THIS IS INDIA

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by

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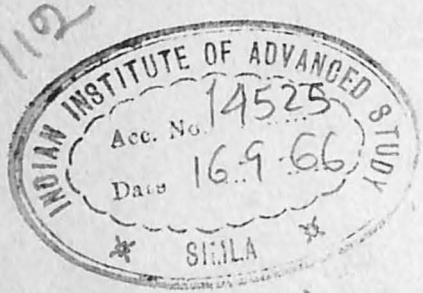

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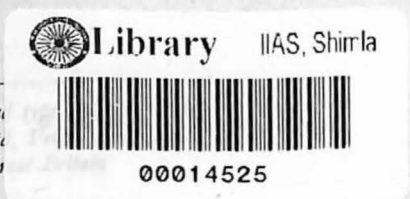

Preface

EVERY one knows, of course, that from time to time people from other countries came and settled in Britain; first the Romans, then the Angles and the Danes, then the Normans. There was a lot of trouble and fighting at first; then they all settled down, married each other, and became so mixed that now it is very difficult to tell who is of Danish, Angle, or Norman descent: we are all one people.

Now, it is not like that in India. People of different countries have come into India, settled down, and have lived there for many centuries. *But they have never mingled into one people.*

The Parsees came and quietly settled all along the west coast; the Moslems came conquering from the north; the Portuguese came to trade; and finally the British came to trade and remained to rule the country.

To get a clear idea of the state of things in India you must try to picture what Britain would be like if the ancient Britons had still gone on being Druids and had carried on their worship at Stonehenge and suchlike places; if the Romans, though a few of them were Christians, had mostly continued to put up statues of the Roman gods, and prayed to them; if the Angles and Danes had gone on worshipping Woden and Thor and the rest of their heathen gods; and if the Normans had come, and, though they might have made a few converts, if the

rest of the people of Britain had stubbornly refused to have anything to do with the Christian religion—how different the country would be.

That is how it is in India. The Portuguese taught some to be Christians; the British missionaries have made many converts, but even now there are only about nine million Christians in India; all the other three hundred million inhabitants still keep to their Hindu, Moslem, or Parsee religion, as they always have done. They keep quite apart. They look different, they dress differently. If I walked down a street in some town—Bombay, for instance—I could say as I met the different people walking there: "That is a Hindu; that is a Moslem; that is a Parsee; that is a Christian," and so on.

Now that India is no longer under the rule of the British you may think that all the British have come home; but that is not so. Many hundreds of British people are still in India, for the sake of trade, for missionary or other Christian work, or just to live in one of the pleasant hill districts that are warmer than chilly Britain.

The stories in this book tell what sort of life the various peoples in India live, and what kind of people they are.

M. C.

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GRAHAM and Margaret Ellsworth had just arrived in India. They had come to join their parents because war was threatening in Europe.

"You must see something of Bombay before we go up-country," said Mr Ellsworth.

"There isn't much to see in Bombay, is there, Dad?" remarked Graham. "Isn't it almost like a European town?"

Coming into the docks and driving through the Fort, the European part of the city, had given him that impression. Besides, people at home had all told him this. Mr Ellsworth merely said, "H'm," and left it at that.

"I am going down to the bazaars to-morrow morning," said Mrs Ellsworth, her eyes twinkling. "You had better come with me."

They were sitting in the garden of the hotel after dinner; the softened sound of motor-horns came in from the broad streets; the *zip zip* of the crickets in the trees filled the air.

"What is that lovely scent?" asked Margaret.

"It is the champak blossom," answered her father. "See—that tree like a great laurel." He went to the tree and came back with a stem bearing a cluster of creamy flowers with folding petals and a touch of orange-yellow at the base of the cup.

"How marvellous!" said Margaret. "I don't think there can be anything more heavenly than a

Bombay night; the scents and the soft air and the warmth."

The cawing of the seven million crows that are said to inhabit Bombay awoke Margaret early; and after a while she heard the *ping* of tennis balls: some one was energetic. She was dying to get up and go out, but the servant came with *choti hasri*—the little breakfast of tea, bread and butter, and a banana—and Margaret suddenly realized that she was thirsty.

They took a taxi to the bazaars; past the great, open, tree-bordered space called the Maidan, which simply means a field; past the great building of the *Times of India* newspaper, the massive General Post Office, and the cathedral-like station of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway.

"I want to go into the post-office," said Mrs Ellsworth.

They left the car and walked past the gardens, full of cannas, scarlet, pink, and gold, that surrounded the building.

"Oh, what are those men doing, sitting by the roadside under the trees?" asked Margaret. "They can't be beggars—they are too well dressed."

"Certainly not," answered Mrs Ellsworth. "They are public letter-writers. Numberless people in India cannot read or write, so they come to these men, who write beautiful, eloquent letters for them, all handy for the post-office, as you see; love letters, business letters, begging letters, anything their customers like."

"What a good idea," said Margaret. "I should love to have a letter written by one of them."

"I am afraid you can't do that," said her mother. "We should draw a crowd."

At last they reached the bazaars; narrow streets crowded with Indians selling carpets, walking-sticks, sweetmeats; coolies carrying great baskets piled with freshly stripped coconuts; and throngs of passers-by, their heads swathed in vividly coloured little shawls as a protection from the sun.

"Well, this is India, certainly," commented Graham.

The shopkeepers sat at the doors of their shops on small square mattresses in clean white covers.

"Any seelk, Mem-sahib?" they called when they saw any Europeans. "What do you want, Mem-sahib?" They could all speak English.

"I want some muslin," said Mrs Ellsworth, pausing at a doorway. "Have you any?"

"Yes, Mem-sahib, we have muslin," cried the shopman, or *bori*, as he is called. "Come in."

About a dozen assistants ran hither and thither, bringing chairs for their customers, while one of them brought out a large roll of calico.

"That is not muslin," said Mrs Ellsworth firmly. "Have you any?"

The *bori* smiled apologetically. No, he had no muslin.

"But I have socks, Mem-sahib, or neckties."

"I don't want socks or neckties," said Mrs Ellsworth. "I want muslin." She left the shop. "It's always the same," she said to Margaret. "They say, 'Yes, yes,' just to get you into the shop, hoping that you will buy something else."

All this time they had been beset by boys, and even men, who carried large, shallow baskets. These get a living by carrying European shoppers' parcels as they journey from shop to shop. One small boy

kept darting to the front of the crowd, repeating in imploring tones, "*Pila*, Mem-sahib, *pila*," only to be pushed aside by the bigger boys.

"What does *pila* mean, Mummy?" asked Margaret.

"It means first," answered Mrs Ellsworth. "He means that he was the first to offer his services."

"Oh," said Margaret. "Well, he was the first, because I remember noticing how small he was."

"Well, we'll have him," said her mother. "It is the coolie law that the first to offer is taken. But where is Graham? Oh, here he is."

"I've been in Crawford Market," said Graham. "You must come, Margaret. Such piles of fruit!"

They went into the great market-hall, where men were sitting by the mountainous stalls of fruit of every kind.

"Here," they called to the newcomers. "Missy-baba, very fine fruit—'ave a taste."

They offered a peach to Margaret, who 'ad a taste.' "Oh, lovely!" she said.

"Now, of course, you will have to buy some," said her mother.

"Look at those garlands," said Graham, as they passed the flower-stalls.

Great, massive ropes of sweet-smelling jasmine and chrysanthemum, with threads of tinsel trailed round them, were hung out for sale.

"Fancy wearing that round your neck," said Graham. "Have you ever been garlanded, Mother?"

"Most certainly—many times," answered his mother. "On State occasions, you know. Rather heavy, but I love them."

They went back to the hotel, laden with fruit and

having visited six shops in the search for Mrs Ellsworth's muslin.

They all went for a drive in the afternoon to Juhu, the holiday bathing resort of all Bombay—a long sandy beach below an endless belt of deep-shaded coconut palms. Driving back through the city in the evening, Margaret's alert ears caught the sound of distant music.

"I can hear a band playing," she said.

"A Hindu wedding, I expect," said Mr Ellsworth. The driver drew the car to the side of the road. "Run and see if you can catch sight of it, you two. It is worth seeing."

Graham and Margaret jumped out of the car and hurried down a side-street. As they turned a corner the music became suddenly louder.

"Here it comes, down the other street," said Graham, and they raced on.

They reached the end of the street as the band, which led the way, passed—loud trumpets, clashing cymbals, and tom-toms. Then came men carrying brilliant lamps on long poles and, following them, men holding aloft great disks of tinsel, like huge toy windmills, glittering in the lamplight. Another band brayed past, and then, "Oh, look!" cried Margaret, on tiptoe.

On a splendid horse in gay trappings, led by attendants, sat a young boy dressed in pink silk, a sword in his sash, a crimson turban on his head.

"How gorgeous!" said Margaret.

"Yes," said Graham, laughing. "It is good as a Drury Lane pantomime. Simply marvellous."

"That is the young bridegroom," said a man in grey, who stood near them. "He is going to the

house of his bride. They are very young," he added, with quiet disapproval: he was a Parsee gentleman. "Now come the wedding-guests."

In the light of more great lamps came a procession of car after car filled with Indian ladies in exquisitely coloured saris and men in brilliant turbans. Colour, light, strange music, the whole pageant passed like a scene from another world.

"Let's go back now," said Graham, as the last car disappeared.

They bade the Parsee good-night, and walked up the street.

"Let's see," said Graham. "Which turning is it? This one, I think."

They walked some distance along a narrow street.

"I don't recognize this," said Margaret. "I am sure we didn't pass that great fountain thing."

"It must have been that other turning, after all," said Graham. "Come along."

They hurried back, then stopped; there were so many turnings. Indians of every class thronged about them; but Graham and Margaret could not speak their language, so they might as well have been alone; they could not have *felt* more alone.

"Baksheesh, Missy-baba, baksheesh."

The whining voice of the beggar at her elbow made Margaret jump. It was a woman carrying a little child.

"How awful!" she exclaimed. "She is teaching the baby to beg. Look—it is holding out its little hand."

But she put an anna into the tiny fingers.

"I feel sure we came from that direction," Margaret declared. "Round this corner."

Public Letter-writers, Bombay

Bombay Bazaar

Children of the Bombay Streets

A Parsee Family

But when they turned the corner they found themselves in a very narrow street, with people lying about the ground asleep, and they stood irresolute and both secretly rather panicky.

"S'laam, Miss-sahib," said a boy's voice, and they turned to see a cheery boy looking up at them.

"Why, it's the boy who carried our parcels in the bazaar this morning," exclaimed Margaret, feeling like one who meets an old friend. "If only he could show us the way back to where the car is."

The boy looked at the two and hesitated; he had been watching them for some time, and had realized they were lost. But he knew they could not speak Hindustani. Then he had a bright idea.

"Crawford Market, Sahib?" he asked Graham.

"Oh, yes, *atcha*," cried Graham. "*Atcha* means all right, Margaret. If we can get to Crawford Market we shall know where we are."

"How quick he is," said Margaret. "He understood that."

With a delighted grin the boy guided the two through the bazaar by narrow, tortuous ways to the market; then, as they started from there towards the Fort, he insisted upon accompanying them.

Presently they came upon the car, with their parents looking out for them.

"What a time you have been," said Mr Ellsworth. "I should think you have seen the whole of Bombay."

"We have seen a good deal of it," answered Graham, pressing a rupee into the coolie boy's hand, to his astonished joy. "I take back what I said about Bombay not being Indian."

The Threefold Cord

A LITTLE Parsee girl stood on the balcony of a large house in Bombay, watching some workmen putting up a platform with an awning of thick canvas over it in the garden below. At last she turned to the room within.

"Hillah," she said to her sister. "They have nearly finished. The awning is up, so I cannot see the platform now."

The child threw herself among the silken cushions on a broad couch, her long black hair rippling over her muslin frock. Her pale olive complexion was rosier than usual—she was excited. She eyed her big sister across the beautifully furnished room; she wanted to talk, but Hillah was reading. The elder sister bent over her book, her wavy hair nearly covered by the exquisitely embroidered sari over her head; the folds of her silk dress lay about her feet.

At last the little sister broke the silence.

"I don't really understand what it all means," she said.

Hillah Setna laid her book aside.

"But, Bapsy," she answered, "you have been told."

"Yes, I know," sighed Bapsy. "But I haven't *understood*."

"Come," said Hillah, smiling. "I will tell you the story of the Iranis from the beginning. Hun-

dreds and hundreds of years ago in Iran a man and his wife prayed that they might have a child, a son; and after a little while a beautiful baby boy was born. He was a most wonderful child; he sat up and spoke as soon as he was born, uttering words of wisdom to his parents. As he grew up he became a great teacher, and preached to his people that they should not worship idols, but God, our Creator, and reverence His great powers, the sun, water, and air."

"Was that Zoroaster?" asked Bapsy.

"Yes," answered Hillah. "And our people believed and obeyed. But after a long time the Moslems came swooping into Iran from the west, forcing many of our people to profess to believe in Mohammed as their prophet, or to die. So some of the Iranis resolved to escape. One dark night a few families, men, women, and children, crept fearfully down to the shore, where a ship awaited them, and they sailed away down the coast of India. They landed in Gujarat, and the Maratha king of that part gave them permission to settle in his kingdom."

"Yes, I know about that," announced Bapsy. "The men had to wear hats shaped like a cow's hoof out of respect for the Hindu's sacred cow; and the women had to wear their saris arranged the opposite way to that of the Hindu women, to show that they were different——" Suddenly Bapsy broke off with a look of horror on her face. "But there are many Moslems in Bombay now," she cried. "I see the women in those burkhas, covering them from head to feet, except for the little lattice in front of their eyes so that they can see. The little girls wear long trousers with lace

round the bottom. Will their men kill us some time if we won't become Moslem?"

Hillah laughed a little.

"No, Bapsy," she said. "They would not be allowed to do it, even if they wished, here in India. And so we have lived happily, and kept our religion in safety ever since. Our people grew in numbers, and many came down to Bombay, where they traded and became prosperous. They were the first to have well-furnished houses in India. When the cotton industry began many Parsees became very, very rich, and, true to the teaching of Zoroaster, they were very charitable. You have seen that great hospital in Byculla—they call it the J. J. Hospital. It was built by Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy. He gave lakhs and lakhs (a lakh is 100,000) of rupees to charities.

"Well, then; to-morrow our brother Manek, now that he has reached the age of ten years, is to take upon himself the responsibility of his religion in the Thread Ceremony. You know why it is called the Thread Ceremony, don't you, Bapsy?"

"Yes," answered Bapsy. "Because of the three-fold cord that is to be bound round his body."

"Which is to remind him to observe good thoughts, good words, good deeds all the days of his life," added Hillah, "as all our people do."

Over a hundred guests gathered under the shade of the trees in Mr Setna's garden for Manek's Thread Ceremony. There were gentlemen in their tall, shiny hats and frock coats, and ladies in delicately hued saris, rivalling the flowers in their beauty. White-robed priests sat on the platform, murmuring prayers and tending a brazier of sacred

fire; a band played softly at a little distance. Bapsy, in a new silk frock, her hair falling like a dusky cloud about her shoulders, behaved with becoming dignity.

Presently Manek was brought from the house and helped up on to the platform. He wore only thin, cotton trousers and a muslin cloth wrapped about his body; he had just taken a ceremonial bath, which signified the washing away of sin. Seated before the chief priest, he had rice pressed to his forehead, and fruit put in his hands, to wish him plenty throughout his life. Then the priest and Manek rose, and the boy, standing in front of the priest, facing the same way and holding his hands, repeated the Parsee creed, sentence by sentence. The priest then was handed a thin, *new* white shirt, which he drew over Manek's head, throwing aside the muslin cloth. This represented the putting on of a new life. The final, and most important, act was now performed. The priest drew from the folds of his cassock a long, threefold cotton cord; this he bound thrice round Manek's body, exhorting him to reflect many times a day on the threefold promise to observe good thoughts, good words, good deeds.

The Thread Ceremony was over. Manek was taken into the house and given presents of money, and, finally, he was dressed in a brand new suit, with the shiny, mitre-like Parsee hat all complete. Bapsy regarded her brother with a new respect, and kept a sharp watch upon his words and deeds for the next few days; in fact, his thoughts only were his own until her first enthusiasm had died down.

A Forgotten Colony

It was very hot, but Catherine Diaz walked along the sea-front of Panjim, the port of Goa, with an unflagging step. She wanted to get to the cool shelter of her home; she also had news to tell. Not that the wide sea-front was without shade; trees bordered the road all the way.

Catherine wore a gay-flowered cotton frock and a broad-brimmed straw hat adorned by a bright-coloured scarf. Her black hair fell in thick clusters to her shoulders. Most of the girls she met, and some of the older women too, were dressed in like manner; but some wore the scarf tied, gipsy-fashion, over their heads in place of a hat.

Presently Catherine turned into a side-street and pursued her way homeward, past the great white, modern, ornamental church, with a twin flight of steps that met on a level space before the front door; across a quiet square enclosed by high houses; and then into the street in which was her father's shop.

Catherine had a brother, Jervon, fifteen, a year older than herself, and she found him 'minding the shop.' This expression was much in use in the Diaz family. Mr Diaz insisted that the few carpets, dusty brassware, and odds and ends of furniture that were exposed for sale should never be left untended. Many an hour Jervon or Catherine spent, sitting in a folding chair near the door, idly watching the empty street, where the harsh call of the mynahs,

those neat brown-and-yellow starlings of India, for they whistle and "*chuck chuck*" on the roof-tops like our starlings, or the clatter of two kites scuffling over some disputed morsel were among the most exciting happenings in that quiet region. A customer was as rare as the Montagu's harrier that fought with the kites one day, and then perched for a few minutes on a wall, resting on its migratory way from South India to Europe.

Jervon was sitting with one foot on a carved chest, the other swinging idly against the chair-leg.

"Just look at me," was his greeting to his sister. "I have been sitting like this ever since you went out, and I've not seen one single person. And Father talks of my having the shop after he is dead. Why, I should be dead first, with sheer boredom. No, I shall go away to Bombay and ask Uncle Laurence to take me into his photographer's shop."

"What, and leave Goa, our own Goa!" exclaimed Catherine.

"Oh, I know that Goa is the first, and last, Portuguese colony," said Jervon; "Father doesn't let us forget that. And I have seen the statue of Alphonso d'Albuquerque, the founder of the colony, in the gardens; and I know all about St Francis Xavier, how he converted us all——"

"Don't be so irreverent," reproved Catherine. "If you didn't talk so much I should be able to tell you the news. There is going to be another exposition."

"What! Is the body of St Francis Xavier going to be exposed to view in the Church of Bom Jesus, as it has been before?" asked Jervon, with kindling interest. "When is it to be?"

"In December, for a month. The third is his day, you know," answered Catherine. "Won't it be grand? Thousands of people will be here! Some grandees will even be coming from Portugal itself, as well as from other parts of India and from Africa."

In spite of himself, Jervon looked elated and proud. He had heard his father tell of the grand times when the great missionary-saint's body, that rested in a silver gilt casket behind the altar of the beautiful Church of Bom Jesus at Mormugoa, was placed out in the chancel under a canopy for all devout Goanese and Portuguese to see and reverence.

The following months were busy with preparations for the event. Jervon often went down to the ferry at Dona Paula and crossed over, in fishing-boat or steamer, to Mormugoa and went up to where the old churches are—that wonderful open space in the midst of vivid green palm-trees, around which stand the Cathedral, the Church of Bom Jesus, the Church of St Francis of Assisi, and the Church of St Cajetan—all splendid churches like those one finds in great cities in Europe, though little used now, and unknown to most of the European inhabitants of India. But at the periodical exposing of the embalmed body of St Francis Xavier the glory returns to the colony for a time.

As December drew near Jervon used to return with scraps of news, such as, "The Bishop's Palace is booked up, full." The Bishop's Palace had become an hotel; the niche at the end of the balcony, containing a statuette of St Francis, alone declaring it to have once been a religious house.

"They are putting up booths by the road leading to the churches," he told his family at another time.

Before the end of November every hotel and house in Panjim and Mormugoa was filled with guests, and all the shops were busy.

"I wish it were like this always," said Jervon to his sister.

Then followed the great month of services and processions, of crowds and ceremonies; and daily multitudes of worshippers filed past the shrine of the saint. Jervon and Catherine lived every minute of it.

It was the first day of January. Steamers were packed with Goanese from all parts of Western India, returning home. Jervon, with a small bag and the ticket he had saved for, stood on the quay. He looked swiftly around him, then joined the throng on the gangway of one of the steamers. He was running away to Bombay. He had chosen this busy time so that he would be less likely to be noticed by Panjim people who knew him. He sat on the crowded deck, not daring to show himself until the steamer slipped away. He thought of his parents and Catherine. Well, he couldn't help it; he simply could not bear to think of staying in Goa—it would be even worse after the fun of the Exposition. Uncle Laurence was a sport; he would let him stay with him.

A day and a night of uncomfortable travelling brought the ship into Bombay Harbour. Jervon found his way through the strange, exciting streets to his uncle's shop. It was still early; a boy was sweeping the steps. Uncle Laurence was breakfasting.

"Come in, Jervon," he said. "This is splendid.

Your father has sent you instead of writing—good. Well, when are you all coming?"

"Wha—what?" stammered Jervon.

"Your father and I have agreed to join forces in Bombay," said Uncle Laurence. "Photographs on one side of the shop; *bric-à-brac* on the other. Has not your father told you?"

"We are all to live in Bombay!" exclaimed Jervon.

"Aha!" laughed his uncle, who *was* a sport. "I believe you have run away."

"Oh, I must go back and help them to pack up," said Jervon excitedly. "All those carpets and things. It will be too much for Father. I'll get them ready in no time."

"Right," said Uncle Laurence. "I'll telegraph to your parents, and you can go back to-morrow. I see I shall not be kept waiting long for my family."

So the Diaz family settled in Bombay, and though Catherine said at first that she would never get over leaving her beloved Goa, the good school she attended, the busy streets, where all kinds of fascinating things were constantly happening, like Hindu weddings and festivals, the fine shops in Hornby Road and the Esplanade, and the fun of hunting for bargains in the Indian bazaars—all made her old home seem very far away and shadowy.

Jervon, on his part, made no secret of his joy at the change.

"This is something *like* life," he said.

Up Broken Tooth Peak

THE Ellsworths' bungalow was on the crest of the Western Ghauts, two thousand feet above the sea. It stood on high ground overlooking a broad plain, through which ran a river. Beyond the plain rose abrupt peaks of strange design, some with sides as vertical as a wall, some the shape of a perfect cone, some jagged and uneven. One of these, the nearest, the Ellsworths called Broken Tooth, because it looked like one.

"I should like to go and climb Broken Tooth some day," remarked Margaret one morning, as she and her father stood on the veranda.

The early sun had turned the mountain to an orange-red, the shadows in the hollows looked like folds of violet velvet.

"It is easy enough to climb, in parts," answered Mr Ellsworth. "But one side of it is like a wall. Your mother and I went one day last year. Why don't you and Graham go to-day? You can't lose yourselves; you can see the bungalow from the mountain. We shall expect you home before dark."

Graham jumped at the idea of a walk and a climb; and, with some sandwiches, fruit, and plenty of water, the two young Ellsworths swung briskly down towards the plain. They found a place where they could cross the river on smooth, flat stones, for it was February and the water was already running low.

"Look," whispered Graham, as they reached the farther bank. "Look at the kingfisher!"

The little bird, apparently identical with the English variety, was sitting on the dead branch of a tree that overhung the river. Then, *splash!* he went down into the water and immediately came up again with a silvery fish in his beak.

"I like to see some of the same birds that we have in England," said Margaret. "It makes me feel that India is not so strange and foreign."

"I saw a great-tit the other day," said Graham. "I recognized its call before I saw it."

They walked until it grew hot, then lunched under the thin shelter of a babul-tree, the commonest tree in India.

"Look at those awful thorns," said Margaret, looking up into the tree. "I see they grow in pairs. Those up there must be quite three inches long."

"It's a kind of acacia," said Graham. "Look at the leaves. It's time we were going on," he added. He had been sitting leaning against the tree. "I say," he exclaimed, "I'm stuck to the tree."

"Oh, you've been leaning on a band of that gum," said Margaret. "See, here is another long trickle of it; beautiful, clear gum, that has run down the tree. But this has hardened—I can break it off, sticks of it. It must be real gum arabic. I shall take it home to use when I want to stick things."

She put her find in an empty tin box, and they went on their way.

"There's a large village over there," said Graham. "Let's go over and look at it."

They came first to a cluster of shacks with walls of palm-leaf matting or petrol tins flattened out and

nailed together. Bits of old sack and matting hung from the roofs of thatch. The people who were gathered round these wretched huts seemed cheerful enough, nevertheless, and salaamed the visitors in a friendly manner.

"See," said Margaret, "they are making string."

Graham and Margaret stood and watched, and one woman tried to show them how to twist the fibre with the implement in her hand, but they bungled it, amid much laughter. Then they went on, leaving a few annas behind and getting many salaams in return.

The village street proper was a wide, uneven road with houses on either side. These were better built than the shacks, some even having a rough veranda. At the entrance of the village was an open-sided shelter which was, though the two travellers did not know it, the village inn, or rest-house. An old man was sweeping this, raising such clouds of dust that Graham and Margaret hurried by. Near the end of the street stood a little shrine, with a shapeless figure inside, painted vermilion.

"That's Hanuman, I expect," said Graham. "It's always Hanuman, you know, the god of the monkeys, in these places."

It was very quiet. A boy stood on a veranda and stared; some women peeped from another doorway; goats browsed on imaginary nothings by the roadside. Presently they came upon a small, well-built hut, somewhat like a wayside refreshment kiosk in Britain. Here an Indian, in spotless white, was pottering among shelves of medicine bottles and ointment pots and suchlike.

"Good afternoon," he said, in perfect English.

Graham and Margaret were so taken aback that they reversed matters and answered, "Salaam."

"I am a Government dispenser," the man explained, seeing their surprise. "I come here every week to attend to the people in the village; I do not live here."

"The people outside the village seem pretty poor," said Graham.

"Ah, they are the Mangs," answered the Hindu. "Outcastes. They are only permitted to come into the village to sweep it. Those in the village are Mahars—low caste; but the Mangs have no caste at all. They are very ignorant."

"They didn't look any different," said Margaret, who always championed the underdog.

"They are very ignorant," repeated the Hindu severely.

"As if they can help that," said Margaret to Graham, as they walked towards the foot of the mountain. "They have no school."

They met groups of the villagers carrying bundles of babul branches for burning into charcoal, and had some fun in guessing as to who were Mangs and who were Mahars.

"I think we might try that bit," said Graham, as they scrambled among the great boulders that lay about the lower slopes. "It looks as if it leads to the top."

They climbed, zigzag, up the mountainside; but, as Mr Ellsworth had said, it was easy going. At last they gained the more level summit and walked up the slope.

"I—say! How grand!" exclaimed Graham, as they stood on the highest ridge, with the brown

plain behind them and the magnificent sweep of wooded, rocky hills that fell towards the sea on the west.

"Let's go a little way farther down," said Margaret.

Graham went first, and called to Margaret to be careful.

"This dead grass is frightfully slippery," he warned her.

They scrambled down a steep slope, clutching at bushes to steady themselves. Suddenly Margaret stopped.

"Look over there," she said. "What is that bundle thing? It looks like a baby."

They sidled along the slope towards the bundle lying on the ground. It was a little Indian baby. No one was in sight, but the baby did not seem to care; he kicked and gurgled contentedly.

"How perfectly sweet," exclaimed Margaret. "And it says '*dad-dad-dad*' just like an English baby. Its little bonnet and jacket and bangles are a dream."

The baby, with fine indifference to her admiration, blew bubbles.

"But where can the mother be?" said Graham. "We can see all along this slope; and she couldn't have got down over the precipice below us."

"Do you think the baby has been *left* here?" whispered Margaret, in horror. "Abandoned?"

She had read of such things being done in India. Graham looked grave, and hesitated.

"I don't know," he said slowly. "The baby *looks* well cared for."

They looked at the child, then round about them, in anxious uncertainty.

"We must wait for a while," said Margaret, "then, if no one comes, we must take the baby with us."

"We shall have to be jolly careful," said Graham, "down those cliffs."

They waited and listened.

"Do you hear anything?" asked Margaret, after some time, "like some one calling?"

"I heard a kind of wail now and then," answered Graham. "I thought it was some bird."

"It's down there," said Margaret, pointing over the cliff. "Oh, Graham! Do you think the mother has fallen over the cliff?"

"I'll go and see," said Graham.

Carefully feeling for foothold, he let himself down the steep slope and disappeared. After what seemed an endless time to Margaret she heard him scrambling among the rocks and bushes.

"It's the mother, all right," he said. "She has fallen down there and is hurt. It looks rather serious. Of course, I can't understand what she says, but I quite understand how overjoyed she was to see me. I knew she was worried about the baby; so I said 'baba *atcha*,' and she seemed to understand. Oh," Graham went on, "have you brought your first-aid kit with you? Don't say you haven't."

"Yes, I have," said Margaret. "I'll climb down to her."

"For goodness' sake be careful," Graham called after her.

Margaret bound up the poor woman's cuts and bruises, but she could do nothing for her injured leg, so she returned to Graham.

"You must go and get help," she said to him. "I'll stay and look after the baby."

Graham hurried away, and travelled down the mountain much quicker than they had ascended it that morning.

I'll go to the village, he thought. That Indian dispenser chap ought to know how to get help.

He ran with long strides among the boulders, then towards the road that led to the village. He found the Government dispenser preparing to depart, but he listened attentively to Graham's tale. Graham's respect for Indian officials rose considerably that afternoon. The dispenser at once took matters in hand with the greatest calm. He called a dozen or so villagers together, and produced a stretcher; he put together splints and medicines; and then the whole party set off for the mountain, Graham and the dispenser leading the way.

" What could the woman have been doing on the mountain ? " remarked Graham.

" She was probably gathering sticks," answered the Indian.

They did not go straight up the mountainside, as Graham and Margaret had done, but by skirting the steeper part ascended by an easier way, and at last reached the ridge from which the mother had slipped, leaving her baby helpless on the grass.

The agile Indian villagers soon climbed down the cliff; and the dispenser descended as briskly as any and attended to the injured mother. With the baby in her arms, Margaret waited for the woman to be brought carefully up on the stretcher. Slowly they all scrambled along the slope and at last gained the road, where women met them and took charge of the child.

It was dusk when Graham and Margaret set off

for home; and before they reached the river it was dark. They could not find the crossing-place, so splashed through the shallow water.

"Look out," exclaimed Graham. "We are on the edge of a deep ditch. I don't remember seeing it this morning."

They skirted the ditch and walked on, uncertain of their way. To their left an animal laughed, *Ha-ha-ha.*

"That's a laughing fox; the bearer told me so when I heard it last night," said Graham.

"It sounds mad," said Margaret. Then she laughed a little hysterically. "We got lost in Bombay bazaar," she said. "I hope we are not going to be lost in the jungle."

"Oh, look!" Graham suddenly exclaimed. "There is a house on fire—there, up on the hill."

"No, it isn't," cried Margaret triumphantly. "Mother has had every light in the bungalow lit to guide us. Hooray!"

Stumbling over the stony ground, they hurried joyfully on, and soon shouted the news of their return to the listening parents on the veranda.

On the Banks of the Godavari

Mang Women and Children

Winnowing

An Indian Well

The Seven Hundred Steps

I AM taking a day off to-morrow," said Mr Ellsworth. "Would anyone care to come to Trimbak with me and climb the seven hundred steps?"

Three hands were raised in assent.

"Only," said Mrs Ellsworth, "I hope seven hundred is a picturesque exaggeration; the weather is warming up."

They started soon after breakfast the next day with a substantial picnic lunch in the basket, and quickly left the group of European bungalows, with their gardens vivid with flowering trees, like huge bouquets of scarlet blossom, behind. Though the landscape is so brown in India in April, the trees are green and fresh, and flowers bloom forth as if refreshing spring showers have fallen.

"Really, Mummy," remarked Margaret, "some of the roads in India are very like those in England. This one is just like the road leading to our school."

She looked up at the shady, overhanging trees as they drove down a pleasant avenue.

"This is the city of Nasik," said Mr Ellsworth presently. "One of the holiest Hindu cities of India."

They bounced over a rough piece of road, passed a life-size image of a gaudily painted but hideous goddess in a niche in a wall, and then found themselves in the city, busy with people, noisy with the clang of the brass-workers beating out their pots.

Mr Ellsworth ran the car down to the broad river, and they all got out and walked on the bank.

" What great temples," said Graham. " Look at that chap bathing in the river. He drank some of the water—what filth! "

Great spired domes of temples lined the banks of the river.

" Here the legendary Rama, and his faithful wife, Sita, and his young brother, Lakshman, built a little hut for themselves in the days of their exile. That is why it is so holy," said Mr Ellsworth.

" Why were they exiled? " asked Margaret.

" False tales were told of Rama, and the old King, his father, believed them," answered her father. " So they wandered to this place; and one day, as they were sitting by their cottage door, a woodland nymph came by and, attracted by Rama's noble aspect, invited him to come and live with her folk, the Rakshas, who were half fairy and possessed magic powers.

" Rama treated her lightly, and jokingly suggested that Lakshman should go instead. This enraged the Raksha maiden, who went off vowing vengeance. A few days later Sita saw a beautiful white deer feeding a short way from the cottage, and begged Rama to go out and capture it for her. At first he refused to leave her, remembering the Raksha's threats; but at last he took his bow and arrows and, telling Lakshman not to leave Sita under any circumstance, went out to hunt the deer. It was a Raksha, disguised in this form, and all day Rama followed it, being led farther and farther from the cottage. Then, towards evening, Sita and Lakshman, anxiously watching for Rama's return, heard

a voice, disguised as Rama's, calling for help. Sita commanded Lakshman to go to his brother's aid, and at last Lakshman, though reluctant to leave Sita alone, went out. He was no sooner gone than a chariot drawn by goats flew over the tree-tops and alighted by the cottage. It was the King of Ceylon, brother of the Raksha maiden. He dragged Sita from the cottage, forced her into the chariot, and flew away. Rama and Lakshman returned to find the cottage empty.

"Then followed the long search for Sita. The aborigines of Southern India, one of their chieftains being Hanuman (they were *not* monkeys), helped the brothers in their quest, and one day Hanuman found Sita in the garden of the King's palace in Ceylon, mourning for her Rama. Many battles were fought before Sita was rescued. Then, the period of his banishment ended, Rama returned to his kingdom, for his father was dead, and all the people welcomed him gladly.

"And there," concluded Mr Ellsworth, "is the pool where they bathed, preserved to this day. But we had better go on or we shall not have time for Trimbak."

They camped by the roadside for lunch before entering Trimbak, which lay under a mountain ridged like great battlements. Trimbak is a little country town, and the approach of a car full of Europeans was quite an event. The Ellsworths were met at the outskirts by a number of people who saluted them cheerily. Several rushed to a tall shed, and, dragging open the tumbledown door, they hauled out a high, much-ornamented car, rising tier upon tier, with tinkling bells at every stage.

"I see we are going to be shown the sights," said Mr Ellsworth. "Eh? Oh, yes, this is Rama's car, used on festive occasions."

This was pushed back in its shed, and they all went on.

"What are those curious, untidy things up in that tree?" asked Margaret. "They look like great bundles of black rags thrown up in the branches."

"Black rags, indeed," laughed her mother. "They are bats, sleeping—the large, fruit-eating kind."

By this time they had entered the main street, which was very narrow, uneven, and dusty, and had accumulated quite a little crowd as their escort; two or three old men, numberless boys, two little girls, who kept up a refrain of "Baksheesh, Mem-sahib, baksheesh!" all the time, a half-witted fellow who danced before the party as they went, getting a great push occasionally for his pains from one of his neighbours, and two young bullocks, disturbed from their afternoon rest, who ambled on ahead looking decidedly annoyed by the whole business.

"Gosh!" said Graham, "this is India with a vengeance."

They walked along by the bathing pool, where steps running the whole length led down to the water.

"Here are the seven hundred steps," said Mr Ellsworth.

Before them rose a flight of steps in groups of three, with a flat space between. The Ellsworths began the ascent.

"How nice the village looks as we get above it!" said Margaret.

"Are we going to climb to the top of those hills?" asked Graham, looking up to the cliffs that towered above them.

"No," answered Mr Ellsworth.

They doggedly toiled on. At every corner they only found a further stretch of steps before them, winding round another corner. The sounds of the town below grew distant and softer. At one place they found a few little huts, and some boys came out and offered the pilgrims some champak blossom, the temple flower, sweet and beautiful, to lay at the sacred place above. At last the steps ended, and a narrow, level road ran below the cliffs that rose like a wall above it.

"Oh, what a rest to walk on level ground," said Mrs Ellsworth.

At the end of the short road was a small stone tank built against the cliff. A young Brahman was sitting on the edge of the tank, and he moved to allow the visitors to see what he was guarding. Above the tank the head of a cow was carved in the face of the cliff, so placed that from its open mouth there ran a trickle of water from a spring in the rock. This was the source of the river Godavari. Seventeen miles away at Nasik this little stream had become a broad river, sacred to millions from its association with Rama, holy and healing water to myriads of people. The Ellsworths quietly gazed at the spot.

They wended their way leisurely down the steps, enjoying the wide landscape below them, and, without so much attendance through the town, regained their car. But when Mr Ellsworth tried to start it the engine coughed, grunted, and stopped. Mr

Ellsworth looked severely at a few small boys who were standing near, and who fled in guilty confusion at his gaze.

"This is fine," he remarked. "I didn't expect this of them."

He and Graham investigated various interior parts of the car. They spent some time lying under it.

"What is the matter?" asked Mrs Ellsworth.

"I simply don't know," answered Mr Ellsworth. "I must see the headman of the town."

He went back to the houses, and after some time returned with the headman.

"He suggests that we should be towed back to Nasik by a couple of bullocks," he said, laughing. "Seventeen miles behind two bullocks! It would take all night."

"We can't stay here," said Mrs Ellsworth.

Mr Ellsworth conversed for some time with the headman, then came to the car.

"Some one, I am not quite sure who, is expected here this evening; somebody with a car apparently, and he might help. In the meantime we are invited to the evening meal at the headman's house."

"That is very kind of him," said Mrs Ellsworth. "Now you two will have the opportunity of eating a real Indian meal," she added to Graham and Margaret.

They all walked back to the village, and the headman led them into his house. The room had a few pieces of heavy black furniture, and there were striped carpets on the floor. Two or three women welcomed them smilingly. Mr and Mrs Ellsworth were given the only two chairs, and they all sat and chatted politely, Mr Ellsworth acting as interpreter.

After some time the dinner was brought in. The Indians took a delight in showing their visitors proper Indian ways. Before they began to eat a girl came with a pitcher of water and poured it over the guests' hands. Mr and Mrs Ellsworth, as the most honoured guests, sat at the table, and were given the only spoons available. Graham and Margaret were shown how to eat with their fingers, their host deftly picking up balls of curry and rice in demonstration. Little turnovers of meat, piercingly hot with chillies, and others filled with chips of coconut and sugar, appeared after the curry.

"I had no idea the Indians had such food as this," said Graham. "I thought they lived on chapatties mostly—those great round, flat, bread pancakes, tough and dry—but these curry puffs are wizard."

"They are too fiery for me," said Margaret, "but I love these sugary ones."

After the meal Mr Ellsworth and Graham went out to the car again, and tried to coax it to start; but it remained immovable. It was nearly dark.

"What is that light?" suddenly exclaimed Graham, as a beam of light shone around them. As he spoke the headlamps of a car came in sight, and soon a car purred up and stopped. A young Indian got out.

"Hullo," he said. He seemed interested to see Europeans in such an unexpected place. "Can I help you?"

"You can," answered Mr Ellsworth. "In fact, we have been waiting for you. Our car has crocked up. You don't happen to be going to Nasik to-night?"

"I am going farther than that," answered the young man. "I have been delayed too. I have to see the headman on a few matters, then I'll take you in tow. I'm a Forest Officer," he added.

After a short interview with the headman the Forest Officer invited Margaret and Graham into his car, and they all set off amid many salaams and thanks to the headman.

"Well," said Mr Ellsworth to Graham and Margaret, when they reached home, "whenever you two go out on an expedition something always seems to happen."

The Picnic

It was more than a month before the May holidays, but the young Graftons had been sent home from their hill school to escape an epidemic of measles. Already Peter and John were growing restive for want of something to do; even their elder sister Ray confessed to being a little bored sometimes. Their father was an engineer on a large station in the Deccan, and a very busy man; but Ray and Peter and John found that a country district in India did not exactly teem with excitement. The great brown stretches of open plain, relieved only here and there by a clump of vivid green trees in the distance, and a few peaked hills of fantastic shape, did not attract them; and they had long ago exhausted the interests of the bazaar.

One morning, when Peter and John had come near to a quarrel as soon as they had got out the bat and stumps, their mother came out to the veranda.

"I think it would be a good plan if you all went for a picnic," she said. "Limbu has fried some lovely patties for you. Just a nice walk out over the maidan."

Peter and John looked blankly disapproving.

"It's awfully hot in the middle of the day," said Peter.

"The spear grass is *frightful*, Mother," said John.

"It is all dead by now," said their mother. "But

don't wear stockings. Spear grass doesn't worry bare legs."

"But there is nothing to *do* out in the jungle," pleaded John.

"Oh, yes," said his mother, in that bright tone of voice that grown-up people adopt when they are suggesting something thoroughly unpopular. "Look for butterflies, and see if you can spot some new birds. Ray," she continued, as Ray came out of the house, "your father is having that meeting here this morning, and I am sure he would rather the boys were out of the way. We will pack up a nice lunch, and you can all go for a good walk, have tiffin, and then come back for tea. But don't go too far away."

"Good," said Ray. "We will go towards Flat-topped Hill, boys, we haven't been that way before."

The boys pulled up their stumps with heavy sighs; but when they set out they felt more cheerful. There is something exhilarating in walking over any wide, open space. In a surprisingly short time they seemed far away from the bungalow, three little dots straying over the brown landscape.

"Oh, look," called Peter suddenly, "there goes a herd of deer. I wish we could get nearer."

"The young ones are darlings," said Ray. "Some one in the village is trying to tame one; in fact, it *is* tame. I saw it the other day in their compound."

"There is a little farm over there," said John. "I can hear the man singing at the well."

They stood for a while and watched the two patient bullocks pulling the great water-bag up from the well, and waiting while the water gushed

out and down the gutter into a little plot of ground below; then they walked on.

Turning a bend in the path that led round a cactus hedge, they came upon two men. One was standing on a rough kind of stool, like a carpenter's sawing-stool, but much taller. He held a large, shallow metal bowl aloft in his hands, from which there fell a stream of grain, the husks blowing aside in the freshening monsoon breeze. The other man was filling another bowl from a heap of corn near by.

"Why, they are winnowing," exclaimed Peter. "I have never seen it done before. Look at the great pile of husks."

"Oh, I should like to winnow," said John. "Just to tell Mummy and Daddy that I had. Do you think they would let me? Hey!" he called to the man on the stool as he ran towards him. "I want to winnow. Let me do it."

The man stared.

"He doesn't understand your Marathi," called Peter.

But actions are understood in any country. John kicked off his shoes and clambered up one of the sloping legs of the stool; then, steadying himself by the farmer's arm, he reached for the bowl. The farmer now quite understood. Indians are always pleased when an interest is shown in their doings, and he gave John his first, and last, lesson in winnowing. John laughed so much at Ray's and Peter's remarks that he lost his balance and tumbled headlong into the soft pile of husks. Every one rushed to pick him up, and when it was found that no bones were broken the picnickers went off amid a chorus of salaams.

They partook of their lunch, or tiffin, as it is called in India, on the bank of a stream, under a banyan tree, which gives good shade. This great tree throws out long, root-like streamers from its branches; these dangle, lengthening until they touch the ground—then they strike root, and in time become trees themselves. One often sees the old parent dying and decaying in the midst of a group of fresh young ones.

The tiffin consisted of small meat turnovers, not baked in an oven, but fried in fat, very rich. There were also plenty of oranges and bananas.

"Look at all these ant-lion holes," said Peter, "hundreds of them."

The boys sprawled on the ground, digging out with sticks the ugly ant-lion that lurked at the bottom of his perfect little funnel in the sand, waiting for any unwary insect that might come too near the edge of the shifting, sandy slope. Ray lay and dozed uneasily on the hard ground. Presently she jerked herself upright.

"Come along, boys," she said. "Let's walk round by that mango tope, and then it will be time to go home. Oh, bother!" she exclaimed, "look at those ants all over the turnovers we left! We ought to have packed them up."

The neglected turnovers were black with the insects.

"Never mind," said John, "the crows will finish them as soon as we go."

They rambled towards the mango tope, which is a mango orchard, picking the beautiful rose-red fruit from the cactus hedge as they went. These fruit are as big as large plums, with a rather tasteless

but juicy interior. The skin is dotted over with tufts of soft prickles, which fasten on to the lips and work into one's clothes if not carefully removed. The pretty salmon-pink blossom appears on the plant at the same time as the fruit, and Ray stuck one or two in her topi. The grove of tall mango-trees, with their long, glossy dark leaves, looked pleasantly shady as the Graftons approached it.

"I say," said Peter. "There is a little hut over there, and an old *boodie* [woman] sitting at the door."

"Yes," said Ray, "the mangoes are nearly ready to pick, I expect, and she will be there to keep off anyone who might come to steal them."

"I shouldn't think she could do much," remarked John. "Let's go and talk to her. Yes, I *can* speak jungly Marathi; I talk to the *mali* [gardener] a lot, and Dad says he is *awful* jungly."

The old woman's jargon was too much even for John, though he gathered that her farmer employer did fear that his mangoes might be stolen, and that she was set there to keep watch.

"It's a good crop," said Peter, looking up at the oval fruit hanging on their long, string-like stalks.

At that moment the old woman sprang up and grabbed up a long, thick, bamboo stick, called a *lathi*. Giving a shrill defiant screech, she ran towards two village youths who were running towards the mango tope.

"She says they are the thieves," shouted John. "Come on, let's help." He snatched up a long pole.

Peter armed himself with a kind of pitchfork, and with war-like yells they rushed after the old woman.

"Boys, boys, come back," called Ray. But she was not heard.

The two youths, seeing a party of people rushing upon them, armed to the teeth, where they had expected only a defenceless old woman, hesitated, then turned and ran. Peter and John dashed on, shouting taunts at the thieves. They chased them down to the river, splashed across it on some half-submerged stones, and raced down an uneven path until they lost sight of their quarry in a steep ravine.

"That'll teach 'em," panted Peter. "Let's go back now."

They walked back along the stream.

"Look," whispered John, suddenly pointing up a narrow way that led into it. At the far end a grey, shaggy animal was standing looking at them. "It's a wolf."

Peter stared uncertainly.

"I know what it is," he whispered at last. "It's a hyena. They don't often come out in the daytime; but it's so quiet here among the rocks."

The animal turned and trotted away out of sight, and the boys hurried back across the river and joined Ray, who still stood by the mango tope.

"Boys!" she said, "what would Daddy say if he saw you chasing about after Indians!"

"Well," said Peter, "he likes us to be kind to the poor Indians. We have seen a hyena," he added.

"A hyena!" exclaimed Ray. "It might have turned upon you. They do sometimes."

"Not often," said Peter. "They are too cowardly."

" The old *boodie* insisted on giving us these three mangoes," said Ray, " she is so grateful."

" Good luck! " shouted both boys, as they swooped upon the fruit. " We are nearly dead with thirst," added Peter.

Though they peeled the mangoes carefully, very soon they all had a generous ring of golden-yellow mango juice round their mouths.

Ray looked at her watch.

" Gracious! " she exclaimed, " it's four o'clock. Mother expects us home for tea; and we are miles from home."

With cordial interchange of salaams with the old woman they set out for home. Mrs Grafton was on the veranda when they at last appeared, red with the scorching heat of the plains, grimed with dust, and very tired.

" Hope you have not been worried, Mummy," said Ray.

" Hope there's lots of lime juice made," said Peter.

" How have you enjoyed your picnic? " asked their mother, rather relieved to see their cheerful faces.

" Oh, we have had a perfectly super day," said John.

The Shirt

DHONDI was sweeping the steps of his Sahib's office. He used a broom made of the stiff mid-rib of a palm-leaf, split and tied together rather like a birch broom without the handle. He wore a ragged *dhoti* for trousers, and a more ragged shirt, for a large rent showed one of his shoulders. His feet were bare. He stood respectfully aside as his Sahib approached the steps, waiting for him to pass into the office. But this morning the Sahib paused, and looked at Dhondi with a half-humorous, half-pitying expression on his face.

"Do you know your shirt is in rags?" he asked.

"Yes, Sahib," answered Dhondi.

"You must get a new shirt," said the Sahib. "You must not disgrace the office, you know."

He gave Dhondi a few annas, then he walked up the steps and went in.

Dhondi finished his steps and went to sweep somewhere else. He was only eighteen, but his face was puckered and serious as he thought about the Sahib's words. He had not the money to buy a new shirt. A shirt and *dhoti* cost two rupees eight annas, a quarter of his monthly earnings. His father was ill, his mother had a little baby, and there were the little brother and sister to keep too. And if you count ten rupees as much the same as ten shillings you will see it was not much to feed a family on; it didn't run to new shirts.

The Village where John and Daniel worked

A Banyan-tree

Bathing at Nasik

The God Ganpati

When Dhondi had finished his sweeping he went and sat down in a corner and took from an old red handkerchief a *chapatti* made of coarse, country flour folded over a little curried *dal*, a kind of lentil. A drink at the tap washed down this tough, dry food. This was Dhondi's first meal that day; he might, or might not, get another before he went to bed.

On his return home that evening he found his family in festive mood.

"Darmu has been given a whole eight-anna piece," they told him. Darmu was the young brother. "A Miss-Sahib gave it him for holding her pony while she broke flowers by the stream."

Indians always speak of breaking flowers, not picking. Eight annas is a whole day's wages for a labourer, and Darmu had got it so easily!

Dhondi's thoughts at once went to the shirt he needed, but he had not the heart to claim the money, for it was the feast of Gauri to-morrow and the family were planning to go into the village for the festivities now that they had eight unexpected annas to spend. After all, he thought, eight annas would not buy a shirt; and if he hurried home he would be in time for some of the fun in the evening.

Gauri is the feast that is a kind of enlarged Harvest Thanksgiving. The Hindus give thanks to their means of livelihood then; the tailor does worship to his sewing machine, the cook to his pots, the clerk to his typewriter, the weaver to his loom, and so on. The farm-carts are decorated with brass-headed nails, and the bullocks' harness and horns with tassels and garlands. The animals are brought to the village shrine to pay their respects also, and

they are given nice food for the occasion. It is a happy feast, and Dhondi and his family enjoyed it thoroughly. But though he had washed it for the feast, Dhondi's shirt had suffered in the crowd at the fair, and when he saw the Sahib approaching the office door next morning Dhondi hid until he had gone in; he did not like to show himself.

Now the rains had come there was plenty to do in the plot of land near the cottage, and Dhondi worked there when he returned in the evenings. One evening, a week after the Gauri feast, he saw Darmu's 'Miss-Sahib' on her pony a little distance away, and saw Darmu running out at her call to hold the pony. It was the daughter of his Sahib! Dhondi watched her with interest.

She swung from her saddle, and walked down the uneven river-bank to gather a sheaf of oleander blossom, which gleamed, coral pink, by the water's edge. She soon had an armful, but there was always another tempting spray to lead her on. She leaned out over the moist bank, holding by a branch, as she plucked an unusually fine bunch. The branch tore from its parent stem, and with a cry the girl went down into the river.

"Dhondi!" screamed Darmu. But Dhondi had seen.

The river was swift with the rains. Dhondi ran by the bank, and saw the girl being swept along as she struggled with the current.

"Throw her something," panted Darmu.

Dhondi looked wildly round for some stick or rope, anything that might reach her. He snatched off his old shirt, and, holding it by one sleeve, threw it across the water, leaning precariously out from

the bank. The girl eagerly reached and seized the ragged cuff, Dhondi leaned back and pulled; but the strain was too great, the shirt parted in the middle, and the girl plunged deeper into the stream.

" Call those men," shouted Dhondi to his brother, and the boy ran screaming to some men who were passing. They ran down to where Dhondi hovered on the river bank watching the drifting girl. She was now in shallower water, lying face downward. They all waded into the water and lifted her out; she was unconscious. Placing her on a *charpoy*, the poorer Indian's bed, which is a wooden frame, laced across with coconut fibre-string, they carried her to her home, where she lay very, very ill for many days before she recovered.

As she gained strength she would come down from her room about mid-morning, and the house *hamal*, who is the masculine Indian housemaid, would have her long, wicker easy-chair ready for her, with the cushions nicely arranged, and the veranda blinds drawn to keep out the sun. He would be just finishing dusting and tidying the lounge inside, shaking up the silk cushions, brushing and dusting the polished floor. He is a slender youth, in spotless white shirt and *dhoti*, a clean grey jacket, and a black pill-box cap. Now the Miss-Sahib has come down he goes up to her room, rolls the mosquito net neatly over the iron support round her bed, makes the bed, dusts the room, tidies, in his own fashion, her dressing-table, hanging any necklace or suchlike over the mirror or on the picture nails, until all is neat and clean. He has the making of a perfect house-boy. No one who had seen him a few weeks ago, ragged and unkempt,

sweeping the path before his Sahib's office door, would recognize Dhondi now.

For this *is* Dhondi; he has come from living in a mud hut to be a promising house-servant. Indians are like that. His rescue of the Miss-Sahib has been rewarded. He gets fifteen rupees a month now, and his food and clothes; and he is already hoping to get Darmu into the house as a 'helper,' to take his place some day. For Dhondi will not be satisfied until he is a fully fledged bearer, able to set the table and decorate it beautifully with leaves and flower petals and tinted rice patterns; and at dinner-parties stand, in all the glory of a long white coat and *pagri*, behind his Sahib's chair.

Having finished the bedroom, Dhondi takes a piece of old cotton cloth to polish the furniture. It is a bit of an old shirt. It reminds him of his own worries over his own old shirt, and he smiles. He can, now.

The Cricket Club

It was a great day for John and Daniel when they left the mission school where they had been trained and came to live in Talgaon. Talgaon was quite a little town, with wide roads and shady trees, and a number of shops. The military camp was near, and the two boys were employed by Mr Jagtap, a Christian *dirzi*, or tailor, for the Indian soldiers' wives brought him much work—dresses for themselves, and shirts for their husbands.

John and Daniel, with all their worldly goods in small kitbags under their arms, found their way to Mr Jagtap's shop. He had been once to the school to see them, and he welcomed them kindly.

"Ah, you have come—good," he said, rising from his treadle sewing-machine. "Now, here is where you will work. I am glad you have come, for I am very busy. Come and see your room."

He led the boys to a little room at the side of his house, fitted with a tap behind a low wall in the corner for bathing, a shelf for their belongings, and a little brazier on legs, called a *sigari*, and a few brass plates and pots for cooking. This would be their home while in Talgaon, and it seemed quite satisfactory to the boys.

"Have something to eat," said Mr Jagtap, "and then you can come and begin work."

Mr Jagtap was delighted with their first day's work, and they went to their room to prepare their

evening meal quite happy. After they had eaten they sat at their door looking out into the roadway, and realizing rather blankly that they knew not a soul in Talgaon beside their master.

" Shall we go out? " suggested Daniel.

" All right," said John.

They mooned along the street, looking at the wares set out in the shops, which were long rooms, open all down the front to the street, and which displayed, in glass-covered counters, combs, brushes, socks, cottons, penknives, scissors, torches, belts, padlocks, pieces of silk, and countless other things—everything, in fact, but a book. Books are unknown in small Indian towns. This is a pity, for folk like Daniel and John would like a good book to read.

John bought a belt. The two boys were not high-caste, and if they had not been Christians they would have had to stand below the shop step outside and ask for what they wanted; they would not have been allowed in the shop—but being Christians placed them above caste.

It was near dusk when they returned to their room, and they sat for a while watching the passers-by.

" The boys at school will just be coming in from cricket," remarked John.

" Why, I was thinking just the same thing," said Daniel, and he sighed a little.

" I expect we shall get to know people after a while," said John, in answer to both their silent wishes. " Mr Jagtap says we shall meet a lot of people at church on Sunday. Let's go to bed."

They said their prayers, thinking of their friends of the school and of their own families at home, then

lay down on their hard sleeping mats and were soon asleep.

The daytime was really pleasantest, when the interest of the work and customers coming and going made the hours pass; but time hung on the boys' hands in the evening. If only they had had something to do. But, unknown to John and Daniel, Mr Jagtap had noticed this; and on the fourth evening, just as they were wandering out for their usual aimless stroll, they heard a voice behind them.

"Hey!"

They stopped, and saw a young man only a few years older than themselves hurrying towards them.

"Are you Daniel Shinde and John Bhalero?" he asked. "Yes? Well, I want to tell you about our cricket club. Can you play cricket?"

Daniel and John were all ears when they heard this.

"Yes," they both answered, and Daniel added, "John is a good bat."

"Oh, that's fine. That's splendid!" cried the new friend.

He shook hands with both the boys in the effusive manner that some Indians have; then shouted across the street to another man who was passing.

"Hey, Mr Battise. Come here. I have got two more for our cricket club."

Mr Battise, who was the village schoolmaster, hurried across the street, and soon John and Daniel found themselves in the thick of the cricket life of Talgaon.

"You see," said their first friend, whose name was Adhav, he was a motor-driver, "our Church

has formed a cricket club, and next month we are to play a match with the *wallahs* in the camp; they have a strong team. But some of our members are, you know, not young men. And they have not time to practise—and we want to beat the camp club."

"Come," said Mr Battise. "We are having a practice now. Don't stand talking."

They all went down the road, past the little Christian church and school, to an open space near by, where several youths and men were practising; and there John and Daniel made many friends and good scores that evening.

"Oh, master! Oh, Mr Jagtap!" cried our two boys when he came into the *dirzi* shop the next morning. "We have joined the cricket club."

"Aha!" exclaimed Mr Jagtap, rubbing his hands joyfully at the sight of their cheerful faces. "Now you will be all right. Is Mr Battise, the captain, pleased with your play?"

Mr Jagtap was rather anxious that his two young employees should not let him down.

"Mr Battise said I batted well," answered John modestly. "And Daniel bowled Mr Battise himself."

Mr Jagtap laughed at this, well satisfied.

"There are some very nice fellows in the club," said Daniel, as he settled himself contentedly on the floor in front of his hand-machine.

So there were no long, dreary evenings. John and Daniel wrote more about cricket in their letters home than they did of their work. At last the day of the match came. The temperature was over a hundred degrees in the shade, but it would be cooler in the evening.

The visiting eleven arrived in great form, and there was much joking among all the players, for, though they were not all Christians, they were all friendly—' cricket-friendly.' There were more high spirits when the visitors won the toss; then they settled down to the game. John and Daniel could see now why Mr Battise and Hari Adhav had been anxious for their eleven. The visitors were the better players; they had picked up some useful hints from the British soldiers in the camp, when they had been in India, and their score steadily crept up.

When the Talgaon Church Eleven went in they had a hundred and twenty runs to beat. Daniel was out first ball; but he had taken four wickets earlier, so he felt comforted. Adhav slashed about and made twelve runs, but he was too wild, and was caught out. Wicket after wicket fell, until Mr Battise and John were left to make twenty-four runs, or lose the match. They played steadily, a run here, two there, so the score grew; it was a hundred and eighteen. Adhav was nearly weeping in his excitement. Then John got his chance; with a terrific swipe he sent the ball skimming over the field.

"Boundary!" shouted Mr Battise; and they had scored four runs. Then, when the ball was bowled, Mr Battise shouted "Run!" again, and another two were added to the score. It didn't matter that Mr Battise was bowled a few minutes later; they had won the match.

At the Red House

If anyone in the village had asked who lived in the Red House they would have been told, "the Dalals"; and they would have been satisfied that this was so. Certainly the Dalals lived there, but others lived there, too. You can decide for yourself as to who owned the house.

Life in the Dalals' bungalow was beginning to awake from the profound quiet of the afternoon's rest. The *mali* was commencing his evening's watering of the plants that were ranged in pots round the house and bordered the drive. The chink of tea-things could be heard in the lounge, where the bearer was preparing tea.

Two brothers, eleven- and twelve-year-old sons of Dr Dalal, had, as usual, cut short the rest-hours and had been pottering in the garden. Suddenly they dashed round the end of the bungalow, across the veranda, and jostled into the lounge.

"Mother," they called, at the door of their mother's bedroom, "the bees have come."

Their mother was tidying her hair before coming to tea, and hastily thrust in the remaining pins.

"*Who* has come?" she said; then, "Tell Waman to bring some more cups and saucers."

"No, Mother," laughed the boys. "Not visitors. The *bees* have come back again."

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed Mrs Dalal, "what a nuisance."

This was the month of May, the school holiday in India; but a swarm of bees in May in India is not worth even an Indian load of hay, which is a small one. Except where the veranda reached to the roof, the broad eaves jutted out far from the walls of the Dalals' bungalow. The wild bees seemed to have said among themselves, "Here is something useful, better than overhanging rocks, for there are no bushes in the way. Let us build our honeycombs here." And again and again they hung their combs under the rafters.

As their father, back from visiting the hospital, their elder brother, back from the office of the engineering works of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway (G.I.P. for short), and their grown-up sister assembled with them round the tea-table, the two boys told of the return of the bees. They all went out after tea to view their unwelcome visitors, who were firmly established on one of the rafters. Already a broad piece of comb had been made, two or three feet wide, and nearly the same deep, and two or three inches thick, hanging from the woodwork. The comb was a dark, glistening mass of bees, all furiously busy. Occasionally one would fly off for more nectar; sometimes one would return, laden. As it approached it would quicken its pace and hurl itself into the midst of its fellows on the comb.

Roshen Dalal had gone back to the house, and suddenly her family heard her exclaiming loudly in her room. She looked cautiously out of her window.

"What do you think!" she cried. "A bee was actually making a mud case for its honey under my pillow—about as big as an almond. I might have

gone to *bed* on it. Oh! " she screamed, " They have been filling the centres of the reels of cotton on my dressing-table with honey, and stopped up each end with mud. How disgusting! "

" They are not the same kind of bees," said her father. " Shut your window."

That night, when the bees were sleeping, the servants, under Dr Dalal's directions, came with long poles with rags dipped in paraffin swathed round the tops, and, after lighting them, they reached from the upper windows and burned the great comb from the beam where it hung. Pieces of comb, dripping with dark-brown honey, were caught in buckets, a treat for the servants; but it was sad to see the bodies of burnt bees scattered about the path the next morning. Those who had survived hummed about the rafter for a while, then flew away. But while the honey season lasted the cry would go up, " The bees have come back! " all over again.

Under the stonework of the Red House there dwelt some millions of ants, and when Manek and Phiroze went to bed one night they met a procession coming from the dining-room, streaming through their bedroom and bathroom, and passing out under the door. Some were carrying aloft pieces of some pale substance.

" Crumbs from the dining-room floor, I expect," said Manek, and the boys stamped on a score or so; but the procession was unending, so they went to bed.

Now, it is the rule in India that the legs of any cupboard that contains food must be stood in tins that are filled with water. Ants cannot swim such a moat even to reach the food cupboard. But the

servants had neglected this duty. The day after the boys had seen the procession of ants Mrs Dalal went into a small godown, which is a store-room, to see that a special cake, covered with rich icing and decorated with tinsel, which was for Roshen's birthday-party, was all right. As she entered she heard an ominous rustling of paper. Great black ants more than half an inch long swarmed in and out of an open biscuit-tin, at the bottom of which lay a few untidy crumbs. They had found the moat dry, had driven away the little ants, and had finished the biscuits. Mrs Dalal snatched the lid from the tin that held the cake. An ant already mounting the side of the tin fell backward; but the cake was saved!

A Village Plot

It was morning, the thousand or so crows that inhabited the village tree-tops were quietening down, and the other birds could at last be heard. A little grass-green bird the size of a sparrow hopped its way up a peepul-tree, occasionally pausing to give forth its song. It had touches of scarlet on its head, a gay little bird; its throat pulsed with its repeated note, "*Tonk, tonk, tonk, tonk,*" like little hammer blows on a metal pot. It was the coppersmith bird.

The babblers (called the seven brothers because they are always together), dingy brown birds, whose feathers seem so loose that they look as if they will come out at any moment, scrabbled about under the tree, chattering, chattering perpetually.

The bul-bul, with its white patches on its cheeks and at the base of its tail, swung on a creeper over a veranda, twining cotton from stalk to stalk for its hammock-like nest, resting for a moment sometimes to sing its short, sweet song, which usually ended in a sort of musical choke.

The buff and brown fan-tailed flycatchers flitted and turned and fussed and flirted as they kept up a twittering conversation. The sparrows, clustered in a bush, chirped incessantly.

For there was a plot being hatched in the village, and all the birds knew it; but no one could say how it was to be frustrated.

There were other birds, outside the village, who

were not concerned with all the excitement; the little egrets, like pure white little cranes, perched calmly on the backs of the grazing buffaloes. It was a friendly arrangement; the buffaloes were beset by flies, the little egrets ate them. The great brown kites soared endlessly in the cloudless blue; occasionally coming down to look for some food (at which time any small bird would seek the shelter of a bush), or perch on some house or post, uttering their querulous, chittering cry. The jet black king crow, a little larger than a blackbird, with curving, forked tail, sat on a post looking for insects. When he beheld one he would leap up into the air, snatch it, and dive downward to the post again. "*Pee-oh, pee-oh*," he would cry, and wait for another insect.

During all this pother in the village two large birds lurked together in the foliage of a mango-tree, peeping and plotting.

"I must lay an egg to-day," said the hen.

"Well, my dear," replied the cock, "call on me whenever you need me."

They were Indian cuckoos; not grey like those who come to Britain (that kind can only be heard in the northern hill-country), but dark brown, and their call is not the same. These two put their heads together and decided upon the bird who should foster their chick; their plot, if not the bird, was hatched.

Presently the cock flew out of the mango-tree, making straight for another tree on the edge of the village, "*coo-ee*ing" as he went. At once there was uproar.

"There it goes!" "Stop it!" "Chase it!" "It is going to lay eggs in our nests!" yelled every bird,

big or little, as they swept in a mob after the enemy; for the cuckoos are alike, and none of the pursuers could tell if the pursued were a cock or a hen. The crows, being more powerful, soon outdistanced the smaller birds; they chased the cuckoo round the trees and up and down the village street, until at last he escaped.

Meanwhile the hen cuckoo slipped quietly into the chosen nest, which was deserted in the excitement of the chase, laid her egg, and as quietly retired. Her husband had simply acted as a decoy, while she was left in peace to lay her egg.

At length the birds returned to their nests, full of triumph that they had driven the intruder away; no one noticed that one nest contained an extra egg, so every one was satisfied.

Women of the Simla Hills

Carrying Ganpati to the Sea for his Bath

Travelling in Northern India

Ram Chandra goes to Work

THERE was joy in Ram Chandra's family when his uncle in Delhi wrote and told them that he had found the boy a good appointment as clerk in a merchant's office. Ram Chandra's father and mother had scraped and saved to give him a good education, and now—why, he might even become a merchant himself one day!

So he came to Delhi, feeling strange in the busy city after the quiet of the little home town but full of importance and of a keen resolve to get on. He was going to work hard. He sat all day on a stool at the back of the merchant's shop, copying out accounts, and returned to his uncle's house, where he lodged, at night. Then it was nice to walk in the bazaars or in the main streets, enjoying the lights and crowds and the fine shops filled with beautiful things—ivory elephants, blue pottery, brass pin-trays, candlesticks, and such-like, ornamented with blue mosaic on black enamel. The uncle was a woodcarver for a large shop, carving wonderful trays, tables, screens, and so on, for thirty rupees a month, which was thought good pay, though a rupee was less than one and sixpence.

Ram Chandra had been at work about a month; the long hours and the strangeness of his new life had made him feel a weariness such as he had never known before. Noticing the date on the office calendar more especially one day, he realized that it

was March, the month of the Hindu Holi festival, and suddenly he felt a longing for the old easy school life, when Holi was kept by everybody in the little town; such fun—everybody out in their best clothes to enjoy the sweet stalls, the joking, pranks, tinsel ornaments. Ram Chandra sighed as he thought of it all, then bent once more over the bills.

Strangely enough, his young cousins were in high spirits at the evening meal that night.

"Holi will be here soon," they cried. "The fair has come already."

"Do you keep Holi in Delhi?" asked Ram Chandra, delighted, looking forward to some lively evenings.

"Of course," they answered. "Oh, what fun we have!"

"I thought the Sahib-log and all the Moslems here would put a stop to it," said Ram Chandra.

"No," answered his uncle. "You will have three days' holiday. Offices and shops all shut."

Three whole days! Ram Chandra had never seen such a Holi. It is the Indian festival of the sun, much the same as the old Roman Saturnalia, as mad and merry, and as rowdy. Ram Chandra returned to work feeling quite cheered.

Perhaps, he thought hopefully, they even keep Dipvali later on.

He asked his cousins about this, and they assured him that they did. Dipvali, the Feast of Lights, comes in October, so it was a long look forward. But one day, a few weeks after the Holi feast, his master called to his employees as they were preparing to leave work.

"Remember, the shop will be closed for two days," he said. "It is Moharram to-morrow."

Two more days' holiday! Ram Chandra hurried home to his uncle and asked the why and wherefore of all this.

"Oh, yes," said his uncle. "It is a Moslem feast, a very great one. All the banks and offices close for two days, so the big shops close too."

It was not a feast really, but the Hindus do not concern themselves with Moslem matters. It is one of the most serious times in the Moslem calendar. For ten days they had been preparing for it, and on the tenth of the month which they call Moharram they held their famous procession. Ram Chandra loitered in the streets, curious to see how the Moslems enjoyed themselves, quite ignorant of the real meaning of the pageant that passed along the streets.

This is its history. Long, long ago, on the tenth day of Moharram, Husein, the son of Ali, a descendant of the Prophet Mohammed, was beset by his enemies on the plains of 'Iraq. Betrayed by treachery, he and his seventy followers fought against overwhelming numbers until seventy-one heroes lay dead upon the sand. His body was taken and buried in a magnificent mosque at Karbala a few miles from the scene of the tragedy. Every year Moslems gather in thousands in Karbala; and those who cannot go there mourn the dark deed in their own cities. Through the streets of Delhi the procession passed on the way to the great mosque; black banners waved, priests beat their breasts, and the mourners cried aloud, "*Husein*! Oh, *Husein*!"

" I like Holi best," commented Ram Chandra to a Hindu friend.

However, the Moslems were welcome to take their pleasures as they liked; Ram Chandra went off and had a good time in the bazaars and thoroughly enjoyed the holiday.

" There is a Christian feast next week," said Ram Chandra's uncle, soon after Moharram.

" What is it called? " asked Ram Chandra.

" It is called Easter," answered the uncle. " The first day is a fast—(the Christians call it Good Friday—it is the day that Jesus died); but two days after every one is very happy."

" Why are they happy so soon? " asked Ram Chandra.

" I don't quite know," answered his uncle vaguely. " But we have four days' holiday."

Ram Chandra watched the Christians on Good Friday, and saw them going, with serious faces, to their churches. Somehow he did not feel festive himself, but strolled quietly in the gardens, admiring the flowers and looking at the statue of John Nicholson, for he had been told that he was a great sahib in the old days. He saw the Christians going to their churches with great bunches of flowers the next day, and, peeping in, saw that they were like gardens with the lovely masses of blossom. The Christians seemed to be singing all day on Sunday, and all, as his uncle had said, looked happy. The next day was a holiday after Ram Chandra's own heart, and the Christians were just as able to enjoy it as the Hindus.

Ram Chandra was ready for anything pleasant now, and was delighted to find that the Hindu

Gauri feast was just as popular in the city as in the country. At this feast every one gives thanks to his means of livelihood, and he watched the clerks burn little sacrificial fires before their typewriters, trail some jasmine over them; and then, with salaams, they all went off to enjoy another two or three days' holiday.

It was not long after this that the good old Ganpati festival was held. Ganpati, the elephant-headed god, to whom schoolboys pray for cleverness at their lessons and merchants pray that they may be sharp in their business. New clay images of the god are made, painted prettily with coloured clothing and gold ornaments. On the last day of this feast the streets of any city are alive with people and the noise of trumpets and drums. The old Ganpati images, in little arks decorated with trailing wreaths of flowers, are carried down to the waterside, whether sea or river, according to the district, and are thrown into the water for their bath. Then the new images are set up in their place. It is a jovial feast.

There were odd days, like Coconut Day, when the Hindus went down to throw coconuts into the river Jumna and pray that the monsoon might cease. It was near the end of the rains, so it would cease in any case. Then a Moslem feast, called Bakr-id—something to do with killing a goat, and not popular with the Hindus; Ram Chandra had never seen so many police and soldiers patrolling the streets. The first Moslems were descendants of Ishmael, and their religion is partly related to the early Hebrew one; this goat ceremony probably is their version of the Jewish Day of Atonement. Be

that as it may, Ram Chandra got enjoyment out of them all.

Then began the scouring and painting of houses, hanging of festoons of coloured papers across the doorways, and the collecting of little lamps, for Dipvali was drawing near, that happy feast that celebrates the return of Rama and Sita from their banishment to the jungle, when all the people welcomed them with lights at every door and window. A good four days of merry-making, bonfires, and exploding crackers.

" I suppose there is nothing much more now until Holi next year," said Ram Chandra a little regretfully. " But I have had such a nice year," he added.

" Oh no," answered his uncle. " There is a great holiday in a month or two's time. The ' Burra Din,' a Christian feast; we have four days' holiday for that."

Burra Din means Great Day, and of course Ram Chandra's uncle referred to Christmas Day. Soon the Indian Christians began in their turn to prepare for their festival, specially cleaning their houses, and coming into the bazaars buying presents for their friends. Ram Chandra heard of great doings in the mission schools, of games, presents, and sweets, and was all agog to see how the Christians kept this great feast. Would it be as mournful as the Moslem Moharram? Not at all; they all looked very happy, went to their churches, which were decorated, and one could hear singing and merry-making in every Christian house.

Ram Chandra was curious to see how the British kept the feast, and on the evening of the Great Day a friend of his uncle's, who was head butler in a

rich merchant's house, allowed him to come and see the company at their grand dinner. The butler was full of importance and fuss, for he had a great piece of work to do. Towards the end of the great dinner he gave strict injunctions to one of the older servants.

"When you see me coming towards the dining-room door put all the lights out."

Ram Chandra was peeping outside the door, hidden by the coming and going of many servants. All the sahibs were dressed in black, but the Mem-sahibs and Miss-sahibs were in beautiful clothes, and their jewels were splendid, like a bride's. They were having great fun, with paper streamers floating about the room, and the company pulling lovely crackers between them; it was as good as Dipvali.

Suddenly the principal electric lights went out, and the head butler strode into the dining-room carrying a dish with a great pudding on it, and round the pudding—Ram Chandra's eyes goggled to see it—blue flames gleamed and flickered. There were cries of applause at its appearance.

"Do they worship the pudding?" whispered Ram Chandra in awe, to the old bearer at the door.

The old man knew well the manners and customs of the British.

"No—certainly not," he answered scornfully.

Ram Chandra went home to his uncle's house.

"The Christian's Great Day is a very nice feast," he said. "They all seem so happy," he added reflectively.

So ended Ram Chandra's first year of his working life in a great city; and, as you see, it had its lighter moments.

Jaganath

It was the feast of Jaganath's Rath Jatra, or Chariot Procession. All day the Hindu pilgrims, on foot, or riding in car, cart, or bus, were passing through the little village of Mahesh, thirteen miles from Calcutta, where the Datta family lived.

Naren Datta, just home from Calcutta University, moved restlessly about the sitting-room talking to his sister, Lakshmi, who was trying to read. She was only seventeen, but she hoped to go to college next year. Naren stopped in front of her.

"I don't know how you can read so quietly," he said, "with all the noise of the people passing. I have been asked to write an essay for the College paper, but—I don't know. I cannot—I feel restless."

Lakshmi laid down her book, smiling.

"You want to go down and see the fun," she said.

Naren made a quick movement with his hands, then laughed. He was slender, and delicately featured, and very fond of his sister.

"Perhaps so," he admitted.

At that moment a little boy about five years old stamped up the veranda steps and ran into the room.

"Ah! my little Krishna!" exclaimed Naren.

The little boy was Naren's married sister's child, and, as the gardens of their two houses adjoined, he spent a good deal of his time with his uncle, who

spoilt him outrageously. The boy now threw himself upon his uncle's knees and climbed up, nearly tearing his tussore shorts in his efforts.

"Why are so many people passing?" he asked. "I looked through the gate and saw—oh, hundreds."

"They are going down to see the Rath Jatra," Uncle Naren told him.

"What is that?" asked Krishna.

"Listen," said Naren. "The great god Jaganath has a bath once a year——"

"Once a year!" exclaimed the child.

"Don't interrupt," commanded Naren. "Jaganath has had his bath, and for sixteen days he has been sleeping, covered with piles of blankets—to keep him from catching cold," Naren added hastily, seeing another question coming. "Now," he went on, "to-day he is going to ride in his chariot to pay a visit to his aunt. His brother, Balaram, and his sister, Shubhardra, go in the chariot with him. Hundreds of men pull the chariot along with a big, thick rope. It is great fun."

"Take me down to see it," said Krishna.

"No, no," interposed Lakshmi, seeing that Naren was hesitating. "There are too many people, crowds and crowds of strange people—thousands of them; you would be frightened, Krishna."

"No, I would not," declared the child. He threw back his handsome little head. "I am not afraid of anything."

Naren put Krishna from his knee.

"In any case," he said, "it is time for you to go to your rest. Run along."

The boy ran off, and Naren stretched himself on a long wicker chair to sleep. It was very hot;

even studious Lakshmi slept. She was conscious of a servant coming swiftly on to the veranda and looking into the room, and as swiftly vanishing, and then she knew no more.

Brother and sister were both suddenly awakened by their mother, bursting into the room from the inner part of the bungalow, and by their sister, with her sari flying out behind her as she dashed on to the veranda.

"Naren! Lakshmi!" they both cried. "Krishna is lost."

"Lost," repeated Naren. "Why, he was here a little while ago."

"That was an hour ago," said his sister wildly. "Oh, where can he be? My darling Krishna!"

"The little rascal!" exclaimed Naren. "He must have gone down to see the procession——" He broke off as he thought of the child in the midst of those myriads of people. "Are you sure that he has not gone with one of the servants?" he added.

"I have questioned *all* the servants," answered the young mother. "They have all gone now to look for him."

"We must all go and look for him," said her mother. "Come, Naren. Come, Lakshmi."

The Dattas were educated Hindus, who did not keep to the old-fashioned custom of women being kept in purdah. They all hurried down the road towards the place of the procession. It was already in progress, for they could hear the bray of the conch-shells and the sound of the gongs that regulate the proceedings. Holding each other's hands lest they should become separated, the Datta family wound their way through the dense throngs

of people. Jaganath's chariot was in the roadway, a massive erection, mounting tier upon tier of carved ornamentation. In front was the full-sized figure of a man in red uniform, bearing a sword—Jaganath's body-guard. Before him were two life-size models of horses on springs, prancing like rocking-horses.

On the upper tier the god Jaganath and his brother and sister sat in a little alcove draped round with orange-coloured curtains. Jaganath, with his dark, ugly face and staring eyes, was not an attractive sight, but thousands of humble worshippers knelt by the roadside, bowing their heads to the ground or lighting little sacrificial fires before him.

When the Dattas arrived the priests were engaged in tying the enormous rope to another part of the chariot. There was much fuss and parade made of this. The priests were dragging out the ceremony to its utmost limit; this was one of their great days.

On either side of the road a seething mass of hundreds of thousands of Hindus joked, laughed, prayed, bought tinsel ornaments, snatched fruit from stalls, and behaved as such an excited crowd might be expected to behave.

"There goes the gong again," said Naren. "They are going to start the car, hold on tightly."

The pullers had seized the rope again. It had begun that afternoon fifty yards long, but now it was but half that length, for at each stage of the god's journey this rope became more sacred. As the men raised it in their hands hundreds of devotees rushed forward and snatched strands from it; widows begged for pieces, for anyone who gains a wisp of this rope is much blessed.

The men gave a mighty heave, and shouts went up from a thousand throats as the chariot moved on for another ten yards or so, while the people threw money to the god; this was carefully collected by the priests, who kept an eagle eye on anyone in the crowd who might be tempted to keep something for himself.

Suddenly shouts of laughter were heard ahead of the car, and the Dattas could see people pointing towards the end of the rope.

"What can they be laughing at!" exclaimed Naren testily. "I wish we could see."

The crowds round them were equally curious, and surged towards the car, sweeping the Dattas with them. Then Lakshmi cried out excitedly, "Look!"

At the head of the broad line of men pulling the car a tiny figure could be seen, manfully struggling at the end of the rope. It was Krishna. Indians are intensely fond of children, and the sight of the little boy's brave effort delighted them.

"He will be trampled on!" screamed his mother. "Krishna, come here."

He certainly was in danger; and the same fear seemed to strike one of the pullers near him. He swung Krishna up on to his shoulder, and the boy finished that stage of the journey in triumph before his people claimed him.

Mystery in Simla

HARI stood beside his master in the cloth merchant's shop and received various parcels that were to be delivered to customers. The pile on his arm grew weighty.

" That is all," said the shopkeeper at last. " Now hurry, and come back quickly."

Hari walked out into the busy Mall of Simla. It was 'the season,' and the town was full of people; Government officials from New Delhi, all moved up to escape the heat down on the Plains (it was the custom before India became independent); and scores of others who were in Simla for a holiday.

The Viceroy was in residence in Viceregal Lodge out on a neighbouring hill, and everything was very festive. The red-roofed houses glowed among the dense green of the steep, tree-clad slopes; the massive snowy peaks of the Himalayas glistened in the sun.

Hari went to cross the street of picturesque, gabled houses when he was stopped by the call of some ricksha coolies, and two rickshas, each with four coolies, dashed by, bells jingling, and the men's bare feet thudding rhythmically on the road. No cars or carriages were permitted in Simla, only the Viceroy, the Governor, and the Commander-in-Chief have that privilege; every one else had to ride on horseback, in a ricksha, or—walk.

Hari delivered his goods with amazing correctness, seeing that he had no list, but when he still had one or two articles in his hand he heard the whistle of the twelve o'clock train, and he darted down the road that led to the station; he couldn't resist the temptation. Many more visitors were streaming out of the station when he reached it, amid a jostle of porters and rickshas.

On the platform Hari specially noticed a pretty young Miss-Sahib standing by her trunk while three coolies, glaring at each other and snatching and struggling to get possession of it, looked ready to kill one another. This was their harvest time, when they earned the money that was to keep them and their families during the winter.

After the first minute of alarm at this fierce scene, the Miss-Sahib took matters firmly in hand. She allotted the trunk to the youngest and strongest coolie, a small suitcase to another, and a rug and an attaché-case to the oldest. Followed by these attendants, she started to walk out of the station when an elderly Sahib hurried in.

"Oh, there you are, Daddy," cried the Miss-Sahib. "I thought you had forgotten I was coming, or were too busy. How lovely and cool it is up here. It was a hundred and six in our carriage when we came through Agra."

"Well," said the Miss-Sahib's father, "it was fifty-six here this morning. Have you got all your luggage? You look as if you have. We can walk up to the hotel, it is not far."

Hari delivered the last of his things and hurried back to the shop.

The next day the Miss-Sahib, whose name was

Anne Hamilton, went shopping in the bazaars with a lady with whom she had made friends in the hotel.

"We must go into the Lakkar Bazaar," said the friend, Mrs Grey.

So to the Lakkar Bazaar they went, and wandered up the steep street, where in the open shops men made, for all the world to see, carved tables, trays, boxes, walking-sticks, and wonderful three-legged stands, from three feet high to three inches high, all carved out of one piece of wood, for holding up tables, little brass pots, or anything you please. At length they walked down towards the shop where Hari worked; he saw them, and recognized his Miss-Sahib of yesterday. One of the workers in this shop was sitting by the door post, ornamenting a cloth with gold wax, squeezing it out of a tube over the pattern in a free and skilful manner. Anne stood entranced, watching him.

"How clever!" she said. "And the gold wax on the green sateen is lovely. I must have it. How much?" she asked the worker.

"Seven rupees," answered the man, with that fine air that Indians always put on when they are asking too much.

"I will have it," said Anne.

"It is only worth five rupees," said Mrs Grey.

"Oh, but I have seen it being made," answered Anne. "That is worth something; it is not like buying a thing ready-made in any old shop."

"It is not finished," said the man.

"Well," replied Anne, "send it up to me at the hotel." She gave him the address. "And here is the money."

Early in the afternoon Hari made his way up to Anne's hotel with the cloth. She was on the veranda that opened out from some of the bedrooms; he saw her, and took it up to her.

" Oh, my cloth," she exclaimed. " Good."

She gave Hari some annas, and took her precious cloth into her bedroom. Hari went away well pleased. She was a very nice Miss-Sahib.

As Anne entered her bedroom Mrs Grey came knocking at the inner door.

" Some of us are going out to Summer Hill," she called. " Would you like to come? "

" Oh, rather," answered Anne.

" Come along, then," said Mrs Grey. " Bring a wrap with you, it may be chilly coming back."

Anne laid the green and gold cloth on her bed, snatched up a big silk scarf from a table, and, throwing it round her shoulders, hurried out to join the others.

It was a lovely little expedition through the leafy woods to Summer Hill, and Anne returned delighted with her first day in Simla. When she reentered her bedroom she looked round for her cloth. She would put it away in her trunk now—there was time before dinner. She looked here and there. Where could the servant have put it? Anne looked up at the top of the wardrobe, and the back of her bed; Indian servants had a way of hanging things up in all sorts of weird places. No, it was nowhere to be found, though she hunted everywhere. At last she called the servant.

" Where did you put the cloth that was on the bed? " she asked.

" What cloth, Miss-Sahib? " asked the man.

" A green cloth with a gold wax pattern. I put it on the bed," explained Anne.

" I have not seen it, Miss-Sahib," answered the servant.

Anne was puzzled. Perhaps Mrs Grey took it to show the others before I came in, she thought. But she felt that it was hardly likely that Mrs Grey would do such a thing. She went into the lounge.

" Anne," said Mrs Grey, " do bring that cloth you bought this morning. I want Mrs Hewlett to see it."

" I have lost it," said Anne. " I left it on my bed when we went to Summer Hill; and now it is nowhere to be found. The servant says he has not seen it."

Everybody in the lounge immediately had a suggestion to make to solve the mystery.

" The wind blew it out of the window."

" Some servant stole it."

" It has fallen under the bed."

But Anne did not believe any of them.

Suddenly one of them cried out, " I know! You say the boy from the shop brought it straight to you on the veranda; he must have watched you go, then hopped in and taken it back to the shop to sell all over again."

" But he looks such a nice, honest boy," demurred Anne.

" Oh, you can't tell," said the one who had this brainy idea. " Well, it lies between the hotel servant and the boy at the shop."

" We had better have them both together tomorrow," said Anne's father, " and hear what they have to say about it."

So Hari was sent for and accused, for it seemed like an accusation to him, of stealing his nice Miss-Sahib's cloth. The servant, worried that he might be blamed, tried to make Hari the culprit; but Hari indignantly denied that he had taken the cloth. He was almost ready to deny that he had brought it, he was so agitated. Anne believed him. It was a mystery, that was all. Perhaps the cloth would turn up some time.

" There is time to go up Jakko Hill before tiffin," said Mrs Grey. " Let us go and forget all about the wretched cloth."

They walked up the steep fir-wooded slopes to Jakko Hill, the highest peak in Simla.

" Who lives up here? " asked Anne. " I can see a little house over there."

" You would never guess," answered Mrs Grey. " A merchant of Lucknow, Hindu, of course, built a temple here in memory of his dead brother; a temple for the sacred monkeys to live in. And now we are nearer you can see the sacred monkeys."

They could—a score or so of them—and as Anne and Mrs Grey drew near several of the animals gathered round them.

" They don't look very pleasant," said Anne nervously.

She opened her bag to take out her handkerchief, and at once two or three pushed up to her in a threatening manner.

" Oh, don't open your bag," exclaimed Mrs Grey. " They think you are going to give them something to eat, and if you don't they will get angry. They won't do you any harm otherwise."

They walked nearer the little temple house. Mon-

keys sat on the steps, and on the gate-posts, swung on the branches of the firs and climbed on the roof. An attendant stood at the temple door, keeping watch over them.

Suddenly Anne stopped and looked at an old monkey that was sitting on a low wall.

"What has that monkey got round its shoulders?" she exclaimed in excited tones.

"It looks like a piece of old cloth," answered Mrs Grey.

Without another word, Anne darted towards the monkey, and, snatching the cloth from its shoulders, looked searchingly at it.

"It is, it is!" she cried, "I recognized the glint of gold on the green. Get away, you brute. Ugh! Fancy building a temple for thieving monkeys! It's my cloth."

At that moment the monkey whipped the piece of cloth out of Anne's hand and made off with it.

"Take it, you wretch," said Anne. "I couldn't touch it now."

The temple man came hurrying, and Mrs Grey, laughing so much that she could hardly speak, explained to him what had happened. He went off without saying that he was sorry; the monkeys were sacred: they were entitled to take what they pleased.

"It is no use complaining," said Mrs Grey. "The Hindus won't have their holy monkeys touched. But our windows in the hotel ought to have wire netting over them."

These monkeys, who are allowed to roam about as they please, come into Simla, and if the windows are not netted over, will enter the rooms and

steal what they choose. When Anne put her cloth on the bed, and, taking up her scarf, wrapped it round her shoulders, a monkey, all unsuspected, was lurking and peeping in the branches of a tree outside the window. When she had gone and the place was quiet it swung down to the veranda, ambled into the room, and, seeing the shining cloth on the bed, took it and solemnly imitated Anne by wrapping it about its shoulders. It had been the envy of all the monkey community that evening.

There were several happy people in Simla when Anne and Mrs Grey returned to the hotel. Anne insisted on going to the shop first to tell Hari of the finding of the cloth, and he was delighted to find himself cleared. His nice Miss-Sahib also gave him very good baksheesh. The hotel servant, now that everything was made clear, told everybody in the kitchen the story of the monkey, and there was much merriment. Anne was happy and triumphant that no one, after all, was a thief (except the monkey), in spite of the fact that her lovely cloth was gone. But she bought another just as good.

The Golden Temple

It was evening in Amritsar. Three boys were walking through the dusky streets to their home.

"Next week is Dipvali," said Gobind, the youngest, giving a little prance of delight.

"I don't believe you know what Dipvali is all about; you only think of the fun," retorted the eldest boy loftily.

"Oh, yes, I do," said Gobind. "It is in memory of when Rama returned to his kingdom from exile, and he was welcomed by his people with lights at every door and window."

All the boys were tall for their years, and slender and very handsome; they were Sikhs. Their father was a *subahdar*, or captain, in his regiment—Subahdar Baklee Singh. Singh means Lion, and is used as a title by all this military brotherhood, which is something like the Knights Templar of Europe in the Middle Ages. Amritsar is the holy city of the Sikhs, for there is the beautiful Golden Temple, which is as sacred to them as Westminster Abbey is to the British.

The three boys paused as they came in sight of the temple. It is not large, but it is covered entirely with gold leaf; with its many minarets, which reflect in the calm lake that surrounds it, it is a thing of exquisite beauty. A few lights twinkled here and there on the building.

"Did the gods build the Golden Temple?" asked

Gobind reverently. He was nine years old, and beginning to show an inquiring mind.

"No," answered the second brother, smiling. "Ranjit Singh built it, the great Ranjit Singh who fought against the British Raj. He was angry when some one showed him a map of India with so much of it marked red, meaning that it was under the British Raj, and said, 'Oh, it will be all red some day; take it away.' And so it is, now; but we are proud of being part of the British Empire, and of our new King-Emperor."

This was in the autumn of 1939.

"Yes," said Nanak, the eldest boy, "Father expects to be called to fight for the King-Emperor soon."

"Soon!" exclaimed Gobind. "Not before Dipvali! That would spoil everything."

Nanak did not answer; his mind was too full of a scheme, or rather a longing, to pay attention to his little brother.

When the brothers reached their home they went to their mother's apartment, and found their father there too. Their mother looked as though she had been weeping, but she greeted them with a fond smile.

"I will leave you now," said the Subahdar to his wife. "I have many things to do." He turned to his boys. "The King-Emperor has called our regiment for service," he said. "We leave in a few days."

Nanak followed his father from the room.

"Father," he said imploringly, "cannot I join the regiment and go with you?"

"No, boy," answered his father. "You are only

sixteen; attend to your studies. I leave your mother in your care, and also your young brothers."

"If I can care for my mother and my brothers I can fight," exclaimed Nanak bitterly, as he turned away.

"You speak like a child," said his father. "If you cannot control yourself you will never become a true Khalsa. Perhaps I did not well to name you Nanak."

This was the name of the founder of the Sikh religion, who was born in the fifteenth century A.D. He forbade caste and idolatry, and preached the fellowship of man. The Khalsas are the chief and elect ones among the Sikhs; they perform a ceremony at their institution of the Baptism of the Sword, drinking water that has been stirred with a dagger, and eating cakes made of fine flour. They renounce wine and tobacco, and adopt the "five *k*'s," five things whose names begin in the Sikh's language with *k*; *kes*, long hair; *kaccha*, short trousers; *kankan*, a comb (to keep up the long hair); *kripam*, a dagger; and *kangha*, an iron armlet.

So Baklee Singh went to the war, and his boys, Nanak with less heart for it than usual, prepared for Dipvali, the Feast of Lights. For days multitudes from all over the Punjab crowded into the city; and on the great evening of the festival every street and alley was packed with people, all moving towards the Golden Temple. Near by was a huge tent, where, with marvellous organization, were stacked and labelled thousands of pairs of shoes belonging to the worshippers. The surrounding wall and the thirty-foot marble walk round the temple were one dense mass of people. The sun

set, its crimson glow reflected in the calm pool round the temple, rivalling the golden sheen of the building. As darkness came on the lights began to gleam; along the edge of the marble way and down to the water's brim thousands of little cups, each holding a light, twinkled, the reflection doubling their number; while the temple itself and the surrounding buildings blazed with electric lights. Then came the fireworks. The people sat entranced at their magnificence until, as by common consent, they broke out into a psalm from their sacred book, the air trembling at the volume of sound.

The years came and went, and the family heard from time to time of Baklee Singh's movements. Nanak became old enough to enter the army, and he, too, went to the war. He had gone when his father returned, too badly wounded for service, but still an unwilling pensioner.

"I could still have fought," he said. "What is the loss of a leg? But my colonel compelled me. But I have seen the King-Emperor; he came out from his palace in Britain to greet us. He sat high in his car to wave to us as he passed through our cheering troops. He wore no hat, though the sun was hot; he was lean, and brown; he is a *man*, our King-Emperor."

Baklee Singh limped into the Golden Temple to give thanks as victory after victory was proclaimed; and when Nanak returned, decorated by the King-Emperor himself, his cup of thanksgiving was full.

Adventure on the Frontier

AHMED was old when he came to the great mission school on the Frontier—nearly fifteen; but he could not read or write. But even the Pathans were beginning to think there was some use, after all, in such an accomplishment. At any rate, Ahmed's father insisted that he should come, and come he did, striding into the classroom with a knife in his belt and a loaded pistol in his pocket. He sat at his desk and looked curiously, and rather scornfully, about him.

What a place! he thought. To allow Hindus, shop-keeping Hindus, to come and sit beside Pathans in class! But they will be kept well in their place I expect.

Ahmed was, of course, a Moslem.

Most of the pupils looked askance at the new boy, though they found that he learned quickly and easily. The next day, however, they discovered that he had a pistol on his person. One of the boys, in moving between the desks, stumbled over Ahmed's foot; Ahmed exclaimed angrily, and two or three boys saw him clap his hand to his pocket, so they guessed. They went to the master.

"That new boy, Ahmed, carries a loaded pistol," they told him.

"Loaded!" the master repeated. "Well, let him be. He will soon learn our ways; and I will get him to give his pistol to me."

That evening the boys went to cricket practice, and Ahmed was put with the newer boys who were learning the game. They all hoped to be in the first eleven some day, and to go to other schools for matches. Their captain was a tall Punjabi Hindu, a patient instructor.

" Go and stand over there," he said to Ahmed. " Arjun will tell you what to do."

" I am not going to do what either you or Arjun tell me," answered Ahmed.

" But you must obey Krishna," said another boy who was standing near. " He is our captain."

" Obey a Hindu! " exclaimed Ahmed, with contempt. " I am ashamed that you, Husein, should do such a thing."

Husein was a Pathan, and a Moslem, but he only smiled.

" Oh, we have got over all that sort of thing in this school," he said. " It is the boy who is good at his work and at games who takes the lead. Krishna is a splendid cricketer."

" Well, let him *play* his cricket," retorted Ahmed, as he walked off.

" Oh, let him go," said Krishna patiently. " We'll get on with the practice."

Ahmed never really settled down to the school ways, but obeyed rules under protest, and was a constant anxiety to the masters, to say nothing of the boys, and after six months he went back to his village; and his mother, who ruled all family affairs, allowed him to remain at home. She was an ardent Moslem, and encouraged Ahmed to put himself under further instruction in the Moslem faith.

The Mullah of the village was a fiery Moslem,

which suited Ahmed; he had found the mission school too gentle for his taste. Many hours he spent with the Mullah, and would return to his home with a wild, reckless manner that alarmed his more peaceable father.

"You should not have let him leave school," he said to his wife. "We shall have trouble with Ahmed later on."

Not many miles from Ahmed's village was one of the Frontier stations with a few British officials and the small garrison that was necessary for keeping order in that turbulent part of the Empire. Brian and David Johnson, sons of the Chief of Constabulary, were home from their hill-school for the winter vacation. Indian hill-schools close for three months in the winter because of the cold. Most of the pupils' homes are on the Plains, but David and Brian merely moved from one hill-station to another. The weather was fine and pleasantly warm in the daytime, and the boys looked forward to a good time.

"I say," said Brian, the elder, the day after their arrival. "Dad has promised me another pony. He says I look like a Pathan on a donkey on Tinker. I knew I was too big for him."

"Oh, well," said David. "Then I can have Tinker, good. When is the new pony coming?"

"To-morrow," answered Brian.

Brian was delighted at the prospect of a new pony, especially as dear old Tinker was not 'going out of the family.' He lay awake that night listening to the *crunch, crunch* of the Pathan sentry's footsteps as he patrolled the compound throughout the night with loaded rifle and fixed bayonet. Other sentries

patrolled other compounds, permanently on guard, for there was always possible danger lurking near.

The next morning the new pony was brought in by the syce, the groom, and all the Johnson family came out to admire it.

"Now remember, boys," said Mr Johnson. "The syce must ride *with* you; no going on ahead, and no going beyond the watch-tower."

"All right, Dad," said the boys. "Good-bye, Mother."

They trotted away, calling to Gulu, their little terrier, who was all agog to be off.

"What's the matter, Ahbul?" asked David presently of the syce. The man was swaying in his saddle and was shaking.

"Nothing, Baba," answered Ahbul. "Only a little fever."

"A *little* fever," repeated Brian. "Why, you look as if you will fall from your horse. I say, you'd better go back."

"Not to leave you and David Baba," answered the man.

"You can't go on like this," said Brian. "Listen, we will just have a gallop round the compound, we won't go outside the gate, and come back. You go back, or we shall have to carry you back."

"You promise, Baba?" asked the syce doubtfully.

"We promise," said both the boys.

The man slowly turned his horse and went back towards the bungalow.

"We'll ride round under those eucalyptus-trees," said Brian. "That will give us a good canter. Perhaps we can get one of the sepoys to come with us to-morrow. Ahbul won't be well enough."

It was pleasant under the tall eucalyptus-trees, the scented, ash-like leaves making a carpet for the horses' hoofs. The gardens round the distant bungalows were full of flowers. Through the gateway the boys could see the sandy, desert country stretching drearily away into the distance.

"What is Gulu after?" suddenly exclaimed David. "Look, he is chasing something."

Brian stood up in his stirrups.

"It is a jackal—a *lone* jackal, so probably mad," he said. "Gulu! Gulu! Come back! If he catches it he will get bitten. Stay here, David. I will call him back."

"You never will," predicted David.

Brian put his pony to a gallop; through the gate, and out over the desert, shouting to Gulu, a Gulu deaf to everything but his chase. Down the road they careered, leaving the station far behind them.

As Brian reached a bend in a rocky slope he suddenly pulled up just in time to avoid riding over a figure lying in the road. It was a young Pathan, evidently thrown from his horse; yet the animal was standing near, as if unwilling to leave its master. Brian swung from his horse and bent over the young Pathan, who was hardly more than a boy. Blood was trickling from a wound in his head. Brian unwound the Pathan's *pagri*, and bound it more tightly over the wound. Then he dragged the youth into a sitting position. After a while the Pathan opened his eyes and murmured something.

"Keep quiet," commanded Brian. He looked about him.

Good gracious! he thought. I am nearly down by that village. Whatever will Dad say to me!

His attention was recalled to the Pathan, who spoke in a stronger voice.

" My horse," he said.

" Well, it's here," said Brian.

The Pathan weakly pointed to some twigs of a thorny babul-tree that lay by the roadside, and Brian understood. He went to the Pathan's horse and saw that it rested the hoof of its near leg very lightly on the ground. He gently raised it and looked; a great thorn was embedded in the hoof. He turned to the Pathan.

" I can do this," he said.

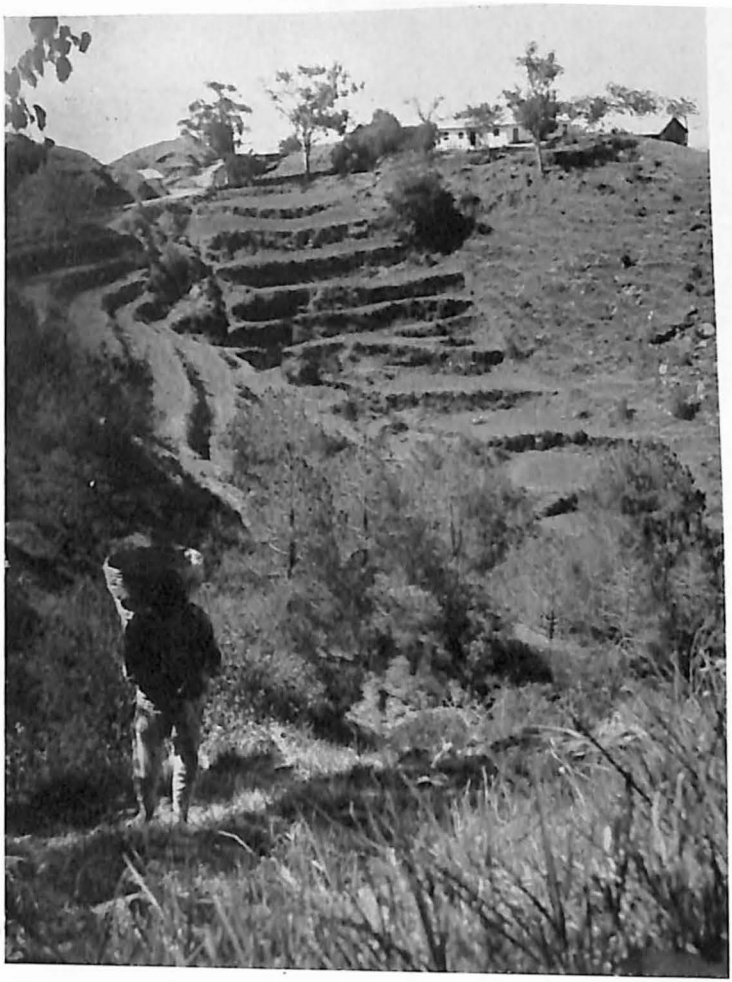
He took out his jack-knife, and, opening a sharp blade, slipped it between the horny hoof and the thorn. The horse hardly flinched as Brian drew the great black thorn out. The young Pathan looked on with solemn interest.

" Come," said Brian, standing upright. " I will help you on to your horse, and take you into the village."

He helped the Pathan to his feet. With a struggle the boy mounted his horse, and, as he steadied himself by Brian's shoulder, they got safely to the village. A tall man came out from a house; it was Ahmed's father, for it was Ahmed on the horse. Ahmed spoke rapidly, too rapidly for Brian to understand; and the father helped his son to the ground and into the house. Several men hung about their doors, looking suspiciously at Brian, but Ahmed's father hurried out of his house and mounted the horse.

" Mount," he said to Brian. " I will accompany you, my son's friend, back to the station."

Brian rode with the Pathan through the village



Terraced Fields of the Simla Hills

Statue of St Francis Xavier, Goa

in perfect safety under his protection. At a short distance from the compound gates the Pathan stopped.

"I will leave you," he said.

He took Brian's hand, and, bending over it, placed it to his forehead and then kissed it.

"You have saved my son from much trouble," he added brokenly.

"Oh, it was nothing much," said Brian.

"No, I must tell you," said the Pathan. "My son was a fanatic, trained by the Mullah, that son of evil. He had vowed to gain merit by killing some Christian or Hindu. I had just discovered it. But your act of kindness has broken that vow. He can never do you or any Christian harm now. You have saved him, and your people." The Pathan turned his horse and trotted away.

David was waiting anxiously at the compound gate.

"Wherever have you been?" he asked. "I was afraid to come out, and afraid to go home."

Brian told him briefly, adding, "I must go and tell Dad at once." And they galloped home.