like a mass of golden fire eternally flaming over the three hairs snipped from the head of the dead Founder by his disciples.

We come to a stop in front of a shrine where a number of naked men lie prostrate on the stones near the door. Each of them offers a particular spectacle of horror; one with jaws agape and eyes that are lost in the depths of dark eyesockets, is a living picture of hunger—a skeleton absolutely devoid of muscle and covered just with skin. Another is apparently dead—his abdomen has been torn open and a crow is picking at his entrails. Only when the young monk who was my guide brought me closer to admire these horrors did I become aware that they were really painted sculptures executed with such minute realism as to deceive the eye. On the pavement farther along there were real beggars, just as naked, just as emaciated, just as horrible to look upon. I could distinguish the real men from the images only by the great numbers of flies that covered the bodies of the living.

In order not to miss any of the wonders of the sacred hill I made my way into the most miraculous of the pagodas. The interior was somewhat darker than that of the others but I soon discovered that I would not care to spend much time there. All about the floor on mattresses of straw or on simple cloaks or tunics lay people with pale faces, an unhealthy transparency about their ears and nostrils, and a cough that made explanation unnecessary. The Shwe Dagon is especially sought by consumptives and its monks will bear witness to many marvellous cures

of this dread disease that have been effected there. Penetrating a little farther into the shrine I came upon a group of women gathered about a bed on which lay another woman, pale and motionless. My guide smiled as he whispered an explanation. The greatest blessing a mother can bestow upon a child is to give birth to him in this temple, and women will journey even from distant realms to provide this sanctification for their offspring.





## CHAPTER XXXV

### THE BURNING GHAT

FOR two days we have been crossing the Gulf of Bengal from the mouth of the Irrawaddy to the mouths of the Ganges and the Brahmaputra. At dawn on the third day I awaken with a start of alarm. The *Franconia* has suddenly come to a stop and I can hear voices calling in the silence of the night. Through the port-hole of my cabin I see the lights of two vessels going to and fro over a sea as flat and tranquil as a lake of fresh water. As the steamer starts slowly forward again, a thought thrills through my mind. The Ganges! We are in the Ganges! In the dim light of dawn I hurry up on deck eager to catch my first glimpse of the lands of India. I can see nothing but a yellowish sea. The Ganges is really far away to our right. We are in an arm of the sacred stream—the Hooghly, which flows through the City of Calcutta.

Some islands come into view, their shores marked with coconut and date palms and native huts with conical roofs. The line between land and water is not clearly defined. Through what I took to be a dry green meadow I suddenly see a boat forcing its way and in water that I thought of great depth cattle can now be seen wading up to their bellies. The lands ahead of us gradually come together till we are steaming through a narrow channel marked by two lines of buoys, and at its end—a broad stretch of red water. The Bay of Diamonds! During the hours of sunset and sunrise this lake is said to take on a varicolored splendor that suggests the sparkle of myriad jewels.

In the Bay of Diamonds the *Franconia* must come to anchor—only steamers under eight thousand tons can penetrate as far as the metropolis itself. The arrival of our liner seems an event of the greatest interest to the jungles about the Bay. Clouds of white and red butterflies come toward us through the air, flitting about the decks and entering our cabins through the open port-

holes. Flocks of black birds are wheeling above our masts, eagerly pouncing upon any refuse that chances to fall overboard from the steamer kitchens. But we are being keenly watched by other feathery inhabitants of the bands of green that surround the Bay of Diamonds. So long as we are on board the steamer the crows and buzzards and gulls content themselves with flying at considerable heights above our decks. But at two in the afternoon we are ready to leave the *Franconia*. The moment the two river boats put off from her sides, the woods on shore seem to discharge in our direction compact masses of bird-life that boldly settle on the steamer as though to take possession. The birds, not daring to go below where men of the crew are still present, sit in rows on the rails of the upper decks, on the cordage between the masts, on the rims of the smokestacks. Hundreds of them seem to be fighting for the look-out on the mast forward. The whole outline of the *Franconia* had been roughened by a fringe of black, palpitating, animated feathers.

As the afternoon wears on the water exchanges its reddish hue for the iridescence of mother-of-pearl, and the shores assume an aspect of intensely productive civilization. Great factories—low buildings spread over vast areas—lift a forest of brick chimneys toward the sky, or thrust great wharfs out into the river and networks of railroad, fan-like, over the plains. All these shops are connected in one way or another with the preparation and weaving of jute, the staple product of the Province of Bengal. Almost all the burlap used in European and American agriculture comes from these great industrial centers that line the banks of the Hooghly below Calcutta. The corn of Argentina, the sugar of Cuba, the potatoes of Idaho, are distributed in bags that have passed through the looms of these Bengalese establishments.

In and out of the factory yards along the river shores, thousands of men and women are going to and fro—endless rosaries of tunics, white, red, violet, yellow, saffron, and green. All India walks in line, each person putting his feet in the footprints of the man or woman just ahead. The trait struck my attention the moment I set foot in India and I observed it everywhere throughout my stay. Rarely have I seen two Hindustanees walking side by side. Even a family, however broad



sidewalk or road may be, progresses longitudinally, the father in front, after him the mother with a pack on her head, after her the children in order of height. Going to work in the factories, or returning, the Hindu multitude maintains this separate silent march, entering a factory door or issuing from a gate and stretching away in long multicolored lines till it vanishes from view.

The river surface about our tender is flecked with numberless garlands of flowers. Every day the Hindu must make an offering of blossoms to Father Ganges. The chief steward in the dining room on our boat was a most impressive individual, wearing a Western smoking jacket in the approved style and giving orders to the other stewards with the greatest competence—I had not expected much sentiment in him. But I noticed that he waited till the passengers had left the dining room; then he gathered up great handfuls of roses from the vases on the tables, stepped to an open port-hole, and solemnly dropped them one by one upon the water. Across the river surface, now opalescent under the glow of the sunset, I could see that the two banks had a fringe of faded red and yellow blossoms that rose and fell with the undulations of the water.

And what was that off there? The rosy surface of the current, pale under the agony of that day's sun, was suddenly pierced from below by a long black shaft as rough and as broken as the edge of a saw. It was the snout of a crocodile, the most ancient and the most respected denizen of these waters, to whom devout Hindus throw offerings of flowers and tit-bits from human funerals.

Calcutta is the second metropolis of the British Empire, ranking just after London in number of inhabitants. Up to 1911 it was capital of all India, but as English conquests extended farther and farther north the seat of government had to be moved to a more central location. Such changes have been by no means unusual in the political history of India. Over a period of two thousand years certain cities have gained, relinquished, and regained this honor in a sort of rhythmic cycle. Delhi was the capital under the Grand Mogul. It is now the capital again under the vice-roys sent cut from London.

After my experience with the Far East, the crowds to be seen in the streets made upon me an impression of extraordinary

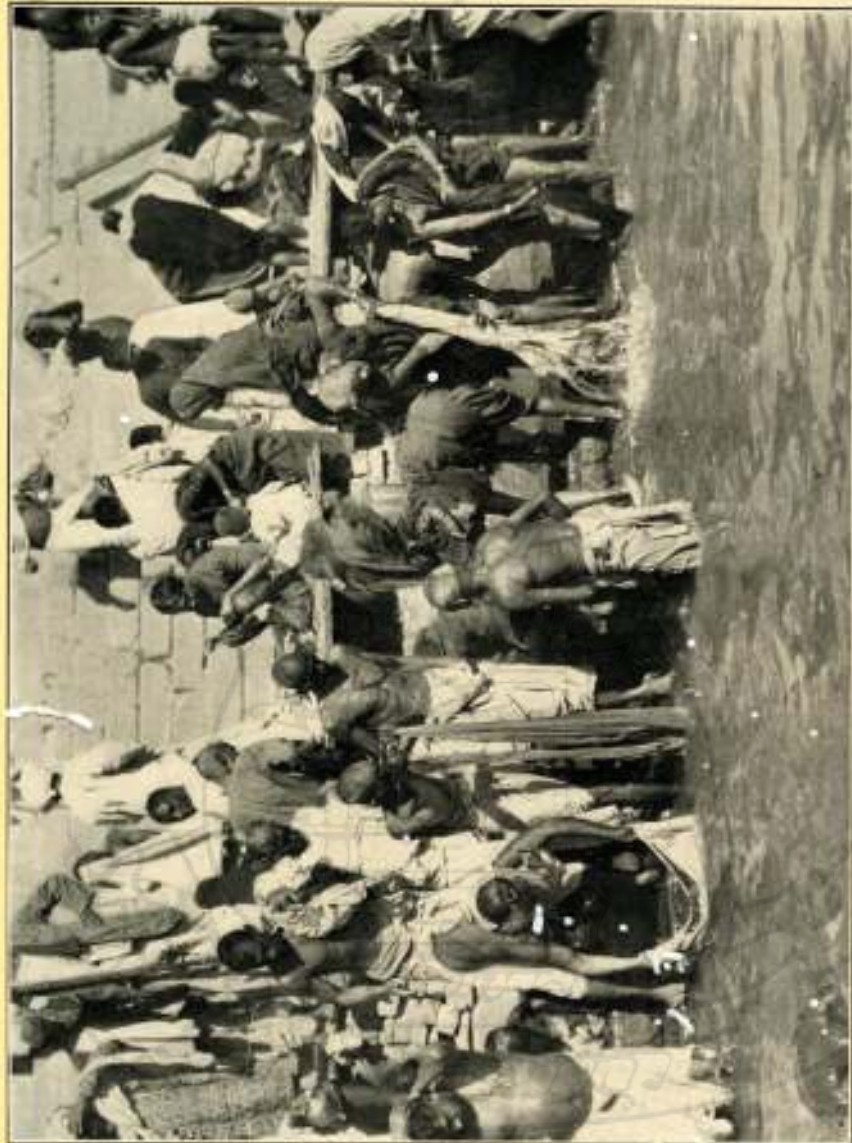


novelty. In Japan, after all, in China, and among the islands of the Malays, the strange and multi-colored costumes gave no great surprise, since the people who wear them belong to races so wholly different from ours. Their yellow or chocolate faces, their slanting half-closed eyes, are somehow in harmony with the clothes they wear. But the Hindustanee is one of us; he is a sub-division of the great ethnic group to which the white men of Europe belong. Some Hindus are almost black, others are copper-colored; but then again, some are absolutely white, whiter than the whitest American or Englishman. But white or black, and however close his relationship to us, the Hindu refuses to wear shoes. He wraps a piece of cloth around his body and calls it a suit; and he is quite ready to take that little off the moment the weather permits.

A morbid curiosity, whetted by all I had read about India, and now particularly by my actual presence on the banks of the Ganges, led me to make my first visit to the famous "Field of Nimtola," which the English call the "Burning Ghat." The ghat is a flight of steps—at times it may even be a simple railing—running down the banks of the Ganges to a certain depth under water. Its function is to permit the worshipper engaged in his devotion to remain submerged up to his shoulders. The ghats of Benares are famous for their number and extent; on certain days of festival they accommodate more than a hundred thousand pilgrims. In Calcutta, however, I was interested in that special ghat which was constructed by the municipality itself for the cremation of the dead according to Hindu rites.

The "Burning Ghat" is situated just above the Howrah Bridge, between the Strand Road North and the river. A line of arches separates the crematory from one of the noisiest thoroughfares of the city. Near the gate is a little shrine dedicated to Shiva, the most terrible and (perhaps for that reason) the most admired of the Persons in the Hindu Trinity. Next door to the temple is an office where various half-breed officials record, in appropriate ledgers, the diseases which ended the lives of those who are to be burned. One of these clerks smiled in explaining his duties to me. Most of the families who bring their dead to the ghat have no idea what the person in question died of. The native proletarians of Calcutta are suspicious of





THE HINDU WRAPS A PIECE OF CLOTH AROUND HIS BODY AND CALLS IT A SUTI, AND HE IS QUITE READY TO TAKE THAT LITTLE OFF THE MINUTE THE WEATHER PERMITS (See P. 200)

physicians and refuse medical advice. They know simply that the dead person died, and are content to let the law record any disease that seems to fit the case.

At the entrance to the ghat our automobile stopped to admit a funeral which was just arriving. A double file of Hindus in white tunics hurried by—four men carrying a stretcher made of branches and covered with pink gauze. The litter was heaped with red and yellow flowers with a few touches of green. Under this shroud of blossoms lay a tiny corpse—the wasted body of a girl who could not have been more than twelve years old. What struck the attention first was the great speed at which the procession moved. It was as though some invisible power were thrusting the marchers forward. It was more like a flight than a march, passers-by rushing to one side or huddling close against the walls in order not to be trampled under foot. Vehicles also stopped or turned aside at the warning sound of a persistent melancholy chant that rose from the procession. All the mourners were repeating the same words in a drawling sing-song such as school children in our country schools sometimes use in learning their lessons: "Bolo hari; hari bolo"—"God have mercy, have mercy God!"

Before removal from their homes the bodies of the dead are anointed with sacred butter (if the family can afford it) and they hear a "Prayer of the Dead" recited in Sanskrit by the head of the family, by a Brahmin, or by a friend: "O thou spirit who art no longer; the parts of thine earthly body are to be consumed; for that body was replete with passions and with ignorance and to thy good deeds it added many which were sinful and wrong. May the Supreme King forgive thy sins, willful or unwitting, and allow thee to ascend to the heights above."

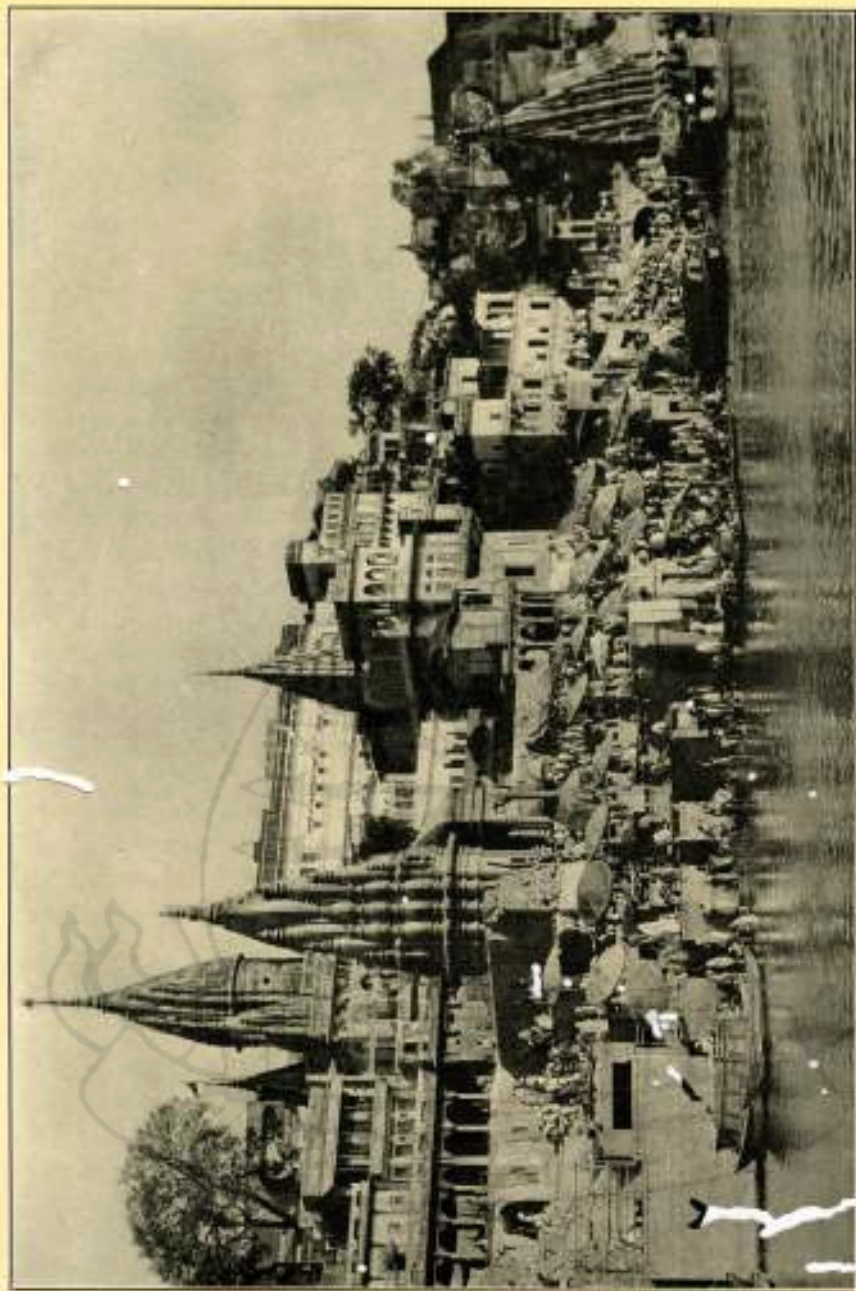
In popular centers like Calcutta the sick are brought to the river bank only after death; but in villages in the interior many families—among other things, to avoid the expense of a funeral cortège—take the invalid to the water-side the moment they suspect that he is going to die. Furthermore, they accelerate his "purification" by plugging his mouth, nostrils, and ears with mud from the sacred stream, and then they leave him where he lies, to come back and burn his body the following day. It



sometimes happens that such patients given up for dead are not mortally ill and manage to recover. In such cases the survivor falls under a most terrible destiny. His family regards him as dead, and renounce him, considering him a guilty soul who has disobeyed divine laws. If he is seen he is not recognized. No one will approach him, for fear of contagion. The pariah, in spite of his poverty, is far superior to him. The man who has fled from death lives like a ghost, and even though he raises his voice, no one will hear him. In the struggle for life he gradually drifts to the dumps and other desert places, fighting for his food with the dogs and jackals that prowl the city at night. Finally he dies, in complete loneliness, and his soul (according to the believers) falls one step backwards in the spiritual hierarchy, becoming reincarnate in some lower animal form.

The triangular plane of the crematory showed, as I noticed, a number of spots which were somewhat longer than they were wide and were covered with still smoking embers. They were remnants of pyres which had been lighted in the early hours of the morning. I could discern the outline of bones under some of the ashes, but, as it seemed, a few blows of a club would reduce them to powder—a task, precisely, which developed upon a hunchback of most disquieting aspect, who seemed to be master of the place. This individual, a man of dark gleaming eyes and cruelly up-turned lips, was going about with an air of importance, approaching the various funerals and indicating the places where new pyres might be raised. With a skill born of long practice, and with no other tool than a short forked stick, he would obliterate in a few moments the remains of previous cremations, breaking the bones into bits and sweeping the ashes into the river. The worshippers on the ghat, sunk up to their necks in the water, did not move as this funeral ash came down upon them. They continued their devout gestures, crossing their hands upon their breasts or raising them above their heads, and sipping in and spewing out mouthfuls of the sacred water.

A modest pyre, barely necessary for the total cremation of a human body, costs from six to eight rupees. For people who cannot afford so much are likely to see their dead only half consumed. The terrible hunchback is a busy man and cannot lose time. When he thinks a pyre has burned itself out, he



THE BATIKING GREATS ON THE BANKS OF THE SACRED GANGES AT BENSARES WHICH ACCOMMODATE ON CERTAIN FESTIVAL DAYS MORE THAN A HUNDRED THOUSAND PILGRIMS. (See p. 292)



sweeps the refuse into the river more or less as he finds it. One of the clerks from the Registry did not spare his witticisms at the expense of this cold-blooded dwarf who judged his prospective customers by the plainness or sumptuousness of their attire and classified them, mentally, as "well-done," "medium," or "rare." He was respectful only to the "well-done"; those, in other words, who could buy plenty of wood, with gratuities perhaps in addition. Since the funerals have to await the pleasure of this chief attendant, various cortèges may be seen scattered about the field, the corpse laid upon the ground and the mourners sitting around it waiting.

I observed a very small procession entering the place—two bearers, an old man and a boy, carrying a plain litter covered with a dirty cloth and followed by three women in soiled white veils and with trinkets of cheap metals on their arms and legs. This company the dwarf received with ill-concealed contempt. Obviously, it was "a rare" one! He exchanged a few words with the bearers and showed them to a spot far removed from the other funerals. The bearers laid their burden down and the women took places on the ground near the corpse, their eyes gathered on the human outline visible under the miserable covering. Their emotion seemed to be expressed only in a strange enlargement of the eyes. In fact, nowhere about the Field of Nimtola did I see a trace of tears. The Hindu seems not to know that grief may be expressed by an over-flow of moisture from the eyes.

I learned how to distinguish the sex of the person about to be cremated. In the case of a woman the body would have a handful of flowers on its breast; in the case of a man, it would bear a stone.

I turned toward the procession which I had seen entering the field with me. The young girl who had died must have been of good family, as I judged from the evident luxury of the mourning equipment; but what was my surprise on discovering that she was not a girl, but a married woman with a family—so little does bodily size count among these frail Hindus! The husband, whose hair was flecked with gray, began the ceremony of purification. Stepping down to the ghat, he fell on his knees in front of another man, who also settled to his knees. This



second individual, as I learned, was a barber. According to Hindu customs, the native barber works just that way. The customer kneels and is held fast by an ear or by a cheek, the barber using his free hand to shave the face and scalp.

After being shaved, this middle-aged mourner, who had a very dignified bearing, and kept looking about with fixed wide-open eyes that could not weep, proceeded to take off his clothes, remaining naked save for a loin cloth. Before setting fire to his wife's body he had to wash himself in the river. He went slowly down the ghat till he was breast deep. Then he drew his head under water, cleansed his mouth with the proscribed mouthfuls, and came up the steps again to array himself in a new white tunic which he had left halfway up the bank.

On the ground near the litter sat a boy who may have been seven years old—a child evidently of the dead woman. His face wore a tense expression—a sorrowing dog, as it were, accompanying its master to the grave; but he was absolutely silent. Without a tear in his eyes he sat fixedly staring at the graceful outlines marked under the shroud of pink gauze. A European lady in my company burst into tears at sight of this silent grief. Understanding this compassion, expressed in ways he could not understand, the boy looked around. His eyes seemed to grow a bit larger and he gazed at us for a moment in a blank sort of way. Then he turned around again to rest his eyes once more on the tiny form of his mother.

It was not to be for long, however. The friends of the family lifted the litter and bore it off down the steps of the ghat to the Ganges. When the bearers were waist deep they sunk the litter under the water, which lifted the pile of flowers over the corpse and bore them off down stream. The pink gauze of the bier floated on the surface like a great stain of purple blood. After immersion the body was brought up the steps again, the wet gauze now clinging to the flesh of the dead woman, showing all her outlines and taking on the color of her skin. The mourners struck up their monotonous chant again: "Bolo hari, hari bolo."

Meantime assisted by a number of other men the dwarf had been busy with the pyre. Four large tree trunks were laid at the base of what was to become a whole edifice of fuel, and





AN INDIAN VILLAGE

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within them other smaller and shorter pieces of wood were symmetrically arranged. The litter was deposited on these logs and over it the dwarf and his men laid piece after piece of timber, finishing off the pile with a sort of gabled roof.

Down the river came a noisy ferry, crowded to the rails with passengers. No one on board gave a glance toward the crematory. The wash from the paddle wheels broke against the steps of the ghat, lifting the many garlands of flowers afloat on the stream and splashing over the shoulders of the worshippers.

Our eyes turned back in hushed anxiety to the preparations for the cremation of this poor Hindu woman so wasted by sorrow and death. We did not know her in this world; we would never know her name; yet Chance had bound us to her with a tragic memory which would be with us for the rest of our lives! The husband, stupefied in his grief, was not sure just what he had to do to complete the sacred rite. The repulsive dwarf came to his assistance and explained—he must move around the pyre, setting fire to it in different places, so that it would all burn evenly at one time! Still the man did not understand. He took a torch and tried to apply it to the kindling. Vainly, however! The flame turned up and scorched his hand! Finally the dwarf took him by arm and wrist and led him around the pyre, showing him what he must do and how he must do it with the self-sufficiency of a sacristan directing a "first-class" funeral in one of the churches of Europe.

The fire catches, the flame begins to mount through the pile of dry kindling. Soon the whole edifice is a roaring, crackling furnace. We would go away, and yet we stand there unable to move, gazing at the burning pyre with that peculiar fascination which holds us to a seat at the fireside on some winter night at home. The sap in the burning wood explodes and throws burning embers far out upon the ground. With experienced foresight, the dwarf, who has been standing nearby quickly gathers up the burning fragments and throws them into the fire again.

The fire, well started at last, the dwarf concludes that his presence is no longer needed and he moves away to superintend the erection of another pyre. We make our way toward the exit



and chance to pass the litter which is lying on the ground in its dirty wrapper, the three women seated around it. The bearers, the old man and the boy, have not yet returned. Doubtless they are going about among their friends, vainly seeking alms to enable them to fulfil their pious task. They have been gone a long time! Perhaps they have failed! Perhaps they will not find money to buy the wood for this unhappy Hindu—poor throughout the course of his nameless existence, poor even now beyond the Gates of Death! Equality in Final Nothing is a concept true only in a physical sense. Men have done their best to suppress this last consolation of the poor, asserting even across the bournes of mystery the competitions of our social order! In India one dies according to the amount of wood that one can buy; in other parts of Asia it is according to the number and quality of the objects that are to be placed in the tomb as an embellishment of life in the Other World; in our western countries it all depends on the amount of pomp and ceremony which we can display before an open grave under show of a counterfeit spirituality!

I drop eight rupees on the dirty cloth that covers the litter of this beggar. The three women raise their heads and look at me with their dry eyes open wide in astonishment. A white man concerning himself with the funeral of a Hindu pariah! My unexpected, incomprehensible act, seems to impress them more than the very presence of Death!

In certain quarters of Calcutta the aspect of the streets, the costumes of the passers-by, the fronts of the buildings, give the impression of some rural metropolis in the interior of England. But once night shuts down the greatest city of the Hindus loses its European mask and the nearby jungle that stretches away to the mouths of the Ganges takes possession until sunrise. My first sleep in Calcutta, in a hotel facing one of the most busy squares, was broken over and over again by, apparently, the incessant howling of homeless dogs. However, it was a barking quite new to me and led me to suppose that the dogs of India must be of a breed wholly unknown elsewhere. The following day my friends among the natives laughed at my inquiries. It was not a case of dogs but of jackals, which come into the city at night to quarrel over the piles of garbage they chance to find.



One cannot go out of the house after midnight without meeting one or more of such commuters who pass their days in the country and their nights in town. The natives do not seem to mind their presence and, as for the jackals, they have learned to recognize the European and to keep out of his way. They know that the white man does not share the Hindu's respect for the lower forms of life and that he may be unkind enough to attack them, though they may have been regular tenants of his backyard.

Other animals block the streets of Calcutta in the daytime—the sacred bulls and sacred cows which live on the municipal budget and which no one may disturb. Every street owns and maintains some of these animals, showing even a certain pride in their sleekness and good condition. They are fat, shiny-coated creatures moving about with majestic sluggishness, apparently quite concerned to impress upon the spectator their distinction as sacred animals. They will carelessly lie down to rest across a sidewalk, obligating two-legged patrons of the same to take to the gutters. Then again they will decide to stop and chew their cud in the middle of a busy street, whereupon automobiles and trucks must halt or turn aside till the consecrated beast—white, usually, with short horns—decides to move on under the caresses and persuasive arguments of its worshippers. No one darts use violence on these animals. During my stay in Calcutta I read a sentence against a chauffeur who had collided with a sacred bull when the latter stepped inconsiderately in front of his car. The traffic judge, a Hindu of upper caste, read an opinion to the effect that a bull has equal rights of way with human beings in the public streets, since the life of a bull is as important to the bull as the life of a man is to the man—and the chauffeur went to jail for a day or two.

The Hindu's respect for animal life forced itself upon me even in my hotel. I have said many times that the crow is an ever-present inhabitant of Asiatic skies; but in Calcutta he enjoys greater respect and protection than in any other city of the Eastern World. From sunrise to sunset his strident gabbling fills every courtyard and makes every roof-top reverberate with its din. The rooms in my hotel had huge windows and skylights and beyond this transparent wall black shadows kept going to and fro and up and down in endless frolic. My quarters con-



tained a notice to the effect that the proprietor would not be responsible for watches, rings, shirt studs, and other shiny objects, left about on the tables. Crows come in and out of the rooms with the same disregard of the inhabitants' privacy as the servants themselves, and they carry off in their beaks or claws all metallic objects without distinction. One might think it a simple matter just to keep the windows closed; but such an opinion overlooks the fact that for the special convenience of the crow, and to prevent his hurting himself by beating on thick glass, one of the upper panes in each window is taken out. I was enjoying a bath when a grayish sort of crow, not very large but fairly sprightly, came and sat in the paneless window with his head outside and his tail turned toward me. There he plumed himself and fluffed about quite unconcernedly, rhythmically depositing his filth on my window-sill. The Hindu servant will clean up after these animals, but he will not shut them out, and I am sure likewise that if the same servant had found a scorpion, a poisonous spider, or a cobra, under the covers of my bed, he would have begged pardon for the disturbance and wished the visitor good luck. We are all children of Brahma and owe each other mutual respect! It happens not infrequently that crows actually make off with jewels of considerable value. When such a thing happens a council is held among the most expert stewards in the hotel. From the location of the room where the theft occurred they try to guess which crow may have been the thief and in just what tree or under just what roof he has his nest. The strange thing is that almost always these barefoot brown-legged servants in turbans finish by finding the stolen goods!

The most famous historical spot in Calcutta is the so-called "Black Hole." In 1756 a Nabob of Bengal rose against the English, to free his country from "The Old Lady of London," as the East India Company was called by its victims. He succeeded in capturing the city and a garrison of one hundred and forty-seven white men was, in surrendering, imprisoned in a small subterranean cell. The English soldiers entered the prison at eight o'clock in the evening on a summer's day. The cell had only two small windows crossed by heavy iron bars. After two hours the prisoners began to cry for help. They were all suffer-



IN THE CITIES OF INDIA, ALONG WITH THE MODERN AUTOMOBILE, MAY BE SEEN, COEVAL WITH THE FIRST SOVEREIGNS OF DELHI, CARTS LUMBERING ALONG ON HIGH WHEELS OF SOLID WOOD.



NO ONE MAY DISTURB THE SACRED COWS AND BULLS WHICH WILL LIE DOWN TO REST ACROSS A SIDEWALK OR IN THE MIDDLE OF A BUSY STREET

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ing from thirst and suffocation. They took off their clothes to relieve the heat and they drank their own perspiration to assuage their thirst. Anyone who fell to the ground died of suffocation within a few moments. The stronger men fought desperately with each other for places at the windows and this diminished the air supply still more. The heads that kept appearing at the bars shouted taunts and insults at the Hindu guards in hope that a bullet would put an end to their suffering. All night long the torment lasted. When, at dawn, the officers of the Nabob entered the "Black Hole" only twenty-three of the one hundred and forty-seven prisoners were still alive and the majority of the survivors died within a few days. When the English re-occupied Calcutta the "Black Hole" was demolished and on its site a building was erected to commemorate the horrible episode.

Around noontime the streets of Calcutta are crowded with Hindus going along with bronze jars full of water in their right hands. The water is for the daily ceremonies of purification. They are taking it home along streets jammed with street-cars and automobiles; but these modern incongruities they pretend not to see. They are as unconcerned with them as if they were performing their sacred rites in the solitudes of a primeval forest. To keep the water as pure as when drawn from the sacred river they must avoid all contact with passers-by. If a white man or a native of lower caste chances to touch the jar, it must be broken at once, in case it is made of glass or of pottery, or repeatedly washed, in case it is of metal. Then fresh water must be drawn from the Ganges.

Naked children may be seen playing everywhere about the more populous streets. The little tots almost always wear chains about their wrists with metal objects hanging down in front—flat metal plates if the child is a girl, one or two flat keys, in case of a boy. At first I supposed this to be a trace of rudimentary modesty on the order of the fig leaf of the Garden of Eden. Later I learned that the metal pendants were symbols of betrothal. The keys worn by the boys and the medals worn by the girls give notice that the little people who bear them have been given in marriage. Child marriages are still frequent in Hindu life, the parents often arranging the futures of their children when the latter are two or three years old, or even less.



On one of my travels into the interior of India I witnessed a celebration held in honor of three betrothals at once. The three future grooms were riding in one automobile surrounded by noisy bands of musicians and by men on horseback who fired pistols into the air from time to time. The boys, all between five and ten years old, wore, as a sign of their nuptial state, caps fringed with tassels which fell down over their faces like visors. Behind them in another automobile came the three future brides draped in veils of cloth-of-silver. They were even younger than the boys and the crowds manifested delight that the youngest had not yet completed a year and a half. After the ceremony of betrothal the children take off their nuptial robes, putting on, as their sole raiment, in the one case the medal and, in the other case, the keys. Then they are sent back to their play with other children who are in the same state as they. Only later on, when their families have decided that the proper time has come, are they made to live together as husband and wife.

Religion is much in evidence about Calcutta, but though Buddha himself was born at Benares only a short distance away, there are few Hindu Buddhists. Nor does Brahmanism have as many adherents as is commonly supposed. Brahmanism is the religion of the upper caste. It requires a reading of the Vedic texts and only learned Brahmins can profess it. The religion of the commonalty is the so-called "Hinduism," a confused jumble of sects and beliefs based on polytheism and magic. In order to overcome the Buddhist reform the Brahmins sought alliance with the primitive and cruder forms of religion in India, and this has favored the retention or creation of gods, goddesses, and devils in unheard-of numbers. Idols and fetishes are to be found on every hand and some god is always being worshipped with great displays of fireworks, flowers, beating of bells and drums, and dances of *bayaderas* (dancing girls). We generally believe that Hinduism adores its famous Trinity, made up of Brahma, the Spirit of Creation; Shiva, the Spirit of Destruction; and Vishnu, the Spirit of Consolation. In reality Brahma has never been a favorite and has remained the property of the learned class. Shiva and Vishnu are the truly popular deities, the former much more so than the latter. Shiva, though called





PUNDTI LEADING FROM A SACRED BOOK

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the Merciful, is none the less a god of terror, and thus he appears on his altars, with a necklace of human skulls dropping over his breast, with snakes coiled around his body, and with an extra eye in the middle of his forehead. His three wives—Kali, the Black, Durga, the Inaccessible, and Párvati, the Daughter of the Mountains, are complex and contradictory divinities, sometimes requiring love and tenderness and then again demanding blood and death. I witnessed a service in honor of Kali one evening at Calcutta. Drove of female goats were led into a temple and there their throats were cut before the altar of the Black Goddess. The children of the neighborhood came trooping into the temple to witness the ceremony, specially organized, it seems, for us. With the greatest fascination they jostled and elbowed one another to get a near glimpse of the dripping blood and of the gasping victims whose bleats they drowned in cries of excited curiosity. And yet when these children grow up not one of them will be able to crush an insect!

Snake charmers—*sapwallas*—are abundant in the streets of Calcutta. The performers we saw in Burma were content with making their reptiles dance to the music of a guitar. In Calcutta every *sapwalla* has his mongoose, a small carnivorous quadruped of the weasel family, which lives on snakes and is ready at every moment to pick a fight with one, no matter how large the serpent may be. The British authorities have never tried to interfere with this native sport, and the snake man, for a small sum, will stage a fight for you in any free spot along the streets or in the public squares. The snake rapidly winds himself around the mongoose and tries to crush him in its folds. But eventually the mongoose catches the snake's head in his jaws and never loses the fight. The fakirs have snakes of all kinds, colors, sizes, and varieties. It is easy here to distinguish the dread *Naja Trepudians* from all the others. Common snakes crawl on their bellies on the ground. They are the animal cursed of God, condemned, as Genesis says, to be trodden under the heel of men. But the cobra is no relative of the serpent who seduced Eve. He refuses to crawl on his belly. He lifts a swollen throat high in the air, resting on the last third of a slender body, and looking you straight in the eye if you get down on your knees before him. This is what the *sapwalla* does—probably to foster the belief that it is his fixed gaze which charms the serpent.



## CHAPTER XXXVI

### TAPROBANA

WE took two trips from Calcutta—one to the cold city of Darjeeling for a distant glimpse of the Himalayas; the other to the sacred city of Benares to see the birthplace of Buddha, the sacred pools, and the springtime festival held in honor of Shiva (The Shivarat). However, my eyes kept turning longingly toward the Bay of Diamonds where the *Franconia* lay ready to set sail toward the south for the magic land of Ceylon.

As we moved out the surface of the bay was like the opened tail of a royal peacock, its reddish surface broken here and there by masses of pure ocean water forced in by the tides. The light of the morning sun played over the estuary in broad meadows of green, in circular lakes of blue, cut here and there with streaks of trembling violet. All this field of tints and shades was gradually simplified as the jungle-lined shores of the mainland faded from view to the left and right of the steamer. Once more the sapphire of the tropical ocean lay before us. On five previous occasions the *Franconia* had turned her prow toward the Indian Ocean, only to turn aside into straits or rivers or estuaries. But at last this glorious sea was to welcome us, one might say, in person, vouchsafing us days of unbroken calm, nights agleam with phosphorescence, dazzling hours of noon when swarms and swarms of flying fish enliven the surface of the ocean.

We coasted for four days along the western shore of the Gulf of Bengal heading towards Ceylon, which, as the Hindu poets say, "hangs on the surface of the Hindu Sea like an emerald set in silver." Sea and sky, in their luminous calm, seemed to foretell the approach of an island celebrated for its eternal springtime and where explorers of old used to locate the Earthly Paradise. The ocean about us was now of a polished white like the interior of a seashell—it was as though the very excess of light had absorbed all its blue. The flying fish, skim-



THE TOP OF THE WORLD, MT. EVEREST



THE HIMALAYAS AS SEEN FROM DARJEELING

(See p. 30)



ming the surface of the water in their light tripping flight, were the only living things to break the glaring immensity about us.

We were to land at Colombo on the East coast of Ceylon. The western shore is more dangerous because of a line of shoals, the ruins, as it were, of a gigantic bridge which in some early geological age undoubtedly connected the island with the mainland. These rocky shallows have given rise to many legends of poetry and religion. According to the Sanskrit *Ramayana*, they were actually a bridge built by those heroic monkeys who worked in alliance with Rama in his wars against the devil Ravana for the possession of Sita his bride.

All the wealth of an exuberant tropical Nature seems to have been concentrated on the Island of Ceylon, which Prahmin poets called "the pond of the red water lilies"; the Chinese, "the land without sorrow"; the Greeks, "the land of the jasmine and the ruby"; the bards of Buddha, "a pearl eternally unstained resting on the bosom of India"; and, centuries later, the Mohammedans, "mankind's consolation for the loss of Eden." So great was the fame of this island that the ancient geographers, Ptolemy among them, supposed it to be fifteen or twenty times larger than it actually is. For centuries human imagination placed there all the wonders of the East. Its beaches were represented as of precious stones washed to and fro by the surf. One of its cities had a temple with a cupola topped by a fiery carbuncle which at night shone far out to sea like a beacon. From Ceylon came Sinbad the Sailor, and the seafarers of his time spoke of a mountain of loadstone that dragged the nails out of the timbers of ships and caused the latter to sink even in pleasant weather. This legend of the magnetic mountain was perhaps a symbol for a land so rich in natural wonders, so gentle of climate, so productive of soil, that many men were attracted to its shores, never to depart again. First the Arabs and then the Portuguese came to this island in search of cinnamon and pin ento and other spices, and finding in addition the sapphire, the topaz, the ruby, along with moonstones, aquamarines, and especially pearls. In the chivalric literature of our own Middle Ages, Ceylon was the fairy island of Taprobana, a land of unheard of treasures guarded by ferocious dwarfs, troops of monkeys, and cruel giants. Don Quixote in



the library of his home in La Mancho dreamed many times of conquering one of the distant kingdoms of a "Trapobama"—as he humorously misspelled the word—where pearls and diamonds were as common as chick peas in Spain.

Towering over the hills behind Colombo we could see an almost vertical cone, "Adam's Peak," the summit of which appeared quite inaccessible. Lying some fifty miles inland, this mountain is climbed only by natives who visit it on a sort of pilgrimage during the summer months. Sunk in the bedrock on the table-land at the summit lies a depression which roughly resembles a great human footprint. Buddhists say that Buddha left this track as he was ascending to heaven. The Brahmins call it the footprint of Shiva. The Mohammedans in their turn assert that it is a trace of Adam, the father of all humanity, who fled to this spot on his exile from the paradise below the mountain and passed many years there weeping over his sins, while Eve took refuge in Arabia. At any rate, each of the three religions has made the mountain its own and sends its pilgrims there during the months when the summit may be reached. Only worshippers of great faith dare undertake such a perilous ascent. The last few hundred feet of the mountain are almost perpendicular and must be traversed with the help of chains, which at times have broken and dashed pilgrims to their death on the rocks below.

While the coast regions of Ceylon are in frequent contact with Western civilization the interior is much more primitive, and its inhabitants live surrounded by all the dangers of tropical life. The tiger and the wild elephant constitute real perils for the explorer. Deaths caused by the cobra are so frequent that they are hardly news for the papers of Colombo. Ceylon is also the home of a giant python. The hunting of big game has come to be regarded as one of the resources of the state. People journey to Ceylon from all over the world to hunt tigers or elephants in its jungle, and they must pay a set tax for each animal they kill.

Ceylon has grown of late years to be one of the most popular winter resorts frequented by Europeans. Time was when a trip from London to the Blue Coast was regarded as an audacious undertaking. Later on, in order to be really "chic," one





ALL THE WILTH OF AN EXUBERANT TROPICAL NATURE SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN CONCENTRATED ON THE ISLAND OF CEYLON, "MANKIND'S CONSOLATION FOR THE LAPS OF EDEEN."  
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had to pass the winter in Algeria or in Egypt. Now the rich vacationist goes to Ceylon, and the hotels on the seashores about Colombo are as large and as luxurious as the best in the United States. Colombo, furthermore, is a great coaling station. All the steamers going to the Far East, or returning, stop in its splendid harbor. For that reason the streets of the city change their appearance every few hours of the day. Here one will see a group of English people who have landed from a steamer from Australia. They will be followed by another group speaking French on their way to or from Indo-China. While the Philippines still belonged to Spain, Spaniards were frequently seen in Colombo and its merchants all knew our language. Now only the older shop-keepers remember that Spain exists.

On landing at Colombo the European feels quite at a loss to distinguish between men and women. The man wears his hair long and coiled in braids on the back of his head. Around his legs and thighs he winds a piece of cloth that looks like a skirt. He paints his lips and cheeks, enlarging his eyes with black lines and crowsfeet. He has a weakness for bracelets, necklaces, and earring. The comb is so much an essential of Zingalese attire that the native continues to wear it even when he has adopted European clothes. Fortunately, most males wear mustaches, the one certain trait that separates the man from the woman.

The absence of horses is a striking feature of the streets of Colombo. In all the island the only horses to be found are those belonging to the army cavalry and a few imported by the rich. The native animals are the elephant (used particularly for agricultural work), the bull, and the buffalo. Both these latter are exceedingly diminutive creatures. The largest Zingalese bull is no taller than the ordinary donkey of Europe. They seem to have been created for a humanity of pygmies. The buffalos, which are equally small, gain a certain comic touch from the hump they have on their backs. They are sturdy little brutes, however, dragging carts and pleasure vehicles with great vim. When hitched to buggies or light carriages they are kept sleek and well groomed, their little horns painted red or green.

Traces of the past history of Ceylon continually appear in the names that are printed in letters of gold over the doors of



the shops in Colombo. Scarcely a street but shows a Silva, a Fonseca, a Costa, a Gomez, a Fernando, or a Perera. All such merchants boast that they are "Portuguese," as though they had arrived the day before from Lisbon. However, their copper-colored faces and their slanting Asiatic eyes arouse one's doubts as to such Occidental origin. They are probably descendants of Portuguese soldiers of remote times who mated with native women, or perhaps of slaves who took the names of their Portuguese masters. The Portuguese, in fact, founded Colombo, one of the first bases of European civilization in the East. When Portugal was annexed to Spain under Philip II the Dutch who were at war with the Spanish king took possession of Ceylon and kept it as the twin jewel of their Java until the English came.

Once in a while a white man may be noted in the throng of copper-skinned natives—a remnant of some Aryan strain that flowed into the island during one of the numerous conquests or invasions. Some of these white men, with white beards and wearing the Zingalese skirt, reminded me of the nude statue of Victor Hugo that was fashioned by Rodin. One also notes certain aged natives stylishly dressed in white suits like the officials freshly arrived from London—only their brown faces, their bare feet, and the inevitable comb in their hair, distinguishing them from the European. These are the millionaires of the country, the owners of the great plantations of tea. The English have made gigantic efforts, in the course of a century, to place Ceylon tea in competition with the teas of China. The Chinese product has not succumbed to this rivalry, but many farmers in Ceylon have nevertheless made great fortunes.

The boats one sees about the harbor at Colombo are very long and very narrow and they carry a prodigious amount of sail. When the wind is abeam they are kept from turning over by a balance run out from the sides of the boat on long thick bamboo poles.

Much of the heavy manual labor in Ceylon is done by women imported from the mainland. While the native women go half-naked and have combs in their hair, these immigrants wear veils that reach from just under their eyes to their knees, and their arms and ankles are adorned with rings and bracelets that tinkle



with every motion of their limbs. One wonders how they can do work which we would regard as more suitable for strong men in such unusual costumes. These women, who wield picks and shovels and carry hods, live lives of great hardships as virtual beasts of burden; yet their costumes and their bearing give them a certain mystery and a certain haughtiness that make them much more attractive than the natives themselves. They work in Ceylon until they have saved a little dowry; then they go back to Madras or to other regions on the Indian Coast to find husbands among their own townsmen.

While we were driving one day in the country about Colombo for a view of the plantations of tea, or rubber, or rice, our chauffeur suddenly gave a sharp turn to the wheel to avoid an obstacle which only he had perceived. Looking out upon the road we were just in time to glimpse some six feet of snake that rapidly wriggled away into the jungle. This extraordinary reptile was the boa, or python, of Ceylon; its tri-colored, checker-board back could not have been less than twelve feet long. For some time the serpent zig-zagged along in a line parallel to the road and in full view from our automobile. We could see everything except his head and hear the crunching of leaves and branches as he curled along. Just across the road a number of women were waiking with bundles or water jugs on their heads. They had not been frightened at the presence of the huge snake. The boa is a regular companion of the Ceylon farmer and is by no means so much feared as the cobra of the deadly bite. Only on extremely rare occasions has a boa been known to attack a man.

Every country dwelling about the city, whether standing alone or gathered in villages, had a front colonnade adorned with hanging flower pots and with strong blinds made of hard flexible wood strung from pillar to pillar. This openwork obstruction does not interfere with the circulation of air but at the same time it affords protection against snakes and tigers. The boa enjoys human society and will come from long distances to take up his abode in the neighborhood of a dwelling. The tiger too is often attracted by the lights that filter through the gratings at night.

On the road to Kandy the Government of Ceylon has built



a zoological garden the like of which probably exists in no other part of the world. It has no buildings and the animals do not know what it means to be shut up in cages. Instead, considerable spaces of forest have been enclosed to a height of some twenty feet in a netting of wire each strand of which is as thick as one's finger. Within these enclosures the animals are able to run and jump about and climb the trees with the freedom they enjoyed in the wild jungle. At one point we spied a tiger calmly resting on the branch of a tree almost within arm's reach of our car, though still within the netting. A number of little tigers, probably its cubs, were playing about on the ground underneath.

Everywhere about the fields we could see elephants plowing or engaged in some other kind of heavy farm work, drivers in white trousers, but otherwise quite naked, perched upon their necks. At one point we had to stop short in order not to collide with a number of elephants which had finished the day's work and were returning to their stables. They were huge slate-colored animals with blotches of red mud sticking to their bodies. They did not seem to be as intelligent as those we had watched in Burma. Like the horses in the West most of these elephants have grown accustomed to the automobile. One of them, however, apparently less experienced, took fright at our car which was running noisily along up a steep grade. Raising his trunk in front and his tail behind he began bellowing both front and rear, finally, turning his face away and backing upon us. For a moment he threatened to upset our car, but finally the shouts of his *cornac* and the other men persuaded him to turn about and continue his ponderous march down the hill.

The elephant, which is now the chief farm animal of the Zingalese planter, was in days gone by his best weapon in war. The ancient kings of the island measured their power in terms of the number of elephants, with the corresponding towers and archers, which could be marshalled with their troops. The first Portuguese Governor of Colombo had to deal with a confederation of native monarchs who attacked him with a great army of elephant cavalry. The captain met the situation cleverly. He waited for the elephants to approach to within very short range and then ordered all his soldiers to fire at one time. The



strange sound of the muskets frightened the elephants who turned and charged upon the native hosts that were following behind. The elephant's sensitiveness to sound finally made him unserviceable in war. In battles between native princes it was discovered that the elephant is utterly unable to stand the squealing of a pig. One of the kings, to meet a charge of elephants, sent against them a number of pigs which had been covered with pitch and set on fire. The desperate squealing of the little animals threw the pachyderms into a wild rout.

Like Rangoon, Ceylon is a great center of Buddhism. Vanquished by the Brahmins in all the rest of India a thousand years ago, the religion of Gautama has held its own here. The Dalada Maligawa or "Temple of the Tooth of Buddha" is almost as famous as the Shwe Dagon. The monastery at Kandy, however, is almost unique among Buddhist structures from the preference given to painting over sculpture. Kandy must have had many generations of painters devoted to religious art. Their work tends to interpret the cruder and more material conceptions of a Buddhism in decadence, with its heaven and its hell, its miracles, and its superstitious laws, all so far removed from the noble and exalted thought of the great Founder. In one of the cloisters the monks exhibit with pride, a series of terrifying frescos that represent the many tortures inflicted upon sinners in hell. These naive paintings reminded me of the Campo Santo of Pisa with, of course, the enormous difference that exists between a work of art and the overflowing of a morbid and confused fancy. The two monuments have in common, however, the same depth of religious emotion, the same desire to express the concept of the Beyond in color.

The famous tooth of Buddha is kept in a casket shaped like a pagoda. To be exact, before one reaches it one has to open seven such pagodas, the one inside the other. The tooth lies in the last on a leaf of gold.

Buddha died at Benares. After his body was burned one of his disciples recovered a tooth from the ashes and carried it off as a gift to the king of his country. Innumerable are the adventures which this relic has since undergone and the wars for which it has furnished a pretext. Quite aptly has it been called the "tooth extraordinary." It is at least two inches long and is



somewhat curved like the tusk of a crocodile. If the rest of Buddha was in the same proportion, he must have been some fifteen feet tall (to be sure one should not consider proportions in these matters of faith). During the days of Brahminist reaction the Brahmins got possession of the relic and decided to reduce it to powder by beating it with a hammer on an anvil. But, at the very first blow, instead of going to pieces, the tooth sank deep into the anvil and only years later did it see fit at the proper moment to leap forth from its metal refuge. Thereafter it came into the possession of a Hindu princess who concealed the tooth in her own hair and brought it to Ceylon. From that time the island has been regarded as one of the sacred shrines of Buddhism.

Every so often the monks of Kandy announce that the sacred tooth will be exposed to the eyes of the faithful and on such occasions pilgrimages are made to the island from all the Buddhist countries of the Far East. In these festivities elephants play a rôle as important as that of the priests. Two files of animals draped in red velvet, with silver helmets coming down to the middle of their trunks and with golden towers fastened to their backs, draw up in front of the temple gate. A special elephant—he must be a white one—is designated by the priests for the honor of bearing the sacred relic. Three of the seven caskets that protect the tooth are removed and the remaining four are placed in the tower on the back of the elephant selected. The other elephants in the line come down on the knees of their front legs and the majestic bearer of the tooth passes slowly in front of them. Then they rise and fall into line behind him, proceeding thence in procession to the outskirts of Kandy where a provisional temple is erected in the form of a tent some hundred yards square. There, on a high altar, the remaining caskets are opened and the gold leaf with the tooth brought into view. The ceremonies last for some days, whereupon the relic is put back in its case and will not be brought out again until another festival is ordered.

Before the Europeans came this ceremony was an annual affair and was a source of glory and wealth to Kandy; now it is very rarely held and the natives of Ceylon, who have been educated in English schools and read English newspapers, are even

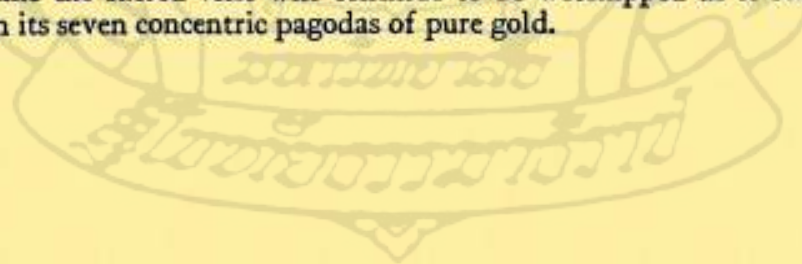


TEMPLE OF THE SACRED TOOTH, KANDY

*(See p. 310)*



beginning to suspect the genuineness of the famous piece of ivory. There can be no doubt whatever that the original tooth was destroyed by the Portuguese. The archbishop they had sent to Goa could not enjoy a night's sleep at the thought that in Ceylon a procession of people was rendering divine worship to a non-Catholic relic. At that time—the sixteenth century—the Inquisition was at the height of its power in Portugal as well as in Spain. Under orders from the archbishop the tooth was seized by a force of Portuguese troops and in spite of the supplications and tears of the multitudes burned in the public square and pounded to dust, the dust being afterwards scattered to the winds. However, when the Portuguese evacuated Ceylon a king of the country turned up at Kandy with the sacred tooth. One story was that, before the Portuguese who had been sent to confiscate the tooth arrived at the monastery, the *bonzas* had carried it away to safety, substituting a false tooth in its place. According to another story the Portuguese Governor was bribed by the nabobs with a large sum to make just a pretense of destroying the relic. Most of the faithful Zingalese think the whole affair was a great joke on the Portuguese archbishop, who ought to have known that, Inquisition or no Inquisition, the tooth of Buddha could never be broken to pieces. How can there be any doubt about it? The tooth was saved in this case by the same sort of miracle that preserved it on the anvil of the Brahmins, and so will it be again if anyone tries to destroy it. Thus the tooth will go on existing for century after century in its temple at Kandy. Some day the English will leave the island, as did the Portuguese and the Dutch before them. Meantime the sacred relic will continue to be worshipped as it rests in its seven concentric pagodas of pure gold.



## CHAPTER XXXVII

### THE TOWERS OF SILENCE

WE are traversing the Sea of Omar off the western ocean of India, which four centuries ago served as a stage for one of the boldest and most dramatic episodes of human history. Here the Portuguese nation developed its great epic which was later to be sung in immortal verse by Camoens—a maritime adventure comparable only to the discovery and the conquest of the Spaniards in the New World. We are now off Calicut on the coast of Malabar, the first land of the East to be sighted by Vasco da Gama.

Here the soldiers and sailors of Portugal were confronted by peoples of long-established civilization. Some of the Hindu kings possessed trained armies and well-equipped navies. Furthermore the Arabs, fearing for their Indian markets on the arrival of this new competitor, lent valiant aid to the sovereigns of the country. The galleons of Portugal often fought single-handed against whole fleets of Asiatic or Hindu war-vessels. Her thinly manned garrisons and landing parties faced armies of majestic array, with soldiers in a golden armor inlaid with precious stones. The vanquished rajahs, who went to war in god-like splendor, hurled upon the invader packs of unleashed tigers and herds of wild elephants. However, the Portuguese issued victorious from the unequal struggle and subjugated the greater part of India.

The hero of this Lusitanian epic was the great Albuquerque, who added to unusual gifts as a military leader sturdy virtues as a man. Only Hernan Cortes in Spanish history can be compared with him. He grasped a future of three centuries with unflinching eye. In anticipation of the modern importance of Singapore he took possession of Malacca as the key to the Far East. His enterprises had the disconcerting boldness of genius. To thwart the sultans of Egypt who were supporting the Hindu



princes, Albuquerque fought victorious naval battles and penetrated the Red Sea, which was then a blind alley, to carry the war to the enemy's territory. No one from Alexander to Napoleon ever dreamed of such vast projects as Albuquerque. His first plan of campaign called for a landing on the coast of the Sudan and an advance on Khartum, whence by agreement with the emperor of Abyssinia the course of the Nile could be turned into the Red Sea. A second plan called for a landing on the east coast to attack Mecca and Medina. Thereby the two holy cities could be levelled to the ground, the famous Caaba destroyed and the corpse of Mohammed carried off to Europe—so many decisive blows at the heart of Mussulman fanaticism which at that time was advancing triumphantly into the Mediterranean basin.

Heavy with years and depressed by the ingratitude of his king Albuquerque was unable to execute these two plans; but he shed upon his country a glory and a prestige well calculated to arouse the fears and jealousy of the kings of Spain. The river at Lisbon was crowded with ships from the east laden with pearls, gold, ivory, silks, spices—the full splendors of the Orient as these were described in the Bible stories of Solomon. All this was fully a century before the gold mines of Mexico and Peru had begun to send their product to Spain. During these years Portugal was the most wealthy country in Europe.

However, Portugal did not establish herself in India as deeply or as solidly as did Spain in America. Within a century after the Asiatic conquest, the richest portion of her Hindu domains had passed to the Dutch. Today of all the vast empire discovered by Vasco da Gama and conquered by Albuquerque and Almeida, Portugal retains only the city of Goa and two seashore towns of slight importance.

Goa, the Catholic metropolis of India, is a comparatively new city; but during its four hundred years of life it has aged to a semblance of antiquity comparable to that of the Hindu capitals which go back for thousands of years. Christians are not as numerous as Brahmans or Mohammedans, but there are still enough of them to give their sacred city of Goa something of the prestige which other religions shed upon Benares and Delhi. The archbishop of Goa is the primate of all Asia and around his ancient cathedral flutters a yellow-skinned clergy of all ranks.



The native of Goa who has been educated in Christian schools—in these something of the ancient courtesy of the old Portuguese hidalgos is still preserved—seems superior in manners and appearance to other Hindus. He wears European clothes and is even accustomed to shoes. He is preferred in Bombay and other cities of the West Coast for clerkships in the public offices and for positions of responsibility in the homes of the wealthy. The "man from Goa" is the traditional butler of the Indian East. Goans call themselves "Portuguese" with a certain pride and are not loath to display their affection for Saint Francis Xavier. The body of this celebrated missionary is regarded as the most important possession of the city. The saint actually died at Hong Kong in China but his remains were brought to Goa and rest in one of the chapels of the cathedral.

Bombay—a Portuguese word, meaning "Good Haven"—also was founded by the Portuguese. It was organized as a "plant" or "factory" on the south shore of the Island of Salsette. When Portugal won her independence from Spain at the time of Philip IV, her rulers had to seek powerful alliances to protect the country from a possible reconquest; and in pursuit of this policy they gave Doña Catalina de Braganza in marriage to Charles II of England. One of the properties which the Portuguese princes delivered in her dowry was the rising colony of Bombay. Her royal husband at once handed the city over to the East India Company for a rental of ten pounds a year—a purely nominal sum designed to perpetuate the legal claims of Doña Catalina to the island. Needless to say, the English took permanent possession of Bombay and did not make a single payment of the ten pounds.

Bombay is the richest and most industrious of the cities of India. The third metropolis as regards population of the British Empire, it is essentially a city of merchant and millionaire. The nabobs and princes who govern provinces in the interior have their residences and build luxurious palaces there. In spite of English influence the caste system is more deeply rooted in Bombay than anywhere else in India. The Brahmins keep austere aloof from other natives and may be seen walking about majestically alone, dressed in white tunics and with heavy turbans on



their heads. They are strict vegetarians and consider the use of tobacco and alcohol a crime. The *Purbus*, of the caste immediately under the Brahmins, have by reason of their industry and reliability won a monopoly of all posts in the customs and other public offices as well as in the banks and the more important commercial establishments. Some of them have attained very high positions and amassed conspicuous fortunes. One *Purbu* was a member of the Government Council for India and is honored with a statue in Bombay. The *Purbus* may be identified by their unusually large turbans. Just below the *Purbus* come the *Kayeths* or "Scribes." They are frail little fellows with features delicately marked. Reputed to be shrewd, subtle, intelligent men, they enjoy in proverb and in the history of wit a reputation similar to that of the "sharp lawyer" in the West. In Bombay itself *Kayeths* have gradually lost their special domain to the *Purbus*, but outside the city limits and in fact throughout India they continue to exert an enormous influence on the people by virtue of their knowledge of the laws and their ability to read and write in various languages.

Among the natives who inhabit the Island of Salsette the most influential are the merchants who come in great numbers from Gazarate. Organized in a powerful Chamber of Commerce they are in a position to dictate the policies of the city. They count among their number most brokers of cotton and silk, a trade which has given Bombay an international importance. The native stock exchange—it is rather a "curb"—presents an extraordinary sight. It is nothing else than a line of bazaars situated on a street where there are no stores. Taken together these bazaars are more like a great continuous café than anything else. In front of the doors are little platforms covered with carpets, and on each platform three pearl-colored divans which are kept spotlessly clean. There vast numbers of merchants—exceedingly fat individuals, for the most part, in tunics and turbans or sometimes in white suits of European cut—sit about talking, smoking, and drinking syrup-waters of varied flavor, or else they circulate from platform to platform giving and receiving news. Here all the high finance of Bombay is conducted, the native market remaining in constant contact with



"the City" at London. Many of these merchants, who squat on their haunches on these platforms, are greeted with deep bows when they enter the branch banks which most of the financial houses of the West maintain in Bombay's skyscrapers.

Bombay has its "bulls" and its "bears," its "panics," and its "booms," like any metropolis of North or South America. Fortunes are made, lost, and recovered, over night. Famous still is the great panic provoked by the American Civil War in the years 1864 and 1865. President Lincoln's blockade of the Southern States deprived Europe of one of the raw materials most essential for industrial life—cotton. The Hindu merchants grasped the full importance of the moment and began energetically to produce an article so necessary for the factories of England. Bombay happened to enjoy a monopoly of cotton and the most important stocks of the precious substance were located there. A period of wildest speculation set in. People who had never known the meaning of banking and had secreted their savings in hiding places underground, suddenly were seized by a mania for speculation. Cotton was soon only a pretext—every day new companies with enormous capitals were formed now for one purpose, now for another. More than seventy banks sprang up in a few months. All Bombay began to buy and sell stocks, most of them mere paper with no basis in real value. It was as though the War of Secession in the United States were to last forever. When the North suddenly put an end to the war, stocks in Bombay all crashed together. Few were the merchants who were not shaken at least to some extent. The city recovered from the blow only after a generation, though now by wiser and less sensational methods it has come to be the commercial metropolis of the middle East.

Among the people I met in Bombay was an old friend, Mr. Laguardia, the Spanish consul, who has been resident there for some years. Mr. Laguardia told me why he had been obliged to give up a pretty villa in the country which he had rented for the summer months. He had been there a few days when he saw one of his children standing motionless in the garden and gazing fixedly at a sort of tiny tree-trunk that had risen among the flowers.

It was a cobra.



In great terror the consul rushed out and gathered the child up in his arms and brought him into the house to safety. The servants about the place showed none of his anxiety. In fact, they were rather surprised at so much excitement. All of them had been going about the garden barefoot, though they knew a cobra was there. In fact, the snake had been a familiar object about the garden for many years and no one had ever thought of disturbing it. During winter nights it had often crept into the lower rooms of the house for warmth and company. Laguardia suggested that the serpent be killed, but his servants smiled at such incomprehensible dullness. In the first place life is sacred in all its forms, but the *naja* in particular has an almost divine status. Are not the gods in the temple paintings surrounded by cobras?

Then Laguardia offered fifty rupees to anyone who would bring him the snake dead. It was useless. None of the natives would touch the serpent even for a thousand rupees. Then the consul had an idea. He would turn to a Mussulman! The Mussulman of India is known to be always handy with a knife and to have no respect for life nor fear of blood. He is, in these respects, quite the opposite of his weakling fellow-countrymen. However, the Mohammedan workman on learning what he was to do, shook his head. Courageous as he was proud to be known, he did not hesitate to confess his fear. *Najas*, he explained, live always in pairs. If he should kill that one in the garden he could be sure that its mate would track him for years, if necessary, till it found the opportunity to get even. He had never yet known of a man who had killed a cobra who did not eventually die from the bite of one.

Laguardia finally decided to take matters into his own hands. He kept watch for the snake and when it appeared he began shooting at it with his revolver. The servants rose in revolt against this impious act, declaring that it would be impossible for them to continue working in a house where anyone could think of killing a creature so beloved of the gods. There was nothing left for him to do except move. And this he did, to the great satisfaction of his copper-skinned staff. They not only thought it logical that he should withdraw but that he should forfeit the rent he had paid in advance. The real mis-



tress of the villa was the cobra! The human being who dwelt there were transients of no particular importance and unworthy of obedience, at any rate at a sacrifice.

About the streets of Bombay, in the cafés, in the banks, in the hotel lobbies, one frequently sees pale yellowish individuals wearing white coats and curious little helmets that are lined with rubber and are somewhat higher in front than in back. These people are Parsees who practise the most ancient of existing religions. They are the last followers of Mazdeism, faithful to the teachings and the rites of the Mages and of the mythical Zarathustra (erroneously called Zoroaster by the Greeks).

There are only a hundred thousand Parsees in Bombay and vicinity and yet they enjoy a social importance and prestige quite disproportionate to their numbers. Some of them are enormously wealthy. Several were knighted by Queen Victoria as a reward for service in the Government of India. One Parsee, famous for his philanthropy, has been honored by a statue in the center of Bombay, the head covered with the little helmet distinctive of his race. This head-dress, historians believe, was imposed as a sign of infamy upon the Parsees ages ago by one of the Hindu kings. Viewed from the front it shows a rough resemblance to a horse's skull and is said to represent the war-horse of the monarch trampling the vanquished under its feet. It was something like the yellow cap that the Jews were for centuries compelled to wear in Europe. In their present wealth and freedom the Parsees have turned what was a humiliation for their ancestors into an object of distinction and pride.

The Parsees are descended from Persians who refused to accept the Mussulman domination when the Mohammedans in their victorious sweep over the Far East became masters of Persia. Most of the country abjured Mazdeism, the traditional religion, replacing Zoroaster with Mohammed; but the ancestors of the Parsees living today in Bombay fled from their homeland to preserve their faith. For many centuries they wandered about the shores of the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Omar, now welcomed, now persecuted, by the native sovereigns. Finally most of them settled in the new city of Bombay, taking an active part in its commercial development and growing rich with its increasing prosperity.



Mazdeism regards fire, earth, and water as sacred elements and considers it a sacrilege to soil any one of them with the slightest pollution. That is why the burial and the cremation of corpses are regarded as the greatest of abominations in the Parsee religion, since such burial pollutes either fire or earth, just as burial at sea would pollute water. To escape from the dilemma they expose their dead to the open air in the famous Towers of Silence, that natural agencies—namely crows and vultures—may dispose of them.

Innumerable are the precautions which a Parsee must take when anyone dies in his family. A first problem is the fly, which may touch the corpse and then rest on some living person. All other impure contacts must likewise be avoided. Shortly before the death of a patient, a Parsee priest hears his dying confession and pours into his mouth and ears a sort of holy balsam called *haoma*. This extreme unction goes back for thousands of years and from it the corresponding Christian rite may perhaps have been derived.

On our visit to the garden where the Towers of Silence rise we learned that no one except the subaltern priests who act as bearers for the corpses is allowed to enter them. When the late King Edward visited India as Prince of Wales the Parsees denied him permission to approach the Towers of Silence, though in his special honor they built a little model which faithfully represented the interior of the towers. This model still stands in a section of the garden and it enabled us to imagine what the inner circles look like.

The Park of Death offers an attractive appearance. Benches of glazed tiles, flowery trellises, dark trees draped with garlands of roses, give it something of the gaiety of an Andalusian garden. But one has only to lift the eyes for the resemblance to disappear. All the bigger branches in the trees are perches for enormous vultures, heavy and swollen from their excessive gorging. Other birds of prey, fat with the same loathsome plenty, may be seen nearby, forming in particular a fringe of feathery life around the circular rim of the Towers. These vultures are the pampered masters of the grim garden. They sit about in the trees on the watch for approaching funerals. The moment they spy a procession of white figures moving along the neighbor-

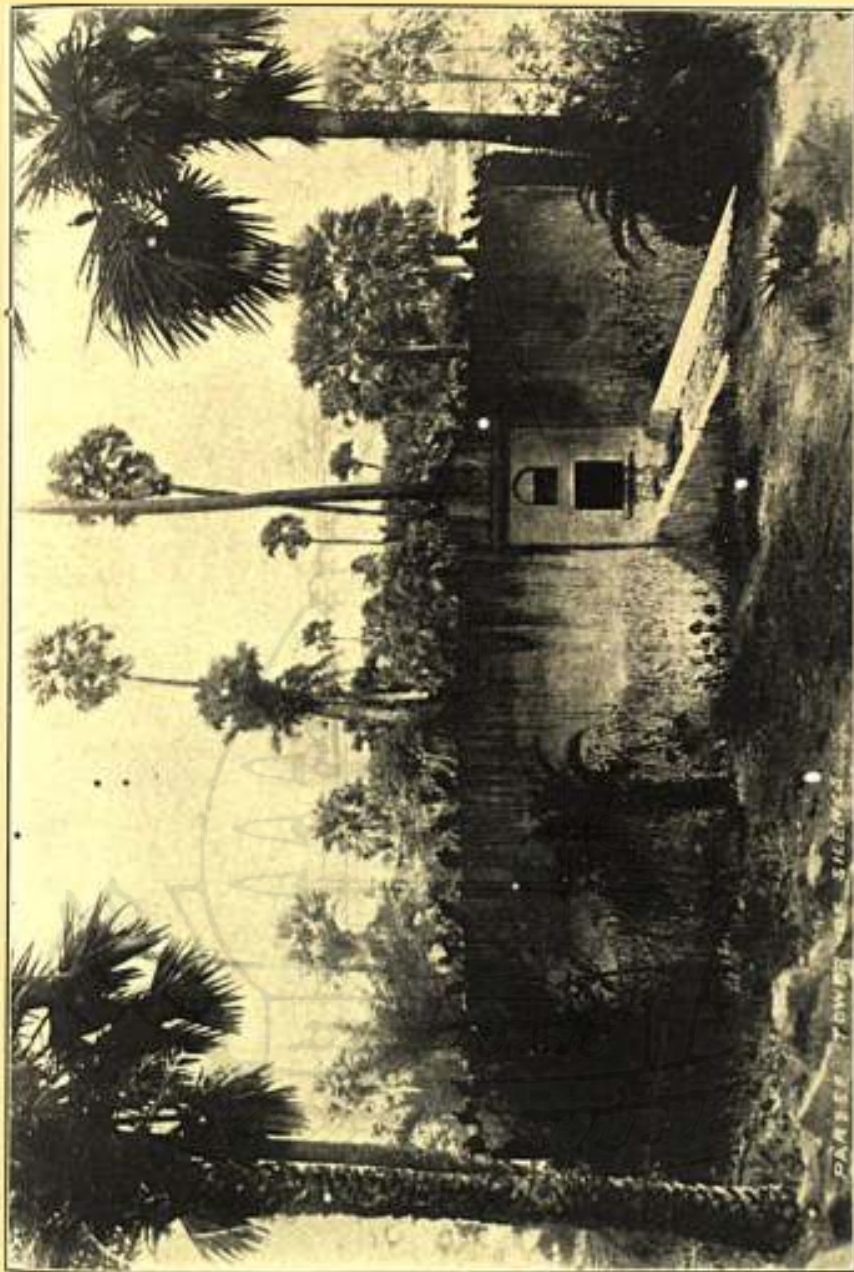


ing highway, they come to life, spread their powerful wings and flap up to the Towers in anticipation of a brief hour of insatiate feeding.

At the entrance to the garden, which is approached over a brick walk lined with blossoming rose bushes, we were met by a priest in a black coat drawn tight about his throat, and with a cap of patent leather. With the over-drawn smile, the unctuous diction, the false humility, that seem to be peculiar traits of the ministers of all religions, he explained to us the Parsee ceremonial of burial. Just inside the entrance was a plain building unmarked by any external signs. It was a Mazdeist temple reared in honor of Fire. Inside on a little hearth a perpetual flame is kept burning with fuel specially consecrated by the priests. This fire was originally kindled from an ember brought from Persia centuries before by the wandering Parsees who fled before the Mohammedans. It can be tended only by priests, and these must take the most minute precautions to preserve its purity, touching the hearth and the fuel only with gloved hands and holding their breath that the flame may receive no contamination from the human body. The bearers who take the corpses to the circles where they are to be devoured live in this temple quite apart from their fellow-priests and are unable to step beyond the one gate of the garden. If they need to go into town, they must submit to rites of purification which require several days.

Leaving the temple we walked on toward the towers themselves, reaching a point where our guide would allow us to go no farther. The towers are five in number (one of them, the smallest, is reserved for suicides). They are all much broader than they are high. The outer wall rises only a few yards from the ground and it has but one opening, a narrow door located at least half-way up the wall and reached by a flight of steps. The interior of the towers, as we learned from the model, is a series of three concentric planes sloping down funnel-shaped toward the center where a deep well opens. The floors of these planes are honeycombed with horizontal niches. The higher circle which, from its position in the tower, is also the most extensive, has the largest niches. In these are placed the corpses of males; the second circle is for women; and the third, the one immedi-





THE LOATHSOME DENIZENS OF THE TOWERS OF SILENCE ARE IN NO DANGER OF LOSING THEIR PRESENT LIVELIHOOD FROM ANY IMMEDIATE MODIFICATION OF PARSEE RITES. (See p. 250)

ately adjoining the well, has very small niches and is devoted to children.

After a religious ceremony in the Temple of Fire the corpse is stripped of its clothing, and family and friends take leave of it, entrusting it to the special bearers of the necropolis. These, four in number, lift the litter and bear it off along the flowering paths. Immediately the tree tops bend and the air vibrates with a sound as of myriad sheets being violently shaken. The birds of prey have come to life and are off in pursuit of the four bearers who move along in white garments that match the shroud thrown over the litter. The winged multitude hovers in the air for a time until the direction taken by the bearers has made clear in which of the towers the banquet is to take place. The tower selected grows black with the flocks of birds that alight and struggle for positions on its rim. The four men in white enter through the small aperture, place the body in one of the niches and then come out again, closing the door behind them. Hardly is the prop in position against the door when the horde of winged creatures with beaks of steel seems to fall inward from the rim of the tower.

Our guide told us that three quarters of an hour are sufficient for a corpse to be reduced to a bare skeleton. Each morning the bearers enter the towers to sweep what is left into the well in the center. There the dampness and the hot sun of India so rapidly disintegrate the bones that years go by before the well is full.

It is said that certain Parsees of the younger generation, cruelly obsessed by this method of disposing of the dead, have been agitating for cremation in the Hindu style. But the richest and most influential Parsees remain faithful to the ancient traditions of a religion dear enough to their forefathers to have made them prefer the dangers and sufferings of exile to apostasy. In truth, any religion which compromises in its customs is likely to die. For that reason the loathsome denizens of the Towers of Silence are in no danger of losing their present livelihood from any immediate modification of Parsee rites.



## CHAPTER XXXVIII

### THE GRAND MOGUL

WE are spending a day and two nights on the train between Bombay and Delhi, almost creating a habit of life in our rolling apartments. The car windows have panes of tinted glass to soften the blinding glare of the sun, but during the night the curtains of loosely-woven reeds, while affording a free circulation of air, fail to keep out the reflection of the lights during halts at the stations. The platforms of the latter are crowded with noisy Mohammedans shouting and singing. Many of them have little pillows on which they seat themselves with their legs crossed waiting thus hours and hours for a train to arrive. Then they silently gaze at the passengers without asking a thing of them.

As we issue from a settlement we enter a country milky white under a full moon, the horizons broken with ebony black masses. We catch, in our rapid flight through towns, glimpses of streets traversed by phantom lines of human beings in white caps and turbans. The native passengers dismount at dawn at such stations as they find convenient to perform the ablutions prescribed by their religions. Hindus look for running streams at which to purify themselves, dipping up the water in their regulation bronze vessels, and taking off all their clothing except a white robe which they wind about their loins. Mohammedans remove their turbans merely, splash their faces with water, and then face the rising sun to make a prayer with many obeisances.

All the wild life of India greets us as our train speeds by. In the trees we spy troops of long-tailed monkeys which jump from branch to branch or scramble down the tree trunks in haste to view the train from as close as possible. Jackals follow along, barking like dogs, and trying to outrun us in our rapid flight. On the other hand, wild boars, stags, and deer flee in mad rout from the railway with a great crashing of shrubbery. All this

animation dies out, however, toward the hour of noon. Then the countryside falls silent. Men and animals cling to the shade of the trees to escape the burning sun. Only the air is alive with clouds of white and yellow butterflies that are to be seen flitting about on every hand, drunk with warmth and sunlight.

Delhi is the most ancient city of India, though its name is relatively modern. Three thousand years before our era, in ages rather legendary than historical, a Madhanti, a Hastinapura, and an Indrapetcha, followed each other in succession on the plain now occupied by the present city. The kings of those three capitals figure among the heroes of the *Mahabarata*, the great epic of Hindu literature. Later on, in historic times, ten cities were founded, embellished, and destroyed on the site of Delhi, which begins to be mentioned only a half century before Christ. In no place on earth can such vast and varied ruins be found in one neighborhood. The *campagna* of Rome, the only city in Europe at all comparable to Delhi, is something negligibly small on the scale of the plain which surrounds the Hindu metropolis. Ruins spread out over a surface of hundreds of square miles transform the environs of Delhi into one vast museum. All styles of architecture may be found side by side in its remains, from the first crude efforts at building made by the early nomads down to the most refined expressions of Brahminist and Mohammedan culture.

All this majesty in ruins forces itself upon us as we advance in our train. Here visible from afar is a table-land covered with towers, and walls, and triumphal arches, and behind the walls, palaces, cupolas, minarets—all in ruins. That is ancient Delhi. Off in another direction lie other towns with crumbling bulwarks, demolished towers, roofless temples, broken arcades. That is also Delhi. A long time goes by—our train must have covered several miles. Here now are fields strewn with marble fragments, and dotted with moss-covered fortresses, mausoleums broken in the middle, palaces without doors rising from gardens that show the melancholy exuberance of abandonment. And it is still Delhi, though we have not yet reached the living city, nor shall we for some time. Yet all this greatness, all this vast experience of life, was unfolded quite apart from our Occidental world. In its passions and interests our own ancestors had no



share. Europe did not appear at all in the early history of the Grand Moguls.

However, by the time I set foot in the town itself, a Spanish reminiscence had gradually taken form in my mind from a haze of almost forgotten readings. The empire of the Grand Moguls was the creation of Tamberlane's grandchildren. This warrior, the terror of his epoch, an Oriental "scourge of God," conquered Delhi in the course of one of those expeditions which caused the whole Orient to tremble; and the only ambassadors from Europe to congratulate him on his great triumphs were those sent by the King of Castille. Enrique III of Spain was eager to acquire international influence by making contacts with the great monarchs of the East—fabulous individuals at that time, and some indeed actually imaginary. To his envoys, in fact, he issued credentials to "The Court of Prester John, Lord of Eastern India, to the Sultan of Babylon, to the Grand Turk Bajazet, and to the great Tamberbuc, otherwise known as Tamberlane."

Two knights of his entourage, Payo Gomez de Sotomayor and Hernan Sanchez de Palazuelos, finally arrived, after many adventures on land and sea, at the wandering court of Tamberlane. The latter had just won his great victory over Bajazet—in fact the unhappy Grand Turk had been shut up after his capture in a cage which Tamberlane was using as a foot-rest for mounting his horse. A descendant of the great Genghis-Kahn, who in his time (a hundred years before) had also been the terror of the East, Tamberlane was not only one of the greatest military organizers of the world's history, but also one of the cruelest of men. On one occasion near Delhi he ordered the slaughter of a hundred thousand prisoners because their cries annoyed him. On another occasion a city sent all its children out to meet him in an appeal for mercy, but he charged them with his cavalry and rode back and forth over them till they had been crushed to death. He left behind him towers fashioned of human skulls that these terrible reminders should inspire fear of him even in remote ages of the future. After leaving a trail of blood over Asia for some seven years, the barbarian conqueror had returned to Samarkand where he had established his more or less permanent headquarters.



Tamberlane received the two Castilian envoys with keen curiosity. In his eyes distance lent the Spanish monarch the same enchantment which the conqueror of the East had for Europe. To show his appreciation of the courtesy of the Spanish king he delivered to the envoys, along with a letter and many jewels obtained in the capture of the Turkish camp, two Circassian girls (they may have been Greeks) who had belonged to the harem of Bajazet. These odalisques were baptised on their arrival in Castile, the one as Doña Angelina de Grecia, and the other as Doña Maria Gomez. Their beauty was such as to turn the hearts of many noble lords of Seville who wrote love songs in their honor. Doña Angelina finally married a rich nobleman in Segovia; while Doña Maria became the wife of that Sotomayor who had brought her to the West. From these two Oriental beauties many Spanish warriors, statesmen and church worthies of following generations claimed descent.

Encouraged by the success of this first embassy, the King of Castille made haste to dispatch a second—perhaps the more notable of the two, from its having occasioned the most important geographical treatise of the Middle Ages: the "Itinerary" of Rui Gonzalez de Clavijo. This nobleman, a native of Madrid, set out with a friar and another knight in the month of May, 1403, and he returned in March, 1406. In his book Clavijo naïvely recounts the uncomfortable trip over the stormy Mediterranean in constant danger from the pirates who infested our waters at that time; then his visit to Byzantium, with its numberless churches, and to the lands adjoining; next his journey thence across Asia Minor, till he arrived at Samarkand where Tamberlane was at the moment encamped. Finally, he comes to the customs and the costumes of the haughty conqueror; the æremonials of his court, which only on rare occasions lived under a roof; and the barbarous feasts of his warriors who devoured horse flesh in incredible quantities.

Tamberlane had just returned from his conquest of Delhi. On that campaign the Hindu kings had charged him with elephant cavalry. To meet this peculiar attack which he found most disquieting to his horsemen, the Tartan chieftain thought of two devices. He ordered his soldiers to beat their weapons together in unison, with the idea of frightening the elephants;



and then, at close quarters, to strike with their scimitars at the ends of the elephants' trunks. These tactics proved successful. The elephants turned and bolted, throwing the troops behind them into confusion. As trophies of this victory Tamberlane brought a great number of the strange beasts back to Samarkand. Since elephants were little known in the West at that time and many fantastic stories were current regarding them, Clavijo was careful to describe those he saw in detail. The Spanish gentleman calls them "ivories" (*marfiles*) and tells how "the ivory" goes to war with a tower filled with archers on its back; how, if it chances to be wounded, it will recover if left standing out in the rain at night, but will die if shut in under cover. And he reports many other wonders which show the innocence of those days on matters pertaining to the natural sciences.

Tamberlane died while preparing a great expedition for the invasion of China, and the three Spanish envoys thought it best to return in all haste in view of the dissension among his heirs. But Clavijo had had time to enjoy many conversations with the celebrated Devastator, and his record of them became the source of several anecdotes that were later kept current in Spain for the flattery of our national pride. "Tamberlane," says an old Spanish author, "had a ring set with a stone of such virtue that if anyone uttered a falsehood in his presence the stone changed color." Rui Gonzales de Clavijo had been informed of the properties of the ring and was careful not to be caught. He couched his boasts concerning the grandeur of Spain in metaphorical language, and since what he said was the "truth," the stone did not change its color. Tamberlane was greatly amazed at the things he heard—among others, that the King of Castille, had three vassals of such lineage that they went to war with six thousand knights in golden spurs—a reference to the Grand Masters of Santiago, Alcántara and Calatrava; that he had a bridge forty miles wide on which two hundred thousand head of cattle could be pastured—referring to the lands over the underground portion of the River Guadiana; that he had a garden surrounded by fire and floating on water—referring to the City of Madrid so abundant in fountains and defended, at that time, by walls of flint stone.

After Tamberlane's death wars among his sons enabled the



Hindu princes to recover their lost territory, but a grandson of the conqueror, who had inherited some of the latter's military talent, made a new invasion into India and won decisive victories. This conquest really begins the period of the Grand Moguls, a dynasty as reprehensible for its cruelties as it was brilliant for its splendor. No sovereigns on earth ever possessed wealth comparable to that of the first moguls. These Mohammedan emperors accumulated treasures from all parts of Asia and their vast resources permitted them to build marvellous palaces which are still the chief adornment of Northern India.

The most famous glory of the palace of Delhi was the "Throne of the Royal Peacock." Taverna, a courageous dealer in precious stones who traversed a great part of Asia in the seventeenth century, and whose position as an expert caused him to be well received by these monarchs who owned the most wonderful jewels on earth, inspected this throne as he did other treasures of the Grand Mogul. To be sure, the moguls had seven other thrones, some decorated with diamonds only, others with diamonds and rubies, others with emeralds or pearls. It must be further remembered that thrones in the Orient must be fairly spacious affairs, more like our sofas, since the sovereign must sit on them with his legs crossed. However, the "Throne of the Royal Peacock" was the largest of them all. It was made of solid gold, with a canopy also of gold covered with pearls and diamonds; on top of the canopy was a royal peacock, of gold inlaid with precious stones, with a great ruby in the center of its breast, from which hung, as a pendant, a pearl fifty carats weight. When the Grand Mogul took his seat on this throne a great transparent gem was let down before him that its sparkle might delight his imperial eyes. Twelve pearl-encrusted columns supported the canopy. Sometimes, for the sake of variety, the peacock was removed and replaced with a parrot of natural size, cut from an emerald.

Like all other great empires of history the rule of the Grand Moguls had a long and melancholy decadence. In 1739 Nadir Shah, king of Persia, invaded the Rajputana and advanced to the walls of Delhi. The Grand Mogul tried to offer resistance there but he was overwhelmed and the Persian entered the capital triumphant at the head of his soldiers. Delhi had al-



ready known some of the greatest massacres in history, but the Persian conqueror outdid them all. At first he decided to spare the vanquished, then he changed his mind and commanded that they be put to the sword. He took up a position on the steps of a little mosque set back from the principal street of Delhi, and drawing his scimitar stood motionless like the image of an avenging god. There he stood for a whole day coldly listening to the anguished cries of the inhabitants, and gazing without pity on the river of blood that gradually formed in the street. More than fifty thousand people perished in that horror. Toward evening the Grand Mogul and the nobles of his court came and begged for mercy, throwing themselves on their faces at the feet of the victor. Only then did the Persian decide to sheath his sword and put an end to the horrible slaughter. Thereafter Nadir Shah abandoned Delhi, carrying off to Persia the "Throne of the Royal Peacock" and such wealth as the Grand Mogul had not been able to hide. It has been calculated that the value of the booty exported amounted to more than a billion dollars.

From this great defeat the Mogul Empire never recovered, and the English East India Company eventually took under its protection these monarchs who had been the richest in the world and were now reduced to begging alms. For a century they tried to preserve a show of exterior pomp; but when the British dethroned the last of the moguls, for his connection with the Sepoy revolt, his authority had already become a thing of the past.

In 1824 Mr. Heber, an English bishop, was still received by the emperor with the ancient ceremonial. On drawing aside the curtains to announce the presence of the Grand Mogul his heralds called "Lo, the adornment of the world, lo, the refuge of nations, sovereign of sovereigns, emperor, just, fortunate, and ever victorious."

The monarch gave Mr. Heber a royal robe and, on his departure, a horse, while again the heralds proclaimed the munificence of the most generous potentate of the universe. However, after the interview was over, the English prelate received two bills totalling several thousand rupees—one for the royal robe and the other for the horse. The Grand Mogul was a poor man

and his generousities had to be paid for with dignity and discretion. Anyone accorded an audience extended to the emperor a hand covered with a piece of silk, to conceal the bag of gold coins that was the standard offering. It should be added that this was not a very serious burden to the Grand Mogul's guests. The agent of the East India Company arranged all such audiences and provided the necessary funds, content to charge these up with interest against the income from the Mogul empire.





## CHAPTER XXXIX

### THE CITY OF JEWELS

DELHI differs widely in appearance from all the great centers of the Mohammedan world. Its streets are straight, long and wide and the buildings are not, as in Cairo and old Stamboul, plain walls of masonry or plaster with a few heavily barred apertures: they are of several stories with broad, spacious windows of plate glass, behind which their inhabitants pass the greater part of the day. Chandy-Choque, the most important avenue of Delhi, is a broad thoroughfare more than a mile long. In the windows, where the shades never obstruct the prospect, men may be seen idly lounging in their magnificent tunics and smoking their long pipes, while the women, free from the prejudices of other Mohammedan societies, move freely about without veils or sit in public view beside their husbands or fathers.

The uproar about the main street of Delhi is indescribably complex. The lower stories of the various buildings are occupied by stores or workshops—each house a beehive where industry and private life are conducted side by side under the public eye. When people talk they scream at the top of their lungs, fighting and quarrelling apparently on the slightest pretext. Down the center of this broad street most motley processions pass in turn, expressing now a life coeval with the first sovereigns of Delhi, now the most recent progress of Western civilization. Here balking and prancing comes a herd of Arabian mares mounted by horsemen in red jackets; here again a flock of sheep moving along in lines under the crooks of half-naked shepherds. Behind a cart that lumbers along on high wheels of solid wood toots a high-powered automobile which, in its turn, is followed by a troop of British cavalry commanded by officers in white helmets. Suddenly the whole street is in commotion, horses and sheep running helter-skelter in panic. An elephant has come out of one of the cross streets and is himself frightened at the terror

he spreads before him, adding to the uproar with his trumpeting and to the confusion by his backing around at random with trunk raised. But here comes a caravan, its camels suddenly terrified of all this noise so bewildering after their lonely marches across the sandy deserts. And here again is a great crowd of people constantly enlarged as new passers-by run to join it. A wild roaring and bellowing seems to be the cause of the excitement. Some hunters have come down from the mountains with leopards and tigers, trained to hunt gazelles or to fight with each other. The animals are being led along on leashes as though they were dogs. The air meantime is vibrant with the din from the shops of the copper workers, each of whom is pounding his metal for all he is worth in front of the door of his house. The shops are really on the sidewalk, and each has two or three men at work. Behind them squatting on crossed legs an old Mohammedan sits smoking his pipe and gazing silently upon his helpers through sleepy eyes. Groups of street musicians are blowing on high-pitched flutes, or scraping on rustic violins. From doors and windows hang curtains of varied hue. The floors behind the windows are covered with mats equally varied, equally gay. On the flat roofs garments of blue, yellow, green, violet, are hung out to dry, so that many of the houses of Delhi look like ships bedecked with flags for a holiday.

All this splendor of color has of course its unpleasant side. The cooking also is done in the open street and attracts clouds of flies. Every respectable inhabitant of the city has a servant who walks along behind him moving a great fan to keep the flies away. Outside the center of the city, moreover, the streets are not paved and the hoofs of horses and camels keep the air heavy with reddish dust. The women use musk and jasmín in great profusion; but this omnipresent fragrance blends with a rancid smell of frying fat, of tanning hides, of fabrics freshly dyed.

Many of the merchants of Delhi have no shops at all and do all their business in the middle of the street, advertising their wares in loud voices. Even in markets of modest proportions products of the whole earth are spread out before the eye—shawls of Kashmir; cuts of English broadcloth; corals of the Red Sea; agates of Gazarate; gems from Ceylon; gums and spices from Arabia; rose waters from Persia; watches and clocks



from Switzerland; perfumes from Paris; candied fruits from China; Worcestershire sauces from England. The animal marts offer horses, elephants, camels, buffalos, dogs, cats, monkeys, leopards, bears, deer, stags of all species. And especially tigers—cubs barely weaned with all the charm and grace of playful kittens, and majestic blood-thirsty full-grown beasts which proudly boast the label of "royal Bengal."

World famous are the gold workers of Delhi, and the designs they execute on cloths are sought through all the Orient. The near-by city of Kashmir exports huge quantities of shawls to Delhi where artists embroider them with ornaments in silver and gold.

The Eastern jewelry shop is much more brilliantly and richly stocked than the corresponding stores in our country, doubtless because in India men make an even greater use of jewels than women, affecting an ostentatious splendor in their costumes which we know, if we know at all, only in our insignia of honor, and in military uniforms. The jewel merchants are all native Hindus and go about dressed in white jackets with round black caps on their heads. They look like hotel waiters, from whom they are to be distinguished only by the red leather bags they carry—always with a certain negligence as though their contents were of scant importance. These merchants ramble about the streets of the city with an unconcern which in any great metropolis of the civilized West would certainly expose them to robbery and death. Express an interest in his wares and the peddler will open his bag and spread out before your eyes a vision of splendor from the *Thousand and One Nights*: long necklaces with five or six strands of pearls; or of pearls alternating with emeralds and sapphires; orchids made of diamonds with corollas of other precious stones of color; heron plumes to top a turban affixed in jewels that will sparkle against the black velvet like stars of night—all the adornments a rajah might need for a gala day at court. They pass their precious wares about with a confidence and an affectation of generosity that is also quite European. "Take this," begs the dealer of an American lady, "it is for you! Never mind the price, just anything you choose—say thirty thousand dollars!"

The most imposing building in Delhi is the Grand Mosque,



built on an eminence and reached by two broad flights of steps. This mosque, the *Djemma Masjid*, is, excepting the shrines at Mecca, the most important in the Mussulman world. From a noble pavement rises a mass of red granite interlaid with strips of white marble, a bi-colored effect which seems to lighten the enormous mass of the structure. At hours of prayer during the Ramadan, the pavement about the temple and the steps leading up to it are covered with thousands and thousands of believers ranged in symmetrical files, bowing and raising themselves with hands opened and arms extended all at one time. In ordinary seasons the neighborhood of the Djemma is the scene of a perpetual fair with all the noise and movement and animated curiosity of the Oriental throng.

Mussulman devotion, in one of its aspects, shows great concern for the comfort of the wayfarer. People often provide in their testaments for the digging of a well with appropriate shelter to offer a little coolness and shade for those who travel along sun-scorched roads. The Princess Nour-Jehan, for instance, stipulated that on her death a well be dug in her name every ten miles between Delhi and Agra. These useful memorials are a conspicuous feature of the environs of Delhi.

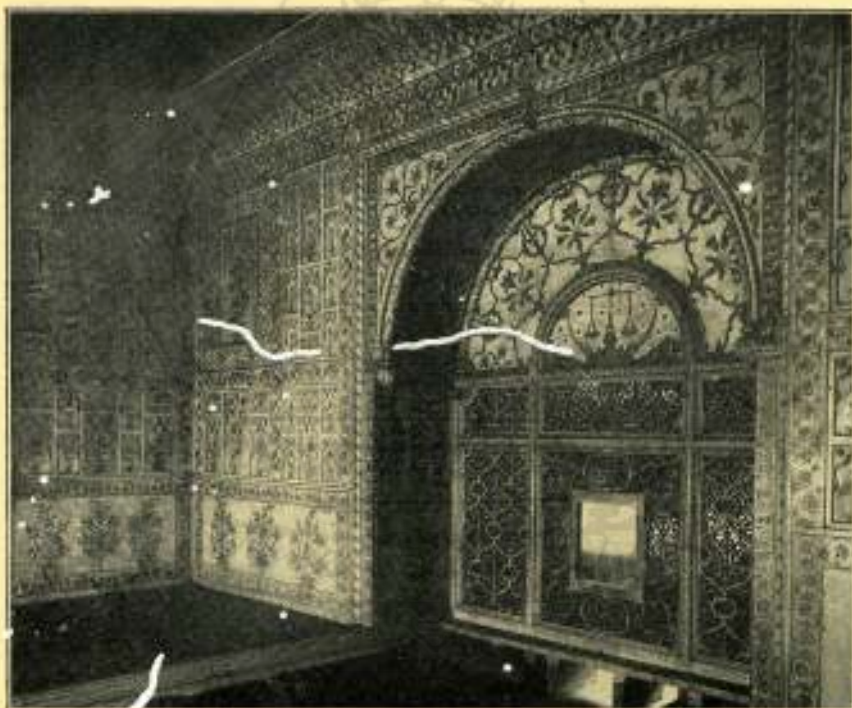
An interesting ruin that in former days lay just outside Delhi but has now been embraced within the growing city, is the astronomical observatory built by one of the Grand Moguls at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Still standing are two circles of stone and two flights of stairs, each of seventy steps, at the top of which were the platforms from which the astronomers of the emperor observed the rotations of the planets and the phases of the moon. The studies conducted in this observatory probably stood toward modern astronomy as the retorts of the alchemists stood toward modern chemistry; but in days gone by this was the most important scientific center in India and the almanacs and religious ceremonies of the East were based on chronological tables prepared on this spot.

It is customary to compare the palace of the Grand Moguls with the Kremlin of Moscow. It is in fact a city by itself with double walls of red granite and towers topped by cupolas. Its stables provided accommodations for ten thousand horses not to mention the numerous elephants that figured in the majestic



processions of the moguls. The palace which now serves as a barrack for the Anglo-Indian troops is surrounded by two walls of red granite so thick that the gateways cut through their bases are really tunnels. Through these passageways, mounted on elephants with red velvet trappings, passed such travellers as were privileged to have audience with the grand emperor. The palace itself, like the Alhambra and all Mohammedan architecture, consists of a single floor. Only here and there is a section raised half a story higher under a low roof. In Granada and the cities of Africa the Mohammedan architect had at his disposal gypsum, alabaster, now and then a column of marble or jasper, but especially the glazed tile, on which last he relied for his decorative elements. The so-called Arabic style is brilliant on the whole, but at the same time fragile and "cheap." In India the builders who worked for the Grand Moguls had marble in great abundance and the structures they reared in Agra, Delhi, and other cities of the Rajputana, make lavish use of this rich material which they employ even in the roofs and in the cupolas. The shades that cover doors and windows, the gratings that surround thrones, baths, and tombs, are likewise of marble worked in such detail and with films so finely drawn that they are like spiders' webs of stone that filter a gentle light through their numberless apertures. These wealthy monarchs of India devoted their surplus of jewels and precious metals to inlays on their walls. The milky white of marble is cold and monotonous unless it is broken with ornament—so their goldsmiths raised a forest of artistic vegetation from the marble pavements a third of the way to the ceilings, to soften the light and fill each marble hall with an atmosphere of dreamland. The trunks and branches of these fantastic trees were of gold, with leaves of emerald and flowers of rubies and carbuncles. Only the moulds of such ancient splendors still exist. The soldiers of the Persian conqueror pried out the gold and the precious stones with the points of their swords. In ancient times any one of these artificial plants represented a fortune. Now we find just tracings, with an occasional metallic glint surviving as a reminder of the treasure that once was there.

The ceiling of the throne room is at present of gilded wood, though before the Persian invasion it was made of solid silver.



THE CARPENTERS WHO WORKED FOR THE GRAND MOGULS MADE LAVISH USE OF INLAID ORNAMENTATION AND OF MARBLE GRATINGS DELICATE AS SPIDERS' WEBS



The guide today points to the window through which the last of the Grand Moguls made his escape.

This was in 1857 when the famous revolt of the Sepoys put English rule in danger. The country was then governed by the directors of the famous East India Company which worked the miracle of controlling the vast Hindu peninsula with a few thousand English soldiers serving as a nucleus to a larger force of native troops called "Sepoys." A subtle agitation, making lavish use of religious superstition, gradually shook the loyalty of the Sepoys. In those days of muzzle-loading rifles soldiers had to bite the ends of their cartridges. It was charged that the English greased the cartridges of the Brahmins with butter, and those of the Mohammedans with lard, thus bringing both types of soldier into sacrilege. Finally the larger part of the native army rose in revolt and the English would have lost their vast dominion had the *Sikhs*, courageous soldiers of Lahore, not remained faithful to their British allegiance. Delhi was the center of the insurrection and the last of the Grand Moguls, a pallid phantom of the power of his dynasty, lent the prestige of his tradition to the revolt. The city to this day bears traces of the terrible war. The red granite gates opening toward Kashmir and Lahore are torn deep from the shell fire and the musketry. Nearby is a church where English residents of the capital, cut off by the uprising, took refuge with their women and children and fought to the death. There also is a statue of the British general who held out without hope of rescue for many weeks against a whole nation of natives. The Sepoys tortured the prisoners they took with most primitive atrocities, and when at last English discipline and English persistence had won over the ferocity of a disorganized army, the conquerors showed a cold methodical cruelty in punishing the guilty. Many rebels were fastened to the mouths of British cannon and blown to pieces one after the other.

When English troops began entering Delhi the poor mogul, who had not once been consulted by the rebels he was ostensibly leading, thought it safer to take flight, and he vanished through this window in the throne room taking refuge in one of the many imperial mausoleums that are to be found near the capital. He was finally run down, however, and the first vice-roy of



India, who took over the authority formerly vested in the Company, stripped him of his traditional majesty and sent him to a villa in Burma to spend the rest of his life in harmless obscurity.

The most recent of the dead cities on the plain, "Old Delhi" as it is called, still shows the walls of its central citadel which was almost as great as the last palace of the deposed sovereigns. From the deep arches of its gates hang wasps' nests in conical masses; its ancient gardens and drill grounds are now meadows where cattle graze; its granite walls with successive tiers of red and white still preserve fountains of tile that have not known the coolness of water for centuries.

Of the cities anterior to Delhi, Kutab is perhaps the most famous and from the splendor of its ruins the most magnificent. It flourished over two thousand years ago under the Brahman monarchs before the first Mohammedan conquerors took up their residence in India. Its most celebrated curiosity is a tapering minaret some five stories high with an interior entirely hollow from base to summit, like a colossal shaft of bamboo. The shaft has apparently been held upright during all these centuries by certain hoops of stone drawn around it at intervals and adorned with inscriptions. This, the boldest and strangest of existing towers, was raised by one of the first Mohammedan kings of Delhi to celebrate the triumph of Islam over Brahma.

Around the minaret, tombs, tombs, more tombs! Here is a vast mausoleum built for a certain Grand Mogul who asked to be buried under the naked dome of heaven. To carry out his wish the burial hall was built without a roof. Another mausoleum contains the remains of an imperial princess who willed "to sleep her last sleep under the common earth that nourishes the tender grass in springtime." Her tomb is a huge jardinière bearing grass and flowers. The grave of the poet Kushru, whose verses have been repeated by generation after generation of Hindus, is still kept in scrupulous repair, while many of the imperial sarcophagi are left in complete neglect, and are never visited except by foreign tourists.

Near the minaret in Kutab stands an iron column rising some thirty feet above ground and sunk twenty-five beneath the soil. This metal shaft was planted in the year 317 of our era when



many peoples in Europe did not yet know the art of iron working and when the most advanced nations were still incapable of forging a piece so great. An inscription tells us that it was the work of King Dhaba, a worshipper of Vishnu, who erected it in commemoration of his victories. However, the two rival religions, not content with this historical explanation, have attributed strange significances to this quite unusual monument. Mohammedans believe that person who can stand back to the column and join his arms behind it will have all his wishes fulfilled by Fate. Hinduists insist, merely, that the pillar reaches to the center of the earth. Its true author, they claim, was a king named Anang-Pel, who was eager to purify himself and free mankind from sin. He commanded various founders in his employ to drive this huge nail into the ground until it pierced the back of the serpent Sechnago who carries the world on his back. Certain sceptical individuals saw fit to question this achievement on the part of the king, and, to confound them, he had the nail withdrawn that they might see its point stained with the serpent's blood. The nail was then driven back to the center of the earth again. However, the wily serpent had learned his lesson and crawled away, and failure to catch him anew proved a disaster for the Anang dynasty, which soon collapsed. So the evil serpent, safe from the steel pin that had fastened him underground, is now going freely about the world to continue his maleficent work in spreading sin and suffering through humanity.



## CHAPTER XL

### AGRA

OF the descendants of Tamberlane the most famous was Akbar, conqueror of a large part of India. Never was the dynasty of the Grand Moguls so powerful and so much respected as under his rule. But, it should be remembered, the residence of Akbar the Victorious was not Delhi but Agra. Thanks to the affection of this monarch and to the prodigality of his grandson, Shah-Jehan, the artist emperor, Agra in the seventeenth century came to rival Delhi and even surpassed it in glory abroad through possession of the celebrated funeral monument called the Taj-Mahal.

At the present time the palace-fortress of the Grand Moguls in Agra is in a better state of preservation than the palace in the ancient metropolis of the empire. The English have not remodelled it as an office building as they have the one in the capital, but have left the gardens and the buildings their melancholy loneliness as abandoned castles. The mosques and the streets of the city likewise retain much of the feeling of bygone days. The city, to be sure, has its purely British quarter—the so-called "Encampment," where the garrison is housed and where modern public buildings and hotels have been erected. For the rest, things remain much as they were in the past. The moats of the castle are still full of greenish water. The double walls of red, the ogival battlements, the tips of the cupolas, show the teeth of time but they have suffered no deliberate profanation. The façades spaced by alternating lines of red and yellow are topped with cupolas of white and gold. Each pinnacle of the battlements has its crow noisily chattering with his feathered comrades which sit in line on the eave-troughs below. Over the gates and the sides of the buildings, whole families of monkeys play, doing their best, it would seem, to amuse the visitor with their cries and their capers. Squirrels run about over



the ground among flocks of birds that go hopping here and there gathering straws for the nests they have built in the cracks in the walls. None of these animals seem alarmed at the presence of man. They will allow themselves to be picked up and petted as if they had no knowledge whatever of the cruelty of mankind. The respect Hindus feel for all living beings has suppressed in the course of the centuries the instinctive fear that Nature seems elsewhere to have implanted in the hearts of all animals.

The fortress of Agra has a Pearl Mosque built by Shah Jehan and more famous than the mosque of Delhi. It is less remarkable for its size than for its simple beauty and the harmony of its principal parts. It is built entirely of marble. Shah Jehan, who left his imprint upon everything interesting in Agra, would employ no other material in his works. It has only three walls since the front is open to the air, the roof supported on pillars. These pillars are of a single piece. It is hard to understand how such gigantic and such graceful masses could have been extracted from the quarries without a scratch, without a chip, to betray the colossal labor that drew them from the earth and brought them into position in this palace.

Shah Jehan built some of his structures in two stories, doubtless under influences from the West. His reputation attracted to his court a number of unemployed artists, architects, and painters of Europe, among them a renegade Frenchman named Augustin de Bordeaux, who worked on the palace and perhaps also on the Taj-Mahal. The women's quarter in the palace is still intact, its upper galleries opening on a great square court. All the great jewel dealers of India came on fixed days to display their treasures on the pavement in this court, and the wives and favorites of the Grand Mogul leaned out of the windows to examine the jewels from afar, pointing out the ones which they desired the emperor to buy for them.

The extent to which perforated marble is used in the palaces and mausoleums of Agra is astounding. The layman finds it hard to understand how thin sheets of stone have been able to undergo such extensive and such complicated cutting. The windows, arches, skylights, all have curtains of marble lace—no other name is appropriate for them. They are spread across the sunlight like veils of gauze, so frail and film-like that it



would seem the merest breath of wind must move them to and fro.

Every visitor to Agra feels, however, a certain impatience with the splendors of the palace and in passing every window he looks instinctively out over the country for a vaporous outline on the last bend of the Jumna. The object of his journey has been to see the Taj-Mahal. Were it not for this monument Agra would have remained quite unknown to the generality of tourists.

A sentimental romantic charm seems to breathe from this beautiful structure which doubtless will always be more admired for the intention that gave it birth than for its strictly architectural qualities. Nothing quite comparable to the Taj-Mahal exists anywhere in the world. Most of the great lovers, who lived in reality or were created by poets, have left some narrative of their passion in words. Shah Jehan has been the only one to perpetuate his love story in a gigantic palace of dream-land.

The street hawkers of Agra offer for sale miniatures, painted on marble, of Shah Jehan and of his beautiful bride, Arjumand Banu. In these little portraits the lady is credited with the almond eyes peculiar to Oriental beauties, and with a skin of milk and rose. The emperor lover is portrayed as a dashing Arabic warrior with a silky beard and a sharp nose, his breast covered with pearl necklaces and on his head a many colored turban topped by a gigantic diamond clasp which holds several white plumes.

Some twelve years before ascending the throne of Delhi, and at a time when he was only a younger prince with scant prospects of ever becoming emperor, Shah Jehan fell in love with Arjumand Banu and made her his wife. The princess died before she could taste the comforts and the honors showered upon mogul empresses, and her grieving husband decided to offer to her memory a testimony of love such as had never been seen in the history of men. He ordered his great architect, Ustul-Isa, to build this monument of pure marble as large as a great cathedral in the West, and with no other purpose than to shelter the tiny form which inspired the passion of his life.

Twenty years were devoted to the execution of the vast



project. The value of the stone employed was never calculated, though the wages paid the workers amounted to a figure in excess of five million dollars without regard to the value of money in those days or to the cheapness of labor in Asiatic countries. In course of time the romantic Shah Jehan came to know such misfortune as had overtaken none of the rulers of his family. His children were enraged at the manner in which he wasted what was to be their inheritance in satisfying his artistic and romantic caprices. One of his sons aroused the country against him and cast him from the throne. Old and sick Shah Jehan took refuge in the citadel at Agra and there he died. His body was placed in the Taj-Mahal with that of his wife whose image had always persisted in his memory. So great was the respect inspired even in his enemies by this great passion that they obeyed to the letter the last requests of the dying mogul.

The Taj-Mahal is a building in Arabic style. It is just a mosque much larger than other mosques, square, with a great dome, and with four minarets at the corners of the enormous platform which serves as its base. And yet it is entirely different from all other buildings of the Arabic school, because of the peculiar quality given it by the marble, the only material used in its construction. It gives an impression of much greater solidity than the brilliant fragile structures of alabaster and tile. At the same time it seems lighter and more airy than they, because it is not weighted down by any heavily glazed roof. Words fail to express the whiteness of this monument. There is something diaphanous, something unreal, about it. It can be compared only to the clouds one sees in the Mediterranean sky, to the foam that gathers on ocean waves, to milk freshly drawn, to the pallor of a winter moon.

A red building with arabesques in different colors serves as a huge gateway to the gardens of the Taj-Mahal. Beyond the gate opens a long rectangular garden with walks and paths paved with marble; and here water furnishes the decorative element that is supplied in other gardens by vegetation. In the center of the rectangle is a wide water-course that reaches as far as the stairway leading up to the monument. The whole gigantic mass, with its dome and its four minarets, is reflected upside down in this silent pool. As the breeze flecks the surface of the



watery mirror the glory of Shah Jehan trembles in the depths with a pearly luminousness that banishes all thought of death. To either side of this large pool are minor ones that stretch away between rows of flowers and shrubs of the Oriental landscape—laurels, poplars, myrtles.

From a distance the whiteness of the Taj-Mahal is absolute, and it tends to remind one of the cheap models that are sometimes made of paste or wax. But as we approach along the garden, designs in marble of different colors begin to appear—arabesques, ornamental designs, Arabic inscriptions, that look as though they had been painted on the walls but are really of colored marble admirably inlaid in the white of the walls. This gigantic mausoleum is so constructed that within it, under the cupola, there is room only for one chapel. The architect regarded it as irreverent to suppose that any other tomb should ever be added to the sepulcher of the empress. Anywhere else the interior would seem dark and gloomy; but here the cupola is under an Indian sky and the light is skillfully filtered through marble screens that keep the resting place of the two lovers enveloped in a soft continuous penumbra. Around the sacophagus are marble balustrades, the most marvelous specimens of perforation in all Hindustan. Neither iron nor bronze, nor any of the malleable materials known to modern times, could lend itself to such delicate lacework as this white marble inlaid with gems which surpasses the finest gratings of Occidental cathedrals. Above the tomb a great silver lamp burns night and day, a gift from numerous modern admirers, both British and Hindu, of the famous lovers.

One always sees the Taj-Mahal twice; once in the sunlight and once at night. We had arrived at Agra at a period when the moon was full and our guides spoke with enthusiasm of this second visit. Besides, in honor of the many tourists present, the authorities had ordered the water in the fountains and brooks of the garden to be played at night—an extraordinary spectacle that is offered only from time to time, and brings crowds of natives as well as foreigners.

We left our car at the great red gate and entered the garden with a multitude of people who advanced in hushed awe as in a place of worship. Beyond the high arcade lay the garden





THE TAJ MAHAL, MYSTIC SHRINE ERECTED TO THE MOST ETERNAL OF PASSIONS

(See p. 342)

resplendent in the moonlight, at its end the monument of love of a whiteness more ethereal, more unearthly, than we had seen in the daytime. The moon seemed to be dashing a luminous spray down over the cupola and the walls. It was difficult to realize that we were looking at a tomb, and yet as one recalled the story of the two people who occupy it, one had no difficulty in imagining their presence.

The whole garden is a poem of love.

A celestial music, suggesting the planetary harmonies of the Ancients, gradually fills the air. It is the murmur of the water flowing in the central stream, and reflecting in its marble depths the round face of the moon; and out of the depths of the night comes an accompaniment from the lateral streams hidden among the black roots of the shrubbery where every leaf is silvered by a rain of milky moonlight.

This gentle melody of falling water imposes silence on the multitude. People move about on tiptoe. Whispered conversations are broken by long intervals of silence. A rich complex, exotic perfume seems to envelop persons and things. Before our eyes flit objects of black translucent gauze—they are bats enticed from their hiding-places by the brilliant night. Even the people moving along the marble walks seem unreal shades; their footsteps make no sound, their lips utter no words. On our faces we feel the soft and pearly kiss of a moon such as we have never known, the moon of India. Meantime the running water continues its monotonous soothing chant in our ears, sometimes swelling in an orchestral crescendo, then growing softer and softer like a love song faintly played on violins slowly vanishing in the distance.

Unforgettable night! My feet will never again tread these marble pathways. Tomorrow I shall be far away never to return. But new visitors will come after me, and after them others and others and others. Lovers live and die, but love is eternal. As long as human beings love, worshippers will never be wanting before this mystic shrine erected to the most eternal of the passions.



## CHAPTER XLI

### PAST THE LAND OF PERFUMES

A REDDISH mist floats over the yellow waters of the *Bom Bahia*, like the burning exhalation which the hot sun extracts from desert sands. Only a few moments are left for us on the soil of India. For some days we shall be free of an air saturated with stifling dust. Our steamer opens its arms to receive us with all its freshness and neatness. Again we shall be in our white city, a whiteness that will surround us while we eat and while we sleep and even while we attend to those humbler operations, the need of which caused the great Alexander to doubt whether he were really the god his flatterers proclaimed him to be.

For five days the journey lasts. We move rapidly along before a gentle following sea. In the distance we see boats passing us in the opposite direction, battling their way through blue walls of water which the headwind is hurling against them. And now it is the sixth morning. Land has suddenly appeared on both sides of our steamer. We are in the Red Sea.

Despite its designation—an amusing geographical irony—the Red Sea is the bluest that we have met on our whole voyage. The name must surely have been invented by the Egyptians who lived at its upper end near the isthmus where its waters may have been discolored by the outflow from the great canal of the Nile.

We enter one of the two channels formed in the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb by the volcanic island of Perim, which the English have fortified and which narrows still more the narrow mouth of the sea. Just beyond it to the right, on the Asiatic shore—the coast of Arabia—we can see an Arab city, wholly white, the minarets of its mosque cutting a cloudless azure sky in competition with a modern battle tower which we take for a lighthouse. It is the famous town of Moka.

Later on two high narrow islets rise before us, a lighthouse on the summit of one of them. From the line of surf at their base to their sharp points, both peaks are as rough and jagged as a honeycomb. They look like great petrified sponges, though they are probably made of pumice. From their narrowness and similarity to each other they are known to sailors as "The Twin Brothers."

In this sea, which is more like a canal, we frequently sight great steamers heading for India, Java, or Australia. We overtake two rusty unkempt cargo boats which lumber along panting asthmatically through unpainted smokestacks. Near the two lame vagabonds are various craft with dark sails and blunt bows that seem very sensitive to the rolling of the water. They are the characteristic Arabic boats of the Red Sea which often cross in a few hours, and with a single shift sail, from the harbors of Asia to the ports of Africa. The decks of the old steamers are literally alive with people, as though they were transports for human cattle. Their passengers are all pilgrims, we are told—Mohammedans from India or from the interior of Africa, who are on their way to Mecca and will disembark at some point opposite and to the north of Port Sudan. These sea-pilgrimages to Mecca in Arabian sailing vessels would give a strangely exotic touch to the Red Sea for anyone coming from Europe. We, however, are finishing our voyage around the world. To us the spectacle is something quite ordinary—a familiar page, as it were, out of our recent past. Perhaps it is because we know that just beyond the isthmus lie the Mediterranean and Europe, and that we could reach "home" within a few days if we went forward in a straight line.

Night on the Red Sea offers, nevertheless, an unforgettable novelty. Hemmed in between two burning tropical shores the sea is subject to an extraordinary evaporation and its waters are unusually salt. The abrupt change from the heat of day to the cold of night occasions an equally surprising precipitation of dew. The air is heavy with the fragrance of salt and sea weed. Great fish of a luminous blue, as though they had been rubbed with phosphorus, swim along close to our prow holding their own with the speed of the steamer, and darting about in capricious play in pursuit of one another. As the night advances the dew



becomes heavier and heavier. The covers on my bed are soaked as with a heavy rain; the bluff triangle of decking forward shines like a mirror. The painted rails and floors drip as under an invisible shower.

We are to land at Port Sudan. The shores I have been seeing for the past two days offer me my first and last view of Arabia. These coasts, now stony, sandy, sun baked, utterly arid and fronted with long reefs of coral, undoubtedly enjoyed in very ancient times much more favorable climatic conditions. They belonged to the Land of Perfumes so famous fifty centuries ago. The Egyptians called them the Celestial Regions in view of their rich produce, though the common geographical name known to Egyptian navigators was "Punt."

Authentic history has little to say about the past of these countries, depending more on legend and conjecture than on established facts. But it would not be rash to guess that on those coasts now of such forbidding aspect, there flourished a civilization earlier than the civilization of Europe and perhaps more ancient than that of Egypt herself.

Thence in relatively recent times came the beautiful Balkis, as the Queen of Sheba is known in the middle East. The She-bites seem to have occupied both shores of the Red Sea, with cities scattered from the African mountains about the sources of the Blue Nile across the Straits into the territories of Arabia Felix. We cannot be sure, therefore, whether Balkis came from Africa or from Arabia. At any rate, she visited the court of Solomon, as the Bible also relates, and propounded to the shrewd sultan of the Jews various difficult problems which he solved with ease. After bestowing upon him the gift of her person the Queen of Sheba returned to her own land, leaving him as presents a hundred and twenty pounds of gold, a great abundance of spices, and many precious stones.

This visit of Balkis to Solomon has always been remembered in Arabia and Abyssinia. Many families claim descent from the alliance of the king of Judea with the queen of the Land of Perfumes, the most important of such pretenders being the house now reigning in Abyssinia. The emperor, or "negus," of that country calls himself King of Kings by virtue of his direct descent from Solomon. A friend of mine, the late Hugues Le-



roux, passed many years of his life at the Court of the Negus and thanks to this intimacy was able to become acquainted with many traditions of the Abyssinian dynasty, which had hitherto been guarded in strict secret. The Abyssinians do not know the Queen of Sheba as Balkis. They call her "Makeda," and imperial chronicles relate that on returning to Sheba from her visit to Solomon she gave birth to a son who was called Baina-Yekhem, "The Son of the Sage." When this young Ethiopian prince attained his majority he decided to become acquainted with his father and set out for Jerusalem, carrying as his sole credentials a ring which the king of Judea had given the queen as a memento of his love. However, Solomon did not need to examine the ring to recognize his offspring. As the boy entered the palace the father rose from his throne, opened wide his arms, and cried in a loud voice, "Lo, my father, King David, as he was in his youth! He has risen from the dead to bless me with a visit."

The festivities of welcome were protracted for some months in Jerusalem and the Jewish monarch honored his son with all sorts of distinctions. But finally, on several nights in succession, an angel appeared in the dreams of the son of Makeda and also to several princes in his Ethiopian escort. The angel ordered them to make their way into the temple, find the Tables of the Law that were kept in the sacred Ark, and carry them away to their country. This they did, and when Baina-Lekhem returned to his mother's side with the original draft of the divine code he was proclaimed as "King David," a name which he used for the rest of his life. In this way the Tables of the Law passed into possession of the emperors of Abyssinia, descendants of the Queen of Sheba. These monarchs keep them securely hidden, however, and even prefer that the existence of the precious relics remain unknown—lest some Jew should try to recover them.

On landing at Port Sudan we find ourselves in a new world. Changes in race and in geographical conditions seem much more abrupt to one who travels by sea. A tourist moving overland meets closer gradation between the architecture and the habits of life of one country and another. Less than a week before the natives about us were timid, smiling, retiring, well-mannered Hindus. Now in this little seaport, which the English built



some thirty years ago as a terminal for their strategic railway to Khartum, we find before us powerful athletic Negroes with thick, brutal, overhanging lips, their ebony limbs furrowed with deep scars, and about their loins varicolored kilts of fiber and in their hands the heavy clubs which they use in hunting or in war. Or here are Bedouins dressed in coarse wool with ropes of camel's hair about their breasts, and beards so long that they look like artificial ornaments appended to lean pointed faces. These pale or bronze-featured Mohammedans seem to have stepped out of the prints in our older editions of the Scriptures. All of them are repulsively dirty, yet at the same time they have a certain graceful majesty. The native troops, who perform police duties about the port, wear khaki uniforms like other English soldiers, but they carry at their belts old-fashioned bayonets, which show the primitiveness of the military equipment with which they are supplied. An original touch is their dark blue fez adorned in front with the golden seal of Solomon.

The "town" of Port Sudan is little more than a number of buildings scattered over a dreary waste of sand. We landed in front of the Governor's house—the only structure of more than one story, and otherwise distinguished by the battery of field guns drawn up in front of it. The main street of the Port consists of a board walk some nine feet wide which serves to keep one's feet from sinking deep in the sand.

Near our hotel we passed between two lines of Negro prisoners dressed in gray with chains running from their ankles to their waists, and carrying water jugs on their shoulders. There were some thirty of them, all under guard of a single native soldier, armed with a short-barreled carbine.

Beyond the houses—sand, sand everywhere! The surface of the desert is broken here and there by clumps of thorny shrubs. Camels half concealed in the little thickets were chewing their cud laboriously, their necks thrown far forward. This desolate town the English had to build to take advantage of the natural harbor that lies before it. The coasts of the Red Sea are lined with coral reefs and maritime disasters are frequent. The possession of a good harbor is therefore an inestimable advantage to any power.

The landscape changes somewhat as our train carries us away



from Port Sudan. Through the car windows we can see river beds completely dry and very, very broad. Doubtless these channels are full of water only for a few hours in the course of each year when there are heavy rains in the mountains of Abyssinia and the water which cannot reach the Blue Nile runs off toward the sea by these other routes. The sand in the bottom of these beds is of a much finer quality, more like vegetable earth; in fact, at intervals along these dead water courses we can see shrubs of a brighter, more juicy green, and around them running with dazzling speed, tiny deer of lithe graceful form with long legs as slender as needles. We have met our first gazelles in this land so famous for them!

Our train occasionally passes a little village screened with trees. Each of these inhabited centers betrays the presence of a water hole. Small kitchen gardens and orchards of tropical trees are gathered about huts with conical roofs that remind one of the ranch houses in some of the countries in South America. At the stations where we stop for water we find the same powerful Negro males that we encountered at Port Sudan. They carry curved knives at their belts and clubs of white polished wood. But all the Sudanese, whether male or female, young or old, have their faces scarred with mysterious letters or mystic symbols. These are the marks of tribal tradition. Parents cut them into the faces of their children soon after the latter are born. A Sudanese would regard himself as a lost soul were his history not thus printed upon his features in indelible form.

For the most part the natives wear white tunics which flow out gracefully behind them as they walk. Some of the young men of bold self-satisfied carriage, undoubtedly the dandies of the country, wear long braids of hair divided into numerous strands and coiled on the backs of their heads. Standing about the settlements are female camels surrounded by their calves, the little animals trying their first gallops with a laughably awkward vim. Between Port Sudan and Khartum there are only three trains each week. Train time is therefore an event in the lonely life of the settlements. All the inhabitants appear at the station to gaze at these luxurious cars that have a diner on behind. To prolong their excitement, little tots race the train along the road bed to show the temper of their lungs and the



strength of their legs. They hold their own for a considerable time and fall behind only as the train attains full speed.

Off to our left in the direction of the Red Sea a group of mountains dents the skyline with peaks of various colors—violet, blue or black. Twilight is settling over the slopes, and light fleecy clouds about their summits catch the last brilliance of the sun which is sinking on the other side of the railroad behind the unbroken line of a dead plain. We shall sleep on board, rumbling along a modern railroad which would never have existed had not the Mahdi arisen in revolt against England and seized Khartum.

My arrival in that city tomorrow will realize one of the great purposes of my journey. All of us as children have in our minds a favorite city of mystery which has an impelling charm precisely because we know we shall never go there. For me when I was a boy such a city was Khartum—the center of a "Wild West" which thirty years ago was a dreamland of adventure to every European boy.



## CHAPTER XLII

MOHAMMED ALI, GORDON, AND THE MAHDI

WHEN I awoke in the morning, our train, instead of running from east to west across the desert, was going from north to south parallel with the Nile and in the direction of Khartum. We kept for the most part at a certain distance from the great stream, though at times the railroad skirted the water's edge and we had before us a sheet of green running at high speed in oily rapids or spouting in whirlpools between cliffs of Lasalt lined with foam. We were, in fact, between the Second and the Sixth Cataracts where no considerable navigation is possible. These, however, were only momentary glimpses. Sometimes it was the river that left us to sweep away in one of its wide bends. Then again it was the railroad that turned aside, raising between us and the water a barrier of sand dunes or spiny vegetation.

Off to our right there suddenly rose a chain of tiny hills of surprising regularity in their crests and surfaces. We had to be told that those eminences were not hills but the ruins of a city. The glaring light of the desert seems to magnify everything and the inexperienced eye is subject to continual error. It was the ancient town of Meroe, capical of Egypt for many centuries. Pyramids, colonnades, sphinxes half sunk in the sand, gave a picture quite similar to the famous ruins of Lower Egypt which we had so often seen in books. We were surprised that the train made no halt at Meroe. As a matter of fact, there are no people there. The ruins rise from a dead desert and only recently have even scientists begun to study them.

\* We did stop, however, at some Sudanese villages in the neighborhood of the ruins. The houses, all in the form of pyramids, or with fronts adorned with short, heavy columns of mud like the granite pillars in the temples of the Pharaohs, seemed to show the influence of the majestic relics nearby. The people crowding the stations to see the train were black, entirely



black, intensely black. We were crossing Ethiopia, a country famous, from time immemorial, as a market for slaves. These Africans have faces so strangely ugly that one can hardly look at them without laughing. Only a few Ethiopians are copper-colored, or rather, have that dirty pallor of skin which has caused them to be called "red." And yet for thousands of years the human beings inhabiting the Valley of the Nile have fallen into two groups—black men and red men.

Along a trail which followed the route of the railroad we saw our first African caravans en route. Each animal carried two bundles hung across its back, a cord running from the neck of the camel behind to the saddle of the camel in front. This device permits one driver to control a certain number of camels without fear that one will be stolen or go astray. Almost always in small caravans the master rides in front on a donkey. This seems to be in violation of all the laws of the picturesque, but it is a fact nevertheless. The expressman of the Sudan is not concerned with poetizing his country. His main thought is comfort and convenience. The "ships of the desert" with the violent undulations of their backs, make inexperienced riders seasick and soon fatigue even the most hardy. Besides it is easier to dismount from a donkey than from a camel and the master in charge must ever keep close watch over his caravan. I must add that the camel, so widely distributed through Africa, is not of African origin at all. He was imported from Asia during the last dynasties of the Pharaohs. The donkey, however, is a native of the Sudan and was brought into Lower Egypt from the Upper Nile. According to Ethiopian tradition the beautiful Queen of Sheba habitually rode a donkey.

Our train breaks through a chain of reddish hills into a cultivated plain strewn with plantations of cotton. These are watered by canals that flow not from the Nile but from the Atbara, a stream that comes down from the mountains of Abyssinia as a wayward child, so to speak, of the Blue Nile. But shortly the desert is back with us again.

At two in the afternoon we have completed our twenty-eight hours in the train. Suddenly a great oasis seems to rise from the sand. The horizon is broken by cube-shaped houses that line the bank of a broad river. On the water are sail-boats



of ancient design and ungainly steamers that look like floating houses of two or three storeys. On the other side of the stream are long lines of trees and little palaces surrounded by gardens of a damp juicy green that stands out in sharp contrast with the sea of yellow sand all about.

Khartum!

Could I ever have dreamed, as a boy, that some day I should actually see this mysterious African city which was associated in the early '80's with the romantic memories of the Mahdi and of Gordon?

When the troops of the first French Republic had to abandon Egypt after the flight of Bonaparte and the assassination of Kléber, two forces were left facing each other for the possession of the country—the Mamelukes who had resisted and beaten the French, and the generals of the sultan of Turkey, who had been the nominal ruler of the country for some centuries. Among the lower officers in the Turkish army was a Greek Mohammedan named Mohammed Ali, a colonel in command of a thousand Albanians. The Turkish general had tried to have this man shot because he believed him responsible for one of his disasters. Mohammed Ali escaped, however, and went over to the Mamelukes, defeating his former friends in all his battles.

Endowed with unusual military and administrative ability, Mohammed Ali soon became master of all Egypt, driving out the Turks and then subjugating his new comrades, the Mamelukes. When the last of his enemies had been overthrown he was as much the absolute lord of the country as any of the Pharaohs of ancient times. Through the intervention of England and the other great powers his authority was legitimized by the payment of a tribute to Turkey, but in spite of this symbol of vassalage Mohamed Ali was virtually an independent sovereign.

The founder of the dynasty that still rules in Egypt, Mohammed Ali was the most distinguished individual produced by that country in the last century. The central idea of his policies was to "westernize" the Nile valley. He created an army and a navy. He established a system of popular education, importing teachers from Europe. He improved agriculture and founded national industries. Most of the work that Mohammed Ali did went to pieces on his death, as usually happens when rapid



reforms are introduced without deep roots in the habits and needs of a people. Mohammed Ali tried in the few short years of one man's life to arouse his country from a sleep of twenty centuries. Nevertheless his influence is felt even today and Egypt still derives benefit from institutions which this progressive dictator established with sound whacks of cudgel and sword to left and right.

As was the case with many of the Pharaohs, Mohammed Ali based his foreign policy on the conquest of the distant sources of the Nile upon which the subsistence of the population depends. In 1820 his son, Ismail-pacha, overran Lower Egypt and part of the Sudan, conquering all the lands between the First and the Sixth Cataract, till he reached the confluence of the White and the Blue Niles. On this spot where the true Nile really begins, he founded a little group of cabins called Ras-l-Khartum; and two years later Khartum (the Arabic word for "Elephant Trunk") became a fortified city and the capital of the Sudan. The town continued to grow for sixty years under the descendants of Mohammed Ali. Governed from Cairo, two thousand miles away, the city became notorious as a center of the slave traffic which continued to be openly conducted in spite of the complaints of the European ambassadors resident in Egypt.

In 1881 there appeared on the island of Abba in the Upper Nile a Sudanese of humble origin named Mohammed Ahmed, a man some forty-seven years old, who had spent his youth as lackey to a French physician in the employ of the Egyptian government. Mohammed Ahmed began to preach and he was soon enjoying a great reputation for sanctity among the faithful of his religion. All the natives who went up and down the Nile stopped at Abba to listen to a sermon or two, and to make offerings to the miracle-working dervish. Mohammedanism also has its Messianic tradition. Mohammed himself foretold that some day "a man sent of God" would appear to complete the work of the Prophet, regenerate Islam, and subject the world to the rule of the Crescent. When Mohammed Ahmed thought his followers sufficiently numerous, he proclaimed himself "Mahdi," a title which means precisely, "One sent of God." To show the religious character of their campaign the disciples of the Mahdi,



and later of the man who served as his lieutenant, called themselves "dervishes."

When Abba finally became notorious as a center of political agitation, the Egyptian Governor of Khartum thought he should arrest the Mahdi and send him as a prisoner to Cairo. With this idea he despatched two hundred Negro soldiers to the island with orders to take the prophet, peacefully if possible, by force if necessary. The troops disembarked on the island but with their morale already much shaken by the religious prestige of the Mahdi. His ability to turn gunpowder into water was common knowledge about the Sudan! When they presented themselves before the cabin of the holy dervish the latter's converts fell upon them, killing half their number and driving the rest in full flight to Khartum.

The moral effect of this first triumph was immense and it was regarded by the superstitious natives as unquestionably a miracle of God. But the prophet asked nothing for himself. He left the island of Abba and went into retreat in the forests of Kordofan, whence his preaching reached all the neighboring territories. In a short time several thousand warriors had gathered about him for his protection and since, meanwhile, a nationalist movement had broken out in Lower Egypt under Colonel Arabi-pacha, the Egyptian Government was unable to deal immediately with the dervishes. Finally, under pressure from England a force of twelve thousand men led by English officers was sent against the Mahdi. A fanatical mob of Sudanese armed only with lances and knives hurled itself in mad fury upon this army equipped with cannon and rifles. The Mahdi won a complete victory. Immediately afterward he overwhelmed two other Egyptian columns and became master of the greater part of the Sudan.

Thus in 1883 began the siege of Khartum, an episode which, in its day, filled the nations of the world with an anxiety comparable to the emotions aroused by the siege of Port Arthur during the Russian-Japanese War or the German attack on Verdun in 1916.

But suddenly there arose against the Mahdi a person of the white race quite as interesting and quite as romantic. A sort of crusader of British imperialism in the second half of the nine-



teenth century was General Charles George Gordon, a man whom his countrymen, though proud of his glory, considered as a "queer duck," familiarly calling him "Chinese Gordon" or "Gordon-Pacha." In 1870 Gordon had commanded the Chinese Army in the war against enemies of the empire known as the "Tai-ping" or "long-haired rebels." With a mere handful of Europeans he reorganized the Chinese military system, sacked Shanghai, and finally put down the revolt. Gordon himself had a mystic belief in his spiritual influence over men. In reality it was his calm and absolute self-confidence that gave him such great ascendancy over the so-called inferior peoples. He always entered a battle without weapons, carrying a simple cane in his right hand; but he was at the front of every bayonet charge and was never absent from the place of greatest danger. The Chinese were convinced that bullets could not hurt him. When the Manchu Empire fell into his hands he did not seek royal honors but resigned his commission as general of the army and returned to England as a plain lieutenant-colonel. In 1874 he entered the service of the Egyptian khedive and was named Governor of Equatorial Africa. In this position he considerably enlarged the frontiers of Egypt. But five years later through disagreements with Tewfik, a new khedive of Egypt, he resigned his command and went to India as a British major-general.

The Government at Cairo thought of him in the emergency at Khartum. The Egyptian soldiers had the same superstitious awe of him as the Chinese. He was the only chieftain at all able to deal with a miraculous character such as the Mahdi. Gordon came back to Egypt and began his campaign with one of those romantic gestures which only he could think of. Instead of asking for an army, he jumped on a horse and with one man as a guide, rode from the shores of the Red Sea to the neighborhood of Khartum, made his way through the Mahdi's lines, and entered the city. The world was astounded that this man, fighting single-handed, had chosen to shut himself up in a city which everyone expected to fall from moment to moment.

As a matter of fact the town held out for three hundred and seventeen days, all Europe breathlessly watching this African village which had been unknown a short time before and which everyone had to hunt up on the maps. Gordon's inspired energy;



GORDON'S STATUE, KHARTUM



THE AUTHOR AT THE TOMB OF THE MAHDI—OMDURMAN  
(See p. 360) \*



his belief in his supernatural powers, seemed to spread like a contagion through the world. Besides, nothing of importance was going on elsewhere at the time and the press in all countries was free to devote its whole attention to this legendary warrior who was represented as fighting the battle of civilization against barbarians. I was a student in those days and I remember that at my university in Spain we all asked each other the same question every morning: "Any news from Khartum? What's Gordon doing? Is he still holding out?"

The suspense lasted for almost a year. Finally the Mahdists entered the town through the treason of some of their fellow-Mohammedans among the defenders. Gordon was cut to pieces on the steps of the governor's palace where he stood waiting for the enemy with imperturbable serenity. Since Khartum had become a city of abomination for the Mahdi, he ordered that its buildings be all destroyed and their materials transferred to the near-by town of Omdurman which had grown up during the siege. Numerous English, Austrian, Greek, and Italian families which had been conducting most of the business in the town were either massacred or sent into slavery.

The Mahdi died some five months after his victory. There was a short civil war among his principal disciples and at last his lieutenant, Abdullah, took the title of Caliph and tried to give national character to the wandering hordes of Nubia, the Sudan, and Equatorial Africa. This government lasted fifteen years. England had sent an Anglo-Egyptian army under Lord Wolseley to rescue Gordon, but by the time this force, after unheard-of privations, reached the neighborhood of Khartum the city had disappeared and Gordon was dead. Lord Wolseley thought it prudent to retire rather than face the danger of a great disaster.

The Sudan was left to itself for a long time. In 1899 Lord Kitchener became sirdar, or generalissimo, of the Anglo-Egyptian armies. Instead of following the dangerous route along the Nile which had been used by Lord Wolseley, Kitchener took the dervishes in the flank by building a strategic railroad from the Red Sea to Khartum. Thus the Sudan fell into English hands without ever becoming an Egyptian province.

Completely destroyed by the Mahdi, as I said, Khartum is



now virtually a new town. Recent governments have embellished the site with modern improvements. There are good school-houses, impressive public buildings, and attractive barracks for the garrison surrounded by gardens and approached by streets lined with leafy trees. Water is abundant and the hot climate working in unison with an irrigated soil produces a most luxuriant foliage. Gradually the town has reassumed its former character. The officials are English but business is still conducted for the most part by Greeks with a scattering of Italians. The Greek has had a liking for Egypt for twenty-five centuries past and in modern times he is penetrating deeper and deeper into the heart of Africa. Go to any trading post in the Sudan and if you find there any European at all he will be a Greek. The supreme ambition of the modern Hellen seems to be to own a café. That probably is why Khartum has hundreds of them.

Near my hotel in Khartum I found a modest church with a cross at the point of its front gable. It was an edifice of the Coptic faith. As everyone knows, the Copts are the Christians of Egypt. After the Romans conquered the Nile valley two thousand years ago the pagan religion of the Empire had no time to become deeply rooted in the country. Christianity was the first truly national religion to develop there and it was adopted with concentrated enthusiasm. Egypt furnished many saints to our calendar and in the deserts of Thebes, near the ruins of the ancient city of that name, grew the famous hermitages and the first monastic orders. When the Mohammedans overran the territory most of the natives accepted the doctrines of Islam, since it is the eternal destiny of the "inferior" races to follow the beliefs of the man who can strike the hardest blow. A part of the country, however, remained faithful to Christian ideals; and this primitive cult, which has peculiar ceremonies dating from the first "meetings" of the Apostles, is the so-called Coptic form of our faith.

Night has fallen over Khartum. A song of childish voices, singing one by one and far apart, strikes my ear. On going in the direction of the music I discover that along a line of poplars which follows the bank of the Nile there is a series of wells dug down through the ground into the underlying waters. On



each of the wells is a wheel turning a chain with tiny earthen buckets. A dwarf donkey walks spiritedly in a circle about the well working this primitive mechanism which may have been invented fifty centuries ago. A dark-skinned gazelle-eyed youth, in a long shirt and a white cap, keeps the donkey in good-humor with a soft tremulous song intoned with a certain sentimental languor.

It is the "water song" which for thousands of years has been stealing across the green surface of the Nile. It was sung, at least, in the time of the Pharaohs and always with the same accompaniment—a soft dripping of the water falling from the buckets and trickling off in tiny rivulets to freshen the nearby gardens. For the Arabic poets, the clink of golden coins, the voice of the woman one loves, and the murmur of dripping water, are the three sweetest sounds in the world. When one is in Egypt that can well be believed. A warm breath of air blows off the yellow desert beyond the farther shore now hidden in darkness. It is like a draught from the fiery furnace that has been burning on the sands since the hours of noon. Deliciously I inhale the steam-like fragrance which seems to emanate from the wells. What would the earth be like if all its springs were sealed, all its rivers dry, and its multitudes of men left parched and panting with thirst? One has only to think of that to sense the cooling sweetness of the "water song," the first perhaps that may have been known of men when men were beginning to think under its gentle gurgling, inducer of dreams.



## CHAPTER XLIII

### THE COLOSSI OF ABU-SIMBEL

It is hardly dawn when I find myself obliged to leave my bed. My room is on the lower floor of the hotel, its windows opening on a garden of tropical splendor. The palms, eucalyptus trees, and sycamores, their roots thrust deep into the seepage of a canal, are of enormous size. Birds build their nests and live their whole lives in this oasis without venturing a flight over the sea of sand that lies around. Each tree, from the flutter of wings and the vibration of song, is a trembling mass of green. There seem to be as many birds as there are leaves. Never have I heard a symphony at once so joyous and so hostile to sleep. In the hotel at Khartum few of us feel inclined to keep to our beds after sunrise.

It was still early when we began our drive to the confluence of the two Niles to catch the first steamer for Omdurman. One could clearly distinguish the two currents. When the annual overflow begins, the Blue Nile is red from the mud which the rain washes down from the volcanic soil of the Abyssinian plateau. The White Nile, on the other hand, has a greenish tint from the great masses of vegetation which are swept down from the tropical jungle. At the moment the river was very low. We could see sand bars and stony islands which normally are covered for the greater part of the year. Under prevailing conditions the water of the Blue Nile was clear and blue, and that from the White Nile red and muddy. A long streak in the middle of the river marked the line where the two currents joined.

Up the Blue Nile to the first buttresses of the Abyssinian Plateau and up the White Nile into the heart of Africa, ply fleets of boats to trade with African tribes which are still in the most primitive stages of civilization. These boats are exact copies of models that have been found in the ancient tombs of Egypt. They have not changed since the navies of the Pharaohs,



four thousand years ago, explored the hostile shores of Nubia and Ethiopia, or penetrated the harbors of the Land of Perfumes. Their long low hulls remind one of crocodiles swimming on the surface. The most peculiar feature is the rudder, which is twice as high as the hull and fully a fourth as long. A heavy bar comes over the stern at a perceptible height above the deck; in fact, the helmsman stands on his feet when he steers and moves the rudder with his shoulders. A single mast is guyed by eight ropes on either side and the yard, when the sail is furled, is not lowered to the deck but hoisted to the tip of the mast.

At the ferry we encountered a number of Arab ladies who were coming from Omdurman to visit relatives or friends in Khartum. Unlike the poor Mohammedan women we had seen at the stations along the railroad, these ladies had their faces covered in the Egyptian manner. A sort of black domino enveloped them from head to foot, while a veil of silk reached from the middle of their noses to their knees. Only their eyes could be seen, and since these were painted with blue halos and enlarged by black crowsfeet their proprietors could be called nothing less than interesting. Some of them, furthermore, wore a plaque of engraved gold vertically between the eyes, and this metallic ornament served to intensify the exotic charm of their glances. They studied the Christian women in our party with the amused boldness of school girls at play, apparently making fun, in discreet voices, of European styles.

When Omdurman fell into Lord Kitchener's hands in 1898 the English, in fear of the fanaticism of the Mahdi's followers, did their best to suppress all worship of the dead prophet. His tomb was blown to pieces by shell fire and his corpse thrown into the Nile. However, certain ruins of the mausoleum still exist and many of the Sudanese refuse to admit that their leader is dead. They believe that "the man sent of God" is just in hiding till the moment when his second coming will bring decisive victory. But since his spirit is probably wandering about the tomb that held his body, worshippers offer him dates, the richest and most expensive article of food in the country, to keep him in good health. In fact, we were crossing the garden about the tomb when something fell at our feet. Two dates had come toward us through the air. We turned just in time to see a



young man disappearing on the run down a near-by path. I kept the two dates as a souvenir, on the theory that the ghost of the Mahdi would probably not miss them. Meanwhile it is difficult to foretell the future. The English may succeed in stamping out the Mahdi's influence, but one must observe that at the present time, nearly a half century after his death, the grandchildren of his warriors are depriving themselves of luxuries to supply provisions to his tomb.

The following day we left Khartum for Wady Halfa, the town where the British Sudan ends and independent Egypt begins. The territory between Port Sudan and Khartum is a garden in comparison with the land that lies between Khartum and Wady Halfa. Here we found the true desert, a monotonous waste of yellow sand without a trace of vegetation, without a sign of a tree, the only breaks in the level plain being the dunes of sand that are heaped up by the wind and which will change their shape and their location during the next storm. When the Sudan was still Egyptian territory a company of soldiers tried to avoid the long march around the bends in the Nile by following the camel trails across this desert. A storm arose and the regiment disappeared, nor was any trace ever found of it. It was swallowed up by one of these great mounds of sand. Doubtless many of the legends that circulate through the towns of the desert are false, or at least exaggerated, as is the case with all the dangerous spots on our planet, especially our seashores! But there is always an element of truth in such tales.

In spite of the cold drinks and the comfortable chairs that were at our disposal on our train, no one gifted with a trace of imagination could look through the windows without a thrill of anxiety. Here and there we could see the bones of animals, bleached marble white by the burning sun and polished by the driving sand. Since the railway was built the caravans have laid their trails along its course to save the trouble of "navigating" by the sun or by the stars.

The wearisome horizon of unbroken sand was varied on occasion, first by rolling hills and finally by sharp bald mountains as regular as pyramids and towering, of a deep rose color, in the far distance. They seemed to absorb the light without reflecting it and were continually bewildering us with the caprices of



mirage. All of them appeared to rise from great lakes which were so real that we would finally believe in their existence. But as our train approached the lakes would gradually disappear as though the sand were drinking in their waters. Then when we had become aware of the illusion, a new chain of hills and a new series of lakes would rise before our eyes, each time with the same convincing semblance of truth.

In the neighborhood of Wady Halfa we came upon some mountains of such perfectly geometrical outlines that they seemed to be the work of man. For a long time we thought they must be pyramids lost in the desert beyond the ordinary routes of the tourists. Who knows but what these capricious works of Nature may not have obsessed the memories of the tribes that first went down the Nile and prompted them to give a pyramidal form to the tombs of their Pharaohs?

From our car windows we saw several herds of gazelles moving across the desert from east to west and cutting the path of the railway. The speed of a frightened gazelle is quite beyond description. One of them came trotting up toward the train but then suddenly took fright and clearing the road bed with one bound in front of the engine disappeared almost instantaneously, like a ball of gold and white, into a cloud of red sand turled up by its flying hoofs. This graceful little animal feeds on the shrubbery on the mountains and comes down to the Nile to drink, making journeys of many miles. Then when he has appeased his thirst, he returns to his grazing grounds on the uplands.

At Wady Halfa we left train for one of those three-storeyed floating hotels with a smoke stack in the middle and a large paddle wheel behind, which constitutes the modern river boat of the Nile. It was as though we had changed worlds. The journey on the train had been one prolonged struggle with sand which, in spite of the devices employed to control it, seeped through the windows and soiled the dishes in the restaurant, the sheets of our beds, the water in the ice tanks, obstructing nostrils, eyes, ears, throats. Here everything was white and clean and cool. A refreshing sense of dampness came in through the windows. The boat started gently forward and we began the sail down-stream.



It was still night when the stewards began knocking on the doors of the staterooms inviting us to rise. A few sips of coffee and pieces of dry bread must satisfy us for breakfast. We are hurried down to the lower deck and make our way in line across a gang-plank to the shore. In front of us rises a dark wall as solid and as black as ebony. Looking upward my eyes finally rest on a patch of clear sky through which a last quarter of the moon is drifting. The faint radiance of this tranquil night seems to linger on the brink of the black wall—it is nothing else than the western bank of the Nile—without venturing to slip down the slimy incline. Out in the middle of the river the surface sparkles with the trembling dots of the stars and the silver lace-work of the dying moon. At the head of our column march numerous sailors with lighted lanterns. The darkness about us becomes more intense as we begin the ascent of the black shore.

Suddenly the lanterns carried by our guides cease going upward and spread out to left and right. We have reached the top of the bank, but the inky black is still there before us. We find ourselves in fact at the foot of a great wall. Lanterns become more numerous. All the sailors are now ashore. We move along the wall toward a rectangular opening which seems to be the mouth of a cave. I have a sense that on the other side of this door there is something grand, something extraordinary. The rock seems to have human outlines, but they are monstrous, incredible. The thick darkness continues to guard its secret. We must go forward following the lights ahead.

We have entered a cavern of hewn stone. The pillars which support the vault are human legs of gigantic dimensions. As my guide lifts his lantern at arm's length the faint light draws from the obscurity of the ceiling a nose, a pair of eyes, a crown, a majestic, inexpressive face ending in a pear-shaped Egyptian chin. Each pillar, in fact, is a colossus carved in the rock. On the walls in bas-relief are war scenes, primitive processions of a Pharaoh, hieroglyphic inscriptions indited to his glory. We are in an Egyptian temple, the southernmost of all that were built on the banks of the Nile. For tourists ascending the river from Alexandria this is the last monument they may visit. For us who are coming from Asia the subterranean temple of Abu-Simbel is a first introduction to Egyptian mystery.





WOMEN, IMMEMORIAL WATER CARRIERS OF EGYPT, RETURNING FROM A WELL AT MEMPHIS (See p. 358)

The reddish light of the lanterns rescues from the ink-like darkness many histories deeply cut in the stone, and statues of various gods all with the features of a Pharaoh. We traverse three vaults, one after the other, and reach the innermost sanctuary occupied by four gods of stone, seated, their feet resting on the ground without any pedestal. These four divinities originally were painted and certain traces of the color remain after three thousand years. One has blue legs, another red; the garments of the two others show just a glint of the gold that once covered them entire.

However, we are invited to hurry out again. This is just a preliminary view—the most interesting spectacle is now outside. Once more the three vaults return to their impenetrable black. We reach the open air and take seats on pieces of stone that are perhaps fragments fallen from the façade of the temple. The lanterns carried by our guides are extinguished. Slowly, with gradations which the eye can barely distinguish, the darkness brightens, first to gray, then to an indistinct blue, then to pink—the rosy hue of dawn. From the dim light four giants emerge, four colossal figures seated with their feet on a pedestal as high as a house and their heads half-way up the slope of a mountain of red sandstone. One of the four colossi has lost his head; two others have deep gashes in the thorax—holes bored doubtless with intent by some Pharaoh, posterior to Rameses, who thought of using the statues in another temple.

It is well known that the sovereigns of Egypt, always so anxious to preserve their own names, robbed each other's glories without shame or mercy. In the case of Rameses II the brigandage here perpetrated could have been only an insufficient compensation. For no Egyptian monarch ever abused his predecessors as much as he. He erased inscriptions from the monuments which they built to replace them with his own name and thus deceive posterity.

In spite of their dilapidation the four red giants make a very majestic group. In all the classic Egypt which we shall see in the days to follow there is nothing to compare, in an artistic sense, with the colossi of Abu-Simbel.

It is almost daylight—the Nile has turned to mother-of-pearl under the distant glare of the sunrise. The images are turning



red as if from the translucence of an inner fire. The sun is about to appear and, as always in tropical climates, with an almost instantaneous suddenness. There are no clouds to herald its approach. First there is a thin rim of fire, then a dome, then a great red ball that frees itself, as with a gigantic effort, from the smoky line of the horizon.

It is the great moment at Abu-Simbel. We are to witness a miracle of light—the shaft of gold that is shot by the rising sun into the innermost shrine of the cavern. The architects built this temple of Rameses with the express intent of catching the first horizontal rays of the sun in the inner shrine. This vain and pretentious monarch, one of the few kings who have set out deliberately to trick historians of the future, willed that this, the greatest of his authentic works, should function for one instant only, the first moment of the day, when Nature awakes and Osiris, god of the morning, rises from the desert. In fact, we can see a ray of light climbing the red stairway, step by step, like a child.

At a call from our guides we hurry back into the cavern. But someone is there before us. It is our shadows. We have the sun at our backs and project great black spots over the walls of the sanctuary. For a moment each of us is as colossal as the images that support the roof. We reach the inner shrine in time to witness the daily miracle. The whole temple is now resplendent with a golden light. Looking back across the three rooms as through the barrel of a telescope we see the great rectangular door and in it a red sun which hurls directly upon us a great sheaf of luminous javelins that compel us to turn aside our eyes.

It is only for a moment. As the sun rises in the sky its disk is cut by the architrave of the door. Now it is only a sort of incandescent cauldron; now again, a thread of red fire. The temple which for a moment was of gold has now turned blue again and is fast growing dark. Soon it will return to the deep black which will shroud it till the coming of another sun.

My companions leave the cavern, but I am impelled to linger for a moment entirely alone in this subterranean vault built by men so many, many centuries ago. Now the great door, the only source of light, has turned a leaden gray. My footsteps resound with a strange echo in the deep solitude. With a certain rest-



gious awe I advance to the inner room of the temple occupied by the four gods. I can see them in the faint light; I can even touch their forms; and I am moved to a sense of humility and admiration at the thought of these men of stone who have survived three thousand years in deliberate battle with eternity.

Yet there is a trace of humor in it all when one thinks of the comedy, or rather of the farce, that Rameses II played over so many years. For a time the moderns called him Rameses the Great, after the Greeks for centuries had known him as Sesostris the Glorious. A man of some achievement he certainly was. But his pride and his fatuity were far superior to his virtues. There is no story in our old books of chivalry comparable to the deeds which this monarch credited to himself in inscriptions which he himself dictated. At one point he says that he found himself deserted by his army and surrounded by twenty-five hundred chariots of war with the corresponding thousands of the enemy; and that he, entirely alone, with the force of his own strong arm, obliged many to flee while he killed the rest.

His true history is quite different. He did make a campaign up the Nile, and there he subdued some of the Ethiopian tribes. He invaded Asia and fought a few battles, but without obtaining any definite success. His principal feats of arms were raids into Nubia and Ethiopia where he captured thousands of Negro slaves who later were set to work in his quarries. Despite the many temples he built, his reign marked a retrogression in the arts and sciences of Egypt.

The pompous Sesostris described himself in all his statues as "the handsomest of men" and the four colossi of Abu-Simbel do indeed show a tranquil dignified countenance with something of that priestly beauty with which the Egyptian sculptors of the dynasties endowed their gods. Unfortunately for him, and by a singular irony of fate, the mummy of this counterfeiter of ruins has been preserved to our day and may be seen in the museum at Cairo. All connoisseurs of Egyptian things know the features of Sesostris, and they agree in one judgment: that he was a man "of moderate intelligence, with a face that wears an expression of brutality, of sensual pride, and cruel insolence!"



## CHAPTER XLIV

### FATHER NILE

A WHOLE day we spend sailing down the Nubian Nile toward the artificial lake of Philæ where the classic Egypt may be said to begin. An occasional village comes into view now on one bank, now on the other. In Nubia the river valley is not so thickly populated as it is below Assuan, since the strip of arable land is much more narrow than in the Lower—the ancient—Egypt. At certain points where the channel narrows between steep cliffs, we find ruined turrets of ancient Roman fortresses—the farthest outposts of the great Empire toward the south, which give the Nubian landscape a military aspect suggesting the violence of the past. Lower Egypt always submitted in resignation to any conqueror, but for thousands of years, Nubia was the paradise of slave hunters. Under the Pharaohs the word for Nubian was also the word for slave and when the kings of Egypt were not fighting wars to gather prisoners wholesale for their slave gangs, merchants organized private expeditions to procure “ebony meat”—a trade that flourished down to the last half of the century just past.

FROM time to time a mountain chain pushes its dark gray promontories up to the bank of the stream, and here and there we can see yellow cloaks, as it were, draped over the shoulders of the hills. These are great banks of sand which the *khamsin*, or “fifty-day wind,” has capriciously strewn over the mountainsides and which some day it will blow away again. At such pranks this dread hurricane of Egypt has been playing for centuries. It gathers up the sand of the desert in *ḡāzīl* cyclones and hurls it against the hills. Then, at some later time, it blows in an opposite direction and distributes the sand over the plains again.

Here are poor villages that seem to crouch in the gloom of vast abandoned cities—line after line of columns that once sup-



FATHER SAILED HERE IT SO FOR THIS RIVER, WHAT IS NOW A PART OF A DEER PREADING  
AS AN ANCHORAGE WASTE TO THE COASTS OF THE RED SEA (See p. 366)



ported the roofs of temples; colossal statues that have been broken to pieces and scattered over the ground; avenues with time-worn sphinxes that show only faint traces of their original form. In these graveyards of ancient towns the structures best preserved are the "pylons," squatty truncated pyramids of masonry with their four slopes still covered with hieroglyphics.

The shores before our steamer seem, by a curious effect of the Egyptian sunshine, ever to be coming together to enclose us as in a self-renewing lake. The horizon ahead is always a strip of yellow sand that draws nearer when the river happens to bend.

Night is coming on. The sky and the surface of the water have assumed an iridescence of mother-of-pearl with certain rainbow glints peculiar to an air saturated with moisture. Approaching evening shows its effects in all the little villages along the stream. On the paths that lead up to them we can see lines of donkeys wending their way home from the fields. Settlements lost behind the sand dunes reveal their presence by processions of women going down to the river to fetch the last jar of water for the day. The wheels that carry the buckets creak in the silence. In melancholy voice the *fellah* chants the last stanza of the water song. The air is as clear as crystal, and carries the slightest sounds to great distances. The voices of men who can barely be seen on the river banks come to us with absolute clearness and we can hear dogs barking in villages so far away that they seem like the cardboard towns of a children's playroom. A steamer like our own comes up the stream, all its port-holes lighted for the night. The tropics have no twilight. Darkness falls upon us with violent suddenness. At dawn we shall find before us the submerged city of Philæ.

Were it not for the Nile, what is now Egypt would be ;---+ a part of a desert spreading as an unbroken waste to the coasts of the Red Sea; but thanks to this refreshing stream, people have always been able to say in the words of Herodotus that "Egypt is a gift of the Nile."

The most ancient of our Western countries is really nothing but a long line of green between two seas of yellow sand. To be sure, at the Delta, the valley of the Nile presents a front of some hundred and fifty miles; but for the vast proportion of



its length it is hardly more than six or eight in width and in some places narrower still. Nevertheless, over the nine hundred miles more or less between Assuan and the sea, it supports a population of nearly seven millions, and has a density of settlement comparable only to the most crowded regions of the Far East.

The ordinary flow of the Nile could never sustain such an enormous mass of humanity. Egypt is an extraordinarily dry country. Very little rain falls anywhere, and in some spots it is entirely unknown. But the river offers in addition the annual benefit of its overflow. The mechanics of the rise and fall of the sacred stream, which takes place every year with clock-like regularity, seemed to the writers of ancient times the most impressive of miracles. Today we know that the White Nile which comes down from the temperate well-watered high lands of central Africa discharges a virtually constant body of water throughout the year. The Blue Nile, however, grows enormously during the rainy season—the months of June, July and August—in the mountains of Abyssinia. Moreover, it falls nearly four thousand feet in descending from its sources to Khartum, where it joins the White Nile.

The balance between these two tributaries is the source of Egyptian prosperity. If there were only the Blue Nile, Egypt would receive a flood of water between July and September and remain a virtual desert for the rest of the year. If there were only the White Nile there would always be water, but not in quantities to sustain such agriculture as at present flourishes on either side of the steep banks. As the old phrase runs: "The White Nile makes the Nile, and the Blue Nile makes Egypt."

In the months of April and May, when Europe is rejoicing in the splendor of springtime, Egypt is a desolate country. The Nile is very low. The cities perched on the river banks find themselves far from the water they need. This is also the season when, for seven long weeks, the terrible *khamsin* blows off the desert, scattering sand over the fields and at times reducing whole regions to ruin. It is the season of the "plagues of Egypt," known and deplored countless generations ago.

In June there comes a most refreshing change. The hot desert lands suck in the cooler air from the Mediterranean in



breezes which the Egyptians call the "winds of the North." Ancient monuments of the country bear hymns of praise to these refreshing draughts, which the poets also compare to the tears Osiris lets fall into the Nile. The Nile itself begins slowly to rise. For some days its waters are green from the great masses of plants that have grown on the river bottoms of the White Nile during the tropical winter. Shortly the current turns red and begins rising with greater rapidity. This is due to an increased flow from the Blue Nile. The water comes from the mountains of Abyssinia, and when it recedes from the inundated fields it leaves a layer of fertile sediment on the valley bottoms. Each overflow of the Nile deposits, it has been computed, some twenty-five million tons of sediment on the floor of Egypt.

The river continues to rise through September. Then about the middle of October, it begins to fall, and it recedes, much more rapidly than it rose, until the end of November. In December it has returned to its normal bed and thus it remains four months till it feels again the impact of floods from its "blue" tributary. As the water leaves the fields the winter sowing begins. During the months of December, January, and February, when the lands of Europe are sunk in their winter sleep, Egypt is a green garden. From either bank of the river vast wheat fields stretch out toward the yellow sand. The harvest is garnered in April.

Old Egyptian historians, despite their fragmentary accounts, tell us something of the anxiety with which, through the ages, the inhabitants of the valley watched for the coming of the waters on which their lives depended. Their first joy was to catch sight of the "ack," the little crocodile that came down from the unknown sources of the Nile with the first wave of the inundation. What wonder that they called this creature divine! He is no longer to be seen in the Nile proper. The noise and commotion of navigation by steam in the lower river, or perhaps the dams that have been raised by the moderns for purposes of irrigation, hold him back behind the cataracts. A stray crocodile may appear now and then in Nubia, but to find him in abundance one must go above Khartum.

On the arrival of the first acks, the ancient Egyptians followed attentively the various stages of the flood, the coming of



the green waters, then of the red. There came a moment of great solemnity when the Nile reached the tops of the dikes. Companies of workmen began cutting the earthen bulwarks that had kept the river to its bed to let the muddy water flow into the canals. Priests raised their arms in prayer and cried: "Hail, O Nile, that comest to give life to Egypt," and the people danced with joy as the barriers were broken. A mound of soft earth was left in the middle of each canal that the current might gradually wash it away to the applause of the multitude. This pile of earth was called the "bride," and scholars have regarded it as an expression of an ancient belief that every gift of the gods should be rewarded by some sacrifice. At times, indeed, a cow was thrown into the muddy water, a survival, perhaps, of real sacrifices once offered to the river that it might not withhold its favors.

At the present time no religious ceremonies attend the overflow of the Nile, but it is still the most important and interesting event of the Egyptian year and provokes great popular rejoicing. The moment the stream leaves its banks men, children, buffalos, horses, wade into the water and play about for a large part of the day. Great schools of fish come down from the breeding grounds, pursued by flocks of wild birds that flit about over the surface of the river.

The banks of the Nile are a sort of visible calendar which has not been without influence on the history of civilization. The Egyptian year is divided into three seasons each of four months; the sowing time between November and February, the harvest time between March and June, and the season of floods between June and November. And I must add that when the land, parched and heated for four months of sunshine, begins to soak up the water, it gives birth to swarms and swarms of insects which only an Egyptian could endure and which form adequate basis for ancient legends of the plagues.

The rise of the water fluctuates between twenty-five and thirty feet; but this difference, which might seem unimportant, determines whether there shall be a year of plenty or a year of famine in Egypt. If Cairo reports more than thirty feet the outlook is not good; if less than twenty-five the harvest is likely to be ruined. In dealing with such dangers modern agriculture



no longer exposes its prosperity to the annual chance of an excessive or a deficient flow of the life-giving stream. Now irrigation is regulated by dams, reservoirs, and canals, which store up the precious water and distribute it according to the seasonal demands of the various regions. Mohammed Ali, the progressive despot who did so much to modernize his country, began a great barrier across the mouth of the Nile to raise the level of the water and dispense it through the canals. But the greatest boom to Egypt has been the cyclopean barrier erected by the English at Assuan.

This dam, which is over a mile long, piles up a great reserve in the valley of Philæ and releases it gradually during the dry season through a hundred and eighty gates. As is the case with all improvements of modern industry the creation of this great lake put many towns under water and damaged priceless monuments of ancient art; but meantime it has doubled and tripled the wealth of the country. Thanks to this dam thousands of farmers can till their lands the year around and instead of the one crop of ancient times they may now raise two or three. Furthermore, many lands that were once sun-baked wastes are now covered with rich fields of sugar and cotton; and in autumn, in a brief period of sixty days, they are made to produce a crop of sorbs that constitutes the staple foodstuff of the country.

Our interest in the great reservoir brought most of us on deck at dawn. The sun rose like a ball of dark red blood that brightened as it climbed above the horizon line. To either hand the shores of the river seemed gradually to recede while before our steamer opened a liquid plain fringed by lines of rocky islands. We were just entering the lake.

Our steamer came to anchor near the dam. This triumph of English engineering is a colossal pile of masonry rivaling the pyramids of the Pharaohs. It is set down into the river on lines of arches over which, as the gates are opened, the imprisoned water falls in cascades. Some of the conduits were in operation at the moment, and we stood for a long time with our elbows on the parapet, gazing at the streams of tumbling foam. I may say that these artificial cascades were the only ones I saw along the Nile, though our route crossed all the cataracts from the Sixth to the First. The famous Cataracts of the Nile,



in fact, do not exist. They may have been there in some remote antiquity when the river was perhaps higher and encountered natural barriers across its path. But now the so-called "cata-racts" are merely rapids, at points where the water is cramped between cliffs that narrow its course and forms a torrent of great violence or even breaks into a number of arms for the space of a few miles.

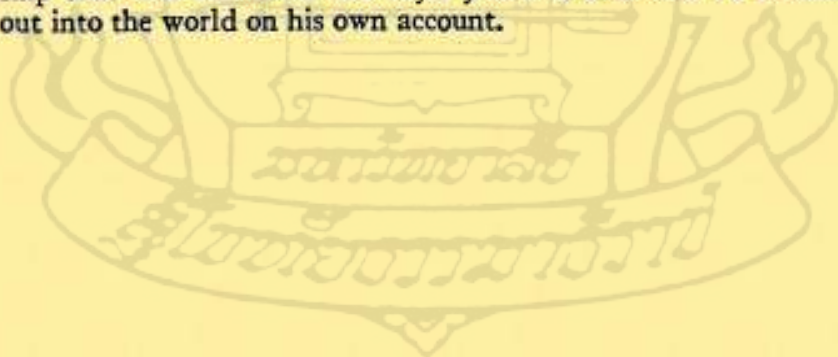
The island of Philæ is entirely under water, its temples at mean levels showing perhaps a third of their colonnades above the surface. Before the dam was built this island was higher than the top of the flood and even now it comes into view again as the water is drawn off from the lake. In Egypt where certain monuments go back for four thousand years the temples of Philæ are almost modern. The most ancient dates from 350 before our era when Necbec II was ruling Egypt as the last native king. The others were built by the Ptolemies and by various Roman emperors, who undertook imitations of Egyptian art to flatter the vanity of their new subjects. These structures do not have the robust majesty of the buildings in Thebes and Memphis, though, on the other hand, they are much lighter in movement and, as I thought, more attractive to the eye.

Between Assuan and the mouths of the Nile whenever Egyptians work in groups they sing invariably in chorus. This custom goes back at least six thousand years. The native Egyptian cannot draw water from the Nile without raising a song, and he sings even in the fields, when conditions permit. There are countries in Europe where the same trait prevails. The Italian and the Spanish peasant, especially, feel the need of singing while at work; but this they do in a quite individual way. The peculiarity of the Egyptian is that he begins to sing the moment he starts working with someone else. Historians have suggested that the custom may date from the building of the pyramids, when great masses of stone had to be lifted and rhythm was useful in making great crowds of men use their muscles in unison. Now at any rate it is universal and is taken so much as a matter of course that any group of workers has its musician to lead the singing with a flute. The nine men who rowed us about the lake sang, and the crews in the boats we passed were singing too. The director of our private chorus was a little boy who sat in



the bow' of the boat. He would sound a motif and the eight oarsmen would answer with a song. The stanza with which the boy opened evidently had words, the answer from the oarsmen, however, was a sort of onomatopœia in melody. Our helmsman did his best to explain the situation to us. "My fair lady comes down to the garden," the boy would gurgle in his soprano voice; and the rowers would answer, "Oh, oh, oh," in voices of various pitch instinctively harmonized. And their little leader went on to tell how his fair one gathered a flower, and how she thought of her lover; and each time the Nubian oarsmen would answer, "Oh, oh, oh," their eyelids quivering with enthusiasm as though they could see the beautiful lady before their eyes and were holding her within reach of their brawny arms.

This boy was clearly the son of one of the men in the boat. He did no work probably because, as a handsome, delicate lad, he was being headed by his parents toward a position in one of the hotels, where he would escape the hard labor traditional among his ancestors. He was neatly dressed in white trousers and a jacket of colored stripes. Not once did the father lose sight of him. In Egypt mothers have little trouble with their daughters. Girls are kept securely at home and when they go out of doors their faces are veiled. It is the father who has to worry. The education of the boy is in his charge; and even when he goes to work the son accompanies him in a companionship that will last until the boy's youth is over and he is sent out into the world on his own account.



## CHAPTER XLV

### LOTUS AND PAPYRUS

WE passed the night at Luxor, a medieval Arabic village which, with Karnak a mile and a half away, still marks the ancient boundaries of the great city that was once the capital of Upper Egypt. I awoke just after dawn and though the hour was early still, a blinding sunshine flooded my room. I leaped out of bed and hurried to the window to enjoy my first thrill of being in Thebes, the center around which are gathered the greatest memories of historic Egypt. The banks of the Nile, which I could see before my eyes were the very ones poets and travellers had been making famous for more than two thousand years.

Two cities divide the æon long history of Egypt; Memphis on the Lower Nile, in the neighborhood of the modern Cairo, and Thebes near Luxor on the Upper Nile, the metropolis of the southern valley at a time when Egyptian influence was felt not much beyond the First Cataract. The old Pharaohs used to wear two crowns to symbolize their sovereignty over the two Egypts; and in all public documents and in many inscriptions the twin realms are represented by hieroglyphics picturing two characteristic plants of the Nile—the papyrus and the lotus. The papyrus was a staple product of the agriculture around the Delta. Its pit was used as food. Its tough, flexible leaves were woven into baskets. But, most valuable of all, its skin or bark was pressed into sheets and used as paper by the ancients. The lotus, a symbol of Upper Egypt, or Thebes, was a plant of white, blue, or scarlet blossoms. The seeds were suitable for food and were sold abroad as “beans of Egypt.”

The origins of Thebes are lost in antiquity, but in days when Memphis was rising to glory the princes of Thebes appear as vassals of secondary importance. It was under the Twelfth



Dynasty' that the sovereigns of Memphis succumbed to those of Thebes, though many years went by before the domination of Upper Egypt was recognized by the country as a whole.

This first period of Theban splendor lasted some five hundred years and was ended by an invasion from abroad. Tribes of nomad shepherds swept into the Nile valley from the Arabian deserts in search of green grass for their flocks of cattle and camels. The Hics were probably a people very similar to the modern Bedouins of Arabia. They fell upon Egypt like a plague of locusts, burning the cities, slaughtering the men, and enslaving the women and children. They conquered all the Delta and set up a king whose descendants governed the country for about two hundred years. The Hic rulers were known to the vanquished Egyptians as the "Bandit Kings." Others called them the "Shepherd Kings." Unable to resist them, Thebes submitted and paid tribute, though finally she gathered her forces together and after another century of warfare succeeded in freeing Egypt from this detested foreign rule. There now followed the great era in the history of the Pharaohs of Thebes, whose vast armies of soldiers reached the banks of the Euphrates and whose still greater armies of slaves peopled the valley of the Nile with eternal monuments.

Of Thebes Homer speaks in the Iliad and says that it would be easier to count the sands of the sea than to enumerate her riches. It was Homer also who gave the Egyptian capital a title that has been preserved to the present day: "the city of the hundred gates." This phrase has often been misunderstood. Egyptian cities were never walled. The country was so well defended by deserts and seas that ages intervened between one invasion and another and no Pharaoh ever considered himself seriously menaced from abroad. The Egyptian temple however is approached by an avenue, lined with sphinxes, at the end of which is a "pylon"—a square gate flanked by two truncated pyramids. In this we find the clue to the real meaning of Homer's phrase. Moreover, in asserting that Thebes had a hundred "pyla," a hundred temples, the Father of Poetry was probably falling far short of the mark.

The king-gods of Egypt were absolute masters of their domains. They owned all the land; and all the inhabitants on



the land were slaves to be assigned at any moment the Pharaoh might decide to such labor as was pleasing to him. This limitless power enabled the kings of Egypt to build countless palaces and temples, all dedicated ostensibly to the gods, but in reality erected to satisfy the infinite vanity of individual monarchs. The people that grovelled before the Pharaoh and his priests, cultivating the land and surrendering the greater part of the produce to their ruler, might expect at any moment a summons from the royal heralds who journeyed from village to village. The king, it would be proclaimed, desired for his greater glory to build a temple, a canal, a dike along the Nile; and before the setting of the next sun, all grown males were obliged to leave for the quarries with provisions sufficient for two weeks or a month.

Pictures of these ancient conditions of slavery are frequent in the tombs of Egypt, where the architects and the bosses of the gangs may be distinguished by the whips which they carried in their right hands and used on the slightest pretext. The flail and the cudgel were the dynamic forces in the industry of Egypt. The walls of Egyptian tombs often show slaves at work in the fields or on buildings; and almost always we find in such paintings a scene where an official is beating a slave, the latter stretched out on the ground before him, and held by hands and legs that he may not escape the punishment. At the end of the harvest the produce had to be delivered to the public granaries, and we know the fate that overtook the farmer whose delivery did not correspond to the due registered in the account book of the Royal Steward. The collector sat at his table surrounded with armed guards and with Negro executioners holding flails of sharp-edged palm. The defaulting peasant was bound hand and foot, and dragged to a near-by canal. There his head was thrust under water time and again. In the intervals between immersions he was soundly beaten with the flails.

Thebes lost importance through the very Pharaohs who had brought the city its greatest glory—Seti I and his son Rameses II, also known as Sesostris. These warlike kings obtained easy victories in their expeditions against the Negro tribes of Nubia; but they were troubled by more dangerous raids from strange



enemies described in Egyptian inscriptions as "the peoples of the sea," perhaps because they came to Egypt in boats from Arabia or by marches over the isthmus. These invaders were white men, tall, with tattooed bodies, and wearing helmets now of metal and now of the skulls of wild animals. They never appeared in great numbers and were always too few to hold control of the vast empire of the Nile. Eventually the Pharaohs won them over by enlisting them in the mercenary armies of Egypt. However, they made the protection of the frontiers such an important task, that the kings of Thebes felt obliged to move their court nearer to the mouths of the Nile; and the delta towns of Tanis Bubaste and Sais came to enjoy transitory importance. Finally the permanent court passed to Memphis, and Thebes thereafter was merely the religious capital of the country, the center of the worship of Ammon, once the Theban god but now the divinity of all Egypt.

The decline of Thebes was the beginning of the decline of the great historic civilization which has been so famous in all ages since. The population of the city gradually drifted away. Great enterprises of commerce passed elsewhere, and even in still ancient times Thebes had come to be "a grandiose monument of the past." First an Assyrian and then a Persian invasion decimated the native inhabitants. Under the Ptolemies the city was punished by a massacre for its part in a local revolution. Then a great earthquake destroyed most of the people who were left. In the first centuries of the Christian era Thebes was already a gigantic ruin visited by Greek and Roman travelers out of the very same curiosity which today attracts tourists to the pyramids and the Sphinx. Diodorus of Sicily, on his journey up the Nile, found "the city of the hundred gates" a field of desolate ruins.

The city passed through a century-long slumber. Then one day it awoke again to a weird and mournful life. Christian ascetics, fleeing from the worldliness of the great ports of the Delta, came to its ruins in search of solitude. With bowed heads and lowered eyes they advanced along the sphinx-lined avenues of the dead city and founded the famous "Thebais." There St. Paul of Thebes, first of Christian hermits, passed, ac-



ording to reverent legend, ninety-seven years of his holy life, dwelling in a tomb alone with his God, and fed by a raven which brought him a loaf of bread in its beak every day. There also lived St. Mary of Egypt, whom Zozimas came upon by chance after she had spent forty-eight years in solitude—her once beautiful skin baked brown by the desert sun, her long white hair her sole garment. But the real hero of abandoned Thebes was St. Anthony. This stern ascetic found even the solitude of that city of tombs far too "fast" and wicked for him. Deeper and deeper he went into the desert, attracting in his footsteps multitudes of young ascetics athirst for Paradise over pathways of self-inflicted martyrdom. These holy men slept in the stone coffins of the ancient idolaters. They looked aside in passing a sphinx since that temptress of paganism had the features of a woman and the breasts of a woman. The colossi of the Pharaohs and the statues of the Theban gods crept into their feverish dreams as apparitions of the Devil. Eventually the Christian hermits became so numerous that they organized in groups, under laws and regulations, to provide for the elemental necessities of life. Thus the first monasteries were founded in Thebes, and thence at last the monks who built them returned as a disciplined army to conquer, in the name of Christ, the world which they had deserted, scattering from Egypt throughout Medieval Europe and establishing an influence which endures to this day.

When the hermits departed, Thebes fell again into a long sleep. Centuries passed. Finally some Egyptian *fellahs* came up the Nile in boats in search of new lands and a freer life secure from the tyranny of the caliphs of Cairo. They founded two villages, Karnak and Luxor, on the outskirts of the dead city.

Again centuries of forgetfulness and silence! Then one day hurrying up the Nile great boats came splashing full of white men. They were soldiers, with pointed caps on their heads, and the Egyptian sun flashed from bayonets at the ends of the guns they carried. As they touched the shore a tri-colored flag was unfurled above them and they began their march across the sands in step with the inspiring music of the *Marseillaise*. But as the troops of Napoleon and Kléber came in view of the gigantic colonnade of the Temple of Amman near Karnak, they



fell silent. A quivering emotion vibrated through the lines, and the warriors of the French Republic, resting their muskets against their breasts to free their hands, began to clap as at an opera in Paris.

And, to tell the truth, the spectacle deserved applause!



## CHAPTER XLVI

### THE WEST BANK

AFTER a day among the great ruins of Luxor, I decided to spend my second on the left shore of the Nile to which English writers refer as the "West Bank."

Ancient Egyptians seem to have passed most of their lives with their minds fixed on death, and they devised processes for the preservation of dead bodies which have never been surpassed. As the ages rolled by millions and millions of mummies piled up in the narrow valley of the Nile so that there is hardly a spot which might not be called sacred ground. The monarchs of Thebes did not build pyramids over their graves as did the kings of Memphis two thousand years before them. Conditions in Egypt had changed. By no means so many men, nor so much wealth, were available for the construction of royal tombs, and since the pyramids are, in reality, nothing but artificial mountains, the kings of Thebes took over the readily available hills which stretch away into the Libyan Desert from just across the Nile. In this they were only imitating the more modest funeral customs of their subjects, who had not been able to pay for mausolea and for long ages had hidden their mummies in those same cliffs. In course of time the royal cemetery opposite Thebes grew in extent until it came to embrace a valley some three miles long. However, the so-called "Valley of the Kings" is peopled not only with royal dead. Mummies of priests, generals, high officials, and even rich merchants, have been discovered there.

In order to avoid the destruction of the body and hence enjoy a fictitious survival after death, all ancient Egyptians desired to be embalmed. Even poor people passed their lives saving money that their heirs might pay for their burial and their tombs. The ordinary cost of making a mummy was a talent of gold, which would correspond to many hundreds of



dollars in modern money. A man had to be very rich before his legacy was more than sufficient to pay for such posthumous luxuries. Paupers without the means to purchase a few square feet of land in the common cemetery had to give up hope of living again in the Other World. Death for them meant complete annihilation.

Thus it came about that the great national art of Egypt was embalming, and everyone devoted more or less attention to it. It was the Egyptian belief that when a person dies something of him continues living; and this Something they called his "double," imagining the "double" to be a sort of ghost, or phantom, which preserved the form, color, and features of the living person and was visible to the living eye though imperceptible to the touch. For many ages also they believed that the "double" could exist only so long as the corpse was kept intact. Hence the care they devoted to the embalming process, that the mummy might be preserved forever. Later they came to believe in the presence of still a third element in a deceased person. He not only had a body and a "double," but also a "soul." The "double" remained in the tomb with the body; but the soul went farther away to the so-called "Realm of the West" after a trial before Osiris had established its worthiness of such a distinction.

Hetodotus and other ancient travellers saw the Egyptian embalmers at their work. When the corpse was that of a wealthy person, the brain and the vital organs were removed and replaced with myrrh, cinnamon, and other spices. The body was then soaked in a saline solution for a period of two months. Then it was withdrawn and wrapped in linens which had been smeared with fragrant gums. In second-class burials the organs were not removed. The body was soaked in a solution that consumed everything except the skin and the bones. Embalmings of the poorer classes dispensed with the linen wrappings. And one may see why. Some of these strips of linen found about the mummies of Pharaohs are as much as a mile long, and often several of them were used on the same body—all previously saturated with liquid perfumes from Arabia. So many precious substances entered into the manufacture of mummies that, as scholars have estimated, half the entire population of Egypt must have been employed in the care of the dead.



Since the "double" was to inhabit the tomb for countless ages his dwelling place had to be much more splendid and comfortable than the person had ever thought of enjoying in his lifetime. The Egyptian tomb was a complicated subterranean excavation beginning with a little chapel. In the back wall of this chapel one finds a vertical column of granite designed to represent a closed door. In front of the column, or door, stood a low table to receive sacrificial offerings. The chapel was the only part of a tomb which living persons might enter. All the rest belonged to the dead, or to his "double"—the "door" once closed was never opened.

From behind this threshold, which no human being ever crossed, a long tunnel or series of tunnels led to the real tomb. These corridors were so narrow, for the most part, that the Greeks, comparing them to the pipes in a flute, called them "syringes," a name that has been taken over by modern Egyptology.

In the first few yards of the "syringe" statues of the dead man were placed—sometimes as many as twenty in number. The idea seems to have been that if a mummy were by chance destroyed these statues would take its place, and the "double" could continue living. Farther along a well was dug in the rock, often to a depth of ninety feet. From the bottom of this well a new syringe was opened. This second tunnel led directly to a chamber excavated in the rock. Here the "double" made its real home. A sarcophagus of pink, black, or white stone rose in the center of the innermost grotto. After the corpse had been put in place the funeral attendants arranged about it great earthen jars filled with water, dates, wheat, cuts of meat. In withdrawing through the syringe they erected a wall across the entrance to the cavern; and filled the well with stones and sand, wetting the mixture with water that it might settle into a compact mass resembling the natural sandstone and hide from eventual thieves the true route to the tomb.

Realizing that the provisions left with the coffin could last only a limited time the family visited the outer chapel at stated intervals burning fruits, fats, and other substances on the stone table, that the vapors might reach the statues situated just beyond the sealed door.





SAVE FOR THE EXTRAORDINARY WEALTH OF PRECIOUS OBJECTS WHICH IT CONTAINED THE TOMB OF TUT-ANSKI-AMEN IS NOT DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHERS (See p. 366)

In the course of centuries Egyptian notions about the feeding of the dead changed. They concluded that a phantom food ought to serve the purposes of a phantom "double" just as well. Thereafter the walls of the tombs were painted with pictures, arranged in horizontal strips or series, which represented all the things that the relative desired to offer to his dead. Not only this; that the supply of food might be perpetual they painted pictures of naked peasants who could plow the phantom land and sow and reap the phantom grain. There were artisans to supply clothing and shoes; dancing girls and jugglers to provide amusement; priests to perform sacrifices; hunters to secure game; fishermen to catch fish. A mummy also might happen to decay through the ravages of a certain worm which bored through embalmed bodies much as parasites work their way through wood, or paper books. For such a contingency the "double" was provided with rolls of new cloth and jars of ointment, that he might cure the wounds in his body, wrap it in new raiment, and then send it back to its eternal sleep.

There finally came a time when the Egyptians forgot the mummy and the "double," and thought of the person as possessing simply a soul which left the body after death and went out in search of everlasting happiness, in the "Realm of the West" ruled by the monarch Osiris. The journey was made in a boat along a dark stream. This river of the dead was beset by demons; but the jackal god, Anubis, and the ibis god, Thoth, had the soul in charge and brought it safely through into the presence of a jury of forty-two gods of which the omnipotent Osiris was president. Before these judges the dead man was examined to see whether he had committed any of the forty-two sins which Egypt held in abomination. Then his actions were placed in a balance, and according as the scales went up or down, the soul was condemned or absolved. In case of condemnation it was thrown into an abyss to be tormented by scorpions and serpents and finally annihilated by a wind which tore it to pieces. Adjudged virtuous, it became a sort of hawk with golden wings and went through a purgatory where crocodiles and serpents lay unsuccessfully in wait to catch it. When at last it was admitted to the presence of the gods, it led an eternally happy life dwelling in the shade of sycamore trees in a spot cooled by the "breezes



of the North," inhaling celestial perfumes, and eating at the table of Osiris himself.

To give the dead man confidence in the presence of his judges his corpse was provided with a copy of the "Book of the Dead" in which he could find all the questions he would be asked with the proper answers. Invariably the dead were instructed to insist that they had been good and just; and some of the Pharaohs even testified before Osiris that they had always taken the part of the weak against the strong. I believe that most of them were brazen liars, but, however that may be, the "Book of the Dead" shows that the ancient Egyptians possessed ethical principles similar in many respects to those prevailing in modern times.

On landing from my boat I entered a carriage drawn by two horses which carried me along a road of red sand to the Valley of the Kings. The neighboring hills were also red and seemed to absorb the light instead of reflecting it. It was like a furnace of smouldering coal that emits a dry suffocating heat but no light. The valley between the two lines of red hills gradually narrows into a sort of pot—the Valley of the Kings proper. Not a tree, not a plant is anywhere to be seen—just bald cliffs with slides of stone chips that have come down from the valley walls.

We came upon some Egyptian police who were intently watching gangs of laborers at work upon a wooden shelter adorned with wreaths and flags. My driver explained that the opening of the famous tomb of Tut-ankh-amen was to take place within a week, and that this structure was to be used by the guests of honor who were to come down from Cairo. In expectation of this great event the hotels of Luxor were crowded. Celebrities from all parts of the world, even royal princes, had decided to endure the heat and flies of Upper Egypt in competition for the honor of being the first to enter the remarkable tomb, or at least of being able to say: "I was there." The entrance to King Tut's resting place was pointed out to me; but save for the extraordinary wealth of precious objects which it contained and which may already be seen at the museum of Cairo, the tomb itself is not different from others.

All the known tombs in the Valley of the Kings may now be comfortably visited. The funeral grottos and galleries are brilliantly lighted by electricity and straight paths have been opened



from the chapels to the inner rooms. But one can well imagine the disappointments and hesitations of the first Egyptologists in mastering the secrets of these underground labyrinths, the builders of which devised all kinds of tricks and obstacles to throw thieves off the track.

Admirable are the mural paintings in the tomb of the father of Rameses. There one sees hundreds of little figures all in profile and representing the religious ceremonies and the commonplace functions of Egyptian daily life. The tomb is now brightly illuminated but the artists who made these pictures must have worked by torch light. Under the last Theban dynasties, when Egypt was most wealthy and most powerful, the art of painting had already become a mechanical routine affair without a trace of originality. One can imagine that sculptors and painters began by directly copying nature, but then their pupils made minute imitations of what their masters had done, and so, from copy to copy, the representation of things became a matter of pure convention.

Most of the royal mummies have been taken off to the museum in Cairo. The only tomb at present "inhabited" is that of Amenophis II. His sarcophagus lies in the center of the mortuary chamber and a window has been cut in the wall of the coffin that the body may be seen just as it lies. An electric lamp has been lowered from the ceiling till it plays full on the face of the dead Pharaoh. For a man-god who gave orders to millions of slaves this must be the most cruel and unexpected of servitudes, and his "double," frightened at the profanation, long ago have fled from the mortuary chamber which now has no stone over its sacred door. But the poor Pharaoh is not alone in his violated privacy; in one of the many corridors which must be traversed before his tomb is reached there is a lateral chapel where various mummies are strewn about the floor without sarcophagi and even without the well-known wooden coffins which the Egyptians made to fit the human form. These bodies were uncovered when the royal tomb was opened, and they were left just where they were found. Some scholars believe they belonged to members of the Pharaoh's family; others have guessed that they were high officials of his court who decided to accompany him in death.

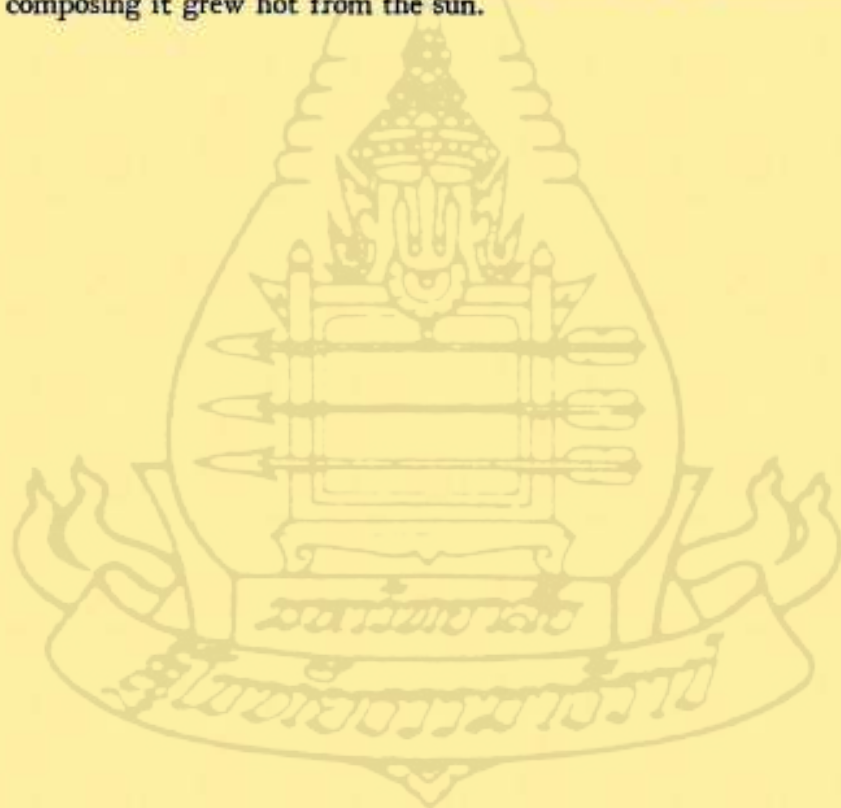


What most surprises in Egyptian mummies is their smallness. The process of embalming seems to have shrunk the bodies till a person of ordinary stature was hardly larger than a boy or a girl. Rameses II, who still preserves in his tomb the dimensions of a modern man, must, on the scale of averages, have been a huge person in his lifetime. Amenophis II was also a person of pronounced size, though much smaller than the boastful Sesostris. In spite of the distortion incident to the embalming process, which tends to rob mummies of their facial expression, his features still preserve a certain majestic and kindly serenity.

Weary of going into one tomb after another through their endless "syringes," we abandoned our visit to the so-called "Valley of the Queens," to take a drive over the cultivated fields which stretched between the hills and the river. On this plain, green with ripening wheat at the time of our visit, colonnades and colossi could be seen in the distance. Our particular objective was the famous "Ramaseum," a temple which Rameses II erected to himself, and the repository of numberless statues with the conventionally attractive features under which he desired to be known to posterity. Nearby also is the "Amenofium" or funeral temple of Amenophis III. Of this gigantic structure only the two colossi of dark stone which flanked the entrance still survive. The Egyptian peasants have for centuries been sowing wheat on the ground which was once the temple floor. Not even the name of Amenophis was preserved in connection with the two stone giants that were made in his image. The whole world has for generations called them the Memnon."

This mythological warrior, a descendant of Ethiopian kings, marched to the relief of Troy and was killed there after a long battle with Achilles. When Greek travellers began to explore Egypt Thebes was already an abandoned city and of the temple of Amenophis only the two colossi were still standing. It occurred to the Greeks that one of these statues must have been an image of the great warrior made famous by Homer, and by another logical guess they concluded the other statue was that of his mother, Ethos, or Aurora, who asked Jupiter to grant her son eternal life. Hence these two images of Amenophis came

to be known as the "Colossi of Memnon" and so they were called by the Romans. Eventually, and still in very ancient times, an earthquake broke off the head and breast of the supposed figure of Memnon, and thereafter there was something about the monument which filled the ancients with astonishment. As the first rays of the sun beat upon the statue it began to vibrate, emitting a sound quite similar to that of a broken lyre. It was Memnon, they thought, replying to his mother's greeting! Later on the fallen fragments were returned to their places and secured with cement. Immediately the statue ceased its morning song, which modern science has explained as due to the rush of air through the cracks and crevices of the stone as the materials composing it grew hot from the sun.





## CHAPTER XLVII

THERE YOU ARE AT LAST!

WE are riding in an automobile along a narrow road, with lower land to either hand, its loam of the blackish color of sediment from the Nile. Before us we can see a well-marked line that separates the fertile fields of the river basin from the sandy slope of the Libyan Desert. The rim of the low tableland is quite regular, stretching away unbroken by hills as far as the eye can see. But no—just to one side rise three white mountains, standing all by themselves, so white that at that early morning hour they seem to be made of salt or covered with snow. They are of unequal altitudes, the nearest, the largest; and the farthest away, the smallest. And one soon perceives that this is not only an effect of light. The nearest is really the largest, the last is really the smallest, and the second, midway between.

Behind our backs lies Cairo where we arrived at dawn after twenty hours on the railroad from Luxor. These fields that lie about us, green with new wheat or black from recent plowing, formed, down to eleven centuries ago, the site for Memphis, the most ancient of the Egyptian capitals and the Egyptian city which lived the longest life. Memphis was still in flourishing existence eight centuries after Thebes had fallen into ruin. It was the Mohammedans in the second century of their era who built Cairo and blotted Memphis from the face of the earth. The stones of its temples were carried off to build the mosques and palaces of the new town. Only the tombs in the neighboring desert of Ghizeh escaped destruction, some, like the pyramids, because they were too huge to destroy, others because they had been buried in the sand.

The vegetation to the right and left of our road has become more sparse. Here are fields over which the *khamzin* has dropped its blanket of sand. Here and there are piles of red



THESE YOU ARE AT LAST! WHO OF US HAS NOT DREAMED OF SEEING AT LEAST ONCE IN HIS LIFE THOSE GREAT STRUCTURES WHICH HE HAS ADMIRER FROM CHILDHOOD? (See p. 260)



stones—waste from the quarries of the desert. Our car mounts the bank that separates the cultivated plain from the sandy plateau. As we turn a second time something intervenes between my eyes and the bright glare of the sun. It is an immense cone that seems to obstruct with its solid mass the whole visible horizon. The forward wheels of the car sink deep in the sand and revolve in clouds of reddish dust without advancing. I leap from my seat and take a few steps forward over the hot ground. I trip over sharp stones that bruise my shoes. The fact is my eyes are not on the ground, they are fixed directly before me. I have thrown back my head.

There you are at last!

All of us from our first days in school have been taught to wonder at certain marvels, some of which still exist, others of which have disappeared forever. Who of us has not dreamed of seeing at least once in his life those great structures which he has admired from childhood and the outlines of which are as familiar to him as his own home?

There you are at last!

I keep repeating the exclamation to myself, but meantime I walk rapidly forward with the haste of a spectator at a festival who is aware that he is badly placed and must hurriedly move to get a better view. The Great Pyramid is before me and I can see only one of its faces. It cuts off the view of the other pyramids. I must go around to the other side, where the classic panorama of Egypt, which we all know, unfolds: three pyramids stretching away in line in order of height, and in front of them, emerging, as it were, from a pit of sand, the colossal mysterious sphinx!

I round one corner of the pyramid, then I turn another. Finally, I see before me the view of which I have so often dreamed. The Great Pyramid, at the base of which I am standing, is the Pyramid of Cheops. Farther along is the Pyramid of Khafren. The third is the Pyramid of Mecherin. These royal names are really malformations from their Greek translations. The three monarchs of the Fourth Dynasty who built these gigantic structures were really named Khufu, Khafra, and Menkara.

The Pyramid of Cheops was originally four hundred and



fifty feet high and was reared by gangs of a hundred thousand men working in shifts of three months. Thirty years were necessary for completing the pyramid. The stone blocks were sought on the other side of the Nile in the quarries of the desert. They were dragged along log roads to the bank of the river. There they were put on rafts and floated to the neighborhood of Memphis. Again they were pushed ashore and dragged to the summit of the Libyan plateau. To move them up the sides of the artificial mountain great inclined planes were raised along the slopes as the pyramid grew higher and higher.

The three pyramids of Ghizeh are the most famous in all Egypt but many others are to be found in the deserts parallel with the Nile. Before the three Pharaohs mentioned had thought of raising these absurdly expensive tombs other kings had built pyramids to shelter their dead bodies. The pyramid is one of the earliest conceptions of the human race. All primitive peoples thought of heaping piles of stone over the graves of their dead. The Egyptian pyramid, as we know it, is simply an elaboration of this elemental idea. The earliest kings of Egypt seem to have built pyramids of brick in imitation of the pyramids of the Sumerians, Assyrians, and other peoples of Mesopotamia, which flourished eighty or ninety centuries before our era. Ages later when the Egyptian monarchs saw themselves powerful, and enjoying absolute authority over their nation, they began to build similar tombs but in the limestone of the Arabian desert or in the red granite to be found in the cliffs of the Nile above Assuan.

I must confess that the first view of the pyramids is not as impressive as one might suppose. We have seen the spectacle too often in books and pictures. What we keep saying to ourselves is that they are huge, absurdly huge. Viewed from nearby the Great Pyramid is just a pile of stone rising in steps some two feet deep. In early times these steps did not exist. The faces of the pyramids were finished in smooth granite so closely jointed that the slope could not be climbed. This outer coating has been removed for use in other buildings. What is left is a great monster of masonry stripped of its hide.

The Bedouins, who earn their livings as guides about the pyramids, finally bring the visitor, by dint of pushing and boost-



ing, to the apex; and there they turn about, pick up a stone, and throw it down, that the height of the monument may be fully appreciated. This custom is now prohibited by law, because in the course of the centuries it has reduced the height of the Great Pyramid by some twenty feet. Nevertheless the Pyramid of Cheops still figures as one of the loftiest stone structures in the world.

Really to appreciate the size of the three white giants, one has to think of the armies of workmen who for thirty years struggled under the lash to raise one of these piles of stone—and they are truly gigantic piles of stone! The Great Pyramid alone contains some thirty million cubic yards of granite, a quantity of material sufficient for building a wall higher than a man's head and reaching from New York to San Francisco.

One's impressions may be clarified somewhat by momentarily forgetting the three triangular mountains and lowering the eyes upon the Sphinx, that enormous stone head which emerges from the sand as one might imagine some pre-historic monster lifting its snout from the yellow foam of the new-born ocean. This mysterious figure is thought to represent the god Harhakis, the deity of the rising sun. The body of the Sphinx is usually buried in the dunes, though at one time or another excavations have uncovered it. The head is attached to a lion's body which, in its turn, rests on crouching paws. The Sphinx is not, like the pyramids, built of granite. It was carved from a cliff that rose solitary in the desert and which, perhaps from its very uniqueness, was esteemed worthy of sacred honors.

In the body of the Sphinx there is a tomb of incalculable antiquity—it probably antedates the carving of the face. The head is some sixty feet high—roughly equivalent, that is, to a five-storey house. The ear, still visible, is about four feet long. Excavations made during the past century revealed a temple between the two paws. Now this shrine has again been buried under the dunes and we can see only the breast, a part of the back, and the mysterious head itself.

The face has an expression of monstrous ugliness. The nose has long since fallen away, a deformation which gives the eyes, still preserved, an awe-inspiring fixity, a certain expression of ferocity that reminds one of the scarred features of a Tartar



warrior. A long gaze upon it gradually brings out a strange sense of enigmatic hostility. Though really the Sun God was an attractive personage! Imagining the nose back in its place and the scars in the face repaired, one succeeds in detecting a different expression in the eyes. They are honest, frank, thoughtful, reflecting an inner spirit of kindness and tolerance. For two thousand years poets and philosophers have studied this mysterious figure, each interpreting its symbolism in accordance with his own ideas. Perhaps it is nothing more than the ruin of a gigantic idol, as some believe; perhaps it may be guarding the great secret of our destiny, as others pretend. At any rate, it helps to divert the mind of a spectator from a first vulgar admiration of the brute size of the pyramids to a sense of the incalculable antiquity of the structures that stand before him.

The three pyramids before my eyes were built four thousand years before our epoch! They have stood there, just as I see them, for more than six thousand years! The Sphinx is without any doubt more ancient than the pyramids, and more ancient than the Sphinx is the underground temple that was built nearby. The latter antedates King Menes, whom tradition regards as the founder of Memphis (adding also that he was killed by a hippopotamus in the Nile, after a reign of sixty-one years). This Menes, the most ancient of the Pharaohs, ruled over an Egypt where agriculture and the essential arts of life were already well known. As a learned Orientalist has said: "The civilization of King Menes was not a beginning, it was a climax, and must have been preceded by centuries and centuries of earlier civilization. The Sphinx is earlier than King Menes, and earlier than Menes also are the pyramids of Sakkara."

I might recall, on the chance that the reader may not know, that our knowledge of Egyptian chronology and history rests, for the most part, on ancient texts, the most important being the "Lists of Manethon" and the so-called "papyrus of Turin." Manethon, a high priest of Heliopolis, was charged by Ptolemy Philadelphus, one of the Greek Pharaohs of the Thirty-third Dynasty, with setting down a record of the thirty-two preceding dynasties, in other words, of the whole history of Egypt from the time of King Menes, founder of the First Dynasty. King Menes began his reign five thousand eight hundred years before



our era—nearly eight thousand years before the present time. The "Papyrus of Turin," so called because it is kept in the library of the Italian city, divides the history of Egypt into three periods covering a total of fully ten thousand years!

The pyramids, by virtue of their amazing size and the incredible amount of labor that must have been necessary to build them, have so impressed the imagination of certain men as to give rise to a sort of religious cult. Men of high intelligence have seen fit to attribute strange spiritual significances to these piles of stone raised by the inept pride of various Egyptian monarchs. In England, in particular, there have been schools of so-called "Pyramidites" who pretended to discover in the pyramids who knows what secrets of mathematics, astronomy, and religion. In their view each of these gigantic tombs guarded some mysterious lesson from the occult science of the ancient Egyptians.

In reality the builders of these stupid, however imposing, piles were bent simply on satisfying their immense conceit following at the same time the instincts of a despot unwilling or unable to trust anyone around him. They wanted their tombs to be visible at great distances as a symbol of their power. At the same time they wished their bodies to be so cleverly concealed that no one would ever find them. Hence this absurd device which so bewildered the students of the pyramids. The idea was to build a hay-stack of such size that the needle represented by a dead body should be lost in it. Fear of the profanation of their tombs spurred the Pharaohs to adopt such exaggerated precautions. Great in Egypt was respect for the dead, but greater still the poverty of the people; and for thousands of years hungry multitudes gazed in envy upon the tombs of forgotten kings whose mortuary chambers held treasures of fabulous worth. Tradition spoke of rooms of gold wherein the priests and concubines of the Pharaohs had hidden all the jewels, weapons, costumes, and precious furniture, which had belonged to them in their lifetimes. In certain periods of famine, when the overflow from the Nile had failed, armed bands assailed these huge monuments of stone and, with the shrewd scent of the skilled native, solved all the secrets of the hidden tombs.

When the first Egyptologists of our time finally discovered



the stone tunnels that led to the mortuary chambers, the three Pyramids had already been visited and robbed. During the Middle Ages the sultans of Cairo had solved the secrets surrounding the dead Pharaohs and had penetrated their hidden dwelling places to make off with the jewels and other treasures they knew to be there. Not one of the three kings was found in the interior of his stone mountain. The plunderers had either lost or destroyed the mummies.

Ancient papyri speak of many desecrations of royal graves. Up to the time of Strabo the bodies of forty Pharaohs had already been destroyed—their chambers so carefully concealed standing open to the world. Tourists of the time of Greeks and Romans entered these chambers in full freedom and wrote inscriptions in Latin and Greek on the walls, just as tourists from modern countries do in their respective languages today. When the first investigators of our epoch made their way into the Great Pyramid they found it empty—many centuries before the Mohammedans had discovered its entrance. The only thing of interest in its interior was the name of Cheops, painted in red on the thresholds. The second pyramid, that of Khefren, was opened in 1818, but also without results. The mortuary chamber contained an empty sarcophagus, and an inscription on one of the walls reported the visit thither of a sultan of Cairo, who had found nothing worthy of note, probably because native bandits had already been there centuries before.

The third and smallest of the pyramids, named after Mecherin, is of finer workmanship than the others and still retains a portion of its expensive facing. When its entrance was at last discovered (by an Italian explorer and an English colonel) it likewise was found to have been robbed by ancient Egyptians. Nevertheless the handsome sarcophagus was still there and in it the cedar mummy case which had contained the body of Mecherin. These, the sole treasures given up by the pyramids in modern times, were pursued still further by evil fortune. They were dispatched to England, but the ship which bore them foundered off Cartegena on the Coast of Spain. The stone sarcophagus, which weighed three tons, went to the bottom, but the mummy case of the Pharaoh floated free of the wreck and after drifting about the Mediterranean for some days



was picked up and finally delivered to the British Museum. There it may be seen today.

The pyramid of Mecherin, moreover, is the only one that has its legend. The other two are silent. Thanks to the wife who shared his throne during his brief existence, Mecherin became a hero of romance. Two stories are connected with him and with the third pyramid.

In the one story, Mecherin appears as the husband of his sister, Nikotris, an incestuous union that can hardly be called unusual. For thousands of years the king of Egypt was required to marry his sister, that no foreign blood might be introduced to profane the sacredness of the dynasty. Even the god Osiris was the husband of a sister, the goddess Isis. Nikotris—she of the rosy cheeks—for such is the meaning of her name—learned one day that her husband and brother, Mecherin, had been murdered by a band of noble conspirators at Court. These men, who were aiming merely at indirect control of the country, offered the throne to Nikotris; and she accepted, harboring a plan of vengeance deep in her mind. She built a subterranean banquet hall on the banks of the Nile and arranged a great feast there, inviting as her guests all the men who had encompassed the death of her husband. They accepted, and when they were all in her power, she opened the gates of a secret canal and flooded the room with water.

The same legend further relates that she built the small pyramid during the seven years of her reign, dressing its exterior in the costly facing of white granite which Greeks, Romans, and Arabs were later to admire. When she had laid the corpse of Mecherin in its central chamber she thought the purpose of her own existence had been realized and brought death upon herself by leaping into a pit which she had caused to be filled with burning embers.

Nikotris was undoubtedly a beautiful woman since all the documents that have survived from her time refer to her rosy cheeks. For some centuries her name was associated with the third pyramid and the Arabs long believed that she dwelt there, appearing at times on the point of the pyramid and leading men to madness and destruction by her songs or by the spectacle of her naked form.



The other legend is less tragic. In it Nikotris has become Rodopis, a name given her by the Greeks, who described her as a courtesan. Rodopis was a poor but beautiful girl of the people. One day while she was bathing in the Nile a hawk carried off one of her slippers and after flying about for some time let it fall at the feet of the Pharaoh Mecherin who sat administering justice in the open air. Surprised at the smallness of the sandal, the king gave orders that its owner should be sought throughout all Egypt and when the young girl was brought into his presence he became enamored of her and ended by making her his wife. The young king died shortly afterward and the queen expressed her love and despair by raising the most graceful of the three pyramids in his honor.

Filled as our minds are likely to be with memories of bleak pyramids, musty tombs, and burning sands, we are not always likely to remember what a colorful thing Egyptian civilization was. The ruins that stretch along the Nile are only the skeleton of a great glory which in its time was clothed with muscle and especially with a skin of surpassing beauty. The ancient Egyptian revelled in gold and paint. Even statues of precious substances were colored with tints that even today are sometimes so fresh as to make one doubt their ancient origin. Almost all the heads of their human figures have glass eyes with circles of ebony or metal to represent the pupils. This gives Egyptian statues a fixed and enigmatic stare which is very disquieting to the modern. It is as though these characters, who have come down to us over a lapse of sixty or seventy centuries, still retained portions of a soul that has witnessed the greater part of human history. The collection of Egyptian relics to be seen in the Egyptian Museum at Cairo (replacing the older Museum of Boulaq) is certainly the most impressive thing of the kind that exists on earth.

Egyptology is a modern science of French origin. Up to the beginning of the past century nothing was known of ancient Egypt except what Greek historians, in the tradition of Herodotus, had said of it. The Greeks moreover knew the country long after the disappearance of the great dynasties of the Pharaohs, at a time when the Persians and successive conquerors were in control of the Nile Valley. Besides, the Greeks did not



know how to read Egyptian and their narratives are based exclusively on stories heard by word of mouth—stories necessarily replete with serious errors which have come down almost to our own time.

However, on invading Egypt in 1798, Napoleon took a corps of archeologists along with him and these scientists on their return brought back to Paris a rich collection of stones, sketches, and transcriptions, from Egyptian ruins. But none of them had solved the mystery of the "hieroglyphics," as the Greeks called the unknown writing of Egypt.

As a matter of fact ancient Egypt evolved during successive epochs three kinds of writing, known today respectively as the hieroglyphic, the hieratic, and the demotic. The most ancient, the hieroglyphic, represented objects themselves with symbols more or less crudely descriptive of the object to which they refer. To indicate a man or a chair they drew a picture of a man or a chair. The records of this language consist of strips of tiny pictures. Later on this system was made more flexible. The figures came to stand for sounds or letters—a hawk stood for the letter "e"; a lion for the letter "l." A series of such pictures represented a word. Such was the hieratic script. The growth of commerce after the Twenty-first Dynasty prompted the Egyptians to abandon this clumsy form of writing and to invent a third which was much easier to execute though it has proved much harder to read. In the demotic script letters are a real alphabet and no longer represent animals, persons, or things.

A young Frenchman, named Champollion, while a mere boy of fourteen studying at a grammar school in Grenoble, became interested in the mysteries of Egypt and he bought a grammar of the modern Coptic language, a derivative of the ancient Egyptian tongue which is still spoken throughout the length of the Nile Valley. At the age of seventeen Champollion wrote a historical treatise on Egypt and then went to Paris to study the inscriptions which had been deposited in the Louvre by the experts of Napoleon's expedition. At Rosetta, a village near the west mouth of the Nile, an artillery officer of Napoleon's army had found a triangular stone which contained three inscriptions, one in Greek, one in demotic, and the third in ancient



hieroglyphic. With the help of the Greek, scholars had already worked out the demotic text, but they had mastered not a single sentence of the hieroglyphic.

Champollion began work on the Rosetta stone in 1821. Starting with the simple fact that the names of kings were isolated in "cartridges" (*cartouches*), he constructed the hieroglyphic alphabet, and furthermore sketched a theory of the relation of the mysterious ancient tongue to modern Coptic. Champollion died in 1832 at the early age of forty-one. Though his guesses were ridiculed by older scholars, he had really solved the mystery. The rules for the hieroglyphics once known, students from all countries threw themselves upon Egypt. Now Egyptian texts may be read almost perfectly, and the modern school boy has a more exact knowledge of Egypt than the most learned scholar had, a century and a half ago.

France was to give other great minds to the science of Egyptology—Saulcy, Rouge, Mariette, and Maspero. Mariette was the most fortunate of the early explorers of Egyptian remains. His discovery of the Serapeum of Memphis—the tomb where the mummies of the sacred oxen were buried—gave him world-wide renown. Mariette founded the Museum of Boulaq which in its time was as famous as the Museum at Cairo is today.

The founder and originator of the Cairo museum was Gaston Maspero. Its various floors with their amazing relics embrace the whole history of Egypt, from the times of the first Pharaohs down to the early centuries of Christianity. In no place on earth does one gather such an impressive bird's-eye view of the enormous antiquity of human history. The museum contains, among other things, a systematic exposition of Egyptian religion. In the beginning Egyptian gods had the bodies of animals and the heads of human beings—of this period the Sphinx is the most famous example. Centuries later conditions were reversed: gods were pictured with human bodies and the heads of animals. Horus appears with the head of a hawk; Isis with the head of a cow; and there are ibis gods, jackal gods, lion gods, and so on. Hence, perhaps, the cult that came to be offered to certain animals, such as the lion, the crocodile, the ox, the hyena, the jackal, the cat, the hawk, the ibis, and the scarab. These animals were, for the most part, local divinities, the species varying



from place to place. Thebes, for example, offered divine honors to the crocodile, but the people of the island of Elefantina, not far away, killed these voracious animals. It was dangerous to touch a sacred beast in the town that worshipped it. Under the Ptolemies a Roman soldier was crucified at Alexandria for having accidentally killed a cat, since the cat was sacred in that city. The Greeks nicknamed the town of Shodu, Crocodilopolis, because its temples contained dozens of sacred crocodiles with earrings in their ears and gold bracelets around their paws. Heliopolis worshipped a bird of passage which the Greeks called the phenix, inventing many strange legends about this fowl which have remained popular down to our own time.

Of all the animals worshipped in Egypt the most famous was the Apis (the ox). The Apis lived in Memphis and certain conditions had to be fulfilled before an ox could be promoted to such divine rank. He had to be black, with a white triangular spot on his forehead, an eagle-shaped spot on his back, and a scarab design among the glands on his tongue; furthermore, each hair in his tail had to be double. It was believed that such an ox was born only when a ray of lightning had fallen, by divine intent, in the neighborhood of the cow that bore it. When the priests came upon such an extraordinary animal and had assured themselves that it possessed all the required signs, it was taken to a chapel and shown to the people. Its reign lasted twenty-five years. If it survived that period it was drowned in a sacred fountain, and another was sought. The carcasses of all the Apises were embalmed, and Rameses II dug a huge caye in a quarry near Memphis and devoted it to the preservation of their mummies. There they were entombed, one after the other, over a period of two thousand years. On the advent of Christianity the worship of the Apis declined. The site of the Serapeum was soon buried in sand; and it lay forgotten, until Mariette, in 1851, discovered it, perfectly intact.

While the Pharaohs ruled Egypt, these religious customs were confined to the Nile Valley; but under the Ptolemies and in the days of the Roman Empire, Egyptian religion spread its wings and made converts along the shores of Asia Minor and even as far away as Gaul and the British Isles. Wandering priests carried the worship of Isis, Serapis and Anubis to the



farthest corners of the Western world. These priests, who left much to be desired on the side of morals, gained special hold on people through the miracles they worked. They professed to cure diseases and carried on a great traffic in charms and in fortune telling. In many of the great centers of Europe congregations mourned the annual death of Osiris and rejoiced at his annual resurrection. The early Christians viewed this worship with special hatred and toward the end of the fourth century of our era Theophilus, the Christian patriarch of Alexandria, led a mob upon the Serapeum, the most famous center of Egyptian worship, and burned it to the ground.

There are many legends as to achievements of ancient Egyptian science. Most of them are quite fanciful; but one, at least, may have a certain basis in fact. The people who lived under the Pharaohs seem to have hit upon the lightning rod. The two towers that flank the gateways of Egyptian temples are pierced each by a vertical hole into which were fitted masts that rose high above the edifices proper. These flag staffs—for such they were—carried four pennants, one for each of the sacred colors, red, white, blue, and green. From documents of the time we know that the staffs were topped with points of copper. The stone obelisks that were reared in front of the temples also were capped with a hood of the same metal. Now certain Egyptian texts expressly state that these poles were raised to "abate the tempests in the high heavens"; while others add that the two poles symbolized Isis and Neptys, "spread their great wings over their brother Osiris to protect him from Thoth, the god of darkness, who would do him harm."

All visitors to the Egyptian museum at Cairo are certain to look for the mummy of Rameses II, not only from the great glory that has become attached to that monarch's name, but also from a weird legend that has gathered about his corpse; for his imperial remains have enjoyed no greater respect from the accidents of Time than has the counterfeit reputation he built up for himself from the searching eye of historical criticism. Many centuries after his death the priests of Egypt became alarmed at the frequent plunderings of royal tombs; and they assembled a certain number of Pharaoh mummies, among them that of Rameses II, and concealed them in a secret burial place. Some



decades ago; however, modern Egyptologists stumbled upon this newer necropolis, and there, among others, they found the embalmed body of the great Sesostris. It was moved to the museum and is now kept there in a coffin with a glass cover. The coffin is laid horizontally on stools at about the height of an ordinary table so that the visitor can bend over and examine the Pharaoh's face from a distance of a few inches. (In another glass-covered case a few steps away lies the body of Seti I, the father of Rameses.)

Just thirty-one centuries after his death, Sesostris was to have the pleasure of filling Egypt once more with terror. Professor Maspero had supervised the disposal of the mummy under glass and the body lay wrapped in its bandages, the two arms crossed over the breast, with the hands touching the shoulders. Just how the thing happened has never been known; but it seems probable that after lying in absolute darkness for 3000 years or more, the body was specially susceptible to the heat that may have been formed by the focussing of sunlight through the glass cover of the coffin. At any rate, Rameses II, without rising from his reclining position, suddenly lifted one of his hands and struck a noisy blow on the cover of his casket. The derangements in the mummy caused by this posthumous exercise are plainly visible: One arm is still lying across his breast with the hand upon the shoulder. But the other is raised from the trunk and the bandaged fingers are touching the glass.

The custodians of the museum never for a moment, one may say, have lost sight of the body of the terrible emperor since he reached his new resting place. And they actually witnessed this awakening of Sesostris. They had always been sure that sooner or later such a person would do something or other. But when he did it they experienced the fright of their lives. Some of them ran in terror through the doors, jumping in great leaps down the stairs. Others had to be taken to the hospitals because they had hurled themselves through the glass windows into the garden below.

This was the last and, who knows, perhaps the sweetest victory of Sesostris the Glorious!

## CHAPTER XLVIII

### ROUGE ET NOIR

WHEN Mohammed had won his great victories in Arabia and all the Arabs had recognized his sovereignty he addressed a proclamation to "The Kings of the World" (he did not know their names nor the names of their countries) offering them a choice between war and conversion to the faith of Islam. "The Kings of the World" failed, for the most part, to reply; but it chanced that the native prefect who had been ruling the Valley of the Nile in the name of the Emperor of Byzantium, sent him a courteous embassy bearing three gifts—a mule, a donkey, and a woman. The woman, known as Mary the Copt, was an Egyptian Christian and Mohammed made her his wife.

This was in the year 628 of our era. In the year 969 one of the Mohammedan caliphs ordered that a new city be founded near the head of the Nile delta. Hence rose the town of El-Kahreh, "the Victorious," which Europeans have since called El Cairo. Cairo often figures in medieval texts as "Babylon." In one of the local wars of Egypt the Caliph of Cairo overcame a rival at the near-by village of Fosta. The ancient Greek name for this village happened to be Babylon. The "battle of Cairo" thus came to be known as the "battle of Babylon" and the strange coincidence often caused confusion in the minds of historians and story tellers between the capital of Egypt and the capital of Mesopotamia. From Cairo also came Salah-ed-Din, the courtly "Saladin" of the Crusades, and his horsemen called "Serradjin" are the "Saracens" who gave their name to all the Mussulman invaders of Europe.

The town, built in large part from the materials used in ancient Memphis, is a labyrinth of narrow streets and alleys that are wound and knotted together to form the most bewildering and complicated urban plan that has ever existed. Only within the last few years, moreover, have the khedives thought



of giving names to their myriad thoroughfares. The strips of multicolored canvas that are stretched across the streets to break the flare of the tropical sun add a touch of wild picturesqueness to this town of the *Thousand and One Nights*. The citadel, and the four hundred or more mosques which lift some thirteen hundred sharp spires into the cloudless Egyptian sky, complete a picture that is surely impressive; though after one has seen Constantinople there is little of special interest from the architectural point of view.

I turned my steps with considerable curiosity, however, to the "Mosque of the Flowers" wherein is housed the University of El-Azhar. This is the great theological seminary of the Mohammedan world, and it trains most of the men who carry on the religious and moral traditions of Islam.

All nations of Mohammedan faith have groups of young men at this institution. Teaching is imparted without tuition. There are no rules or regulations. The student remains as long as he thinks he has something to learn and departs when he considers his education adequate—some students, who have an insatiable thirst for knowledge, remain there all their lives. The professors for their part have no special requirements nor is there any limit to their number. Anyone who feels inclined to offer a course may present himself at El-Azhar, find a seat at the foot of one of the columns in the interior courtyard, and begin his lectures. Inevitably he will find an audience. If those who come to hear him conclude that he has something worth while to say, they continue to frequent him. If his teaching is found faulty, they go away and the would-be professor soon vanishes for lack of pupils. There are no salaries. The poorer teachers live by giving private lessons to students attracted by the fame they have acquired. Some eke out a livelihood by making copies of ancient manuscripts. The attendance varies according to political circumstances in Egypt, for that country is often isolated by wars in other lands. On the whole an average of about 7000 pupils and 300 teachers can be counted on.

There are courses in grammar, rhetoric and versification, subjects of great moment to peoples of Arabic tongue, who seem to attach more importance to the sounds of words than to the



thoughts which words express. But the science which attracts students from far corners of the Mohammedan world is the exposition of the Koran and of the law which has been derived therefrom. Some attention is given to arithmetic, algebra, and computations of the calendar, and to a certain primitive medicine. But in these courses there is the strictest adherence to traditions which go back for centuries. In fact, it is hard to believe that the present-day teachers and students of El-Azhar are descendants of those Arabic philosophers, mathematicians, and alchemists, such as Averroes and Avicenna, who brought Greek learning to Spain and Sicily during the Middle Ages and awakened the mind of Europe from its superstitious barbarism. Some years ago a professor tried to give a course in modern astronomy at El-Azhar but he was driven away on the charge of assailing the authority of the Koran.

When I entered the vast quadrangular courtyard of the "Mosque of the Flowers" most of the students had already scattered for their afternoon diversions through the streets of Arabic Cairo. Nevertheless a few groups were still seated on the hot pavement, some listening to the last lectures of the day, others reviewing lessons they had been hearing. Among the latter were men of mature age, reciting their lines in loud voices, sometimes alone, sometimes with a comrade in front of them to point out their errors. All of them were seated on crossed legs and swinging rhythmically to and fro like pendulums from their waists up, some forward and backward, others from left to right. This is a custom which Mohammedans learn in their elementary schools. They believe that rhythmic movement is an aid to memory—and all Arabic learning is based on memory.

Three sides of the university quadrangle are formed by buildings, with quarters respectively assigned to different nationalities. Each Mohammedan race has its own rooms though they are not for sleeping. The number of students is far greater than the space available for such a purpose. Each of the rooms, however, has closets, or lockers, where the students may keep their belongings and their provisions. The food supply consists of loaves of hard-baked bread which are received from the homes of the students every four months. If the student has money he may eat his bread with an onion, or with a handful of raw





SORRENTO

(See P. 410)

beans. Most of them are content with the dry bread alone. Some are too poor even for this scanty fare—a fact which bears witness to the seriousness of their intentions and to their steadfast devotion to sacred knowledge. There is a foundation, however, administered by the authorities of El-Azhar, which supplies bread free to indigent students from legacies left by pious devotees of the Faith. A certain number of the less fortunate individuals are employed about the university as cleaners and janitors. The costumes of the students consist of a plain blue shirt, a pair of trousers, and a turban. Some who come from distant lands go barefoot, still wearing the hat they wore from home and carrying an unshorn sheepskin which they use as a mat and a bed.

As I make my way through the groups of students I am aware of an ill-concealed contempt in the eyes that follow me. One professor looks up, makes a graceful gesture of indifference, and resumes his lecture, as though he had been interrupted by the buzz of a fly or the importunity of an ant. Farther on a student, apparently too poor to own a turban, has stretched himself out on the hard stones, his head carelessly lost among the feet of comrades standing nearby. He has wearied of the lecture and is taking his sleep in his place, in order not to disturb the lecturer by rising and going away. Especially the mulattos and the Negroes gaze at me with hostility—men with narrow foreheads, prominent jaws, and eyes alight with a dangerous fire. Any one of them might renew, one feels, the career of the Mahdi. All the boys who pass through this school are ready to die for their faith, and especially to kill for their faith. Sooner or later these scholars will return to their respective homes endowed with the prestige of study and sanctification at the University of El-Azhar. By the multitudes of Asia and Africa they will be worshipped as men inspired of God. They will recite the verses of the Koran with the traditional commentary on each of its lines. Later on they may be found advancing under the banners of fanatical fraternities, and with scimitars in their right hands, in some holy war of the Faith. All the revolutions and mutinies of Cairo—most of them arise from some incident of a religious character—are led by students from El-Azhar. At the present moment the school is a hotbed of Egyptian national-



ism and a source of perpetual concern to the English authorities who persist in "protecting" Egypt.

To reach Alexandria from Cairo by train one crosses the most fertile and wealthy portion of the Nile Valley. The fields are no longer two strips of cultivated land so narrow as to be embraced by the eye. The river itself has disappeared into several secondary streams cut in turn by hundreds of navigable canals. The Nile, in fact, takes the form of a tall tree. Hitherto we have been climbing the trunk. Now we have reached the bigger branches which eventually divide into smaller twigs. The delta is a flat plain, without mountains, and even without the yellowish hills that broke the plateau of the sandy desert in Upper Egypt. Over fields perpetually green is spread the mantle of a hot and ever-cloudless sky. The earth is a black loam formed from the famous mud of the Nile.

Alexandria, in the course of its history, has had perhaps more than its share of world-famous monuments; but during the many vicissitudes of the city's long existence even their remains have disappeared. Here rose the Pharos, or "beacon," in its day one of the Seven Wonders of the World. It was a tower more than three hundred feet high. Every night a fire was kept burning on its top platform, while during the day a mirror of polished steel caught the image of ships the moment they appeared on the horizon. Today a few blocks of marble and some granite buttresses, which may be seen by peering through the deep water in the New Harbour are all that remain of this marvelous structure built by the first of the Ptolemies.

Here also was the most famous library of antiquity with its seven hundred thousand manuscripts gathered together from all countries of the ancient world. This priceless collection was burned by Julius Cæsar forty-six years before our era in the course of a naval battle with rebels of Alexandria. The Temple of Serapis was, after the Capitol in Rome, the most famous structure in the empire, but it was destroyed by the Christians in the year 389, along with another collection of one hundred thousand manuscripts that were kept in its archives. The Palace of the Ptolemies (which amazed Cæsar and Mark Antony by its magnificence) and the Poseidon, a great temple of Neptune,



have also disappeared without leaving any trace whatever behind them.

For the three centuries just preceding our era Alexandria was the commercial and intellectual metropolis of the world. Founded by Alexander the Great the city passed on his death into the hands of his lieutenant, Ptolemy, who declared himself king of Egypt and established a dynasty which ended with Cleopatra and was the last independent government in the Nile Valley. The Ptolemies, a family of intelligent and subtle Greeks, kindly disposed to the arts and sciences, made their capital a storehouse for the riches of the East, a meeting-place of Asia and Europe, a resort of the most gifted artists and scientists of their day. Most of the Greek inheritance which has reached the modern West did not come to us directly from the little republics of the Greeks. It was the Alexandrians who assembled and increased the treasure of ancient learning, transmitting it later on to the newer countries of Europe. The last great philosophical school of ancient times had its home in Alexandria where Plotinus, Jamblicus, Porphyry, Hypatia, and others still carried on the traditions of Plato.

Alexandria introduced the Jewish race to the world. The commercial prosperity and the social prominence of the Jews began in Egypt. The more enterprising of the Hebrews, who found the little kingdom of Judea too narrow-minded and too restricted for their abilities, gradually drifted to Alexandria; and that place finally became a larger center of Jewish life than Jerusalem itself. Philo estimated that over a million Jews were living in Alexandria in his time, swelling the population of the city till it became the largest in the world next to Rome. Jews filled most of the administrative offices of the city. They collected the taxes and even officered the army. The later Ptolemies, Cleopatra included, had brigades of Jewish mercenaries in their service and the most important generals of their troops belonged to the same nationality. The connection of the Jews with the administration of the declining Hellenic empire made them the object of many uprisings of the people of the Valley; and the Roman Cæsars, in making their cruel laws against Jews, held particularly in view the Jewish center at Alexandria, where



they were often called upon to stifle resistance or revolt in blood. At Alexandria the Jews became imbued with Greek poetry and Greek philosophy—with Hellenism in short, and thus forged a connecting link between Oriental and Occidental civilizations. Their Greek culture also enabled them to make some of the fundamental notions of their religion universal throughout pagan society. In the course of their literary activity they were brought, among other things, to translate their Bible into Greek, a version which served a practical purpose for them since most of the Alexandrian Jews had forgotten their native tongue and transacted all their business in the language of Athens. This translation of the Bible, the famous Septuagint, was a vast undertaking which absorbed the lives of several generations of scholars. The rivalry between Greeks and Jews in Alexandria gave rise to most of the slanders against the Jews which have been popular ever since and were particularly exploited during the many persecutions and massacres of Jews during the Middle Ages.

It was the Christians who finally expelled them from Alexandria. In view of its luxury and its splendor the Christian ascetics came to regard Alexandria as a place of abomination and they often entered the city, whip in hand, to demand the extirpation of the works of the Devil. They could always find Egyptian multitudes ready to follow them, whether out of fanaticism or out of eagerness for plunder, certain as such crusaders could be that while satisfying their own instincts they were gaining favor in the sight of Heaven. It was just such a mob of fanatics which murdered the youthful Hypatia, the last representative of Greek culture, and tore her body to pieces. It was just such mobs that overthrew the monuments of Helleno-Egyptian art.

The Jews did not come back until the Mohammedans took possession of the country, but by that time the glory of Alexandria had passed forever. The Islamic rulers built Cairo at the head of the delta, a city easily accessible to shipping through the many deep canals and also more centrally located for the commerce of the Upper Nile. The capital of the Ptolemies has been from that time only a simple seaport.

Nevertheless the Jews of Alexandria were to become famous



MARE NOSTRUM

(See p. 42)



once more. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries they developed a flourishing export trade in mummies. Despite our inclination to laugh at the pharmaceutic traditions of strange people we must remember that up to two centuries ago the nitrate and the resin that could be extracted from mummies were worked into a drug which was generally used throughout Europe as a "cure" for many diseases. The "discovery" was made around the year 1300 by a Jewish physician in Alexandria, and at once its fame became worldwide. All of the peoples of Europe used it. Scarcely a book of the older medicine but has some reference to it. I own a Spanish volume published as late as 1727, which devotes an extensive treatise to "mummy." "Mummy," it says, "is a hard black resinous substance derived from dead bodies of human beings, which have been preserved with balsams and aromatics." So prosperous did this trade become that during the two centuries in question, mummy-hunting was an established occupation. To it we owe the destruction of many of the ancient cemeteries, the mummies being carried off and sold to the Jews who in their turn packed them off to their numerous agencies in Europe. Eventually the mummies in the neighborhood of Alexandria gave out and the Mohammedan authorities, meantime, had decided to prohibit under severe penalties the further profanation of cemeteries. But this ancient form of prohibition only gave rise to a new art—the manufacture of counterfeit mummies. The corpses of slaves and paupers were bought or stolen. Then they were injected with resin and dried in the sun for a couple of months, to be finally packed and shipped away like any contemporary of the ancient Pharaohs.

Among the Christian memories of the city one may still find the catacombs. These crypts were opened by the ancient Egyptians for use as cemeteries; but since most of them were below the level of the sea their arches were gradually undermined and they either collapsed or else were filled with water. At times of persecution, however, Christians often took refuge in them; and in one of the underground chambers one may still see an image of Jesus painted on the wall but with the features and adornments of Osiris—a witness to the strange confusion of doctrines that were sometimes to be found at the dawn of Christianity.



We found the *Franconia* waiting for us once more in the harbor at Alexandria and again our cool comfortable life between spotlessly clean walls was to be resumed. But now we had before us only a week's voyage. The passageways and salons of the steamer were beginning to fill with barricades of boxes, bags, and trunks, and over the passengers there fell that certain subdued melancholy which betokens the dissolution of a steamer's small world. Some of us were to land at Naples for a tour of Italy, others were to start for Paris by way of Monaco. Barely a half were to go on to New York to complete the "trip around the world."

Late one afternoon, under a murky sunlight that threw a yellowish tinge over distant peaks and villages, we passed between continental Italy and the steep mountainous shores of Sicily. Then before us out of a violet sea the conical peaks of Lipari rose like shafts of gold. For me the voyage was over. The ship stopped three days in the port of Naples but I scarcely left my room. I had seen Naples, Salerno, Amalfi, Capri and Sorrento so many times before. We left Naples in the morning and sailed past Procida, Ischia, and Ponza, keeping to the Italian shore as closely as a boat of deep draft could. Off Ostia a tremor of excitement ran through the steamer. Following the pointing finger of an officer we could see a sort of spot rising above the curling line that marked the line between shore and sea. All roads, in fact, lead to Rome! That little white spot was the cupola of St. Peter's!

When I awoke in the morning the boat was motionless. I looked out through my open port-hole and saw before me the Casino at Monte Carlo—to one side Monacc, to the other Cap Martin, the latter closing with its green curtain the Gulf of Menton. I rubbed my eyes and asked myself whether I had not been dreaming. Had I really been around the world? The practical requirements of landing cut short my puzzled ruminations. I was hurried ashore. Some of my friends were anxious to see Nice at once; others could scarcely wait to try their luck at the Casino; others wanted to be off on a ride along the blue Coast. I found myself finally on the dock with twenty-three trunks full of I could not imagine what. The officers of the customs looked at me in laughing helplessness. I had never



dreamed I had been buying so many things—crockery, costumes, images, books, swords, lances, polished metals—enough to start a store with. I gave up in despair, leapt into my automobile, and was driven up the hill toward Monte Carlo.

In passing the Café de Paris I could not resist an impulse to stop for a moment. There they all were, just as I had left them! The same people on the seats in the square, the same people at the tables in the café! No one had moved, it seemed, for the six months!

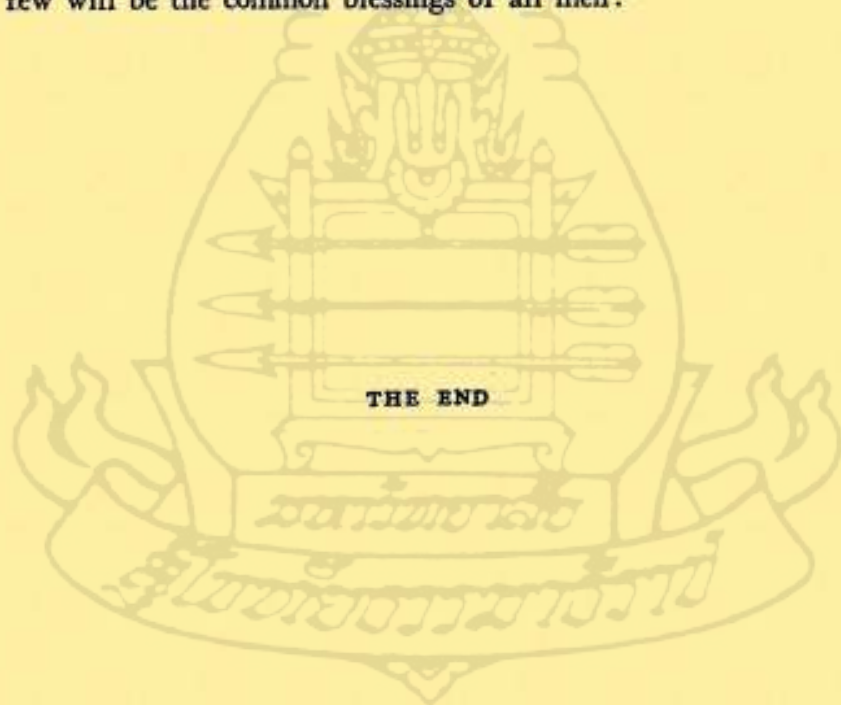
"Where have you been?" questioned a voice from one of the tables. "We have not seen you for some time." "I have been around the world," I answered, turning to two ladies who called. They smiled incredulously, until one of them remembered that she had read something about my voyage in a newspaper. I was at once surrounded by a group of old friends who began bombarding me with one question or another and insisting that I tell at once what I considered the most interesting feature of my trip. While I had been putting a belt around the world these people had spent the same six months in this Casino and around this square, the ladies, perhaps, buying a dress now and then, or losing a few thousand francs and regaining a few hundred at the Casino. A lady insisted that I state at once just what I had learned on my journey—the "definite lesson" taught by all the different peoples, all the different creeds, all the different forms of society which I had seen.

"Is that all?" I asked. "It is a large order, but, perhaps I can say one thing, though, it is not calculated to make you any happier. There are more people than ever in the world. Progress in hygiene and facilities of transport are preventing most of the epidemics, famine, and disasters which in the past have made up the history of our unhappy world. I have a feeling that populations are multiplying much more rapidly than the supply of available food. More than half of mankind has less to eat than it ought to have. We white folks happen to be enjoying the best share of things for the moment; but supposing those billions of Asiatics some day find a leader and a common ideal? My journey around the world has convinced me that we are far from through with the devil of war. I have traversed the battlefields of the future—India, China, the Pacific

Ocean, and—who knows?—Egypt, stretched out under its ancient tropical sun! These future wars may not be for us, but our descendants will surely witness them, unless mankind sets out to prevent them with a will."

I thought this was almost enough for people who were probably more interested in finding out whether fashion's next color would be red or black. So I hastened to conclude:

"All men are very much alike. We progress, but in a purely exterior, mechanical, material way. We have not yet had the great revolution—that revolution of the soul which Christianity began but never finished, since no Christian practises what he preaches. My impression is that we ought to create a new human soul! We have got to do away with our selfishness. Then everything will be easy; for the abnegation and the tolerance which are today the blessings of a privileged few will be the common blessings of all men!"





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