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provide one of the best
ons of Tibetan Buddhism yet
in English, and form a
ition of the work of the
ed French authority on Tibet,
David-Neel.

there. Many of the people among whom he moved were Tibetans and, in particular, Mr. Pallis came into contact with certain lamas living on this mountainous southern border of Tibet.

He was deeply struck by the fact that in so many of the Tibetans a lively temperament and physical vigour were able to co-exist with gentleness and serenity of spirit, and this led him to embark on a closer study of the lamas' teachings.

Three years later he returned to the East; and in Sikkim and Ladak, two Indian states bordering on Tibet, he found Tibetan monasteries set up, and a way of life identical with that over the border.

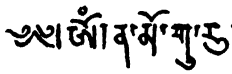
He studied carefully the Buddhist Tradition under the guidance of four profound thinkers from among the lamas, and the result of his study is set forth in several chapters

Madame David-Neel's is not the only name that comes to mind in connection with this book. One thinks too of Mr. Peter Fleming, for *Peaks and Lamas* is, in the first place, an absorbing travel and mountaineering story.

Mr. Pallis's accounts of mountain-climbing on the roof of the world include the scaling of the 22,000 ft. Central Satopant'h Peak, and his descriptions of the wonderful Himalayan valleys and the peoples with whom he comes in contact are exceptionally vivid.

Indeed, this book, with its adventure element, its study of Buddhism and its fascinating survey of Tibetan art and living, has a treble value, which is enhanced by the addition of many beautiful and unusual photographs taken by the author and his friends.

PEAKS AND LAMAS



TO

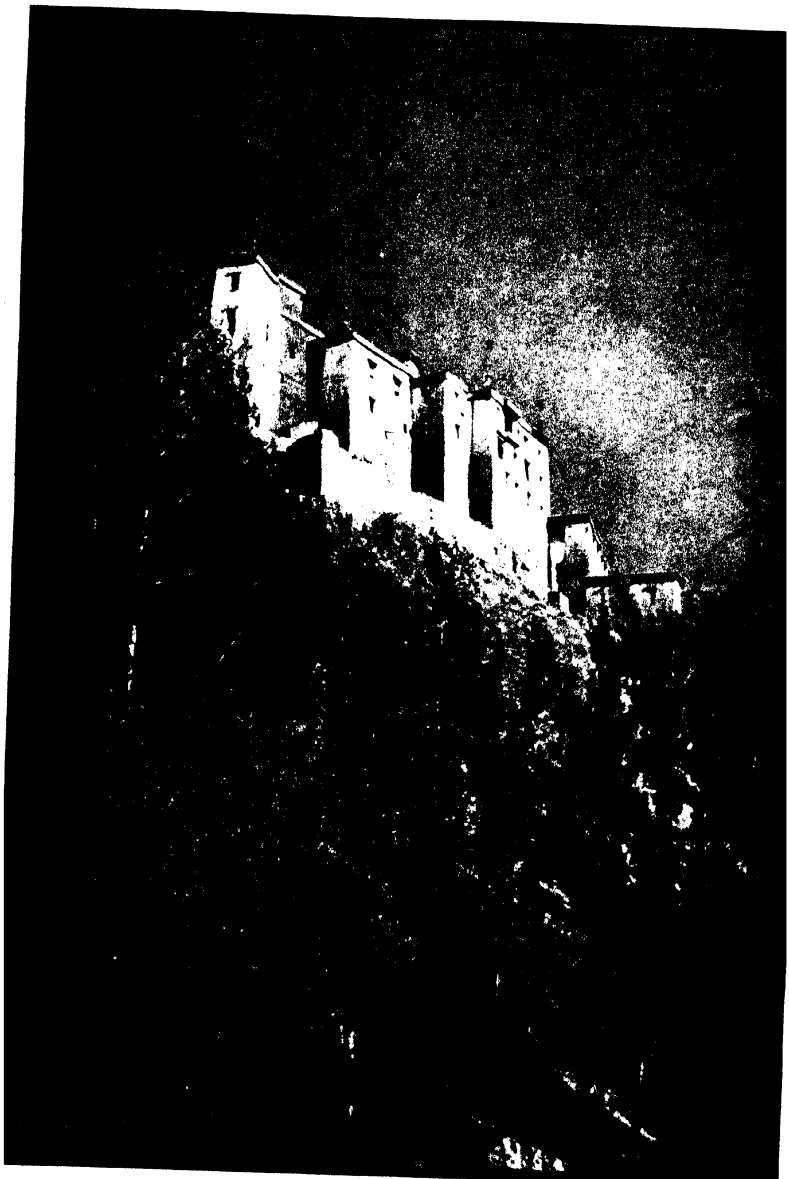
THE FOUR LAMAS

THE HERMIT ABBOT OF LACHHEN
THE LAMA DAWA, BURSAR OF SPITUK
THE LAMA-PAINTER, KONCHHOG GYALTSAN OF P'HIYANG
THE LAMA WANGYAL, OF DREPUNG, LHASA

Who for my benefit and for the good of all creatures
set in motion the Wheel of the Doctrine

THIS BOOK

IS REVERENTLY DEDICATED



"IF I FORGET THEE O JERUSALEM
Monastery at Likhir, Ladak

PEAKS AND LAMAS

By

MARCO PALLIS

With one plate in colour, ninety-five photogravure illustrations, and three maps



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Introductory Notes

A FORMAL preface would serve no useful purpose in this book. All that had to be said has found a better place in the actual narrative: there is no object in preparing the reader's mind for things that he will discover soon enough for himself. I shall therefore confine myself to giving a few explanations of a purely practical nature, concerning the spelling of place-names and the use of special terms. At the same time I shall discharge the pleasant duty of thanking the many friends, without whose help the book could neither have been written nor the work done which furnished the excuse for writing it.

Spelling of Indian and Tibetan Names. I have all along tried to reproduce the correct sounds, as spoken, and have disregarded the original spellings. Therefore the name of a celebrated monastery in Ladak, though spelt Himis on maps, is here written Himi, since in conversation I have always found the s to be muted. Similarly in referring to a Tibetan valley that lies near the north frontier of Bhutan, I write Hlobrak, instead of the orthographically correct Lho-brag. The name of a certain divinity called Chenrezig is so written here, though by its spelling it would be Spyan-ras-gzigs. The book is intended in the first place for the general reader, not for scholars; the latter will in any case know what the spelling should have been. The only exceptions to this rule of writing phonetically, are names such as Lhasa and Darjeeling, which are now practically English words. To have turned Lhasa into Hlasa, because it is so sounded in Tibetan, would have been pedantic and confusing.

In the Tibetan language, generic terms derived from places are made by the addition of the suffixes -pa, -wa or -ba. Thus a man of Ladak is Ladakpa, a Londoner is Londonwa. By this method many circumlocutions like " a man of Kham " can be avoided. I have therefore permitted myself its free use: in the example given I should simply say Khamba.

Phonetics. Vowel sounds may be taken as being roughly like the continental ones, say in Italian. The diphthong *au* in Indian words and the modified vowels *ö* and *ü* in Tibetan should be pronounced as in German.

In a few Indian words stress accents have been added, wherever the tendencies of English were likely to predispose people towards wrong accentuation. Nine Englishmen out of ten, who have not had some connexion with India, will call the capital of Kashmir, Srinagár, instead of the correct Srinágar, unless the stress is marked as I have shown it.

Aspirated consonants need special attention. Both in the Indian and Tibetan languages the h sound must be distinctly pronounced, even after p or t. To make sure that no one falls into the error of reading ph with an f sound, or th as in "then," I have marked an apostrophe thus: p'h, t'h. In the word *t'hanka*, meaning a painted scroll, the t'h should therefore be spoken as in "that *h*ouse."

For the sake of accuracy I have followed scholars in indicating a particular sort of t and d sound that is found in Tibetan thus: ṭ and ḍ. They occur in words where the main consonant is followed by a muted r, which lends to the preceding letter a slightly explosive character. To produce it, the tongue must be pressed hard against the palate. The words *Ṭulku*, an Incarnation, and Ṭashilhunpo, the great monastery near Shigatze where the Panchhen Lama resides, are a case in point: so also is Ḍikhung, the name of another monastery.

Use of the Terms "Tradition" and "Lama." In treating of doctrines, both Hindu and Tibetan Buddhist, I have been faced with a difficulty over the choice of terms to express certain fundamental ideas. The chief trouble has been over the use of the word "religion," which seems unsatisfactory when applied to the two examples mentioned, for they differ markedly in their modes of thought from that of Christianity, Islam and Judaism, the three typical religions of the world. In the religions the doctrine, though necessarily metaphysical in its essence, has been expressed in a special manner suitable to the mentality of peoples in whom sentimental tendencies were powerful. It is this concession which characterizes the "religious" point of view properly speaking, affecting the doctrinal forms. The Personal aspect of Divinity is emphasized, Knowledge appears as Faith, moral and social interests are greatly stressed,

as well as oppositions such as "believers and heathen." I do not say that these limits are not transcended in principle; but religion is too constantly associated in men's minds with a certain type of organization and a certain outlook, to allow of its being applied, without grave danger of misinterpretation, to doctrines where the point of view is very different. Of all possible choices, the word Tradition seems the best. Another alternative, "philosophy," is even less satisfactory than "religion"; for it is too often associated with closed systems and with the persons of their founders. I therefore reject both such phrases as "Hindu religion" or "Tibetan philosophy" as being misleading; I will refer to them as the "Hindu and Tibetan Traditions." To bring out the distinction still better, I would say that "the Christian religion is a special mode of Tradition peculiar to the West."

Tradition, because of its comprehensive character, is not easy to define; but a few indications may make it clearer. It embraces the whole of a civilization, in all its modes and departments, so that it cannot be said of any element that it exists independently of the traditional influence; there is no place for a "profane" point of view. A traditional civilization has its roots fixed in a doctrine of the purely metaphysical order, beyond the limitation even of Personality. This doctrine gives to the whole its principle or sufficient cause. The other constituents of the Tradition, whether ethical, social, or artistic, down to the most petty activities of daily life, all derive their authority from this doctrine, to be exercised within their prescribed spheres. Ideas of a metaphysical order are the cement which binds every part together. The whole body of thought must be viewed as a hierarchy, with pure metaphysic at the head.

The mechanism by which the Truth is made to circulate through the body is the Tradition from Master to pupil, which stretches back into the past and reaches forward to the future. By the doctrine so handed down, all parts are related to one another; they derive from it both stability and elasticity. No set boundaries can be recognized by Tradition as a whole; it can only be taken as the equivalent of Knowledge itself.

When employing the word in its full sense, I have always been careful to spell it with a capital T: only when using it in the ordinary loose way, as an equivalent of custom, have I

written it without a capital. Two examples will bring out my meaning:—We have the "Tradition of Buddha," but the "traditions of Harrow."

A similar distinction occurs in the use of the words "Lama" and "lama." Spelt with a capital, it is used in its technical sense of either a saint, a personal spiritual director, or else one of those abbots in Tibet who are venerated as Incarnations of their predecessors—they are often, but improperly, spoken of as "Living Buddhas." When, however, I have only wished to refer to clerics or monks, which is the usual meaning when speaking of lamas in English, I have used the small l. Thus we have "the Lama who founded the Yellow Order of monks," but "a group of lamas in the village."

In speaking of the Tibetan Buddhist Tradition I have never used the term "Lamaism," which has been much in vogue among recent writers on Tibet. The form of the word is offensive, like Romanism or Papism: some of those who introduced it meant it to be so, though others have merely copied it innocently or thoughtlessly. I hope that it will be abandoned by everyone.

In regard to the word "native," the context usually shows whether it is legitimate to use it. That it can be insulting has been recognized by no less an authority than Signor Mussolini, who some years back forbade its use in referring to the inhabitants of Italian Somaliland. But there are many cases where it is quite inoffensive, so I have not felt bound to avoid it in all circumstances. While a phrase like "experience in ruling natives" sounds contemptuous, there is no objection whatsoever to speaking of "native arts."

Photography. Most of my illustrations have been taken from photographs by my companions on the two expeditions. For 1988 they are mostly by C. F. Kirkus and Dr. Charles Warren; for 1936 some of the Sikkim ones are by J. K. Cooke, some by R. C. Nicholson, one by F. S. Chapman, while all the Ladak ones are by R. C. Nicholson. None of these illustrations is signed; I have only added the names underneath if the photographs have been taken by friends not belonging to my own parties. I have much pleasure in acknowledging the privilege of reproducing these extra photographs, which have filled important gaps. I append a full list:—

H.H. the Maharaja of Sikkim	Tibetan paintings
The Rani Sahiba Dorje	Private Chapel
Professor Dr. G. Dyhrenfurth of Zürich, leader of the Kangchhendzőnga and Karakoram Expeditions of 1930 and 1934	Works of art at Yuru, Ladak
Major C. J. Morris	Sacred dance and Musician from Bhutan
Dr. R. M. Gorrie	View of the Satlej
Miss Audrey Harris	The Abbot of Lachhen
Mrs. P. Freston	Khamba dancers
Mrs. A. N. Odling	Portrait of Dr. Graham and Wheel of Existence

In illustrating Tibetan art I have included as much as possible of the work of contemporary artists, as my purpose has been rather to try to give a picture of present conditions than to celebrate the glories of the past. A number of pictures and metalwork objects were specially photographed for me by Messrs. Harper & Taylor of Liverpool, whose technical skill on tricky jobs I here acknowledge, as well as the kind interest which they have always shown in my work.

My thanks are also due to a large number of people who have assisted me in a variety of ways. I have tried to put down the list of my benefactors; but if memory has sometimes let me down, I hope that the omissions will not be misunderstood. I have indeed been surprised at the trouble taken on behalf of both expeditions by all sorts of busy people. Not the least of the rewards that have fallen to me and my companions have been the many friendships that have arisen in this manner, both at home and in the East, both among our own people and with Indians and Tibetans. I can assure all who have contributed information, advice, gifts or any other form of help to us, that their kindness is neither forgotten nor forgettable.

The chief names are :—

Their Highnesses the Maharajas of Sikkim, Tehri-Garhwal and Bashahr; also many officials belonging to those States, and to the Government Services of British India.
Major-General W. L. O. Twiss, C.B., M.C.
Dr. R. Maclagan Gorrie of the Indian Forest Service

J. F. Corlett, Research Fellow in History at Liverpool University
Dr. Tom Longstaff
John Morris
Frank Smythe
E. B. Wakefield, I.C.S.
Mr. George Stavridi
Miss Helen Stavridi
Mr. William Crew, Saddler, Liverpool
Robert Lawrie, Alpine Equipment, London
Stewart Chantrell
Carl Brunning

I acknowledge kind gifts from:—

The London Aluminium Co., Birmingham	Complete aluminium requisites for both expeditions
Messrs. Cadbury Brothers Ltd., Birmingham	Chocolate
Messrs. Ilford Ltd., Ilford and London	Photographic material for the 1938 expedition
Messrs. Lillywhite Ltd., London	Collapsible sledge for dragging stores up glaciers
Herr A. Horeschowsky	Crampons
Ever-Ready Ltd., London	Electric torches and refills

In connexion with the publication of the book, I must not omit to thank Mr. M. Thomson of Messrs. Quinn & Thomson, Liverpool, who prepared the typescript, and whose personal interest soon turned business visits into pleasant interludes, to which I always looked forward, as each new chapter was ready for typing.

To Pamela Freston my debt is beyond all thanks. The whole book passed through her hands three times, and received from her a most rigorous, though sympathetic, criticism, which got rid of countless clumsy passages and other faults of style. I have reckoned that she pointed out about two thousand major and minor blemishes. Her contribution has been such that I look on her now not so much as an adviser, but rather as a collaborator.

MARCO PALLIS

LIVERPOOL
February 28rd 1939

PART ONE

GANGES AND SATLEJ—1933

CHAPTER I

The Birth of an Expedition

THE story of two Himalayan journeys which fills this book presented a peculiar difficulty in the telling, because of the many and sometimes bewilderingly sudden alternations of mood required of the reader. At one moment, in our company, he would be living on the purely physical plane, while he was pitting every ounce of strength against a giant of the mountains; or else in the midst of flower-filled meadows or in a secluded glade of the primeval forest, he would be recovering from the fatigues of defeat or success. Yet directly afterwards, having moved on but a few short miles, he would be found sipping tea from silver-mounted bowls and exchanging formal courtesies with representatives of one of the earth's most civilized peoples; or again, with intellect whetted to its keenest edge, he would be trying to keep pace with the descant of some contemplative recluse upon a theme of pure metaphysic.

To have suppressed some of the contrasting elements, leaving the others in a position of unchallenged preponderance, would have been simple; advisers were not wanting who urged this course. But somehow, when it came to be tried, the journey so described seemed to be no longer the same that I remembered: a stranger had gone on it, a man more single-eyed than the author. I resolved, therefore, to risk a long story and to relate the adventures of our party in all their diversity, allowing the pendulum to swing where and when it willed, leaving out nothing that really mattered, and only praying that my would-be companions might have patience to adapt themselves. Whoever is willing to bear with these apparent caprices, will find, I hope, as I have done, that the bodily exertion of climbing, by forcing the mind to lie fallow for a time and concentrate on purely animal needs, will have prepared it in just the right way for subsequent excursions into more abstract realms. There is

some advantage in first reducing mental, no less than physical, weight, before calling on the spirit, thus lightened of its ballast, to take flight towards the stars.

Indeed there is everything to be said for letting unaccustomed impressions soak in slowly, without system, to find their own level in their own time. A vague idea, born of some chance event, presently ripens into sharper definition as fresh incidents bearing on it, occur at intervals and are pieced together with other impressions already garnered in the consciousness. The first allusion may have been superficial and soon forgotten, while we turned from the path to attempt some peak which caught our passing fancy. Later, the same question comes up again. Possibly our increasing fluency in the language, fruit of daily practice, has enabled us to debate it seriously with someone qualified to throw light on it. So we are led on by small, discontinuous steps, till at length we are swept into very deep waters.

At the end of the narrative portion of the book, two or three chapters have been added, in which general subjects such as Art, which previously had been touched on piecemeal, are dealt with in more orderly fashion and some wider conclusions drawn. Since much of the material on which these depend will by then have become familiar, it should not be difficult, on meeting it again assembled on a logical plan, in just relation, to judge whether the facts cited do indeed warrant the interpretation which has been put upon them. I have all along attempted to leave out nothing relevant, and conscience does not accuse me of wilful inaccuracy either by suggestion or suppression. Whenever a fact has not come under my personal notice, but has been accepted on hearsay, I have been at pains to show who was the author of the statement, so that his competence to make it might be the more easily criticizable. As to books of reference, whenever there has been the least feeling of doubt, information obtained from them has, if possible, been corroborated by someone trustworthy.

In particular, a number of passages concerning Tibetan doctrines have been checked with the help of a learned Mongolian lama from Lhasa, the Rev. Dr. Wangyal, who passed several weeks of the summer of 1937 at my home. I have seen so many other writers duped by having taken on trust the word of experts holding apparently good credentials, whose work later

proved to be tainted, that I am resolved to lean to the side of scepticism, lest I too make myself into an unwitting agent for passing on inexact or prejudiced information. When once a man begins to delve in the Oriental field, he finds out only too quickly how many so-called authorities owe their standing rather to the bulk than to the accuracy of their research. The grotesque travesties of doctrines which they try to foist upon the thinkers of India and Tibet would be laughable were they not apt to be employed, sometimes even intentionally, as weapons, by persons having an obvious axe to grind, for subversive propaganda in those countries. The only safe way of separating the grain from the chaff is by submitting even the most innocent-looking assertions for verification by duly accredited exponents of the doctrines in question.

So much, then, for principles: the hour has come to pack up our baggage and set out on this our first visit to the mountain ranges of the East. It is All Fools' Day, 1933, and the group of five well-seasoned climbing friends is waving farewells to parents and relatives, and drawing the fire of cameras on the dockside at Liverpool, where the good ship *Custodian*, which is to be their home for the next four weeks, is taking on its last belated bits of cargo.

The members of the party must now be introduced by name:— RICHARD NICHOLSON, a son of the famous builder of yachts, and a fellow-musician of mine, for many years my companion on almost every climb, both in the Alps and at home; F. E. HICKS, a schoolmaster and notable rock-climber and ski-runner, one of the strongest and gentlest of men, owner of physical and mental gifts blended in such a nice proportion as to make him, to my mind, the very ideal of an all-round mountaineer; C. F. KIRKUS, who works in Insurance, one of the two or three best rock-climbers in this country, pioneer of many new routes, especially in Wales; DR. CHARLES WARREN, a man of considerable Alpine experience, who afterwards acted as Medical Officer on several Everest expeditions; lastly, myself, rather older than the others, with a number of Alpine seasons behind me and an affinity for Oriental, especially Indian, History and Art dating back to early childhood: a reasonably strong party, and even-tempered, a thing which counts for much in the wilds.

When the last cable that joined us to England had been cast

loose and the ship began to move out into the river, there was a brief moment of excitement; then a pleasant feeling of relaxation began to steal over us, which had long been a stranger; for the preliminaries of such an expedition, new to every one of us, which had occupied our leisure for twelve months or more, had been strenuous: drawing up lists of equipment and estimating rations, unpacking parcels, sorting, checking, repacking, weighing, working out a fool-proof method of cataloguing simple enough not to break down under field conditions, consulting every accessible authority living or printed, sifting their often contradictory information, cadging contributions in kind from sympathetic firms, poring over maps, or, ensconced in armchairs before the fire, calling up those alluring phantoms which by and by materialized into feasible plans—these were but a few of our occupations.

In addition, certain items of equipment had to be put to practical trial so as to preclude the danger of unpleasant surprises on the mountain. The most plausible design often hides lurking weaknesses which are only detected in actual use. Clumsiness in handling tackle too, due to ignorance of the appropriate drill, may entail exhausting struggles in the rarefied air of high altitudes. We held sleeping-bag parades, tentless, on the windy summits of Ben Nevis and Snowdon in mid-winter, following them up with a grand dress-rehearsal, tents and all, played under mock-Himalayan rules, as realistic as we could devise them, in the Valais Alps. Nothing was taken on trust: there were no serious mishaps when the hour came for real testing.

Fair weather attended us from the outset of the voyage; but some days elapsed before we began to feel inclined for anything except sleep. After we had rounded Gibraltar however, and entered warmer seas, and turtles with orange shells had swum past, and we had looked on the ineffable transparency of Algerian Atlas, his snowy back still, as of old, holding up the heavens, our torpid energies began to reassert themselves. As we were the only passengers on board, the jovial Irish captain gave us the run of his ship and a number of "rock-climbs" were soon discovered. The most important activity, however, was connected with the study of languages. The *Custodian* was promptly converted into a floating university; in every corner you could have found grammars and dictionaries left by

students who had been diligently compiling useful vocabularies under headings such as "On the March," "Pitching Camp," "Buying Food in a Village," "Visiting a Shrine," when they were summoned to the saloon by the clang of the dinner-gong.

In the tropics, while lying on the deck sunbathing and watching the shoals of flying-fish skimming the crests of waves like volleys of silver arrows, we concocted strange dialogues, now Hindustani, now Tibetan. The classic "Have you taken the pen of my uncle? No, you will find it in your grandmother's garden" was replaced with "Is there a camping-ground in the woods behind the village? No, it is on the glacier to the east of the mountain pass." Presently, as the combining of phrases began to come more easily, they were tried on the dog, that is to say, on members of the Lascar crew, who at first affected not to know the language at all for Hindustani, till one day it dawned on them, when they broke out into such volubility that they left us all guessing.

Many people intending to travel in the Himalaya are, in the matter of languages, ready to accept a rather low standard, ignoring the rules of grammar, and contenting themselves with a hundred words or so. No doubt this can be made to do for elementary needs, and even for forging the links of a genuine, if inarticulate, comradeship with the native porters. But it seems a pity to put up with such a narrowing of possibilities; for most English people are not nearly so incompetent at languages as they imagine, and good teachers are to be found to help them over the more awkward stiles. The reward for trying lies in the possibility of a real exchange of thoughts with the inhabitants of a foreign country, which is surely one of the greatest joys of travel.

For us so occupied, four weeks slipped by all too quickly, and it was with mixed feelings that we saw the mangrove-fringed coast near the mouth of the Hoogli slowly loom into sight and knew that it was the last time we should hear the cheery voice of Captain O'Connor summoning us to his cabin, at the end of the day's work, to join him in a "sundowner." But there was a thrill in the thought that this turbid waterway, with its jute factories and barges, its feathery palms and slimy mud-flats, suited to the siestas of crocodiles, was a mouth of the selfsame Ganges which we were about to follow all the way to its source, goal of many pilgrims, where it issued from the glacier ice.

Calcutta saw us for the inside of a day; at night we made our way to Howra terminus and entrained for Dehra Dun, the railhead for the hill station of Mussoori. As we walked down the thronged platform we noticed a white cotton thread apparently endless, extending away from us into the distance; it might have been taken for the clue bestowed on Theseus by Ariadne, to guide him through the labyrinth. Moved by curiosity we traced it out; but our Minotaur proved to be an obese, elderly Bengali, white-robed and clutching the inevitable, untidily-furled umbrella, who was waddling along through the tittering crowd, all unconscious of the mirth he was causing by reason of the reel of cotton in his pocket ever unwinding, the free end having caught itself somewhere on the way. As no one seemed to be making a move, one of us picked up the strand and, nudging the old babu on the elbow, handed back his straggling property. The old fellow gathered it up with a startled movement, and then broke out into such effusive thanks, that our simple action might have been an unprecedented act of chivalry. Could it really have appeared out of the ordinary? Or did his pompous gratitude mask some age-long reproach?

We spent the railway journey, or at least its waking hours, gazing out of the window. Charming rural scenes, familiar through the miniatures of the Rajput school in London museums, passed before us, villages of reddish mud and thatch surrounded by mango trees, hump-backed cattle watched by half-naked urchins, grazing upon what seemed bare earth (for it was near the end of the hot weather), women in gay saris—it must have been a festival day—waiting their turn at the well or walking home with the gait of princesses, their polished brass pots balanced on their heads. By a queer reversal, it felt as if all this was meant to illustrate the miniatures, instead of the contrary being the case. With what deep understanding those old artists had caught hold of the spirit of village life, where beats the real heart of India.

A number of sites of historical interest flashed by. Here was Benares, sacred city of the Hindus; over its many-stepped bathing places and conical-roofed temples towered the twin minarets of the Mughal Aurangzib, who, unlike his ancestors, was no builder, and erected them there principally in order to annoy his non-Moslem subjects. We also caught sight of Jaunpur, glorious in the stately Saracenic gateways of its numerous

mosques, the former capital of a dynasty bearing the proud title of Kings of the East, now reduced to a quiet country town.

Later came temple-girt Ayodhya, scene of the childhood of India's epic hero, Rama, mighty bender of the bow. In the station a family of brown monkeys was waiting, father, mother and frolicking babies, apparently hoping to catch the next stopping train.

But what astonished us most of all on the journey across India was the abundance of animal life: we saw foxes, jackals and monkeys; and a great variety of birds. Remembering the songless countryside of so much of Europe, one was tempted to ask how it was that this Indian plain, densely inhabited and cultivated since remote times, was still able to support so large an animal population. Surely the interests of some, at least, of the creatures which we saw, must be competing to a certain extent with those of man. Does the explanation lie in the fact that Hindus, in their abhorrence of killing, for which people sometimes ridicule them, are ready to overlook a moderate toll levied by animals on their crops, and do not make it an excuse for wholesale extermination, though these Indian peasants can spare it far less than any of their brothers in our part of the world?

One of the minor peculiarities of an Indian tour is the sheer hopelessness which attends any search for a drinkable cup of tea, although this is the land which contains Darjeeling and Ceylon. Neither prayers nor threats will make the Indian servant on the railways or in hotels believe that every Englishman does not like his tea *ystrang*, that is to say of such a consistency that I could easily have written this book by filling my fountain-pen from the teapot. As to serving a jug of hot water with the tea-tray, that is simply not done, not even in good hotels. If pressed, the waiter, after a prolonged show of incomprehension, will first take away the pot and dilute the ink, or if one goes on insisting, he will go and fetch a second teapot full of boiling water: but the convention, as we know it at home, is simply not recognized. It is strange that the British, who have succeeded in imposing so many of their institutions on their imperial possessions, should have failed over this. It is as if the Indians said: "You have conquered us in other ways; in this one thing, a thing moreover very close to your hearts, we defy you!"

Early on the second morning we woke up in a climate markedly cooler: we were passing through a belt of jungle; when we emerged, we saw hills at last. Then the train drew up alongside Dehra Dun platform, and we stepped out to shake hands with Dr. R. Maclagan Gorrie, a distinguished member of that admirable service the Department of Forests, who bade us welcome to the Himalaya. His help and advice at this stage were invaluable, for we suddenly felt tongue-tied by shyness and in no mood for making decisions. He piloted us through our first awkwardness, interviewed candidates for the post of head-porter and selected one who had been overseer to a gang of road-menders, a Hindu of the name of Jai Datt. Dr. Gorrie also took two of us for a whole day in his car across the lovely forested Dun to call on H.H. the Maharaja of Tehri-Garhwal, in whose principality our mountains lay. To the prince also and to his prime minister our thanks are due, for the kindness of their reception and for their readiness in arranging all facilities.

Clouds hung low on the ridge, and we walked up the short distance into Mussoori, from where the motor road ends, through a fine drizzle. A regimental band was giving selections from light opera on the parade and the doubtful cheerfulness of the tunes seemed to add a touch of melancholy to the rawness of the evening. Knots of Garhwalis huddled in shop doorways, their brown blankets drawn over their heads. We passed a lighted shop-window which displayed a fashionable frock draped superciliously on its lay figure. A young man in evening dress rolled by in a rickshaw. As we turned down off the parade towards our hotel there was a sudden crash overhead as a band of monkeys hurtled out from among some scarlet rhododendrons, chasing one another across the road, and disappeared down the hillside.

That first evening we assembled for dinner only four out of five: one member of our party was confined to his room indisposed, truly a matter for agitation. We were on the threshold of our adventure and a man gone sick already! What precaution could possibly have been neglected? Had we not let our insides be turned into a bacteriological laboratory and our skins into sieves with I know not how many innoculations? It was in vain that other visitors in the hotel explained that it was the commonest thing to be slightly upset by the sudden rise from the plains to eight thousand feet. He who has come

with ambitions to climb to a height of twenty thousand or more, is loath to believe himself of the same clay as ordinary hotel guests. His mind is prone to wildest alarms about nameless exotic diseases. Little was said, but a jumpy uneasiness lurked behind the desultory conversation as we drifted in and out of one another's rooms or up and down the veranda, listening to the whirring of cicadas or stopping to examine the unfamiliar moths round the electric lamps. In the light of later experience how easy and how unfair it is to laugh at those exaggerated fears!

The sun rose in a clear sky next morning and for a brief hour or two the matchless panorama of the Gangotri peaks was uncovered. Our goal stood outspread before us; catching that first glimpse of the land of our dreams, what a passionate eagerness welled up in us to set out, leaving all tedious last-minute organization to run itself. We longed to start, not the day after the day after to-morrow, but in that very instant, along the winding tracks that cross the seventy miles of forested foothills to the base of the snowy ranges. Whoever has had experience of a get-away into the Himalaya must be familiar with this impatience. One remembers several evenings standing knee-deep in the debris of packing, to watch the twilight in the valleys snuffed out by the over-hasty fingers of sub-tropical nightfall, and sighing because yet another day's work stands between oneself and departure. The vow is fiercely registered each time to travel lighter and yet more light: and in fact, if it is to be purely a question of travelling, that is easy enough, as we have since found out; but when the programme includes mountaineering, with its siege tactics, a certain minimum of climbing gear and provisions for spending several weeks on glaciers is unavoidable, and that minimum when stacked together in one place can look disconcertingly elaborate.

Before 1938 few expeditions had gone up from Mussoori. There was no tradition behind the formation of a *bandobast* such as exists, for instance, in Kashmir. This was not without its compensations, for we escaped the regiment of touts which falls upon the greenhorn in those other places, with its nicely-graded tariffs based on the degree of "roughing it" required or apprehended: so much for tents, chairs, tables, camp-beds, commodes, and tin baths, with slight reductions on omitting any one or other of these almost indispensable articles. How we

laughed on a certain morning three years later in Kashmir when we rode up behind a young servant trotting along with the meat-safe strapped to his shoulders and Sunday's joint visible through the wire on its white china dish! But if we enjoyed the advantage of being early in the field in Mussoori, there was correspondingly more for a stranger to find out and more work to be done.

The hotel manager kindly made over to us one of his sheds in which to complete the packing and interview porters and candidates for the all-important office of cook. Several mornings were spent down there weighing up loads on a spring balance, squeezing out any object regarded at the last minute as superfluous, and all the while fending off the inquisitive, the hasty, the officious would-be helpers, who buzzed like a cloud of blue-bottles round the door, threatening at any moment to reduce everything to a state of chaos. The bazaar knew, of course, all about the expedition, and besides those whose names had been entered officially on the head-porter's list, countless hopefuls hung round from morning till night. It was during these operations that a little Puck-like fellow called Urbi Datt first caught my eye. We used to pick two or three assistants from the crowd and one day the lot fell to him, a happy chance, since he was to turn out the most able of any of our servants during this early part of our travels. We soon saw that here was a first-class man, from his unhurried manner, his quickness to catch on to an idea, and his ability not to meddle in matters that did not concern him. Also he had a way with the crowd which was an invaluable protection when one's back was turned.

At home we had read a good deal about the sufferings of mountaineers at the hands of their cooks, though the grumblers rather betrayed themselves by having made no serious effort to change cooks. It seems so unnecessary to put up with unwholesome food. The Englishman's readiness to allow a low standard to be imposed on him and his almost criminal timidity about experimenting with outlandish cookery, partly accounts for these tales. A man may be an expert in cooking the food he usually eats, and at the same time may make a hopeless failure when invited to reproduce the foreign recipes which his sahib demands. How else can one account for the fact that though skilful cooks abound in India, so much of the food served up to

Europeans there is uneatable? In the long run it is better for the digestion, as well as pleasanter, to experiment a little in the native dishes which one's cook already knows how to prepare, than to expect him to try his hand at the English style at short notice. If he is a professional he will at first assume that English dishes are expected of him, but he will probably be overjoyed and begin to turn out food of a very different quality when firmly told that one prefers to feed like an Indian.

A friend had advised us, when choosing a cook, to avoid the professionals and to teach our few special requirements to an intelligent porter, who would be bound to know the common Hindu dishes and would not have great pretensions. We followed his advice both then and ever since, and in consequence have never had to complain of bad catering. On this first occasion in Mussoori, however, the cook question was complicated by our inexperience, so that of the many warnings, we did not quite know which to believe. People who prided themselves on their mastery of the mysterious lore known as "understanding how to manage the natives" alleged that the number of religious customs, which had been invented solely as traps for ignorant travellers, was legion. To fall into one of them would infallibly cause the porters to rise in insurrection and the expedition to end in a humiliating fiasco. "You should do this, you mustn't do that. Believe me, I have lived twenty years in this country; I understand the native mind. You can't go without a regular cook; it's simply not done!"

We inquired of Urbi Datt if he would take on the job, but he replied that being a strict vegetarian he was afraid of being asked to handle what was unclean. Though disappointed we still hesitated, because a few interviews with professional applicants for the post did not tend to predispose us in their favour. We had heard that the subdivision of labour had gone far in India, but the question was how far? Did custom entitle the cook to demand one menial to fetch water for him, a second to scour his dirty pans, a third to blow up his fire and a fourth to carry the food to the sahib's table? Or was this simply jobbery? We saw our caravan growing into an army. When it came to a request for a cookhouse tent to shade the meats from the sinister influence of hooded crows or even of a passing cloud, suspicion turned to conviction. Here was

nothing more or less than a ramp to provide a couple of months' employment for brothers and cousins and in-laws.

Eventually a porter named Maidar Singh was chosen. For a few extra annas he was prepared to do his share of carrying, as well as our own domestic work. He was a big, rough fellow whose shirt protruded from beneath a tight-fitting blue waistcoat even on the hottest of days and who professed, with what turned out to be false modesty, to know very little about cooking. Actually, I think, he was nearly first-class, and we soon learned our place and abandoned any amateurish attempts at interference with his art. He managed to gather three helpmates for the kitchen, including one of suitably low caste to do the washing up, which he himself could not touch. But as they all carried ordinary loads and were counted the same as other porters, he was welcome to them.

Maidar Singh was a child in his habit of fishing for praises: "That was a very nice curried chicken you gave us this evening; I hope we shall have it often." "Ah! Ah!" he purred, drinking in our words. A few minutes later there would be a scratching at my tent-flap. "What is it, Maidar Singh?" "Did the Sahib like the curried chicken? Was it good?" "But certainly, Maidar Singh, I told you so. You must do some again to-morrow." "Ah! Ah!" A quarter of an hour would pass and the identical ceremony had to be gone through again. "Ah! Ah!"

One other controversy led to prolonged heart-searchings. It is a convenience when trekking to carry personal belongings in one's own rucksack and to be independent of servants. It had been hinted, however, by some of the initiated that this practice would at once lower our prestige. We were by no means above taking hints; quite the reverse, for in our hearts we did feel some diffidence in setting out to control sixty or seventy men in this unfamiliar land. The climax came when it was realized that if we carried packs the head-porter must do likewise; naturally he could not be seen walking unburdened behind his loaded masters. Jai Datt was much dashed when his nice new rucksack was handed to him, for he was a man of rather feeble character, morbidly sensitive about losing face. His redeeming feature was that he never tried to abuse or bully his subordinates. There had been some difficulty in securing anyone better for the job, as the man engaged for us before we

left England had gone off to Everest at short notice. Dr. Gorrie had done the very best possible in the time.

I forget if Jai Datt resorted to the persuasion of tears on the first or second day. "Please don't make me carry it," he whimpered. "Everyone on that route knows me for the friend of important people, of forest rangers and even deputy-collectors. What will they think when they see me with a load like a coolie? They will make a mock of me." "But, Jai Datt, they will see us carrying packs too: we will walk beside you whenever you have to go through a village." In the end he was forced to yield and his forebodings proved unjustified; but he never felt easy about it, and took every opportunity of handing over his rucksack on the quiet to one of the other porters.

It is to be hoped that we did not socially demean the rather pitiable Jai Datt. As to ourselves, what with one thing and another, our loads became of quite respectable weight; but this, far from losing us the respect of our porters, enhanced it noticeably. In fact it produced a crop of topical jokes. A man would come up and feel my pack. "That's quite heavy. Why not get a fresh porter?" (That, doubtless, with an eye to providing an extra job for some cousin.) "I'm doing it for practice. If I lose my money and all else fails, I shall take up the profession of coolie." This sally never failed to bring the house down.

At last the morning of May 10th came: all was in readiness, venesta cases and kitbags were stacked according to their several marks; ice-axes and an awkward parcel of skis—which, when carried upright, turned its owner into the likeness of a monster praying-mantis—were standing in a corner, ropes and line were neatly coiled and the pile was completed by a couple of empty kerosene tins grandiloquently called "canister" and used for fetching water, washing the sahibs' socks or shirts, or for the sahibs themselves to wash in. The march appointed for the first day was a short one, only seven miles, to a camping-ground called Magra, near which was a shop where the men could buy food for several stages out of their first day's pay. No one could understand why I insisted on everyone reporting at the store-shed as early as six-thirty, with a view to an eight o'clock start. If truth must be told, I did not wish to air my still halting Hindustani or to make a display of incompetence

in controlling men, under the critical eyes of those of the hotel residents who might have been tempted to look on. It was better to know that they were all still safely in their beds.

It is extraordinary how, till one has tried, one fails to think of quite simple expedients such as ordering the porters to stand in a line so that they should pick up their loads one by one. The management of these matters was left to Jai Datt; for we had yet to plumb the depths of his incapacity. Almost all the men pressed forward simultaneously and settled on the pile of waiting loads like swarming bees, each man determined to weigh every one of the sixty-five packages with his own hands, in search of the lightest. In vain we shouted above the uproar that they were all equal, fifty pounds, neither more nor less. For a few moments confusion threatened, while poor Jai Datt stood turning the leaves of his notebook and sucking a pencil, his usual signal of distress. Then somehow, probably with the help of Urbi Datt, the hubbub was stilled and in small groups the men started off down the road.

There is a special excitement belonging to any first occasion. For pure delight what can equal a first day's trek out into a fresh landscape? With eyes shut I can conjure up a picture of every day's march I have made in the Himalaya; so, to say that I recall every bend of the road that first day, conveys nothing either exceptional in itself or peculiar to first-day pleasures. On these occasions the commonest object fascinates; every viewpoint, every plant, bird or beetle. The business of the day, reaching a destination, becomes quite secondary. I, for one, am given to peering inside thistles and turning over dockleaves for fear of missing something. It does not worry me if the local inhabitants stop and stare at the mad foreigner.

It was misty that morning and the air was softly caressing. Before turning north off the ridge towards Magra, we stopped to take a last look at the plains. The clouds had lifted, revealing the white stony bed of Lord Ganges, where he issued from the mountains, winding away endlessly. The sound of many cuckoos calling in the woods below came as an almost annoying surprise. In that exotic landscape the cuckoo which, like the nightingale, suggests a copse with primrose, dog-violet and anemone—the heralds of an English spring—had no place. Rounding a corner, we came upon a clump of tall rhododendron, trees rather than bushes, carrying their dark leathery foliage

and clusters of blossoms upon smooth, russet-coloured branches. A pair of Himalayan pie floated off into the woods, trailing their graceful powder-blue tail-feathers behind them. No homely associations could outlive that sudden vision of crimson blooms and brilliant plumage, and we walked on engrossed again in the examination of the new and the strange.

The path had veered sharp left over the crest now, and we found ourselves beginning to drop down the farther slope, following a small ravine. " I, no other, supervised the making of this bit of road," exclaimed Jai Datt proudly. At last, in a grove of fir we caught the glint of fires. Our men had already made themselves at home; some were engaged in carrying water from the stream, others were squatting over stew-pots, or merely enjoying that sweet art of doing nothing which we are, to our loss, on the way to forgetting in this hard-driven society of ours. This was Magra, the first of our camps.

CHAPTER II

The Pilgrim Way to Gangotri

CERTAIN anxieties attend the setting of a first camp. The whole carefully planned system of packing becomes open to suspicion if, on this occasion, a tent is discovered without its attendant pegs; nor is the suspicion allayed if out of another tent-bag there clatter enough pegs to anchor a marquee. The porters have not been drilled in the handling of your particular brand of tent; confusion and damage may result if you cannot keep their zealous hands off the gear while you yourself carry out a demonstration pitch. Indian porters seem constitutionally slow at learning the principles of guy-ropes. Even after repeated and patient coaching they keep reverting to their own idea of tightening, which is to stick a peg through the ring at the end of the line, pull hard and then force the peg into the ground, using a stone to hammer it home if it resists. If the adjustment of some other guy-rope causes their line to slacken, they uproot the peg and haul on it again.

Light fabrics or aluminium pegs will not stand such treatment for long; that is why tent-pitching and striking should never be left entirely to underlings. If hasty and thoughtless handling can be restrained, it is remarkable how small are the effects of wear and tear even after a strenuous season. It will have been gathered from this that I am somewhat of a fanatic on the subject of camp technique. I have developed so fine a nose in this matter that I can usually smell out, better than any African witch-doctor, the intention of pulling on a guy-line even before the potential culprit has lifted a finger, merely by the way he walks and looks. I believe that I should rise from my deathbed at the sight of a tent being treated cruelly.

At Magra, a fortnight's walking lay between us and Gaumukh, source of the Bhagirat'hi, one of the several head waters of the Ganges, itself the continuation of the great Gangotri glacier. Gaumukh means Cow's Mouth. It is the Hindu custom to

attach symbolical names to the salient features in a landscape, the intention being to conjure up ideas rather than to refer to historical events or to evoke the memory of famous men. The Ganges, which plays so prominent a part in Hindu scripture, is pictured as having its source in the mouth of that gentle, patient creature, the chosen type of the animal kingdom, whose protection is enjoined on all Hindus. To a stranger in his ignorance "Cow's Mouth" might seem an unromantic name for one of Nature's grandest display-places: yet, when the meaning is made known, one revises one's opinion. Looking with the eye of a pilgrim at the flood of waters gushing forth from amethystine caverns concealed beneath the ice, a sculptor might have found inspiration in the name and felt moved to carve some great animal head, a sphinx-like Colossus, through whose jaws the waters of the infant Ganges might flow.

The second morning's march continued the descent into the valley of the Aglar. The unforgettable memory of that day was a magnolia bush at a curve of the road; its few flowers were of shell-like purity, their frilled petals shaded to a deep rose. The trunk and branches were gnarled and twisted into shapes so fantastic that one would have said it had been consciously trained to serve as a model for some divine old Chinese artist. Each man stopped as he caught sight of it in breathless amazement. At a later stage we found more magnolias, larger and covered with flowers; but that first one contained the quintessence of them all, an unfading picture imprinted on our minds.

Between us and the Bhagirat'hi valley there still lay two passes, each about 8,000 feet high. Twice we saw the Gangotri peaks from these points of vantage across the wooded foothills. For the second pass it was desirable to make an early start, since the descent on the farther side was said to be long and hot. With the dawn we broke up our camp on the hillside at Chapra, below the first pass, and plunged down into the cool shadow. At the bottom we paddled through a shallow torrent in which a Hindu devotee was performing his morning ablutions; we had noticed him the night before, sitting in deep thought in a villager's garden among opium poppies and tobacco plants. He had greeted us with a motion of the hand and a dreamy, far-off look; our passing scarcely distracted him for a second from the vision that held him.

For a couple of hours we climbed up the opposite hillside. Peasants here and there were tilling narrow strips of field, walking behind the small wooden harrows drawn by slow, plodding oxen; little boys, the colour of the soil, were sitting on the ploughs, using their scanty weight to drive the ploughshares deeper. About eight o'clock we arrived on the col. I remember how we all stood in silence before the glorious line of peaks glistening in the early morning sunlight. Close at hand on either side a soft breeze was brushing across the barley, while overhead eagles wheeled against the blue. The porters came up close behind us, some of them bringing handfuls of yellow raspberries. As each man topped the pass he sang out boisterously in praise of the Great Ones. "Hail to Jamnotri!" (source of the Jamna). "Hail to Gangotri!" "To the white lord of Kedarnath, homage!" (Its Weisshorn-like pyramid occupied the centre of the picture.) "To Badrinath," (sacred to Vishnu) "all Hail!" We would willingly have gazed all day, but the thought of the heat, awaiting us in the valley below, made us cut short this joyous moment and we set off on the descent to Dharasu.

Our way followed the Bhagirat'hi valley, now making height steadily, now rising suddenly, when rocky narrows forced the path to take a higher level. We had got into our stride now, arrangements were working smoothly, and we felt in a carefree frame of mind, able to let our attention wander among the countless new things which met us at every turn. To allude to them all separately would need a volume; so I will first describe a typical day, and afterwards mention one or two happenings that stood out with special prominence.

We usually woke about five and, while breakfast was cooking, strapped up our holdalls and struck the tents; for the porters would be already hovering round impatient to get off in the cool. Then, after indicating a place some fifteen miles away for the next camp, we let them straggle off, each at his own pace; the faster ones, to whom things first needed on arrival had been entrusted, forged on ahead, while the older ones trudged behind slowly. We were then free to employ our own time on the march as we pleased, pausing to take photographs or to bathe in an inviting pool or to pass the time of day with some friendly pilgrims bound like ourselves for Gangotri.

This valley is sacred to Shiva, the Aspect of the Hindu Trinity

who stands for the transmutative and also, but only by extension, for the destructive function in the Godhead. We passed many small temples, like elongated beehives; almost all were dedicated to Shiva under one of His aspects, such as Conqueror of Demons or Lord of the Cosmic Dance: within, in lieu of an image, there is often placed a black conical stone, the phallic emblem of the God. The corresponding valley on the East of the Gangotri mountains in British Garhwal, that of the Alaknanda, is consecrated to the cult of Vishnu, the Aspect that is the complement of Shiva's, that of creation and preservation; His temple at Bradrinath draws a still larger yearly pilgrimage.

The pilgrims themselves belonged to every province of India and came from all ranks of society. First we met a sturdy peasant, half hidden under a huge bundle of bedding overflowing from his long wicker basket, like the ones used in Switzerland, which was slung over his back. On the top of it his wife was perched, her legs dangling: yet the Orient is called ungallant! Then we came across a wealthy dame, borne aloft in her palanquin on the shoulders of four stout attendants, looking, but for her clothes, like one of her eighteenth-century predecessors, the pious Austrian or French great ladies, Romeward bound.

I remember also a mysterious person whom we passed frequently, a very tall man in a flowing toga, with eyes that pierced like stilettos, his coal-black hair gathered up in a knot, in his hand an iron-shod staff like a spear. He strode along haughtily, and whenever he came upon a big stone that had rolled on to the path, he picked it up as if it were a feather and tossed it over the precipice with a gesture of disdain that was rather terrifying in its suggestion of power. We thought of him as the god Wotan, disguised as the Wanderer—for he really might have stepped straight out of *Siegfried*. When he brought his staff sharply down on the rock, I momentarily expected sparks to fly out.

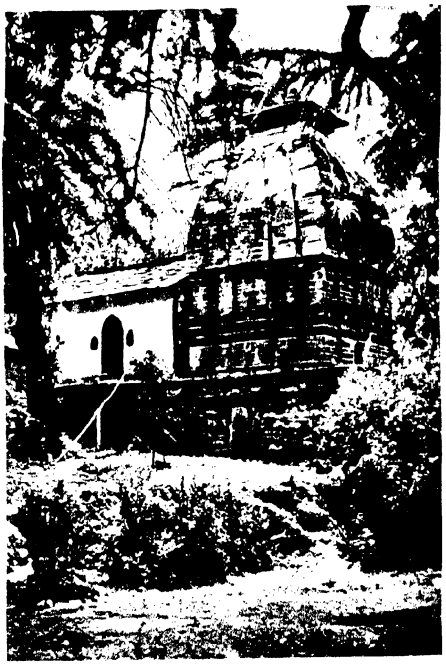
Many *Swamis*, or devotees wearing saffron robes and turbans, each of them carrying a drinking pot of burnished metal, passed us by. Most of them eyed us coldly, as if resenting our presence: their demeanour came as a shock after the unfailing smiles and salaams of the common pilgrims. There was also another class of devotees, to whom we were even less attracted,

so-called *Sadhus*, men naked save for a loincloth, besmeared with grey ash from head to foot, their faces made to look repulsive by blotches of ochre. The ideal of the true *Sadhu* is an exalted one: he is the type of the spiritually independent man, who asks guidance of no power but his inner light, and has passed beyond all that social life can give, whether rights or duties. For him, renunciation implies no idea of sacrifice of the "good things of the world"—that conception, peculiar to European monasticism, is unknown to India, Tibet and other Oriental traditions: this is an important point to grasp, lest one be drawn into a false analogy. On the contrary, the genuine *Sadhu* rejects the world "with pleasure, just as a man would find satisfaction in taking off a filthy and ragged garment." He makes himself like an outlaw, abandoning the privileges of family and caste in the present, of past fame, and of aspiration for the future life, and tramps the highways, begging for his meagre livelihood, driven on by the wind of the spirit, that bloweth where it listeth.

This ideal, however, is not for the many: only a minority of the ascetics who frequent sacred places can approach it. There is also a host of hangers-on, charlatans usurping the title, who, to do them justice, adopt an uncomfortable existence, in order to purchase a far from disinterested exemption from ordinary rules. They stand convicted by their insolent smirk and the lecherous twist of their lips.

In the afternoon we used to go ahead of the porters to choose the best site for a camp in beautiful surroundings. Having read of the uncleanness which spoils many usual camping-grounds in Garhwal, we made a point of avoiding them and choosing ground of our own, not too close to villages. It is a better plan not to leave this important matter, affecting both comfort and pleasure, to head-porters, who will of course invariably do as everyone else does and pick for preference an area in the middle of the village, infested with flies and vermin, near a stream which receives the sewage of all the houses. Indians are extremely clean as far as their persons, clothes and eating-vessels are concerned, but utterly insanitary in their use of ground in the vicinity of habitations. Within a radius of two miles round Gangotri temple, for instance, the soil is badly polluted. Near villages or cultivation one cannot be too careful about the water: in fact we never risked drinking it unboiled





HINDU TEMPLE AT UTTARKASHI



till we were past human settlements. Lest anyone should be tempted in the midday heat, we made it a rule that each European must carry in his rucksack a flask of boiled water. Should any man desire to undertake a worthy work of piety, he might try to instal a system of simple latrines along the pilgrim route: I should like to see it established not so much as an innovation in the name of foreign hygiene, but rather as an offering to Shiva, for a purification of His holy ground.

It is lucky that carcasses of cows and goats are dealt with by the vultures, which circle continuously overhead at a great height, and scan the country for dying animals. Outside the village of Uttarkashi we came upon a dozen of them which had just finished picking a skeleton clean. How magnificent they looked as they flapped their mighty wings, and how different from the listless captives of our zoos, which are made into a gazing-stock for the supposed education of children. It is surely base ingratitude towards a fellow-creature, which, even from the narrow point of view of our own self-interest, should be saluted as the unpaid ally of the sanitary squad and the health inspector.

After pitching tents and making tea, the work of the day was by no means over, for some of us at least. News that we had an English doctor in our midst spread quickly, and soon a long string of people demanding medicine appeared at the edge of the camp. First they had to be sorted out, and then the doctor examined each in turn. One of us acted as his interpreter and helped to dispense in small envelopes the pills or powders which he prescribed. We saw some sad, and many amusing, cases.

One man reported various symptoms, affecting almost every limb and organ in the body, which seemed hard to square with his appearance of robust health. Pain in the shoulder, in the hips, headache, shivering, what next? Fever?—the thermometer belied him. "There is nothing wrong with you, why do you come and waste our time?" cried the doctor. "Oh! no, Sahib," he answered. "It's not I who am ill, it's my wife. She lives at the village back yonder, two days' journey away. You can give me the medicine."

Another man demanded something for his horse, also not present. All this had to be carried on in full publicity, with the whole village enjoying the show. Some of the bystanders,

bitten with a desire to share in the excitement, were seized with sudden ailments and looked quite crestfallen when the doctor refused to prescribe for them like the others.

The outpatients' clinic not infrequently lasted till dark, with an overflow meeting before we started in the morning. No one could say that Dr. Warren idled his time away. Some consider that it is justifiable to distribute fizzy salts to all and sundry and send the people away happy, but that was not the view of either Dr. Warren or Dr. Roaf, who acted in his place in 1936. Of course it is little enough that one can do to relieve sufferers when one is moving from place to place: many cases are beyond such temporary treatment. An itinerant medical service might do much good. But there are others who can be helped, those who require above all advice—to them it is usually best to give a little medicine too on some pretext, otherwise the advice will be disregarded. Those who are able and willing to travel to a hospital—to them a letter can be given; minor surgical cases, gathered fingers or teeth needing extraction, these are the ones who benefit positively. To malingerers one need not be afraid to tell the truth. In quite unmanageable cases like cancer, it is best to avoid raising false hopes, and of course single doses of anodynes, such as injections of morphia, seeing that they cannot be followed up, will only add to the suffering and are out of the question.

At long last came the big meal of the day, supper, usually a curry of sorts; and then half an hour's yarning round the camp-fire, in which some of the porters joined, reduced everyone to somnolence. By eight-thirty or nine we were all asleep.

The commissariat proved an unqualified success, thanks to the fresh food we bought daily and to Maidar Singh's skill in cooking it. During the course of travel in the hills, one learns to know the essential requirements, what must be brought from home, and what can be purchased locally. Experience has shown that in most districts the village shop can be relied on for flour, rice, lentils, *ghi* (clarified butter), sugar, onions and pepper. Eggs, milk, and often a few vegetables such as potatoes, a kind of spinach and large sweet radishes can be bought direct from the peasants. We accustomed ourselves to a diet of these foods; our imports only amounted to a few luxuries.

The quality of the native foodstuffs is on the whole excellent;

the fatal cult of whiteness and regularity of form has not caused half their goodness to be "purified" away, nor has their flavour been dissipated in the crazy worship of size and number. To give one instance, the native sugar, slightly greyish of hue, sweetened twice as well as our imported refined sugar. The native potatoes, about the same size as our new potatoes, are the tastiest known to me. After getting used to the small, hard rice of India, unpolished of course, the white, big-grained, "high-grade" rice usually sold in England, especially the most expensive, is insipid to the point of being unusable, and I should not be surprised to hear that its nutritive properties are equally deficient.

In retrospect, the preparations made at Mussoori in 1938 with such care, appear needlessly elaborate. It has become, in fact, difficult to believe that those quantities of big and little tins, with their garish labels which exhaust superlatives in proclaiming the unique virtues of their contents, could ever have been thought indispensable. Those ugly, aggressive little objects have unfortunately got their uses on the mountain; but elsewhere they are never missed. They are the spurious substitutes for things which can be better bought at the local shop, where we can see honest, rough flour being shovelled from big sacks and hear the patter of rice-grains in the scales.

The highest-lying villages in Garhwal, along the Tibetan border, are inhabited in the summer months by a semi-nomadic tribe called Jadhs or, farther to the east, Bhotias. These people are a typical frontier product, mixed racially and in tradition, who make the best of two worlds in any border dispute. The Tibetan half predominates in the Jadhs, however; six days out of seven they are Buddhists and, when not wearing European cast-offs purchased while they are wintering on the edge of the Indian plain, they clothe themselves in Tibetan style. In summer they pasture their flocks and ponies in the uplands, or cross into Tibet to barter Indian produce for a consignment of salt or borax.

A party of Jadhs happened to be encamped near a place called Kot'h Bangla the afternoon we arrived there. Their gaily-coloured tents, unusual clothes, and Mongol features at once attracted our attention. We stopped to stare and they, for their part, returned the compliment with interest. Then I took my courage in both hands and spoke a short sentence in

Tibetan, my first remark in that tongue to a native of the land. There was stony silence till I spoke again; then everyone burst into roars of laughter, shouting, " Why, he's talking Tibetan, he's really talking Tibetan! " It was rather disconcerting to have one's linguistic efforts laughed at with such unconcealed frankness; but it was not long before I discovered that what tickled their sense of humour was not so much my halting speech, as the extraordinary fact that a white man should speak in Tibetan at all! There was among them one man in particular who caught my eye; we asked him to visit us so that we might continue the new talking-game. Sure enough, he turned up in an hour's time, bringing a young Jadh with him, and spent the rest of the afternoon in our company. Mutual sympathy developed from the start. We found out that he spoke, and even could write, Hindustani as well as Tibetan, and what was still more exciting, that he was no Jadh, but came from Poo on the Satlej, a place which stood on our itinerary for Part Two of the expedition's programme: for it was our intention to climb at Gangotri till the rains broke and then to cross the Ganges-Satlej watershed to a district beyond the monsoon's influence, and passing through Poo, to attempt, as a grand finale, the ascent of the great peak of Riwo Pargyul. Our new-found friends seemed to have turned up providentially; before they left our camp that day we had invited them both to join us. The man of Poo asked for a brief delay in order to go back and consult his wife, but promised to bring an answer before the day was out.

In the evening he returned with the glad news that everything was settled and that he and Djun Singh, his friend, who looked as strong as a young bull, would most certainly come with us as far and as long as we liked. As if to seal the compact, he made me a present of a little wooden bowl with a silver base and received a knife in exchange. His name was Odsung in his own country; but he kept the alternative one of Ishwar Singh for use when associating with Indians. In time he was to become the head of our porters, and three years later both he and Djun Singh joined us again to go to Sikkim: far-reaching results from a chance meeting by the roadside. Ishwar Singh's rapid decision to throw in his lot with total strangers, for a journey of six hundred miles, was characteristic of Tibetan independence and love of roving.

CHAPTER III

Porters and Sahibs

FOR the man who loves trees and plants, even if he be no more than an amateur, the walk along the Bhagirat'hi is one long succession of delights; for each day's gain in height is faithfully reflected in corresponding changes of vegetation. Dharasu, the point where one enters the valley, at the low level of 2,500 feet, lies in a warm zone in which even small palms are found—outposts of the flora of the plains. The blue-grey of the long-needled pine colours much of the landscape. White roses are massed along the path for miles on end; *Erythrina, the coral tree, lends here and there a touch of fire; this part of the valley* is the favoured home of the pink magnolia.

At about 7,000 feet, that king of forest trees, the Himalayan cedar or deodar, makes its appearance, its roots clinging to ledges on the cliff face, its trunk leaning precariously out over the swirling rapids. A few miles short of a place called Gangnani the road crosses temporarily to the left bank and penetrates a belt of mixed forest, maple, oak and chestnut, of almost tropical density. The shed petals of tree rhododendrons turn the path into a crimson carpet, as if in expectation of a royal progress. Jasmine and wild hops wreathe the boughs with festive garlands. The tender shoots of bamboo, so delicate yet so impenetrable, bar the way to the interior of the forest, guarding the glades where the wild peonies gleam like folds of white satin.

One more day, and the scene changes to typical Alpine country, a flat-bottomed valley through which the Bhagirat'hi winds along its shingly bed, hardly recognizable for the same stream as the raging torrent lower down. Mixed woods have disappeared and the hillsides are uniformly forested with stately deodars; violets look up from the grass; the light airs bring with them the fragrance of thyme. One is glad to pull on a sweater, for in mid-May the snow is still lying quite low and evenings soon turn chilly.

At the farther extremity of this valley there is a small hamlet

called Harsil where, according to our programme, we had planned to make a three days' halt in order to pay off our Mussoori coolies and to replace them by local men, better inured to the rigorous climate of the glaciers. We had been counting on the Jadhs to furnish the whole of our new personnel, but found that at that date only a few advanced bands had yet come up from the winter grazing-grounds; the remainder were still scattered down the valley. The only alternative was to make up the number from near-by villages, though we knew that the nomads, whose life is one long trek, would have answered our purpose far better than the peasants, whose hearts were in their fields and who elected to come for the pay, but came reluctantly. There was, however, no choice, so word was sent to the villages stating our requirements. Presently three headmen arrived at the camp to parley over terms. They were striking figures, thick-set and powerful, bearded and beaked, natural orators and possessed of an inborn dignity with a dash of cunning. As soon as we saw them we christened them the Canaanite "Kings," rulers over "cities" that might have resisted Joshua. At every turn in the debate, the three chieftains consulted one another from the corners of their eyes and then, one of them, say the King of Eglon, would take the leading part, while the others stood by to lend moral support.

"I require twenty porters by to-morrow," said I.

The trio exchanged hasty glances.

"To-morrow, twenty men cannot possibly be found," answered the King of Eglon.

"No, indeed," chimed in the King of Jarmuth.

"Can't be done," echoed the King of Ai.

"Suppose we collected them in three days' time?" said Eglon.

"Yes, in three days it shall be," agreed Jarmuth.

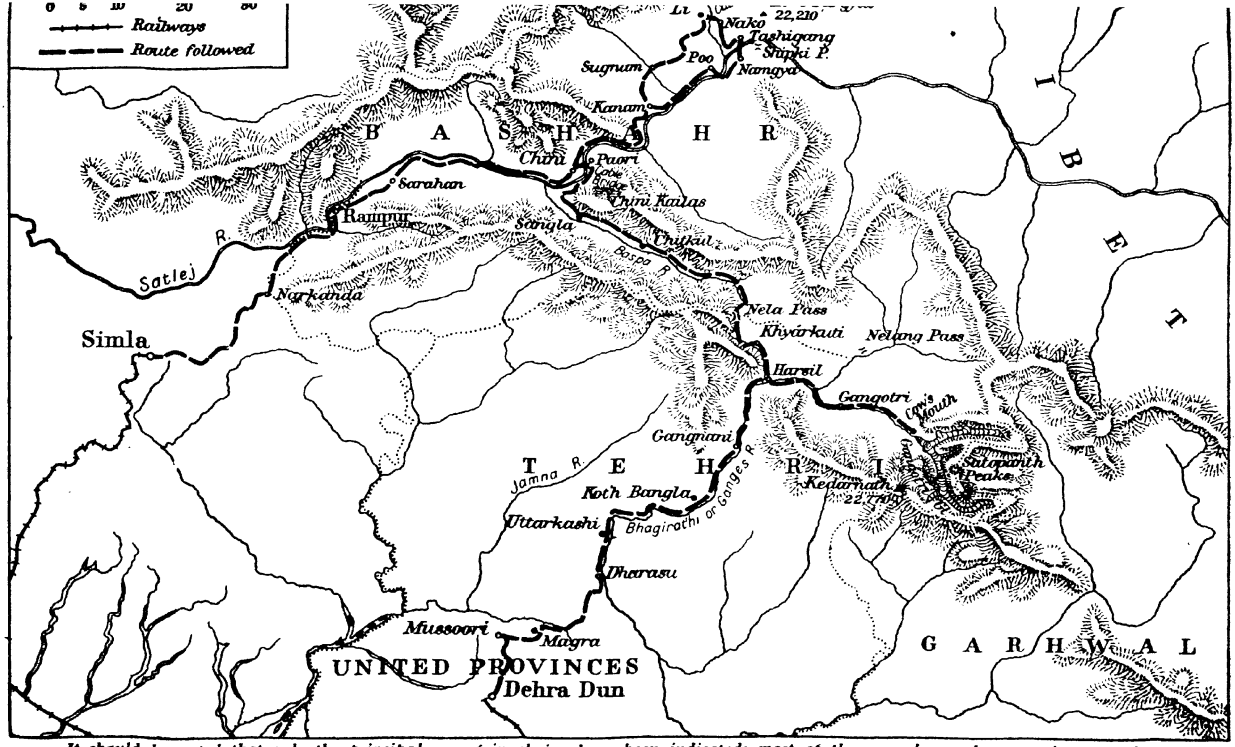
"By the fourth day from now they can be here," corroborated Ai.

"Oh! but I can't wait so long as that; besides," I added, "you will find it worth your while, if you do get them sooner. Now what about splitting the difference? Say, two days from to-day?"

Another hasty ocular confabulation. Ai picked up the ball.

"In two days from now it could be done."

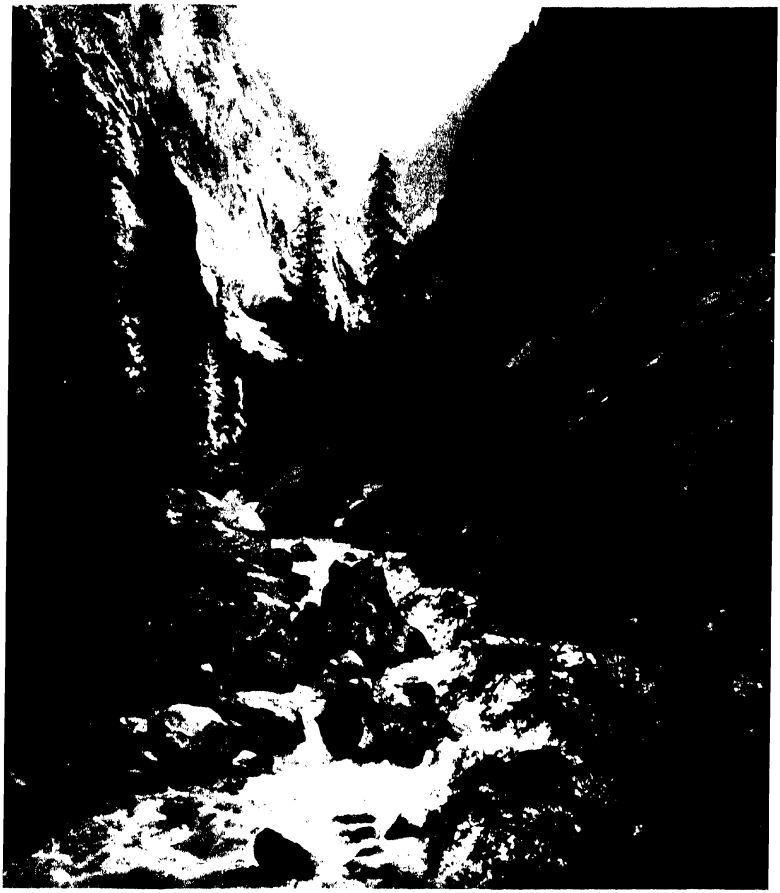
"Indeed it could," assented Eglon. "You just leave it to us; in two days!"



It should be noted that only the principal mountain chains have been indicated; most of the area shown, however, is mountainous.

Jarmuth ratified the treaty: at which all three marched off to set the wheels in motion.

Meanwhile at our end there were also jobs to be done. First, we had to decide who were the four best men to keep with us at our glacier camp for work on the mountains. As recently as 1933 it was still generally believed that Europeans were only just capable of becoming sufficiently acclimatized to climb their peaks, and that, in the absence of native porters to do their fetching and carrying for them, they had hardly a hope of success. For one European climber to go high, several natives had to accompany him. It is not difficult to calculate what a multiplication of personnel and baggage resulted from this hypothesis: for the attendant natives themselves needed food and shelter, which entailed again more porters and so on for ever. In fact, it could be proved mathematically that by this process one European party would eventually involve the whole human race, and still the problem would be no nearer solution. We were, I believe, one of the earliest parties to break decisively with this custom, both from our own wish for privacy, which was incompatible with the presence of a regiment requiring a sergeant-major to manœuvre it, and because our pioneer theories received firm encouragement from Dr. Longstaff, who always maintains that Himalayan climbing can be treated very much like Alpine, save in the case of certain monster peaks. The chief argument of all in favour of reduced numbers lay in the knowledge that whatever climbs were accomplished would be due to the climbers' own efforts, and that the satisfaction derived from success would not have to be scaled down proportionately to the number of their helpers. It would be a sad story if porters in the Himalaya were to be turned insidiously into something like guides in the Alps, namely middlemen, admittedly competent ones, interposed between the amateur and his mountains. Since 1933 we have seen most of the younger climbers reach the same conclusions and the soundness of the method has been incontestably proved on very high peaks indeed. One has only to think of the brilliant explorations of Shipton and Ṭilman in Eastern Garhwal, which for magnitude of accomplishment, coupled with exiguousness of expenditure, perhaps constitute the finest piece of mountaineering recorded in history, or the tackling in 1937 of the extremely difficult Mana Peak by



GORGE SCENERY ON THE PILGRIM ROUTE



A FRIENDLY JADH



COOKHOUSE GROUP

Smythe and Oliver, which of all ascents appeals to me most for its "artistic" qualities, or again the success of Tilman's party in 1936 on Nanda Devi, when, owing to sickness among the coolies, all carrying on the upper reaches of that formidable mountain was done by Europeans. A significant point in that expedition was the inclusion of Professor Graham Brown who, though not young in years, did his full share of the work and, by so doing, helped to lay the old acclimatization bogey.

Our complement of only four porters was probably rather short commons, since it meant less than one coolie per European: we found in practice that we wasted more of our own energy than we could afford in long-distance carries over the glaciers. I have said four; but in reality they were but three and a half, for one of the men selected, our new-found friend from Poo, Ishwar Singh, was not very strong and did not undertake serious carrying. He more than made up for it, however, by being the perfect caretaker of a camp, ready to turn his hand to anything, and a suitable man for sending down to the villages to order fresh supplies or to engage porters to clear our stuff when the climbing was all over. His friend, Djun Singh, the Jadh, was a powerful fellow. The other vacancies were filled by two young men from British Garhwal, one of whom was an old soldier, in more senses than one, who had served with the Garhwal Rifles. He was perpetually saluting and clicking heels; but he was active as a cat on rocks. He also performed prodigies of weight-lifting and speed on steep slopes. Had we asked for his life he would have given it; but that did not preclude his trying to score off us in petty ways from time to time. Apart from that, as a mountain porter he could not have been bettered.

How proud the four picked men felt the first morning they paraded the village in their new clothes and nailed boots, with ice-axes and rucksacks! They had been provided with green windproof suits of Grenfell cloth, like ours, but different in colour, and bright blue jerseys. When I was purchasing porters' clothes in a Liverpool store I inquired among other things about high-necked sweaters. "We've got a new line in jerseys that should just suit you," said the "young person" behind the counter; "there are grey or brown, or would you prefer the Everton colour?" What could be more appropriate

for a Merseyside expedition? It has by now become classical with me; none but my permanent men have the privilege of sporting the blue of the Everton team.

A further job at Harsil was the dumping of half our baggage which, not being immediately required, was intended for use during the second or Satlej part of the journey. Everything was handed into the charge of the district forest ranger, a very obliging Hindu who stored it in a safe place against our return from the glacier.

The third job was a melancholy one for all concerned, the paying off of the old set of porters who had served us so faithfully. Nine days of acquaintance may not seem long, but the Indians, if treated considerately, attach themselves easily; the men seemed genuinely sad to be leaving us as they walked up in turn to the box that served as a table, to receive their wages. We were particularly sorry to say good-bye to Maidar Singh and Urbi Datt. We would have liked to stretch a point and keep on the latter; but he was rather a delicate man, inclined to suffer from a chronic cough, so it would hardly have been fair to take him high. Some weeks later, by good luck, he came back to us for a time; the pleasure of that reunion was all the greater for the previous parting.

This opportunity must be taken of testifying to the uniform level of honesty that we have found among the mountain peoples. In 1933 we changed porters five times and employed Indians, Jadhs, Tibetans and Kunáwaris from the Satlej. During the whole time we did not miss so much as a lump of sugar; not that we took precautions, we soon learned that it was a waste of trouble. Everything was strewn about the camp. In how many countries of Europe would it be safe to pick up fifty chance comers at the street corners and yet enjoy perfect immunity from anxiety on the score of pilfering? Sometimes in the case of Indians, though not of the other races, those who were entrusted with the job of buying provisions, were inclined to add an anna or two to the bill; but even here a distinction must be made between regular perquisites sanctioned by convention, amounting to a tiny percentage levied on all shopping transactions—this can be paralleled by the rule at home that empty bottles are a perquisite of the butler or the parlour-maid, as certain other things are of the cook—and attempts to exceed just limits by taking advantage

of the ignorance of an employer new to the game.

Honesty and deceit are governed by fashions which vary greatly in different countries: it is the unfashionable dishonesty which evokes the severest censure. Many people in England, for example, seem to consider semi-deliberate slackness in repaying a loan or failure to settle a tailor's bill or a doctor's fee distinctly less heinous than other forms of cheating. Among Indians it is probably in connexion with the seeking and accepting of commissions that there is most room for criticism. Making all due allowance for local variation in the standards of serious and excusable crime, my experience of the Himalayan peoples is that the general level of honesty is pretty high, reaching its maximum where Tibetan blood preponderates, and falling slightly below that standard where there are more Indians. All races we had to do with in 1933 seemed entitled to full marks on the score of not stealing. When it came to truthfulness the difference was greater. The Tibetans and allied peoples tend to be extremely accurate, while the Indians are inclined to romance, more from a desire to please than from any wish to deceive. There is much truth in the tale of the tired English traveller who asked the distance to the next village. "Not far," was the answer. "What do you mean by that? Is it about three miles?" "Yes, your honour." But the Englishman still entertained some doubts. "Are you sure it's only three miles? Or is it six?" "Yes, six, your honour." Losing his temper the Englishman cried: "What the devil do you mean by saying it's three miles and then six? Don't tell me any more lies, which is it, three or six?" "It's as your honour pleases." In a small way this sort of thing often happens; children are usually the best informants.

The three headmen were as good as their word; at the appointed hour the new coolies duly paraded for their loads. Physically they looked equal to any call; but their faces struck us as rather vapid, with a dash of that peculiar brand of slyness which goes with low intelligence. They were much better clad than the Mussoori men, for their hand-woven garments contrasted favourably with the heterogeneous collections of European misfits which have been adopted by a great number of the hill Indians. This regrettable practice cannot entirely justify itself on the plea of cheapness, for the local cloth, often still worn by women even when their husbands have discarded

it, is spun and woven at home from the wool of their own sheep and costs them next to nothing. Furthermore, it is hard-wearing and warm as well as beautiful; made from it, even the rags of a beggar look dignified. That is really the test of good cloth; machine-made materials are tolerable when new and smart, but their old age is ugly. The more sophisticated the garment the worse it looks when once it is worn out; nothing looks more dilapidated than a well-cut dinner-jacket that is soiled and shabby. It is partly the desire to raise their social status by emulating the sahibs, and partly the easy temptation of getting things ready made, which causes the Indians to despise their own goods. I have occasionally put leading questions to some of these people concerning their motives, and their replies bear out my conclusions. It is worth noting that women are less prone to lose their heads in this way than men—the male is the unstable sex. A marked strain of Tibetan blood is usually a safeguard: but not always, for that fine race of men, the Nepali Sherpas, justly famous as mountain porters, are great offenders. If only the climbers who employ them encouraged them to revert to their national costume, it would be doing them and the world a service.

It did not take us long to discover how much we had been spoiled by our Mussoori coolies. As usual, having indicated the stage for the day, we left the men to their own devices, knowing that they were not yet in training and expecting them to follow slowly. After going some miles, I sat down for rather longer than usual and began to wonder why nobody had yet put in an appearance. Having waited some time, I walked back to a commanding point, but not a soul was in sight. Slightly concerned, I retraced my steps; but I had to go a long way downhill before I encountered Jai Datt, who had been retained in his office of leading porter, and who announced that most of the men were dawdling miles back. Some time later we came upon them all sitting down, their loads off, taking turns at puffing their charcoal pipes, and to all appearances settled there for ever. When we started to protest some of them stood up sulkily and raced a few steps uphill at an absurd pace, only to collapse once more. Out came the pipes again quite blatantly. This performance was repeated at intervals all the afternoon, and we reached Bhaironghati, the resting-place for the night, with frayed tempers. It was dark before the rearguard slouched

in at last; not a good outlook, for we were still following a path, whereas, the next day, we were to enter trackless country. Working out that day's rate of progress, I made it not much more than one mile an hour, as compared with the normal two and a half miles.

In the morning, things at first looked a little more cheerful: there was a perfumed freshness in the air that left little room for worries. In this part of its course, the river had hewn its way through a succession of deep chasms, racing through their depths in a thin line of foam. The fantastic rock-walls of the cutting were unlike anything I had seen elsewhere; and yet there was something reminiscent about them, but I could not just lay my finger on it. Eventually it dawned on me: it was the rocks in Giotto's frescoes. The whole scene would have served to illustrate the Inferno of Dante; thus I picture murky Acheron, or Styx, on which if an oath be sworn, even a god may not break it.

Towards ten o'clock the temple of Gangotri, the end of the pilgrim road, came into view, a pleasantly-proportioned domed building of grey stone that did not look very old; I should have guessed no earlier than eighteenth century, though this may not be quite accurate. It stands on the river bank, against a background of noble deodars. We were received by a priest who offered to show us round. We gave him a small present, and besides, following the ancient custom of feeding a specified number of poor Brahmins, distributed alms to some of the neediest-looking of the pilgrims. In front of the temple steps we removed our shoes and were then permitted to approach near enough to peer vaguely into the dark interior. A tray with sweetmeats that had stood in front of the image was brought out and we were each invited to taste a piece, and then our foreheads were marked with powdered sandalwood, to the accompaniment of triumphant shouts from the bystanders led by Jai Datt. Sight-seeing, lunch, and a long rest filled a couple of hours before the signal was given to continue the march.

At once a chorus of moans rose from the porters, who had evidently been counting on our readiness to accept the few miles between Bhaironghati and Gangotri as the equivalent of a day's work. Wringing their hands they whined: "Please, please don't make us go farther to-day. There is no path, it is a terrible wilderness full of leopards and bears. We shall

be killed by falling stones, and there are no camping-grounds!" At length, having exhausted themselves in vain lamentation, and seeing that we were not to be moved from our purpose, they lifted their loads with an ill grace and started off. Several truants hid among the temple outhouses, hoping to be overlooked, and had to be rounded up by Jai Datt and the forest ranger who, uninvited, accompanied our column.

The wild Gangotri gorge, the passage from the temple to the Cow's Mouth, is crossed at that season by huge drifts of compacted winter snow which bridge the river and allow free crossing to and fro. In summer, these get washed away and the approved route follows the left bank and crosses to Gangotri by a bridge. The other side is blocked by formidable cliffs lashed by the torrent which boils against their base. When we came down in the monsoon, though the main body took the left bank, two of us, ignorant of the obstacle, followed the right bank and only just got through, after a strenuous day's rock-climbing along ledges and up cracks, all the time haunted by the fear that in the end we might find ourselves cut off.

The porters soon began to repeat the previous day's tactics, but with even more frequent halts, a policy which was favoured by the abundance of cover. Every inch was contested. Sometimes a man would move not more than twenty paces and then subside under a bush and slip his arms out of the loops of his carrying-rope. Poor Jai Datt lost his head completely and showed abject irresolution before his men, while the ranger, being made of sterner stuff, preferred futile threats to entreaties. At last, when we had crawled a couple of miles, things came to a head. A ringleader, ordered to get up from behind a boulder where he was crouching, refused. Abandoning his load he declared that he could not go a step farther. Thereupon Ted Hicks snatched up the package and slung it over his own shoulders saying: "If you are too weak to carry this light box, I can do it myself." The man was utterly taken aback by the unprecedented sight of a sahib actually doing a job of work; he sprang up and rushed after Ted begging to be allowed to take back his load. A general stampede followed and before we knew where we were, we had gone quite a distance. For the moment we were in control of the situation; but it was doubtful how long the emotion which had befriended us would last, so as soon as I saw a possible site for a camp I called a halt. It

was elementary generalship to be the first to offer, indeed to order, the very thing which the other party was still screwing up its courage to demand.

At tea-time we held a council of war. It was evident that we were facing a crisis; for had the discontent resulted in a strike and the dumping of our baggage, it would have taken us days to extricate ourselves from the mess. Gangotri is not a village; we could only have sent back for fresh porters to Harsil, the very place from which the present lot were drawn, and we should have been more than ever in their power. Nor would the monsoon have stayed its hand for our convenience. A loss of time at that moment could not have been made up later. As things turned out, it would have meant utter disaster, for the rains came on a full three weeks before the expected date, so that we only had a bare month on the glacier. In addition, we had visions of the sarcastic comments of those prophets who had shaken their heads over the imprudence of five amateurs venturing to run an expedition without an experienced transport officer. Heroic remedies were obviously called for.

The first move was to get rid of Jai Datt and the officious ranger; their presence as intermediaries was only adding to our difficulties. After that, remembering my army training, I worked out a new order of march, by which a slow but unflagging pace was to be imposed on all, on the fast few as well as on the many loiterers; they were to keep in one body, with official halts at stated intervals. We went the round of the camp-fires that night and explained the morrow's plans; we found everyone in better humour and more ready to listen to us in person than to Jai Datt's hysterical appeals.

We pointed out to them that at the present rate we were never going to reach Cow's Mouth; and that this rushing on a few steps and then stopping was actually the most tiring method imaginable. We pointed out that they were mistaken in thinking that we did not intend them to have time to rest; we promised, on the contrary, to arrange regular halts and they would see for themselves how much earlier they would make camp and how fresh they would feel. We said that the next day no one would be allowed to go fast, but all must go at a set pace; every half-hour there would be five minutes' halt, after an hour ten, after two hours a long rest. They were not to sit down except at a given signal, nor to start without

another. Between the halts they must keep moving at an even pace. We assured them that they would thank us in the end, when they realized how much less tired they were. The men seemed disposed to respond to this appeal to their reason; we retired to bed still anxious, but somewhat more optimistic, and blessing the extra time we had spent on language studies, without which such complex explanations would have been impossible.

After breakfast we lined up the men facing the loads and called the roll, so that the day might start in an atmosphere of calm. When all were ready, we formed them in single file, placing two of our party at the head, two at the tail, and one to act as liaison in the middle. Then we set off; but, at first, success hung in the balance. Several men attempted to sit down and had to be hooked up with ice-axes by their girdles. As soon as the hands of my watch pointed to the half-hour I called a halt and sat down. This seemed to affect certain notorious sluggards with an irresistible enthusiasm for going on; they had to be forcibly restrained and made to rest.

The next period went better; by the end of the second hour, when a lengthy pause was due according to schedule, we knew we had won the day. The coolies had caught on to the idea; their step had become springy and their whole manner changed. We had no further trouble with them, and during the next two days in the gorge, everything went smoothly. At the finish, the tables were turned; for when we had nearly arrived in sight of the glacier snout, the porters could no longer be restrained, and one and all raced off at breakneck pace across the slopes, so that we hardly knew them for the feeble creatures who, three days earlier, seemed hardly capable of putting one foot in front of the other. The whole episode was a valuable lesson to us, our first real experience of porter management: the story may make the hard-bitten traveller smile, but to five novices it seemed no small adventure.

Some little distance short of the Cow's Mouth and separated from it by an expanse of clean sand like a sea beach, we camped in a leafless birchwood, surrounded by long drifts of snow. Ahead loomed the vast glacier, measuring a mile across, its rubbish-covered surface broken up into mounds, which turned out to be hillocks quite a hundred feet high. Peaks rose on every side in wildest confusion; not even in Sikkim have I seen



DEODAR CEDAR



SATOPANTH PEAKS
From Camp below Gaumukh

anything like the mountain scenery round Gangotri. Dominating all was the glorious group of the Satopant'h peaks, a magnet for our ambitions during our stay there—one of them was eventually scaled by two of the party—but it is useless to try to describe the grandeur of the scene: there are perfections about which the only eloquence is silence.

During the following three days the baggage was transferred on to the glacier, to a spot close under the left moraine which had been chosen for the Base Camp. Across the opposite side, in a branch valley, a slope covered with low bushes of juniper provided plentiful firewood. After we had settled in, the majority of the porters returned home, leaving only the chosen four to keep us company. We now split up into pairs and began to make exploratory forays and to look for climbable peaks; we rejected at sight a nightmare version of the Matterhorn, that overhung the camp. I do not propose to enter into minute details of our mountaineering round this region, for it is now old history, as an Austrian expedition has recently explored the Gangotri district. But briefly, one small, one larger and three medium peaks—not to mention two abortive attempts—were climbed before the warm rains descended upon us prematurely, to the accompaniment of a barrage of falling stones and avalanches, and put an end to operations.

The highest as well as the most formidable of these excursions was the ascent, previously mentioned, of Central Satopant'h[1] by Kirkus and Warren. Of this a full description will be given in the next chapter, written by C. F. Kirkus himself. At the time when the account first appeared it did not, to my mind, receive the general attention which it deserved. The ascent was not only a fine piece of mountaineering, but it afforded a triumphant vindication of the theory that Europeans were capable of carrying out such enterprises without the help of porters. In this case the two climbers did the whole of their portering on a difficult mountain, involving several bivouacs, unaided from start to finish, and at the height of 21,000 feet negotiated a rock pitch which would have counted as severe at sea level; it is this difficult rock-climbing at a high altitude that makes their achievement so outstanding.

[1] As a result of the Austrian party's explorations there is now reason to believe that the peaks known to us as *Satopant'h* should be named the *B'hagirat'hi* group.

CHAPTER IV

Central Satopant'h

(By C. F. Kirkus)

ON the afternoon of June 14th Warren and I arrived at our advanced base, a pleasant camp at a height of about 15,000 feet, pitched on turf. It would have made an ideal Base Camp if only our transport arrangements had enabled us to get all our equipment up the extra seven miles of glacier.

We were still undecided about our next move. It was a warm and sunny day, the kind of day that inspires one to make bold plans for the morrow, and until the morrow comes, to relax in delightful idleness. Across the glacier to the east was the great rock mass of the Central Satopant'h Peak, 22,060 feet. Its face was a fearsome yellow cliff, crowned by a snow-capped ridge of red rock. This looked possible on the right where it sloped down to a col and, providentially, a long, curving, easy-looking ridge led up to this col. We wanted to climb a big peak but we wished for no more slopes of endless, heart-breaking snow. The gleaming snow and silvery rock of Central Satopant'h standing up so boldly against a sky of deepest blue, proved quite irresistible and we decided to start the attempt on it next day.

There seemed to be two doubtful stretches on the route we had planned—a rock tower on the col and a vertical step in the ridge immediately above. This step was several hundred feet in height and looked formidable enough to stop us unless we could manage to turn it. The whole peak, in fact, looked definitely difficult and we were not too optimistic about our chances.

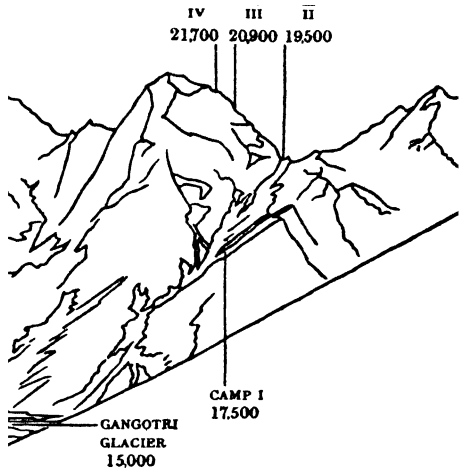
We set off at eight o'clock next morning, stumbling and cursing across the mile-wide glacier. Never is scree so villainous as when it is resting on ice; never are the limpid depths of





CENTRAL SATOPANT'H

glacier lakes less appreciated than when one is faced with the prospect of falling into them. We each carried a sack weighing about twenty-five pounds, containing sleeping-bags, bivouac tent, a week's supply of food (chiefly pemmican and boiled sweets), solidified spirit cookers and a Primus. Everything had been cut down to a bare minimum. A very pleasant slope of grass and grey boulders, with scarcely any snow on it, led us to a ridge, clustered with grotesque pinnacles of red rock. Soon afterwards we had to rope for a fascinating arête of grey rock, which reminded us of Snowdonia, wonderfully firm and rough and technically quite difficult. It made us feel almost homesick and was altogether an exhilarating interlude in this rather grim business of Himalayan mountaineering.



CENTRAL SATOPANT'H

We had to traverse off finally, to avoid a wall that would have given good sport in gym shoes, but we had no trouble in getting back to the ridge again. We pitched Camp I at about 17,500 feet, right on its jumbled crest. The only flat place was a miserable patch of snow, four or five feet square; this we had to build up with stones until it was big enough to take our 4 foot by 6 foot tent.

As usual, it came on to snow in the afternoon and a bitter wind harried us. I kept myself comparatively warm by building a cairn and a wall worthy of the old Romans. By the time we went to bed there was half a gale blowing and we were afraid that our tent might be swept off its precarious platform.

It was still horribly cold in the morning and the tent was frozen stiff as a board; we had to wait for about an hour before it was soft enough to pack. We had to rope very soon for a small pinnacle and then were forced off the ridge on the left, across a slope which looked from a distance like snow, but proved to be composed of small prickles of ice, about three feet high, frozen on to rock. Then we got on to slabs, smooth and holdless and covered with snow wherever snow would lie. The route-finding was very tricky and the climbing difficult and insecure, with a great scarcity of belays. All the time we were getting farther and farther away from the crest of the ridge, with less and less hope of regaining it. And this was the part that we thought would be an easy scramble up to the true peak above the col.

I came round a slabby corner and to my joy saw that an easy snow gully led right up to the ridge. Here we made some tea and basked in the sunshine. We were now 8,000 or 4,000 feet above the glacier, which looked like a great sweeping river of speckled grey and white. An astonishing array of peaks surrounded us. There was the huge pinnacle that we called the Matterhorn, half spire, half tower, red rock at the bottom, snow-powdered yellow at the top; beautifully alluring, hideously inaccessible. We unroped with profound relief and made our way across a slope of mixed snow and stones on the right. This was made necessary by a curious kink in the ridge, where it almost ceased to be a ridge at all. We climbed easily upwards by interesting rock pitches and little knife-edges of snow. I felt well and happy and was able to enjoy the noble scale of the scenery. Especially impressive was a weird and shadowy ice-valley, dizzily far below on the right, into which a hanging glacier, perched on top of 2,000 feet of cliff, rained showers of ice-splinters.

Then followed two towers, the second rotten and snow-sprinkled, after which a descent of a hundred feet or so brought us, still unroped, to our longed-for col. It was an ideal spot—flat, slatey ground with convenient stones all ready for the tent flaps. And there was even a water supply where a stone had melted a hole in some snow and left a small pool. One could not hope to find a better spot at 19,500 feet; it was amazing luxury not having to camp on snow. A full vertical mile below was our Base Camp and the whole dreary ribbon of the

glacier. In front was the face of our mountain—8,000 feet of the smoothest, sheerest yellow-silver rock, almost luminous against the clear blue of the sky. Behind, over the Ganges, the clouds were gathering—monsoon clouds had we but known; but who would have expected the monsoon to come three weeks early?

We had now a chance to examine the ridge above us, the final peak. It rose in a great step of rotten red rock, streaked with yellow. Even foreshortened as it was, it looked very formidable, but not quite out of the question, should all else fail. However, it seemed possible to turn it on the right, across a slope that rose at an angle of 40° to 50° for 2,000 feet, snow where snow would lie, and the rest loose stones. In some parts of the Himalaya, from tales we had heard, such a slope would have been suicidal. However, the Gangotri mountains seemed to be no more prone to avalanches than the Alps, so we decided we were quite justified in venturing on this eastern face of the ridge. We discovered one interesting fact: our col was not a main col of the Satopant'h range as it had appeared to be from below, but a subsidiary neck on our particular ridge. The main col was behind and the two ridges joined about 1,000 feet higher up.

It snowed as usual in the evening but soon cleared up. There were only 28 degrees of frost in the night and we had a comfortable sleep. We set off at eight o'clock leaving the Primus stove and some pemmican behind. The first tower, which had looked so imposing from the glacier, gave no trouble at all; it was easily turned on the right. Then came the traverse, horribly unpleasant. We got on to some rotten rocks, covered with wet snow and loose slate. It was very trying and disheartening; after going for two hours we had hardly risen a foot, and it was a miracle that not a stone fell; in such a place in the Alps there would have been a bombardment.

At last we entered a gully of steep snow-covered slabs, where we had to run out the whole hundred feet of rope to find a stance, let alone a belay. The return traverse to the ridge, however, went quite smoothly, though it was unpleasant going. The ridge was very rotten—mud and snow and loose shale. There was one pitch in particular, a vertical tower about fifty feet high, composed of great red blocks like paving-stones resting on top of each other. It looked as though the whole

structure would fall to pieces, and, added to that, the final overhang was decidedly difficult.

We pitched Camp III on a miserable spot at about 20,900 feet. Before we actually put the tent up I wandered on alone and had a look at the next section. It was only 1.15 p.m. and I thought we might have gone on a little farther but, as Warren pointed out, there was quite a possibility that we might not find another suitable site in time. It is Dr. Longstaff's golden rule of Himalayan mountaineering always to bivouac by three o'clock. If you are later it gets cold before everything is done, and the result is confusion and discomfort. Just above was a wall of rock. I climbed up the first forty feet but stopped at the final portion, which looked terrifying, overhanging ominously at the top. I descended and rejoined Warren. The only place on which to put the tent was a little snow ledge at the top of a very steep snow-slope that descended several thousand feet to the glacier on the east. This ledge was just too small, so we had to build it up on the right and dig it out on the left. One of the ice-axe extensions (we used ice-axes as tent poles with bits of bamboo added) was dropped and slid rapidly out of sight. We hoped that the tent would not follow suit in the middle of the night.

It was a desolate spot, almost overhung by cliffs, so that the sun set on the tent at three o'clock. We went fifty feet down the ridge and found the sun again. At 5 p.m. it got too cold and we struggled and gasped and panted our way back to the camp and crawled into our sleeping-bags. Then there was the miserable business of cooking and eating pemmican; that night it seemed nauseating fare. We were using solid spirit cookers now, and their choking fumes filled the tent and made our eyes smart. Fourteen hours in a cramped tent is a weary business. Sleep does not come easily at this height and the first few hours are usually spent in regretting the food one has eaten.

It snowed all night and when we got up at 6.30 a.m. we felt rather pessimistic. There had been only 16° F. of frost—an ominous sign at this height. However, at 7.30 there was a clearing in the cloud and we had a magical view of a summit across the glacier, an island of gleaming ice floating in a sea of cloud with a vivid sky above. It must have been very marvellous, for I crawled out of the tent especially to photograph it. Soon all the peaks appeared, and the snow evaporated

from the ground in a few minutes. When we set out just before nine o'clock the valleys were still shrouded in mist, while streamers of cloud lapped the peaks like angry waves against sea cliffs.

We soon got into the shade where the rocks were icy cold and the snow still lay on every ledge. I had to take off my woollen gloves for the difficult pitches and my fingers were soon stiff and numb. At high altitudes I always feel sick and weak in the morning for the first two hours. This, coupled with the bad conditions, made even the first pitch seem much more difficult than it had done the night before. And now we were standing under the final wall which was to decide the fate of our venture. We were in a vertical corner of red rock. The holds were flat but not incut and very rotten, and at the top there was an overhang of at least two feet.

With Warren belayed some forty feet below, I climbed up to this overhang, having first divested myself of my rucksack. The overhang seemed hopeless, but on the nose on the right was a projection like a wafer, about two inches thick, and jutting out horizontally a yard or so. I pushed off the top layer, which was obviously loose, and then looked at it. If I could trust my weight on it I could cheat the overhang. Three days of grim and anxious effort could not wait on one doubtful hold. I stood on it—it had to be near the edge for me to keep my balance—and it held. That was the only time on the whole climb that I was really frightened. The pounding of my heart was not due entirely to the altitude. Another anxious step—only just in balance—and I lay panting on the scree above.

An easy slope of slates and snow led to a little tower and we were able to see what lay ahead. The ridge was narrow and very serrated—not at all the solid smooth slope it had looked from below. Quite close was a great snowy rise; behind, dimly seen through the mist, a shadowy pinnacle; steep snow on the left; almost vertical rock falling for thousands of feet on the right. This we took to be the summit. We climbed the pinnacle. At the top the snow turned to ice, and, after a good deal of step-cutting, we had to take to the awkward slabby rocks on the left. We reached the top of the pinnacle at 11.25 a.m., rather tired. We dumped our loads and decided to make an attempt on the summit that day. It looked very close, but I was dubious; things are always three times as far away as

they seem in the Himalaya. I thought it would take us at least two hours.

Before starting out we made some tea. Water boils at about 175° F. at this altitude (about 21,750 feet) and all the tea-leaves floated, so that we had to drink them. It was about the most unpleasant tea I have ever tasted, but it had a marvellously refreshing effect. We started off again at 12.25, without our rucksacks, feeling fit and excited. We had to ascend a narrow ridge of snow, corniced on the right above the great rock cliffs and dropping very steeply on the left. The cloud shut off everything except the immediate foreground; we seemed to be very much alone on the crest of the world. We moved one at a time; it is safer that way and also the rests are welcome.

At 1.5 p.m.—surprisingly soon—on Sunday, June 18th, we stood on top of the Central Satopant'h Peak, 22,060 feet above sea level. It seemed an eternity since we had left the advanced base camp three and a half days before. I felt very little elation —altitude deadens all emotion—only a great relief; for I had been very much afraid that we should not succeed. We had no view—there was thick, depressing cloud all round.

We could just make out the other summit, marked 21,991 feet on the map. We decided we ought to include this, so after ten minutes' halt we set off again. There was an ice-cornice on the right and a steep ice-slope on the left leading down, as we knew, to 8,000 feet of cliff. Between the two, the cornice and the slope, was a little snow-filled crack. We walked on this to save step-cutting, which does not appeal at 22,000 feet. Even so we had to cut some steps. The other summit was about 500 feet away. We still moved singly, but led through. The actual top was such a narrow point of ice that there was room only for one at a time. We solemnly stood there in turn, then retreated without a word. We regained the higher summit after an absence of one hour.

It had grown colder now and the weather was threatening. As usual I felt weak and empty when descending, and progressed in a curious bent-up attitude. We regained our rucksacks at 2.15 p.m. and descended the big pinnacle to an ideal shelf of flat snow, just the right width for a tent, at its foot. Here we pitched Camp IV (about 21,700 feet) under a large sheltering rock, at 8 p.m. It began to snow just as we got in. I had a very poor night with a violent headache and thirst.

We had not enough fuel left to melt snow for drinking at odd moments. Also my pillow was most uncomfortable. This pillow consisted of my rucksack containing boots and an air cushion. When the boots came uppermost I rarely had a good night.

We set off at 8.15 a.m. on a perfect morning. It was a long and tiring day; we were rather short of food and again I felt weak and empty. On the ascent I had been keyed up with the urge to get to the summit; now a reaction of listlessness had set in.

When we reached the crux of the climb, the great rock wall, we roped down it, cutting a loop off our line. I went down first and then Warren let down my rucksack with the ice-axe insecurely attached, with the result that it fell out, but luckily it stuck in the rock. As I was going to get it, a large piece of rock which I had grasped, began to slide. I held it up as long as I could and then jumped to the right, luckily landing on a ledge. The rock crashed down the other way and did not hit me. As if that had not been enough, the buckle got torn off my rucksack and I was just in time to save the tent. Our position would have been very unpleasant with only one axe and no tent. I was shaken by the incident and found relief in several minutes of continuous cursing.

We reached the site of our old Camp III (20,900 feet) at 9.50 a.m., made some tea and left at 10.15. Against Warren's counsel I decided to try the snow-and-rock slope on the left. We soon found it quite hopeless—loose snow on ice and sliding stones—and we had to make an awkward upward traverse back to the ridge. A lot of snow had melted and the ledges were covered with slippery mud. One just had to hope that all the handholds did not give way at the same time as all the footholds. Climbing down the red rock tower without a rucksack proved to be much easier than I expected. Then we were faced with the problem of finding our way off the ridge. We found vague signs of our old footmarks and followed them. The snow was in a wickedly dangerous condition. We managed with a fair degree of safety by leading through in short run-outs, and, after a good deal of difficulty, found the top of our gully. We also found avalanches sliding into it. Most of them were small, and stopped at the top of the gully, but the stones were more serious. They came down in bounds of 400 feet at an incredible

speed, and hit anywhere in the gully with terrifying cracks. We did not stay here longer than was necessary. Now that the monsoon had arrived, the Himalayan snow-slopes were certainly justifying their reputation.

We found an easier traverse back to the col than the way we had taken on the ascent. We kept a little lower and avoided the steeper rocks. We were so tired that we continued to move singly, leading through. I still remember what a blessed relief it was, when all the rope had run out, to sit down and wait for Warren to pass me, and what an effort it was when I in turn had to move. I have two recollections of this traverse—one of Warren, far ahead on the skyline, signalling to me to come on; the other of rounding, interminably, corner after corner and always seeing an endless distance between me and the col.

We finally reached the col (19,500 feet)—our Camp II of the ascent—at 3.15 p.m. very tired. Although clouds hid the sun, even at five o'clock it was warm enough to sit outside. I had quite a good night in spite of a headache. At five in the morning it started to snow; at dawn it looked quite hopeless. There had been only 10° F. of frost in the night and we realized that this must be the monsoon, in which case it might go on for days. The outlook was distinctly unpleasant; it certainly seemed as though we should not get down that day. We had only one tin of pemmican and a few biscuits left, two days' provisions at the most. Added to this, Warren was partially snow-blind, from having left off his goggles the previous day, and was in some pain. I put my head out of the tent and dug the Primus stove out of the snow. It was nearly empty and would not work at this altitude. After nearly setting the tent on fire several times, we barely managed to melt some snow and had to content ourselves with a cold drink.

About eight o'clock the other side of the glacier became visible, although it was still snowing, so we decided to descend. It was quite warm and, once we were outside the tent, it was not nearly so unpleasant as we had expected. Several inches of snow had fallen and we had some trouble in unburying the odds and ends which we had put outside the tent before going to sleep. However, we managed to start off by 9 a.m. It stopped snowing at ten o'clock, but the cloud remained, making route-finding rather a problem. We cut out a lot of the difficult traversing by an awkward descent on a doubled rope and

managed to miss the lower rocks altogether. We finished down the turfy slope which we had left nearly a week before. Now streams of crystal-clear water were flowing across it and little alpine flowers were springing up all round in soul-satisfying contrast to the grimness above. There could hardly have been a more idyllic ending to our climb.

We reached the advanced base at three o'clock. Warren had to remain there for an extra day because of his eyes, but there was not enough food for me to stay as well, so I put some drops of cocaine in his eyes and left him with the remaining food and fuel and thirteen matches. I got lost in the mist and finally reached the Base Camp and a long dreamed-of meal at 6.30, just before dark.

The Central Satopant'h Peak is definitely a rather difficult mountain. Above Camp II—for four days, that is—we were moving one at a time almost the whole way. We had some severe rock-climbing at 21,000 feet; we had bad weather most of the time and ended by being caught in the monsoon. Yet I think we managed the whole climb with a very fair degree of safety.

CHAPTER V

The Ganges-Satlej Watershed

THE last days of June found the party on its way down the Gangotri gorge, between mountains which hid their snowy heads under a pall of impenetrable mist. Nature, which still slumbered when we had passed upward five weeks earlier, was fully awakened now. The woods were gay in their mantle of young leaves. We had to push our way through thickets of pink ramblers which barred the gaps between the huge birches. Many unfamiliar shrubs were in flower and mingled their honeyed perfume with the incense of cedars. In open spaces banks of white lilies heralded the return of spring.

An interlude of several days at Harsil, where the surplus baggage had been deposited, passed in pleasant uneventfulness. Unstinted fresh food and sleep was all that glacier-weary men asked for. Two of the party, Hicks and Kirkus, who were now due to return to England, packed up, leaving the other three of us to make the crossing of the divide between the basins of the Ganges and the Satlej, into the country of Kunáwar known to readers from the pages of *Kim*. Its own people call it Khunu, a name which I like better than its Indianized variant. A fresh troop of porters, drastically reduced in number, was engaged. This time there were plenty to select from, as all the Jadhs had come up to the summer pastures: also a number of Tibetans had crossed the frontier seeking work. We were therefore able to confine our choice to these two races, and to exclude doubtful or troublesome elements.

From the moment that we began to have dealings with the Tibetans, we felt ourselves in sympathetic company. Though no one could then have foreseen the far-reaching effects fated to spring from this fresh contact, we felt from the outset that here was something entirely new, and that we had stepped right out of the circle of influences that had enclosed our lives hitherto.

Naturally, our impressions were concerned with outward things; but from under the surface, the power of an unfamiliar tradition let itself be half inferred, half sensed intuitively. As regards appearances, we had evidently said good-bye to everything machine-moulded. Men's souls showed as little trace of it as did their clothing. The occidental world might not have existed, for all the notice that these people had taken of it: whereas the same could not be said of the Garhwalis, nor even of the Jadhs, all of whom, in one point or another, showed evidences of having at some time impinged on the sphere of modernity.

Most of these Tibetans were drawn from the district of Sarang, just across the border. Their clothes, even those of the poorest, were invariably made of materials which filled us with envy. Their dark maroon gowns were worn over white shirts fastened on one shoulder in the Chinese way. Their legs were thrust into high cloth boots with flexible yak-hide soles, held up by coloured garters. Most of them went bare-headed. Some allowed their hair to hang wild and matted, others had it plaited into pigtails, which they wound round their heads. A few wore black felt caps with fur-lined earflaps. Nearly everyone owned some jewellery, the poor, an irregular string of uncut pebbles, the better-off, a silver chain with a chased box containing an amulet. One ear was always pierced to take a gilt and turquoise ear-ring.

They were mostly big-boned men with hairless faces darkened many shades deeper than sallow through the effects of exposure and of not washing: the severe climate of Tibet does not favour frequent removal of the natural oil of the skin. A few had broad features that might have been called bestial but for the attractive smiles which sometimes illumined them. Others had a curiously feminine look, which was matched by their high-pitched voices, so that it took us a little time before we learned to tell the sexes apart with any certainty. While remaining normally serious, they could also be uproariously gay, breaking out into noisy and unrestrained laughter. They were open in expression, in manner respectful yet dignified. When accepting money they never troubled to count it. Their womenfolk were equally cheerful and robust-looking. No one could have thought of applying to them the epithet of weaker partners. We gathered that they married later than the Hindus, at the age of eighteen to twenty.

Tibetans of lower rank have a curious manner of showing respect by sticking out their tongues. Anyone who had never heard of this custom might easily misinterpret it. I remember an amusing story told me by a general who, while yet a young subaltern, accompanied the military forces which occupied Lhasa in 1904. As he was going along the road a man passed on horseback, and of course politely thrust out his tongue at him. Enraged at the fellow's apparent insolence, the officer seized hold of him and pulled him out of his saddle. The more he shook him, like a terrier tackling a rat, the more the wretched man tried to propitiate the angry Englishman by stretching out his tongue still farther, to the great mirth of a Gurkha orderly who had seen the joke, but had no intention of enlightening his superior officer!

During these final preparations at Harsil we were cheered by daily visits from a little lama who had also come over from Sarang to minister to the horse-dealers and shepherds encamped in the valley. He was the first Tibetan priest whom we had met and he created a favourable impression of his Order which time has not caused us to modify to any material extent. In his case, even more than with his lay companions, we felt ourselves in the presence of an unseen power, which, if I must give it a name, might be called Compassion. It is a virtue of peculiar quality, not identical with, though not unrelated to, that Charity which is radiated by the best Christian people. Our lama's love possessed a note of serenity which seemed to distinguish it from the similarly-named but usually more passionately expressed virtue found among Europeans. I do not believe that this Compassion, said by some to be special to Buddhism, really differs in essence from Christian Charity; but it is, as I shall try to explain later, consciously linked with a certain intellectual concept, of which it is the corollary—a recognition of the relations which exist between all creatures, including men, based on an insight into the true nature of the Universe, and not dependent on a vague emotional appeal. This intellectual basis is, or ought to be, just as indispensable in the Christian doctrine of love; but in practice Christians often allow the sentimental side to predominate.

I cannot hope to define the Buddhist compassion; but I feel that its possessor has something of the detached, or rather non-attached, temperament of a mathematician. Instead of the

science of quantity, the sole object of research is the intuitive realization of metaphysical truth, unfogged by any expectation of rewards; and the method and tool is not the art of measurement but an application of utterly disinterested love itself. This analogy is an afterthought, a comment in the light of present knowledge upon impressions which then only appeared as a faint glimmer of understanding.

The Harsil lama reminded me constantly of Kipling's hero in whose footsteps we were about to tread, though it is probable that the original lama of *Kim* was conceived as a man of greater learning and authority than our little friend. But he possessed the same simplicity, coupled with penetrating vision, the same immunity from apologetic or propagandist tendencies, the same disposition to playfulness. This meeting, though we hardly knew it then, set our faces corporeally and spiritually in the direction of Tibet.

When the day of departure came, the lama was invited to bless the caravan in the presence of the entire village. He turned up in full canonicals, an under-garment of orange damask, and over it his rust-red gown. The company was made to sit in a semicircle on the turf; he then passed three times along the line, reciting sacred formulae. The first time he poured water from a teapot-shaped sprinkler into each man's hands. The recipient made a gesture of ceremonial washing and also sniffed some of the liquid up his nose. At the second round a bunch of peacock feathers was waved in our faces, while at the third passage he blessed each of us again on the head with his rosary. The Tibetans do not confer benedictions collectively on a crowd of people as in Europe; for the blessing to be effective there must either be direct contact or else the celebrant must bestow power by an intentionally-aimed concentration of thought upon the postulant. The power of transferring a grace is held to reside in the actual minister, a faculty gained by his own efforts; emphasis is laid less on his office than on the degree of "realization" he has personally attained to.

A faint path that rises sharply round a spur just behind the village gives access to the first great torrent valley joining the Bhagirat'hi from the north-west. This is the beginning of the route by the Nela pass into the valley of the Baspa. Our way led into this side-valley, through cedar forests with an undergrowth of mock-orange-blossom or syringa, which was in full

flower and gave out an overpowering sweetness. I once showed a photograph of this wood on the screen at a lecture in one of our industrial cities. After it was over, a lady, prominent for her municipal activities, came up quite indignantly and offered the following comment:—"How ugly those forests look with all the valuable timber tumbled about. It is high time something was done to tidy the place up and stop such appalling waste."

The track continued rather steeply for some hours through denser woods, chiefly of ancient birches dividing into many trunks. Strawberry plants made a pleasant carpet for our bare feet, until we discovered that this wood was haunted by large adders. The next two short marches lay across open meadows crossed by bands of birch, new country for us. Near Gangotri the sides of the valley had been too uniformly steep and rugged to form alps. Here the grassy hillsides were scored by stream-beds, edged with birch-scrub. It might have been Scotland, but for the flowers, purple iris and potentillas—yellow, deepest crimson and magenta.

There was also a dwarf species of lily, cream yellow in colour, some bulbs of which we dug up and eventually sent to England where they proved new to our gardens and quite hardy. They were identified as *Nemocharis oxypetala* which had been described by a botanist close on one hundred years ago. It was in this place that we first made the acquaintance of the poppies of the genus *Meconopsis*, now becoming such favourites in English gardens; in this instance the colour was mauve, not blue, with an orange centre. A species of rhododendron formed the undergrowth of the higher birch woods. The huge flower-heads were dazzling white, like snowballs. The kitchen-garden was also represented, for we gathered bundles of wild rhubarb, a welcome addition to the bill-of-fare. In the wild variety only the young stalks are worth stewing, as the older ones are stringy and acrid.

At the alp of Khyárkuti, a wide flat at the junction of several glens, the flora was so rich that we decided to stay there an extra day. This pleased Djun Singh greatly because it gave him an opportunity of displaying before us the wealth of his family as represented by the flocks and herds which, with a few ponies, were grazing on the luscious pasture "These are our sheep, those goats are ours, over yonder it is our own men you see!"

We were able to get plenty of fresh milk and a sheep for the whole company to feast upon. The humane killer, a gift of the Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, was much admired; we carefully explained its purpose, which was to spare the animal the anticipation of death, and then demonstrated its use on the sheep, which continued to crop the grass unconcernedly up to the last minute. Though two of us have since altered our views on the question of slaughtering at all, members of most other expeditions will doubtless continue to demand meat, so we strongly recommend the use of the captive bolt pistol. It anyway eliminates any risk of cruelty that might result from entrusting the killing to incompetent or callous hands; also the public pointing out of the moral is worth something in itself. It is interesting to note that on all occasions when this implement was used it was welcomed; there was no hostile reaction such as has often followed its first introduction into parts of Europe. Slaughtering is a serious job which, in general, is best not left to underlings. The suitable person to act as butcher is really the most sensitive member of a party, not the toughest: for then one can be sure that no effort to minimize pain will be neglected. Perhaps executioners ought to be chosen from the ranks of the most humane and tender-hearted citizens too!

At Khyárkuti we passed beyond the birches, but stunted willows still formed diminutive woods. Higher up, nothing that could be called a tree was found, though dwarf willows crept in and out of the stones. The large-blossomed rhododendrons too had been left behind and replaced by a small lemon-yellow variety which covered the slopes just like the familiar "Alpine rose" of Switzerland. Immense auriculas of the deepest purple, ten inches high, grew under the bushes and three kinds of fritillaria, one with a speckled green bell shaped like the hood of a cobra, another white, and a third delicate mauve.

This last, as well as the yellow *Nemocharis* mentioned earlier, was also successfully exported to Europe and has flowered in the nursery of the well-known Alpine grower, Walter Irvine of Bromborough, Cheshire. There were, besides, asters similar to the Alpine ones, and wherever snow had just melted, tufts of golden kingcup. We were surprised not to find any members of the carnation tribe—but there may have been a campion—nor did we see any gentians or saxifrages, though various unknown

rock plants abounded. The most conspicuous plant of the district, covering some slopes like a white sheet and over-topping the yellow rhododendrons, was an anemone with a circlet of flowers on a fleshy stalk. Judging from photographs and published lists the flora of our valley must be very similar to that of the Bhyundar glen, in Eastern Garhwal, made famous by Smythe under the name *The Valley of Flowers.* From the extreme localization of such rich assemblages of flowers it seems evident that even in this latitude, sheltered places alone favour dense concentrations and multiplicity of species. The perpetual cold draught of the greater glacier valleys is probably rather discouraging to plant life and partly neutralizes the advantages of sub-tropical sun and generous rainfall.

The next day's march was a very short one, only three hours; but we had to halt near the limit of firewood on this side of the watershed because there was not time to cross from Khyárkuti to the corresponding point on the farther side of the pass in one day. We camped near a small green lake with tiny icebergs floating on it, not far from the end of a long moraine that leads conveniently to the foot of the actual pass. Two of our porters were Baspa men and knew the route, which is used to some extent by the local people. The mountains were more Alpine than anything we had yet seen, long jagged rock ridges enclosing combes filled by icefalls.

The pass itself is long and monotonous. For the ignorant it is merely a snow grind, but for the geographer, who knows that here is the parting of two of the great river systems of the world, there is romance in the thought that standing on the crest, the waters on his right—that is if he is facing towards Tibet—go down to swell the sacred Ganges and bring life to the whole north Indian plain, before the river discharges its flood in the Bay of Bengal; while the melting caused by his left boot will be carried first into the Baspa, and thence via the Satlej and the Indus into the Arabian Sea.

When negotiating the Nela pass it is advisable to make an early start, as the snowfields lie steep enough to let their angle be felt to the full, but not sufficiently steep to help one to gain height quickly. In the heat of the day, after the snow has begun to soften, the walk up the airless trough is tiring, nor is the scenery interesting enough to make one forget fatigue. Unfortunately, being inexperienced in the psychology of porters,

we let them dawdle at the start; the weather was dull and inclined to rain and porters hate to move save in sunlight. We also found out later that they had not bothered to cook a proper meal and had only brewed some tea, although they knew that it would be an unusually long carry over the 18,000-foot pass. They are happy-go-lucky and never carry food to provide a snack at halts. It is a mistake to leave such questions to the porters' own initiative, and the person in charge must himself supervise every detail. Lack of food made them slow and when we stopped at the rocky rib which marks the real pass, we realized that the next firewood in the upper part of the Baspa valley could not be reached before dark. Snow began to fall, turning to rain lower down, so we decided to pitch camp in an unpleasant spot on loose stones and wait for the stragglers. Night had fallen when at last they drifted wearily into camp. Though it was not part of our agreement to provide shelter for the porters, we thought it only fair to pitch all our tents, and squeeze into a single one ourselves, so that, with some shelter, the night might be less miserable for them.

One lad called Gonu caused anxiety by narrowly escaping frost-bite. Men who lack boots usually wrap cloths round their feet when going through snow, and that is quite effective; but this youth, who was wearing flimsy shoes, took them off and struggled up the pass in bare feet. Two of us who were waiting to see everyone safely across the pass, noticed that his feet had turned a queer colour; on closer examination they proved to be quite numb. There was no time to linger, as snow was falling and a biting wind rising, so we could only rub his feet with our gloved hands for a few minutes. Then we made him put on two pairs of dry socks, and let him walk in them, without shoes, down to the camp where he was handed over to the care of the doctor for first aid. His feet were carefully dried with wads of cotton, and he was placed in a tent, and instructions were given that he must wear a larger size of boots with several pairs of socks and be carried across streams and wet places bodily, to make sure that his feet remained dry. His load was handed over to another man. Though his feet looked alarmingly bad for a day, a naturally good circulation did its work in time and Gonu suffered no ill-effects. In crossing snow with porters, neither the care of feet nor eyes should be left to the men's own initiative. On that same day three men were affected by snow-

blindness from neglecting to shield their eyes against the glare. It is a painful ailment while it lasts, though it rarely has permanent consequences.

When we had settled down in the camp, we went out in the pitch dark to see if the patients were comfortable. Two of the snow-blind men were found lying out in the drizzle, unable, so they said, to find room in any of the tents. This was surprising, as we had calculated that there was just enough accommodation for all. The first two tents we came to were quite full, but in a third we found only two occupants. "What's the matter here, why have you left these men outside?" "Oh, they don't belong to our district, they are Baspa men." Though greatly annoyed, we said quietly, "Have you ever found us making a difference between Tibetans or Indians, Hindus or Buddhists? We have given up one of our own tents to the porters to-night. Are you greater than we are, that you cannot share a tent with your companions? If you do not like to shelter them, you need not: no one is going to use force; we will squeeze them into our own tent, we are not above sleeping with them." The lesson sank in and we never again had similar trouble. It is not to be supposed from this story that real hostility existed between members of the different communities. On the march they were perfectly friendly; but tribal attachment limited their vision so that they were unconscious of wider social obligations. For instance, every group kept to its own camp-fire, ignoring the others at neighbouring fires.

Descending the Baspa, some little trouble was experienced in crossing torrents in spate; in fact we had to camp on the bank of one of them, waiting for the flood to abate in the early hours of the morning, when the melting process on the parent glacier had slowed down. The porters excelled at this game of torrents, fearlessly threading a way through the swirling eddies and jumping from foothold to foothold; but in the worst places a rope had to be used. There was one porter, a native of Nesang in Upper Khunu, called Ts'hering Tendzin, an elderly man of dignified appearance, who had a special flair for detecting a practicable passage. He had slanting Tartar eyes and a pointed beard and wore a short double-breasted tunic of white wool with a cap to match. He looked like one of the Mongol archers of the twelfth century just stepped out of a Persian miniature. Djun Singh, his nephew by marriage, also used to treat torrents

with complete disdain, plunging in headlong with no apparent precaution. In fact he became somewhat conceited about his skill. At last we reached the edge of a broad stream, across which some of the more timid of us, myself for one, after taking soundings with axes, worked out an intricate zigzag route; but Djun Singh, with his habitual recklessness, leapt straight into the middle, and having chanced this time on a deep hole, suddenly disappeared under the flood, while his load, which contained tents, was seen floating away towards the Baspa. Fortunately, his uncle was on the watch and hauled him out by the hair, while another excellent porter called Naranhu, whom we later kept on as a permanent climbing coolie, retrieved the precious bundle. Poor Djun Singh emerged like a drowned rat, suffering even more from chagrin than from the icy bath; we gave him dry clothes from our rucksacks and rubbed him back to warmth; but his pride received a damping from which it took days to recover.

It was in the Upper Baspa that we first saw the blue *Meconopsis* poppy; it grew in the most unlikely-looking places among big scree. Strangely enough, we never came across large collections of these plants such as one would expect from the number of seeds which cram their seed-pods; but we kept finding single specimens every quarter of a mile or so, growing among the stones in solitary aloofness. They all attained a superb size as if each one was being carefully and separately tended for the Chelsea show.

Chitkul, the first village after the Nela pass, is built amid glacier boulders in a magnificent situation backed by a great curtain of fiercely sharp peaks. We had reached the birch line only just before; but below the village, forests of deodar cedar occurred again, carpeted with pale turquoise aquilegia. We elected to pitch camp on the other side of the river just over a bridge, where a good spring of fresh water issued from the bank only a few feet above the level of the river. The usual camping-ground lies in the middle of the village close to a torrent which receives all the refuse, so that its water cannot be drunk unboiled. A peculiar race inhabits Chitkul and its sister villages of Raksam and Sangla, whose affinities I have not been able to ascertain. There is no trace of the Mongoloid in their faces, neither do they look like Indians. They are tall, powerful and strikingly beautiful. I have seen no other race to compare with

them for looks, except the Khambas of Eastern Tibet.

One of them picked up the load of one of our porters on two fingers exclaiming scornfully, "That's not a man's load, anyway!" We met men and even children carrying enormous logs on their backs, yet the people seemed to preserve their physique to an advanced age, which struck us as remarkable after associating with the short-lived Indians of Garhwal. The men had long flowing locks and short beards trimmed like those of ancient Persian kings; their dress was a grey homespun tunic girded with a violet sash. The women were like Greek goddesses; even quite elderly women had an unwrinkled complexion and a full contralto timbre of voice that would have been the envy of their timid and overworked-looking sisters of the Ganges side of the range. The young girls, merry and rosy-cheeked, invited us to fall head over heels in love at first sight. By their dress they recalled Tanagra statuettes, with a flat round cap and a shawl fastened with a brass pin, its design also reminiscent of ancient Hellas. The children were little angels of beauty, but they had impish smiles; their bearing had the dignity found everywhere among those accustomed to spend much of their time away in the wilderness. No artifice of the schoolmaster can provide a substitute for that sort of independence. It was a great disappointment that the photographs we took here were failures.

I remember particularly two people whom we met at Chitkul. The first was a young man who would surely have put Adonis out of countenance. He knew it too; but this cannot be called conceit, for who could be the possessor of such supreme comeliness and pretend not to know it? In his dress, there could be detected an extra care in the choice of material (white wool instead of the usual grey) and a distinctive jauntiness in the way he wore it. On his finger we noticed a ring of unusually fine craftsmanship. It was the work, so he told us, of the best smith in all Khunu, whose fame had spread throughout the province. He dwelt at Sugnam beyond the Satlej, more than a hundred miles away and his products were everywhere in demand. Later, we met the artist himself.

The other person who lives in my memory was a woman, wife of one of the elders. She was middle-aged, but still possessed a rare beauty, shadowed by obvious signs of suffering; for she had a cancer of the breast, not uncommon in that district. It

was tragic that nothing could be done for so sweet a creature.

When the first of our party came in sight of the houses, a tall figure detached itself from a group that was holding a discussion on the veranda of the temple and came running towards us; it proved to be the headman, who, with marks of profound respect, made us welcome and explained that he had been expecting us. We wondered how he came to have heard of our approach, and it transpired that the Superintendent of Hill States, Simla, had, unsolicited by us, very kindly written to inform the Raja of Bashahr that we were coming over the Nela and he, in turn, had sent word to all his people to receive us hospitably; this order was faithfully observed in all the villages under his jurisdiction.

Chitkul is almost entirely built of wood, and every house, as well as the principal temple, is adorned with notable carvings, in which, unlike the woodwork observed in the Ganges valley, Mughal influence is hardly apparent. The style of design is based on square forms and seemed to us to have a connexion with that of the older Jain temples of the north of India. The temple was a masterpiece of the woodworker's craft, with rich floral devices, elegant verandas and pierced panels. A small detached pavilion standing in the open space close by, was still more perfect. Round it hung a fringe of wooden drops, which produced a curious soft jangling in the wind, like the ghost of a xylophone.

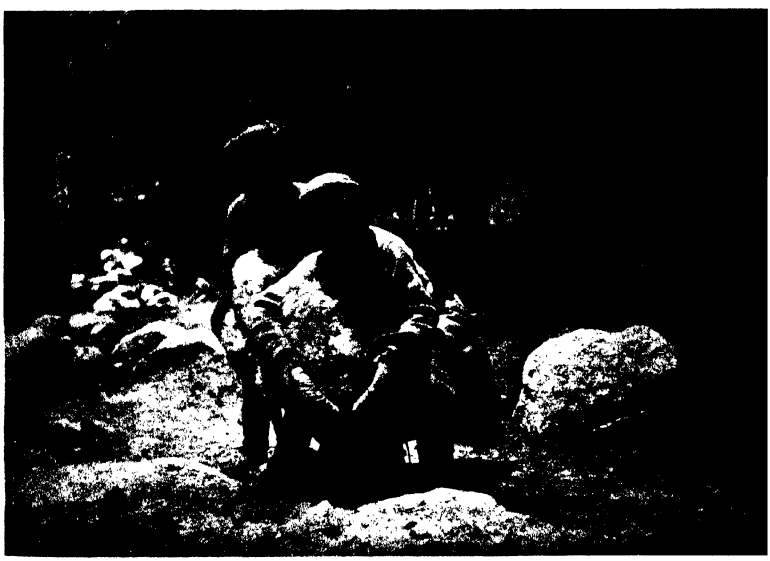
Chitkul divided its allegiance between two Traditions. The temple already described, which was dedicated to the Devta or local divinity, was nominally Hindu; but there was another newer temple, looked after by a ragged and unprepossessing lama—a veritable tramp—which was Buddhist and built in Tibetan style. To the first shrine we were not admitted for fear of pollution; but the second, like all Buddhist places of worship, is open to everyone. This contained some crude mural paintings that nevertheless had a certain liveliness. In particular I remember the figure of a huge slate-coloured Warden brandishing a sword, a St. Michael barring the way to Heaven against the wicked. The Tibetan influence appears to have been brought to Chitkul from the adjoining valley to the north, over the Charang pass. The Chitkulis, living as they do on the borderline of the Hindu and Tibetan Traditions, try to make doubly sure by offering worship impartially to the gods of both.

The central part of the Baspa valley is friendly and park-like, with stretches of fertile farming, alternating with conifers and groves of walnut. In places we found wild apricots bearing small but palatable fruit. Sangla, the richest of the villages, is a station of the Forestry Service. The Forestry officer, Mr. Deans, was in residence accompanied by his wife and two friends and they kindly invited us to spend the night. They were the first English people that we had met since leaving Mussoori many weeks before and we had almost forgotten how one behaves when faced with china, knives, forks, napkins and a tablecloth. Pulling ourselves together we managed to acquit ourselves fairly creditably, though I admit I did fall asleep at the dinner-table once.

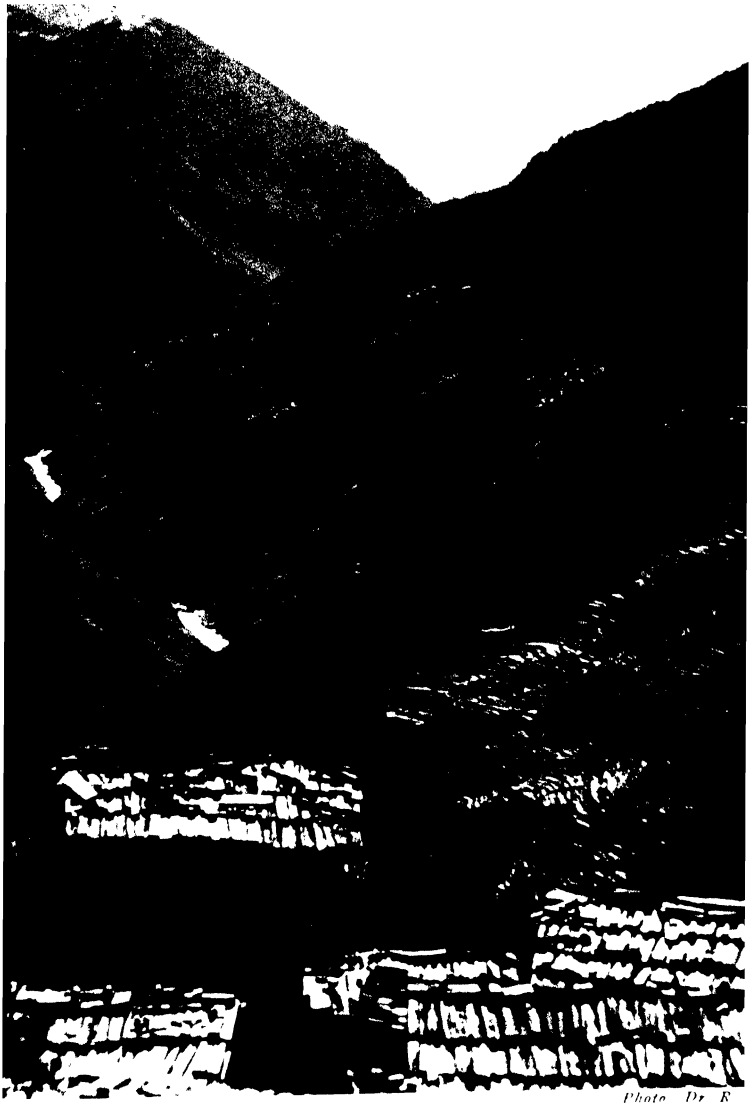
Below Sangla the scenery becomes rather uninteresting: we hurried through it impatient to see the Satlej. That great river, which at this confluence has already run over three hundred miles of its course, is so impressive that it seems immediately to reduce the Baspa to the inferior status of a minor tributary. There is something awe-inspiring about the Satlej, which other rivers do not share. Man is not alone in feeling its secret power, for according to certain authorities, Nature herself recognizes it by making the river into an easterly boundary of the kingdom of the goats. The horned species that are to be found farther east of that line, despite their goat-like appearance, are all sheep or antelopes, with the one exception of the t'har. The ibex, whose range extends even as far west as Spain, when he comes to the Satlej, hears a mysterious voice whispering in his ear: "Thus far, but no farther!"



BIRCHWOOD CAMP



SHEPHERD BOYS IN THE BASPA VALLEY



SATLEJ GORGE SCENERY

CHAPTER VI

The Hindustan-Tibet Road

WE crossed to the right bank of the Satlej by the *jhula* or cable-bridge of Paori. Such bridges are frequent in all Tibetan countries and are rather amusing to negotiate. The passenger or baggage is fastened on a wooden platform suspended from the main cable which is then drawn across by means of a second rope. Ferrymen are deputed to work the *jhula* from each end; at Paori there were ferrywomen too, real Amazons, who pulled with as much vigour as the men. While doing this job they wore their jewels, and their appearance would not have disgraced a wedding. Pack-animals were slung by a girth passed under their bellies, and then hauled across, dangling over space. Ponies seemed rather nervous of this bridge and began to kick when they got near the landing-place; but donkeys faced the ordeal with stolid unconcern, never moving until all four feet were safely on land.

Opposite Paori the path zigzags up a long rise to Chini, winding through dry and open fir woods with occasional cornfields in the clearings. We had now said good-bye to the monsoon and rain troubled us no longer, though clouds still clung to the mountain tops. At Chini there is a post-office and a delightful Forest Bungalow with a terraced garden planted with apples, plums and every sort of English vegetable. It also commands a surpassing view across the Satlej towards the Chini Kailas, a splendid group of mountains which includes a peak said to be the dwelling of a certain godling, who betrays his presence from time to time by showering down apples from his orchard on to the places below. Climbing parties who wish to attempt these peaks might be well advised to leave that particular one out of their programme, as they may experience trouble with their porters.

Chini is also an important post on the Hindustan-Tibet road, which connects Simla with the trade-mart of Gartok. All along

it, bungalows have been erected at convenient intervals by the Public Works Department; we were glad to use them, for they are comfortable and invariably placed with an excellent eye for a commanding view. Staying in these houses, we gained additional enjoyment from being able to have regular chamber music every evening, playing on viols, treble and alto, which had accompanied us so far without our having found an opportunity for using them. For protection, each viol was fitted in a solid box of cypress-wood, enclosed in its turn in a thick padded sheath, waterproof outside and stuffed with hair impregnated with creosote, in which spiral springs, like those of an armchair, had been embedded to act as shock-absorbers. The instruments stood up to the many changes of temperature and humidity remarkably well, and not even a top string broke in all the five months of the journey.

Music that sounds complete in two parts, needing no accompaniment, is not easy to find. Our great stand-by was the book of Two-part Inventions by Bach which, though composed for the keyboard, transcribe excellently for viols. We also had a set of fantasies in two parts by Thomas Morley which are authentic viol music. Finally we arranged a number of sixteenth-century English and Spanish tunes in such a way that, by the generous use of double stops, they sounded like a full quartette. It often happened that, unperceived by us, a little group of porters would gather quietly round us and listen intently. They formed a perfect audience, unobtrusive yet seeming to possess the true faculty for listening. Playing our national music to these foreign but sympathetic listeners, we could not help recalling the words of Thomas Mace, a Fellow of Trinity, Cambridge, who wrote a book in the middle of the seventeenth century entitled *Musick's Monument*. In the last chapter he speculates on the method of communication that will be used in Heaven by members of the diverse nationalities there assembled. There must, so he argues, be a common language intelligible to all mankind and the only known language that fulfils that condition is music

On quitting Chini the woods begin to thin out rapidly and the country takes on the character of semi-desert, with patches of cultivation only at points where the waters of snow-born torrents can be tapped for irrigation. Here the beauties of the landscape are quite different from those of the wooded

regions. There are open views and vivid colours. We felt sudden stirrings of emotion each time we came to greenness after hours of walking through parched country. The combined effect of dry air and an average altitude of about 8,000 feet is extremely exhilarating. The flora changes to the arid type: thyme and other aromatic herbs and various thorny plants are scattered sparsely over the hillsides; only high up, close to the melting snows is there any grass for summer pasture.

Such a climate suits the apricot: orchards surround each village, and the trees appear from a distance like little dark green islands in a golden sea of barley. The houses are well built and the general aspect of the villages is much neater and more prosperous than in Garhwal. As one approaches the frontier of Tibet, timber becomes scarce, and the chalets and carved wooden temples with their high-pitched roofs give way to an exclusively stone style of architecture with flat roofs. The roofs are used for drying piles of apricots, which do not rot, but are turned by the sun's rays to every shade between orange and deepest crimson. When dry, they form a staple winter food.

On entering a village, the road passes through a gateway something like a lych-gate; under its pointed roof is placed a *chorten* or *stupa*, to give it its better-known Indian name, the Buddhists' emblematic monument which replaces the crucifix of Catholic lands. *Chorten* means literally "receptacle of offerings" or "reliquary": some of them do shelter relics of saints as a protection against the entry of evil influences; others again are cenotaphs. The interior of the gateway consists of a shallow dome from which rows of saints of the Tibetan calendar peer down gravely upon the traveller. These paintings are excellent and probably of considerable age, though, judging by the freshness of the colours, some of them have been renovated in modern times.

Besides *chortens*, each entrance to a village is marked by a *mendong* or *Mani* wall, a low cemented breastwork upon which innumerable flat stones carved with sacred texts in low relief have been laid, the accumulated offerings of local piety. The commonest text is *Om mani padme hum* from which the name is derived. Its significance will be explained later. Where such a wall occurs the road divides, leaving a free passage on either side of the *Mani*, so that passers-by, whether men or beasts, are enabled to walk on its left side, that is, turning their

own right sides towards it. It is an invariable rule in Tibet that any sacred object must be passed on the left; neglect to do so will be considered both disrespectful and unlucky. There is a popular saying: "Beware of the devils on the left-hand side." To turn the right flank is a sign of assent to the doctrine inscribed on the stones or enshrined in the *chorten*; the left side is turned towards the devils, personifying sins and errors, in token of defiant rejection of their blandishments.

The basic food of the people in this land of Khunu is barley, first parched and then ground into flour; in this form it is consumed. It is called *tsamba*, and takes the place of bread in all countries of the Tibetan group. Frequently it is eaten mixed with buttered tea to form a kind of stiff porridge; when dry it is not unlike sweetened sawdust—an acquired taste! Along the Satlej excellent potatoes are also grown and a sort of white radish, the size of a turnip. Rice is imported and a little sugar. Very little meat seems to be eaten: the chief, and almost the only source of fat, is the butter melted into the tea. To this list must be added apricots fresh or dried. On this diet both men and women maintain a magnificent physique. Their teeth are invariably excellent and likewise their eyesight, except in cases where there is definite disease. It is said that certain illnesses of the eyes are not uncommon in the Tibetan countries. One does not come across many decrepit-looking old people; I do not know what is an average expectation of life among them.

On July 28th we reached the important village of Kanam, notable as the place where a systematic study of the Tibetan language by a European first began. A Hungarian, named Csoma de Kőrös, arrived in Western Tibet about 1825 and settled at Kanam, where he resided several years. The ostensible object of his researches was the origin of the Hungarian race and language, over which there was controversy. He at once fell in love with the character of the Tibetans, as we did, and found no difficulty in adopting the hypothesis that a people so endowed with charm and intelligence could not but be cousins of his own Hungarians. He pursued his studies most conscientiously, living exactly like the people and assimilating their ideas by the one method which, to my mind, is likely to yield reliable results, namely, by steeping himself in the atmosphere, and by seeking information only from those who, by their own traditional standards, were qualified to impart it. Second-

hand learning, based on observations made from the outside, notebook in hand, hardly seems worth the trouble of amassing.

Csoma published a grammar, now very rare, and a dictionary, and must therefore be hailed as the Father of Tibetan studies. His residence among the lamas opened his eyes, too, to the nobility of Buddhist doctrine and to the similarities that exist between its ethical precepts and those of Christ. He died at Darjeeling in 1842, and left behind him the memory of a singularly sweet and enthusiastic personality.

At the time of our visit Csoma's lamasery was being drastically reconditioned as it was becoming dilapidated. We were fortunate in seeing the work in its early stages. The temple had been partly pulled down and the walls had only risen again to half the intended height. Round the courtyard, which was encumbered with timber and stones, the residential buildings were arranged; cells occupied the upper story and access was gained to it by a " ladder," that is, by a tree trunk with nicks cut in it, more alarming than many a rock-climb.

The work was being directed by a tall and dignified-looking person in a long robe, with a silver chain round his neck, from which hung a cylindrical charm-box. His beard was sparse and his hair gathered into a pigtail. Across his forehead were scored three parallel wrinkles as straight as if they had been drawn with a ruler. He was introduced to us as a painter from Ladak who had been engaged to be the *capo maestro*; under him senior monks acted as foremen, whilst for labourers he had juniors and peasants of both sexes who were giving their spare time as an act of devotion. Thus it could be claimed that the entire labour employed was amateur, except for the director. But it must not be forgotten that the practice of building is common in this country: most people would have done such work at some time or other on their own houses, so that it would be false to describe them as unskilled. The masonry and woodwork were excellent. It was probably the artist's intention eventually to line the walls with paintings. It was indeed exciting to witness the same process by which our own cathedrals and parish churches were built in the Middle Ages, when ecclesiastics had a practical understanding of construction and could collaborate intelligently with their technicians without being helplessly at their mercy: whilst the laity contributed that voluntary labour which best adorns a sacred purpose and

edifies the donors much more than a money offering. The most surprising architectural feats of antiquity were not accomplished by architects trained by a protracted university course to draw elaborate plans, with every single detail prejudged, in an office; nor was the planning of a church handed over to Messrs. X—— the atheist and Z—— the cynical capitalist. The processes of building, except in the case of structures which verge on engineering, are evidently not beyond the comprehension of the average person. I wish we had thought of offering ourselves and our men to take part in the building. It would have been a rare experience; but, as so often happens, the idea occurred to us too late, and can only be added to the list of missed opportunities.

The painter invited us to follow him up the ladder, into an upper chamber supported on pillars and furnished with some elegance. He was using it for a workshop and a number of unfinished figures of painted wood were drying in a corner. We were also shown a scroll-painting of the type found universally in Tibet, and called a *t'hanka*, in brilliant colours on cotton impregnated with lime, and mounted on Chinese brocade, with a baton at either end so that it could be rolled up like a map.

One fact puzzled us at first: whereas on the *t'hanka* the colours, though vivid, made a harmonious effect, the wooden images stared at us from under a coating of shiny and rather offensive pigment. How could the same eye and hand have produced these two incompatible results? Suddenly the explanation dawned on me and I said to our host, "Surely those are not Tibetan paints which you have used for the images?" "That is true," he replied. "I bought some foreign paints for doing wood, but I always employ Tibetan paint for pictures."

There is little doubt that he had been tempted sometime or other into buying factory-made chemicals of cheap grade to save the trouble of grinding up his own paints. Then, having once accepted this compromise with his artistic ideals, his senses, in their turn, had duly registered the result and become correspondingly coarsened. His taste was now partly vitiated, remaining sound when doing pictures, but over-tolerant when painting statues, probably for no stronger reason than because the amounts of paint necessary for the latter are large and tedious to prepare. These were the first symptoms of a disordered critical faculty. Later, perhaps, under the specious

whisperings of intellectual laziness, the bad paints would invade the pictures also. Such are, commonly, the first steps of the descent into Avernus, before the easy gradient turns to a steep incline down which the self-deceived victim slides with ever-growing velocity towards the pit.

The painter of Kanam had been infected with the disease all unconsciously, quite likely by pure accident, and it may well have stopped there without developing aggravated symptoms. One can only hope so: but having come across many other cases of loss of judgement from similar causes, I feel in a position to trace out the stages by which this disorder runs its normal course.

Beginning with:—

1 Acceptance of inferior materials;
it proceeds via:—
2 Damage to the sense of colour;
3 Seduction by the idea of saving trouble;
4 Disturbance of colour-sense which in its turn disturbs sense of form;
5 Bewilderment—general atrophy of taste;
6 Collapse of the sense of tradition in the artist, who becomes a prey to the idea of novelty and begins to imitate misunderstood foreign models, usually the worst.
And so to the last stage:—
7 Extinction of the Art.

That, alas, is the history of a great part of Asia; whether in our time we shall be permitted to descry the first faint signs of a turn in the tide, cannot be told; but it is not easy to be optimistic.

There was a separate temple in the village known as "The House of the Kangyur" (the collection of canonical scriptures corresponding roughly to the Bible) where, in semi-darkness, an enormous number of scrolls hung, all rather dusty, but including among them some extremely fine examples. We offered the community an adequate sum towards the building fund if they would sell us two *t'hankas*: we did not feel that this was a wrongful offer, for the pictures were being neglected and a fair equivalent was paid for them and applied to a necessary sacred purpose. It is always a nice question how far it is lawful to buy objects dedicated to religious use. If a competent

authority is willing to sell, it is, of course, admissible legally; and should the work of art be perishing from neglect, it seems morally so; but on the other hand, in cases where the object is still fulfilling its proper purpose and being duly cared for, every means should be taken to encourage the custodians to continue to treasure it: indeed, they should be warned against parting lightly with their precious possessions. Collectors and archaeologists, in their insatiable thirst for rare antiques, sometimes develop a lack of scruple which would hardly stick at murder or burglary; certainly bribery and undue pressure of every sort are resorted to in order to wrest sacred treasures from the hands of their owners. One has read of people publicly glorying in the tricks by which they have overcome the qualms of their victims. It should not be difficult to determine the ethics of each case; but, if there is doubt, a conservative policy should be preferred.

It was at Kanam that we had our first taste of tea made in the Tibetan way. A broad-leaved kind is used, compressed into bricks, and brought mostly by yak caravan from Western China. The Tibetans have such a preference for this sort of tea that even when living on the south side of the Himalaya, where Indian tea would be cheaper to obtain, they go to no end of trouble to import their favourite brand. In preparing the infusion the leaves are put into cold water and then heated. When the proper strength has been reached, salt, with a pinch of soda, is added, then butter, and the whole is thoroughly mixed in a churn. The soda has the effect of making the tea into a uniform mixture instead of the butter floating on the top. It is afterwards warmed up again and served from the teapot.

Not far from Kanam, a certain Tibetan Lama from the Chumbi valley, adjoining Sikkim, was then living; he was called "The Chumbi Precious Doctor" and was famous in every corner of Tibet for his sanctity. He had spent years in caves communing with higher Powers and, like the old anchorites of Europe, enjoyed an extraordinary influence over animals. Our head-porter related to us with emotion how bears and leopards waited on him in the wilderness, even as the ravens served Elias. He had come to Kanam in order to "set the wheel of the Doctrine a-turning," that is, on a mission to reawaken the faith of the people and to illumine their ignorance. There is no doubt about his immense reputation, which extended even out-

side the limits of his own communion. Everyone spoke of him with reverence. A Hindu official told us that to look at the Lama's face was to realize how great a saint he was. We naturally felt a longing to call on him on the return journey; but when the moment came we let trivial obstacles turn us from our purpose. The same occurred in 1936 when he was residing at Ghum, near Darjeeling. Again we put off the meeting till too late; we have since heard the sad news of his death, so the chance is gone for ever, and we are left with vain regrets.

The two best silversmiths of Khunu belong to this neighbourhood. One is the man mentioned in the previous chapter as the maker of the ring which we had so admired at Chitkul. His village was Sugnam, a few miles up a side-valley, where Richard Nicholson went to visit him. Assisted by his son, he was working to supply a very wide market with silver clasps and trinkets for the country women, who delight in jewellery. His colleague, who came to call on us, lived quite close to Kanam, in an outlying hamlet called Labrang, conspicuous for its old watch-tower. They both had a fine presence, typical of master craftsmen the world over. That profession, with its happy blend of head and hand, the intellectual and the practical, seems to select the best type of humanity, and its members might well style themselves the "salt of the earth." Their extinction, under the pressure of the modern industrialism that is overrunning the Orient, must be regarded as a social, no less than an artistic, disaster. To the Labrang jeweller we were able to show two pieces by my brother, Andrea Pallis of Neston, in Cheshire, one a ring, and the other a pendant in the form of a golden lotus, with a small diamond set in the centre, representing the "jewel in the lotus" or the Doctrine in the World. Its symbolism made an instant appeal to him and he kept turning it over and over, the better to admire the workmanship.

Metalwork is the craft at which the Khunuwas excel. Teapots in brass, decorated with silver and copper bands *appliqués*, are in common use: the combining of several metals is typical of Tibetan work. The illustration facing page 358 shows a fine example made for the parents of one of our porters, at Hlari, a village in Spiti. On the silver band round the base of the neck are incised certain classical tokens of felicity; the tassel-like pattern also occurs very frequently. Handles are invariably made in the shape of dragons, which exhibit almost

endless diversity of detail, but fall roughly into two generic types, the fish-like, as in this photograph, and the pure dragon type with horns, related to Chinese models. The spout issues out of the jaws of a monster rather like an elephant, but said to inhabit the sea; it might be called a leviathan.

Ornamental woodwork is also to be found in the better houses and temples, combining happily both boldness and grace; but this craft is seen at its best in the villages of Lower Kunáwar, in the well-timbered tract between Chini and Simla.

A minor craft is the making of wooden bowls with a hoop of chased silver round the base. Every Tibetan habitually carries his own tea-bowl in the ample folds of his gown, and specimens with fine figuring are said to command high prices. If the natural pattern of the wood is exceptionally good, no metal base is added.

The next halt along the Hindustan-Tibet road is called Poo. We had been listening to tales about the wonders of this place for weeks before we reached it, because Ishwar Singh, or to give him his proper Tibetan name, Odsung, lived there. We had recently appointed him head-porter, as he had proved exceptionally reliable and intelligent. "The sweetest potatoes come from Poo." "Apricots! you don't call these apricots: you wait till you get to Poo and then you will learn what's what." "Woodworkers? The ones here all overcharge; besides not one of them can hold a candle to the carver at Poo!" This became a standing joke, so that we composed a music-hall song about it with a refrain:—

> If Woolworth's not got it,
> And Fortnum and Mason don't stock it,
> You'll find it at Poo.

But to do our friend justice, his home did not fall far short of his claims: it was a charming place, with quite the most succulent apricots, the tastiest potatoes and the most intelligent inhabitants in the whole district. This high opinion was afterwards borne out by our friend of the Forestry Service, Dr. Gorrie, who had an intimate knowledge of this country and declared the Poopas—the men of Poo—to be unusually attractive.

The first sight of the village is dramatic. As the crow flies, the distance from Kanam is not great, but a deep re-entrant

has to be contoured, which prolongs the road to some twenty miles. Trees, already sparse and small, resembling Mediterranean pines, cease altogether beyond Kanam and the vast stony tract of Western Tibet begins. The road descends to the edge of the Satlej and follows it for some miles through a burning hot gorge: then suddenly quitting the bank, by a sharp rise to the left, it takes a sweeping curve round a combe to a small pass between the main hillside and an isolated knoll above the river. On this pass stands a conspicuous *mendong* that, even from a distance, makes one feel as if something exciting is about to appear. From this gap one looks straight across a ravine to Poo, with its terraces of well-built stone houses relieved by elegant wooden balconies, and surrounded by barley fields and apricot orchards. At the edge of the village stands the pleasant little rest-bungalow in a garden full of hollyhocks, probably introduced by the British. When we arrived, the loaded apricot trees were being stripped by boys who had climbed up into the branches and were beating down the fruit with poles. It was then gathered into baskets by their mothers and sisters. The caretaker of the rest-house, one Namgyal, seemed like an old friend before we had been an hour under his roof. We had already heard of him from an earlier traveller, Mr. E. B. Wakefield, I.C.S., who had carried out a mission in Western Tibet for the Government three years before. As soon as we entered the bungalow, tired and thirsty, Namgyal offered us tea and a wooden platter piled with a pyramid of unusually tasty *tsamba*, bidding us welcome with a courtesy of language noticeable even in one of his polite race.

The people of Poo are well-to-do peasants, and the cultivated land is divided between the various families. Besides tilling the fields and taking their flocks up the mountains to graze, they also do a certain amount of trading, especially in the autumn when a series of great fairs is held, at which merchants from Ladak, Garhwal and other distant places gather together to exchange their wares, first at Gartok in Tibet itself, then at Kanam and, lastly, at Rampur, capital of the State of Bashahr, of which this district forms a part. The Poopas lead a well-balanced life, free from strain, which has its leisure as well as its hard work. Ready money is scarce, but they are well provided with food, clothes and good housing. The cultural

influences emanating from independent Tibet are apparent in the artistic quality of most of their possessions. The presence of richly-decorated family chapels to shelter the household gods, and other amenities, prove that they have aspirations beyond the purely practical.

We were invited to supper in Odsung's home. The family consisted of his mother, a widow, and numerous brothers and cousins whom we never quite managed to identify, since the term " brother " is indiscriminately applied to both. If the apricots and potatoes of Poo surpassed those of other places, the ones provided by the Odsung family took the prize in Poo itself. Their house, which was two-storied and built round a court, was planned on generous lines. The chief living-room was left half open on one side, commanding a magnificent view down the Satlej to the snowy summits of the Kailas. Our hostess at first refused to come and sit with us at table, till I got up and pleaded with her, saying: " If the mountain will not come to me, then I shall have to go to the mountain."

The old quotation, thus adapted, gains additional piquancy on being turned into Tibetan, because the words referring to the other party—the mountain in this instance—can be placed in what is called the honorific language, while to oneself only common terms are applied. To give a rough paraphrase of the sentence, it reads something like this:—" If the honourable mountain will not deign to proceed to me, the insignificant fellow (myself) will have to go to the mountain."

It should be explained that the Tibetan language reflects in its vocabulary the nicely-judged grades of feudal society. For every noun, pronoun, or verb, and for many of the adjectives, not one but two words must be learned, a common one which applies to ordinary folk, and an honorific which must be used when speaking to or about persons of quality. Turning the idea into an English equivalent, my gardener simply " walks " but my readers " proceed." Similarly, a thing is " shown " to a servant, but in the case of an aristocrat, one " petitions the coming of the honourable eye." Sometimes even three words exist for the same notion, the third being a " high honorific " which can only be applied to representatives of the most exalted political or ecclesiastical authority. A subtle play of compliments can be introduced by timely selection of this or that word, especially as at the other end of the scale a further weapon

lies to hand in the form of self-depreciatory words, denoting one's own worthlessness or humility. Normally, one simply uses the ordinary non-honorific words in referring to oneself; but in extreme cases, especially in letters, it is possible to use in place of " I," " the trifle " or " the naughty boy." Even words like " liar " or " murderer " have their honorifics: they are an essential part of the language, employed by all classes, and not a precious affectation of the educated, though the latter naturally have a much fuller command of them. A few specially high expressions can only be used about the Dalai Lama and Panchhen Lama, the two senior Pontiffs. There is, for instance, a word meaning " to come " which is normally applied to any dignitary over a certain rank; but it can, by special extension, be used of the arrival of a cup of tea for the Dalai Lama. " The goblet of honourable tea," as it were, " ambulates into the Dalai Lama's chamber," or rather—(" the insignificant trifle petitions for his Holiness's absolution ")—what I intended to say was not " chamber " but " location of the cushion of repose."

In the evening the Poopas invited us to watch an entertainment of folk-dances performed by torchlight and accompanied only by drums. The dancers provided their own music by singing songs at the same time. These dances are rustic in character, simple ring groupings, which reminded me of the old Scotch Brawl. One of them was broadly comic. A huge circle was formed, half of men and half of girls, turning clockwise. Suddenly one group of men, without warning, would violently reverse the direction, causing a general collapse, which was greeted with shouts of laughter.

On another occasion some wandering lamas performed a peculiar semi-sacred dance for our benefit. Every man played two instruments. In the right hand he wielded a small drum called *damaru*, held by means of a wooden handle, to which a string was attached tipped with a small weight. By manipulating the drum to the right and left the weight was made to swing and so to beat the instrument. In the left hand he grasped a bell with a fascinating silvery tone; for the Tibetans excel in the casting of bell metal. Since the performer also sang at the same time, it might be said that each man constituted a self-contained trio.

We were sorry to leave Poo, but time was slipping away and we wished to tackle the last item on our programme by attempt-

ing the highest peak of Khunu, Riwo Pargyul. Crossing the Satlej by a bridge, we made for the last village on this side of the frontier, Namgya. Before we left, Odsung's mother, with many tears, committed her son to our care. The country now became barren and stony, even the river's margin showed no trace of green. We passed the junction of the Spiti and Satlej, where the rock had been eroded to form a chasm of such depth that the water was not visible from the path. Namgya is a beautiful village with many fine houses and carvings. We camped on a terrace of stubble in an orchard: all night long we could hear a soft patter on the tent-roof, as the trees, gently shaken by the wind, rained down ripe apricots.

Fifty yards along the terrace some other tents were standing, guarded by a terrifying Tibetan mastiff, a regular Cerberus, all snarl and fang, who strained furiously at his chain when we approached. We found that this camp belonged to one of the ablest scholars of the day, the Italian professor, Giuseppe Tucci. He had just come down the Spiti valley on his way into Tibet, accompanied by one companion, Captain Ghersi, who filled the twofold function of doctor and official photographer. Professor Tucci kindly invited us to share his dinner, so we sat down with him to an appetizing menu of five courses. During the meal, the professor kept up a running lecture in excellent English, on archaeology, history and art, out of his inexhaustible fund of scholarship and enthusiasm; at the same time he carried on whispered negotiations in Tibetan, spoken *prestissimo e sempre accelerando*, over the purchase of an antique ceremonial apron made from carved plates of human bone joined by strings of beads of the same material, such as are used in certain rites. It was being offered for sale by a mysterious person hovering in the background.

Food, archaeology and bargaining became hopelessly entangled. "Have some hors d'œuvre." (Aside, to a servant who was playing the go-between: "Yes, you can offer him two hundred." In a whisper: "No, I won't give more.") "Do let me pass you some spaghetti." ("Say yes, if he offers it for two hundred and fifty, I'll take it.") "As I was saying, about the year 1250—yes, I have read Schnitzelfresser's paper. No, he's not a scientist; he actually confused Vajrapani with——" ("Yes. What? He can go and think it over—no, I won't offer any more.") "Do please help yourself to cheese.

Dr. Warren. In the sixteenth century the King of Tsaparang was attacked by——"

Over the coffee, we were shown photographs taken in the ancient temples of Spiti, which contain some of the most precious relics of Tibetan art. The professor explained that the unusually perfect examples which existed at Tabo were in considerable danger of disappearing. The prosperity of the country, and consequently its culture, had been declining steadily in the last century and the upkeep of ancient monuments was lapsing. The school of painting to which the Tabo examples belong is unique, so perhaps the Archaeological Survey may devise measures to protect them. It is often only a question of blocking up a few cracks which, if neglected, will eventually let in the weather. In other respects this dry climate is the most perfect conceivable for the preservation of antiques.

Seeing that the professor had just made his way past the foot of our mountain we asked him to tell us about it. "Oh! you'll certainly get up it," he exclaimed, "it is a mere *maidán* —yes, a *maidán*!" (This Hindustani word means any flat, grassy space.) This sounded rather damping, for though one likes one's mountain not to be so difficult as to narrow the chances of success unduly, one wishes it to offer sufficient resistance to flatter one's pride a little. As it proved, the peak was, fortunately, not quite such a walk-over. We never found out exactly what caused the professor to rate it so low.

From Namgya the path once more descends to the Satlej and crosses a bridge to the right bank, whence it rises again to a small grove of willows, below Tashigang, the see of the presiding Lama of all Khunu. From there a track rounds the spur which fills in the angle of the two rivers and the Spiti valley is entered at a height of about 12,000 feet. The rest of the way to Nako, our base of operations for the mountain, is about level, rising to 13,000 feet at times.

At first the hillside is devoid of vegetation. From far above us some big stone-falls, that looked as if they could not miss the path, came crashing down with a thunderous din. Round the corner, we came to plants again. First there were enormous rose bushes, covered with pink flowers, that grew out of crannies or climbed up the face of the cliff. Then a patch of vivid violet revealed the presence of a magnificent bushy delphinium among the stones. Later, in the Spiti valley, the

path was bordered with Alpine flowers, speedwells, harebells, rock-roses and saxifrages that reminded us of Switzerland.

Nako is built among the boulders brought down by old glaciers, and a walk through its "streets" involves constant scrambling. Behind the village extend the endless scree-covered slopes of Riwo Pargyul, which, when we arrived, hid its head under a cap of cloud. On the outskirts numerous *chortens* and *mendongs* look as if they have sprouted like mushrooms among the stones. At every street corner there are prayer-wheels containing cylindrical paper rolls inscribed with prayers which are set in motion by passers-by. The best place to camp is on the edge of a small lake fringed with willows, which are among the few trees that survive this altitude. It is too high for apricots, but not for barley, which is supposed to be of special quality when grown at this height. There are three big tracts of cultivation, to which water is conducted through a leat from the Riwo Pargyul main glacier stream.

Our baggage had been brought from Poo on ponies, the first pack transport we had used. It was pleasant to notice how well the animals were cared for. The local people, like most Tibetans, were devoted to their animals and did all that was possible for their comfort; they never thought of settling down to cook their own meal until saddles had been removed and fodder distributed. They carried rounded sickles in their girdles, and in this barren country they often had to go some distance before they found any grass to cut. I have never heard impatient abuse addressed by a Tibetan to a horse or mule, nor seen one beaten or goaded. The races of the Mediterranean littoral, where somewhat similar climatic conditions prevail, might well take a few lessons in animal management from the Tibetans, as much for their own interest as on moral grounds. But when people regard animals as having no real rights and as merely existing for the service of man, it is difficult to persuade them to control their tempers or to exert themselves on their beasts' behalf, even on utilitarian grounds. The clear emphasis laid on the position of animals in Buddhist teaching undoubtedly influences the people in the right direction.

Though we were intending to set out for the mountain on the day after our arrival, we found time to visit the ancient temple, locally ascribed to a famous saint of the tenth century called Rinchhenzangpo. He is surnamed Lotsawa which means

Translator or Interpreter: it is a title accorded to a few scholars, in honour of their having made the Indian sacred books accessible to their own countrymen. The same sage was the founder of most of the Spiti temples. The one at Nako contained some curious carved wooden altar canopies, composed of conventional trees issuing from the mouths of monsters and surmounted by winged figures, which were almost Baroque in conception, if one could conceive that style shorn of its rather too common faults of vulgarity and senseless jumbling of Roman details. The interior walls must once have been resplendent with paintings, but time and smoke have dimmed them sadly. We could, however, make out a huge Wheel of Life, or diagram representing the central Buddhist doctrine of the perpetual flux of existence; those who have read *Kim* will recollect that it was a picture of this same Wheel, drawn by the old lama, which was torn in the exciting scuffle with the two foreign spies up in the Khunu country. I shall discuss this Wheel and its meaning when I revert to it in a later chapter. At this moment it would be premature; but a few explanations are necessary concerning the implications of the name "Translator" which the Spiti temple-builder bore, for its significance is more profound than appears on the surface.

A Translator, in the sense recognized by the Tibetans, is not to be taken for a mere scholar who, aided by dictionaries, turns a certain text from one language into another and leaves it at that. A text interpreted according to the whim of every reader, however uninstructed, is a danger, since the seed of a whole crop of errors may be sown which, in their turn, engender new errors, which again, in course of time, may even become invested with the prestige of acknowledged authority. One has only to recall some of the ill-founded theories of orientalists, due to the distortion of texts by persons who had, half-unconsciously, read into them their own personal habits of thought, assimilating any words of doubtful meaning to specious equivalents in their own tongue and thus conjuring up an entirely inappropriate set of associations.

An elementary example will serve to show how easy it is to slip into this pitfall. There is a popular proverb in Tibetan which says that, "without the Lama no man can be delivered." Europeans have quoted it with indignation. "See how the lamas try to keep the people in subjection!" was their com-

ment. " Here's priestcraft for you, here's jesuitry ! " Actually they have been betrayed by a slight yet crucial inaccuracy over the word *Lama*. As I explained in the introduction to this book, the word should, strictly speaking, be applied either to a Teacher, " one's own Lama " or personal spiritual director, or else to members of the highest clergy, especially those recognized as remanifestations of past notabilities. On all formal occasions, or in writing, this is the meaning the name *Lama* bears. In ordinary conversation, the body of clergy is occasionally called *the lamas* indiscriminately, but it is comparatively rare to find the word so used; among the clergy themselves this colloquialism practically never occurs. The proper word for a cleric is *trapa*, and that is the one commonly in use. Thus the foreign critics, accustomed in their own language to giving the word a different shade of meaning, and also being predisposed by their own anticlerical upbringing to place an unfavourable construction on the whole phrase, committed the sin of those who possess a little learning. This is a simple case, typical of countless similar ones. The real interpretation of the proverb quoted is " without a Teacher, no man can be delivered." This is not strictly true, for it is considered just possible for anyone to discover all the truth by his own inner light: nevertheless, in common with all Orientals, the Buddhists regard study at the feet of a Teacher or Lama as the normal and almost indispensable prelude to " entering the current," that is, imparting to one's spiritual aims a definite direction towards Enlightenment. I had a talk on this very matter with the hermit of Lachhen in Sikkim, which will be related in Part Two.

To return to the real Translator: his task was indeed a formidable one. His first duty, before putting pen to paper, was to seek out some practising adept of the doctrine expressed in the treatise which he wished to translate and be initiated into all its teachings for a period probably lasting years. Then, having experienced the meaning of that doctrine in his own person, he was ready to turn the Sanskrit text into Tibetan with more than mere verbal accuracy: though even that would not be possible unless the general sense were fully understood, for the wording can only be interpreted in the light of the idea; the reverse process is full of danger. That task completed, he carried back the manuscript to Tibet, but again, did not hand it over to the people, leaving it to take its chance of being understood. He

reversed the process he had himself followed and now expounded the doctrine in all its aspects to his own disciples, at the same time placing the text in their hands. Thus the tradition was truly imparted. Several divines besides the Nako founder have been accorded the title of Translator; one of the most renowned was Marpa, tutor of Tibet's ascetic poet, Mila Repa, about whom much more will be said later. Even nowadays, as the Lachhen Lama emphatically declared, it is useless to try to read sacred books except under the guidance of a competent teacher. According to this conception the word " read " begins to mean something more than skimming through books. If this line of thought were to be pursued it would also radically alter the meaning of the word " Education."

In former times Nako and the whole Spiti valley belonged to the kingdom of Gugge, which attained an extraordinary degree of civilization. Since the extinction of that kingdom there has been steady deterioration. Cultivated areas have shrunk, populations have dwindled and the sands of the desert are invading the surviving settlements. Gugge was the province of Tibet first visited by European missionaries in 1624. Portuguese Franciscans established a mission in the capital, Tsaparang, the modern Chabrang Dzong. They were received by the king with all the honour that Tibetans are ready to accord to the bringers of unknown doctrines. The friars, at one moment, had some reason for hoping that they were about to effect a royal conversion; but it is also possible that their optimism may have been somewhat exaggerated. The Tibetans are always ready to offer worship to any sacred object, and do not necessarily confine their homage to the more familiar forms. They do not feel that by so doing they are tacitly admitting the superiority of the foreign Tradition or showing infidelity towards their own. They will bow as naturally before the Crucifix as they would at the feet of a Buddha, whereas our own people, accustomed to the sectarian exclusiveness of Europe, usually feel that by offering reverence in a church with the tenets of which they disagree, they are condoning its errors. A Catholic cannot legitimately attend a non-Catholic service and it would not be long before a Protestant seen too frequently at Mass would be suspected of having been secretly won over by the Jesuits. Among Tibetans no one would attach such a meaning to the act. The Hindus have a special term for that

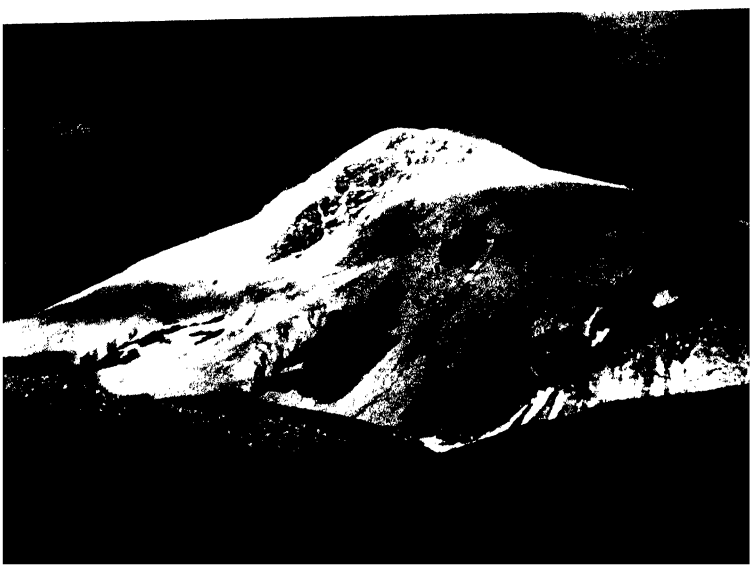
section of mankind, regarded by them as spiritually immature, who are unwilling to worship anyone's gods but their own. They are called *Pashu* (from the root *pash* = bound) and are supposed to be blind to the larger Unity of the Godhead, though within the parochial limits they lay down for themselves, they may be worthy of all respect and praise. They are described as men in whom a tendency towards obscurantism is strong, who exaggerate the distinctions of mere form or name; they are all too prone to speak contemptuously of the beliefs and practices of others. Far superior to the *Pashus* are the men who fall into the class known as *Viras* or heroes. They are those who recognize that though modes of thought are many, yet metaphysical realization, obtained everywhere by direct intuitive identification of the knower with the known, is one and only. It is that which counts; it is that truth which underlies all symbolism and is the object of every traditional ritual. The Buddha Himself counselled His followers against abruptly curtailing the gifts which they had been accustomed to offer to the Brahmans: that spirit still prevails to-day. One young lama told me that they were taught from childhood not to speak ill of other religions, but on the contrary to treat them with every respect. A second, contributary factor to their tolerant point of view is also to be found in the traditional politeness of the yellow races which, as a Japanese once told me, ranks as the first among the arts. If it is a duty to be polite to a person, how much more so to his gods!



NAMGYAL OF POO



RIWO PARGYUL
South Peak



CHAPTER VII

Riwo Pargyul

THE peak which was the last objective of our journey possessed a topical interest in that it had been ascended to a point well over 19,000 feet quite early in the nineteenth century by two enterprising Scotsmen, the brothers Gerard, who travelled all over the country of Khunu and published a diary which shows them to have been honest observers, unblinded by racial prejudice. In those days, when travel was more of an adventure than it is now, doubtless only those attempted it who were impelled by a keen curiosity to see and learn. It would be sad if the development of communications were to end in doing away with all possibility of genuine travel. Considering the early date of their expedition, when only thirty years had elapsed since the first ascent of Mont Blanc, and when the Pillar Rock in our own Ennerdale was still virgin ground, the height which they attained is a highly creditable performance, though that does not imply that they did any serious climbing. The snow-line is very high and a number of subsidiary points could be reached in a couple of days' laborious plodding over scree, without setting foot on snow. But for all that, to have braved such an altitude involved real enterprise at that time.

Many legends connected with Riwo Pargyul exist, for in common with all permanent snow its twin peaks are regarded as sacred by the Tibetans. One of the chapels in the temple at Nako is dedicated to the genius of the mountain; but it is now derelict, devoid of an altar and all furniture. On a rock near by, the imprint of the god's huge foot is pointed out.

There are even tales of early ascents: a pious lama, so it is rumoured, had actually climbed to the summit long ago. In more recent times a party of four villagers ascended the mountain on a quest for sapphires. When they reached the highest pinnacle they found it to be formed out of a huge sapphire

about a foot across and worth millions of rupees. They managed to dislodge it and were already well on the way down with their booty when a terrible storm arose and overwhelmed them all. The story sounds most credible to judge from our own experience on what we must, therefore, reluctantly claim to be no more than the third ascent. Exactly how the accident to the second party came to be reported with all its details is unexplained! There are other legends too; at Poo we witnessed a folk-dance performed to the strains of a ballad in which Riwo Pargyul figured prominently; but we were unable to secure a copy of these verses.

On the evening of our arrival at Nako we started to sort out the miscellaneous things required for the assault on the mountain, and made them up into forty-pound loads. There was food for the body, and food for the soul in the shape of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, and paraffin for the Primus which, by some silly miscalculation, was measured out short, and all the usual climbing apparatus. We aggravated the error about the paraffin by including rice in the list of porter's rations, not having then realized that rice is of all things the most wasteful of fuel when boiled on a Primus, both because its preparation is a relatively slow business at the best of times, and because the flame of a Primus is too fiercely concentrated on the lower half of the pot, so that the upper layers do not get cooked at anything like the same rate as the rice at the bottom.

Two Jadh porters, Djun Singh and Naranhu, were chosen to come high with us, while three men from Poo were told off for the initial carry to a camp just below the snow. After following the main road northwards a mile or two, we veered sharp right up the valley of a torrent which we believed, correctly as it proved, to issue out of the central glacier basin between the two main peaks. The lower slopes are a chaos of old glacier debris, waterless save for the leat, fringed with gentian-spangled turf, which brings the main water-supply down to the village. Higher up, from about 14,000 feet, patches of grazing occur, and low thorny bushes, the inhabitants' only source of fuel. Between 15,000 and 17,000 feet, some way below the zone of melting snows, lie the summer pastures, which support quite a number of cows and sheep. There is a fairly rich Alpine flora, which was only just coming into flower when we passed on the upward way, but had reached full bloom by August 11th. We

saw two or three kinds of blue gentian and a light mauve delphinium with large rounded blooms, growing in clumps among the stones.

For the last couple of hours before approaching the terminal ice of the glacier at a height of some 17,500 feet, we passed along a succession of boulder-covered moraines. A drearier landscape could not well have been imagined, for lateral ridges confined the view to a crumbling world. These containing walls of the valley were no more than great rubbish-heaps, an aimless accumulation of rocks piled crazily one upon another; only at the lower extremities of the ridges, where they faced outward towards the Spiti, their tips were still sheathed in a carapace of slabby rock, like the rams of some monster ironclads still standing in mock defiance long after the rest of the hull had rotted away.

A Tibetan hermit in search of a place in which to rest in meditation, as so many do, on the great principle of Death and Impermanence, would have found these surroundings peculiarly appropriate. "The Universe is running down . . . down . . . *tout passe, tout casse, tout lasse*" seemed to be whispered by a thousand expressionless voices. "Where's the glacier now, that viscous flood which once upon a time overran all these slopes? It was active then, look where it reached to; but now it's getting old, and one day it will die, there will be no ice to melt and the water will dry up, then the gentians will be dried up too and the crops of the people of Nako, and the men also will die out. The stones which remain, they too are gradually dying; death is not an appanage only of the living, nor are the living alone in being subject to death; in this is to be seen the pattern of all things." Thus would muse the hermit—a faint whisper of this message reached even our own ears—and a great love and pity would be kindled in his heart for all the deluded creatures blindly chasing the will-o'-the-wisp of happiness, trying to fix it firmly, now in this life, now in the next. Not to realize this, say the Tibetan sages, is to remain the plaything of ignorance and of the suffering born therefrom, but to know it, is reality and freedom, which is called Buddhahood.

We pitched our second camp—for we had taken two days to approach the glacier—in a hollow, and then walked up to a point whence we hoped to obtain the first view of our mountain; but its face was veiled in mist. Though Riwo Pargyul has a

very low rainfall and is considered to stand outside the monsoon's influence, the proximity of rainclouds at that season is enough to produce constant mist, hanging round the mountain tops though not falling in actual showers. Beyond that point the moist vapours are cut off sharply by the dry Tibetan winds. One of our principal hindrances in climbing the peak was our inability to obtain any save the most fleeting glimpses of the upper parts of proposed routes. In the end we had to hazard a partial guess in making our choice. There is evidence that this mountain does not enjoy very good weather as a rule, for other travellers have remarked on it. Possibly the fact that it towers considerably higher than anything for many miles around, may account for this, for it seems to collect all the weather.

In the evening the twofold miscalculation over the paraffin and the rice was brought home to us, for when we set about cooking a meal for the porters on the Primus, we were not long in finding out that a single boiling of rice used our meagre supply of fuel at so uneconomic a rate, that it threatened to jeopardize the commissariat arrangements. Something had to be done without a moment's delay, for time was precious. An anxious debate ensued, after which it was resolved that one of the men should be sent down, the next day, to Nako, to collect more paraffin from the big carboy left in charge of Odsung, while the rest of us, to make doubly sure, were to postpone the pressing reconnaissance and to go down to brushwood level and lay in enough fuel to stock the camp for two or three days. A man named Djambal, a strong and willing young fellow with flowing locks, volunteered to run down with the message. That night we retired to bed feeling rather depressed over the bad management that had caused the waste of a day.

Next morning we all trekked off downhill again, bearing empty rucksacks and ground-sheets, not at all relishing the idea of having to retrace our steps across the unending screes. But luck favoured us in an unexpected way; we had gone but half the distance and arrived at the upper pastures, when Djun Singh, with an exclamation of joy, pointed to some droppings of cattle scattered about the slope and dried hard by the sun. "Here is good fuel," he cried, "and lots of it. It's what we always burn in Tibet." So we set about with a will stacking the

dung and filling our sacks, taking care to reject any that was still at all damp. By afternoon we were loaded up and on our way back to camp, cheered by the knowledge that we need not raid the precious store of paraffin for at least three days. The dung was found to yield quite a fair heat, smouldering like peat and surprisingly free from unsavoury smell; but it is rather difficult to coax it into a good fire and, in default of bellows, Djun Singh kept up a steady blast from his lungs.

We had prayed that the sun would shine on our efforts to reconnoitre the approaches to the peak, but mist continued to harass us all day long, hanging disobligingly round the 20,000 foot level, now tantalizingly lifting a little, now threatening to ring down the curtain over the whole scene. The party had agreed to split up, two men going into the main basin, while I explored a snowy col on a ridge uniting the west flank of the north peak and a small spur. Nearer portions of the mountain had already been ruled out. The south peak, which consists of a long rocky ridge bristling with pinnacles, looked as if it would offer good sport; but as it was slightly the lower of the two, inclination drew us rather towards the north peak, which was of an entirely different character, a huge rounded white mass, portions of which looked ominously grey, suggestive of ice and hours of step-cutting. A great shoulder not easily attainable in a day indicated a pitch for an upper camp, but the sides seemed badly exposed to stonefall; even if we had got up that way it would hardly have been justifiable to have let porters return down it alone. So we decided to look farther afield.

In the afternoon we foregathered again to compare notes. Those who had been to the glacier had drawn a blank. They found no practicable col on the ridge connecting the peaks, as the basin was walled in by forbidding cliffs of mixed rocks and ice. I was able to give a better report, however, of the snowy col on the west side: the approaches were gentle and the ground was safe till quite close under the col, where there was a lake of the purest azure and one or two crevasses that had caused me, as I was alone, to restrain my curiosity to look over the other side. As to the route up the west flank, it seemed promising, being all snow without a trace of rock. The only snag was an icy bulge on the skyline just below the mist, which looked as if it might either be easily contourable or else might indicate a row of formidable ice defences: but it was well worth chancing.

All voted in favour of adopting this route and we sat down to await the return of Djambal and the paraffin; nor were we kept waiting long, for he soon turned up with a bulging pack, looking as if he had been out for a stroll instead of having raced all the way from Nako over bad ground with a heavy load.

Eagerly we undid the package—"Ah! I see Odsung has sent some extra biscuits, thoughtful of him. Butter? Well, I should have thought we had enough, but no matter—all is grist for the mill. Chocolate—matches—that can't be all? Look here, where's the paraffin?" Djambal turned on us an uncomprehending eye. "The paraffin, the paraffin! Why on earth——?" But it was useless to go on lamenting—the awful fact was there: a misunderstanding had occurred and the wrong stores had been sent. We were as far as ever from getting on to the mountain.

There was no help for it; we must face another delay. Who would go down next day to Nako, while we carried on with pitching a camp on the western col? The stout Djambal was the first to jump up and offer his services a second time for the tedious errand; this time, however, to make doubly certain, Richard Nicholson, who was not intending to come beyond the next stage, thus leaving two for the final dash, offered to descend at once and see that no further blunder occurred. As there were still some hours of daylight, they started immediately. The two of us who were left, retired to our tents, chafing at this new delay, for time was getting short and the weather did not promise many extra chances in case of initial defeat.

The job of carrying stores and a good-sized tent as far as the col occupied the next day. The camping site proved to be excellent, a few minutes from the west flank of the north peak. Looking northwards, a great glacier (the Chango Glacier) lay outspread, possibly for the first time, to human gaze, surrounded by serried rows of peaks of every kind, easy ones and hard ones, snowy ridges and forbidding needles, first cousins of the Aiguilles of Chamonix. How we wished that half the season were still before us; we could even discern, on a flat piece of moraine across the other side, the exact spot for a Base Camp; and there were some enticing passes that beckoned us over into Tibet. We slept on the col that night, sending back the porters to the lower camp, where our two Jadhs were ordered to await the paraffin and to bring it up with all speed. The Poo men

were dismissed, as there was not enough work to keep them busy.

The following morning passed in enforced idleness; but in the afternoon the porters returned with the eagerly expected supplies of paraffin. At last all was ready for the start and even the weather began to show signs of clearing up. This promise was fulfilled, for the morning of August 8th was sunny. We started off in good spirits, but had not climbed more than a couple of hundred feet before we found that the snow was turning into pure ice, though luckily not of the toughest black variety which occurs so frequently in the Himalaya. A long spell of cutting lay ahead and it was evident that we should be unable to reach the upper shoulder, where we hoped to bivouac, in a single day, unless the ice gave way to soft snow higher up, which at the time seemed unlikely. This day had therefore to be devoted to the job of cutting a well-graded staircase to a point as far up as possible that would serve as a jumping-off spot for completing the ascent afterwards. So we started in an unhurried manner and worked our way upward, chipping careful steps in the ice-slope, equally safe for descent and ascent. We were, however, unexpectedly lucky, for just below the ice-bulge, past which we could not yet see, we discovered a tiny platform, barely wide enough to take our bivouac but not a bad pitch though rather airy, with clear ice-slopes leading the eye down in all directions and with the bulging cliff of ice blocking the upward view. It was a blessing to have found any flat ground at all at such a convenient level, so we called it the site for Camp IV and retreated to the col in an optimistic frame of mind.

Unfortunately, we were reckoning without our host, Riwo Pargyul himself, and his reputation for storms. At about nine o'clock that night, a tremendous blizzard suddenly arose, driving hard from the north across the ridge. It was so furious that we were afraid lest the fragile-looking bivouac-tent, that we were to use at Camp IV and in which the porters were now sleeping, might have been torn away from them. So we got up at midnight and shouted to inquire if all was safe. Contented, sleepy voices answered that they were quite snug. The little tent had never stood such a testing before; it was a high tribute to the toughness of the thin material and reflects great credit on the specialists in light-weight fabrics, Camptors of

London, who constructed it to our specifications. Though only weighing three and a half pounds, it accommodates two people in comfort, if not quite in luxury.

The sight of our lovely staircase so laboriously cut, or rather the sight of the place where it had been—for it had disappeared under a coating of fresh snow—was not the best of morning greetings. The hurricane had blown itself out, but the weather still looked ominous and another day of impatient waiting confronted us. If things went on at this rate, it was important for supplies to be made to spin out to the latest possible moment, so we resolved to dispense with porters' help even at the cost of making our loads to Camp IV heavier than was pleasant. Our men were therefore told to join the others at Nako and to await us there.

Towards evening, the sky began to clear and pessimism gave way once again to rising hopes. Packs, weighing about thirty pounds each, were hastily shouldered and off we went towards the old steps, which the wind, once it had ceased to bring snow with it, had cleared as if to atone for its earlier misdeeds. The bivouac was successfully pitched on the platform and we were soon inside consuming an energizing brew of pemmican. We did not sleep very much during the night, partly from excitement, and partly because we were listening anxiously for signs of a return of the storm. The earlier performance of the tiny tent should have made us confident, but the fact that we were pitched on hard ice, not dug into snow, and anchored with the spikes of our crampons in the absence of stones, in a very exposed situation, left little margin for accidents. Besides, the ice-platform was cramped, with no room for sleep-walking!

August 10th dawned radiantly; zero hour at last. Bolting our breakfast, we set about dismounting the tent by withdrawing the two ice-axes, which with their bamboo extensions served as poles, one of our several dodges to save weight. Prospects of reaching the top that day seemed so bright that we felt it was worth while to go light and take only one rucksack with spare clothes and the utensils for brewing fresh tea. Some people prefer vacuum-flasks, but these always give the tea an unpleasant taste, a mixture of tin and stale cork; they are moreover fragile and the liquid has to be doled out in miserly doses. Some spirit and an aluminium lamp weigh no more than the flask and provide really good tea in fairly generous

draughts, the best of stimulants on a climb.

We were, of course, expecting to have to continue hewing out steps, and we also had the bulge to negotiate: but our luck held; the bulge proved innocent enough, being only part of a small isolated projection on the mountainside. To the left of it the passage was clear and, still better, free from ice. A splendid slope of hard snow, in which the points of our crampons gripped safely, extended before us into the distance. We happened to notice that down on the left there was a labyrinth of crevasses which showed that our line of ascent had been the best possible one. This observation was to prove useful later in an unexpected way.

Some hours of walking in wide zigzags eventually led us on to a huge plateau, "the shoulder," from which we could see the sharp crest of a ridge, continuing steeply upwards, perhaps the final lap. It was now just after noon, and we were thirsty, so we chose that moment for rest and the making of tea. It was so hot that we debated whether to climb the last bit in shirtsleeves; but Charles Warren, being a prudent mountaineer, said that on these high places one never knows what abrupt changes are in store and that it would be wiser to take spare clothes, leaving the rucksack behind. We were full of excitement trying to imagine the view which awaited us on top; it must surely be one of overwhelming grandeur, since Riwo Pargyul is not only the highest point of vantage for a wide tract of country, but stands midway between groups of still higher peaks. Without being quite sure of the lie of the land, we thought of the Karakoram to the north-west and our own Gangotri range to the south. But most of all, we were looking forward to our first sight of Tibet; our recent contact with its people, their culture, their fine sturdy character and their philosophy of life had forged a bond between us and Tibet which was destined to influence us in the future more profoundly than we dreamed. A longing to pass within its closed gates had taken possession of our hearts; already it would be a milestone in our pilgrimage to look into the promised land. With such thoughts to urge us on, we advanced towards the foot of the ridge.

The giant was taking his noonday siesta when he was awakened by a slight tickling on the shoulder. Looking to see what was the matter he perceived two minute dwarfs just start-

ing to climb up his neck, making for his head. "What, at it again?" he exclaimed, "wasn't the drubbing I gave you the night before last good enough to teach you manners? You just wait and see this time!" So speaking, he shuffled off to the cave as fast as his legs would carry him. The four winds who were imprisoned inside were holding a rehearsal of the chorus *Zerreisset, zersprenget, zertrümmert die Gruft*, by Bach.



"Zerreisset!" they yelled, as they battered on the door. "Just hold on a minute, my hearties," growled the ogre, "till I unfasten the padlock." Then out they charged, driving black thunder-clouds before them, till the whole mountain became enveloped so that the world was blotted from view. Back and forth they lashed, snarling round corners and whistling athwart the ridges, while the thunder-spirit added his counterpoint, now decrescendoing to a low growl, now administering a succession of *sforzandi* almost as frequent as in a composition by Beethoven, now coalescing into a roar like a continuous barrage, now taken up in canon by a choir of echoes.

We looked at one another. To advance or not to advance, that was the question. "Let's go on a few more steps up the ridge." Sss . . . sss . . . sss! "What's that?" One of us had waved an axe and it emitted a prolonged hiss like an adder. From the direction of Tibet came up an icy draught. We drew on our windproof suits and caps, and as we did so our hair crackled uncannily. The axes by now were sizzling: it sounded as if the storm were drawing nearer. It seemed unsafe to keep hold of steel, so the axes were planted in the snow on the crest while we cowered some way off to leeward. Again we debated whether to persevere or not: "We must not leave the descent till too late, for it may be damnably hard to find our way off the slopes in the mist. Snow is certain to come soon and all tracks will be covered."

"Yes, but the top can't be far off now. Let's give it a few moments more"—(listening)—"I think the storm seems to be moving away a bit."

Every mountaineer knows the difficulty of such decisions. To confront an insurmountable obstacle, as was destined to happen to us on Simvu three years later, leaves no choice and therefore no sting; but to turn back for bad weather always involves doubt whether one might not have pushed on with a little more firmness of purpose. No worse dilemma could be imagined than that of a climber who had reached a point say two hundred feet from the summit of Everest and saw the weather changing or realized the danger of becoming benighted. If he turned back he would, probably rightly, be praised for moral courage; but most climbers would suffer cruel searchings of heart or they would not be climbers at all.

The storm, with occasional threats to revive, did indeed seem to draw away from the ridge, though the blackness was as dense as ever, save for brief moments when glimpses of ghostly glaciers appeared away in the depths. The axes, though still sizzling occasionally, were growing more silent and we judged that we might try our luck by pushing on a few steps. We agreed, however, on a time limit of three o'clock after which, if the top was not in sight, we must retrace our steps at all costs. To ease the strain we took it in turns to lead on short stretches. Fortunately the snow on the ridge kept good and firm. Suddenly, two black specks appeared ahead. What could they be —rocks? But when we caught sight of the upper part of the ridge earlier in the day we had noticed that there were no rocks save on the very top. We must be there! A moment later and Charles Warren stepped on to the summit and saw the other two main ridges disappearing into the mist below. Nearly 8 p.m.: but the mountain had surrendered; the whole of Riwo Pargyul's 22,210 feet lay under our feet. "Thou shalt tread on the lion and the basilisk."

"Whose feet did I hear you mention?" whispered an unseen Lama. "How can you talk of 'your' feet, when there is no real person of the name of 'you'? There exists indeed a certain bundle of mental and physical properties temporarily associated, ever changing: soon they will be dissolved again; which of them then will keep the right to say that he was Marco? 'You' have not conquered Riwo Pargyul, for there is no Riwo Pargyul either, though there exists an aggregation of stones and grains and bits of ice called, purely for convenience, by that name. If there be no vanquished there can be no victor.

If you still believe those old legends you are far from the road to freedom. There can be no true achievement so long as there persists the slightest hankering after an individual enjoyment of its fruits. If you don't realize that, why do you climb?" So commented the unseen Lama, but his meaning was at that time hidden from me.

No view was vouchsafed us, and Tibet might have been the Atlantic Ocean for all we could see. It was no time to linger, not even to hunt for sapphires, for already the first stray snowflakes, harbingers of the blizzard, were drifting over. We turned and hurried down the ridge; but by the time we had got to the rucksack, snow was falling heavily and all trace of our footsteps had vanished, so that the problem of keeping direction on the featureless slopes was not easy. As we made our way down, trusting to a sixth sense more than anything else, we were pursued by periodic bursts of hail, like volleys of pins. It was strange that with so much wind, the mist could remain so unmovingly opaque.

We had come a good way down but were beginning to doubt our bearings, when we saw close under us the margin of a huge crevasse, then another, and then a third; we were certainly off the route and in that weather there was but a poor prospect of setting ourselves right. We wondered, if we were benighted, whether one of the crevasses might offer us shelter, only temporarily, we hoped. But surely we had noticed a crevassed area on our left when we started out in the morning? If this was it, we ought to contour, with a faint downward trend and then might strike the proper route. We altered direction accordingly, crevasses were swallowed up in the mist and we found ourselves again on open snow. Then something loomed ahead, ice pinnacles; were we approaching another crevassed system—in which case we had miscalculated in the first instance? But surely there was something familiar in the shape of that bulge! Could it be *the* bulge, the one above Camp IV? Yes, it must be, and beyond it was a black speck marking the dismounted tent. Snow had not fallen densely here, the mist too was thinning.

Thankfully we came to the tent, all anxiety now dispelled. We had finished with the mountain and the last item on the expedition's programme could be ticked off. In a flash our thoughts were homeward bound, speeding across the seas. The tent and the second rucksack were hastily packed and all un-

necessaries were sent spinning down to the glacier; then, leaving the last traces of the snow-storm, we walked down the ice staircase and by 6 p.m. found ourselves back on the col by our big tent. Fatigue began to steal upon us, and made us feel too lazy to cook, so we contented ourselves with a cup of Horlick's each, and then curled into our sleeping-bags.

Indescribable was the fury of Riwo Pargyul at having allowed his prey to checkmate him. All night long he raged impotently, like a blinded Cyclops, lashing the upper parts of his mountain with storm after storm: but we, peacefully sleeping, knew nothing of this, till, on waking up rather late in the morning, we found that masses of snow had piled up against the sides of the tent. Looking out we saw a wintry landscape extending some thousand feet below us. The weather, too, seemed to have broken again decisively: it was evident that the only possible day for the climb had been the one chosen by or rather for us. Thinking back now, one can see that the north peak, under reliable conditions of weather and if free from ice, would not be a difficult mountain; but for all that, it was a grand adventure.

Having struck the tent and gathered whatever of value was left, we started down the 7,500 feet that separated us from Nako. By the time we and our excessive burdens had struggled across the wilderness of boulders and at last reached the road, we felt thoroughly tired and longed to be relieved of our loads for the last mile. As if in answer to a prayer, as we rounded a bend within view of the houses, two figures sprang up and came running towards us. We felt a sudden lightening as the loads were whisked from off our backs, and our strength seemed to rush back to us in that moment. Our two faithful coolies, who had been watching for our return, were overjoyed to hear of the success of the climb and spread the news among the villagers standing near. Someone made a joke, evidently at our expense, the tenor of which eluded us, and the whole company burst out into uproarious guffaws: it was better than fulsome congratulations and so typical of the jovial ways of the Tibetan countryfolk.

CHAPTER VIII

"Back to Civilization"

"MEMBERS of the party which has been exploring the X glacier and lately climbed Mount Y have just got back to civilization after spending four months in the wilds. All are in good health."

There is not an expedition about which something like this has not been said. The wretched cliché crops up with unfailing monotony in newspaper articles and reviews of books, in the remarks of chairmen before lectures and from the lips of proposers of after-dinner toasts. Anyone who chooses to spend some of his time off the beaten track, be he surveyor or mountaineer, geologist or bug-hunter, student of archaeology or merely a traveller for his own pleasure, is equally victimized; and that quite irrespective of the nature of the country in which he has been staying.

"We are glad to announce that Mr. Peter Fleming, whose brilliant journey from Peking to Sinkiang has been recently reported in these columns, is at last safe and on his way"—no, not to India, or England, but "to civilization." Our own case was no exception, and were our tale, as the *Arabian Nights* say, "to be pricked with needles in the corner of the eye, it might serve for the edification of posterity."

The scene is laid in one of Simla's larger hotels and is founded on fact. The date is August 30th, 1933: time, early afternoon.

She: "What on earth is all that baggage lying out there?"

He: "Oh, it's a lot of junk brought back by those Himalayan peak-baggers."

I could not help playing eavesdropper; the tents and three store boxes that had survived four months' trek and climbing (the commissariat was actually down to a single tin of condensed milk) had been stacked outside the door of our room

on the hotel veranda. We were sitting inside—we had to lie low because we had no clothes that would pass the scrutiny of Sahibdom in the lounge; our suitcases, forwarded from Mussoori, had somehow failed to turn up, so the manager very kindly arranged, at no extra charge, to serve meals in our own rooms. We did venture out once or twice into the State Apartments; but if looks could kill we should never have escaped out of that frozen silence alive. Of course, one can sympathize a bit; I suppose we did look fairly tough. Still it felt rather damping, for we had been picturing something of a triumphal entry. The three young mountaineers fresh from the conquest of the highest peak actually visible from Simla, achieved in the face of fearful weather with true British pluck, arrive at the hotel! The residents, impelled by a natural curiosity, ask the clerk in the office, "Who are those young fellas just come in with that mountain kit? What! really climbed Riwo Pargyul?"

"I say, Philip, let's ask them in for a drink: I'd so adore to meet them."

"Good idea, Jennifer, you'd better ask them now. They look as if they needed one."

"They rather do, poor darlings—I'll go and collect them."

"Well, now, tell us all about it—what'll you drink? Say when!—I suppose you always carry extra light tentage on these shows? As a matter of fact I know a bit about that country myself. Four years ago I was out on *shikar* after bear in a *nullah* back of Chini. I am always telling Jennifer that she must come too next time; but she thinks she will find the *khads* too steep."

"What nonsense, darling! But don't listen to my husband, Mr. Pallis; I'm dying to hear all about your adventures."

Naturally, on our part, we should have displayed adequate reticence, murmuring something about the rights of the story having been pledged to the Liverpool *Daily Post*—"You understand, we have to be a bit careful about the local journalists." By "adequate" reticence, I mean, just enough to encourage curiosity and let the members of the audience relish each detail sip by sip, like a rare vintage. Gradually the pace could be allowed to accelerate a little, starting from *un poco lento* via *andante* (*crescendo* here!) till the whole story could at last be released in the tonic major *con brio*.

"Well, if you'll excuse us I think we ought to go and have

a wash—when was your last, Charles, three months ago?"

"But you will come and dine with us, won't you? There's masses more I want to hear about."

"I'm afraid our clothes are rather unpresentable—luggage—not turned up."

Chorus: "Never mind about that—come as you are—it doesn't matter a scrap!"

Toying with such fancies, we had walked the last few miles of the Hindustan-Tibet road towards the corrugated-iron-roofed summer capital of the Indian Empire. The trek back from our mountain on the frontier ridge of Tibet had been sheer joy. Nothing to worry about, the entire programme accomplished without serious hitch, everyone feeling fit after four months of an ideally healthy life, lovely country to traverse, a perfect climate at the enlivening height of 8,000 feet

Our favourite coolies, who had been with us from start to finish, were still in attendance. There was little for them to do, so we treated ourselves to the hitherto forbidden luxury of walking unloaded and handed our personal rucksacks over to them with instructions that they should keep close at heel in case of a sudden call for camera or notebook. The first time I stopped, my heel landed on someone's toe; as I turned abruptly I collided violently with one of the faithful coolies, who had interpreted his orders with literal exactitude.

The first few days we passed through familiar country. From Nako, at the foot of the mountain, we plunged down the steep side of the valley to the stony banks of the Spiti river, which we crossed by a rope-bridge to the prosperous fields and orchards of Li. Then over a pass covered with Alpines, to the Satlej again and our beloved Poo. After this came Kanam with its monastery and the joy of the first woods, and the taste of ripe apples as good as Ribston pippins in the garden of the delightful Forest bungalow of Chini. There we beguiled the evening playing over the old English and Spanish airs on our viols which, judging by their tone, shared our pleasure.

From there we began to tread new ground. The Tibetan language and Buddhism were now things of the past and the village "devtas" belonged to the Hindu Pantheon. But the Kunáwari peasants with their long hair and beards and homespun gowns with purple sashes were still with us and their artistic talents were in evidence, now that timber was plentiful,

in the decoration not only of temples, but of ordinary houses, on which the carvings were of great boldness and originality. There was not a veranda or window-frame, beam or rail or string-course which was not appropriately beautified.

Gone, however, were the laughing, self-confident faces of the women of Upper Khunu; their sisters here looked shy and rapidly aging, and the golden rings they wore in their noses made their wizened features look all the more dejected.

After Urni we entered the zone of rains again; the monsoon was sending down the last few drops from its bucket. All kinds of butterflies were flitting to and fro in the river gorges; some looked like huge orange-tips or brimstones, yellow, white and red; we also saw fritillaries and swallow-tails, some of them velvety black and others, the commonest species, dusted with golden green powder and with an electric blue mirror on the hind-wings. They settled on moist patches of the road, and rose in clouds when disturbed. Numbers of large grey-green lizards lurked on the rocks, lying in wait for the yellowish grasshoppers that swarmed everywhere. Having seized their prey, they carried it off struggling in their jaws to a hole, before gulping it down.

In the more humid parts the forest rioted in tangled luxuriance. Balsams, pink, yellow or white, bordered the track and in one place a rock that oozed moisture was half hidden behind a curtain of pink begonias. The ground was covered with a thick carpet of ferns and selaginella.

At Sarahan we were received in audience by H.H. the Raja of Bashahr; we welcomed this opportunity of thanking him for his kindness and all his subjects for their willing help. Our head-porter, the man of Poo, on this occasion suddenly shed the character of Odsung the half-Tibetan Buddhist and appeared again in the guise of Ishwar Singh, the complete Hindu, with a sash and a turban like a monstrous onion, in which his flat Mongolian features were comically framed. Thus attired, he paraded before his ruler to the accompaniment of many bows and claspings of hands; we always thought he would have made a perfect Vicar of Bray.

Then down from the woods we went to another dry valley, along stubbly hillsides dotted with euphorbias, like weird candelabra, and so into hot and stuffy Rampur, the capital of the State. After a night spent in the Raja's guest bungalow, we

went on to Nirt'h with its graceful temple spire, which seemed to tell us that we were really back in India, and then, after bidding good-bye to our old friend the Satlej, we climbed again to 8,000 feet and the frontiers of British India at last. We were now all impatience to get to Simla and its luxuries. The expedition was over, and long unheeded cares and desires, like an elbowing throng of ghosts come to life, began to jostle us.

We arrived at Narkanda in a heavy shower and stood rooted in horror gazing on its hutments covered with old kerosene tins hammered out flat. For nearly three months we had not looked on an ugly thing and had begun to take the beauty of the world for granted, even including the works of man. Now the unclean hand of encroaching slumdom had reached out to welcome us home even here in this glorious situation.

The dak-bungalow's charges, though perfectly normal, struck us as terrific. For a single man's meal we were expected to pay what had hitherto sufficed for the expenses of the party for a whole day. When the caretaker quoted the price, our porters turned on us such a look of reproach that we simply could not face it. We managed to find cheaper lodgings in a house that had, we were told, belonged to some missionaries, but had now been abandoned and converted into a private hostel. The house was of wood, shockingly put together; not a decent joint in it, every window-frame warped, cracks in the plaster, furniture both uncomfortable and unsightly, and a few irrelevant ornamental details on the mantelpieces, that could be traced back to some obscure Roman source. Tea, black as pitch and bitter as gall, was served. We hated to sit down or to touch anything. That night, for the first time for weeks, under the influence of these distressing emotions, it took me more than a few moments to drop off to sleep.

So missionaries were responsible for this jerry-built place! I think they must have been the same ones whom Kipling wrote about in the story of *Lispeth* in *Plain Tales from the Hills*. They lived at Kotgargh then; but that lies only a few miles from Narkanda. What we saw was doubtless part of their efforts to "educate the natives." Could they not have found models a few miles away in the charming and solidly-constructed peasant chalets? What could anyone wish for better? Probably in Narkanda they built like that too, formerly; but when they saw that the sahibs did things differently, they followed suit and the old

local craftsmen, finding themselves out of a job, were driven to other occupations and their tradition died with them. Everything was mean and ugly and yet, a couple of days' march back, the people seemed to possess unerring taste and a love of sound workmanship, as well as that poetic fancy which, from the old forms, is ever turning out something fresh and alive—I will not call it new, but ageless.

As I lay restless on my bed, I heard a curious scurrying and snapping going on as if a pair of huge rats was at work gnawing behind the wainscoting. I prayed that they might be successful in rearing a numerous progeny to collaborate with them in their useful and civilizing efforts.

After Narkanda, continuing along the ridge, we entered the devastated belt, though the valleys on either side looked fair enough still. Rickshaws turned up and the coolies offered to draw us to Simla. The inhabitants were now all dressed in the cast-off reach-me-downs of Europe mixed with loin-cloths and turbans in all sorts of unlikely combinations. Once, however, when we halted for lunch, we came across a young shepherd with an extraordinarily spiritual face and the body of an athlete, comely in his peasant dress of grey wool. He was amusing some children who played around him with shouts of merriment. How did he manage to keep himself untainted in such a place? Or had we been speaking unwittingly to Lord Krishna himself?

Simla at last and the flesh-pots! We had not been long in our hotel before we were rung up by Major-General W. L. O. Twiss, C.B., M.C., at that time Honorary Secretary of the Himalayan Club, who bade us welcome and asked us to tiffin on Thursday. "We'd simply love to come along but—would you mind telling me what day it is to-day?—Oh, Tuesday, that's all right, then we'll come on Thursday. Many thanks."

The kindness of the General and Mrs. Twiss lives as a very pleasant memory indeed, making up for other things that Simla lacked. Considering that the jaded officials have to go there every year to recover from the heat of the plains, it is strange how wanting in amenities the place is. There is not a decent tea-shop nor are there even public gardens with terraces where people can sit and enjoy the surpassing views. Almost the greatest joy at the end of the monsoon is watching the sunsets, which are positively Wagnerian. We have seen Hunding and Siegmund duelling on the crest of their ridge and

the Valkyries riding back to their rock on cloud-borne chargers, bearing the bodies of dead heroes laid across their saddles, and at last Valhalla has opened to show Wotan and his gods waiting sorrowfully for the unescapable Dusk.

But to return to our story. After General Twiss had rung off I began to wonder how he knew already of our arrival in Simla. It was drizzling as we straggled in and there were few people in the streets nor was anything about our caravan specially noticeable. Was it the Intelligence of the Government or the no less efficient Intelligence of the Bazaar which had been so expeditious? Or was it—yes! that must have been it—one of the pukka sahibs in the hotel who had hastened to report to headquarters that a party of undesirable characters had arrived. *I could imagine the gist of that telephone conversation:*—"*No, foreigners I'm sure—a frightful outsider with a big nose—What have they been doing? Up to no good—A party of sportsmen? They certainly don't look it—climbing, did you say?—you don't call that sport, do you?*"

We still had a few days left before catching the steamer at Bombay, so we decided to spend most of them at Agra, visiting its incomparable monuments of Mughal Art. At Kalka junction, where the narrow-gauge railway from Simla joins the main line, we said good-bye to the two Jadhs, Djun Singh and Naranhu, who had continued to attend upon us in the hotel. In fact there had been some difficulty in persuading them that Simla was not a nest of robbers and that it was really needless for them to lie across our threshold at night like watch-dogs. We had suggested to them that they should walk back to Mussoori by a high-level route, instead of descending to the plains and going round via Dehra Dun; but Djun Singh, who, if so commanded, would have gone alone across five hundred miles of Tibetan desert without turning a hair, absolutely declined to risk himself in this tame bit of British territory, declaring it to be swarming with crooks and brigands! Ishwar Singh, alias Odsung, refused to be parted from us till the last possible moment and accompanied us as far as Bombay, whence we saw him off on a return train, the day before we sailed. When the coast of India began to fade from sight, though we were full of excitement at the prospect of home, we could not help feeling some twinges of regret, which made us realize how hopelessly we had lost our hearts. The Himalayan germ, once caught, works



PAINTED CEILING OF A VILLAGE GATEWAY



inside one like a relapsing fever; it is ever biding its time before breaking out again with renewed virulence. Dr. Longstaff had warned us when we set out, "once a man has found the road, he can never keep away for long." "It is certain you will return," had declared Professor Tucci, over supper, that evening at Namgya: to which I could only answer "Amen" in all sincerity.

PART TWO

SIKKIM—1986

CHAPTER IX

The Antechamber of Tibet

MARCH, 1936, found us back again in the Himalaya, as the prophets had foretold; or rather two of us, Richard Nicholson and myself, for of the other members of the old party, Ted Hicks and Colin Kirkus were not free to join us, and Charles Warren had been yielded up, grudgingly, to the Everest expedition. "A little regret is not out of place in making an offering," as Aramis said in *The Three Musketeers.*

In the interval between the two journeys, not only had our study of the Tibetan language continued with unflagging diligence, but also there had been a good deal of general reading and thinking round the subject of Tibet and its institutions. A path was beginning to be cleared through the maze of new and exciting impressions that we had collected, so that they could be sorted into some degree of order and related to our ordinary life.

One thing was evident to us; we could never more remain indifferent to those doctrines which underlay the Tibetan culture. The little that we had learned at first hand was evidence enough to prove beyond hesitation that a precious treasure lay there: only he could hope to find the key, who first earned the freedom of the Tradition through a mastery of the language, and through real sympathy with the mode of life and outlook of its votaries.

Our return into Occidental society, after having spent some months separated from it, made it possible to examine in a new and critical light many institutions that had hitherto been taken for granted. Indeed, reversion to the old conditions came in many ways as a shock, for the restless, noisy daily round seemed strangely futile after the manageable pace to which we had accustomed ourselves. We missed the quietness and the physical well-being of the mountain life, and we looked round

in vain for an adequate substitute for that sense of poise which, more than anything, distinguished the people among whom we had lately stayed.

As soon as we began to make definite plans for another visit to the East we invited two more climbers to join us, J. K. COOKE, a very able mountaineer with whom I had been associated both in the Alps and in Wales, and F. S. CHAPMAN of Greenland fame, a keen field ornithologist, who after leaving us, accompanied the Political Officer of Sikkim to Lhasa as private secretary, and finally capped his varied adventures with a first ascent of the lofty peak of Chomolhari. The medical officer's place was filled by Dr. R. ROAF of Liverpool who, though he had done but little mountaineering, shared many of our other interests, especially the artistic ones. He was gifted as a linguist and in a short time managed to make considerable headway with his Tibetan, to which a Balliol accent lent an original flavour.

The projected expedition was to be divided roughly into two parts. First, we wished to attempt one or more of the peaks situated near the margin of the Zemu glacier in Sikkim, before the arrival of the monsoon about June. In the second half Cooke and Chapman were to be free to continue climbing in the north of Sikkim if they wished, while the other three of us devoted ourselves to Tibetan studies. Permission to enter Tibet proper was solicited from the Government of India, who promised to take an early opportunity of forwarding our application to the Lhasa authorities. The district for which we required a passport was called Hlobrak, which means Southern Crag. It is a valley adjoining the north frontier of Bhutan and is reputed to be both of extraordinary natural beauty and to contain a number of ancient monasteries of great interest, in one of which we hoped to be allowed to stay and receive instruction.

Hlobrak is famous as the birthplace of one of Tibet's great divines, Marpa, who, like the founder of the Spiti temples, earned the rare title of Translator, from having brought back doctrinal books to his country from India. He is still more renowned as the spiritual guide of Tibet's most popular saint and national poet, Mila Repa. The latter had started life as a notorious sinner. When his father died, his uncle and aunt seized on the inheritance and drove Mila and his mother out

into penury. The widow vowed vengeance and called on her son to show himself a man by exacting a cruel punishment from the usurpers of his patrimony. But his uncle only mocked the youth saying, "If you are many, declare war on us: if few, cast spells on us!" The young man took them at their word and went in search of a sorcerer able and willing to teach him the art of black magic. Eventually he found his man and became initiated into the mysteries of witchcraft. When he felt his powers sufficiently matured, he made his preparations and launched spells against his uncle's house, condemning all who dwelt there to perish except two, his uncle and aunt, who were to be spared so that they might experience the anguish of their loss to the full. At that moment a feast was in progress and the horses belonging to the guests were stabled on the ground floor of the house, as is still customary in Tibet to-day, while the family entertained their friends on the first floor. A maidservant, sent down on an errand and deluded by the spell, imagined she saw a scorpion as big as a yak tugging at the central pier that formed the main support of the building. Unhinged by terror, she rushed shrieking from the stable, and her alarm communicated itself to the horses; upon which all the stallions hurled themselves madly upon the mares and a terrible fight ensued. The whole house was shaken so violently that it toppled down, burying all the company under the ruins except the wretched aunt and uncle.

The news did not take long to reach the ears of the old widow, who hastened to the scene of the disaster and added her triumphant gibes to the sorrows of the hapless pair. To escape the consequences of his crime Mila Repa had to flee the country; but in exile he began to be tormented by remorse. His highly sensitive and spiritual nature craved to understand the true meaning of life. A chance acquaintance happened to mention to him the name of Marpa the Translator, and Mila instantly experienced, as many young Tibetans still do, a conviction that he, and he alone, was the Master to lead him into the Path of Truth. He set out at once for Hlobrak where Marpa, who is represented in pictures as a rather stout, choleric-looking man, already expected him, having sensed his approach through second sight. Mila offered himself body and soul to his Lama, and prayed that he would impart to him his special doctrine. "What!" cried Marpa, feigning anger. "Do you think I am

going to hand over secrets which I brought all the way from India at great trouble and risk, to the first comer, to one moreover who is a wicked sorcerer, the slayer of I know not how many human beings? It is only after a long probation that I may, if I see that you are really in earnest, instruct you in the doctrine." Mila, having agreed to his terms, awaited his commands.

The Lama, who discerned in Mila's enthusiastic personality a wealth of possibilities which were only waiting to be released as soon as his past misdeeds had been expiated, deliberately put him through a testing that would have broken the spirit of any ordinary man, treating him with the utmost harshness, snubbing him on every possible occasion, and displaying a shortness of temper and despotic capriciousness which belied the deep respect that he really felt for his disciple. Marpa is still held up to admiration as the type of an uncompromising trainer of character, who shrinks from no discipline that he thinks likely to aid the spiritual development of his pupil. If few men have quite equalled Marpa in his almost ruthless interpretation of a preceptor's duties, many of the modern lama-teachers to-day would be found to act on his principles to a surprising extent.

One of the first measures taken by Marpa will perhaps astonish my readers, though to a Tibetan it would seem more natural. He ordered Mila Repa to use his magic arts to coerce the people of a village who, so he said, had offended him in some way. Mila, who was by this time consumed with shame for the murders that he had perpetrated by his sorcery, crimes which he now appreciated at their true worth, suffered the pain of realization a hundredfold, now that he had to repeat them in cold blood; but, like a true pupil, he never for a moment dreamed of disobeying his master. The strange-sounding command was really a means of bringing home to Mila, in a way that no mere precepts could have done, the real enormity of the sin of violence, revealing it to him in its true colours. The sole object of a genuine Lama's training is realization; whatever does not conduce to that end is a waste of time. Innocence, if due to nothing more than ignorance of evil, is considered worthless. Not the new-born baby, but the experienced sage is the Tibetan ideal. It must be admitted that in the history of these events, Marpa got out of a difficulty by restoring to health the men, rats and birds that had suffered from his so drastic experi-

ment. He then invented a fresh series of tests. He ordered the building of a house on a certain site and specified the exact design. Mila was to erect it unaided, bringing every stone with his own hands. When after unspeakable toil it was completed, Marpa came along and said casually: "Who ordered that absurd building to be put up there?" "It was your Reverence," answered Mila. "I must have been crazy when I said it. Pull it down and re-erect it here." This episode, with variations, was enacted again and again. Mila was even made to replace the stones where they had come from, miles away, carrying them on his back.

At last when the young man had proved that, though pushed to the limit of endurance, his steadfastness was utterly unshakable, his formidable tutor relented. Mila could hardly believe his ears when he heard the news that the coveted initiation was to be his at last. Then, in the centre of a *Khyinkhor*, or Sacred Circle, Marpa admitted his favourite pupil into the Order and cut his hair with his own hands.

There follows one of the most moving episodes of the whole story, the description of the parting of the old Lama from his beloved disciple. After the stern lesson of Mila's cruel labours, the poignant tenderness of this farewell is strangely affecting.

Mila Repa's autobiography, which he dictated later on to one of his own pupils, is the great masterpiece of Tibetan prose and has fortunately been competently translated into English, and into French still better. It gives a more vivid notion of how the Tibetan mind works than any other book that I know, and as a picture of daily life it holds good to-day, though these events happened about the time of William the Norman.

Mila Repa became one of the greatest saints and by his extreme power of concentration, succeeded in telescoping into the space of a single earthly life, all those stages of Being that must precede the Supreme Illumination of a Buddha. He spent most of his remaining years in reclusion in caves, some of them not far from Mount Everest, where one can still meet a few of his spiritual children. There he meditated upon the Truth for the good of all creatures. The Order of Lamas which Marpa and he founded on Earth is called *Kargyudpa* or Verbal Tradition Order. It hands down, in golden succession, doctrines which perhaps represent the richest manifestations of Tibetan thought. The saint has revealed his most intimate musings in a collection

of spiritual poems, characterized by an extreme succinctness of expression. The autobiography is also a model of brevity; the style is vigorous and free from padding and the dialogue positively scintillates.

It was to the scene of St. Mila's apprenticeship, to the mountain valley hallowed by his footsteps, that we hoped to go, and, perhaps to receive there some faint reflected glimpses of the teachings which he had dared to face in their dazzling effulgence. As soon as our Sikkim plans had been sanctioned by the India Office we set out, at the end of February. Had we been Tibetans we might have felt dismayed by bad auguries, for the ship sailed on the last day of an unpropitious year, by Tibetan reckoning, instead of the date originally fixed, at the beginning of a new year. We had been promised that we should sail under our old friend Captain O'Connor, who had taken us out in 1938; but at the last moment his ship was ordered to South Africa.

After an uneventful voyage we landed at Calcutta, buoyed up by hopes, little dreaming that we were fated to be thwarted in every single item of our programme: that we should fail on our peak, and be unable to set foot in Tibet; that our arrangements would work less smoothly than when we came out, quite inexperienced, three years before; and that luck would only turn at long last, when we had left our chosen ground, and migrated to the opposite end of the Himalaya, where, at P'hiyang in Ladak, a spiritual descendant of Marpa of Hlobrak would instruct us!

At Siliguri on the edge of the plain, where passengers for Kalimpong detrain, the sight of the flat-nosed, high-cheek-boned faces of the hill-men filled us with excitement. We packed into a car driven by a Nepali chauffeur, and sped off along a road bordered by dense jungle, said to harbour tigers and elephants. A sharp turn into the hills, and the river Tista, flowing between banks overgrown with luxuriant tropical foliage, came into view. There we saw the polished leathery leaves of wild banana and of the indiarubber plant, palm-like cycads that called to mind remote geological ages, the light fronds of bamboo, screwpines or *Pandanus* and creepers in amazing variety. The trees, covered with ferns and orchids, exhibited the characteristic phenomena of damp tropical vegetation; fine air cables like telegraph wires, buttressed roots and subsidiary

trunks growing out of the ends of branches so that a whole grove might really be but a single tree. Monkeys played overhead, and here and there huge butterflies, known hitherto only from collections, flitted past. But at the moment of our arrival, owing to the failure of winter rains, the country was suffering from drought and our car raised clouds of fine dust. This was to prove our undoing on the mountain later on, for the belated rains arrived in May and tailed on into an early monsoon, producing a very short and unsettled climbing season.

The opinion of the bazaar folk at Kalimpong was that one might have expected as much, because it was the year appointed for another Everest expedition. The mountain spirits would, of course, send bad weather; anyone in their place would do just the same. Perhaps also a Tibetan magician was amusing himself with the time-honoured pastime of making hail! Mila Repa had resorted to it in his unregenerate days.

Having once spent some weeks in the forests of equatorial South America, I was expecting to find the jungles of the Tista valley equally prolific, since the rainfall of Sikkim is enormous, some 120 inches in the outer ranges. They were, however, on a markedly smaller scale. The trees themselves were perhaps half the size, and did not produce the stately cathedral-like impression of the more highly developed tropical rain-forest. Creepers also, though numerous, were mostly of the fine jasmine type. Thick-stemmed lianas were relatively few: I noticed the rattan or climbing palm and the pothos, a scansorial member of the arum family, and another creeper with broad heart-shaped leaves. On the whole, much more light penetrates into these forests, so that the plants have a less severe struggle to reach it and are not forced to resort so generally to complex expedients like air roots, such as appear in great profusion in forests where even the smallest gleam of light is precious. By the Tista there were open paths which on the Essequibo of Guiana would have been roofed over by creepers in less than a couple of seasons. Insects too, though common and splendid, did not hover round in anything like the same numbers. It must be supposed that the slightly higher latitude (27° North, actually outside the tropics), the sharper division into seasons (the dry season tends to act somewhat like a winter) and perhaps also the proximity of the plains of India, which are comparatively poor in species, have jointly conspired to water down

the intensity of Nature's energy: but even so, the forest is of great magnificence, such as temperate vegetation, even at its best, does not quite equal. The beauty of the latter may not be less perfect in itself, but its possibilities are more limited. If temperate woods resemble the Pastoral Symphony of Beethoven, tropical forests are a fugal concerto of Bach or a six-part anthem by Palestrina.

After crossing the Tista, the road winds upwards in numerous bends, including one figure of eight, to a ridge 4,000 feet high with the bazaar of Kalimpong straggling along its crest. Most of the upper levels have been cleared for cultivation, and the hillsides are terraced with maize. The area, both the outlying hamlets and the bazaar itself, is a jerry-builder's paradise; most of the hutments consist of a few planks, sheets of corrugated iron and old bits of tin. The cultivators are largely Nepali settlers, who are diligent agriculturists. Many of them look not unlike the Garhwalis whom we met in 1938, while others show in their features traces of Tibetan admixture. They have cheery expressions and energetic movements; one can recognize them at a glance for a virile and pushing race; but they must be rather a menace to the existence of less aggressive races whose territory they peacefully penetrate. We were told that their presence does constitute a problem, both for Sikkim and even in closed Bhutan, and that Nepali settlement has had to be limited to certain areas, otherwise they would overrun the whole place; but whether the measures taken are adequate or not remains to be proved. Though nominal Hindus, they do not spare the wild animals, but slaughter them mercilessly. Gurkha troops are notorious as poachers; but they are pleasant fellows and their "sporting" character endears them to the Europeans who see in them something more familiar than is normally to be found in Asia.

Kalimpong, which once belonged to Bhutan, but was part of a district annexed to British territory in 1865, owes its commercial importance to its position as a terminal of the Lhasa-India trade route. Thousands of mules and ponies come and go, bringing the wool of Tibet to India and carrying in exchange cotton, manufactured goods and also silk and other Chinese products. In Kalimpong's rambling street of shops many races rub shoulders, Bengalis and merchants from Marwar celebrated for business acumen, neat little Nepalis and high-

cheeked Tibetans, lanky bullet-skulled Bhutanese in short striped tunics, heroic-looking Khambas with their broadswords swinging from their belts, lamas trading on behalf of their monasteries or intent on a visit to Buddh Gaya in Bihar, where the Victorious One obtained His final revelation. The best shops, neatest, cleanest and most tastefully arranged are those kept by Chinese; the smiling faces of their owners strike a friendly note as one walks through the bazaar.

The European residents differ from those of an ordinary Indian hill-station in being less stiff, more free and easy, in fact much more like the same people in England. No jaded government comes here to recuperate, there is no cantonment and no club. The presiding genius of Kalimpong is The Very Rev. Dr. J. A. Graham, sometime Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. Having come out as a missionary, his attention was drawn to the crying evil of unwanted children of Anglo-Indian parentage, who, like Kim of old, hung about the streets of India, deserted and neglected. Dr. Graham came to their rescue and, starting from small beginnings, built up a wonderful organization to deal with the problem. The boys and girls are fostered, educated and eventually placed in suitable trades or professions, in all parts of the world, where most of them have made good. Many firms, as well as private persons, have recognized the great public benefit of this work by becoming regular subscribers to its upkeep. It is a moving experience to visit the Homes in company with the saintly man who acts as father to this huge family. The unfeigned joy that lights up the rows of faces, as he pushes open the doors of successive class-rooms, the general atmosphere of health and confidence, the pleasant cottages among which the children have been subdivided in small groups, instead of being allowed to grow up under barrack conditions, all these things make the St. Andrew's Homes deserve the much-abused name of Charity. General Bruce once said to me: "It is the finest piece of welfare work in India."

I was privileged to make a number of close friends in Kalimpong. I have not named them, but I trust that this intentional reticence will not be mistaken for forgetfulness. I am thinking of three households, which are rarely out of my thoughts for long.

During my stay there, I spent every available moment in

trying to improve my Tibetan. Having picked it up in the western provinces, and gone on building upon that foundation, my ear was not attuned to the dialect and accent of Lhasa, which is the lingua franca of educated Tibetans everywhere. I had several teachers at Kalimpong; one of whom, an elderly layman, used to come and coach me on the hotel veranda. One day, as we were sitting at our lesson, I happened to see an ant crawling up the hem of his gown and picked it off and put it on the grass. "You have done well," said the teacher. "I rejoice to see that you did not unthinkingly squash the ant. You must be familiar with the doctrines that enjoin respect for life however lowly." "Yes," I answered, "I have heard the popular saying that any insect you see has probably been at some time one or both of your parents." This is a way of expressing the idea that all beings are continuously passing from one state to another, according to the actions which consciously or unconsciously affect them, so that all living things are brothers, and all things whatsoever, one. This doctrine will be explained in detail in the chapter on the Round of Existence.

While at Kalimpong I had many opportunities of investigating the attitude of the Tibetans towards animals, as not a day passes but long trains of mules or ponies come and go along the caravan route. I had already noticed in 1933 that Tibetans acted kindly and thoughtfully towards their animals, and that ill-temper, cursing and beating seemed unknown among them. This first opinion was reinforced by what I heard and saw at Kalimpong, in Sikkim and later in Ladak. I consulted several British residents so as to check my facts. I think one is safe in declaring that genuine cruelty is uncommon and that in their relations with the animal world, the Tibetans might serve as an example for many other races. Their theoretical position is sound from the start. Animals are sensitive beings, differing in degree, not in kind, from ourselves, and must be treated accordingly—so runs their teaching. Hunting or fishing are discountenanced by the law, and foreigners admitted into Tibet are obliged to give a pledge that they will respect this prohibition. Wild animals are in consequence often very tame. Feeding of birds and fishes is considered a pious act. Meat-eating, though general because of the scarcity of other kinds of food on the plateau, is only admitted as a regrettable necessity, and the stricter lamas and any others who abstain

from it altogether are much respected. The trade of butcher is in very bad odour, though, with the sophistry which comes so easily to mankind, Mussulmans are allowed to practise it at Lhasa, but outside the city boundary.

Pack-animals travelling along the trade-routes suffer from frequent sores caused by the rubbing of the wooden pack-saddles. I have seen many bad open wounds, while there is hardly one mule or pony that does not show some patches of white hair where an old sore has healed over. In Europe a bad sore on a horse is taken as clear proof of cruelty. Should not the same be said here? I think that a different construction should be put on the evidence, and that the evil is almost entirely due to the nature of the ground over which packs must be transported. The paths are often strewn with boulders; successions of high mountain passes must be crossed where blizzards overtake the travellers; early or late in the season deep snowdrifts add to the difficulties. I was told that a driver is usually put in charge of from twenty to thirty mules; the men battle hard to help their animals, but the task is beyond one man's strength. If the ponies themselves were like the nervous creatures that we know over here, the number of casualties would bring all traffic to a standstill; but the Tibetan pony or mule is as tough as his master. When he falls over, if there is no one at hand to help, he just scrambles up and goes on his way. One English resident also told me that the animals eventually become hardened to the pack-saddles and that the second-growth skin is less liable to sores than before. An improved saddle was once designed; but it was impossible to get it tried seriously, as the existing pattern is time-honoured and slightly cheaper too. We know over here how difficult it is to overcome the conservatism of simple people.

In Southern Europe, where sores on animals are common, we find them invariably associated with emaciation from underfeeding, beating and goading, and especially with the habit of leaving the pack-saddles on day and night out of sheer laziness. In Tibet, I regard the sores, though greatly to be regretted, as a comparatively minor ill, among the many evils by which man, as Schopenhauer said, has "turned the Earth into a hell for the animals," both because the sores seem to recover under good treatment on reaching home, and because they are chiefly the outcome of extremely hard conditions of life, which the men

also endure in equal degree; they are not caused by malevolence, indifference, denial of the animals' just rights, or, as so often happens, simply by indolence. All this mitigates the evil considerably, and though one would not exactly choose to be born a mule on an Asiatic caravan route if one could avoid it, I continue to rate the Tibetans high in their treatment of animals. Above all, they admit the right principle, so that, in case of abuse, there is something to appeal to.

At the same time it would be easy to misread the motives that govern the Tibetans in their attitude towards cruelty. Their treatment of animals, in which their standard is above average, must not lead us into ascribing to them our own tenderheartedness and inability to witness pain without repugnance. By no stretch of imagination could they be called humanitarians, even when their acts conform to the humane code. With us the chief objection to cruelty is the actual pain inflicted: not so with the Tibetan, whose powers of enduring pain without flinching are great, but who can also look unmoved upon suffering that would horrify us. For him, the feeling of hostility, which leads to the doing of an injury, is far more serious than the pain involved in the cruel act. The two points of view differ profoundly, even if they sometimes approach in their results.

The Buddhist takes for his starting-point the rights of all his living fellow-creatures, rights which he recognizes in theory, whatever may be his own practice. The sinfulness of ill-treatment lies in the ignorant denial of those rights and in the indulgence of anger or self-interest. For our part, we make a marked distinction of principle between the rights claimed for man and those accorded to animals. The latter can vary between moderately full rights—sometimes marred by a patronizing attitude—slight recognition, and non-existence. On the other hand, our objection to pain is extreme. We fear it greatly for ourselves and, by a projection of our own highly-developed sensibility, we recoil from the idea of inflicting it on others.

The Tibetans, on the other hand, take little stock of pain as such. A man who would not commit a cruel act himself, could be unmoved by the severest torture suffered by either man or beast, provided he was convinced that it was inevitable or deserved. If it were purely the result of chance, he would probably feel no strong impulse to seek a way to remedy it. A

man who would put himself to no end of trouble in order to spare his animals, might experience little horror on witnessing an accident to one of those same animals; even a deliberate act, such as a painful penalty decreed by the criminal law, would not stir his feelings.

For us pain is a comparatively rare occurrence: where it exists we try to hide it from public gaze. Our fear of it for ourselves, as well as humane teachings, have sharpened our imagination, so that we no longer feel able to apply it even towards the worst criminals. We only tolerate it openly in war, and to some extent in scientific research; in the latter case our besetting fear of the pain of disease works the other way and overcomes our normal inhibitions. There are of course other horrible cruelties like trapping for furs; but they are allowed to continue because the pain is out of sight and is accepted as an incidental feature. The same applies to some of the measures taken against those wild animals that are counted as "vermin." These remarks apply to England, one of the most humane countries in the world: in many other parts of Europe the attitude towards animals is appalling, both in theory and practice. In some modern States torture for political causes has begun to regain favour; but even there it is not yet safe to inflict it publicly.

It is rare to find in the same person both remarkable stoicism under pain and a quick sensitivity to the sufferings of others. The martyr's fortitude and the tormentor's callousness are ever prone to change places, if fate should so order things. Europeans who travel in independent Tibet should not forget this, in the event of their wishing, for any reason, to have recourse to the protection of the law. They must expect the criminal, in that case, to suffer penalties that may greatly exceed what they themselves would consider just, let alone endure. Whether they are prepared under such circumstances to take the responsibility of invoking the law, is a matter for their own conscience.

The virtues of the Tibetans in their relations with animals, they owe chiefly to their Buddhist principles, which remain unquestioned, even if they are not applied consistently. Were such to be the case, indeed, it could not but bring about the abolition of all cruelties. But of objection to pain for its own sake there is little, and inhuman practices hallowed by custom,

such as the slaughter of animals in certain districts by suffocation, do not stir the public conscience.

One of my pressing duties after my arrival was to go over by car to Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim, and introduce myself to the Political Officer, Mr. B. J. Gould, who controlled the issue of passports into Tibet. He had very bad news for us. A report had arrived concerning an untoward incident on a different part of the frontier which, it was feared, had annoyed the Lhasa authorities. In consequence the promise of forwarding on our application for a permit to go to Hlobrak could not be fulfilled. It was a great blow: all our plans were in the melting-pot. There was, however, nothing to be done now but to carry on with our immediate programme of climbing in Sikkim. We spent several days at Gangtok organizing transport. Mr. Gould most kindly offered two of us the hospitality of the Residency and its lovely garden.

During our stay in Gangtok, H.H. the Maharaja of Sikkim received us several times and treated us with every possible consideration; I would like to express to him the grateful thanks of all our party. I am myself specially indebted to him; for when a chance remark made him aware of my cherished desire to embark on a genuine study at first hand of the Tibetan doctrines, for their own sake and not out of mere scientific curiosity, he spoke encouraging words which I have not forgotten.

By far the most interesting of the sights at Gangtok is the new temple attached to the palace, which has only recently been completed by the reigning Maharaja. Both the structure and the interior decorations and fittings are new. It is significant that a work has been carried through in this little Himalayan principality which would nowadays be well nigh impossible in the capitals of the richest States in the world. Externally the building is plain, built in two stories like all Sikkim temples. The nave, well proportioned and resting on pillars with the usual Tibetan bracketed capitals, is lined with mural paintings by the best contemporary artists from Tibet. Symbolical figures, illustrating metaphysical doctrines, scenes from the life of the Buddha and from local church history, bands and panels of conventional foliage, have all been executed with precision and in animated style. The colours are clean and well blended; the only fault that can be alleged against them is their rather



LOOKING ACROSS THE FOOTHILLS FROM KALIMPONG





TIBETAN T'HANKA

aggressively new appearance, intensified by the fact that they have had to be overlayed with a coat of glossy varnish, to protect them from the humid climate. It is to be hoped that time will tone this down.

His Highness also showed us his private chapel and his wonderful collection of *t'hankas* or painted scrolls. One of these, illustrating the doctrine of the Wheel of Existence, was the work of his own uncle who is a lama in Tibet. But the crown of all his possessions is a set of *t'hankas* hanging in the dining-room of his house, which are not only the finest of their kind known to me, but rank among the greatest masterpieces of painting anywhere. These are not of recent date: they were executed in Kham, adjoining Western China. Whoever painted them was one of those rare geniuses who show their superior powers as unmistakably in the most insignificant details as in their treatment of human figures and in the general composition. All the better Tibetan *t'hankas* are competently drawn; but in this case there is an extra quality in the actual line which has been granted to few outside the circle of the great artists of China and Japan. In the Maharaja's *t'hankas* slight Chinese influence might almost be suspected. They seem somewhat less austere than the ordinary run of Tibetan work. The treatment of trees and landscape in particular suggests an artist who shares the Chinese feelin · for Nature. They provide much more than a mere background to set off the figures and illustrate the story: each separate feature seems instinct with a life of its own, besides taking its place in the composition. I feel that it is a special privilege to have been permitted by His Highness to reproduce photographs (facing pages 121 and 420) of two of these remarkable *t'hankas*.

The proximity of the new temple has put the Maharaja's present house rather out of countenance. It was erected in a previous reign, at the time when the first wave of imitation of European styles was sweeping over Asia. Possibly the Residency building may have had something to do with setting the fashion; though John Claude White, the first British Resident, who built it, was by no means out of sympathy with the cause of native art. He showed his enlightenment, remarkable for the time, by opposing the introduction of chemical dyes into Sikkim. It is a pity his policy in this matter is not still applied with unrelenting severity. He not unnaturally put up for his own use

an English country house, as a reminder of home; but had he foreseen the effects of his example, he might have acted differently.

Besides the royal shrine, there is a conspicuous monastery on the top of Gangtok hill, to which we paid a call, at the hour of afternoon service. When I knocked on the door to ask admittance, the lama doorkeeper must have been puzzled by my appearance and accent: I suppose I pronounced Tibetan rather differently from an Englishman. I overheard him whispering "He must be from Ladak"—prophetic words, as it happened. I thought of Madame David-Neel when she stayed at Lhasa disguised as a beggar, for she also had been taken for a Ladaki.

The service was not edifying. The lamas who foregathered in the choir seemed bent on getting through their orisons in the briefest possible time. They gabbled mechanically and turned to stare and gossip quite unashamedly. It was the "vain repetition" mentioned in the Gospel, vain by reason of its inattention, for repetition is not in itself harmful and has its uses. In Tibet, the delinquents would soon have heard from the monastic censor, and maybe felt the weight of his whip too! There is plenty of room for reform in the Sikkim lamaseries, real reform, not revolutionary innovation, but a return to earlier practice and a stricter enforcement of rules that already exist. There is a great difference between these two policies.

Unlike so many Hindu and Moslem rulers, the Maharaja and his Court invariably wear their traditional dress. This wise and salutary practice, in keeping with the dignity of a prince, is unfortunately not copied as it ought to be by the officials of petty rank. Postal servants, overseers on roads and, most serious of all, schoolmasters, are frequent offenders. This last case is specially regrettable because of their influence upon the character of their youthful and uncritical charges. I used to meet the schoolboys returning home in the evenings with their satchels: some of them looked in the picture, but far too many were got up as grotesque travesties of European children. There is no law I should welcome more than one which made it a duty of every employee of the State to wear his national costume. The same rule should be applied to school children. Designers of school buildings and Government offices might apply this principle, so far as is practicable, to the style of their architecture and

furnishing. It is only long after people have relinquished their heritage that they begin to feel regrets; but then the attempt to reconstruct the past is only too liable to result in a mere romantic affectation, like the Gothic revival in Europe. The time for devising counter-measures against the evil tendency is now, before it has had time to gather its full force.

I believe that this question of costume, external though it may appear at first sight, is a crucial one for India, China, Japan and other nations too. It has become a symbol of something far more deep-seated, a touchstone by which the traditional and anti-traditional souls can be distinguished. That I am not alone in thinking so, is proved by the actions of those to whom, in this matter, I feel most opposed. I call to witness the inveterate Occidentalizers, Kemal Atatürk and his Persian and Afghan imitators, for they, though from diametrically contrary motives, came to the same conclusion as myself. They wished to uproot tradition, to snap the links that bind their people to history. They too felt the power of symbols; that is why they persecuted all the outward signs of native culture and forcibly imposed trousers and bowler hats, Romanized architecture and jazz orchestras. They accepted for a criterion of civilization, conformity to the Western model, and that alone. In their eyes such an object as a typewriter was more than a useful tool to do a certain job; it became invested with mystical qualities, like an emblem of progressiveness in the new era. Their ideals matched their outward trappings. Militaristic nationalism, identification of propaganda with education, hatred of religion and denial of the private authority of conscience, above all the exaltation of feverish action over thought in every sphere, these were their ideas of culture.

In encouraging contrast, I must tell the story of how in 1937 I was visited in my home in Liverpool by the Mongol lama Wangyal, whom I have mentioned before and to whom this book owes so much. He came over in his national dress and always wore it while in England. On the voyage some Indians tried to frighten him by prophesying that he would be laughed at; they even told him that the police would interfere with him if he did not change into European clothes! Not only did no such thing happen, but people who met him, repeatedly went out of their way to comment favourably on his appearance. The only minor criticism I ever heard was over a pair of tan shoes of

English make and a Homburg hat that he sometimes wore. I was asked why he spoiled his beautiful dress with those incongruous additions! That is how it struck English people. I wish some of my Oriental friends would lay this to heart.

To cite one more example, I remember the universal admiration which greeted that noble Chinese Christian Dr. Ti Zi Ku whenever he came over to our country to address the Student Christian Movement. He owed this honour not only to his own rare personality but also partly to the fact that, clad as he was in his becoming national costume, the frame befitted the picture. On the other hand those Indians whom one meets walking along the pavements of London, wearing a pink turban and a black beard, in combination with a check golf jacket and plus-fours, simply appear ludicrous to European eyes, and it is almost impossible to rid oneself of the idea, despite any assertion to the contrary, that this grotesque attempt at imitation masks a sense of inferiority deep down in the heart. It is even more difficult to understand why the Japanese, who are citizens of a great Power, as greatness is judged to-day, continue to act in a similar manner. They are a typical example of what happens to a people when it starts copying, even for a perfectly understandable reason, without discrimination and with unsettling precipitancy. I recently saw a photograph of a ceremony in Korea where the Koreans present were all dressed in their white robes, while the Japanese officials were wearing that most unbecoming of uniforms, the frock-coat of the 'eighties. They looked ridiculous and one could have laughed, were the whole subject not so depressing.

A general reversion to the traditional costume on the part of male Indians, and Chinese and Japanese of the educated classes, especially students and officials—ladies seem usually to have more courage and sounder instincts in these things—would, in my opinion, earn general respect from Europeans. Respect is the first step towards friendship. Slavish imitation is the way to get oneself despised, when all talk of equality or reconciliation becomes futile. Of course certain adaptations for climatic reasons have to be made when travelling abroad, just as our own people do in India. No one suggests walking down Piccadilly in January in a loincloth, or cleaning a motor-car attired in silken raiment. The only thing to guard against is any tendency to make the proposed reform in a defiant or aggressive

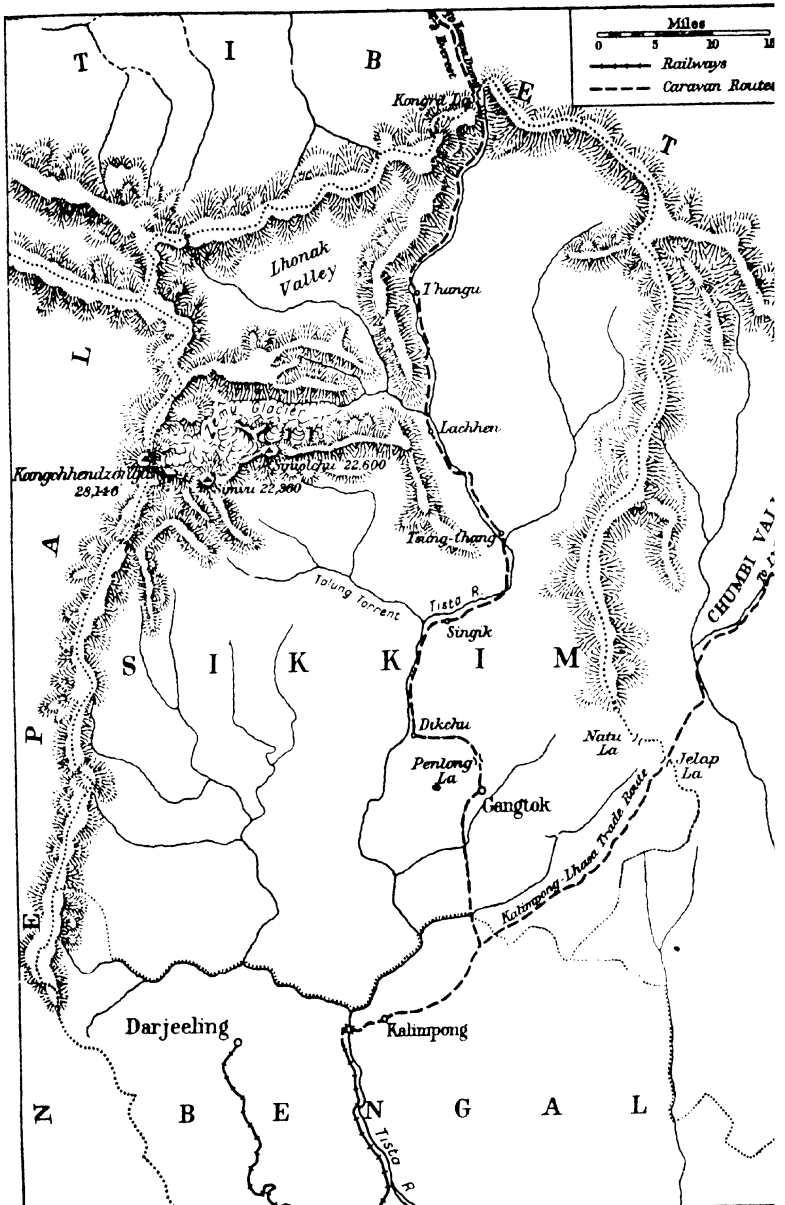
manner. If the Indian magistrate would one day appear in his court, or the undergraduate at his lecture in India or at Oxford, wearing his Indian dress in all men's sight, without any fuss, then the lesson would sink in; nor would its motive be in danger of misinterpretation. The Tibetans have shown a sound judgment in this matter. In the border countries, where the two opposing tendencies meet face to face, far-seeing leaders might do much to raise the morale of their weaker followers, and gradually the tide would roll back even from those places where it has begun to encroach on the dykes of tradition.

CHAPTER X

Defeat on Simvu

THE valley of the Tista, approached by a short descent from the Penlong pass, is the ordinary route from Gangtok to North Sikkim. It is a sylvan fairyland which should have inspired poets; but its name has been more often associated with the unpleasant topics of malaria and leeches. True, the disease is common in the lower parts of the valley, especially during the rains; but the upper reaches, along which the path of expeditions lies, are, except for one stretch, free from it. It is only in the rainy season that certain sections are overrun with leeches; at other times of the year they are only found as a scourge in some unusually moist side-valleys.

When our caravan marched up the four stages between Gangtok and Lachhen, at the gate of the Zemu glacier valley, the drought had not yet broken and vegetation was not showing at its best. There were few insects or flowers; only here and there a vivid purple splash indicated a plant of Dendrobium orchid perched up in a fork of the branches. I will leave more detailed description till our return in the monsoon when everything had come to life again. In the space of a few days on our outward journey we went through the gamut of the year's seasons in reverse, starting from the perpetual high summer of the subtropical zone, passing within a few hours into an evergreen sub-temperate summer, then gradually rising to temperate spring, till finally, after climbing abruptly on to the much higher shelf, where stand the pretty chalets of Lachhen, we were back again in a landscape of leafless trees, except for the conifers; the first touch of spring was just showing in the red of tree rhododendrons, the waxy white blooms of magnolias, and the mauve of primulas dotted over the brown turf. When we reached the glacier, after a brief stay in the village, we had taken the final step back into a wintry snowbound world.



It should be noted that only the principal mountain chains have been indicated; most of the shown, however, is mountainous.

Lachhen stands on a minor caravan route leading into Sikkim from Tibet, which has been followed by several Everest expeditions. The Zemu torrent, which feeds the Tista with the drainage of a huge group of snow mountains, culminating in the gigantic massif of Kangchhendzŏnga, comes out some two miles beyond the village, which thus occupies a strategic position on the path of parties intent on climbing in these parts. The villagers, who provide a good deal of the porterage, are well aware of their power to hold the climbers up to ransom; they do it with some show of rustic cunning, though quite good-humouredly. Their idea is to try to spin out the stages between Lachhen and the proposed Base Camp so that they, being paid not by distance but by the day, may reap the maximum profit. It is necessary to be wary when making an agreement with them and to drive a keen bargain oneself, if possible laying down beforehand what stages will be officially recognized irrespective of the time taken. Lachhenpas can be astonishingly quick when there is nothing extra to be gained by being dilatory; when about their own business they cover great distances at a remarkable speed, carrying superhuman loads, and never resting till they have reached the other end, when they let themselves relax. These people are all born pleaders. They will talk interminably before they accept your terms, but once an agreement has been made, they will not try to violate it; for they are not educated to the ways of the great outer world and have yet to learn that one can always find a loop-hole for wriggling out of one's pledges.

Lachhen runs its affairs on a curious semi-communistic basis. Property is privately owned; but all take their share of work that affects the village as a whole. Rules have been made which aim at preventing one family from getting an unfair advantage over the others by such means as an early sowing, or a reaping of the crops before the date laid down by the commune, which meets to debate in the *agora* on the edge of the village. Regulations having this end in view are often enforced with unimaginative rigidity, not taking into account whether a field faces the sun or has a different kind of soil. Madame David-Neel, who spent several years near Lachhen, tells some amusing stories of how the principle is apt to be interpreted. She was herself nearly forced to accept a whole pack of hounds, because a family which sold her one dog; was considered, by

so doing, to have tried to steal a march on its neighbours.

The headman, recognized by Government, is the person who acts as go-between for strangers. At the time of our visit, he was an obliging and intelligent man in the early thirties, who had been to school in Gangtok and could speak, and even write, a little English. As spokesman for his people, he always tried to obtain for them the most advantageous terms; but he also saw to it that his part of the bargain was faithfully carried out.

One morning he presented himself at the rest-house and asked to see the doctor. He wished to be overhauled, for he was suffering from an annoying complaint, and another medical man whom he had consulted had shown himself incapable of prescribing a remedy. Whenever he drank a lot of brandy, so he said, his eyes began to water; but the other doctor had suggested nothing more helpful than that he should in future abstain from taking brandy, an obviously impossible solution. He hoped that Dr. Roaf would give him a medicine to stop the flow of tears without interfering with other paramount interests!

Above the village there stood a small monastery, of not more than twenty lamas, which nevertheless had acquired considerable fame through its abbot, a most remarkable man, who styled himself the Lachhen hermit. He occupied a thatched cottage adjoining the temple and had gained his title by spending several years in meditation in mountain retreats. He was considered to have advanced very far on the road to Buddhahood.

We naturally felt a wish to make his acquaintance, so we sent word to ask leave to come and pay our respects. When we arrived at the monastery, we were told to wait a few minutes as the abbot was not quite ready to see us. While we stood outside, several lamas rushed here and there in a feverish search for five chairs, considered indispensable to the proper reception of the party. After four stools had been carried into the abbot's room, a fifth one, a wicker armchair, was produced; but the door was too narrow to admit it. As the lamas struggled to force it through the entrance, I tried in vain to explain that so much trouble on our behalf was unnecessary. When once a Tibetan has made up his mind that politeness demands a certain course of action, no power on earth will

turn him from his purpose. The guest may be made to wait all night out in the cold, but that is preferable to insulting him.

When their frantic efforts to coax the armchair into the doorway proved fruitless, they turned their attention to the window. One young monk heaved vigorously from the outside while another pulled with all his strength from within. We feared that the whole cottage would collapse, but suddenly, with a crash, the armchair lurched through the window. In a second, agitation gave way to their normal bland demeanour, as we were smilingly ushered into the august presence.

We stepped into a dimly lit room, furnished with altar, lamps, scrolls and books. On a rug by the window, turned so that the disturbing rays of the sun should not fall directly on his face, a rather fat man in orange robes was seated, Buddha fashion. His face was broad, with twinkling, humorous eyes, his hair long and wispy; from his ears hung a pair of large gold rings. The great thickness of his neck was increased by a prominent goitre; the whole effect might have been comic but for the aura of power which seemed to radiate from his person, making one feel at once that here was no ordinary mortal. Actually, I have never looked on a more impressive face, despite its grotesqueness.

We presented a ceremonial scarf and were then invited to take our seats in strict hierarchical order, with myself in the armchair. After this there followed a brief and formal conversation, during which I asked him to be so kind as to bless the porters before we started up the Zemu. The abbot offered us some *arak*, or rice spirit; we were each served with a bowl of the liquid. I took a sip; it was the nearest thing to neat sulphuric acid that I have ever tasted and I spent the rest of the hour fiddling with my cup and pretending to sip it from time to time. I do not think that much of the precious fire-water was wasted, for no doubt all that remained in our bowls was afterwards carefully poured back into the bottle.

The stage was set for the blessing ceremony on the open space before the temple, where a high seat was installed for the abbot and facing it, five lower ones covered with small Tibetan rugs for us. The porters, both Lachhen men and our nucleus of Darjeeling Sherpas, gathered round, and then the hermit, attended by his lamas, mounted the dais. He was wearing on

his head a queer hat of papier mache, shaped rather like a top hat and secured under the chin with a string, which made him look even more peculiar.

Before the service began, offerings were presented on behalf of ourselves and our party. The porters gave him a white scarf, which is as indispensable in Tibetan social intercourse as a visiting-card in nineteenth-century England, and a silver coin, while I handed him a large *t'hanka* of the green Dolma, a divinity who plays a part analogous to that of the Blessed Virgin in the Christian religion. It had been sent to me from North China and we had brought it out to Sikkim in accordance with our policy of giving as presents only those things that would fit in with their surroundings and which would not be in danger of acting as " carriers " of the germs of Occidentalism. For gifts to temples I had brought three such scroll-pictures and two silver lamps made in Greece over a century ago; for highly-placed personages there were rings and a pendant made by my goldsmith brother. We had, besides, a number of semi-precious stones, unset, such as garnets and amethysts, cornelians and lapis lazuli; these were suitable for persons of medium status, while for people of higher rank we had reserved a few aquamarines and tourmalines.

Stones, being endowed with an intrinsic beauty that cannot be affected by time or fashion, are made to fit into any cultural scheme, ancient or modern. In presenting them, we fulfilled two aims, for the recipients were likely to entrust the setting of the stones to a local craftsman, thereby lending practical support to his art. For people of lower rank I considered it harmless to give certain manufactured articles such as plain knives or packets of needles; but for such presents I relied chiefly on Chinese glass beads, which, though cheap, were traditional objects free from the deadly uniformity of machine-made articles.

For those who care to follow this principle, the choice of presents becomes a simple one. For instance, an ambassador, if he also took unset stones, could grade them so as to suit every rank from the highest downwards. To the Sovereign a diamond, to a Minister an emerald, to a local governor an opal and so on. It is easy to be thoughtless and play the part of a tempter, offering things which will help to corrupt people's taste by playing on their mere love of novelty. In ancient times,

when the products of every country were more or less artistic, such precautions were needless: indeed, quite the contrary, for the exchange of artistic products between nations was a means of mutually stimulating their creative instincts. But now, it is different, and most of our present day "art products" are unfit to represent England's taste. Their introduction into a society whose artistic taste is uncorrupted is dangerous. The precious stones furnish an easy solution of the problem and their influence cannot but work in the right direction.

The abbot's benediction differed entirely from that of the lama who officiated for us at Harsil in 1933. The Lachhen prelate remained seated throughout, and let us file up one by one to receive from him a few drops of a strange decoction. We sprinkled our hands with it and sniffed a little up our noses, after which he gave us an equally mysterious pill to swallow. Then, to the accompaniment of an invocation, rice grains were thrown up into the air and the service concluded with a distribution to everyone of small muslin scarves, knotted in a peculiar manner by the abbot himself. As he handed out each one, he said: "May your stay in the mountains be happy."

Rather late on our last evening, I wandered out alone by the path that led to the entrance of the Zemu valley; the others were still busy packing. As I was returning homewards I saw a pathetic sight. Two men were approaching from the side of the village, weighed down by bulky burdens, at least eighty pounds each. One of them walked ahead at a brisk pace and the second, who was blind and tied to him by two bits of string, arm to arm, followed without hesitation over the irregular ground. "Where are you bound for?" I stopped to ask. "We are going over the Kongra pass to Kampa Dzong"—that is, over a pass 17,000 feet high across the mountains at a season when snow was still lying quite deep! "Alas," cried the blind man, "woe is me; for twelve years I have not seen the light. Who is there to take pity on me?" I felt much affected, but could think of nothing to say. I saluted them and had moved off a few paces, when I suddenly recalled a story in Madame David-Neel's book about her famous journey to Lhasa. She tells how she met a dying man by the roadside and found a way of comforting him. I turned and ran after the pair, who were walking away rapidly. I nudged the



LACHHEN



EARLY SPRING IN ZEMU VALLEY

leading man's arm and he turned round in surprise. "Listen, friend," I said, "to the possessor of the eye of the doctrine there is no darkness. In the Western Paradise of the Buddha who is named Boundless Light the sun shall rise for you once again." A flash of joy chased the blank despair for a moment from the blind man's face, while his comrade thanked me with a touching look of gratitude.

Next day the whole party set out by the same path on which I had met the blind man. Before we had gone a mile I noticed that the Lachhenpas were walking badly, advancing a hundred yards at excessive speed and then putting down their loads and starting to gossip. The symptoms were unmistakable: I saw the ghosts of the troublesome porters at Gangotri rising again. But this time I was no longer a raw hand. If they were working for a prolongation of marching time in order to earn more days' pay, we could manœuvre for position too. One thing to do was to pick out the willing elements and play them against the Bolshevists, and another, to anticipate intended halts and rush the men quickly past attractive camping-sites on to ground where a stop was not so alluring. At each inviting spot I was ready for them and managed to hustle a few beyond it, without betraying my feelings. The men were argumentative but friendly and often a jest was enough to keep them on the move.

There was one young porter, with a very droll expression, who was conspicuous for his strength, speed and reliability, a fellow who gave no trouble and was a pattern to the others. "What's his name?" I asked. "Oh! he's a loony, soft in the head!" I was told: actually he was slightly sub-normal. Of course our Sherpas were always entirely dependable; but they tended to forge ahead too fast for the force of their example to influence the others.

Our three days' trek to the Zemu passed off quite satisfactorily in the end, though it required constant vigilance to control the troublesome elements among the porters. In the evenings, the leading Bolshevists used to harangue us eloquently on the scarcity of camping-grounds and fuel for the next day; we countered this by proposing an exceptionally distant place as the end of the following march, in language no less rhetorical. This little game was played without ill-feeling and the compromises that we reached worked out about right.

In the end we became fast friends. The Lachhenpas liked us to sit at their camp-fires while they played dice. Each man had his " system " : one would shake the dice-bowl in a special way, another would shout out some luck-bringing ejaculation, and a third would bang down the dice on the cloth with a whoop. Most Tibetans love games of chance. On rest-days, whether it stayed fine or whether it rained, the porters spent their entire time, from early morning till far into the night, with little piles of coins by their side or chips of wood for counters, passing the dice-bowl round, shouting and laughing, but never quarrelsome. I found that if any petty dispute among porters did arise, it could usually be settled by an appeal to their sporting instinct. An award based on drawing lots or tossing up was invariably found satisfactory by all parties.

Bits of cast-off property which they coveted were much enhanced in value for them if they could be won in a competition. After we reached Base Camp a few empty boxes with padlocks were raffled. All the names were put down on a list and numbered. Then the numbers were written on slips of paper, which were folded and mixed, with much solemnity, in my own hat. Then came the draw, carried out by the youngest Lachhenpa, a handsome youth dressed in lovely red cloth woven for him by his mother. Fortune is ever unjust and takes no stock of virtue. We were hoping that some of the prizes would fall to our faithful Sherpas, but nearly everything went to the Lachhen men; the leading malcontent—the man we knew as the Kommissar—getting first prize, and the next in order of truculence, the second. The only compensation was that one prize fell to the " softie."

The Zemu valley is richly wooded with conifers and mixed rhododendron scrub. In April the tall red variety is flowering: to see the vast number of smaller kinds one must wait till the end of May. On our upward journey we found great snow-drifts lying on the path under the trees; the picture which they made only wanted the addition of a wolf to transport us into the middle of a Russian fairy-tale. Underfoot the ground was often quite hidden by masses of primroses, like English ones, except that they were mauve instead of yellow.

Trees ceased near the snout of the glacier. Beyond that point the whole country lay under snow and at night it was

very cold. We followed a trough between the left moraine and the mountainside, making for the " Green Lake " where former parties had camped, opposite the side glacier coming down from Simvu, the mountain that we wished to attempt. In the end, however, we chose another spot about three miles lower down, a sheltered bay that caught all the sun, where a patch of grass had already been thawed clear of snow. The Lachhen men then left us, promising to return when the camp had finally to be struck. We kept on five Sherpas and our old friends Odsung and Djun Singh who had been with us in Garhwal days. We had only intended to retain four of the Sherpas, but one man, called Ang Babu, had so set his mind on going up the mountain with us that we had not the heart to send him away. He turned out to be the keenest of them all. He had a monkey-house face, an asset in his chosen rôle of professional humorist; he kept everyone continually amused with his sallies. At the second camp on Simvu, when we were all feeling fagged after a carry up bad snow, he set to work immediately on arrival and modelled a large snow elephant and then rolled on it, squashing it flat, and pulling a face that set us all laughing helplessly. At the end of the expedition he was rewarded with the gift of a fine ice-axe.

Weather favoured us for the first few days on the Zemu, which were spent in finding out the lie of the land and in surveying routes up Simvu from neighbouring heights. Two lesser points on the left bank of the glacier were climbed, one evidently a Bavarian peak, judging by the neat masonry of the cairn found on the top, suggestive of German thoroughness. The other peak was new (Point 19,420 feet) and consisted of a pleasant rock-ridge, giving out on to a rounded cap of pure ice, with a diminutive crevasse right on the very top. We felt in a hopeful frame of mind, for acclimatization seemed to be proceeding satisfactorily for everyone; this was proved by the absence of signs of distress when walking up to 18-19,000 feet and confirmed by certain tests carried out by the doctor. He was constantly prowling round, in search of material for his experiments, and one never quite knew what moment he would choose to make a sudden raid for blood, so innocent was his air as he approached, holding his needle out of sight till he judged the moment ripe for springing upon his victim. In the evenings we used to sit round huge fires of juniper, and amuse ourselves

devising ways of varying the diet with new dishes. Camp cooking may have its limitations, but it is surprising what a little ingenuity will do. There is, for instance, an expensive sweet called Zabaglione, originating, I believe, from Sicily, which, on one's extravagant days, can be ordered in Italian restaurants in London. I once casually asked a waiter how it was made. It requires nothing but eggs, sugar and a little Marsala. It suddenly occurred to me that it would be an easy camp dish; for we had all the necessary ingredients, excepting the wine, which we replaced with brandy. It proved quite simple to make and was acclaimed a great success.

Optimism about the weather turned out to have been premature. After a week, when we were just thinking of making a move towards our mountain, the wind changed its quarter and blue skies disappeared behind blankets of grey mist; this was followed by snow soon after midday, which drove us under cover. Late at night the sky cleared again and hopes revived; but next day brought the same order of changes, and the next day after that; and so it continued, till we began to lose count of the days, and passed from a mood of chafing to one of blank resignation. The only useful work that could be done was carrying stores across the glacier and making a dump on the moraine that led up towards Simvu. After that there was nothing to do but be patient and reflect that if this was purgatory, the Everest party on the other side of the mountains must be having hell—a doubtful consolation for us, even if the bazaar had been right in accusing them of having brought the bad weather.

A protracted period of waiting is trying for the nerves, especially in the case of people of athletic temperament, who are bubbling over with energy. As day after day passed with the same tedious routine of early morning sun, followed by mist and then snow all the afternoon, ending in a tantalizingly clear spell after eight o'clock at night, everyone began to feel the strain of inactivity, which translated itself into a curious sense of guilt, as if we ourselves somehow were to blame for the delay. Our company was an extremely good-tempered one; but a similar experience in a large, ill-assorted party, must be most unpleasant.

One morning, we had just finished breakfast and were settling down to yet another wasted day, when suddenly we



FIRST BREAKFAST ON THE ZEMU GLACIER
Simolchu in the background



FIRST CAMP ON SIMVU

noticed that something unusual was happening to the mist across the glacier. A rift opened in the clouds and the graceful Gothic pinnacles and flutings of cathedral-like Siniolchu appeared, glistening against an azure background, a sight which, at that hour of the day, had long been denied us. Then in ten minutes, as if under the stroke of an enchanter's wand, the mists dissolved into nothingness and on every side the peaks stood out clear and sharp against the sunlight. We leaped up, galvanized into instant action. Orders were shouted, lists hastily consulted, kit was packed, and in less than a couple of hours we were ready to start. The porters, in their green windproofs, gathered round a big boulder outside the camp before shouldering their packs and kindled their ritual fire, on which they piled branches of juniper and sweet-smelling azalea, with shouts of "*Hla gyaló!*" (The Gods conquer!).

I do not propose to give a lengthy description of our attempt on Simvu, nor to tell how we worked our way up the great snow-slopes towards our ridge. Successions of camps, numbered or lettered, are familiar to readers of climbing books. Their unavoidable repetition can only be compensated by the conquest of the peak. When that is not achieved, it is wiser to cut short that part of the story.

We spent ten days on the mountain, and established three camps, the highest being placed at about 20,000 feet close to the foot of the north-east ridge. The promise of good conditions on the day we started was not fulfilled, and we reverted to a slightly improved version of the previous weather. The mornings were usually sunny till about eleven; then mists began to swirl over from the south, followed by a cold wind which brought snow in the early afternoon. Thus every day counted but half its normal length in climbing hours, and this made upward progress extremely slow.

Except on the crest of the ridge itself we never touched good snow. It was always quite soft, even early in the day, so that the carrying of loads and the kicking of steps was a laborious business. We often used to sink up to our thighs in the snow and a good deal of care was required to keep clear of hidden crevasses, for when sounding with an axe one could rarely touch bottom even on safe ground.

From the Upper Simvu Saddle, where we established our principal depot, we saw through gaps in the mist, an over-

whelming panorama of peaks, culminating in the monstrous mass of Kangchhendzönga. Only to the south, across the steamy Talung valley, source of the bad weather, a sea of trees extended as far as the eye could reach; we knew that it only ended at Siliguri, on the edge of the Bengal plain, where passengers for Darjeeling were even then sitting in the station restaurant consuming their coffee and bacon and eggs. Looking back, we had before us the terrifying Talung face of Siniolchu. It looked a most inaccessible mountain and it was a great surprise to hear, in the autumn of 1936, that it had actually been climbed, by a dangerous route from the Zemu side, by that most dashing of parties, Paul Bauer and his Bavarians. The men who climbed Siniolchu certainly earned their glory.

But there was something else which, in the clear hour after daybreak, drew our gaze even more than that icy spire. To the left of it, through a distant gap in the mountains, we could just make out lines of rolling purple hills, that seemed to belong to another world, a world of austere calm, of deserted plateaux and colourful downs, which made the snowy Himalaya seem strangely young and assertive. It was a corner of Tibet. My eyes rested on it with an intensity of longing. I sometimes wonder whether I shall ever be privileged to approach the vision any closer. Tibet is well guarded, as it should be. The issue still lies on the knees of the gods, and what is still more formidable, on the knees of the officials of two Governments, who do not always find it easy to distinguish between the genuine seeker after knowledge, and the charlatan or the sensation-monger intent on "getting into Tibet", merely because of its reputation as a closed and mysterious land. I continue to hope; but it must not be forgotten that even Moses was not permitted to set foot in the Promised Land. He got no nearer than a glimpse, as he lay dying, from the summit of Nebo.

The final assault on our peak occupied two days. First we tried a side of the ridge from a point about 400 feet above our highest camp, where a steeply inclined snow-slope led through a breach in the formidable ice defences which ring the mountain. Had the surface of this slope been hard, it would certainly have led us out on to the higher part of the ridge; but it was found to consist of shallow rotten snow, adhering precariously to a substructure of pure ice, and ready to avalanche at the slightest provocation. We pushed on as far as we could;

but eventually even the most daring among us voted emphatically for retreat.

Early next morning we explored another line of weakness, a similar slope starting level with the camp, but it was no safer. One can deal with pure ice if one has time enough, but that disintegrating film of snow, ready to part company with its glassy base at any moment, was more than nerves could stand. We proceeded to work along the bottom of a quite vertical curtain of ice cliffs, of the purest white and conspicuously layered, till we came to the very steep nose of the ridge, which fell away into hazy depths that looked bottomless. I happened to be walking behind when I heard a shout: "Come on quickly! We've found the passage!" I rounded the corner of the cliff and saw that we were close to a comparatively short ice-slope, free from snow, which joined the crest. Everyone put on spiked crampons and I led out on to the ice.

We had often, in Switzerland, spent off-days practising making steps up and down the steep pinnacles of glaciers; but we had never yet been called upon to tackle ice at such a steep angle on an actual mountain. I still remember that slope as one of the most exhilarating bits of climbing of my life. I worked my way in a wide zigzag, out over the abyss, into which the ice-chips went sliding down with a silvery tinkle. I graded my steps with the same unhurried precision that I would have shown on a purely experimental pitch. Not having specially strong arms, I did not try to cut fast, but I was glad to note that accurate aim, with its consequent economy of strokes, was resulting in sufficiently speedy progress. Our long enforced spell of idleness at the Base Camp had brought about a very complete acclimatization, and we felt a mastery over our movements, without any greater strain than we would have experienced on a Swiss peak. Having cut a long course to the right, I returned on the left tack and suddenly felt the dancing resiliency of the ice give place to a dull "plop," as the head of my axe buried itself in snow. A few steps higher and I stood on the ridge and had plunged the stem of the axe into firm, deep snow. Attached to it by a loop of the rope, I was in a position to hold a whole party. Everyone followed up speedily and then unroped, for before us the ridge extended upwards broad and easy. We felt that the first trying obstacle was behind us, and that we could relax a little before tackling the summit ridge

some 1,000 feet ahead, which, though it looked jagged, did not suggest insurmountable resistance.

We sat down to lunch in a hollow. Then, without roping, we advanced once more over the next bump. To our amazement we found that we were gazing down into a huge gulf. A crevasse, as broad and deep as a castle moat, cut off all communication between our part of the ridge and its continuation. Up and down its lip we walked, looking for a bridge, but the harsh truth was not to be charmed away: the upper part of the mountain was cut off from us. It was the very ease of that middle portion of ridge which had been our undoing. On a narrow ridge such a split would not have appeared. Simvu is a mountain where it is difficult to discover even a speck of bare rock, and its huge massif lies buried under a thick ice-cap, which has overrun every rock, like icing squeezed out by the hand of a giant maker of cakes. On the gentler portions of its ridges, splits in the ice occur, though not deep enough to expose the rock foundation.

We had no alternative but to retreat. The situation was rather comic: there was no arguing with stark impossibility. We descended to the head of the ice-staircase and only took a few minutes to reach the lower slopes again. As we drew near the camp, the first flakes, harbingers of the usual blizzard, began to eddy round us. The rest of the day had to be spent in our sleeping-bags.

That night we were troubled by ghostly visitations. In the small hours, occupants of both tents overheard voices outside and wondered dreamily why their friends had chosen that peculiar moment to go out, or whether it was the porters who had returned. Comparing notes next day, we found that everyone was agreed upon the facts, but the cause remained a riddle.

About 5 a.m. the tents were shaken by a tremor, to the accompaniment of a weird rumbling noise, like a small earthquake. We ran out and found that a crevasse, which we had noticed as a thin crack some thirty yards below the camp, was gaping wide; its opening had cast up the snow along its margin like a row of molehills.

A day sufficed to clear the upper camp and to descend to the Zemu. Tufts of a tiny mauve azalea, the first moraine plant to open to the sun, caught our eye from afar, by sheer brilliance

and purity of colour. The spring—and the monsoon—were at hand. That same night we crossed to the Base Camp and celebrated our defeat by lighting the plum pudding, a festivity to which the Sherpas were also invited. We hid a rupee in it and there was great excitement when one of the porters unearthed it from his slice. The honest fellow, doubting his luck, came round after supper to ask if he was expected to return it.

Had more time been available we should have continued climbing on other peaks; but the weather was showing by unmistakable signs that the season of rains was beginning. Word was therefore sent down to Lachhen to arrange for the collecting of our baggage, while we and the Sherpas, carrying what we needed for a few days, enjoyed a brief rest at Tset'hang, a beautiful clearing in the Zemu forest.

Sikkim at the end of May is famous for its rhododendrons. They are of every conceivable size and colour, from tiny white or purple varieties found above the tree line, to showy bushes covered with huge tufts of blossoms, which make up the tangled undergrowth of the woods, and colour the slopes mauve and white or, most wonderful of all, yellow. On the way down from the snout of the glacier we kept discovering fresh species. For variety, the primulas almost equalled them; there were mauve ones, and deep purple, and yellow ones on all the grassy banks. Blue *Meconopsis* poppies were also at their best, but the great yellow poppy which we had been hoping to see was not yet out and only showed as a rosette of leaves. In the forest, festoons of white clematis bound tree to tree.

At Tset'hang we parted company from two of our friends, Cooke and Chapman, who were intending to go up north into the Lhonak valley and continue climbing. They were joined there by a third friend and, in spite of poor weather, managed, among other things, to make the first ascent of the difficult Fluted Peak.

The last few miles before Lachhen brought changes again in the plants. Among the new kinds of rhododendrons, there was one of a fiery scarlet with flowers hanging down like bells. Another species, in its efforts to evade the competition of its neighbours, had ingeniously made its home forty feet above ground, as an epiphyte on old and mossy pine trees, which it adorned with bunches of snow-white flowers. There was an orchid also, on the same pines, called *Pleione*, tinged with a

delicate mauve. Bushes of orange azalea flamed round the entrance to the torrent valley.

Sikkim hills in rhododendron-time deserve the epigram which the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan wrote over the gate of his palace :—

"If there be a Heaven on Earth, it is here, it is here!"

CHAPTER XI

The Round of Existence

PERHAPS our defeat on Simvu was symbolical. We climbed no more peaks of ice and snow on our travels, for we were led into a different world. We became pilgrims of the Tibetan Buddhist Tradition; but before I tell of these adventures of the mind, it is necessary to explain a few fundamental teachings of the Doctrine, so that those who read of our journeyings may realize the nature of the quest, and may share in the treasures that are to be found along the Path.

None of the great Traditions can be enclosed within the narrow framework of a school of philosophy. Nor ought an explanation to be over-simplified in the vain hope of bringing it within the effortless comprehension of all men; facile diffusion of an idea can only be achieved to the detriment of its purity. It is not for the Doctrine to abase itself to the common level, but for those who can, to exalt themselves to its height. That is why a doctrine spread by organized propaganda is liable to be reduced to a hollow shell, empty of the essentials. The Truth may be likened to a difficult mountain peak which, though free of access to all mankind, is yet actually scaled by a chosen few, by those who are willing to pay the price in self-discipline, steadfastness and risk. Though it is no one's private preserve and all have an equal right to possess it, yet all do not attain it simultaneously, for there are those who feel no urge to seek, and those who suffer from vacillation, doubting whether the quest is worth the trouble. Others again must measure painfully every step on the Path, inch by inch, over an indefinitely protracted period of effort. A few rare souls find it possible, like Mila Repa, by supreme concentration, to compress into one, the several stages which ordinary flesh and blood must needs take successively. That road is known to the Tibetans

as the "Direct Path"; but it is not for faint hearts to think of braving its perils.

It is therefore not without misgiving that I have decided to include the present chapter; for I may, in spite of these warnings, be luring someone into rash generalizations, not warranted by these gleanings from my own elementary knowledge. Nevertheless, it seems imperative for me to try to clear up certain basic ideas; otherwise many of the illuminating talks which I had with lamas may not be fully understood, since terms will have to be used and references made, which are unfamiliar to the reader, though common knowledge among educated Tibetans. More than that, there is no phase of Tibetan life which is not pervaded by the subtle influence of the Doctrine, as by an ether; the whole Tibetan picture must be viewed in that light for it to become intelligible. What I wish to do for my reader is to help him to place himself, as far as possible, at the same viewpoint as a Tibetan, so that allusions to the traditional doctrines, whether explicitly made or only implied, may not fall on his ears as on those of a merely curious stranger.

One minor point must be stressed. It should be understood that I have had no first-hand contact with Buddhism except in its Tibetan form. When I speak of the Doctrine I mean the tradition that has come down through the Lamas. Of other schools, such as the Southern School of Ceylon, I know little, and that little is taken from books.

It is not unusual for European writers to reproach the Northern School, which includes Japan and China as well as Tibet, with being "impure," because it has admitted elements borrowed from other traditions. The Tibetans have been greatly beholden to Shivaite Hinduism; it is from there that the Tantrik doctrines, a favourite target for obloquy, derive. Students who approach every question mainly from a historical angle, are given to overstressing the importance of "primitiveness" in estimating the authority of a doctrine. If doubt is cast on the antiquity or on the exact authorship of a certain saying, its claim to embody authentic teachings is thereby held to have been exploded. Historical research can assuredly throw useful light on the background against which the teachings were unfolded; but it can never furnish the test by which their authority stands or falls. The origin of a doctrine

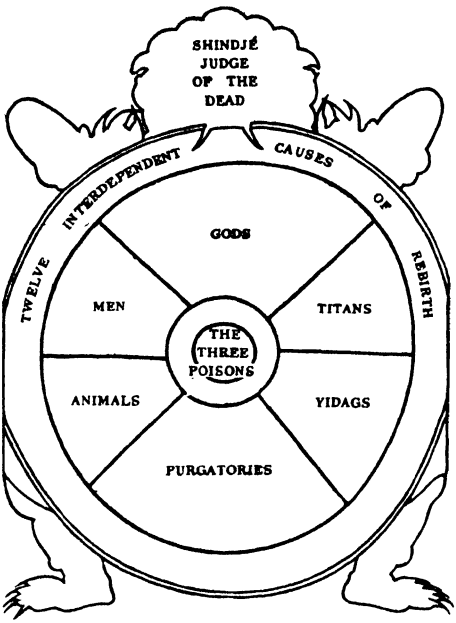
or the historical personality of its author, are trifling matters compared with its truth.

If some of the profound metaphysical teachings of the Tibetan Tradition are, in fact, traceable to a Hindu origin, that in no wise invalidates them. The power of drawing on any and every source for the illustration of the Doctrine, and of pressing the most unlikely tools into its service, constitutes the " Note " of Catholicity, which unites all the authentic Traditions. However widely separated their view-points, there resides, under what, at a superficial glance, seem like irreconcilable differences, an underlying metaphysical core, which is allowed to clothe itself at will in whatever guise best suits its immediate purposes, without yielding up one jot of its reality or one tittle of authority. This Note of Catholicity, though not absent either from Christianity or Islam, has frequently been obscured there, because the strictly religious form of those Traditions, suited to the temperaments of their peoples, inclined men to stress external dissimilarities and to overlook points of likeness, and in general to cultivate a warlike mentality that found its external satisfaction in " the Crusade " or " Holy War "; though this idea is capable of being applied in a more interior sense as well. In the middle and farther East, on the contrary, purely metaphysical doctrines, unclothed in the special religious form, have prevailed. Such doctrines have flourished in their most untrammelled and intellectual mode in the Traditions of Hinduism and Tibet and China and their influence has filtered through into every corner of those civilizations.

I have already made several allusions to the Round or Wheel of Existence. Facing page 146 is a picture of the conventional representation of this doctrine, as one sees it in the porch of every Tibetan temple. It is said to have been first drawn by the Buddha Himself in rice grains on the ground, and it was one of the very earliest lessons that He communicated to His disciples. As each detail composing it is mentioned, it will be found helpful to refer to the picture. It is essential to familiarize oneself with this fundamental theme.

The Wheel consists of a circle subdivided into six sectors, with a small concentric circle in the centre and another of wider diameter outside, so that a continuous border runs round the main circle. The whole is a diagrammatic scheme of the principle of multiple states of finite Being. Existence is not

conceived as a single episode in Time, affecting a basically fixed individuality, and finally determining the future status of the being concerned. It is viewed as a connected series of changes, a continual passage from one state into the next, without a single one of the participating elements remaining exempt from modification. Man is but one of an indefinite number of states of Being. His earthly life is but one episode among many others. No special importance distinguishes the human state from the others, though it is legitimate to treat it as a mean from man's own point of view, seeing that he is located therein by definition and cannot escape viewing all other beings in relation to it. Therefore it is just for us, and for us only, to call any other being which, compared to Man, is less limited in its possibilities "superior," just as the converse holds good for "inferior" beings which, in comparison with Man, are hedged in by narrower limitations. Thus a passing into one of the former or higher states may also be called an ascendant movement, while the exchanging of the human state for one of the lower degrees can be described as an obscuration or fall.

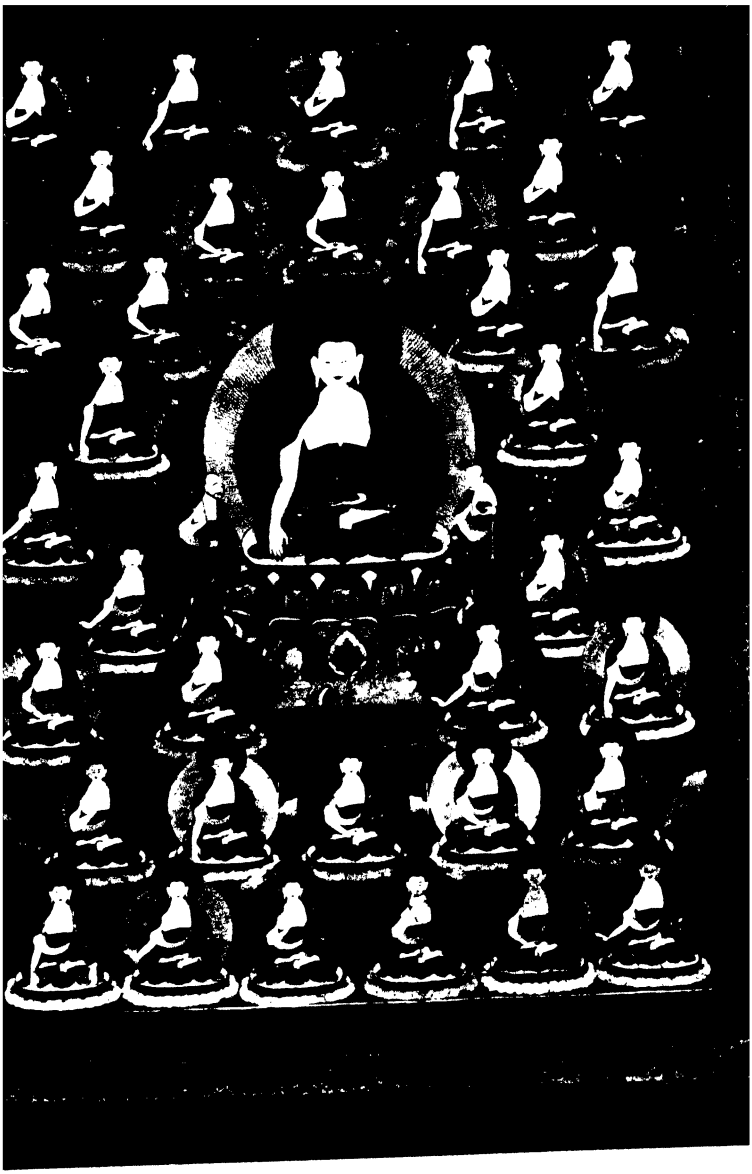


THE ROUND OF EXISTENCE

The agent which keeps the Round moving, and rings the changes between various states of Existence, is the force of Action. Its well-known Indian name of *Karman* means nothing else; it is wrong to translate it as Law of Cause and Effect, or Fate, though the two notions are closely connected. It is the play of complex activities which introduces the inces-



THE ROUND OF EXISTENCE



ASSEMBLY OF BUDDHAS
Every gesture has a symbolical meaning

sant modifications into every being and it is legitimate to say that no existence preserves its identity for two successive moments: change in one part entails corresponding variations in all the others. There is nothing but ebb and flow, continual reshuffling of the cards, continual Becoming.

A circle is well chosen as the symbol of this unending process. The Wheel is a misnomer, for when a wheel turns it is as one solid whole, whereas in the Round it is the contents which remain in motion, a tangle of orbits entering at every moment into new permutations, as the Existences, planet-like, collide, split, cohere, grow or dissolve. A whirlpool is perhaps the best simile of any.

The Round is described as of indefinite extension, reaching backward into the impenetrable dimness of the past and, in default of Liberation—that is, of an interruption in the Action which provides the motive power—extending equally relentlessly into the future. It is too early to discuss Liberation, the one exception. As the Round includes the state of existence in which we are situated ourselves here and now, it calls for detailed consideration before we turn our attention elsewhere.

The flux of endless change involves each being in accessions of strength and onsettings of weakness, entries into stages marked enough to receive a new name, and exits from previous states; these are what we call youth and age, birth and death. They are signposts, imaginary but convenient points of division in a process that, nevertheless, remains fluid and uninterrupted. So we live out our lives, as corks, playthings of the waves on the ocean of Activity, or as pebbles ground against one another under the poundings and buffetings of the eternal tide.

We must now consider Action under some of its aspects. It comprises a great deal more than the manifestations that we normally call acts, attributable to beings in virtue of their individual existence. First there is Cosmic Activity, the sum total of effects (themselves already on the way to becoming new Causes) of all the Causes that have occurred throughout the Universe. These include effects of Will, recognizable as such, and the interplay of inanimate forces. Then there is Localized Action, bound up with the conditions that prevail in any subdivision of the Universe considered separately. There is also

Racial Action, the united causes and effects definable as Heredity. Finally there is Personal Action, individual acts and thoughts, with their chains of results. Any one of the many series of causes and effects can be discussed in isolation; but in reality they are all contributors to the General or Cosmic Activity and have no proper existence outside it.

The effects of Action on a given being may be direct, or indirect and produced by unsuspected causes at the other extremity of the world. No series develops in a continuous line like a bundle of endlessly extensile threads: it forms part of a network, throwing out filaments and gathering them in from all directions, beyond hope of unravelling.

Every activity is the result of previous activity, or activities, and bears in it the seeds of future ones. This is one of the fundamental postulates of the Buddhists, summed up in the sentence:—"Every effect springs from a cause." Creation, if taken in the sense of something expressly fashioned out of nothing by a Divine decree, is foreign to their ideas. "What is not now was not before, what was not before is not now." They will admit indefinite combinations and dissociations, changes advantageous or harmful, simplifications or increases of complexity, in the stream of cause and effect. All that is, whatever its nature, can be referred back to causes in the indefinite past and points forward to effects in the indefinite future. It follows from this, that nothing can fail to produce some effect or other, since the merest thought, devoid of observable results, does introduce instant and inescapable modifications in the general Activity of the whole world. This doctrine will be found to have important ethical implications, since it does away with the possibility of a totally ineffective action. No right action, however Quixotic it may seem, can be called useless; no foolish action can be excused as harmless. Every activity, be it the most trivial or apparently purposeless, sets in motion, as cause, a new series of effects, which even if they are incalculable to us, are none the less strictly determined.

If the Round depends on Action, Action viewed as a whole is the product of Desire. Every being, even the most inert, must be credited with some form of Will. Attachment or repulsion, which are the same thing viewed under two aspects, are inherent to all existence. Volition may be conscious or reflex or so faintly energetic as hardly to be recognizable for Will; but

some response to the impacts of other Existences is there all the same. In a conscious being, attachment is the aspiration after pleasant experience and its repetition, repulsion the avoidance of the unpleasant and of its recurrence. Each attempt to catch and hold and repeat the former produces a new chain of Action; so does every endeavour to change painful or disadvantageous experience: and so the Round goes on turning.

But the argument can be carried back another stage. What is it that prompts Desire or Attachment? That is declared to be none other than Ignorance, the want of realization of what things really are and how they really work. If the search for the pleasant and the shunning of the disagreeable only results in going round in a circle, if the action planned to that end as a result of those desires, is not, in fact, calculated to yield the results aimed at, then that action of seeking and shunning is unreasonable, based upon false information, on a failure to fathom the mechanism of the Universe. It deserves the epithet "ignorant." Were true Knowledge to be present, assuredly a totally different method would have to be followed and with quite different ends in view. No one, in that case, would go on doing exactly those things which were bound to perpetuate his wandering in the Round; he would devote his energies rather to *Undoing*. Therefore so long as Ignorance, unawareness of the true constitution of the World and of oneself, persists, so long must be postponed any hope of breaking the Vicious Circle. Obstinate attempts to cure disastrous Activity by still more Activity, Desire by fresh Desire, are as futile as the babblings of those who would make War to end War or cast out devils in the name of Beelzebub.

"By Action men enjoy happiness," says the book called *Great Liberation*, "and by Action again they suffer pain. They are born, they live, and they die slaves of Action . . . As a man is bound, be it by a gold or an iron chain, so he is bound by his Action, be it good or evil." It must never be forgotten that the Action referred to is always united to some degree of Ignorance. Everything can be changed by real Knowledge.

Activity and War have something in common; both are largely remedial in intention. If there is nothing to be set to rights, no livelihood to be gained, no want to be supplied, no loss to be made up, then there can be no incentive towards

action, even the most creative and altruistic action. The fiddle that is guaranteed to play eternally in tune, does not require any turning of pegs. Peace or Harmony belongs to Non-activity. The cessation of action will result in peace: but how is such a pacification to be brought to pass? So long as Ignorance is still there, it must remain a dream; there is no cheating the inexorable law inherent in the very nature of things. Ignorance, teeming womb of Desire and Action, supplies the power which keeps the wheels turning, as in a factory where the machinery must never be allowed to stop day or night. All else depends on this: were Ignorance to be interrupted for a second, the Round would automatically come to rest.

The world passeth away and the lust thereof.

We must now return to the examination of the diagram of the Round of Existence. We have already noticed that there are six compartments, corresponding to six groupings or classes of beings. The number is arbitrary: it should really be indefinite, for they merge into one another imperceptibly; the classification is a mere matter of convenience, a symbol. Attention must be drawn to one omission. All the six classes that we are about to name can be termed Animate beings. Ought not inanimate existences such as stones or air to occupy a class also? Logically speaking they should, for no sharp boundary is really admissible; but those who devised this symbolism for popular use, like their colleagues of other faiths, gave most of their attention to those beings that showed affinity with the human, and treated all that was inorganic, and even plants, as so much furniture. Nevertheless, they ought to recognize the omission; though I once had difficulty in persuading a lama to admit that plants were alive in the same way as animals. This slight crudeness is in the symbolism, not in the theory. That the more profound thinkers were in no two minds about the essential Oneness of everything, can be proved by a quotation from a Japanese sage who declared that "the very mountains can become Buddha."

The six classes are named respectively:—

1 Gods 2 Non-Gods or Titans	Higher than man
3 Man	

4 Animals
5 *Yidags* or tantalized ghosts
6 Tormented beings in the purgatories, including devils

lower than man

Popular belief which, all the world over, tends to a literal interpretation of the external symbol and to an overlooking of the principle symbolized, makes of these six classes so many closed realms, entered by successive individual rebirths. Similarly, it has read into the Universal law of Causality, a law of Retributive Justice and turned those effects which flow from Action as its unavoidable continuation—a fruit inherent in the seed—into so many moral sanctions punishing the wicked, and so many rewards, earned by the merits of the virtuous, on a basis of a strictly kept profit-and-loss account. This is the commonest attitude everywhere; but it need not imply that the symbolism fails in its purpose. As was said before, it is for those who can, to raise themselves to the heights of the Doctrine. Symbolism is the ladder and some may never climb farther than its lowest rungs. But the other rungs are all there, in proper succession, so that the climber may pass, according to capacity, from what is crudely external, through stages where the spiritual is half seen, till he rises to the height where the Doctrine dawns on him in its universal application.

For the ordinary man the abode of gods is a delightful kingdom into which suffering does not penetrate and where all wishes—and whims—will be gratified. Thousands pray for rebirth in that sphere and look no farther. They are content to enjoy its pleasures—while they last. As with us, the heavenly scene may be spiritualized or gross, according to each person's mental development; but in any case it is an *individual* enjoyment that is imagined, as in our own popular conceptions of Paradise—that is to say, an enjoyment which is the fruit of Desire and in which Ignorance continues to play its part. Such joys, therefore, contain all the elements that perpetuate the Round, which will, in due course, bring back change and pain.

A word should be said about the use of the name "gods," since it is liable to cause misunderstanding. The gods here referred to are not immortal and self-sufficient deities, but simply beings of an Order higher than ours, possessed of wider

powers than man's, such as longevity, unfading beauty, and freedom from pain, except at the last when they are about to cease from being gods and turn into something lower; for then their charms begin to wither and their fragrance turns to stench so foul, that their goddess-wives flee from their presence. Having set their minds on nothing but pleasure, and felt no incentive to listen to the Doctrine, their end is a miserable one. When they suddenly become aware of this, it is too late. Confused by the Ignorance which they have done nothing to diminish, they flounder helplessly and fall even into hell. "Many long-lived gods are fools," said a lama to me. One cannot help comparing this with *Paradise Lost*, where Milton makes Lucifer, after his fall, deteriorate by imperceptible degrees from a hero, still endowed with personal beauty, a noble address, and several of the conditional virtues such as courage, until he turns into Satan, repulsive, crafty, wholly evil. These changes are not punishments imposed on him by a sentence of the Divine Judge, so much as self-imposed consequences, fruits of his own wrong-headedness or, as the Buddhist would say, of his own Ignorance.

It would have saved some confusion if we could have called these gods "supermen" or "angels" or some such name. Technically speaking, they should have their full denomination of "Gods of the Round" (to worship whom is idolatry), to distinguish them from true Divinities, those who are free of the Round, Buddhas and high degrees on the road to Buddhahood. In common speech Tibetans employ the same word *Hla* to denote both kinds, leaving the context to explain itself.

Non-gods are another sort of supermen, more powerful than ourselves, but portrayed as warlike and ambitious, discontented with their many advantages because they envy the superior felicity of the gods. Titans is a good name for them.

Next comes mankind, occupying but a small number of places among the innumerable existences of the Round. Man, though he possesses no privilege over the others, is naturally of special interest to us as men. Likewise a cockroach, in drawing the Round, would doubtless have created a special class for cockroaches, probably including man in one of the other sections. Man is spoken of as an enviable state, and many are those whose aspirations do not go beyond a hope of rebirth in the world of men. It is claimed that man's life is, on the whole, a fairly

happy blend of joy and pain: not enough joy to dull the senses, as is apt to happen to the gods, and not so much pain as to induce perpetual self-pity, as occurs in hell; a fatal distraction from the problem of looking for a way of escape from the Round.

Animals, the fourth class, are creatures for whom the gaining of their daily food is a dominant care, so that they have little leisure to spare for higher things. Their intelligence, too, operates as a rule within a restricted circle. They are objects of pity, because generally they cannot live without preying on one another, a characteristic that they share to some extent with Man. Animal life is therefore counted as the most tolerable among the states called "sorrowful," because the margin for modifying such existence in a favourable sense is necessarily narrow.

Yidags or tantalized ghosts are beings in whom Desire has taken the upper hand. They are pictured as having huge bellies, but pinpoint mouths, so that though their hunger is insatiable, their power of satisfying it is minute. When they drink, the water turns to liquid fire inside them; when they eat, the food swells like undercooked rice and brings on acute colic. Under this imagery, we see a state of Desire so overweening, that every attempt to pander to it only serves to make its pangs more consciously felt. One lama who was telling me about the *Yidags*, said that sometimes they see a refreshing spring or a table set for a feast and hasten towards them, but, just as they are about to seize the food, guardians appear, harpy-like, before them, armed with swords, spears, bows and arrows and rifles —a delightful modern touch—and drive them back. People often perform a rather touching rite and consecrate some morsel of their own food for the benefit of the poor *Yidags*. A special prayer is said which is supposed to counteract its painful results.

Lastly come the purgatories, both hot and cold; to call them hell is really a misnomer, because that word, to the Westerner, denotes a hopeless state, without a chance of eventual escape; whereas in the Buddhist view, torments however prolonged, must surely, by a turn of the Wheel, when the effects of their evil causes have played themselves out, give place to some other kind of existence, as surely as the paradise of gods will also be exchanged for a less happy state. Inmates of the

purgatories are not deemed incapable of good impulses, and even devils, that is to say beings who have sunk into a state of utmost malignancy, are able to rise in course of time.

To the eye which troubles to look further than the symbols, all these states are simply corollaries of various sorts of activity. He in whom Desire has become an overmastering passion, sees all things in the light of his desire; for him the World is as *Yidags* see it. To the being who has given way to hatred, all the world is spiteful; what is a pleasure to others becomes his torment, and the whole Universe transforms itself into a hell. Man is a comparatively balanced state, with some surplus energy left, after satisfying physical needs, for paying attention to wiser counsels. But men, in this respect, must again be subdivided; for many are forced to lead lives in which the available surplus of free attention is reduced to a minimum. Their lot must be considered unfortunate beside that of their less enslaved neighbours. Rebirth in the humblest station in Tibet offers fuller possibilities than life in a factory town of Europe or America, or even life in the manager's office of a great firm. In hell, suffering is so intense as to leave little time for serious thought; only by an exceptional effort can a being rise above the distractions of that dreadful environment. Gods, as we have seen, just because of the evenness of their life, are in danger of being lulled into unawareness, till one day their stock of merit becomes exhausted and a change for the worse supervenes, an exact reflection of their mental state at the time, so that they may slip as low as hell itself.

So turns and turns the Round of Rebirth and Redeath. Suffering is inseparable from its process, for some of its classes are wedded to suffering by definition, and the others are ever dogged by it, as their cherished happiness ages and fades, or as change and death remove from them the objects of their love; friends, possessions, one by one, sooner or later. Even in one's day of health, one knows, beyond question, that deterioration and disease, if nothing worse, are lying in wait.

All that liveth impaireth fast.

Even the hope permitted to the damned is only a palliative, not a cure. If relief is gained for a time, yet the disease will, of a surety, recur some day. In the Round, real bliss is impossible; to seek it therein is self-deception. Our hope of heaven,

the reward for well-doing to be enjoyed by individuals, as it is usually conceived, leads into the paradise of gods, but not to real freedom. The ruler of the Round is disappointment; each of its so-called joys bears within itself the seeds of insecurity, separation and sorrow.

Everyone has, at some time or other, in a moment of extreme well-being, in the contemplation of a sunset over an estuary, or while sitting silently beside a chosen friend, experienced that peculiar pang which is inseparable from intense joy, a drop of gall distilled into its honey. It is as if one were striving to hold up Time, to keep the vision immovable for just one moment; but even in the hour of rapture, in our innermost heart we feel its beauty slipping away, leaving us bereft. It is the pain of "Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips bidding adieu."

This brings us to Suffering, the real starting-point of the Buddha's teaching. The Tibetan books mention two kinds of suffering, to both of which I have alluded already. There is the Pain of the Round, found in the purgatories and the land of *Yidags*, and in the disease and death which afflict animals and men, the other is the Pain of Happiness, the regrets brought on by change, the turning of youth into old age, of health into infirmity, the separation which brings friendships to their close, the dreariness which succeeds to a joy that is over.

SUFFERING is the FIRST of the FOUR TRUTHS or Pointers in which is summed up the message of the Buddha, His proclamation of a hope of something less ineffective than the transient rewards of the Round. Suffering is the beginning of His whole argument, chosen because it is a truth which none could think of denying, which calls for no act of faith, since it is seen and experienced in the world around. The Buddhists make no attempt to explain it away by poetical sophistries, nor to neutralize it by offering compensations in another life. They regard it as inseparable from all states of existence, a thing not to be fled from but to be faced, here and everywhere. But the important thing is to discover the proper means, if such exist. The remedial activities of the Round are clearly inadequate. Buddhism is primarily a war on suffering, not on its symptoms but on its causes. When a disease has to be diagnosed, what must the good physician do first of all? He must find a cause for the symptoms. Till this is done he cannot treat the disease. What is the cause of suffering? The cause of suffering and the

cause of the Round are identical, Ignorance, which leads to ignorant Desire and ignorant Action. Already the SECOND TRUTH or Pointer is discovered. THE CAUSE OF SUFFERING is IGNORANCE.

Ignorance of what? Ignorance of the real nature of things, a mistaken notion of ourselves and our relation to other beings. It is more than an absence of correct belief; it is something entrenched in our nature which must be eliminated and replaced with Knowledge. Mere study is of no avail; there must be realization, bringing about a radical and *irreversible* change in our Being. It is not a question of Faith in certain propositions. Understanding both the illness and its cause, the doctor reassures his patient: the illness is not incurable. This, incidentally, disposes of the rather silly accusation that Buddhism is "pessimistic," as if such words as optimism and pessimism have any meaning in an investigation of the Truth. As a great Frenchman, René Guénon, said:—"Truth does not need to be comforting; if some have found it so, so much the better for them." Nevertheless, though there are good grounds for hope, the treatment is not easy and must be carried out by the patient himself, who is apt to be his own worst enemy. The THIRD TRUTH or Pointer is discovered, the CESSATION OF SUFFERING; that is our aim and that aim is possible of achievement.

Now it only remains to find the remedy, that is the FOURTH TRUTH, the WAY LEADING TO A CESSATION OF SUFFERING. The Buddha tells us what it is. If Ignorance is the cause of suffering then the opposite, JUST VIEWS, is the remedy. Ignorance cannot live in the same heart as real Knowledge. Introduce the latter and Ignorance will die. The evil will be cut off at the root. When Ignorance has ceased, ignorant desires no longer can arise, nor the Action loosed by them. When useless activity is stopped, the Wheel is deprived of its motive power and stops turning. Action is no longer needed when once the harmony of Knowledge has been achieved. In real Knowledge there can be no action, because there is nothing to change or improve. Change and imperfection go hand in hand. Once Enlightenment has been attained, the Wheel of Change stops and Stability begins, in which there is no action and no rebirth or death. Action breeds action for ever. Enlightenment breeds Enlightenment for ever.

The Four Truths are the quintessence of the Doctrine: all

else that may be said or written is only a commentary upon them. It is good to reiterate them in order to fix them in the mind:—

1 Suffering
2 Cause of Suffering } Diagnosis
3 Cessation of Suffering
4 Way leading to a Cessation of Suffering } Cure

Let us now return to the picture and look at the little circle in the middle of the Round. It contains three animals:—

A pig typifying Ignorance
A cock typifying Desire-Attachment (To define this as Lust alone, which is often done, is to miss the meaning completely.)
A snake typifying Anger

These three, commonly spoken of as the Three Poisons, are the basic evils to which all other evils can be reduced. In reality Ignorance is the only basic vice, for even the other two could not occur without it. It always accompanies their every manifestation, and one of their results is a renewal of Ignorance. The immense stress laid on the duty of combating Ignorance distinguishes Hindus and Buddhists from Christians. Not that this theory does not also hold good for Christianity; but in practice there has been a great difference of emphasis. Love, the central Christian virtue, is regarded by the Indian Traditions as the natural consequence of Knowledge. There are comparatively few overt allusions to Knowledge in the Gospels, though the implications are there all the same.

Ignorance is much more than mere lack of information on this or that subject. It includes every kind of sin against the Light, not only false beliefs, but unawareness, loose thinking, woolly-mindedness, obscurantism, and above all, indifference to knowledge, neglect of the duty of trying to be truthful and intelligent; a life organized in such a manner as to produce constant distractions, dishonest stifling of doubts, doubt as to the necessity of seeking knowledge at all, neglect of opportunities of listening to those who have a doctrine to teach, all these things fall within the scope of Ignorance. The pursuit of Truth

must not be left to chance. No number of charitable actions can be a substitute for that primary need. So-called altruistic actions, if uninformed, are not quite what they purport to be. In so far as they are founded on false premises, they remain ignorant actions and bring forth some of the fruits of ignorance. You cannot gather figs from thistles. Nor is mere Innocence, due to lack of opportunity rather than to a clear appreciation of the issues, accepted as a sufficient passport to heaven: indeed if it were so, the greatest blessing that one could wish for a human being would be death in infancy, before the child could experience a temptation to sin, and Herod should be acclaimed as the special benefactor of innocent children. Similarly, sincerity of motive, which is so often stressed among us here, is counted as no palliative for wrong action. The evil, in that case, is the expression of the innermost nature of the agent. Evil resides not so much in an act, as in the state of mind that makes the act possible. If the Ignorance of an evil-doer is invincible and he is thereby relieved from doubt, that is a matter for regret, since it holds out little promise of a change for the better. A hesitating sinner, whose conscience is alive, is far preferable to one who is misnamed a sincere, but mistaken, doer.

The second poison, Desire-Attachment, which includes repulsion, is taken in a much more radical sense than mere egotism. An *impulse to individual experience* is the nearest definition I can offer: it has often been expressed by the one terrible word "Thirst." This trait must be taken as appertaining in some degree to all things, though one commonly treats it as if it were only synonymous with conscious volition as found in sentient beings. That is the form in which Desire interests us most directly; but it would be a great mistake to lose sight of its general applicability to the whole of Creation.

If we turn to the special case of Egotism, a sharp cleavage is to be noted between the usual Christian conception and that of the Buddhists. In the former it is taken for an overstressing of one's own importance, an arrogation of rights outside one's just limits, with a consequent invasion of the rights of others. Nowadays it tends to become more narrowly restricted to its social applications. The vice comes from an excess of a supposedly legitimate feeling of individuality. But the Buddhist argues that when we confine our condemnation to the

examples cited, we are still treating symptoms only. The roots of Attachment lie deeper still, in the belief in an individual self as such, and in the attribution to it of reality, permanence, and of the rights consequent upon those qualities. Self-denial, for the Buddhist, is literally a denial of self. The separateness which is ascribed to the "ego" is the error. "He is the rogue who playeth every sort of trick," and his Action which, to our eyes, seems like an independent development *in* the Universe, not *of* the Universe, keeps up a false relation of dualism between the self and what lies outside it. So are engendered the concepts "myself and others."

A Tibetan work, the *Powerful Good Wish*, says:— "Immersed in ignorance and obscured by delusion the Knower (Mind) was afeared and confused. Then came the idea 'I' and 'Other' and hatred. As these gained force a continuous chain of Action (*Karman*) was produced. The Root Ignorance is the abyssal ground of the knower's unconscious Ignorance. The other Ignorance is that which regards self and others to be different and separate. The thought which regards beings as 'two,' begets a hesitating, doubting state. A subtle feeling of Attachment arises, which if allowed to gain force, gradually resolves itself into strong attachment and a craving for food, clothing, dwellings, wealth and friends . . . There is no end to the Action flowing from ideas of dualism."

This duality is denied both by Hindus and Buddhists; but their expression of the doctrine takes somewhat different forms and has given rise to long discussions. The Buddhists condemn the belief that the "myself" rests on any real or permanent basis whatsoever. For them the so-called individual is a bundle of activities, joining and dissolving, and passing into other activities. They do not, of course, contradict the obvious fact of some sort of quasi-individual existence within the phenomenal world of the Round. That would be absurd. But they deny its reality, saying that once its components are dissociated, the individuality also ceases to be, since no single one of those components has the right to act as its nucleus or to continue to bear its name. Selfishness is therefore more than an abuse of legitimate rights; it is an ignorant arrogation of reality to the "ego." What *we* call selfish, is but a secondary product. So long as a craving for individual enjoyment and individual reward persists, so long is the root of selfishness kept alive, nourished by

mistaken notions of "self." The Christian heaven, as popularly conceived, in which "I" is rewarded and preserved in perpetuity, is, according to the Buddhist doctrine, only a temporary state: its beatitude cannot be anything else, for in spite of good acts the root-error is still present, and it offers no more than a provisional salvation.

Many parables have been used to express the Buddhist doctrine of non-individuality. I have taken upon myself to invent my own simile, after the traditional style, which, I think, expresses the idea satisfactorily. The nature of a man or other being may be likened to a river of which the source is undiscovered. Activity is the water. As the river flows along seeking the sea, several tributaries, from tiny brooks to quite big streams, come in to swell its waters. The farmers along its banks have dug irrigation channels and drain some water off and spread it over the land. The Government, under a big inland waterways scheme, has also opened up canals joining the river to other river systems, flowing towards different seas. Part of its course takes it through hot desert, where evaporation is high. In summer the river becomes shallow and broken up into channels. In the rains it swells with the drainage of a huge area. Along its banks stand several modern manufacturing towns, which allow their sewage and all sorts of chemicals to enter the stream. Close to its mouth, it becomes a tidal estuary and the water is brackish. Some of the water of the sea and of the river itself is evaporated and comes down in rain all over the land and into other rivers and lakes, and falls as snow on the mountains where is born the river's unknown parent glacier. The river exists: no one could deny that. Geographers give it a name and draw it on their maps. But which part of the water has the right to say, "I was and still am the river?" It might well be that hardly one drop which actually falls into the sea is identical with any other drop which formed part of the river when it was still a glacier torrent.

The river's existence is undeniable, but the phenomenon of its individuality cannot be called real.

Thirdly comes Anger. Here again we find a slight difference from the common Western notions of anger. When Christ denounced uncharitableness as the deadliest sin, Anger, driven from its first line of defence, entrenched itself behind the question of motive, and assumed a new name under which it hoped

to remain unrecognizable. This was Moral Indignation, anger rightly directed, as it is supposed to be, in which case the resentment is held to be praiseworthy. The toleration of anger under this disguise has ended by making the Christian teachings of mercy and non-retaliation almost a dead letter; for self-righteous people never fail to find an excuse to justify their resentment against those who, as they say, have not harmed them personally, but have injured other people, whom it is their duty to protect. It is considered unnecessary that such giving of protection should be a coldly-thought-out, passionless act, undertaken with a view to serving in the appropriate way the higher interests of both aggressor and victim. On the contrary all the sentiments of hatred, pent up as a result of the Christian veto upon them, have been able to find channels where they are allowed legitimate scope. The Buddhist never recognized such a compromise. Anger, whatever its motives, remained anger in his eyes. When people showed hatred and violence, as men do everywhere, at least they were not to be allowed a loophole for self-deception. Hatred in a righteous cause should, logically, be regarded as more heinous than that prompted by pure selfishness, of which anger is, after all, but a natural expression. To degrade the service of Righteousness with such a weapon verges on sacrilege. If the judge must chastise, he must be a judge who weighs up all the evidence, and pronounces an unimpassioned sentence according to the law, free from Ignorance. If the reformer feels called on to fight an abuse, he must never forget that the cruelty of the tyrant is as worthy of pity as the groans of the slave. Moral Indignation is the subtlest form of Anger, which should not even be directed against Satan himself, for he too can become an object of compassion. Our hatred for him is the seal of his kingdom upon our foreheads. So long as the hatred of Satan is allowed to be an exception to the general law of Charity, so long will hatred continue to flourish in human hearts. Moreover it is but a step from hating Satan to hating evil-doers. If Satan is considered as a being incapable of redemption, it follows that we ought not to desire his salvation, for it would be contrary to the Divine Order. The Buddhist rejects the idea that any being is unalterably evil, and among the Christian Fathers, Origen, who was condemned for maintaining that the Devil would ultimately be saved, shares their point of view.

While I was writing these pages, an acquaintance with whom I had been discussing the alarms of the present political situation in Europe, made the remark, half approvingly—so I thought—and half doubtfully:—"I see you take a very detached view of it all, as if you stood outside. But does that not prevent you from getting anything done? Can we really avoid attaching ourselves to a cause, or a party, and putting our enthusiasm into it, shutting our eyes to everything but the main issue?" There seems no valid reason why the detached person, the philosopher in the primitive sense of "lover of wisdom," should be any less capable of effective action than his more passionate neighbour. On the contrary, in so far as with him opinions are opinions, that is, based on all ascertainable evidence, and judgments are judgments, that is, formed after hearing both sides without prejudice, so also this same philosopher's action ought to be intelligent action, not a mixed bag of elements germane to his purpose, together with many irrelevant factors thrown in. The demands of this ideal are too exacting for it to make an instantaneous appeal. The plausible security of a label is dear to the slothful. Even appointed leaders prefer the easier course of flattering, under pretence of directing, the mob. If this ideal is to have any chance of being realized in the world, those who believe in it must not, in every difficult moment, desert it for its opposite. In any case, the visible results count for little. The fruits of Action cannot escape ripening somewhere, sometime. There are no such things as wasted actions; though they may be temporarily lost from sight, they will be stored in the aggregate of Cosmic Activity, and will, beyond all question, become Causes in their turn. I have mentioned this example, which is my own, and not derived from a lama, to show the sort of way in which the Causal Law of Action applies to a given problem. The partisan way of life exemplifies the action of the Three Poisons better than anything else. The root is Ignorance, evinced in the unwillingness to weigh up a question fairly, and in the alacrity shown in submitting the will to a so-called opinion, based on evidence selected by methods which would not be followed by a genuine investigator unswayed by sentiment. Above all, in the anxiety not to weaken one's own devotion to the chosen cause, one becomes *indifferent* to accuracy, even more than a deliberate falsifier of facts. The latter state only follows on the former.

Anger is represented by detestation of the opposition; this is true, irrespective of the rightness or wrongness of our cause. But it is Desire-Attachment in this case which incites us, and forms the substance of our loyalties and readiness for self-sacrifice. From a Buddhist point of view the whole business is corrupt through and through. The same ought to hold good from a Christian point of view, were it not for the fact that many of the Christian churches have been only too willing to make things easy for those who actually treat Attachment and Indignation-Anger as things worthy of encouragement and who, for the sake of obtaining speedy results, are willing to resort to the demagogue's appeal to Ignorance.

Every poison has its appropriate antidote. For Ignorance the antidote is Knowledge, Just Views, Awareness. For Desire-Attachment the antidote is Non-Attachment, including abandonment of ignorant belief in a permanent individual self. For Anger the antidote is loving-kindness and a consistent refusal to inflict suffering.

Love, Charity or Compassion is the first-fruit of Knowledge. We have seen how, in spite of moments of pleasurable delusion, life in the Round is lamentable. All find themselves in the same quandary, from the most carefree of gods to the most tortured of fiends. No one is favoured; to each one comes his turn. This, logically, makes us all brothers: there is not one corner of the Universe undeserving of pity. Whoever stops to contemplate the crowds frantically chasing the will-o'-the-wisp of happiness, or falling over one another as they turn and flee from a suffering which they believe to be external to themselves, cannot but be seized with boundless compassion.

"That which makes one weep," said St. Marpa, "is the thought that all creatures could be Buddha, that they know it not and die in suffering . . . If that is what you are weeping about, you should go on ever weeping without pause." So, also, wrote a Chinese sage: "With an understanding of the impermanent nature of all things, devoid of reality in themselves and subject to pain, rises the sun of true wisdom . . . Go on with hearts overflowing with compassion; in this world that is rent by suffering, be instructors and wherever the darkness of Ignorance may happen to reign, kindle there a torch."

There is a close connexion between the idea of Compassion

and the teaching on the subject of "self-naughting". Mila Repa expounds this truth in three lines of one of his poems:

> The notion of emptiness (absence of real self) engenders Compassion,
> Compassion does away with the distinction between " self and other,"
> The indistinction of self and other renders the service of others effective.

His sequence of thought is not immediately apparent and requires elaboration. His meaning is that once a being is aware of the impermanence of individuality, he is brought to the recognition of his one-ness with everything which before had falsely appeared to be external to himself. Their sufferings become his sufferings; their liberation becomes identified with his own; His service to others is no longer one-sided generosity, for the distinction between giver and receiver is no more. The Buddhist Tradition denies to " the Ego " any vestige of permanence, and refuses to recognize the real existence of a central thread of individuality on which the various qualities of body and mind are strung like beads. It declares repeatedly that the so-called individual soul is but an aggregate, temporary, changing and devoid of firm foundation, a play of forces derived from heredity, environment and a thousand other influences, as well as from the effects of its own actions good and evil.

The aim of the good life is therefore to reach the state of Non-Attachment to self, the ideal which implies final abandonment of the partisan attitude towards life's happenings. The Enlightened being perceives that he cannot monopolize the credit for his own acts of charity, because no act is entirely one person's doing, all beings have a share in the causes and consequences of every act. Everyone must accept responsibility even for the murderer's knife.

The Ideal Being who has realized his complete one-ness with all creation, and who has thereby become an initiate of the supreme Doctrine of Non-Duality, is called a Bodhisat, of whom Jesus might almost serve as an example, since He claimed no merit for Himself but suffered all sorrow, knowing that whatsoever belongs to one, already belongs perforce to all others too.

Loving-kindness is the only reasonable outcome of the doctrine of the Round; it can accept no limits short of the entire Universe. To preferences and aversions, which are

really nothing else than extensions of a false belief about self, it cannot stoop.

Now let us suppose that we have been successful in substituting the antidotes for the poisons and that Just Views have replaced Ignorance in our make-up. Being set free from our fictitious individuality, with its fixed idea of dualism, we are no longer forced to act as a cog in the Wheel of Existence. The Round ceases for us: we are Delivered or Enlightened. That is the state called Nirvana, which translated literally, means "Extinction." The word has given rise to a number of foolish interpretations—outside the countries of its origin—by which the Buddhist is accused of seeking mere nothingness, annihilation. The perpetrators of this error let themselves be deceived by the word "Existence" and its associations *for them*. What ceases to exist, so they argue—because for them existence and reality are associated—must be reduced to Nothingness. The Buddhist understands it in quite another way; for, in his eyes, it is the Existence of the Round which is the illusion, the unreal. Enlightenment is nothing to *us*, for it is the beginning of Reality, something utterly foreign to us within our present limitations. It is a waste of time trying to imagine that state; for whatever we think or say must perforce be taken out of our own experience of the world of phenomena. "When you will have understood the dissolution of all compounds," says the *Dhammapada*, "You will understand that which is uncompounded." At present one can only say of Nirvana what the Hindus say of Brahma, the Infinite; "Not this, not this."

The word Nirvana means extinction, something like the action of the fingers in snuffing out the flame of a candle. That which is extinguished is Ignorance and its train of consequences. A double negative—the extinction or annulment of Knowledgelessness—is our only way of faintly suggesting its positive reality. What Buddhahood, the state of having found Enlightenment, is, we simply cannot say. He who attains it, knows it. He who has not attained it can only speculate in terms of his own relativity, which do not apply to it. To be Buddha is not just one more degree in the series which we know, like an ascent to a higher existence within the Round. There is complete discontinuity between that state and the Circle of Existence, a great gulf fixed.

To return for a moment to the diagram. We have still to mention the border, containing twelve little scenes, which runs round the outer rim of the circle. These scenes explain, in more detailed form, the process of rebirth under the influence of Ignorance. They are known as the " Twelve Interdependent Origins " and must be studied by anyone who wishes to enter deeply into the doctrine; but as they are really an amplification of the basic concept Ignorance—Desire—Action, it is unnecessary to analyse them here. They express, in more precise terms, ideas which we have already considered under those headings.

The remedy for Ignorance is Knowledge or Just Views. It goes without saying that by Knowledge is meant something more than ordinary discursive knowledge. Liberation is not to be compassed by attending courses at the University or by reading up manuals of philosophy. Rational knowledge makes its own useful contribution in helping to clear the ground of minor delusions. To despise the least of sciences must be reckoned a serious fault, because that indicates a predisposition to tolerate Ignorance; such a state of mind must poison the whole psychology of a being and make him more than ever unready to embark on the conquest of the higher Knowledge. But Knowledge, the transcendent virtue by divine right, is above Reason. It is the fruit of a direct intuitive experience, which is not so much a thing acquired by accretion, rather it is a thing which is already there, from the moment that the obstacles to its realization have ceased to be. The effort of the seeker after this Real Knowledge, is all along directed to the elimination of hindrances, to *allowing* the Knowledge to arise spontaneously, as it will do, the instant the necessary *undoing* has been effected. The presence of Knowledge is reflected in a radical alteration of the entire nature of a being; this can only be corrupted if there should supervene a yielding to any obscuring tendencies, such as may still be lurking within that being, so long as Deliverance is still unachieved. This belief in the transcendent Intellect, a faculty capable, and alone capable, of direct contact with the Real, is common to all Traditional doctrines, of all ages and countries. At a chance meeting between a lama, a Mussulman doctor of the law, a Brahmin and one of our own Medieval Schoolmen, their common acceptance of this conception of the Intellect would have made them



Photo: Audrey Harris

THE GREAT HERMIT THE ABBOT OF LACHHEN



LAMAS HOLDING DORJÉ AND BELL
The Emblems of Method and Wisdom

feel at home in each other's society. Some critics have discounted the reality of this experience; to them the Indian or Tibetan teacher can only answer "Here is the method. Try it out—but thoroughly and without self-deception—and see for yourself."

Sound Method is inseparable from Wisdom. The Tibetans speak of these two as husband and wife, making Method into the male and Wisdom into the female aspect. They are symbolized, respectively, by the thunderbolt sceptre or *Dorjé* and the Hand-bell or *Dilbu*. These emblems appear everywhere. In pictures they will be seen wielded by the hands of Divinities and every lama possesses a pair for use in the temple rites and at his own altar. His prescribed movements, as he turns them about, represent the eternal dalliance of Wisdom and Method; even to think of divorcing them is to court disaster. "Just as one desirous of reaching a certain city requires the eyes for seeing and the feet for traversing the way, so doth one desirous of reaching the city of Nirvana require the eyes of Wisdom and the feet of Method." Method itself is sometimes made synonymous with Universal Love or Compassion.

Wisdom is usually considered under five headings, in correspondence with a fivefold symbolism which runs right through Tibetan Art. Exoterically, they are personified in five Buddhas and are a favourite theme with the decorators of temple walls. One of them called Öpagmed (Immeasurable Light), who is coloured red, presides over the Western Paradise of the Great Beatitude, the Elysian Fields where the great mass of men, who feel unequal to the effort of escaping from the Round of Existence, dream of passing long ages of contentment. It was to this that I referred when I tried to comfort the blind man at Lachhen. These five kinds of Wisdom—none of which must be confused with the profane Science which studies objects while still regarding form as real—are:—

1 The All-accomplishing Wisdom: that by which all works of Enlightenment are carried out. It manifests itself in an indefinite variety of forms and conditions, to suit the special needs and unequal capacities of beings.
2 Discriminating Wisdom: that which treats of distinctions between objects. This is the kingdom presided over by Öpagmed.

8 Equalizing Wisdom: that which treats of the likeness and sameness of objects.
4 Mirror-like knowledge: The mirror is pure, and reflects all things, yet itself remains entirely unaffected.
5 Knowledge of the Changeless: Understanding of the Divine Substance that pervades all things.

The Buddha in one of His early sermons, explained the Method by which Wisdom was to be gained and suffering destroyed, under eight headings, known as the PATH WITH EIGHT BRANCHES. It is often compared in its scope with Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount. It therefore corresponds to the last of the Four Truths, the Way that leads to the extinction of suffering. The Eightfold Path is the Buddhist's programme of life, and comprises:—

Perfect Will Just Views	relating to Wisdom
Right Speech Right Action Right Means of Livelihood	relating to fitting and intelligent conduct
Right effort Perfect Attention or Awareness Perfect Meditation	relating to concentration of mind

It may at first appear strange that a method of which the avowed aim is the acquisition of Just Views, should place Just Views among the first items on its list. By so doing it seems to beg the question. Though Just Views, in a sense, must be regarded as the end, from another point of view they are also the starting-point, since were there not some measure of Just View at the outset, where would be the incentive to embark on the Eightfold Path at all? A first Just View tells us that it is both possible and useful to seek Wisdom. As the various virtues of the Path are perfected, so do inferior Just Views grow into higher ones, of more universal applicability, leading at the last to Truth, the Changeless Knowledge of the Real and the Infinite.

Similarly, the four branches of the Path concerned with conduct, are both a result and a cause of Just Views. As we learn to define our relation towards ourselves, our neighbours, all creatures and the entire world more and more accurately, so our

conduct becomes more appropriate and enlightened. The fruit of fitting conduct is an increase in the Justice of our Ideas.

The penultimate virtue, Awareness, is also indispensable from start to finish. If our actions or thoughts are to have the slightest value, they must be fully responsible actions or thoughts, designed and carried out for ends and by methods which harmonize with the facts of the world and with the relations which unite all beings, as far as it lies in our power to ascertain them. Our actions and thoughts are the result of our whole nature at a given moment, and become the causes of its further development for good or ill. A nature which is still mainly emotional, and not brought under proper control by the intellect, is a weathercock turned by every impulse. In such a condition of irresponsibility, even if an action happens to be right, it is largely an accident; for, not being based upon relevant motives, it is properly little better than a foolish action in masquerade. It must be our constant aim to withdraw as much of our life as we can from the power of outside influences and accidents, and to bring it into subjection to our informed Will, so that each act may be exactly what it purports to be, no more and no less, each opinion a genuine opinion uninfluenced by anything irrelevant, each decision a judgment reached after due consideration of all accessible evidence.

It is as a means towards heightened control, that the great Teachers so strongly recommend certain physical exercises, aiming at bringing movements which are normally reflex under the partial rule of conscious volition. To turn matters of habit into deliberately controlled operations is considered highly beneficial. Conversely, the cultivation of an automatic response to external stimuli, by expedients such as marching in step or shouting slogans, the stock-in-trade of modern European organization, must, Buddhistically speaking, be reprobated as a disastrous abuse, leading to greater and greater irresponsibility and enslavement.

Meditation, the eighth branch of the Path, is the cultivation of calmness and harmony of soul, the attuning of the whole being to the Word, the promotion of a state of perfect receptivity. Like a rippleless tarn in which the snows are seen so distinctly reflected that one forgets which is solid mountain and which the image, so is Meditation, the solvent of distinctions and the gate of the Real. It is an experience which the

average person ignores; yet without its peace of mind and the resultant mastery over self, Illumination cannot be achieved. A state of agitation always fosters Ignorance, therefore, all the sages of the Orient counsel the cultivation of the habit of calm, unruffled meditation. Rushing about to set the world to rights, without pausing to think, must prove useless. In the highest degree, Meditation is the mark of the saint, the serenity which nothing can disturb, not even in the middle of the Round's eddy.

Concerning the branches of the Eightfold Path that deal with conduct, little need be said. Right speech, Right Action and Right Effort are indistinguishable from the same virtues as taught by Christ. Selfless Love and all it implies, Mercy and Non-retaliation for injuries, Gentleness, Reverence, in all these there is nothing to choose between the teaching of the Buddha and the Gospel. So striking is the similarity, that one lama gave it as his opinion that Christianity was simply an aberrant branch of Buddhism.

Right means of Livelihood deserves a word of its own, for though it is just as implicit in the Christian revelation as in the other, it is apt to be overlooked, and has been especially disregarded by those followers of Puritanical tenets, who played so prominent a part in the development of big business. According to the Eightfold Path, it is not enough that one's personal conduct should be apparently blameless, one must look further, lest one may be deriving sustenance from some practice inconsistent with the law of Mercy or Truth, from some brutality or exploitation of fellow-men or animals, or from some organization which is tending to hinder Knowledge and favour the growth of Ignorance. A Buddhist may not be a trafficker in lives, that is to say a slave-dealer or a butcher; worse than the actual killing is the failure to realize that animals are alive and sensitive—the unawareness is as bad as the cruelty. The calf led to the slaughter is not to be shorn of its pitifulness by allowing one's sensibility to seek shelter behind the word "veal." Neither may a man live by selling drugs (save for medical use), nor may he be an arms-manufacturer. Living in modern times, he should look to his investments lest he be the unwitting accomplice of commercial exploitation of the weak. It is obvious that a Christian ought to investigate the sources of his income with no less scrutiny, but on the whole this duty has been understressed.

There is one application of the law of Causality which is of special interest to Europeans and has been the subject of much contention. Several writers, both Christian and Buddhist, have taken the view that the doctrine of *Karman* or Action and the Christian doctrine of Forgiveness are fundamentally irreconcilable. I have read somewhere that a Buddhist leader from Ceylon once addressed a protest against some young nobles being allowed to attend a mission school where they were taught "the abominable doctrine of the forgiveness of sins." Was he justified in this particular criticism or not?

If by forgiveness is meant the non-arising of an effect from a previous cause or the simple wiping of that effect off the slate after it has been produced, then the answer must be an unqualified "yes." Any irregular or arbitrary interference with the succession of Cause and Effect is rigidly excluded by Buddhism, as constituting a denial of Order. But does Christian forgiveness really amount to this? Does Christ wipe out an offence unconditionally, as an act of Grace quite unconnected with the response made by the recipient? The muddle-headed talk which often occurs in sermons or pious books might lead one to think so. Popular deformations are common enough, especially among those sects that lean to justification by faith alone, and who stress the impotence of man to do more than solicit direct guidance from on high. Among such people there is always a tendency to mistrust carefully worded dogmatic formularies and to employ sentimental and rhetorical phrases such as would lend colour to the Singhalese critic's fears: but it is just as unfair to treat as a formal exposition of Christianity an emotional reference to the loving Father who, for the asking, is ready to disburden the sinner, as to regard one of the travesties that are found in polemic tracts against Buddhism as a just presentation of that Doctrine. In such a sentence as "You have only to lay your sins at the feet of Jesus, imploring His pardon, and He will grant it," though the words are unexceptionable if rightly interpreted, there is a certain danger of misunderstanding from the vagueness which allows one to believe, though it does not affirm it, that there is an easy escape from the consequences of one's offences. The emphasis is laid on the remission of the sin, and a discreet silence is maintained on the part to be played by the sinner himself, while the introduction of the word "only" opens the door to further possibilities

of confusion. Similarly, when a Catholic says, "If you go to the priest and humbly confess, you can be sure of receiving Absolution," he certainly does not mean to imply that a mere formal ceremony will be sufficient. A good confession demands more than the recital of a list of misdemeanours, followed by the administration of a grace conferred by the sacramental words upon an entirely passive recipient. Doubtless in practice, many people treat it so; but this is no more than to say that many of mankind water down and denature every doctrine to suit their own feebleness of purpose. Were it otherwise we should already be at the millennium. When Catholics are accused of using the sacrament of Penance as a cheap way of escape from the consequences of sin, there is no more truth and as little accuracy in the accusation, as in the complaint put forward by the Buddhist from Ceylon. In any given case he may have been justified, yet the question of principle is really left untouched.

Again it must be asked:—Is there any place for Pardon under the strict application of the doctrine of Causes, or are the two ideas mutually exclusive? Sin, under the law of *Karman*, can be viewed with a twofold aspect, first as an effect, the product of Causes dwelling in the sinner's character or in the circumstances governing his life, and secondly as itself a Cause, productive of various results. Sin first affects the sinner's inner being, producing in it a change which we call guilt and which furthermore implies a reinforcement of the tendency towards repetition of the sin. There are also the extraneous consequences of the historical act, its effects on other people and on the world. Granted that there is a possibility of forgiveness, which of these effects will be cancelled by it? The second group of effects can be ruled out, since they lie extraneous to the guilty person. If I commit a murder, no forgiveness will resurrect the murdered man, or stop the police from arresting me, or interrupt the social consequences flowing from the crime, or assuage the sorrow of the victim's relatives. The sphere in which forgiveness can operate is restricted to that of the effects personal to the delinquent; more especially it concerns itself with the washing away of the stigma of guilt.

Again it must be repeated that, if the Remission of Sins were really a tricking of the Causal law, if Christ simply expunged the guilt *motu proprio* without the participation of another

chain of Causes neutralizing the series loosed by the sin and thus changing the direction of the erring soul's development, that would, to the Buddhist, be tantamount to investing the Will of the Ruler of the Universe with the note of capriciousness, an unthinkable proposition. But surely the true Christian doctrine postulates a second factor, on the presence of which forgiveness is conditional, that is Repentance. The word may often be spoken glibly so as to suggest a mere formality; but no one who takes the trouble to think it out would dismiss it so lightly.

The conditions for a perfect act of Contrition—and nothing less is demanded—are not difficult to define. Firstly there must be a recognition that the act repented of was a sin, and why. Whether this be expressed under the symbol of a personal offence against Divine Majesty, or as an act that does not square with the just relations between the doer and the rest of the World, as a disturbance of harmony arising from non-recognition of the true nature of things, it amounts to much the same. In either case one admits that there has been misunderstanding or Ignorance, for which Knowledge must be substituted, before the act can be seen to be sinful. The Ignorance has let loose one chain of effects—the sin and its secondary consequences. The Knowledge which now succeeds to it, looses a new set of consequences, working in a contrary direction. The first set is not so much made nul, as counterpoised by the effects of Knowledge, resulting in a clean sheet. There is nothing contrary to the law of Causes here; indeed that law, under its ethical aspect, is nothing else than the opposing of Knowledge with its effects to Ignorance with its effects.

The second postulate for perfect Contrition is sorrow for the sin. Sorrow here is an effect, part of the pain which accompanies the changes wrought by wickedness. The punishment inflicted by the police is a direct external effect of the sinful act itself. The sorrow of self-accusation is an internal effect of the act, arising when that act begins to be viewed in the light of Knowledge. Again we are not dealing with any challenge to the principles of *Karman*.

A third condition is a sincere intention of amendment, a taking of effective measures to prevent a repetition of the sinful action. Without understanding why the sin was a sin,

or what should have been the alternative to committing it, no effective good intention can possibly arise. Again the whole problem becomes centred in Knowledge and its consequences. Once the nature of the sin has been clearly recognized, the intention of changing one's ways arises almost as a natural consequence; this intention, becoming in its turn a Cause, leads to the new consequence of taking practical measures in the future. One can dismiss all reactions such as a superficial wave of emotion, a half-desire to escape from the results of sin without paying the price, a regret, a half-hearted profession of good intentions. The Divine Judge is not so easily mocked; when we speak of repentance we mean the real thing, with all the conditions carried out in full.

So much for Contrition itself: now for Forgiveness. Can a sin be forgiven, even by a Saviour, without Contrition? Surely such a suggestion would be an absurdity cutting at the roots of Orderly Justice. Repentance must be an absolute condition; if there be no repentance, the Grace of Christ, though proffered by Him, is in fact rejected by the sinner.

If Contrition be perfect, then the guilt is said to be wiped off the soul. If this seems to be an arbitrary reversal, yet on closer examination, it can still be explained in terms of Action and the effects of Action. The combination Ignorance-Sin has brought about one sequence of effects, altering the state of a soul by the addition of guilt. Knowledge-Repentance, a separate *Karman*, also brings its own sequence of effects, which are bound to alter the nature of that soul by the addition of Understanding and New Intentions. The first change has been followed by a second change, and an undeniably radical one; for of all possible changes the displacing of Ignorance by Knowledge is the most fundamental. Once there has been a genuine change of heart, the changed situation as Cause, is reflected as a matter of course in a whole new series of consequences, and the traditional language of forgiveness is applicable without inconsistency.

That forgiveness is not an idea utterly foreign to Buddhism was confirmed for me by the Mongol lama Wangyal, under whom I read the *Lamrim*, or *Stages in the Path*, the principal doctrinal book of the Yellow-Hat Order of lamas, which is the most influential in modern Tibet. He used a terminology which approximated strikingly to that of the Catholic Church, divid-

ing sins into " mortal " and " venial ": only when challenged did he admit that " unforgivable sins " really meant sins which required a protracted penance for their expiation. Hell to all eternity is not admitted by Buddhism; though it may last for aeons and aeons, an upward turn of the Round must come at long last, just as a downward one will eventually replace even the most lasting of pleasures. Here lies the difference in the manner of expression: but in other respects the language of contrition and pardon might have been taken from one of our own medieval divines.

We have now covered most of the ground. For the sake of completeness, mention ought to be made of one more detail in the picture of the Round, the fearsome monster who clutches the entire Circle of Existence in his teeth and talons. He is Shindjé, judge of the dead; in his horrible visage we see the true nature of the Round unmasked, and in his domination over the whole scene, we recognize the inexorable character of the Law of Causation, with which the Round itself is cognate. Shindjé must not be taken for a minister of retributive Justice. He does not dispense penalties in the name of offended Deity, nor do the consequences that accrue from good or foolish actions depend on his private pleasure. Neither gifts nor charms can buy his indulgence.

> I set no store by gold, silver, nor riches
> Nor by pope, emperor, king, duke, nor princes
> For if I would receive gifts great,
> All the world I might get;
> All my custom is clean contrary.

Shindjé's sole office is to operate the mechanism of cause and effect, in faithful obedience to its rules. " Every effect proceeds from a cause." The whole implication of this law is that every act will bring about an appropriate modification in the Universe, which nothing can hinder. Other actions may change its direction, neutralize it or transform it; but an effect as such can by no means be wiped out. Joy and pain are simply effects of causes, needing no bestowal of grace or word of condemnation from outside to produce them. They are symptoms of the state of a given being at any given moment. The present condition of the whole Universe, viewed as one, is what it is, because, with the history of causes and effects as they have been till now, it cannot but be what it is.

In Buddhist countries, as elsewhere, the majority refuse to give up the simple idea of poetic justice. They measure merit as one might weigh potatoes; so many good acts against so much happiness, so many sins against such and such penalties. All those who, in spite of anything they may profess in theory, still show their belief in their own self-sufficient ego, naturally continue to hanker after the delusions of individual enjoyment and advantage, in the form of happy rebirths. I remember one lama who told me that he did not feel equal to an immediate effort in the direction of Buddhahood, but he was at least making sure, by a nice balance of his acts, that he would earn rebirth as a man again, so as not to lose his coign of vantage for further progess later. He confessed that he was an inveterate meat-eater—the Tibetans are not given to making hypocritical excuses—but as a counterblast he was as uncompromising a teetotaller as ever came out of Wales. For my friend, the future life resolved itself simply into a matter of efficient book-keeping. Unfortunately for his naïve schemes, he left out of account the besetting sin of Ignorance, which accompanied his well-planned acts of merit. He was a very kind and pleasant man, well above average, yet he will be lucky, figuratively speaking, if he does not obtain rebirth among the *Yidags*. There are thousands more like him, who are still missing the crucial point. Like all of us, they get what they really desire and expect, not what they profess to ask for—therein lies all the difference! "Knock and it shall be opened unto you: seek and ye shall find." That is a profound truth: but much also depends upon which door one knocks at, and which gifts are asked for.

Some may be surprised that in all this lengthy discussion there has been no direct allusion to God. We have had a whole chapter on doctrine without so much as mentioning His name. Is it correct to say, as some have liked to do, that Buddhism is "atheistical," and that it precludes the belief in a Personal Deity? This is a question which loses its substance once it has been realized that Personality already implies some degree of limitation: every specification must always be sharply distinguished from the unspecifiable Infinite. So long as it is accepted that Personality occupies a lesser degree of universality than the Infinite, the Supreme Principle of All—there is no objection to admitting it as one among possible determinations. The enemy to be shunned at all costs is a permanently dualistic

conception, an immutable persistence of pairs of contraries that refuse ultimately to be resolved in the unity of a Principle dwelling beyond their distinction. The Hindus, whose metaphysical language resembles that of the Lamas, have separate names for the Infinite (Brahma—neuter form), the Supreme Principle of Being (Brahmâ—masculine form) and Ishwara, the Personified Creative Function. Christian theology applies the name of God now to one, now to the other, now to all three together, which is slightly confusing. The Hindu terminology ought to be valid for a Buddhist too, if he wished, though, so far as I am aware, it has not actually been so used.

The just word on the Buddhist position with regard to God has been spoken by René Guénon who, more than any other European, is qualified for the office of interpreter of the traditional doctrines:—

"In reality, Buddhism is no more 'atheistical' than it is 'theistic' or 'pantheistic'; all that need be said, is that it does not place itself at the point of view where these various terms have any meaning."

CHAPTER XII

The Hermit and the Pilgrim

SPRING had given way to full summer when we got back to Lachhen and the better-off of the inhabitants, who, like all Tibetans, dislike damp heat, were talking of moving to cooler levels up the valley, away from the heaviest rains. The abbot had already withdrawn to T'hangu (13,000 feet), to a hermitage dependent on his monastery. As we were anxious to spend some time in his society, we prepared to follow him there, but thought it wiser to let him know beforehand, lest he should be entering into one of his periods of seclusion. Meanwhile we camped, in order to save bungalow charges.

Caravans from Kampa Dzong kept coming through the village, laden with wool and barley flour to be exchanged lower down for rice. We stopped them from time to time and asked if they had any rugs for sale. These Tibetan rugs, coarsely knotted on a woollen warp and dyed in sound vegetable colours, fetch very low prices. The patterns are usually variants of one design, consisting of a central field containing one or three circles more or less decorated, with a key-pattern round the border; the style shows unmistakable Chinese influence. The art of making them is common knowledge in Tibet; happy is the artistic condition of a country where such rugs represent the low-water mark of material and craftsmanship, within reach even of the poorest. We laid a couple in our tents and at once realized that they were exactly suited to such surroundings. One can readily see why semi-nomadic nations like the Turkomans developed the art of carpet-making.

Near our camp we used to listen to the song of a bird of the Cuckoo tribe, probably the Brain-fever bird, so named because of the persistency with which it repeats the same call, to the annoyance of people trying to doze in their siesta hour. It sings a musical phrase entirely diatonic in character, and then proceeds to repeat it on ascending degrees of the scale, advanc-

ing mostly by whole tones, occasionally by semi-tones. When it has reached the highest note it begins again from the bottom. It sounds just like a prima donna vocalizing. The interesting feature of the bird's performance is the fact that the phrase is correctly transposed into the new key at each shift; that is, if we take its starting-point as being C, the theme next appears in D and so on. This really carries with it the whole principle of modulation; for the implied harmonies can be readily supplied by the ear. It looks as if the diatonic scale, and the harmony based thereon, really do derive direct from Nature and can only be varied within limits. There is certainly no atonality about the Brain-fever bird.

The headman of Lachhen, who had all along been attentive to our comfort, kindly lent us one of his house servants, a young man from Shigatze, named T'hargya, to accompany us up to T'hangu. He was an unusually intelligent and sensitive youth, and after we had employed him for a few days, we were anxious to retain his services, so we did our best to persuade his master to release him. But he knew T'hargya's value too well and would not yield him up, though he promised to lend him for a future journey if still in his service.

The system of hiring such domestics is a kind of indenture. The servant contracts to stay three years. No regular salary is paid; but he is clothed, fed, housed and given occasional pocket money. In many respects he is treated like one of the family; we noticed that a respectful address towards his employer did not affect T'hargya's ease of manner, free from all servility. When the term of service expires, the employee is given a present in money, or possibly in kind. We found the same system working in Ladak, in the houses of the Lhasa merchants who lived round Leh.

The headman told us that T'hargya had already made himself invaluable inside the house and was entirely trustworthy in running distant errands. We were so interested in the lad, whose merry yet earnest conversation at the camp-fire delighted us, that we wanted to reward him. The rule is that if regular pay is given to such an indentured servant, he has to hand it over to his master, though anything in the nature of a tip is his own. Eventually we decided to contribute a little towards his education, so that his quick brain might find a new outlet in the reading of serious literature. Among Tibetans, whose respect

for learning is ingrained, no gift could be better calculated to raise the recipient in his own and his friends' estimation. A small sum was therefore allotted, with a request that a good instructor should be chosen from the lamas to teach him his letters.

Going up towards T'hangu, the scenery is not specially striking. After a few miles, altitude begins to affect the denseness of the forests; yet here, where trees should be prized, denudation is going on apace, due to the habit of clearing new acres by fire in order to sow corn. We passed wide tracts where all the big trees stood leafless, mere blackened skeletons, surrounded by bare soil or low scrub of recent growth. The destruction seems to go on recklessly and it would be worth some attempt at regulation by the State Forestry department.

Close to T'hangu big trees give place to vegetation similar to that found near the snout of the Zemu glacier. The prevalent flowering plants are dwarf rhododendrons of several sorts, purple or white, and primulas, either small mauve, large dark purple, or, in boggy places, yellow ones like cowslips. Blue poppies are also common. T'hangu is not a village; there is only the pretty hermitage, a big cottage surrounded by a circle of prayer-flags, on a grassy knoll, and under it an eyesore of an ugly, ill-constructed rest-house. In June the surrounding hills are clear of snow; the weather was unceasingly damp, with a raw Scottish mist.

There was local excitement at the time because of the completion of a new *Mani* wall near the road, neatly built of masonry and cement, with the sacred inscriptions incised on flat stones embedded in the wall. The letters were left white on a ground made red with a kind of clay. The builders were two pilgrims who spent their time going from place to place and erecting these walls; but the carving was done by a local man. The moment for consecrating the *Mani* wall had arrived and the headman of Lachhen and several monks and peasants assembled for the ceremony. A large tent with red flounces was pitched, housing a brazier, a table and a seat for the abbot. We introduced ourselves to the pilgrims, who were standing by, surveying their handiwork. One of them was a thick-set man of powerful build, with a merry, open face over which laughter was continually rippling. He was a child-like soul, delighted with the smallest things and radiating a

transparent benevolence towards all. His home lay north-west of Lhasa, so he told us, and he had not seen it for twelve years, having spent all his time in pilgrimages to the most remote parts. With delight he recounted the wonders of the Holy Seat (Buddh Gaya in Bihar) where, at the foot of the Bodhi tree the Teacher sat to receive His Enlightenment. The pilgrim was planning to visit it again, for the third time—but not before winter: for the plains of India are insufferably hot at other seasons. Five years ago, during his travels, he had met his present companion, a monk from the land of Kham, far away to the east on the China border.

The latter was not so prepossessing as his friend. He was rough-looking and ragged; a near relative, we thought, of the younger of the two dissolute friars in *Boris Godunov*. But on closer acquaintance we decided that his gruff voice and unkempt appearance did him an injustice. He was a decent, straightforward fellow. The stonemason seemed a very odd type. Some unusual racial elements must have gone to his make-up, for whereas the Tibetans have sparse hair on the face, or none at all, he had a long black beard. He too looked as if he had strayed out of Grand Opera; both his costume and his face came straight from the Pilgrims' Chorus in *Tannhäuser*.

Among the young lamas who had come up from Lachhen for the service, there was one called Samdub to whom we felt attracted from the moment we set eyes on him. His features were fine and regular and his expression suggested the youthful saint, for a look of rapture never quite left his face. He greeted us like old friends; it is curious how many people we met, with whom the tedious processes of introductions and feeling one's way, could be curtailed. Social intercourse is undoubtedly made much easier by the absence of servile manners in any class, and by the traditional forms of politeness which, once they have been complied with, indicate exactly where each man stands.

When the stage had been set for the consecration, we looked up towards the hermitage and seemed to see Chaucer's Canterbury Pilgrims approaching in procession. Our old friend the abbot, in full pontificals and wearing a mitre, was riding, not on a palfrey, but on a sturdy mule better fitted to bear the weight of his portly figure. A leopard-skin was thrown over the saddle and a young monk led the animal, while Samdub and others,

armed with drums, sacred vessels and lighted tapers of incense, acted as acolytes.

The dedication was long and complicated. Towards the end, the abbot issued from his tent, scattered rice on the wall, and offered small conical cakes, after which the procession circled round the *mendong* several times, clockwise. Just at that moment, however, some mules appeared from the Kongra pass track and insisted, with native obstinacy and in despite of every effort to deflect them, on going round the wall counter-clockwise. "These are no Buddhist mules," whispered Dr. Roaf in my ear, "they are Bőnpos," that is, adherents of the old Tradition which reigned in Tibet before the introduction of Buddhism. Small communities of these people are still found scattered about the country and are rather feared for their skill in sorcery. A lama once told me that a friend of his was travelling in a lonely valley when he saw one of the Bőnpos flying through the air above his head. Very much frightened he just kept enough presence of mind to remember that there is a charm which exorcizes their power. He picked up a pinch of dust and threw it at the Bőnpo, murmuring the formula of the god Tamdin. The flying man dropped at his feet like a stone, and implored the lama to spare him, which he did on condition that he renounced his dangerous practices.

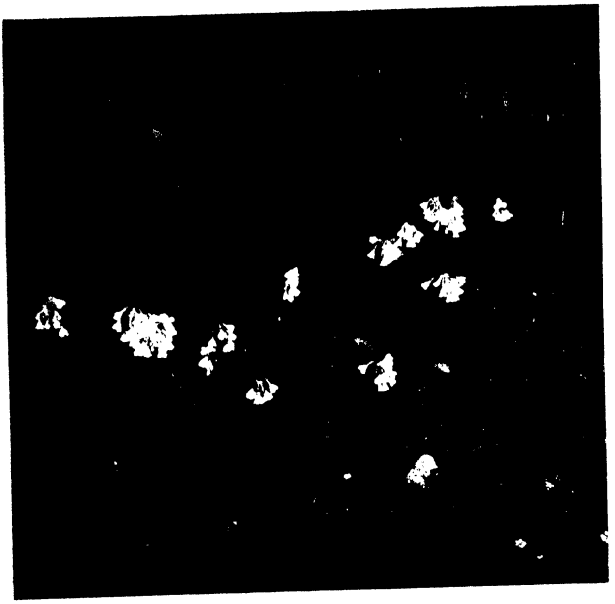
From all accounts, the Bőnpos are really harmless enough people. Very little is known about their Tradition, which reaches back into a dim, remote past, but casual allusions which have appeared in books of travel, suggest that it contains some remarkable features. At the present day the Bőnpos have assimilated many of their ideas and practices to those of the lamas; but they still follow the custom of doing things the wrong way round. This applies not only to the passing of *mendongs*, but even to the pronouncing of certain formulae backwards.

Mani walls are a typical feature of the Tibetan landscape. The one at T'hangu was an insignificant affair compared to the vast erections that mark the approaches to villages or monasteries in Tibet proper and Ladak; but it differed from them only in length, and there is still time for it to grow, as offerings of additional inscribed stones by the faithful gradually extend it. The *Mani* wall or *mendong* consists of a cement base on which flat stones are laid, each with its sacred text, of which



THE PILGRIM AND HIS MANI WALL





YELLOW PRIMULA



by far the commonest is the formula *Om mani padme hum.*

The origin of the *Mani* formula is attributed to the "All-Merciful Good Shepherd" Chenrezig, the personage who manifests himself in the Dalai Lama, and who revealed it for the profit of creatures, much as Our Lady revealed the Rosary to St. Dominic. In India, and in Tibet, where religious thought was moulded under Indian influence, a whole science of *Mantra* or Significant Sound is recognized which, in the same way as visual works of art, gestures and other rites of all sorts, helps to create "supports" or "props" for the reverence, attention and meditation of the worshippers. Of all *Mantras*, the *Mani* phrase is the favourite, and figures not only on the innumerable *Mani* walls leading into and out of every town, village, or monastery in Tibet, but also on many of the prayer-flags, and inside prayer-wheels great or small, operated by hand or turned by wind or water power. Thus every person travelling in Tibet is continually in touch with the idea, bathed in its influence, whether he responds consciously or not. It is wafted to him by all the breezes, in which also the birds are flying. The same words are repeated to him by the emphatic voice of the hurricane. The water he drinks may have passed over it and fishes swim within range of its message. His eyes, and also those of passing wolves and wild asses, are constantly lighting upon its beautifully shaped script, now chiselled on the face of some prominent cliff, now on a boulder, now on the flat stones of the wayside *mendong*, to pass which, in a correct direction, the traveller is frequently forced to go up a bank or to squeeze awkwardly through a narrow gap. So the whole country, from end to end, is pervaded with a devotional atmosphere; only the wilfully blind can altogether avoid responding to it, while wandering across the austere landscape of the sacred tableland.

Some travellers have been tempted to hold up these practices to facile ridicule. The *Manis* and other texts, the lotus-throned figures of meditating Buddhas that confront them from rock faces or by the roadside, seem to them nothing but the futile extravagances of childish minds. Yet one might ask oneself, which best becomes a civilized nation—the inscribing in beautiful lettering round the approaches of a city, say London, or about the countryside, of a verse or two of the Beatitudes or some of Shakespeare's most pregnant quotations, or the plastering of those same places with posters, vulgarly worded and

printed in aggressive colours, inviting passers-by to prove the transcendent virtues of Messrs. So-and-so's pills or pig food or such-and-such a hair oil?

The precise meaning of the *Mani* words has given rise to much discussion: I should by rights have said meanings, for it is a characteristic of traditional ritual sentences to bear several senses simultaneously, some literal and some figurative; a whole tissue of ideas is woven into them, which can be teased out one after the other, till the most far-reaching principles become exposed.

The literal translation of the formula is "*Om*, the jewel in the lotus, *Hum*!" In a general way it may be described as an act of assent to the divine aim. *Om* (derived from the Sanskrit *aum*) stands for Brahma, "the one without second" or "the inexpressible Absolute." As one writer has put it, "*Om* is the ultimate word which can be uttered, after which there remains nothing but silence." In it, therefore, are summed up prayer and praise and worship. *Om* is also the sound of all sounds, audible to the initiated ear, which is produced by the act of Manifestation or, as we would say, of Creation, which produces and nourishes this and other Universes. It might also be compared with Pythagoras's music of the Spheres.

Mani means "jewel"; therefore a precious thing, the Doctrine. *Padme* means "in the lotus"; it may refer to the world which enshrines the doctrine of Buddha (the jewel), or to the spirit in whose depths he who knows how to take soundings, will discover Knowledge, Reality and Liberation, these three being really one and the same thing under different names. Or possibly the lotus, the usual throne of divinities and saints, is simply attached as a divine attribute to the gem of doctrine. *Hum* is an ejaculation denoting defiance. Its utterer hurls a challenge, as it were, at the enemy, at the passions, such as lust, hatred and stupidity, the poisons which drug us into submitting to the tyranny of the Round of Existence. Or, viewed in yet another way, the adversary is no other than the cherished belief in an indissoluble "myself," and the desire for individual recompense.

But these explanations are elementary, a mere prelude to the secrets that await discovery by the initiate in the *Mani Mantra*. Even the shapes of the letters that compose it can be visualized, and made to correspond to ideas for the mind's

eye to fix on. There is no end to the truths that a competent teacher can extract from this one phrase. One of the less profound interpretations current among the lamas is to establish a correlation between each of the six syllables and one of the six classes of beings in the Round. Thus *Om* is made to stand for the world of gods, *Ma* for non-gods, and so on to *Hum* which evokes thoughts of the beings in purgatory.

A seventh syllable is sometimes appended to the classical six, the word *Hri*. It is said to signify, in the sacred language, the underlying reality hidden behind phenomena, the Absolute veiled by Form. It is therefore, in a way, a quintessence of the whole preceding six syllables.

It must not be imagined that I am claiming that every Tibetan peasant who passes a *Mani* on the left, or tells the beads of his rosary, nor every lama who casually walks along the temple courtyard turning the prayer-wheels, is conscious of all these meanings, any more than every Catholic who says "Hail Mary" is always conscious of its connexion with the doctrine of the Incarnation. There is every degree possible between a vaguely reverent feeling (as when taking off one's hat on entering a church) and a profound awakening of consciousness by the full and right use of the words as an instrument of association with metaphysical ideas. The man who lays a fresh *Mani* stone on the *mendong* may get no further than a naïve act of piety, aiming, as so much of prayer does everywhere, at securing material benefits. Not strong enough to contemplate escape from the Round into Buddhahood, he possibly dreams only of a pleasurable rebirth in an individual sense, or if he is of a somewhat more aspiring turn of mind, he prays for rebirth in a position more suitable as a starting-point on the Path of Enlightenment than the one he occupies at present. But the whole doctrine is potentially there all the same, awaiting those who care to avail themselves of it. "Knock and it shall be opened unto you." But if you do not trouble to knock, the door remains shut.

I have gone into this example rather fully, in an endeavour to help readers to grasp the theory of "supports" or "props" for meditation, on which both ritual and art depend. Even the involuntary act of breathing can be linked up with special thoughts and serve as their support. The sounds of intaking and outgoing breath are then evoked as a *mantra*, and serve to

symbolize the alternating rhythm of the manifestation and resorption of Universes. The end and aim of both Tibetan and Hindu teaching is to emancipate the mind from the separatist illusions of individuality, and to raise it eventually to a practical and irreversible realization of the non-dual character of all things, something higher even than Unity. Anything whatsoever, a word, a stone, an image, can be the starting-point of the chain of ideas. From any single point in the Universe the whole remainder can be integrated. Tradition concerns itself with the two indispensables, wisdom and method; if it propounds a doctrine, it must also teach the art by which we can raise ourselves to its comprehension. A certain missionary once said that if everything could be turned to a sacred use "why not worship my boot?" He spoke truth: a modern Balaam, he was taken to curse, "and, behold, thou hast blest them altogether." Not only his boot, but even his person, could, to the seeing eye, be taken for a pattern of the divine scheme: but every man has not reached that pitch of discernment and it is for art to supply more generally practical means than this.

Our time at T'hangu alternated between visits to the abbot in his hermitage and to the pilgrims, who had found a comfortable, dry lodging in a cave under a huge boulder that stood in the midst of the valley. Once our friend came to feed with us in camp. He was a most lovable person, so like a child, affectionate and unworried, and enabled by the conditions of life in Tibet, to carry out literally the Gospel precept, "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on."

The conversations in his cave made the hours slip by unnoticed. One day, after describing different countries through which he had travelled, the pilgrim said: "Are there many goats in England? And sheep? And if I turn up one day at your home will you take me in?" I assured him that it would be an honour. As to animals, there were plenty of sheep but few goats: cows were used for milking. "Oh, cows, how lovely, you have lots of cows?" The thought made him chuckle with pleasure. "Then you will receive me if I come to your house?" After that, he inquired about my family and I explained that my mother was nearly eighty. "Did you say that your mother is one hundred and eight?" cried the pilgrim,

in great excitement. He turned to his companion. "Our friend says his mother is one hundred and eight years old!" (This is a sacred number in Tibet: the beads of a rosary are so numbered and a hundred and eight Buddhas are often found drawn on a single scroll picture. To reach that age is considered exceptionally lucky, a mark of divine favour.)

He showed us his possessions, which, besides clothes, blankets, food, teapot and cups, included a small library of books wrapped in silk and a set of drawings of Lamas and Divinities, the size of playing cards. The whole together must have added up to a weighty load for carrying across mountain passes, but his physique was equal to anything.

His friend related to us stories of border warfare with the Chinese, about 1906 and after. Many of his relations had lost their homes, and even their lives, in the disturbances. The Khambas are the most warlike as well as the handsomest of the Tibetan races and are noted for their raiding propensities, their victims being usually the caravans of wealthy merchants trading between China and Lhasa. Kham seems from all accounts to be a romantic country of seers and brigands, artists and armourers, hermits and Homeric heroes. The Chinese in these campaigns were not provided with artillery and the walled enclosures of the lamaseries were turned into fortresses which had to be invested in true medieval style. There were several epic sieges, in which the defenders performed prodigies of endurance and heroism. No quarter was given to the vanquished and both the Khamba irregulars and the Chinese forces inflicted terrible atrocities upon their unfortunate prisoners. Some of the tales are almost past belief; but there is not the slightest doubt about their accuracy, for they have been recorded by the eminent French scholar and traveller, Professor Bacot, who passed through some of the subjugated country not long after.

He relates one history which, for superhuman heroism, must be hard to parallel, that of a young Khamba of noble blood who fell into Chinese hands and was asked to divulge information about his comrades. When he refused he was threatened with torture. I will not harrow my readers with the hideous details; but the ingenious efforts of ten executioners taking turn and turn about without interruption during thirty successive days, proved impotent to extort a single word. At last the Chinese Governor, at the end of his patience, suffered him to

be put to death. European history records a similar case, that of the Venetian Bragadino, who was captured by the Turks in 1571, in the Cyprus war. His martyrdom was spun out to ten days, and was endured with sublime fortitude. Such men are giants and their courage in the face of physical pain is of an order that we can hardly imagine. Yet such things have happened in our time, while we were perhaps lying comfortably in our beds.

It is a relief to turn from these horrors to the reports of Sir Eric Teichman, a British official who mediated between the Chinese and the Tibetans and helped to conclude a peace. The Tibetan regular forces, which took part in the final phase of the struggle in 1918, were commanded by a churchman, the Kalon Lama, who rode to the wars like the old mace-bearing bishops. Sir Eric pays a tribute to the humane treatment of prisoners by order of the clerical general, and the absence of reprisals. The cruelties had been the work of irregulars, desperately defending their homes. The Lhasa regulars, obedient to the instructions of their commander, seem on that occasion to have shown an exemplary restraint.

In their departure our friends the pilgrims were true to their character. They said no good-byes, but disappeared one morning early from the cave, leaving no trace except some clay models of *tormas* (conical votive cakes) in a niche in the rock, a thank-offering to the daemon of the place. Our friendship with them was a great experience. From the moment we met, it was as if we had known each other all our lives. Should we ever meet again, it will be as if we had parted but yesterday. We never asked their names nor they ours (no one thought of it); it is, perhaps, more fitting so.

The pilgrims' simplicity cloaked no emptiness. Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven—at last we had actually met and recognized the prototypes of the Gospel description.

Our time at T'hangu, apart from brief walks, was spent in the society of the pilgrim and the abbot. Nothing could have provided a greater contrast than these two men. The pilgrim stood at the pole of childlike and unsolicitous trustfulness, while the abbot occupied the opposite pole of extreme intellectuality and knowledge of the world—acquired, however, largely by withdrawing from the world and watching it from without. He had the urbanity, tempered with a dash of satire,

that distinguishes the man of culture everywhere. In the pilgrim we discerned the free spirit that never would grow up. Power meant nothing to him; he neither aspired to wield it nor stooped to worship it, he just ignored it. In this trait he and the hermit met on common ground; for the latter, though possessed of powers both temporal and psychic which brought with them a right to the service and obedience of others as a matter of course, yet set no store by such power because, by a ruthless stripping of all romance and sentimentality from life, he had learned to know it and the sensations which it brings, for hollow things. Thus both the men, otherwise so different, conformed in their own ways with the Buddhist ideal of unattachment, towards which they had travelled by routes that suited their respective natures. Both of them were founded upon the rock of the same idea, the illusory character of the phenomenal world and of their own egos; but the one knew it instinctively and revealed it by his attitude towards the quite simple problems of daily life, while the prelate had the added power of being able to define his ideas for the benefit of others. He was a born teacher, a Lama in the technical sense of the word.

Once, at a later date, I made the half-joking remark that "the Lachhen Lama is one of those who are said by the Tibetans to have passed to the stage beyond good and evil." I had inadvertently happened on the truth; for, after we returned home to England, I read in a travel book by the Marquis of Zetland, then Lord Ronaldshay, of how he had been told by the same abbot of Lachhen himself that he had reached a penultimate stage on the way to Enlightenment, where pairs of distinctions lose their meaning, even that of evil and good.

He who shall have mastered this doctrine will be freed from sin, and also from virtue.

The quotation comes from one of the Tantrik books, I think, but I have been unable to trace the reference. I have never met anyone who so impressed me "as one having authority, and not as the Scribes." During daily interviews with him I felt my attention captured beyond any chance of straying. His room at T'hangu was similar to the one at Lachhen monastery. A softened light entered by the window. There was an altar

on which glowed a single copper lamp; over it hung a truncated cone of paper, similar to a lampshade, inscribed with texts and tilted at a slight angle, so that the hot air in rising caused it to revolve gently. There were, besides, a few small tables with books, his finely chased teacup and an ancient painted scroll of some deity under his "fearsome" aspect. A rug was laid for guests to sit on; and a young monk, who was charged with the abbot's personal service, kept up continual relays of cups of tea and rusks of puffed rice.

There we conversed by the hour. The abbot's speech was slow, but not devoid of a humorous turn. A wide range of subjects was touched on and it seemed to me that he was turning over some plan in his mind which concerned me; but perhaps I only imagined this.

One day he suddenly asked: "Why did you go up to the Zemu and try to climb snow mountains? I would know your true purpose." A difficult question to deal with on the spur of the moment: to such a man the usual humbug about finding it good for one's health or character, or that one was pursuing some pseudo-scientific object, would have been an insult to his intelligence. His piercing glance was like Ithuriel's spear, compelling truthfulness. So I made a lame answer: "We love to go to wild places for their solitude, to avoid the bustle of town life." "You will never find it thus," he replied. "You have no idea how to seek it. It cannot be won by such methods. It will not be obtained nor acquired nor gained nor procured nor encompassed." (I have tried to give an impressionistic rendering of his words in Tibetan.) "The solitude to seek is the concentration of your own heart; if you have once found it, it will not matter where you are." Perhaps he was thinking of his own spiritual ancestor who said, "For him who hath realized Reality it is the same whether he dwell on an isolated hill-top in solitude or wanders hither and thither." Then placing a tiny image of the Buddha on the table, he said, "Learn to fix your thoughts on this, and then you may know solitude, but not otherwise." "But surely, my lord abbot, the great saint Mila Repa himself has sung the praises of mountain and wilderness, and recommended them to those who wish to master the art of solitude. He who aspired to Buddhahood within the span of a single life, found that the undistracted atmosphere of mountains offered the best setting in which to

woo the solitary spirit. Does he not introduce many of his poems with the couplet:—

> Obeisance at the feet of Marpa the Translator
> May he grant me strength to persevere in my mountain retreat?

I myself am weak and cannot easily learn even the elements of this art in the middle of crowds. If Mila Repa found it helpful, can we be blamed for wishing to escape from the turmoil sometimes?"

I felt I had just kept my end up—not that I am presuming to compare the love of solitude as the mountaineer knows it, with the retreats of a Mila Repa, or of the abbot himself, intent on achieving complete calm for the benefit of suffering creatures. Such a comparison would be blasphemy or pure romance. Yet in the mountaineer's conviction that there is a fulness of life to be found in the lonely places, which is lost in the hurry and noise of the world, he can claim to have more in common with the contemplative ideal than with the uneasy ambitions of the man about town.

It was now my turn to question. "Tell me truly, can anything be learned about solitude without a teacher?" "It cannot." "So it seems that a study of the sacred books by oneself won't reveal the way to it?" "It will not reveal it." "Is that, then, your final word? The first thing of all, for him who would enter on the Path, is to find a teacher?" "A teacher is essential; without him you will get nowhere, for you will not learn to fix your mind." He then quoted a popular proverb, in metre, the gist of which is:—

> Without milk you won't make butter,
> Without barley you won't brew beer.

And so on, till it ends:—

> Without meditation you won't attain Buddhahood.

I then asked him: "Could we possibly stay on here now and study with you?" He replied: "Yes, if I were remaining here myself: but this year I have arranged to go to Tibet. This happens about once in six years. In a few days' time I start for Tashilhunpo." "And where do you advise us to go and seek our teacher?" He pondered a little and then spoke. "One of two places would suit you; either Tashilhunpo or else the

monastery of the Great Accomplishment at Mindŏling ('the place where Deliverance is ripened'): that's the place for you."

One day he talked about the famous French traveller and scholar Madame Alexandra David-Neel and we were much excited to discover that he had been her teacher during the early years of her Tibetan studies. When he learned that I had actually corresponded with her, he brought out several old letters of hers which he treasured. He expressed the warmest appreciation of her as a pupil. "She learned the Doctrine very thoroughly," he said, "and quicker than most. She was a splendid pupil; but she got into trouble with the authorities through a contravention of the frontier passport regulations, which ended in her expulsion from Sikkim and the fining of the village that had supplied her coolies. Later on she went to Lhasa from China. I would be very happy to see her again: ask her to write to me." The French lady is certainly remembered with affection in Lachhen; everyone who had known her paid tribute to her charm, vivacity and cleverness, and Samdub, our young friend at the monastery, told us how kind she was to him as a little boy.

One day the young lama who, with a small kitten, was the sole attendant upon the hermit, arrived with a message. "Will Mr. Pallis please come at once to the hermitage? The Precious Master requests his presence." I hurried up the hill and found the hermit fingering a large book. "Be seated, please." To the novice: "Serve tea to the gentleman." Then again to me: "The other day you spoke of Mila Repa. Here is his Legend. I wish you to read it aloud to me." He pointed to a chapter and I began, regretting that I had left my reading glasses behind, though fortunately I was not helpless without them. After a few sentences the abbot interrupted me. "No, this is not what we want: it does not contain the important parts of Mila Repa. It is not the history, but the spiritual poems that you must read from." He turned up another volume and I began again. The language was classical and rather harder than the prose biography, and I was not proficient in the old tongue. I managed to extract a little sense as I went along, but must confess to have missed a lot. I read on and on. Whenever a stumble occurred, due to the worn printing of the wood-blocks, the hermit corrected me: he knew it all off by heart, no unusual

accomplishment among Tibetans. Then he would recite or read a little himself and expound obscure words, turning them from the ancient into the modern idiom; sometimes he stopped to enlarge on the sense of a passage. It was a curious experience, alternating between moments of lucidity, half-understanding and total obscurity.

The afternoon passed and still the reading continued. As the sun began to decline outside, the twilight in the room increased and the print was no longer clearly distinguishable. I began to demur slightly. Looking at the master I perceived a strange look in his eyes, as if some change were about to come over him; but its nature was not, at the moment, plain. He remained silent for a minute or two and then said abruptly: "Now depart—go!" Closing the book of the poet, I rose and bowed. "And what of to-morrow? Shall I return in the morning?" "No, not till I send word. Perhaps the day after to-morrow." Next day, however, the novice came down to say that the hermit had entered into a trance out of which he would not emerge for several days. No one might seek speech with him or approach him. At that last interview his spirit must have been hovering on the brink, about to take flight to undreamed-of realms. I thought of the passage in St. Paul:—"I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."

So ended my strange visit to the abbot. As he was about to leave for Tibet, we decided that there was no point in lingering in T'hangu in bad weather; otherwise we would have asked nothing better than to spend several months under his regular tuition. Leaving a letter to be delivered to him on his emergence from meditation, we packed up and walked down to Lachhen, overtaking Samdub and another monk on the road. They were returning to the village for the services of the Sacred Month (May-June) in which the entry of the Buddha into Nirvana is celebrated, the climax of the Tibetan year that corresponds with the Christian Easter.

CHAPTER XIII

Of Missionaries and Moths

AT Lachhen live two Swedish lady missionaries who run a school and an industry for the making of blankets. I wished to find out what was the attitude of the lamas towards the representatives of an actively competing creed, so I tried to sound Samdub by putting the innocent question: "What do those missionaries do in the village?" "They teach in a school, and weave rugs," he replied. Repeated inquiries entirely failed to elicit any resentful answer; the propaganda motive behind their work he seemed to ignore. I have had several subsequent opportunities of discussing the question of missions with other lamas, especially in Ladak, where the Moravians run an old-established proselytizing agency; but on no single occasion have I heard a spiteful word. Once, when I was moved to comment on this fact, I was told that "we are taught that it is a sin to speak disrespectfully of other religions or to treat their ministers in unfriendly fashion."

This precept, which goes back to the times of the Buddha, has been faithfully observed by His followers, with few exceptions, and makes Buddhist history pleasanter reading than the grim records of the more militant religions. The spirit of the Gospel ought, one would think, to have been enough to restrain the growth of bigotry; but unfortunately, like a noxious weed which, though uprooted, leaves its seed in the soil, the sectarian spirit germinated afresh from the exaggerated distinction made between Chosen People, privileged by right of membership, and heathens or even dissident Christians; between the unregenerate and those who fancied themselves "saved." The habit of harping on this division of mankind into camps was one of the less happy inheritances from Judaism. Hatred, masquerading in its new-fangled dress of righteous indignation against error, found a way of playing the yoke-fellow to Chris-

tian love. The resurrection of bigotry followed close upon the Resurrection of Christ Himself.

Already in Apostolic times violent personal hostility towards heathen and heretic had shown distinct signs of raising its hydra head. Many of the early theologians, though good and courageous men in other respects, exhibited, even in the days of their persecution by the Romans, a bitterness towards dissenters and a readiness to ascribe to them the worst motives, which foreshadowed the adoption of the persecuting habit by the Church as soon as it, in its turn, acquired a position of dominance. There is nothing like a strong consciousness of one's own righteousness and a contemptuous pity for those dwelling in outer darkness, for producing a state of mind which is only separated by a step from the mentality of the inquisitor. The dispensing of gifts by one who places himself on a pedestal, only too often masks uncharitableness in the heart. This is, above all, the temptation of the missionary.

The open-minded spirit of Buddhism is shared by all other Traditions of Indian origin. It proceeds partly from the Oriental temperament, which tends to non-interference and, in the case of cultivated intellects, from the realization that any one man's vision of the truth is likely to be only very partial in this relative world. The idea of the same truth presenting a different appearance when looked at from several view-points, and of various paths converging upon it, is familiar in Eastern thought. Furthermore, with so impersonal a conception of Divinity as the Orient tends to hold, it is almost impossible for anyone to fall into the state of thinking that he stands in a privileged position in regard to God. An anthropomorphic habit in referring to the Godhead, makes it easy to ascribe to It partisan sentiments of the most blasphemous kind. The believer with God on his side, does not take long to identify his own rivals with God's enemies. When he finds himself worsted he comforts himself with the crown of martyrdom. In his eyes the besetting sin is rebellion; to the Buddhist and Hindu it is Ignorance. Nevertheless the Buddha and other Indian teachers, being aware of the human tendency to faction, showed foresight in formally condemning the sin of irreverence towards other religions, and thus cut the ground from under the feet of potential bigots. An edict of the great emperor Asoka, pattern for all humane rulers, who reigned in the third

century B.C. says: "Do not decry other sects, do not run them down, but on the contrary, pay honour to all that in them is worthy of honour." One sometimes wishes that the official teachings of Christianity had been equally explicit in respect of this practical application of Christ's law of Love. One has only to reflect on what would happen if a band of "Evangelical" missionaries were suddenly to arrive, as they do in the East, in an Irish parish and plant themselves opposite the Catholic church or vice versa, in order to admit that in these matters we are behindhand. In such a case, even if no heads were broken, or if the attacked party turned the other cheek to the extent of abstaining from violent invective, it is doubtful whether a question such as I put to Samdub would have been answered without some derogatory comment or other, possibly taking the form of mild ridicule. The early apostles of Buddhism managed to bear their good tidings to distant lands, without having to heap abuse on existing Traditions. They addressed themselves first and foremost to those who were capable of forming a considered judgment, the intellectually and spiritually gifted élite. The Doctrine percolated downward into the mass of the people, which it leavened more or less. In all religions, a wide membership tends to a dilution of the vital message. Tibetan Buddhism is no exception; yet in the case of the modern Tibetans, my own observations have led me to think that more of the Buddha's teaching has sunk into their general consciousness than they are usually given credit for, though few of them could answer the set questions of a catechism.

The professional missionary stands at a disadvantage. It is unavoidable that he should be much concerned with the counting of heads of converts, for these are required for the statistics of the societies who collect subscriptions. The less scrupulous make use of disguised bribery, such as the distribution of medicines or the offering of free tuition. Few, nowadays, are ready to trust frankly to the doctrine of Christ as their only weapon. Ostensibly charitable deeds, operations in hospitals, gifts to the poor, and the care of orphans, can become, for the doers, so many deceitful crimes in masquerade —in spite of the undeniable gain to the beneficiaries—if they are designed, even in part, to be used as a stalking-horse.

Those who feel a Christian call to the service of the needy can do wonderful work; but then, in my opinion, they would

do better to leave the proselytizing to others. The man who wishes to play the part of an apostle is ever well advised to come empty-handed.

Bringers of new doctrines have never been unpopular in the East. One has only to remember the treatment accorded to the Jesuit Desideri who visited Lhasa in 1716. He was at once granted permission to preach and when he wrote a book to refute the errors, as he considered them, of the lamas, far from resenting it, they all rushed to borrow it. Desideri himself says: "My house suddenly became the scene of incessant comings and goings, by all sorts of people, chiefly learned men and professors, who came from the monasteries and universities, especially those of Sera and Drepung, the principal ones, to apply for permission to read the book." This was happening only a few years after the Huguenots had been driven from France and when in most of Europe heretical books would have been publicly burned by the common hangman.

Though in our eyes uncharitableness and pride are among the worst temptations, I think I am right in saying that a Buddhist or Hindu would always consider them secondary to that of wilful Ignorance. He would reserve his strongest blame for the habit of attacking other people's beliefs without first, like Desideri's lamas, making a genuine attempt to understand those beliefs as professed by their ablest exponents, not only by the unlettered herd. A scientist who presumed to find fault with a rival's hypothesis, without giving evidence of more than superficial acquaintance with its principles, would make himself ridiculous in the academic world. In one who tries to make himself the mouthpiece of God, this attitude, not at all uncommon, is not only intellectually censurable, it is a sin against the Holy Ghost.

Apart from doctrines, even in regard to actual statements of fact, there is a temptation to try to paint a lurid, rather than a balanced, picture, underlining moral and material abuses and suppressing whatever is favourable: otherwise, the emotions of parishioners at home will not be raised to the pitch of inducing them to open their purses wide for the cause. Nowadays, if a missionary said: "This nation has a fine culture. Their moral code is below ours in these points, in those superior. Their religious ideal is a high one and their clergy include mediocrities, rogues and saints. On the whole I think our ideal

to be still better. Please subscribe generously," he would not have half the success of his more sensationally-minded colleagues. I can think of several honourable exceptions; but my meetings with a good many missionaries and the perusal of their literature, have led me to the opinion that, on the whole, their activities in Asia are disruptive and their methods open to severe criticism.

When we returned to Lachhen we were informed that heavy rains had washed away paths in the Tista valley and that it would be advisable not to linger if we wished our baggage to reach Gangtok in safety. These rumours afterwards proved to have been exaggerated; but at the time, having no means of verifying them, we decided to stay no more than two days, just time enough to sort out the remaining stores and attend a service at the *Gompa* (monastery), to which we had been specially bidden by Samdub.

We were, however, first invited to tea by the headman, in his own house, where we were introduced to his wife and little son, as well as to his mother, who, as commonly happens in Tibet, ruled the home. There is no friction on that score, since family life is strong and governed by conventions that no one thinks of questioning. The interior of the house revealed an astonishing number of the amenities of civilization, considering the small size of the village. One has only to compare it with an Alpine village of similar character to see the difference in the level of taste. The living-rooms, as usual in Tibet, were on the first floor, the principal one being a combined chapel and entertaining room. On either side of the altar stood a tier of pigeon-holes, each harbouring a sacred tome; these books are probably seldom read; they are more often treated as mere objects of reverence. After taking our seats on rugs of very fair quality, we were served with tea in cups with finely-chased silver mounts. There was chopped mutton with spinach for the meat-eaters, and rice in china bowls for all. The best thing in the house was a beautifully fashioned copper brazier used for keeping the teapot warm, with a pair of silver handles ending in dragons' heads and a delicate band of ornament running round the edge. It was an outstanding piece, with a flavour of the early Chinese about it, though the shape is classical all over Tibet. It is reproduced opposite page 852.

The important event was, however, the visit to the *Gompa*.

The service was timed for noon. A little before that, we walked up the hill and were received with due ceremony by the lamas, who presented the usual white scarves. We were led into an upper chapel above the main temple—most Sikkim temples are built in two stories—where we were served with tea. After that we climbed up a ladder through a dark hole in the ceiling, trying to avoid bumping our heads, and found ourselves in a still higher chapel containing an altar dedicated to the presiding Lama of the monastery, spiritual ancestor of succeeding abbots. Samdub explained that "when the Precious Master is sunk in meditation he then becomes this"—pointing to the image. It was the only occasion when I ever heard the theory advanced that a Lama becomes identified with his predecessor through the act of meditation. Most abbots are treated as incarnations of the original person without qualification of time, function or place.

When the monks had assembled in the temple we were led downstairs. In their anxiety to put us at our ease, they unearthed their three European chairs, and placed them in the porch facing the doorway, doubtless supposing that no sahib was capable of sitting on the floor. When the service began we occupied the chairs, but felt horribly self-conscious and out of the picture. I tried to compose my mind by repeating a few *Manis*, but it kept wandering, unable to focus on what was going on in the church. My chair seemed to be burning the seat of my trousers. I fidgeted and fidgeted till I was able to bear it no longer; at last I sprang up and slipped inside and squatted against a side wall.

The service was most impressive. Perfect order and attention reigned, but free from any suggestion of drilled precision. The clergy were arranged in two choirs facing inwards and seated Buddha-fashion on low platforms covered with carpets. All had musical instruments; trumpets, eight feet long, oboes with a strong reedy tone, various percussion instruments such as drums of all sorts and sizes, and cymbals. Others held a handbell, with a very sweet note, in the left hand and a *dorjé* or thunder-bolt sceptre in the right, the pair which symbolizes the marriage of Knowledge and Method, the inseparable precursors of Enlightenment. From time to time the orchestra played a refrain; then chants followed, accompanied by drums or bells. The participants seemed absorbed in what they were doing:

there was no shuffling or gazing around such as we had seen in the slack monastery at Gangtok. One sensed the influence of the abbot's teaching, imbuing his pupils with real seriousness and devotion. Samdub happened to be sitting facing me. As he wielded his bell and *dorjé* his hands described graceful ritual gestures. There is a whole language in these *mudras*, to give them their Sanskrit name, for one who knows how to read their message. A faint smile occasionally flitted across his seraphic countenance. Most of his companions knew the whole service off by heart; but he followed in a book placed on a stand in front of him, periodically turning the page over with a light flick of his finger. There was nothing to mar an atmosphere of perfect edification: the only thing that spoiled the picture somewhat, was ourselves with our incongruously cut clothes which seemed aggressively out of place. I felt as if I ought to be sent away like the man in the Gospel who attended the King's feast without his marriage garment. It is extraordinary how hopeless it is to try to reconcile importations from the anti-traditional world with any traditional scene. I longed more than ever to be allowed to take part in the life of these people under conditions which would relieve me of all constraint.

In the evening Samdub and a friend of his came down to supper at the bungalow. When the meal was served, we waited for our guests to help themselves; but they paused as if embarrassed. Thinking they might be shy, I dipped a spoon in the curry, but had only just time to drop it unobserved as they started to intone a long metrical grace. When it was over they took some curry and conversation began. Samdub told us something of his life. He belonged to the village and was a special pupil of the abbot for whom he professed enthusiastic admiration. They used to rise at 5 a.m. and usually retired to bed about sunset. They apportioned the day between study, occasional services and meditation under the teacher's direction. They gave occasional instruction to the laymen of the village, and the Precious Master preached a sermon from time to time. They spent not less than three months of the year in meditation; at a later stage even more time might be given to it. During retirement, they kept silence and each man attended to his own needs. Samdub was certainly a diligent pupil, with a grace and refinement all his own. It was strange to think that he came from one of the same peasant families

as our rather argumentative and uncouth porters. Probably, had he not entered the Church, he would have been just like the others. His refinement seemed to be largely the result of environment—though with him the right material happened to be there also. A more spacious life and cultured surroundings and contacts had brought out his latent possibilities.

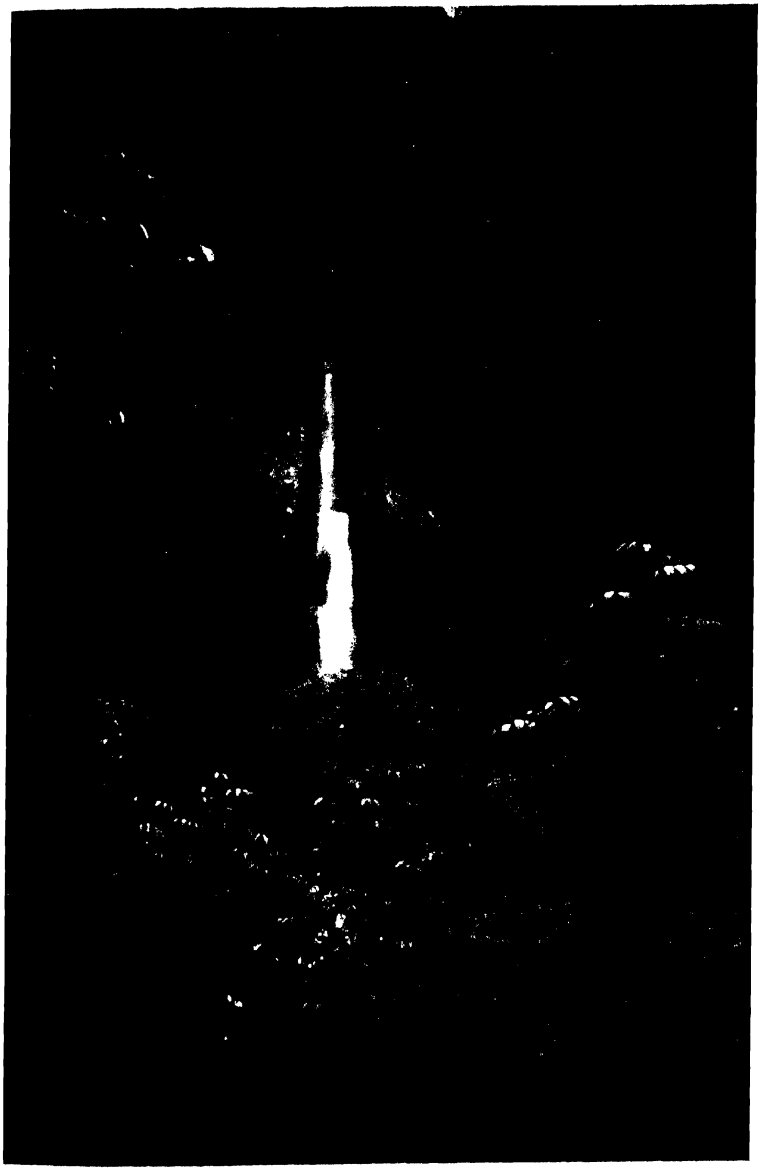
The monsoon is the season for seeing the Sikkim forests in their glory. As we returned down the Tista valley, which we had only seen in the April drought, it was hard to believe that so much growth could have happened in two short months. Innumerable creepers which, on our earlier passage, were only just beginning their upward journey, had now overtaken the trees and bushes, whose new shoots were vainly striving to escape their pursuing tendrils. A bewildering tangle of lesser plants covered every inch of ground under the big trees—ferns, selaginellas, heart-shaped leaves of a coppery red with variegated markings, strawberries with fruit equal in size to a medium garden variety, but with a flavour that belongs only to the wild. Round Tsungt'hang we came upon the giant white Sikkim lily growing in the glades to a height of about eight feet. A little way below the same village we found two species of white orchid; their huge spikes described a prancing curve through the air high above our heads. These orchids, although not rare, were never seen in large numbers together, as if Nature, with her unerring taste, realized that the orchid is not a flower to be admired in masses, but that the eye must be allowed to take in each spray in the unblurred definition of its form. We recognized a woody creeper, which wound its way luxuriantly round the boughs of smaller trees, as a hydrangea; in all things, except in its manner of growth, it resembled the homely potted variety in English greenhouses.

We lingered to pick some green raspberries, as delicious as the strawberries, but we had to keep a careful watch for the small black leeches that swarmed in the undergrowth. We found that a well-adjusted puttee was a sufficient protection; but a few leeches managed to evade our vigilance and made their way to exposed parts higher up, whence, after gorging themselves with blood, they eventually dropped off unperceived. If detected, a leech can always be made to release its hold by a pinch of salt. It is useless to pull them off as they may leave their grappling hooks in the flesh, and, in that climate, the sore is apt to

fester. The bites bleed rather a long time because of a liquid which the leeches inject in order to retard coagulation. We were told that there are times when leeches swarm in such numbers that one cannot even walk down the centre of the path with any hope of eluding their attacks.

Towards Dikchhu, in the tropical belt, the splendour of the woods attained its climax. Among the trees, broad-leaved varieties, reflecting much light from their leathery surfaces—a characteristic of warm damp regions throughout the world—contrasted with the feathery grace of acacias, tree ferns and bamboos, and the twisted sheaves of sword-blade *Pandanus*. The air was laden with heavy scents from invisible flowers overhead. Sometimes the path itself was strewn with fallen blossoms, the confetti of some sylvan wedding. Passing through this ordered confusion of forms and tints, where every step brought us face to face with a new fantasy, proof against every effort at analysis, we felt we were in the grip of a vital power, in whose presence man and his ethical preoccupations were of supreme unimportance. It is her very indifference which makes men fly to Nature for comfort when they are in trouble, for she is a mother who listens, but volunteers no interested advice.

Endless diversity of green gives the character to these woods. Flowers only play a subsidiary part in the landscape. The task of supplying brighter colours is left to butterflies, which emerge in great numbers at the approach of the rains. Among the common varieties are many yellow or white butterflies, related to the orange-tips and clouded-yellows; also swallow-tails, mostly velvety black, with patches of white or red on their elaborately scalloped hind-wings. The common Himalayan species, known to us from the Satlej, dusted over with gold and with a blue patch on the lower wing, is also abundant. Then there is the famous mimic, the Leaf butterfly, which, when its wings are closed, looks exactly like a leaf, complete with stalk and veinings, and the Map butterfly, white, with dark meridians and parallels, and the brick-red *Charaxes* and *Apatura ambica*, shaped like an enormous Purple Emperor, but brown with a broad iridescent band of blue crossing both wings. When it is flying, the blue mirror flashes as it catches the light. This butterfly takes the place of the blue-winged *Morphos* of the South American jungle, from whose wings vandals have made ugly paper-weights and brooches. A fritillary, a near relative of our



FORESTED SLOPES OF THE UPPER TISTA



KANGCHHENDZÖNGA AND SIMVU FROM SINGHIK
From torrent to summit over 24,000 ft. vertical

English Queen-of-Spain, lends a homely touch. In dry spots, especially on the path leading from Dikchhu up towards the Penlong pass, various members of the *Danaine* family, relatives of the common Monarch of U.S.A. hover round the trees. They are all large butterflies, some reddish-white with black wing-tips, some dappled grey and others (of the genus *Euploea*), dark brown velvet suffused with sapphire, one of the loveliest of all Indian butterflies. In addition there are no less brilliant day-flying moths, and innumerable bees and wasps of monstrous size encased in metallic panoplies of green, blue and purple. At night, moths, beetles, ant-lions and praying-mantises come out in immense variety; but we did not get much chance of observing them till we reached Gangtok itself, where the electric light standards drew vast numbers every evening. Whether we were looking at a hawk-moth or the huge Atlas himself with his nine-inch wing-span or an almost microscopic plume-like species, we never ceased to marvel at the intricacies of the designs which had been bestowed on them. How hopelessly inadequate and artificial those theories seemed, that attempted to account for such beauties on utilitarian grounds, and which till recently were supposed to have said the last word on the subject. The prevailing bright colour of an insect or flower can certainly be advantageous to its possessor as a means of calling a mate, or warning off a bird, or attracting the pollinating bee; but it is only an artist who can find a use for the minute lines and dots, the delicate scroll-work, the silvery hairs, the tiny points of colour that turn orchids and insects into so many miracles. Without the presence of some sort of inherent Will in all things, it would seem the maddest waste. For whose eye must the controlling cells go to all this trouble?

At Singhik there occurred the first break in the monsoon. Till that time we had been almost continuously enveloped in mist, with heavy rain at times. We went to bed in Singhik bungalow without a hint of a change in the weather; but about midnight someone chanced to go on to the veranda and saw the mountains unveiled and silhouetted against a moon-lit sky. At dawn we witnessed a great wonder. In front of us lay the garden, bounded by a fence of purple bougainvillaea and datura bushes covered with white trumpet-shaped flowers. Looking beyond, we could see up into the side valley of Talung, thickly wooded, which drains the snows of Simvu. Suddenly that

mountain, scene of our defeat, and beyond it, the overwhelming mass of Kangchhendzőnga, were aflame, not with the pink glow of the Alps, but with an orange so unearthly, that a painter who faithfully reproduced it, could hardly have escaped the accusation of fancifulness. Then the curtain was lowered once more over the peaks; but we walked down to Dikchhu in radiant and unwonted sunlight. The same evening, taking two stages in one, we reached Gangtok.

We were now forced to make fresh plans, if we wished to carry on with our studies; for Tibet for the present was out of the question. After toying with several proposals, each of which proved to contain insurmountable objections, we decided to go to Ladak, a small kingdom of Tibetan affinities, which an incongruous accident of history has united to the Indian State of Kashmir. Excepting Western China, which would have involved too long and costly a journey, it was the only district outside the political frontier of Tibet, where there were monasteries of sufficient size and importance for our purpose. It meant that we had to go down to Calcutta and take the train across to the western end of the Himalaya; but it was a case of Hobson's choice, so, after saying good-bye to our friends at Kalimpong, we set out for our new destination and were soon speeding across the great plain, which the monsoon had reclothed with the lively green of young crops.

PART THREE

LADAK—1936

CHAPTER XIV

Kashmir and Purig

THE most pleasant way of approaching Kashmir is to detrain at Lahore and then to continue by car across the foothills, by the Banihal pass, a journey which occupies two days. Jammu, the old capital of the present ruling dynasty, is a possible half-way house. It possesses a number of Hindu temples, with elegant spires tipped with golden finials; but many people will be surprised to hear that one of its most interesting buildings is the dak-bungalow maintained for travellers. It must have been erected when the Indians first began to copy European styles of architecture and to abandon their own. The rooms are vast and almost oppressively lofty. The entrance leads through a colonnaded portico, of a bastard Roman Doric order.

But the ceilings are quite another matter. Not one of them but is an exquisite example of Kashmir painted and gilt wood, covered with the most intricate geometrical and floral arabesques. Each room has a different pattern; how many passers-by must have seen them without paying the least heed! It is evident that when the rest-house was built, the local workers entrusted with the roofing followed their traditional usage and made something refined and expressive. They had not yet learned how to skimp work or thought; in those respects, the masons had anticipated the wood-workers. The result is somewhat incongruous; it is the epitome of a melancholy history. If some of my readers happen to pass through Jammu, I hope they will not forget to glance upward while they are having lunch in the dining-room. Nails have been driven into the panels and electric fans fixed: in time it will all perish, unless the archaeological authorities can protect these lovely ceilings as they deserve.

Having emerged at last on the fabled plain of Kashmir, we drove along straight roads enclosed between rows of white-

stemmed poplars, to Srinágar the capital. We occupied a house-boat on the river Jhelam. Europeans are not permitted to own freehold property, because the rulers of the State are apprehensive lest the excellence of the climate, which is like a dry and sunny version of our English one, should tempt retired employees of Government or Commerce to settle there in embarrassing numbers, in order to avoid the strain of re-adapting themselves to the long winters and socially less spacious conditions of home. Such a colony would tend to create problems inseparable from the presence of a permanent racial minority, especially one with rather extravagant ideas about an adequate standard of living. As a result of this ordinance the foreign residents mostly inhabit house-boats. The waterfront fringed with poplars, willows and plane-trees, with its long lines of floating dwellings made fast to the bank, is reminiscent of Oxford or Maidenhead, though the river here is swifter than the Thames. Kingfishers dart about or perch fearlessly on the mooring-ropes while they gulp down wriggling frogs. A beautiful species of Paradise fly-catcher is also common: the male is white, the female red, and in shape they are not unlike some Birds-of-Paradise, whence the name.

The European end of the city, where the General Post Office, the club and the modern shops are situated, has become very trippery, and innumerable touts dog the footsteps of the tourist. The nuisance is less noticeable in the old quarters, where people are civil and where it is possible to wander unmolested. Among the bric-à-brac shops real bargains in antiques are still to be picked up by the discerning. Some of these shops have come to be called by strange names, born of the mispronunciations of the tourists who form their principal clientele. Among the most famous are "Ganymede" and "Suffering Moses"; I never found out their correct names, as their owners have long since given up all hope of defending themselves, and now frankly use the queer titles even on their printed cards.

Much of Srinágar looks like a blend of Holland and Venice, with a labyrinth of shady canals and bridges, through which the boats of hawkers of fruit and vegetables thread their way. There are little private landing-stages and spacious mansions dating from the seventeenth century, but now mostly falling into dilapidation. The material is a fine mellow brick; the walls are broken here and there by windows or balconies closed with

lattices of wood forming complex geometrical interlacings. On most of the roofs grass is growing, and the effects of impoverishment are apparent on all sides. One wonders how long it will be before some municipal council affected with zeal for modernizing the city in the name of slum-clearance, will condemn them to demolition. These noble and well-constructed houses, if people had any taste, would be reconditioned and become the most sought-after residential property.

They must have been magnificent in the heyday of Mughal power, when Kashmir became a regular summer resort for the Court during the hot weather: the practice of moving the Government of India up to the hills has, of course, continued to this day. Srinagar was a centre of art, renowned for metal-work, weaving and painted wood. The Kashmiris are, as a race, exceptionally dexterous with their hands; but hardly any craft worth the name survives now, although a lot of hideous carving and papier mâché is still turned out. One can purchase bureaux, prickly with the horns of dragons and the manes of lions in three-quarter relief, cigarette-boxes and trays covered all over with finicky flowers done in shiny paints, and white felt rugs imported from Eastern Turkistan and embroidered locally in nightmare colour-schemes. Yet in most of these things, if trouble be taken to trace back the patterns through serial stages of degradation to their origins, they will be recognized as the lineal descendants of once harmonious designs. Only in the case of rough glazed pottery, used by the very poor, and despised by the bourgeoisie for its cheapness, have a few good traditional forms survived. We purchased a pleasing vase with a biscuit-coloured glaze for three annas (probably too high a price), which can hardly be bettered for showing off a branch of some flowering tree, or leaves turned to copper by the touch of autumn frost.

But what of shawls, the craft for which Kashmir is specially famous? Plain white shawls, as fine as a spider's web, are still woven and drawn through rings to impress the customer. But shawl-making as a creative art, with the flowered borders so popular in Victorian days, is now a thing of the past. During the nineteenth century, when no lady of quality thought her trousseau complete if it lacked its Kashmir wrap, and two hundred pounds was not an out-of-the-way price to pay for a good specimen, the weaving of shawls, under pressure from the

dealers, was speeded up excessively, to the detriment of the workers' eyesight. In more modern times, to combat the abuse, the authorities are alleged to have discouraged the manufacture; though one would have thought that a rational control of hours and conditions of work would have answered the purpose. However, even had the shawl-making not been frowned upon, it is doubtful if it would have survived in the face of the universal tendency to falsify processes, which has ended by killing almost every art in the Orient within a couple of generations. As in carpets and other textiles, the first step would have been the introduction of chemical dyes, because their violence was mistaken for brilliancy, or else on the flimsy plea of "saving time"; though the proportion of time spent on the actual treatment in the vats bears no relation to the months needed for the weaving of a shawl. The colour-sense of the people, formerly unerring, once having been disturbed, deadly logic subconsciously working in the artist would have taught him next to alter the designs also, to save labour and thought. Patterns would have become bigger or more repetitive or more obviously striving after self-advertisement. The result would have been the same in the end—extinction. There seems to be no trifling with the artistic ideal. To recover the sense of craftsmanship one must retrace one's steps right back to the point where the traditional and anti-traditional ways parted; but if through a readiness to compromise on this or that, the true tradition be not restored in its integrity, imitation of earlier models still results in something alien. The neo-Gothic and neo-classical and neo-Indian and neo-palaeolithic are examples of what follows in such cases.

In making preparations for a journey into the interior, the newcomer to Kashmir is faced with certain difficulties not met with in other parts of the Himalaya. Many of the agencies engaged in supplying the needs of tourists are far from reliable. The country is very cheap indeed, but the standard of honesty seems low and one cannot indulge in that carefreeness about prices and property that makes Garhwal and Sikkim so easy to travel in. We were fortunate in enjoying the advice of a leading resident of many years' standing, Mr. George Stavridi of the Oriental Carpet Company, and of his daughter Miss Helen Stavridi, who had made several enterprising journeys in the interior and knew all that was worth knowing about local conditions.

A young Panjabi clerk was given the job of purchasing stores for the party; we were quite taken aback by the exiguous sums he expended. For this young man, the bazaar was an arena, bargaining a sport and price-cutting a subtle branch of psychology. For instance one of the things he had to purchase was a small milk-can. He walked into a shop and asked: "How much is that?" "Eight annas." "What, do you take me for a millionaire?" He quitted the shop with an inimitable air of injured virtue and walked into the premises of the first shopkeeper's nearest competitor. "That fellow over there had the impudence to ask me eight annas for a milk-can. What will you give it for?" "Six." "You must be out of your senses: I've never in my life heard of such outrageous extortion." "But I will reduce it to——" Unheeding, he swept out of the second shop and entered a third. "I wish for a milk-can of this size: how much is it?" Before the man could quote a price, another shopkeeper who had been standing by, listening to the previous encounters, pushed his way up to our friend and nudging him, whispered with a wink: "You come to my place: I'll let you have it for four"; but by that time a fourth man had rushed up and was offering it for three annas six pice and so on, till the whole street was afoot in fierce competition. The young imp was well aware of the lack of solidarity among petty retailers in India and their readiness to whittle their profit down to nothing in order to undercut their next-door neighbours. Finally he closed for the price of two and a half annas, with the owner of the shop into which he had entered first of all, having in the interval circled right round the bazaar back to his starting-point. He bore off his trophy triumphantly, pursued by indignant cries of "Dirty Panjabi swine" and other still more colourful imprecations from the whole neighbourhood in chorus.

Guided by our friends' advice, we applied for our transport animals to one Muhammad Ramzana, who keeps a shop on the Bund or river front. He is a very straight-forward man to deal with and looked after us splendidly at most reasonable cost. The ponies engaged to carry our modest baggage for the first week, as far as Dras, were obtained from the village of Ganderbal at the entrance to the Sind valley: they were to meet us at Wayl bridge, eighteen miles from Srinagar; as far as that point the road was fit for wheeled vehicles, so that everything we

needed could be carried in a small van. For our permits, and for information about the Treaty road to Leh in general, we applied to the Residency office where we met the secretary, a Panjabi called Khan Muhammad Din, who had been sixteen times to Ladak. From the first moment of being introduced to him we perceived that we were dealing with a man of unusual insight and kindness: this early esteem became cemented into still closer friendship in the course of subsequent meetings in Leh. I am glad to take this opportunity of expressing our thanks to him once again.

We did not, of course, think of leaving Kashmir before paying a visit by boat across the marshes and lakes to the famous Mughal pleasances of Nishat and Shalimar, the first built by Shah Jahan and the second by his father Jahangir. The craft used was not the swift *shikára*, which is the easiest method of communication on these waters, but a massive barge with a hut woven of rushes in the centre, in which the boatman and his family slept and cooked. These barges are punted in leisurely fashion through the reed-fringed channels that offer a passage in the tangle of pond-weeds which choke a great part of the lakes. Huge pink lotuses lift their heads high out of the water; they are much overpicked by natives, who offer them in bunches to tourists. In quiet backwaters the surface is starred with a small yellow water-lily. Villages and cottages, surrounded by fertile market gardens, occupy the solid ground, while floating islands formed of water-weeds bound together, on which tomatoes and marrows are planted, allow the peasants to push their productive holdings out on to the surface of the lake itself.

Punting up one of the water-alleys cleared in the reeds, we reached the steps of Nishat, below the principal pavilion of the garden, which is a simple building with projecting balconies closed with the usual lattices. Some officious hand has thought fit to fix a notice with the name *Nishat* in large block letters in the middle of the façade.

This dream-garden is planned on the classical Mughal model, with a row of water-channels and fountains passing down the centre and out through the main pavilion itself. The water comes from a source in the hills which form a steep background to the garden, and flows down a series of terraced levels, leaping each wall by an ornamental shoot. Lawns, like the softest

of carpets, are edged by beds of sweet-scented carnations, heliotropes and every other sort of garden flower. It is probable that this part of the work has been enhanced by the efforts of recent gardeners, for the English can always be trusted to make the best of a garden. It is the one art which they will never allow to be filched from them. Most of the trees of the garden are gigantic plane trees, the famous *chenars*, introduced by the Mughals to console their homesick hearts with tender memories of the old domain of their family, away to the north of the Hindu Kush. The gardens must look very different now from the time, three hundred years ago, when they were planned and the young trees planted.

Another hour of punting brings one to the Shalimar, a name redolent of sentimental ballads. In its setting, it is not quite so perfect as the other garden, because its gates do not touch the edge of the lake. A short walk between rice-fields, some vivid green and some of a reddish brown, like fur, leads to the entrance. The plan is not unlike that of Nishat, but the slope is gentler and it is not possible to take in the whole at a glance; nevertheless it is just as lovely and romantic, and in the architecture of its two pavilions it surpasses the other. One kiosk in particular, of black marble, is built in the characteristic square style of the time of Jahangir, with bracketed capitals and overhanging eaves that cast deep shadows, so that the sunlit garden outside has the magic of an enchanted realm. The ceilings are of the same decorated wood as in the dak-bungalow at Jammu; but curiously enough, the latter, though so recent and not built to house princes, is somewhat the better example. The two gardens, rightly esteemed among the perfect achievements of human genius, must have been a rare solace to sovereigns weary of the cares of empire. They showed extraordinary wisdom in not adding a residence, so that the fuss of Court administration found no excuse for invading their retreat—an act of conspicuous foresight in princes who, elsewhere, were tireless palace builders. When holidaying in Kashmir they must have resided in a huge camp, for Srinagar contains no Mughal palaces either. There is a castle on the hill dominating the city, but whether it was used as a royal domicile I do not know.

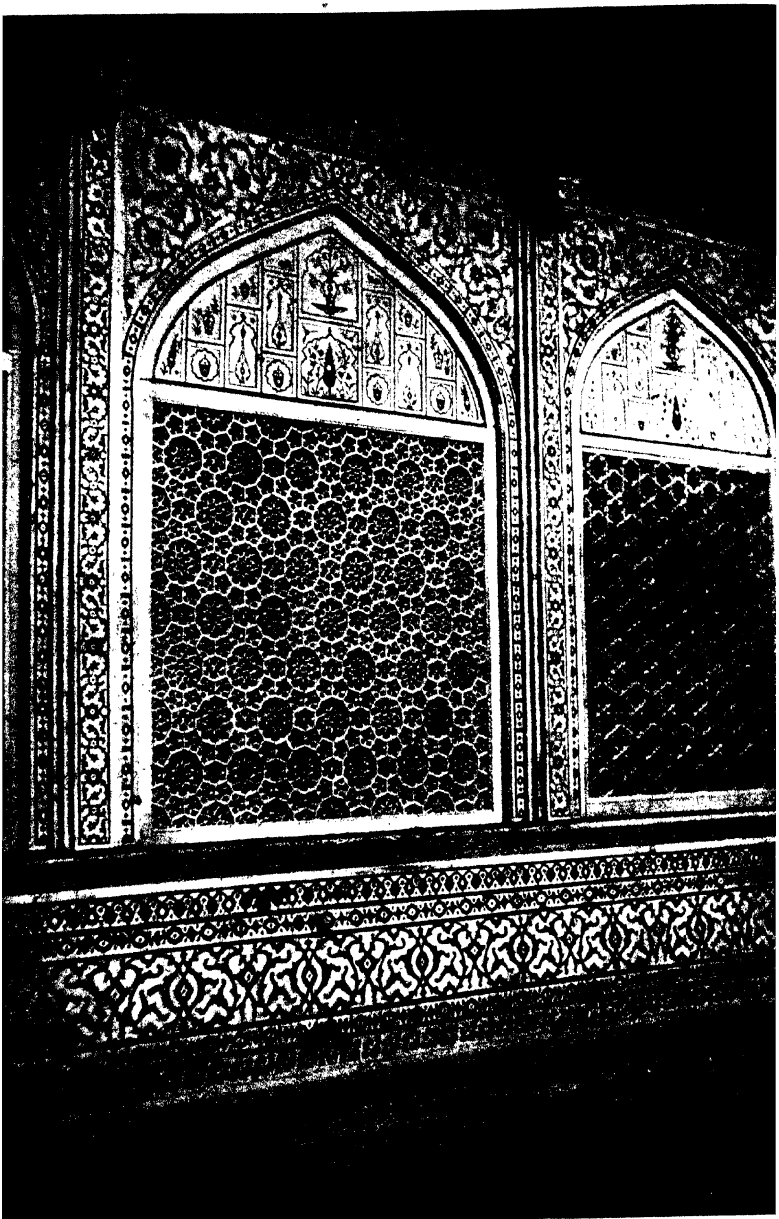
One can picture Jahangir with his fascinating and masterful queen, Nur Jahan, picnicking at the Shalimar and being diverted by the recitation of Persian lyrics or witty epigrams, or else by

the disputations of learned philosophers, in which the royal pair took a special delight—surely a true sport of kings. Or perhaps they sat and turned over the leaves of albums illuminated by the incomparable skill of the Mughal miniaturists, that strange art in which the force of a common tradition made co-operation between artists possible to an unheard-of degree, so that three separate masters, each of outstanding genius, collaborated in the production of a single small page, one doing the drawing, a second putting on the colour, while the portraits fell to a third. Often the artists would exchange their respective functions, yet these miniatures show a unity which makes it hard to believe that they were not the creation of a single brain. If anyone doubts this, let him go to the India Museum, in South Kensington, and look at one of London's greatest treasures, Jahangir's album of illustrations to the history of his father, Akbar.

At Nishat, one can picture the peaceful and compassionate Shah Jahan, under whom Hindustan enjoyed almost uninterrupted tranquillity and good government, sitting at sunset with the lady of the Taj, his adored consort Mumtaz-i-Mahal ("Crown of the Palace"). They are looking over the lake which shimmers like molten gold, past the arch of a camel-back bridge which marks the point where a raised road crosses the marsh towards the fort of Srinágar that shows up black against the orange transparency of the sky. It was then that the genial monarch lived his happiest moments in the enjoyment of perfect conjugal love, little dreaming of the bitter cup which he must drink in his old age, when his own son, the able but narrow-minded Aurangzib, was to depose him and reverse his tolerant policy, to the eventual ruin of the empire. It is suggestive to note that the latter prince, with the typical prejudices of the puritan, was no friend of the arts; under him began the slow decadence of Indian culture and the disintegration of society which made India fall such an easy prey to later invaders. He did not share his father's love of building—his mosque at Benares, the slender minarets of which can be seen from the railway, was put up rather in order to annoy the Hindus than from any love of architecture. He removed his patronage from musicians and dancers who had made gay the feasts of his predecessors, so they plotted a stratagem to soften the heart of their dour sovereign. One day sounds of mourning reached his ears as he sat near the window: when he inquired the cause, it



PAVILION IN THE SHALIMAR GARDENS



MUGHAL LATTICES AND INLAYS

was reported to him that a long and doleful funeral procession was passing in front of the palace. "Whom are they burying?" inquired the emperor. "Sire, it is Music herself: the guild of musicians are holding the obsequies of her and of her instruments." "An excellent idea," cried Aurangzib, "tell them to dig the grave deep, that she may be in no danger of a resurrection!"

Among the minor campaigns undertaken by the generals of this harsh ruler, was one into Ladak; the king of that country had invoked Mughal aid to repel a Mongol-Tibetan invasion. It was accorded, but only at the price of conversion to Islam. The Ladaki prince, however, reaped but a short-lived advantage from his nominal apostasy from the ancestral faith, for, though the Mughals routed the host of the invaders in a great battle, as soon as they had withdrawn, the enemy reappeared and dictated terms afresh. From this time the fortunes of the principality, which in the height of its power had extended over all Western Tibet right into the valley of the Brahmaputra, fell into decline, though it preserved a precarious independence with its boundaries curtailed to the present limits. But the Mughal empire was also moving towards dissolution, largely as a consequence of Aurangzib's religious intolerance, which goaded the Hindus into revolt—by contempt and petty vexations, be it understood, for no case is on record where a single unbeliever suffered death or loss of property for his faith—and reduced most of India to anarchy, paving the way for the gradual subjugation of the peninsula by the British. During the period of disintegration in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Kashmir, after a spell of cruel oppression at the hands of Afghan upstarts, which ruined its prosperity, fell, in 1815, under the new military power of the Sikhs. A general of one of their vassals, the Dogra Rajput prince of Jammu, pushed the invasion into Ladak and, though meeting with fairly determined resistance, overran it between 1835 and 1840. From that moment its story as a separate state was ended, and this once glorious kingdom, in violation of its ethnic affinities, remained henceforth an unnatural appanage of a State mostly inhabited by Mussulmans and ruled over by a Hindu; for when the Sikhs in their turn fell foul of the British, Kashmir, and with it Ladak, were handed over to the Dogra chieftain, who, from having been a petty tributary to the Panjab, now emerged as the ally of

British India, the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir, and has remained in control ever since.

Srinágar to Leh is an easy journey of fifteen days, but the time can be shortened by doing double stages. Rest-houses have been built at intervals along the route and the villages are bound, as part of their taxes, to provide transport animals if required, rates of payment being laid down in a schedule obtainable at the Residency office. Supplies of fodder, firewood and certain basic artices of food are also catered for, so that the traveller has not to forage far afield. In certain cases it is pleasanter to avoid the conventional halting-places and to split up distances in a different proportion, camping on ground of one's own choosing. Till one is clear of Kashmir proper, it is wise to be rather wary before turning pack-animals out to graze, as there exists a species of coarse grass which produces a severe and often fatal colic in any pony unlucky enough to swallow it. One of our ponies eluded the vigilance of its syce and grazed on this grass. Next day the animal showed signs of distress. Then with rest and care it seemed about to recover; but it died on the tenth day.

After crossing the Zoji pass, one enters a country of stony mountains and high-lying valleys, its barrenness relieved only where irrigation by means of leats has been able to harness the torrent-waters. In such favoured situations, there are oases of an intense green, kept moist by regular flooding, which takes the place of rain in this region, where the annual fall dwindles to a bare ten inches or less. Set at convenient distances apart, *baghs* or gardens, grassy enclosures shaded by willows, have been planted, kept fresh by daily watering. They offer charming camping-grounds; but when occupying them a watchful eye should be kept lest the caretakers charged with the duty of watering should open the irrigation channels without bothering to ascertain if any tents are standing in the grove. Otherwise the unsuspicious camper will suddenly notice a silvery edge of water stealing snake-like across the turf. In a moment the peaceful camp is humming with activity; men snatch up blankets or stores from the path of the oncoming flood, others rush with stones to deflect it at a higher point, while yet others shout out to the villagers, not without uncomplimentary epithets, calling on them to run and block the main breach. The waters stop short in the nick of time, the hubbub subsides

and calm enfolds the camp once more.

The number of visitors proceeding into Ladak in any one year is wisely limited, so as to avoid throwing an excessive strain on the scanty resources of the province. Permission to enter has therefore to be obtained from H.M. Resident in Srinágar. But for this measure, the peasants, tempted by a prospect of ready cash, might improvidently barter away too large a share of their produce, leaving themselves short in the lean season. The whole administration of the Treaty road is simple, efficient and to the advantage of all concerned.

At last the appointed day arrived (July 12th) and we set out by car for Wayl bridge; but before we emerged from the warren of narrow alleys, we passed under the walls of a vast building of remarkable appearance, forming a regular quadrangle, with a peculiar wooden tower, a cross between a pagoda and a belfry, surmounting the middle point of each of the four sides. Built from small, flat bricks of a lovely warm tint, on a foundation of stone, it was entirely without ornament; but the proportions of every part and of the tunnel-like arch at the entrance were so faultless that it did not seem conceivable that anyone could wish to add to its perfections. Inquiry revealed that this was the great mosque of Srinágar, erected in a style peculiar to Kashmir during the reign of Jahangir.

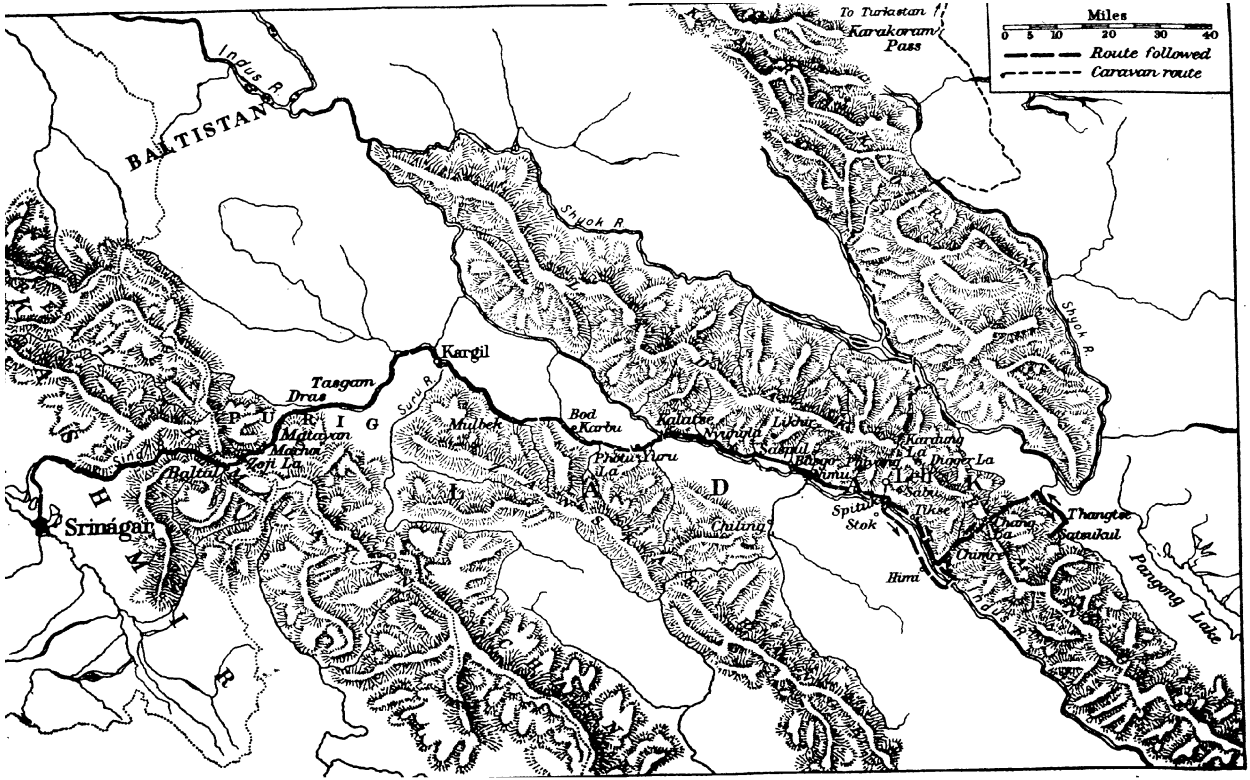
No one had the heart to hurry past, so we stopped the car, and, removing our shoes, entered the mosque. The interior is as austere as the outside. Only a black marble niche bearing an Arabic inscription serves to point the direction of Mecca; otherwise the impression relies on the proportions of the surrounding arches and the forest-like colonnades bearing the roof, each pillar being the smoothed trunk of a gigantic deodar tree. The most subtle play results from the exact size and disposition of the bricks, comparable, in the kind of effect sought and obtained, to the flutings of the Parthenon columns.

In the centre of the court is a basin where the faithful can make their ablutions, and two old trees which sound a tiny note of tenderness in the presence of the overwhelming majesty of God under His aspect Unity, the doctrine which this building seems to proclaim with a single voice. Nowhere has the Mussulman genius achieved a more crowning triumph; it is strange that books on Indian architecture usually omit any reference to this mosque, though it must be admitted that it does

not lend itself to photography as easily as some more ornamental buildings. The peculiar minarets, which are not altogether happy in their design, must derive their shape from some non-Moslem prototype; they are not unlike the wooden temples on the Satlej, which are classed in what is often called the "Himalayan style." This mosque had a narrow escape from destruction on the annexation of Kashmir by the Sikhs. Ranjit Singh closed it for a time and it fell into disrepair. It is fortunate that no one laid covetous hands on its colossal timbers. Later on, a subscription was levied for its restoration, and the whole population contributed handsomely.

At Wayl bridge we crossed the Sind and followed its wide and verdant valley, which yields crops of rice and maize. We passed through prosperous-looking villages, shaded by huge walnut trees. The containing hills were not steep and their sides were clothed with conifers; we could have fancied ourselves in the Tyrol. Neither the valley itself nor the distant peaks suggested anything on a Himalayan scale; but the narrow side-valleys were wilder and more rugged. I followed a torrent for a long way during a day's halt at Gund. The slopes were extremely abrupt and savage-looking, with long drifts of old avalanche snow lying about, through which sweet-smelling bushes with white flowers, probably viburnum, poked their branches. Delphiniums, almost as big as our garden varieties, made brilliant splashes of blue on the steep sides of the cutting. Chestnuts, with a few pines, formed the woods. The undergrowth was also chestnut, but of a different species, rather lanky and profusely flowering with bunches of huge pink blossoms. This was true Himalayan country again.

The pass across the main range, the Zoji La, the lowest in all the two thousand-odd miles of the Himalaya, is reached from Baltal rest-house, on the Kashmir side, by a path which rises some 3,000 feet by easy gradients. Pines soon gave place to birches, the trees that usually are found nearest to the snows, then the path, rounding a rocky corner where, in shaly crannies, grew huge tufts of pearly-white columbine, unexpectedly took a level sweeping curve to the right. Here we saw the last of the birches, save for a few gaunt stragglers higher up the pass, gnarled and riven under the lash of the storms. A biting wind attacked us; through mist we caught a distant glimpse of white peaks. Before us extended an even snow-bed, in the centre of


Miles
0 5 10 20 30 40
Route followed
Caravan route
To Turkestan
Karakoram Pass
Indus R.
BALTISTAN
Shyok R.
Kargil
Tasgam
Dras
Suru R.
Mulbek
Bod Karbu
Kalatse
Likhir
Nyimu
Karzung
Dungri La
Sabu
Tikse
Spitok
Stok
Thangtse
Saspul
Chuling
Hima
Pangong Lake
Matayan
Matma
Zoji La
Baltal
Srinagar
JHELUM R.

which lay the half-eaten carcass of a horse, with a solitary vulture perched on it. The great bird, gorged so that he could only rise a few inches off the ground, scuttled away, aiding its legs with the beating of its magnificently spreading wings. Shivering we stopped to open rucksacks and take out warm sweaters and scarves, for the edge of the wind was keen: then on, over more snow-beds for some little distance, till we suddenly became aware that the streams had begun to flow the other way. It was the top: we were astride the Himalaya, but we could not quite agree upon the exact point of the divide. Where the snow had melted, skeletons of animals had been uncovered, calling up images of some old slave-route in the Sahara. Though such a low pass (11,800 feet) and a simple walk under summer conditions, the Zoji is one of the most murderous, accounting for a number of animal lives, and human lives too, levying its deadly toll by means of sudden avalanches, or engulfing its victims in bottomless drifts.

In the winter months, though trade is quiet, a number of Turkoman *Hadjis*, or pilgrims bound for Mecca, come from Yarkand to Leh by the Karakoram pass on their way to India. They are a happy-go-lucky lot and frequently get stranded in bad weather, at the cost of frostbitten fingers or toes, which are in due course amputated by local practitioners or, if they are lucky, by an English lady doctor who works devotedly in one of the Indus villages. Then, disdaining prudent counsels of delay, the *Hadjis* push towards the Zoji, their minds possessed by the sole thought of reaching the sacred goal and assured of a crown of glory if they should fall by the wayside. The inhabitants of the villages just north of the pass, though nominally co-religionists, exploit the pilgrims unmercifully, withholding their help in crossing the pass until the travellers have consumed all their food, and then reprovisioning them at an exorbitant charge. Finally, having bled them white, they help them down to safety on the Kashmir side.

Four miles beyond the pass stands a rest-house called Machoi and some way short of it there is a small cabin connected with the telegraph, in a flat alp where several glacier streams meet; it is a delightful place for a camp and would make an excellent centre for a climbing holiday. The grass cropped short by sheep is silver-grey with tiny edelweiss. It is said that the shepherds who frequent these pastures are given to pilfering,



THE ZOJI LA



EREMURUS IN THE ALP OF NIMARG



and it is unwise to leave a camp unguarded.

At Machoi we encountered a troop of Baltis with a slightly Mongolian cast of face, fine-looking men clad in serviceable homespuns, and of a cheery demeanour. We knew that their dialect belonged to the Tibetan group; but its harsh sound seemed far removed from the soft tones of Lhasa which we had heard farther east. Written Tibetan abounds in consonants; but the majority of these are now mute, only a single one, out of a group of two or three, being sounded. It suddenly occurred to us to address these Baltis in our ordinary Tibetan, but to sound all the mute consonants. In an instant they were beaming, and chattering to us in voluble Balti. Evidently in this remote land the language has retained very much the sound it had when the Tibetans first emerged into the light of history. At that time they were a rapacious tribe delighting in plunder and cruelty, dreaded over Central Asia as the Vikings were once feared in Europe. Their tongue then matched their deeds, bristling with harsh combinations of sounds. Then came Buddhism with its genius for drawing the sting from the war-like lusts of peoples, and the Tibetan language seems to have softened in sympathy. Acting on this idea that the Balti language reproduced an early form, we not only pronounced the mutes, but racked our brains for all the obsolete words that we could remember. The plan seemed to answer, and we carried on quite an intelligent conversation and were credited with a mastery of their dialect—utterly undeserved! After some weeks among "Aryans," it was exciting to string the old monosyllables together in concise phrases and to see again flat noses and almond eyes.

Four miles beyond Machoi, we came to the earthly paradise of Nimarg, again a meeting place of several streams, where every inch of ground was hidden beneath a carpet of irises, potentillas, delphiniums, gentians, verbena, onions—both metallic purple and yellow—primulas, anemones and other species too numerous to mention. On certain slopes, creamy *Eremurus*, three feet high, stood up like lilliputian woods. A pink goosefoot formed the foundation in most of the spaces left unoccupied by other flowers; but on the floor of the valley the prevailing colour was the blue of synoglossum; pink lousewort and edelweiss fringed the streams.

This alp owes its luxuriance to the fact that it receives the

residue of all the heavily-charged rain-clouds that escape being precipitated on the Kashmir side of the divide. Though Nimarg is frequently drenched, the rainfall shrinks rapidly beyond this point, being only twenty-two inches at Dras, a few miles on, while at Leh it is no more than 3·26 inches.

A couple of miles from Nimarg, a group of mean hovels with a sordid little rest-house marked the village of Matayan. Most of the houses were too low to stand upright in, and the inhabitants seemed poor and suspicious of strangers. Though the moisture had markedly lessened, there were still many flowers. The marshy flats were rich with purple iris and on one bank, near the path, grew a specially lovely pale cream anemone. We gathered seeds of this exquisite flower on the way back and tried to induce them to germinate in a Cheshire garden, but unfortunately without any success. *Eremurus* was still found in abundance just below Matayan; but each mile brought fewer and fewer flowers. At Pandras, five miles farther on, the Alpines had almost disappeared and plants characteristic of dry climes, many of them aromatic, replaced them; thymes, chamomiles, huge umbels and a few leguminous plants armed with thorns were growing among rocks; great rose bushes made cascades of pink blossom down the face of the cliffs. The banks of the river were stony and at times it raced furiously through narrow gates of serpentine marble, like black slag. At Dras, which is a fairly large village with a few general utility shops and a camping-ground in the usual willow grove, we felt that India was already far away. This was the highly-coloured landscape, the way of life and the invigorating air of Central Asia.

We had been told that we should pick up Ladakis at this place, so we had only engaged our Kashmiris to accompany us thus far. Actually the information was inaccurate and we were compelled in consequence to take on Dras men as far as the stage before the Ladak frontier. They were an unprepossessing crowd and not too trustworthy. We had to be watchful at night against theft: a blanket was stolen off a sleeping porter in the enclosed garden where we camped.

At most stages on the Treaty road, eggs are to be had from an official supplier appointed to attend to travellers; but if several parties happen to pass through the same village within a few days there may be a shortage. Nevertheless, as a Kashmiri petty official assured us, it is the statutory duty of the

tehkidar or caterer, as laid down by the regulations, to produce eggs on demand. "But what happens if the hens don't lay?" we asked. "They are bound to," he said pompously, "it is the Government rule." Acting on this assumption we put in an indent with the caterer at Dras, a crafty-looking old fellow with a flowing beard; but he, after endless badgering, only managed to produce three eggs, one of which was cracked. Two eggs seemed rather a short ration for three hungry people even if we made an omelette, well aerated by vigorous beating and swelled out with milk, such as cheap restaurants at home love to serve. We were beginning to entertain serious doubts as to whether the hens in Dras had really been sufficiently socialized to lay in obedience to Government behest, when our old friend Khan Muhammad Din rode up, having followed us from Srinágar on faster horses; for it was the time of his yearly inspection of the road to Leh. "Have you all you require?" he asked, after greetings had been exchanged. "Everything, Khan Sahib, except eggs, which seem to be scarce." The Khan transfixed the caterer with a severe look. "What is this that I hear? Eggs must be found immediately." Then to us: "How many do you want? Oh! a dozen? All right, the caterer will supply a dozen eggs." The old peasant muttered something about to-morrow morning. "No, this minute. Bring a dozen here so that I may have a look at them," corrected the Khan sharply. The caterer went away and must have read the Riot Act to the fowls, for he was back in a few minutes with a dozen eggs, among which we even recognized the selfsame cracked one of his earlier offer.

While at Dras we were invited by the local schoolmaster, a Hindu, to witness a drill display by his pupils in a field by the river. He was assisted by another Kashmiri dominie with a black beard and by a little Ladaki Moslem, dressed in the usual Tibetan garments, but crowned with a red fez, who acted as gym-instructor. It is curious how this profession seems to bring out the same characteristics all the world over. The little man was bubbling over with heartiness and energy and kept urging on the class in the same provokingly sharp voice that we remembered from gym practice at home. The orders were given in three languages, mixed entirely haphazard, Hindustani, English, and Balti.

"*Ek, do, sum, bji* . . . left, right . . . one, two, *chik, nyis*

. . . wake up there you . . . number three wake up . . . *tin* . . . *sum* . . ." (Here a sound thwack on number three's shins.) " . . . double ! "

There was one little boy who stood and watched but took no part in the exercises. Although it was a grilling hot day he was upholstered in layers and layers of clothes as if prepared for the Arctic. It was surprising that he did not liquefy there and then. He proved to be the son of the postmaster, another Kashmiri Hindu who, like all his kind, looked on his job in this rough country among uncouth barbarians as an exile. " Sir, these people are utterly failing in appreciation of the benefits of education ! " complained the pedagogue. Thus lamenting, the two functionaries doubtless kept each other company during the long evenings of winter. The postmaster was perpetually fussing lest his precious son might be starting a cold, and so kept adding fresh wrappings. He brought the child later on to Dr. Roaf, who found him a perfectly strong and healthy little fellow—he must be exceptionally resistant to boiling—though pampering will doubtless succeed in turning him into a hypochondriac in the end.

The display ended with a tug-o'-war. The whole school took part, and the two strongest boys were placed, not at the ends, as with us, but in the centre. They used no rope, but the leaders simply grasped each other's wrists, on which each took the pull of some fifteen tough and excited young Baltis. The event was fiercely contested, so it can be imagined what a strain their muscles had to stand. One wonders why it should be necessary to go in for a " Keep Fit " campaign with such people.

From Dras to Kargil is the hottest and least interesting part of the journey. On leaving Dras, the path passes two ancient stones carved with figures of Buddhist divinities and bearing Tibetan inscriptions. There was evidently a time when this district, like Ladak, professed Buddhism, and its replacement by the Mussulman religion must have greatly altered the appearance of the villages. Except for these monuments, almost every trace of art has been swept away, and even the jewellery of the women is crude in the extreme. The whole standard of living is low and the people seem morose and unambitious for more than mere existence. The Italian explorer, De Filippi, observed a great difference in standards between the Buddhist and

Moslem districts. Women in particular, who here do not wear the veil, all seemed scared and shrivelled up; but many of the children appeared normal and healthy. Perhaps the causes of the low condition of these people are to be found in social institutions rather than in heredity.

There is one attractive halting-place some thirteen miles beyond Dras, where it is worth stopping a night for the mere pleasure of camping there. It is an oasis called Tasgam, set like a verdant island in the midst of a sea of shimmering radiation, with multi-coloured tangles of wild flowers along the edges of its corn-fields, and a bewitching willow-wood to camp in. The inhabitants of this and neighbouring hamlets belong to a tribe who, though speaking a dialect akin to Balti, are a hairy non-Tartar race. In Tasgam they looked healthy enough; but in villages farther on they were afflicted with all sorts of nameless diseases.

The administrative headquarters of the whole district between the Zoji and Ladak, which is known as Purig, are at Kargil, a small township which has grown up round a bazaar of Indian-owned shops which draw their subsistence from the Turkistan-India transit traffic. In addition it is the centre of a considerable tract of fertile land, beautifully tilled and planted with trees; its irrigated terraces reach far up the hillsides and into the minor valleys all around. It is the seat of an official of the Kashmir Government, who, among his other duties, is charged with the examination of travellers' passes into Ladak. The place is beautifully situated on a wide, fast-flowing river, the Suru, and has an air of prosperity which makes an agreeable change after the miserable villages round Dras. The inhabitants are largely Baltis, clad in hard-wearing brown woollens, with flat round caps to match.

The greenness of Kargil is more than usually joyous, because the last few miles before the village are tedious, with torrid stretches of sand, trying both for pedestrians and horses. After passing the head of an iron bridge, where the road to Skardu, capital of Baltistan, forks off, a bend brings one opposite a thin line of poplars, just over the river, which widens as one advances in the parallel direction, until the whole panorama is unfolded, with groves, bubbling rills of pure water, and waste ground covered with purple iris, different from the ones we found below the Zoji. These irises have been put to charming use by the

peasants, who train them in tufted belts to mark the divisions of their fields.

As we entered the first grassy patch on our side of the river, we caught sight of a couple of tents, pitched not far from the roadside, by a tempting spring of icy water which welled up from under a bank. Some small dogs and children were playing there, two or three women sat gossiping, and the menfolk lay stretched on the ground fast asleep. One woman caught our attention by her clothes, which were not of the style usual either to Baltis or Ladakis, but looked rather like those that we had last seen on Tibetan women at Kalimpong. A closer look left us in no doubt: this was indeed a true Tibetan, there was no mistaking her cast of features. Excitedly we greeted her and put a few questions. "Where have you come from?" "I come from Leh," she answered in the same dialect as we had used. "Are you a Tibetan? Where is your home?" "I belong to Tsang province; my village is close to Shigatze, but my husband is a Ladakpa." Then, in growing animation: "Wake up, you." (She shook her slumbering mate violently without making the least impression.) "Get up, quickly: do you hear? Here are some gentlemen speaking Tibetan!" She plied us with questions till she had satisfied her curiosity and then in her turn she told us her life-story. It was typical of that roving spirit which gains possession of so many Tibetans and sends them roaming from the frontiers of China to the edge of the Karakoram, quitting their homes without fear or care for the future. Our friend the T'hangu pilgrim was one of these wanderers, now here was another. Her father had died long since, but her mother was living when she quitted her home several years before. Though poor, she had made a pious resolve to go on pilgrimage to the Mountain of Precious Snow, better known by its Indian name of Kailas, close to the sources of both the Satlej and the Brahmaputra. All the way behind Nepal she trekked, now alone, now with others on a similar quest, till she reached the foot of her mountain. Then she took part in its solemn circumambulation, clockwise of course, for it, like a *Mani* wall, being sacred, must be passed on the left, with the right side turned towards it. The circuit concluded, instead of going back to her people, a desire was born in her to proceed still farther afield to other shrines and monasteries of the far west. So she found herself at last in Ladak. At Leh she had

met her husband-to-be. Now they had a large family, and she was trying to eke out her scanty resources by breeding Lhasa terriers. She had some twenty dogs with her and was taking them down to Kashmir to sell to the English ladies.

This unexpected encounter seemed a good omen. We lingered for some time talking to her, and then walked on towards our camp, at the far end of Kargil, where the Ladak road starts. We felt excited by the prospect of re-entering a Tibetan country the next day, where we would be free to take up those studies which so enticed us. We had been waiting for this moment to put into execution the long-cherished plan of adopting, as far as possible, the Tibetan way of living, both in regard to food, dress and personal habits. We wanted to absorb the spirit of the Tradition by direct experience, subjecting ourselves to its laws as had been done formerly by Csoma de Kőrös, the founder of Tibetan studies, as well as by certain others who shared his views. There comes a time when it is difficult to rest satisfied with the rôle of observer; one must participate, and if this spiritual association is to be thorough, the external trappings, which provide the background, must also be made to agree.

But to accomplish such a purpose certain conditions must always be laid down; otherwise the plan may degenerate into masquerade that does no good to anyone. The conviction behind it must not only be sincere and strong, but also well-informed. There is a price in knowledge that must be paid as an entrance-fee through the traditional wicket-gate. Accurate observation of the people's habits and the motives that govern them is necessary, so as to preclude any danger of committing crude solecisms. Some slips are unavoidable at first; but the person who really knows what he is about and who has grasped the principles behind his new technique, can usually arrest a slip so quickly and naturally that it passes unnoticed. After a time mistakes cease to occur, as right conduct becomes a matter of habit.

I regard this living of the Tibetan life as an extension of the study of language. There is speech in gesture, even in the way a cup is lifted to the lips, in a bow, in a thousand light touches which go to reinforce the spoken word and lend it additional point. Without them, language remains a foreign thing to the last. Externals, such as clothes, count for a great deal. The

actor who wishes to live his part, must first convince himself. He will find it much easier to transform his personality if he can banish as many incongruities as possible from his make-up. Kingliness is enhanced by the crown, a soldierly bearing by the sword, beggary by rags. Our intention was to be as thorough as possible. It was a way of saying to our hosts: "We wish to be as one of you. Please make no unusual arrangements on our behalf. We love your traditions, and hope they will not be rashly changed. We have found means of attuning ourselves to them." I need hardly say that no question of disguise ever entered our heads for a moment. We had nothing whatever to gain and much to lose by concealing our identity. Moreover, even had we so wished, it would have been utterly impossible. Granted that one's features could be remodelled by an operation of plastic surgery and that one would eventually learn to speak without a trace of foreign accent, there would still be plenty to give one away. For example, most Europeans are too muscle-bound to learn to sit in the cross-legged attitude usual to all Tibetans; not to do so would quickly dispose of every hope of disguise.

I have studiously avoided turning any part of this book into an apologia; the recorded results must prove the soundness or folly of my methods. But I must make one slight exception, because I know that I have laid myself open to a charge of inconsistency. Someone is sure to offer the criticism, on the face of it a reasonable one, that here is a man who has all along gone out of his way to blame Indians and other Asiatics for copying Western dress and customs, yet he himself is doing just the same in regard to Tibet. I was never blind to this possible objection; nevertheless, I believe that I did not violate any of my principles; but I do not expect to convince everyone. I shall be satisfied if they admit that there was a *prima facie* case for my having acquired sufficient knowledge of things Tibetan, to be allowed some rope in the matter of which methods to follow.

My basic thesis is that between any traditional body of custom and that of an anti-traditional civilization like ours—the only one of its kind that history now remembers—there is no real equivalence. Modern Occidentalism is threatening to flatten out the whole world and mould it to a single, rather dull, pattern, throwing away all that diversity whereby man has expressed himself through the centuries. Not only are all the Oriental

civilizations in acute danger but, what is specially sad for us as Europeans, the culture of Europe seems to have gone the same way, eaten away by the same colourless solvent. In conquering the world physically, we seem to have lost much that was great or worth while in our own heritage. Our costume can no longer be associated with a definite culture; it has rather become the most general and characteristic symbol of this deplorable world-reducing movement. At home one can but try to make the best of its rather narrow limitations; but on stepping into a society which is still based on regular traditional principles, one cannot help feeling that in introducing our manners and customs we may be helping to spread a taste for things which will ultimately corrode the armour of Tradition, thus paving the way for totalitarian materialism, which seems to be the logical outcome of the non-traditional outlook. Furthermore, in the West no man can be said to follow the path of Tradition without let or hindrance, even should he be so minded: one in whose heart the traditional fire has somehow been rekindled finds himself like a homeless exile and instinctively yearns to taste the experience of a normal human life, free from profane compromises. There was a day when all civilizations were roughly equivalent and travellers from one to the other could feel at home wherever they went. Now the odds are unequally weighted, the world pressure is from the single direction of the enemies of all Tradition. Anomalous circumstances create their own problems which demand peculiar solutions.

In practice, I believe that I possess the requisite qualifications for making a free choice and that I could never have accomplished as much as I did, had that choice been made differently. From the first moment, I felt as if I had escaped from an invisible barrier, within which, like a hen in the middle of a chalked circle, I had been penned. I have felt at ease among Tibetans of all ranks as I have not often done elsewhere. I never felt that I was among strangers; rather was it a return to a long-lost home. A lama, with whom I was intimate, explained this quite simply by saying that it was no accident, but that I showed unmistakable signs of having been a Tibetan myself in a previous existence, whence I had inherited a natural sympathy with my former compatriots and a tendency to return to them, like a homing pigeon. Whatever may be the truth,

I can at least say this about the next life: I should be well content to be reborn as a Tibetan—always provided that Tibet is still Tibet, and has not been turned into one of many feeble copies of America. From my limited experience I can endorse the words of that able French observer, Professor Jacques Bacot when he writes:—"The Tibetans impress one at once by the dignity of their persons. One sees them on horseback and nobly clad, scattered about the open spaces of their deserts . . . In all Tibet one would be hard put to it to discover one fool . . . The Tibetans are not barbarous or uncultivated; nor for that matter is their country. Under their rough hide they conceal refinements that we lack, much courtesy and philosophy, and the need for beautifying common things, whatever happens to be useful to them, be it a tent, a knife or a stirrup . . . Moreover they are gay, these Tibetans, and happy as is not the case elsewhere to-day, more so than our wretched workers in their wretched factories, armed with the whole arsenal of their rights . . . The more densely the country is populated, the tamer is the wild game. The Tibetans are not much addicted to hunting. They have long since lost the taste for killing which we still keep . . . I love their companionship during the long rides, for they are taciturn, or else they only speak with good sense, originality and a taste for speculative things."

CHAPTER XV

Kargil to Yuru: Symbolism of the *Tantra*

FROM Kargil onward we had decided to take ponies instead of continuing on foot; in a country where most people ride, walking would have appeared eccentric; also there is no real objection against traversing half-desert tracts fairly rapidly. Details count for little in such scenery, except within the restricted belts of cultivation, whereas in woodlands like Sikkim a thousand beauties of plant or insect life are met with at every turn, past which it would be a pity to hurry.

Twenty-three hot miles separated Kargil from the next halting-place. At first the way crossed an arid plateau, its monotony relieved only by a momentary glimpse of an impressive snow-mountain lying to the south-west. The lifeless tableland seemed as if it would extend for ever, when suddenly without warning, we were looking over the edge of a huge sunken valley watered by a river from which numerous artificial rivulets conducted the life-giving water to smiling corn-fields and shady groves. The place seemed so secluded and out of keeping with the dead wastes immediately surrounding it, that it might well have been taken for a mirage. These unexpected encounters with life in the midst of desert are always dramatic, and man never fails in his emotional response to the first sight of green. It is one of the peculiar charms which belong only to barren countries and cannot be shared by luxuriant ones.

The track led down into the hollow and then hugged the margin of the fields so as not to waste a foot of arable ground. As at Kargil, here also, the wild iris was planted to mark the boundaries between properties. At the far end of the oasis the road mounted sharply over a shoulder, missing the rocky gates by which the river entered. We then rode on up-stream for several hours, past a few villages of rough construction such as are found all over Purig. Wild rose bushes, armed with formidable prickles, were employed for hedging. Gradually the gorge

closed in: it was thirsty work riding through it in the heat of the early afternoon, especially as most of the ponies hired on this road needed ceaseless urging.

It is usual to engage so many riding horses and so many for carrying packs, but the sole distinction between them lies in the name. A piece of old blanket over a wooden pack-saddle suffices to convert it into a riding-saddle. The harness is frequently tied together with bits of string quite haphazard: as for stirrups, to find a pair that can be adjusted to equal lengths is a memorable event. Girths are constantly breaking; on one occasion, as a pony scrambled up a rocky step, saddle, rider and all gently slid off over its haunches. The action of most of these ponies is like a curious hybrid between a trot and a canter; but occasionally one may be lucky and get a tolerable mount, though to find an equally satisfactory saddle on the same day would be a miracle.

The Tibetan riding-saddle, of medieval pattern with a high pommel, is really not at all uncomfortable; but on this road, where ponies are relayed at every stage and used indiscriminately for riding and for carrying baggage, only the roughest of harness is provided. If one has found a good pony, it is advisable to make private arrangements and keep it for several stages. Occasionally one comes across very fine saddle-cloths belonging to persons riding their own horses. They are really small pile carpets specially shaped, either of Tibetan make, with blue and yellow for the dominant colours or, finer still, products of Yarkand, with cypress trees and other beautiful Turkish devices in red on a ground of silver grey.

As it was our first day on horseback and a specially hot one, we were beginning to feel rather sore and weary, when we emerged unexpectedly into a wider part of the valley with open views in several directions. There was a bridge to the right giving access to the small village of Shergol. From a gravel bank on the left several cold springs gushed out as if placed there specially for the convenience of thirsty travellers. But what immediately arrested our gaze and held it riveted was the sight of something like a stone bell terminating in a needle-like pinnacle—it was a *chorten*, the symbol of Nirvana, found in all Buddhist lands. Presently, looking across the river, we discerned a cliff face some two miles away, against which nestled a white facade with a red frieze, evidently where some huge

OASIS NEAR KARGIL.



MULBEK

caverns provided natural chambers. Our first lamasery! We were in Ladak at last!

Yet a little farther on and Mulbek *Gompa* came into view, perched on the summit of a precipitous aiguille, its white and red walls outlined in the golden evening light. It looked like a small fortress, with its projecting balconies that hung airily over the gulf. Standards, like closed parasols, marked the angles of the roof.

Near the foot of the rock stood the village. Almost every house in it could lay claim to some artistic distinction. Even the meanest were of ample size, two-storied, with but few openings on the bottom story, for this was, as usual in Tibetan houses, taken up by granaries and stables. The classical plan consists of a central block with two wings. The rooms on the upper floor form three sides of a square, leaving a central space open to the sky, like a court with an arcade round it. The woodwork of doorways and window-frames was of simple but elegant design, while the more important upper rooms had graceful covered balconies of wood. Over the whole fluttered a forest of prayer-flags. One of the dwellings, which belonged to the headman, was a mansion fit for a duke.

A grassy flat by the river, here easily fordable, was chosen for the camp. Across the water could be seen an isolated farm or two, again constructed on generous lines. Judging from photographs, the style differs little from that of farms in other provinces of Tibet. It is extraordinary over how extensive an area the same design persists with but little variation. Beyond the farms rose a fantastic escarpment of red sandstone that would not have looked out of place in the Southern Sahara. The camping-ground was close to the Government rest-house which, unlike those found in Sikkim, was built in the style of the country, with ceilings of rough poplar logs and a little porch held up by wooden posts terminating in the spreading bracketed capitals of the Tibetan pillar. Throughout Ladak the native style has been kept in the rest-houses and even at the Residency of Leh. The official who initiated this policy had two great qualities—imagination and a readiness to let well alone; would that his example had been followed throughout India. Unfortunately these Ladak rest-houses are not kept clean: we found that one or two of them were infested with lice.

As we approached, the little bungalow presented an animated scene. Our friend Khan Muhammad Din was seated in the porch, receiving petty notables and making his annual settlement of local business. A gay crowd of villagers was gathered round; their cheerful faces made a pleasant change from the dour looks of the Purig people. Nor were the women any less assured than the men. Their Moslem sisters, whom we had met on the way, had looked worn and suspicious, but here we saw rosy complexions and unaverted eyes. The Ladaki wife is anything but a doormat; more often than not, she is the real ruler in the home, and children, when asked about their parentage, will often give their mother's name before their father's. The Italian explorer De Filippi was not wrong in saying:—"The woman has considerable influence in family affairs—though the situation is hardly a true matriarchy—with a dignity, a social position and a freedom not surpassed in any country in the world."

The male costume is not unlike that of Khunu, consisting of a long *chuba* or gown of brown or grey or sometimes purple homespun secured with a sash, in which are stuck a brass spoon and a flute. It is common to meet people playing merry tunes as they walk along the road. The shoes are quite different from the high Tibetan model and are often decorated with swastikas. The cap is peculiar to Ladak, made of cloth or a velvety material, flattened on the crown, but with the edges turned up, something like a "cap of liberty." Often solid bracelets adorn the wrists, and the ears are pierced for rings. The men tend to be big and strong-looking: nor do their looks belie them, for they are about the toughest people I know. Even the Sherpas do not treat cold or bad weather with such complete disdain. At night they hardly bother to shelter, if that involves them in the smallest extra trouble. They wear their hair in flowing locks like the Three Musketeers; it gives the younger ones a slightly girlish appearance. Many grow beards, which is not a Tibetan characteristic. The race must contain a high percentage of non-Tibetan blood, though it has adopted the language and customs of its conquerors. We noticed a wide range of types, both those who looked closer to Europeans in cast and others in whom Mongolian features predominated. Whatever else he may be doing, whether walking or sitting, the Ladaki is always assiduously spinning coarse woollen thread;

his little shuttle hangs from the end of the thread and revolves merrily under dexterous twists periodically administered, while a thick skein of crude wool is hung over his elbow. The finished thread is wound on a stick. In this way a continual supply of yarn is spun for weaving into clothes during the winter months. The women wear a peculiar costume, picturesque but not so becoming. The dress is dark, trimmed with sheepskin and decked out with silver ornaments of beautiful chain-work, one of which dangles from the shoulder; the chains terminate in a tiny manicure-set with silver tweezers and knives. A basket, like that of the Swiss peasants, is carried on the back; under the basket a goatskin with the hair turned outwards prevents chafing. The head-dress is extraordinary. It consists of a sort of bonnet, shading the face and curling snail-like over the back of the neck. On to this are sewn uncut turquoises, few or many, big or small, according to a person's means. Children wear a similar style of dress to their elders.

In the animated crowd gossiping round the bungalow we saw a group of red-clad lamas. We went and spoke to them, and they answered not in Ladaki, but in our own Central Tibetan. One of them had recently returned from Tashilhunpo where he had been studying. It was a joy to hear the familiar accent. We experienced the emotions of a Scottish Highlander who, in some outlandish part, encounters someone who "has the Gaelic."

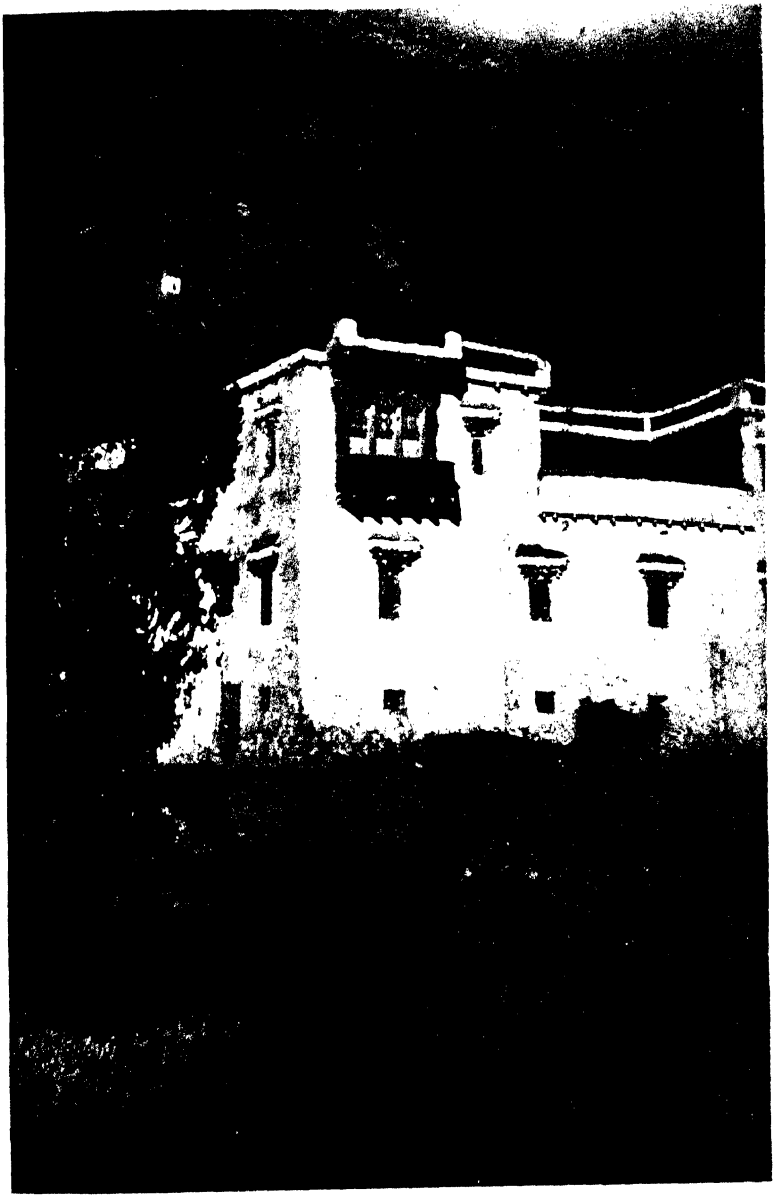
The lama was equally delighted and asked us to tea at the monastery the following morning. We had not meant to stay at Mulbek more than just the one night; but the place so charmed us, that we needed little persuasion to remain a day longer. It also suited us to stay on, since it was the date we had chosen for making the change from European customs to those of the country, by assuming the outward and visible signs of our pilgrimage. Talk with the lama was brought to an end by a polo match got up to entertain the Khan, in which several villagers took part, playing with much spirit, if with little apparent plan. The gay costumes and trappings called up visions of medieval jousting, for which the setting was exactly right, with the *Gompa* on its crag replacing the feudal castle.

Next day the Khan and his train set out with the dawn, leaving us in sole possession. The first experiment with Tibetan

clothes made us feel slightly self-conscious; but we were helped over the awkward stage by the fact that no one ever showed the least surprise. It occasionally happened that a person asked us what price we had given for this or that, or, after feeling the cloth, passed some comment on its quality; but *why* we chose to wear them, they never inquired. One or two Lhasa Tibetans, or Ladakis who had spent many years in Tibet proper, did go so far as to express positive pleasure. Usually we were treated as if our use of Tibetan clothes was the most natural thing in the world. Twice I was asked if I had lived many years at Lhasa. What I soon noticed, however, was that the discriminative treatment accorded to Europeans was dropped automatically; people no longer tried to offer us chairs to sit on, and we were everywhere expected to produce our own tea-bowls out of our *ambags*, that is to say, out of the pouches formed by the fullness of our gowns. The *ambag* hangs over the sash and serves the Tibetans as a pocket to contain everything from a purse to a pet dog.

The valley next to Mulbek was called Bod Karbu; it was reached by crossing a long pass between rolling red downs. This second valley was a good one to select for studying the typical features of Ladak farming. In addition to the biggest village, there were several small hamlets set along the lower slopes of the hills, while all the flat lands were given over to corn, out of which rose islets of trees and the pinnacles of *chortens*. The edges of the fields were a matted tangle of common wild flowers; cranesbills, vetches, blue chicory and various clovers, which gave to the country its individual honeyed scent. Walls were hidden under white clematis and purple catmint. In one or two places the curtain of red rocky hills was pierced by a narrow gate-like rent through which plunged a small torrent. Peeping inside was rather like viewing a theatrical scene: everything resembled the main valley, but seen in miniature: the stream with its stony bed, a few fields, a flume of running water, a long row of *Mani* walls leading up to a tiny village of fine stone houses, the whole crowned by a diminutive white and red *Gompa*.

The peasant houses were a never-ending joy throughout Ladak, with their combination of the qualities of amplitude, solidity, classical plan and appropriate detail. A mean or cramped or ill-constructed dwelling was never to be seen, while



LADAK PEASANT HOUSE



LADAKI PEASANT



THRESHING BARLEY

a fair proportion of the bigger ones made us feel positively envious. This was true of every village through which we passed. Nowhere else have I seen any houses to compare, on an average, with those of the Ladakis.

The lower story is usually allotted to animals and stores, and the family spends the summer on the upper floor in half-open chambers round the pillared court. When it is very warm, people often sleep out on the flat roof, usually naked, with clothes or a blanket thrown over them. Household furniture is confined to necessities. Besides cooking-pots and wooden bowls and cups for eating and drinking, with perhaps a china cup or two for special occasions, there is always a red glazed pottery charcoal stove for keeping tea warm, in form not unlike a Greek urn; and one or two brass or copper teapots, often decorated with good chasing, sometimes even with appliqué silver plates and dragon handles, earthenware pitchers for beer, small carpets for sitting on, and low tables for tea, painted gaily with flowers. All these objects are hand-made and of real artistic value: richer peasants sometimes possess quite fine utensils, and the woodwork of the principal rooms in their houses may also be decorated. There is no collecting of useless junk to clutter up the home. Special attention must be drawn to the common red pottery, which is undecorated and depends entirely on perfection of shape. It is very like Greek pottery, but without any ornamentation.

In each farm-house there is one room which claims pre-eminence in respect of furnishing and comfort; this is the family chapel, in which reside the images of the Tutelaries of the household, before whom lamas from time to time are summoned to hold services. Votive lamps are alight on the altar and painted scrolls line the walls. One family of peasants whom we knew and who, though well-to-do, cannot have possessed much ready cash, told us that they were about to invest in a new *t'hanka* by the most celebrated living artist of Ladak, Rigzin. Could one imagine many of our farmers at home who, even if they could afford it, would dream of placing an order with, say, Augustus John? Yet it must not be thought that I am trying to make out that the average Ladaki is a highly intellectual or consciously aesthetic person. Quite the reverse; compared to the Tibetans, for instance, they appear rather simple-minded; but under the guidance of Tradition there is a diffusion of

culture throughout the country which cannot be paralleled in modern societies, for all their compulsory schooling.

A pass, the P'hotu La (18,400 feet), separates Bod Karbu from Yuru, where the first of the great monasteries is situated. It is usually called Lamayuru on maps and in books, an Indian corruption of the real name, which should be Yuru *Gompa*. I was seized by a sudden longing to wander off alone while we were sitting at supper at the Bod Karbu rest-house, so I asked my friends to bring up the baggage ponies next day, and I set off for Yuru on foot. The mysterious peace of sunset possessed the landscape as I walked out into the sandy waste beyond the last fields. The jagged rows of peaks that formed the sides of Karbu valley faded slowly from orange through dull red into inky black. By an isolated *Mani*, I saw in the half-light a figure with clasped hands and heard the faint whisperings of his prayers. Then night dropped its curtain and I was alone with my thoughts. I walked on and on, forgetting time and distance. Occasionally the dying gleam of a fire or the pawing of a horse's hoofs indicated an encampment. After a time the track began to rise and the shapes of mountains, huge and eerie, closed in on either side. I was hoping to make the top of the P'hotu La and then rest, waiting to descend on Yuru soon after dawn. A dog began to bark far off to the left, another joined in and then a third; all at once a whole chorus broke out and began to surge towards me in a furious crescendo. I felt very much alarmed, for it was evident that I had approached a shepherds' camp, guarded by some of those fierce mastiffs, rather like chows, which are used as watchdogs all over Tibet. It would have been most unpleasant to be attacked by several of them, for I was not even carrying a stick. Picking up a couple of stones, I hurried along the path, hoping to get out of their range. I caught a glimpse of a furious brute who refused to be shaken off till he had seen the intruder well out of the way. It was a great relief when the barking died away in the distance.[1]

[1] The instinct that drove me to pick up the stones would have been blamed by several lamas of my acquaintance as a sign of weakness. Still more they would have criticized the egotism, expressed as *fear of others*, root-poison of hatreds, that prompted the act. They would probably have voiced their opinion thus:—" When you heard the dogs barking, no doubt your own fear aggravated their ferocity. You underrate your own powers; for you might have proceeded on your way boldly, fending off the phantoms of this contingent world with the buckler of profound Meditation on the all-embracing Compassion. Why put your trust in other defences? " I must record events as they actually happened; but I admit that the criticism does not lack force. Viewed from the

I walked on, feeling rather nervous; then I heard another dog just ahead. I wondered what was the best thing to do, for it seemed unwise to proceed before daylight came. I turned up into the entrance of a ravine and decided to halt for the rest of the night. I lay down on the stones by a stream and slept fitfully. At the first glimmer of dawn, I got up and unpacked some bits of wood that I had brought, to boil up a pot of tea. It was the first time that I had tried to light a fire on a hearth of three stones, such as the natives use all over Asia. It is extraordinary how clumsy an inexperienced hand can be, even at an operation that one has watched hundreds of times. I wasted many matches and sticks before I got the draught properly regulated; but I derived a childish pleasure from my cup of tea, for this too was one more tiny step into the Tibetan world.

From the head of the pass the road descended a small stream-valley with gravel-strewn sides and sparse vegetation. It widened out near a point where a solitary *chorten* had been set up, in the middle of the pebbly bed, as if to suggest that something important waited round the corner. The path turned abruptly left for a few yards up a small col with another *chorten* standing on it. Then I stopped, in face of one of the world's wonders, overcome by the whirlpool of emotions that suddenly surged through me. A hollow, shut in between red hills, lay below, its floor filled by fields and a tiny willow copse: the brick-red background threw up the greenness of the leaves in unusually sharp relief. The road contoured round the left of the combe in a wide curve, to the foot of a huge sandstone cliff honeycombed with caves, which looked as if they had been specially designed to serve as cells for the meditations of hermits. On the crest of this cliff stood the magnificently proportioned pile of the *Gompa*, a tall central building, with a number of lower wings containing monks' quarters and on one side a warren of peasant houses.

A continuous line of huge *Mani* walls and white *chortens* bordered the road, forming a sacred way and exerting on the eye an almost dynamic influence in guiding it in the direc-

standpoint of Enlightenment, my act of warlike preparation deserved the epithet "ill-considered." I believe that it is no exaggeration to say that persons capable of this degree of Non-attachment in the face of danger are far from extinct in Tibet: for them, the demons of fear and worry have been exorcized, and they enjoy a serenity that even a savage mastiff might respect.

tion it should go. Some of the larger *chortens* had their bases moulded into bas-reliefs of dragons, horses, lions and phoenixes. The monastery itself was white, with the usual red frieze under the roof. These bands are always made in the same way, by laying bundles of sticks closely bound and painted red, so that the cut-off ends face outwards like a brush. The setting of Yuru *Gompa* is unsurpassed and the first sight of it, is an unforgettably stirring experience.

Unfortunately it seems to have suffered by its proximity to the main caravan route; being the first big monastery on this road, it is visited by every tourist who enters Ladak. Its monks give the impression of being venal, and they hold the record for the number of requests for *bakshish* which they address to the stranger. When I was going over the building, a group of nuns from the village also assembled in the courtyard and shouted "*bakshish*" in chorus.

It is inconceivable that an edifice so rich architecturally should not also have been correspondingly endowed with pictures, books and other sacred furniture of the best periods; but the movable objects must have been disposed of long since, for most of what I saw in the temples was second-rate. It was plundered by the Dogra armies in the 'forties; but that does not explain the matter entirely, for soldiers would tend to carry off only objects made of precious metals. Also the decorative arts had not at that date shown any serious signs of decline and replacements of pictures and statues would still have been possible without noticeable loss of quality. I suspect that archaeologists, curio-dealers and travellers have played their part in stripping Yuru of its treasures, abetted by the more unworthy among its sacristans.

Though the movable furniture is not up to standard, the same cannot be said of the fixtures, such as painted woodwork and paintings on walls. The former craft, which is lavished on all rich houses or temples in Ladak, never ceases to delight by its delicate drawing and brilliant colouring. The motifs employed are much the same everywhere, consisting of sprigs of flowers and pairs of dragons or birds, set out on capitals, brackets, beams and panels; but the variety achieved within the set convention is astonishing.

The temples of Yuru are in a poor state of repair. Cracks have appeared in walls which have been painted only recently,

either because the plaster was too hastily laid on, or, more likely, because the outer wall itself is crumbling, but no one bothers about it. Much of the work is extremely fine, being, I think, by the same living painter Rigzin, whose name was mentioned earlier and whose work is in great demand throughout Western Tibet. He is a native of the Indus valley and started life as a monk, but afterwards reverted to the lay state.

In Ladak there are, besides Rigzin, two or three more painters of major rank and numerous lesser ones who execute designs on furniture and woodwork. All these are kept continuously busy serving the needs of less than forty thousand people. From this, an idea can be formed of the number of artists required by a community in which art products are deemed no luxury, but something in which even common folk can share. No great halo surrounds the artist; but if his work is above average, he enjoys the solid esteem which is to be earned among a people who have real power to judge good workmanship.

Some of the Yuru mural paintings have been reproduced here through the kindness of Professor Dyhrenfurth of Zürich, leader of the International Kangchhendzönga Expedition of 1930 and the Karakoram Expedition of 1934. One of them (facing page 317) shows very well the style of woodwork decoration to which I have just alluded. The figure-compositions are probably mostly by Rigzin, assisted, of course, by several lesser artists, so that here we also have an opportunity of examining the work of a contemporary living painter. It seems extraordinary to think of such things being done anywhere today. Rigzin's great forte is his drawing. Though his colouring is also well conceived, he has occasionally yielded to the temptation of substituting European second-rate imported paints for his usual Tibetan ones, which are slightly more troublesome to prepare and to procure; where this has been done it has affected the texture for the worse. Seen next to earlier paintings the surface seems rather too shiny and hard, though the general effect is brilliant. The colour-scheme of most Tibetan mural decorations, especially those done sixty years ago or more, is not unlike that of the school of Giotto seen in the Florentine churches. If one had to pick out a single name for comparison, Orcagna's would probably be the one.

It will be noticed that the figures divide into two strongly contrasted types. On the one hand we have Buddhas and

Celestial Beings, their faces calm or lit up by faint smiles of rapture, seated on their lotus pedestals in attitudes of imperturbable serenity. On the other hand there are frightful apparitions, decked with crowns and necklaces of human skulls, dancing in convulsive frenzy on the prostrate forms of men or animals. It is not surprising that the casual traveller to Tibet takes these dreadful beings for demons more appalling than those who people the hells of Signorelli, Fra Angelico or Dürer; but that view is far from the truth. Many of those diabolical-looking figures are in essence identical with those who look so gentle. The Tibetan divinities all have a variety of aspects according to the functions that they are called upon to fulfil, perhaps even more according to the state of mind of the beholder. There are benign or peaceful, fascinating, fierce or terrifying aspects. Thus to the saint and to the evildoer the same Being will show himself in widely differing guise. To the virtuous soul the Divine is necessarily glorious and comforting, but to an evil conscience the same can be a cause of horror and anguish. Indeed the lamas teach that the various states of existence which men and animals attain to, such as the abode of gods or the purgatories, are entirely subjective in character, forming part, as they do, of the general body of illusions from which the mind suffers so long as it has failed to attain Enlightenment. The illusory river which might appear to us in our human state as the Thames, would seem to one of the gods like a stream of water of long life; but to one of the damned the same will be a spate of molten lava. The oak tree on its bank is a Wishing-Tree from which gifts can be obtained at will by the blessed spirits; but to him who is blinded by sin-nourishing Ignorance, the same tree is a mass of lacerating thorns. To the perfected Saint, who has attained Knowledge, there is neither oak nor river, but only Emptiness; for he looks on the reality which these and all other phenomena mask. This is the theory behind the various forms of Tibetan divinities.

Such a method could equally well have been applied to a Christian subject, had our minds chosen to work in this way. For the benefit of the sheep and the goats respectively Christ would then be portrayed under two outwardly contrasted aspects, the one suggesting the countenance of the merciful Redeemer and the other evoking the terrifying vision of perpetual doom. This doctrine of the posthumous repartition of

individual states plays an important part in the religious form of Tradition, but perhaps less so in the more strictly metaphysical forms like the Buddhist. In the doctrine of the Round a different symbolism is employed that aims rather at revealing the inadequacy of every individual paradise or hell from the ultimate point of view of eternity. Thus we are reminded that even the beings enjoying the heavens are essentially pitiable, while the lowest denizens of the infernal regions never cease to be suitable objects of redeeming love. St. Mila Repa says: "By compassion I subdue the devils."

A certain writer, noted for his research into the externals of what he called "Lamaism," has employed the words "fiends and fiendesses" to denote these "terrible forms." This is an unhappy choice of terms, since in our language the word "fiend" is necessarily associated with a being unalterably evil by nature, in rebellion against God, whereas it is the stern aspect of a beneficent power that is indicated. I must therefore protest against the use of the word "fiend" in this connexion, as being likely to mislead the average English reader into thinking that the Tibetans practise "devil-worship." The real meaning underlying the "terrible forms" of Divinity is not difficult to understand, and it is of importance if one wishes to appreciate the inner meaning of Tibetan metaphysics and art.

Another side of this doctrine of multiplicity of forms is equally important. Whoever tries to thread a way through the complications of the pantheon, not only of Tibet but equally so of India, will find that he starts by learning a bewildering number of names of apparently separate gods with their attributes. Later he will find out that each of these can be recognized under several forms, externally very different: and again, as he pursues his inquiry, he will find that these forms manifest themselves in yet other forms and that some of them merge into forms which have apparently been derived from other prototypes. This has been pithily expressed by Kipling in the line:—"Kali—who is Párvati, who is Sitala, who is worshipped against the smallpox."

His humorous remark enshrines a profound truth. Reversing the succession of forms, the goddess whom the villager invokes to guard him from smallpox becomes, as one traces her upward by a sort of involutionary process, Párvati, the spouse of Shiva. The goddess can also be worshipped as Kali under both

gentle and fearful aspects. Further on we will see that Párvati is the Active Energy of Shiva Himself, wedded to Him in the same way as Wisdom is wedded to Method. Thus the mind, unable to find any single static form on which to rest, is led into recognition that all forms are really one, or to use still more accurate language, not-two, and that the whole complex is merely the total of Divine Manifestation in Form. The symbolism is here part of Means leading to a basic metaphysical concept, part of Knowledge. This, incidentally, disposes of the favourite accusation of polytheism which the wilfully-ignorant love to level at the Hindus, Tibetans and other "heathens." That the followers of these Traditions are clear in their own minds on this doctrine, can be proved from innumerable quotations. I will give two of them:—The Brihadāranyaka Upanishad, a Hindu scripture, says that, "those who adore the Divinities, thinking that they are different from themselves, such men the Divinities make their beasts of burden." So also the Varâha Purana, another Hindu book, says, "What Durga (Kali) is, that is Vishnu and that also is Shiva. The wise know that they are not different from one another." In the Tibetan sacred writings whole books are devoted to a special form of mind-training by which various "circles" or sets of divinities, with their attributes, are evoked as on a stage, and then gradually made to merge one into another till all their distinctions are absorbed in the "Foundation of all, beyond Mind and Speech." Not only are divinities viewed kinetically, as a series of aspects of each other leading to recognition of the One, but even doctrines are constantly expressed in terms of each other, leading to final identification in a single Truth.

In one of the chapels at Yuru, stands a colossal image of the Bodhisat Chenrezig (a Bodhisat is in the state of Knowledge approaching that of Buddha), the same one who is manifested through the Dalai Lama, under the form known as the All Merciful Lord. He is portrayed as a tall figure with innumerable arms forming a circle which surrounds him like an aureole; he has not one head but eleven, disposed like a pyramid. This strange symbolism was explained to me by a lama, who was almost carried away by his own eloquence. "Chenrezig is filled with boundless compassion for all creatures," he said. "You simply cannot imagine how compassionate he is. And he saw their constant sufferings and struggles in the Round of Exist-

ence, from which they vainly sought a way of escape, so overcome with pity was he that his head burst and was shivered into fragments. Then his own Lama, the Buddha of Immeasurable Light (the same who manifests Himself in the Panchhen Lama of Tashilhunpo, who consequently should become the natural spiritual director on Earth of the Dalai Lama) provided him with a fresh head and this happened no less than ten times." Chenrezig's typical representation is, however, not the eleven-faced form, but the likeness of a young and beautiful white prince, with four arms. That is why an imprint, indicating the rudiments of the extra pair of arms, is one of the signs sought for on the body of the baby that is chosen to act as the earthly sanctuary of the Bodhisat's influence.

Chenrezig is often likened to a shepherd in terms which cannot but recall the Good Shepherd of the Gospel. There may perhaps be some common origin of the two parables. The Shepherd-like Lord, in the Tibetan version, is so called because his action is that of a shepherd who, having led his flock to the entrance of the fold, lets them enter in first, and then, when all are safely inside, goes in himself last and closes the gate. Chenrezig, in his capacity as Bodhisat, is freed from sin and illusion, and is able at any moment to become a Buddha; but moved by his compassion for suffering creatures, he abstains from final Deliverance while so many are left behind in their imperfections and sorrows. " What is it to be saved oneself if others are still lost and suffering? " He therefore elects to continue in the Universe of Form so that he may aid all beings to pass in together to Nirvana. Then, and only then, he also will take the final step across the threshold. Chenrezig and his fellow Bodhisats, who again are not to be regarded as objectively distinct personalities but as " stages in the Path " accessible to every one of us, represent the embodied ideal of the Tibetan Buddhist doctrine, the Saviour who, though sinless and all-knowing, offers himself for the Universe, in the supreme and eternal sacrifice of redemptive love. This ideal is held to be open to everyone and everything, since all that is, if only it could be rightly viewed, would be found to be one and capable of Buddhahood.

While examining the photographs of Yuru paintings facing page 249, another peculiarity will probably strike the eye, namely, that each of the figures is really composed of two figures

clasped in close embrace. This is a common feature in Tibetan iconography and illustrates a doctrine which has been the subject of uninformed and derogatory comment under the name of "Tantrism," a word derived from the books in which it is expounded, called the *Tantras*. According to their peculiar symbolism, each divine Being is represented as a pair, composed of a male or non-acting and a female or creative principle. The latter is spoken of as the consort or wife of the former: in Sanskrit she is called *Shakti* and an adept of this school is called a *Shakta*. The *Tantras* themselves are primarily of Hindu origin, being the latest set of sacred writings to be codified. Their inspiration is considered to be the Word of Shiva Himself; but there are also a great many Buddhist *Tantras* of similar character, though the nomenclature is different. St. Padma, the earliest Apostle of Tibet, introduced the Doctrine under this Tantrik form. After him came the succession of the great Translators, one of whom was Marpa of Hlobrak, of whom I have spoken so much. In the Indo-Tibetan Cosmogony, the process of manifestation of the Divine Power as Form, is conceived as being subject to a rhythm comparable to breath, so that the expiration corresponds with the Manifesting Act and the intake of breath with the withdrawal of the Universe back into itself. Each of these cycles is termed a *Kalpa*, presided over by a supreme Buddha-teacher: the *Kalpa* contains fourteen *Manvantaras*, each made up of four *Yugas*, equivalent to the gold, silver, bronze and iron ages of European tradition. Each sub-period has its appropriate scripture, a *Tantra* being suited to the needs of the last phase in the cycle, the black age of decay, when the average degree of spiritual perception is insufficient to allow of the truth being encountered face to face. It must then be viewed through a glass darkly, and communicated to the dwindling group of devotees chiefly by means of symbols.

"All these things are done in parables: that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand . . . And with many such parables spake He the word unto them, as they were able to hear it. But without a parable spake He not unto them."

There are some who, by certain signs, think that the present time may be the death-throes of one such dark age, the blackest hour which precedes the dawn.

Almost every writer on Tibet who happens to have mentioned the word "Tantrik" has used it simply as a synonym for superstition. Certain professional research-mongers, whose publications are as voluminous as they are prejudiced, have peppered their writings freely with such words as "gibberish," "meaningless," "necromancy" and even "filthy" and "obscene." Less learned persons, such as explorers and climbers, have borrowed these fantastic slanders on the *Tantra* from the supposed authorities and retailed them as if they were Gospel truth. This has happened even in the case of some writers who were obviously trying to be sympathetic, but simply were snared by their own trustfulness. Thus in one book Himalayan porters were described as affected by "Tantrik superstition." From what I know of porters they are as innocent of any knowledge of what is in the *Tantra* as the man who used the unhappy phrase! Naturally, all the writer meant to convey was a sense of something sinister, savouring of black magic. From the way some people write, it almost looks as if they think a *Tantra* is a kind of loathsome ghoul, that lurks in dark alleyways waiting to spring out on the belated wayfarer.

The *Tantras* are chiefly concerned with methods for assisting the mind to emancipate itself from the tyranny of phenomena. We are indeed imprisoned within a world of form, whence we cannot escape by simply wishing to be free; the Tantrik teacher starts by accepting this fact, but contrives to use the very multiplicity of form as a means to freedom. He causes the thoughts of his disciple to dwell on forms, to juggle with them, to make of them puppet actors on his mental stage where they play Passions and Moralities, till through the jungle of their multiplicity he begins to notice the trail that leads out to the great underlying Unity. It is this kinetic idea which has been the womb of symbolical art in India and Tibet. At the cost of seeming to labour the fact, I repeat that according to Tibetan ideas, each celestial figure is capable of a continuous succession of transformations, being himself or herself a form of a form and so on indefinitely. To regard the numerous figures seen in the temples as separate "gods" or "devils" whose "idols" are worshipped, is an error that will rob the traveller of any chance of learning how to read the symbolical language which is unfolded for his edification.

But there is another and far more serious misunderstanding

of the Tantrik symbols which demands to be refuted in the public interest. This error is spread by persons who have seen a little more than the mere name and are vaguely aware of the worship accorded to the Divinity under the form of His own consort, the Female Energy. There is little doubt that many have persuaded themselves to suspect that under this representation there lurks some vile suggestion, pandering to man's sensual appetites, and that the figures seen clasped in ecstatic union are really pornographical emblems.

I have read that in Peking there is a lama temple, resort of many a tourist, where the vergers have tried to turn to profit the propensity of Europeans to cherish such notions, by hanging a curtain in front of those twofold figures, ready to be drawn aside in return for a tip: by so doing, of course, they commit grave sacrilege themselves, for, in the Tibetan view, the Father-Mother pairs, as they are called, partake of a character of the austerest purity. In Sikkim also, in one chapel sometimes shown to English visitors, the custodian, this time from a commendable desire to save sacred things from being blasphemed, has curtained off the Father-Mother picture. Though the intention was good I incline to the view that the means were mistaken. Anything savouring of mystery will only seem to lend confirmation to the theory that there is something to hide. Rather should a point be made of displaying the picture and explaining its true purpose on every possible occasion. The trouble really arises from the rather prudish conventions prevalent in Europe itself, by which open reference is always avoided to whatever is connected with the act of procreation, while it is deemed utterly inconceivable that a visible portrayal thereof could have a reverent purpose. In the Orient the subject is treated without reserve: it need not be mentioned in whispers and its emblems seem the natural ones for associating with the actively creative power in Nature. As to those who so easily fly to conclusions about the "indecency" of the "Father-Mother" pictures, one is bound to say that such people reveal nothing but the nastiness of their own minds.

I came across yet another case illustrating the need for enlightenment on this subject, this time at a photographer's. We were admiring some prints, also from Ladak, which showed a series of Father-Mother forms on a temple wall. The shop-assistant, a Hindu, who by rights should have known better,





Photo: Prof. Dr. G. O. Dyhrenfurth

PAINTINGS AT YURU

Divinities with their Consort Energies under both peaceful and terrible aspects

said: "You who have studied these things in the country itself know their *real* interpretation." (This with many winks and meaning smirks.) "*You* understand, of course, and could if you chose tell people what they mean——" he giggled. To which I answered in matter-of-fact tones: "Yes, of course, I can explain to you quite easily." He was all ears! I then simply told him how the figures stood for the dual aspect of power, on much the same lines as I have done in this chapter, and his whole edifice of lewd suspicion collapsed like a pricked balloon.

To continue the argument a step further, let us again use a rough simile by applying this symbolism to Christian material. Suppose that instead of God being addressed as Father He were to be called Father-Mother, the Universe being regarded as born, that is, created, from the mystic union of the Godhead with Itself as Consort. This hypothetical suggestion is put forward simply by way of illustration, in order to bring home the Tantrik imagery to the reader. I am not asking people to adopt the method in preference to their own time-honoured practice; all that I desire is that it should be recognized to be a perfectly feasible way, as reasonable and natural as our own. It does, indeed, possess one advantage, in the avoidance of the terminology which associates God with the male sex and which has given rise to the various irreverent jokes about the old gentleman with the long beard: a notion which has been unconsciously used, moreover, in favour of a tyrannical interpretation of the father's family duties. Incidentally, in connexion with these emblems, one recalls the medieval imagery of the marriage between Christ and His Divine Spouse, the Church. One might almost be justified in speaking of Dame Poverty as the *Shakti* of the Franciscan Order. Here the parallelism is inexact, yet it is not too far-fetched to shed some light on the Tantrik Doctrine.

I have borrowed one final example out of a *Tantra* called *Demchhog* or Highest Bliss, because the Divinity who passes under that name, and who represents an ideal propounded for contemplation, is described with great wealth of detail, while a plain explanation is given of what each of these details stands for. No better instance could be given of how the Tantrik symbolism works. I can only offer an abridged paraphrase of the passage, for to quote it all would take several pages.

The Chief Divinity, "Circle of Higher Bliss," has four faces, symbolizing fourfold sets of ideas—among them the Elements of earth, water, fire and air, which, with ether, constitute the material Universe, and the Four Boundless Wishes which are Compassion, Affection, Love and Impartiality; but there are several other sets of a still more profound character. The body is blue, to symbolize that He never changes from "the Wisdom, which knows that the things which are coloured differently and the like, are really not so, but they are all of a single nature and taste." Each face has three eyes, to show that the Three Worlds—the Sensual, the World of Form but without sensual craving and the Formless Spiritual World—are under His vision, and also that He knows the Three Times, past, present and future. He has twelve arms that represent His knowledge of the Twelve Interdependent Origins of the Round of Existence (see opposite page 146).

To prove that Perfected Mind (the mind of a Bodhisat, the ideal to which all should aspire) is both the Void (that is, the Absolutely Real, which we can only indicate through a privative word, since for us the Real cannot but be void of determination, form, relativity and all that we can possibly conceive of) and Compassion (the pure sacrificial Love which characterizes the Bodhisat, the highest goal of Buddhism), He holds in the upper hands a *dorjé* (thunderbolt sceptre) and a bell. To show that Method and Knowledge are ever in union, the first pair of hands clasp His Spouse or *Shakti*. The next two hands hold a raw elephant hide which they are tearing asunder: this is the emblem of Ignorance. The third right hand holds a drum, proclaiming the most joyous tidings. The fourth hand brandishes a battle-axe, by which He cuts off births and deaths. The fifth holds a dagger to show that the six sins of pride, disbelief, want of serious devotion, distraction, inattention and boredom are cut off. The sixth right hand grasps a trident, showing the destruction of the Root-Poisons of Anger, Desire-Attachment and Sloth (the inertia of Ignorance?).

Now to turn to the left hands:—the third holds a staff surmounted by a *dorjé*, sign of supreme bliss, and the fourth holds a blood-filled skull signifying that all ideas which regard things as either material or immaterial are done away with. From the fifth hand dangles a noose, the Knowledge that grasps the nature of sentient beings. In the sixth left hand is the head of four-faced Brahma, showing that all the delusions of the Round have been finally shaken off.

Under His feet He tramples an emaciated figure of Time, proving that out of His boundless Compassion He voluntarily remains in the world of sentient beings as Saviour. His bent left leg spurns the form of a Black Destroyer, for Wisdom has got rid of every antithesis such as subject-object and enjoyer-enjoyment. His hair is tied in a knot on the crown of His head, because merit has been acquired in the fullest measure. Each of His heads is adorned with a chaplet of five skulls, standing for the five kinds of Wisdom (see page 167). His face frowns and His teeth are set, for by Him all heresies are

overcome. His ear-rings are Fortitude, His necklace Charity, His bracelets Chastity, His girdle Energy, the wheel of bone over His Head is Meditation.

Round His waist is draped a tiger-skin, not tightly fastened, because He is released from all belief in the real distinction of Body and Mind. His limbs have symmetry and grace, His visage is heroic, stern and severe, He is full of energy, He is awe-inspiring, and yet He is compassionate and His features are of a peaceful cast. (This form belongs to a type called semi-wrathful, not one of the "terrible" forms, nor yet wholly "peaceful.")

We now come to His Consort-Energy, who clings to Him in inextricable embrace. She is red in colour, because She is devoted to the service of all beings. She has only one face, because all things have but one taste—they are basically one. She possesses two hands, for She comprehends both aspects of Truth, the apparent and the real. Her right hand holds a curved knife which is Wisdom-Consciousness, that cuts away qualifying thoughts and all passions. This weapon She thrusts in all directions. With Her left hand She clasps Her partner. To show that She has untied the knot which holds all things to be what they appear, Her hair is loose and flowing. She is naked, for She is free from the obscuring veil of Passion. She, like Her male partner, is three-eyed and crowned with the Five Wisdoms, shown by skulls. He should be regarded as Appearance (that is, the Phenomenal Universe), as Method and as Boundless Compassion; while She is the Void (the symbol of the Absolute, the Empty of all relativities), Wisdom, Tranquillity and Bliss. The pair are inseparable, so they are shown interlocked in sexual union, touching at all possible points of contact. The marriage is consummated in the midst of a halo of flames, the fire of Supreme Wisdom which burns up all obstacles.

A casual observer, uninitiated into the mysteries of these symbols, would almost certainly mistake this picture of Highest Bliss for a demoniac form. It only shows the danger of applying the artistic criteria of one land to another, without sufficient information as to where there is concordance and where the symbolic languages part company. In the present example we have seen skulls, blood, weapons and flames, which in Europe have always been given infernal associations, made to represent such mild virtues as Chastity and Longsuffering! In the book which I have quoted, these descriptions are given for the benefit of meditating disciples, who evoke the images mentally; but they could equally well serve as models for the painter. It is obvious that in his choice of colours and many other details the artist is not allowed to give free rein to his imagination. For instance, "Highest Bliss" cannot but be made blue and His

Consort red; otherwise She would seem to have given up Her devotion to the service of beings, which red denotes. The artist can vary the shade of red for better or worse; and there are many other details in which he can indulge his fancy to the full. But the emblems that are bound up with definite metaphysical concepts are unchangeably fixed.

Whoever wishes to delve deeper into the *Tantras* and their teachings will have to refer to the only comprehensive book published in English, compiled by a distinguished British judge of the High Court, who was also a Sanskrit scholar, the late Sir John Woodroffe. He applied the searching probe of the finest judicial mind to the investigation of this difficult subject. Every misleading clue was cleared from the path. Long unchallenged prejudices, circulated not only by European controversialists, but also by some obsequious Indian writers, were dispelled. He never moved a step beyond his brief. Every statement was accompanied by the evidence on which it rested, for all to weigh up for themselves. The book is called *Shakti and Shakta*, that is, *The Female Energy and Her Devotee*. In addition, Mr. Justice Woodroffe arranged for the editing or translation of several complete texts of *Tantras*, both Sanskrit and Tibetan. Some copies of one of his editions, bound in the two sacred colours, red and yellow, were taken by us as presents for the more scholarly lamas. One of the latter, on receiving the book, observed in matter-of-fact tones: "This is a great doctrine. I know the book and it will be very handy when I next retire for a few months' solitary meditation." By his manner of speaking, it might have been a dictionary or a railway timetable. But another lama warned us: "It is useless for anyone to try to apply these methods by himself, without the supervision of an adept. Attempts by the uninitiated to carry out these exercises may involve them in no little danger." To read something about these doctrines is open to all, but he who wishes to use and realize them as a help towards Enlightenment, must not forget that a teacher, imbued with practical knowledge of the particular *Tantra* selected, cannot be dispensed with.

Doubtless there is nothing which one man has expressed which another cannot ultimately discover for himself, if he is lucky enough to find the right way of approach: but the chances are so much against success as to make it a foolish presumption for one to think of attempting it alone, seeing that competent

teachers are there to be consulted. A man wishing to learn Chemistry might also go back to the very beginning and, were life long enough, rediscover the whole from A to Z; but who would dream of doing so? Yet in the case of the interpretation of the most abstruse and condensed doctrinal texts, where a vast amount of detail has been left to be filled in by word of mouth by the teacher, many a savant presumes to pass a judgment, to write commentaries and to make translations. This shows grave intellectual short-sightedness, from which, as the Tibetans teach, all sins and follies proceed, like the rings which radiate from the point where a stone has been cast into a pool. The only easy and safe method of studying is the obvious one, as recommended by the Florentine painter Cennino Cennini to his own pupils:—"As soon as thou canst, put thyself under the guidance of the Master to learn, and delay as long as thou mayest thy parting from the Master."

CHAPTER XVI

" If I Forget Thee O Jerusalem "

BELOW Yuru, a rocky defile, straightly hemmed in by sheer cliffs, falls away in a succession of huge steps down towards the Indus. The sky, far overhead, shows as a narrow strip of blue. A rivulet, born of an insignificant trickle, is crossed and re-crossed. Gathering volume, it swells into a quite sizable river which, after an all too brief independent life, goes to merge its identity, with breath-taking suddenness, in the coffee-like waters of the greater stream, which here races along between forbidding banks of scorching rocks and sand.

A mile or two eastwards from the confluence, a suspension bridge leads over to the right bank, defended by a fort of sun-baked mud, built by the Dogra invaders of Ladak to command the passage. In this part of the Indus valley the road goes through three villages, Kalatze, Nyungla and Saspul, a few hours' ride apart. They are some of the most prosperous settlements in the land. Each of them has sprung up close to the entrance of a tributary valley, whence issues the torrent which, through its leats, allows wide terraces to be irrigated. Every large village thus owns its own hinterland, with a chain of lesser hamlets extending inland from the river. Usually in each of these districts there is one important monastery, which fills the part of feudal overlord as well as being the cultural centre for the fief, and receives a contribution of novices from all the leading families around. Most of these youths, before being admitted to the rank of full choir-monks, must first visit Lhasa for a long term of study, so that the holy city continues to be a nerve-centre for all Buddhist Central Asia. Young scholars from outlying provinces as far apart as Ladak and Mongolia gather there and meet their fellows from the Chinese border, Sikkim and every part of politically independent Tibet. These exchanges help to foster the unity of the Tradition over such a far-flung area.

To the rider in the desert, the sight of long *Mani* walls dividing the road into two, always heralds the approaches to a village. Some of these *mendongs* are colossal, especially those built beside the trails that converge on Leh. Huge *chortens* are set up at intervals along the walls, which suggest a breakwater with lighthouses, except that here the ocean is of sand instead of water.

At the beginning of the fields, the roadway passes under several *chorten*-crowned gateways which, though modelled to one pattern, yet somehow always contrive to reveal the play of individual fancy. So also the houses, though conforming roughly to the plan described in the preceding chapter, remain a never-ending source of curiosity and delight. A long series of photographs of Ladaki houses would well repay the trouble involved; I regret that we were not able to allot more time to this. "Every man his own architect" is the motto in this country; it explains how it has been possible to reconcile such extraordinary variety and originality with adherence to one model.

The valley of the Indus, comparatively sheltered from the most biting winds, offers ideal conditions for the cultivation of the apricot. Fruit ripens almost as high as Leh, but there the climate is too rigorous. The city lies near enough to the orchards, however, for a daily supply to be brought in baskets during the months of July and August. A certain proportion of the crop is dried and stored for winter use. In this form apricots are an excellent food for travelling. They are delicious when stewed, and have a very sweet, slightly toffee-like flavour. They are also economical, for they require the addition of little or no sugar, quite different from the tart dried apricots slit into halves and stocked by grocers at home. The reason is doubtless that the last-named variety is picked unripe, while the Himalayan fruit is left on the tree long enough for the sun to complete its work. The low humidity of the climate allows the apricot to be dried without decay setting in.

The inhabitants of these villages must surely be some of the happiest on the face of the earth. One can only pray that no zealous enthusiast will feel impelled to "raise their standard of living," acting on some sociological theory worked out under totally dissimilar circumstances. Certain writers have alluded to the poverty of the people, doubtless referring to their lack

of ready money and their rather Spartan simplicity of life. There is no luxury, nor a big margin of surplus food, but if the enjoyment of a sufficient, if rather unvaried, diet—composed of tasty, unadulterated materials—and the leading of a healthy, outdoor life in majestic surroundings, with work which has its leisured as well as its strenuous phases, the wearing of durable and comely homespun clothing, the dwelling in spacious, well-built homes, and the possession of a restricted number of objects pleasing to the eye—if all this be poverty, then let us deplore our wealth! To the above catalogue two more intangible amenities can be added: time to think without the sense of being driven, and the absence of organized persuasion and regimentation at the hands of the State. Yet a Ladaki might reckon himself a rich man if he were to receive in actual cash the pittance on which one of our own unemployed, dwelling amid hideous surroundings, barely keeps alive.

Some twelve miles above Saspul, in the upland valley of Likhir ("Circle of the Water-Serpent-Spirits"), stands the great abbey of the same name, belonging to the Gelugpa or "Virtuous Custom" Order of monks, commonly known as "Yellow-Hats," in order to distinguish them from the red-hatted adherents of earlier conventual organizations; all, however, without exception wear red clothes. The Yellow-Hats were founded in the fourteenth century by St. Tsong Khapa, "the man from Onion land," born near the western marches of the Chinese province of Kansu: eventually they became the most powerful religious association in Tibet and Mongolia, including among their members the sovereign of the country, the Dalai Lama, as well as his spiritual compeer the Panchhen Lama of Tashilhunpo. Some of their colleges number their students by the thousand, the biggest of all, Drepung ("mound of rice"), outside Lhasa, exceeding in membership both Oxford and Cambridge taken together. Tsong Khapa's new Order has been described as a "reform," and one ill-advised author even went to the length of naming him the "Tibetan Luther." No more misleading label could well have been chosen. It is a fact that he tightened up rules, in reaction against what he considered as excessive licence among the other monks of his day, but there was nothing the least bit revolutionary or anti-traditional in any of his ordinances. Comparable reforms have occurred at various times in the history of

every religion; the Yellow-Hat reform most resembles perhaps the Cistercian revival in the Benedictine Order, which amounted to nothing more than a variant on the original foundation, though one which was, in its time, fruitful in rekindling the fires of monastic zeal. In doctrinal matters, Tsong Khapa went to some pains to make it plain that he was not an innovator, but was building his teaching on the foundations laid by the great Indian saint, Atisha, whose re-evangelization of Tibet in the eleventh century was like a second spring for Buddhism in that country. So also in respect of the Tantrik doctrines, so unloved by foreign commentators, especially by those lacking first-hand knowledge, the founder of the Yellow-Hats expressly declared that his own doctrine is a synthesis of the *Sutras*, or ordinary public teaching of the Church, and the *Tantras*, a special intensive method handed down, under the safeguarding seal of initiation, for the use of those who hope to tread the "abbreviated way" towards Buddhahood.

The Gelugpa differ from earlier foundations mainly in allotting relatively more time to public services, to the slight attenuating perhaps—or so their critics allege—of those ideals of pure meditation, after which the others continue to strive before all else. The Yellow monk regulates his conduct by a statute of 258 clauses, which include abstinence from alcohol, meat and marriage. The second rule is often disregarded in practice, by reason of the difficulty of obtaining enough vegetable food on the plateau of Tibet, even more so in Mongolia, where the people remain exclusively pastoral, refusing to take to agriculture. But even so, no one presumes to defend the lapse into a carnivorous diet, and all those—and they are not a few—who do remain faithful to the law against flesh-eating, are generally honoured by high and low. In contrast to the Gelugpa, several of the old Red-hatted schools—to speak of Red-Hats as one Order, balancing them as one whole against the Yellow-Hats is a common inaccuracy in books—admit both fermented liquor and marriage.

Though the adherents of the various Orders (again I must protest against the misleading term "sects" which is so often applied to them) usually live in harmony, they would not be human if a little rivalry did not sometimes creep in; one has only to think of the petty bickerings of Franciscans and Dominicans in our own Middle Ages. The Yellow-Hats are

given to reproaching the others with slackness, especially over the question of drink, and to congratulating themselves because of their zeal for book-learning; whereas the Red-Hats, who, though they have their books too, lay rather more preponderant emphasis on the oral transmission of doctrine, turn that very same fact into a counter-accusation. Referring to the frequent daily assemblies in the temple for the choral repetition of the office which the rule of the Yellow-Hats prescribes, one Red-hatted monk voiced his criticism to me by saying: "They go in for too much chatter." It is said that these rivalries occasionally have reached the point of acrimony where brawls with iron pen-cases (the monks' weapon in Tibet) have broken out, and have resulted even in the spilling of blood and the cracking of tonsured skulls.

In Ladak, though both Red and Yellow Orders are found, with a certain advantage of number in favour of the former, relations between them seem perfectly amicable. Likhir of the Gelugpa is one of the older and larger houses; it is so flourishing that a new wing containing monks' quarters is in process of erection. It enjoys a high reputation for strict observance, being surpassed in this only by the neighbouring convent of Rigzon, many lamas of which—so it was said—refuse to ride, lest the horses should take it amiss.

On a day of July, 1936, a band of pilgrims from a distant land arrived at Saspul bound for Likhir. By their apparel one would have taken them for Tibetans from the Central Provinces, or perhaps from Sikkim, where that fashion is copied. Instead of the Ladaki self-coloured woollen tunics, they wore kimono-like cloaks of a dark maroon, girt at the waist with silk sashes, bright red, blue or green; for yellow is the privilege of the clergy, and it is a criminal offence in Tibet for an unauthorized person to wear it. Their caps were of black felt, with a band of gold Chinese brocade and fur-edged ear-flaps, worn turned up. Their boots were of the usual high shape, bound with coloured garters; the soles were of rope, while the uppers were black felt, gaily decorated with bits of green, blue and red cloth. There were three principal persons in the party, besides a few grooms, one of whom, a tall and ugly man called Norbu, acted as servant. Norbu had a plain face, but a heart of gold. He came from Timosgam above Nyungla, which is the home of the best porters in Ladak. The baggage too, like the retainers of

the party, was on a modest scale: one did not see the huge paraphernalia with which Europeans are wont to encumber themselves when travelling in the Himalaya.

The little cavalcade rode into Saspul in the afternoon and alighted at a caravanserai, where they made a meal of milk, eggs, big radishes resembling turnips and ripe apricots of prime quality, thin-skinned and succulent, resembling the cotton-wool-like, tasteless things imported into England in nothing but the name. The newcomers must have been thirsty from having trudged through the torrid stretch which lies between Nyungla and Saspul, for each consumed a double portion of fruit, and still was eager for more. After lunch they asked for a messenger to carry a note to Likhir, since it would have seemed discourteous to have arrived there without due warning; in no land is the virtue of politeness cultivated more than in Tibet. A peasant boy volunteered for the job, and a letter, couched in suitably honorific terms and wrapped in the white silk scarf which betokens sincere respect, was entrusted to him. He set off at great speed, not by the usual tracks, but by a short cut across the hills, promising to be back with an answer soon after sundown.

While waiting for their envoy to execute his errand, the three strangers idled away their time strolling through the fields, where the tawny crops, ripe for the sickle, were being cut down and carried to the threshing-floors. When they felt tired they sat awhile in the dense shadow of the apricot trees; the deep, intense green of the foliage was gold-spangled with fruit, which kept dropping to the ground with every puff of the clover-honeyed breezes. The air had an aromatic tang that mingled with its sweetness, a fragrance as of incense that came from the catmint which covered the walls. The three friends sat and rested on the brink of one of the leats, screened from the sun by willow trees; the water at their feet ran icy cold, though only two yards away the stones were too hot to touch.

Returning to the fields, the newcomers stood watching some peasants winnowing, to the accompaniment of shrill women's voices raised in a tune which served to support the rhythm of the teams engaged in treading out the grain. Apple-cheeked girls drove their yokes of four or five yak calves round and round in circles, while others, armed with long wooden forks, threw fresh sheaves upon the pile. The women took turns at keep-

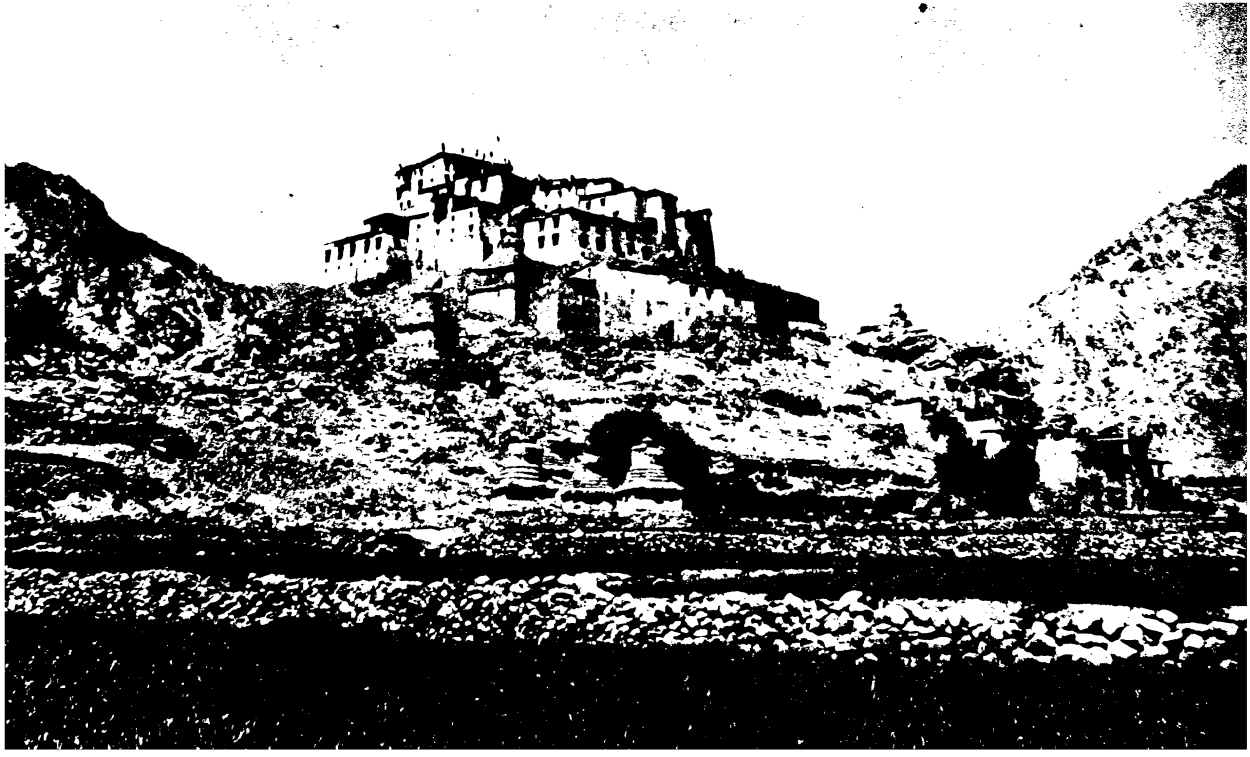
ing up the refrain continually; at that season the whole country resounds with song from daybreak till evening. Not only harvesting, but every kind of work has its appropriate tune, comparable to our sea-shanties. One of the most expressive is that of the log-carriers. Heavy poplar logs, to be split in half for roofing, are borne on men's shoulders. As they march along, a single voice sings a verse, which is then answered in chorus by the remainder of the gang. Similarly, when a big reservoir had to be dug at Leh, an oboe-player and drummer were engaged all day to give the rhythm to the labourers: surely the requisitioning of serious music for such a use betokens a high degree of civilization!

At nightfall the messenger returned from the monastery with a message bidding the pilgrims welcome. He also reported that the abbot of Likhir was absent in Lhasa, and that the prior had been left in charge and would do the honours.

Next morning, the party rose at dawn and followed a sandy track that led away from the river into a small valley between gravel-strewn downs. Norbu acted as guide with great willingness, for the goal was his family *Gompa*; two of his brothers were at that time in residence, the one just ordained *Gelong* or full monk, the other a novice still in his early teens. After a few miles, the path mounted more steeply till it emerged in the Vale of Likhir, one of the most attractive in all Ladak. It was a rich expanse of cornland, dotted about with charming homesteads, each standing in its clump of willows or poplars. Since every inch of irrigated ground was precious, here, as always, the road ran in the desert, though close to the margin of cultivation. It was marked by rows of *chortens* and *mendongs*, on which pious hands had laid innumerable flat stones bearing the *Mani* formula: the long chain of *Mani* walls constituted the Sacred Way towards the Water-Serpent-Spirits' abode.

Likhir *Gompa* stands on a bold eminence commanding a view of the whole valley: as one approaches it from the direction of the Indus, there is a break in the curtain of hills to the right, through which a shimmering panorama of snowy peaks appears, like an immense diamond tiara. These are the higher portions of the Ladak range, mostly attaining about 19,000 or 20,000 feet.

The abbey forms a magnificent architectural pile, terrace upon terrace, which seems as if it has grown out of the very







LIKHIR

rock, an effect due to the fact that every wall, window and door is given a slight inward slope. It is this habit which makes the Tibetan style fit ideally into a mountain landscape, so that the handiworks of man, far from detracting from Nature's perfections, seem merely to heighten and extend her rhythms.

About a mile and a half from the *Gompa*, the party was greeted by a young and handsome lama, who had been sent out to meet them. The distance to which a person walks to receive a guest is proportional to the latter's rank. For a prince they might ride out a whole week's journey. A ravine had to be crossed to reach the end of a spiral path which led round the hillock forming the emplacement of the abbey. As soon as the riders came within sight of the lowest bastions, the deep purr of a bass drum greeted them. Next, added to the rumbling of the drum, sounded forth the majestic voices of the twelve-foot trumpets which serve to hold a pedal in every Tibetan temple orchestra, the foundation-tone over which the higher-pitched instruments build their symphonies. The players take turns in breathing, so that the note is maintained unbroken, heaving like the swell of some ocean of molten brass. The descant is rendered by oboes, not unlike bagpipe chanters, while complexities of rhythm are contributed by smaller drums, handbells and cymbals. The clashing sonority produced is strangely thrilling when heard in the open, especially when the orchestra plays accurately in tune. There is variability in this matter among Tibetan as among European bands: that of Likhir was beautifully exact; but in certain decadent monasteries, careless ensemble and bad intonation reduced music to a mere cacophony; indeed the standard of orchestral playing is often a very fair index of the moral state of any *Gompa*! Raising their heads, the wayfarers caught sight of the group of red-robed musicians high up on the walls. Surely no crusading baron returning to his castle from the Holy Land could have enjoyed a more romantic welcome.

As the riders rounded the last bend, a throng of lamas and peasants ran out towards them. They dismounted from their ponies and, casting the bridles into willing hands, advanced to an alleyway, where a tall and venerable figure stood a little apart. He was the prior, before whom knees were bent and foreheads touched the ground. Signing to the party to follow,

he turned and led the way at a rapid pace, threading a labyrinth of courts and stairs and passages to the topmost terrace of all, marked at the angles by banners, rather like furled umbrellas. Then he passed through the doorway of the abbot's private apartment, which, as was customary, was situated at the top of the building. They removed their shoes, and stepped inside a chamber of surpassing magnificence.

It was supported on wooden posts, the bracketed capitals of which, as well as all the beams, window-frames and other woodwork, were picked out in delicate patterns of flowers and dragons of brilliant hue. The windows, which were flung wide open affording a grand view over the mountains, were of Chinese design, with a kind of translucent paper to take the place of glass. The walls of the room were hung with scroll paintings representing saints or angelic beings, each picture being mounted on Chinese brocade of rich design. The ceiling was like a tent, with an awning of peach-coloured Chinese embroidery of ancient date. Along one wall, facing the window, stood the altar, behind which presided a row of gilt, lotus-throned figures shaded by elaborate carved canopies. The floor was spread with fine rugs of Turkistan and Tibet, on which the guests were bidden to take their seats; a charming little carved and painted table was placed before each man for his teacup and food-bowl. Each article was a work of art of real worth, and was kept in spotless condition, though put to reasonable use. How different works of art look when they are seen thus related to life, as intended by their makers, and not imprisoned, on the plea of safeguarding, within those vast concentration-camps called museums.

No sooner was everyone seated, than tea—that inevitable preliminary to all business in Tibet—was served out of a fine tea-pot, which, after use, was kept warm on an earthenware stove, which might have been Etruscan. The tea was equal to everything else at Likhir, prepared from the best brand, with the usual butter and salt and a pinch of soda added. One missed the famous "rancid butter," that has been made the subject of such frequent comment in other travellers' tales. Is it possible that it is only brought out during visitations by the larger climbing expeditions?

The Tibetans daily consume a prodigious quantity of this tea, which to our taste seems rather more like soup. At every sip,

the cup is promptly refilled to the brim, and this goes on till the guest, after repeatedly making a polite show of refusal, finally decides to make a stand and covers his bowl with his hand, turns it upside down, or hides it under the table. Reverting to the question of the butter: one lama from Drepung, Lhasa, who was boasting of the superiority of the tea served there, was asked if they kept the butter a long time before using. "No, we always use fresh butter," he said, in a tone of voice which showed that he did not even comprehend the motive of the question. The only explanation one can offer for the frequent occurrence of the epithet "rancid" in descriptions of the butter used in Tibet—so frequent as to reduce the phrase to a cliché—is that much of the milk and butter in that country, as in many parts of Europe, tastes and smells "of the cowshed"; perhaps this is what is meant by rancid. Poor people, too, often use inferior butter, though in our own experience I cannot say that we were often served with objectionable buttered-tea.

After the guests had drunk a good many cups of tea, food was also offered; apricots both fresh and dried, a hard crystalline candy and a kind of rice pudding containing currants, lightly fried and dusted with sugar. During the meal the old prior and one or two senior monks sat on the floor and carried on an elegant conversation covering a varied range of topics, while the young novices crowded in the doorway to watch and listen.

The boys are carefully brought up and have excellent manners, each one being allotted to a tutor who instructs him in deportment as well as letters. They do not look repressed in any way, but are, on the contrary, extremely lively, save on occasions when etiquette requires a grave demeanour. Up to the age of fourteen, their duties do not amount to much more than pouring out tea at intervals during services, and playing instruments in the orchestra; but after that, they are expected to leave the monastery and make the long journey to Lhasa for their university studies. Unless they choose to take a degree corresponding to our Doctor of Divinity, for which about ten years' work is demanded, they go back to their monastery after three years as full fledged choir-monks, being allotted rooms of their own, more like those in an Oxford college than a friar's cell.

The voyage to Lhasa takes not less than three months on

horseback; but that is no deterrent, since from time immemorial the Tibetans have been great lovers of travel. They delight in tales of distant countries: as our three pilgrims were also widely-travelled people, it was natural that they and the lamas should compare notes on what they had seen. Some of the younger monks, instead of riding all the way to Lhasa behind the Himalaya, had gone down to Srinágar, about a fortnight's trek, and then proceeded by bus to the railhead, whence the North-West Frontier express had whirled them across the Indian plain to Calcutta. That vast city had not impressed them much, and they had been glad to leave it for Kalimpong, where they found themselves in a godly country once more. From there, crossing the Jelap pass into the Chumbi valley, in the path of Everest expeditions, they reached Lhasa in a month. That capital represents for them the centre not only of religious studies, but also of secular culture and fashion.

The pilgrims gained some prestige from the fact that their dialect, clothes and customs also derived from the Central Provinces. They, too, knew Kalimpong and Sikkim. They had even pitched a camp at the very foot of mighty Kangchhendzőnga, "the five great treasures of snow," which is the residence of a Spirit who, in form of a goose, pointed the way over the Himalayan passes to the Apostle who brought the Buddhist faith to Sikkim. But they were also familiar with other and yet more distant lands, such as Yunan or Ionia, P'haransi with its capital Pari, and Italia, the home of the explorer, Professor Dainelli, who had also been to Likhir and had written enthusiastically in praise of Ladak. They themselves dwelt in New Babylon on the farthest confines of the Lands of the Setting Sun. The regions in question were in process of being enslaved by three malignant demon-kings named Progress, Hurry-Hasty, and Propaganda—like many felons, the last-named has several aliases, the commonest of which is simple Mr. Education: these tyrants forced their subjects to work at a rate so intense that they might well have envied the pyramid-builders. From time to time the three fiends would set their subjects to battle, inflaming one against another like fighting-cocks, so that they were roused to the pitch of blind and furious hatred. Possibly the motive behind all this strife originated from a desire to distract men from calm thinking, lest having leisure to view things, and themselves, as they really are, they

might discover, in non-attachment to self, a way of escape out of the sufferings of the Round of Existence in which they were imprisoned.

The majority of the servants of the demons lived in want, but some of them had persuaded themselves that their lot was enviable and should be shared by other races that had so far managed to avoid adopting their customs. Numerous busybodies were recruited, under all sorts of specious pleas, and despatched to remote corners of the globe in order to disseminate the demons' influence. The company offered up an earnest prayer that Ladak and Tibet might be spared as a preserving-ground for other ideas and that, by the power of the five kinds of Wisdom embodied in the Buddhas of the five directions, assisted by their active Consort-Energies under their sternest aspects, the malice of the demons might be exorcized, so that all mankind might live in peace.

There was also some talk on diseases and their remedies; for one of the younger lamas present—he was actually Norbu's brother—had studied the art of simples and herbs in a medical college in Lhasa. He now practised his medical calling at Likhir, dealing with a few minor ailments and now and then drawing out a painful tooth. But he was under no misapprehension as to certain accomplishments of Westerners in Medical Science, though in few other things, and was glad to hand over some of his patients at once to the care of one of the three visitors, who was a skilful physician. For a man sick of a curable illness there are temporary advantages to be derived from living in the West; if the disease is hopeless, this becomes more questionable, for in Tibet the patient could not long be forced to linger by artificial means—always a doubtful blessing. Curative Medicine, to my mind, is one of the few solid gains we have to offer the people of the trans-Himalayan countries; but I question whether the healing of the sick would not, under the present circumstances of the world, be dearly bought at the cost of upsetting the mental and physical balance of many others who now are normal.

After tea, the guests were led into a small adjoining chamber, the bedroom of the abbot. In it there was a fine chest painted in delicate gold arabesques; otherwise the room was bare except for five large scroll pictures so wonderful that to describe them there are no words sufficient in language. Whether one

values most, boldness of composition, clarity of drawing, wealth of detail free from all irrelevancy, brilliancy of colour, or the wrapt devotion expressed in the faces, one would discover each of these qualities in the five masterpieces. The middle one of the set represented the red Buddha of the Western Quarter, "Immeasurable Light," seated under a canopy of fruits and garlands that might almost have come from Crivelli's brush, and worshipped by angelic servitors and every sort of animal, bird and plant. The attention of the sacristan was drawn to a small crack that had appeared in the paint, due to the warping of a wooden roller from which the *t'hanka* hung, a frequent cause of damage in such scrolls. He undertook to change the roller and to engage a competent artist to repair the harm before it spread any farther.

Finally, everyone repaired to the main temple or Hall of Assemblies for the afternoon service. It was a lofty church, divided into three aisles by massive wooden piers, on which rested the flat ceiling. The walls were brilliantly painted or hung with *t'hankas*, so that every corner of the building offered to the eye some new play of colour under the intense rays of the Central Asian sun, streaming in by open windows opposite the high altar. There were two thrones, a higher one for the abbot and one slightly lower, on which the prior sat cross-legged. A double row of wooden platforms, raised a few inches off the floor and covered with thick rugs, formed a choir on either side, facing in towards the central space. On these the monks sat in "lotus-posture" like statues of the Buddha, those of the inner row holding musical instruments. Each man, before taking his seat, drew over his shoulders a yellow cape.

All through the service a little black kitten, the pet of one of the lamas, kept playing in and out under the platforms on which the officiants were sitting. No one paid attention to it, and it was allowed to gambol to its heart's content up to the very feet of Him who did not try to distinguish between man and beast, nor even between god and devil, in pointing out His road of escape from suffering.

A brief meditation preceded the rite, the offering of the Universe to the Buddha. This idea runs through all the public worship like a central theme. St. Tsong Khapa, who fixed the order of service for his own Yellow monks, tells them to start by imagining themselves each to be endowed with a hundred

heads, and each head with a thousand mouths, and each mouth with unnumbered tongues, all eloquent in praise. In making votive offerings, a first separate gifts must be brought, such as flowers, incense and music. What cannot be given in kind, may be offered up in imagination, and gradually added to, until the whole Universe is ready to be laid at the divine feet "as a gift tendered by the mightiest of kings, its possessor."

The hands of the worshipper are joined in a gesture called *mandala* (globe), which is the regular symbol of the Universe. The hands are turned palms upwards, with the little fingers crossed. The tip of the right thumb touches the left little finger, the right index finger touches the left middle finger, and *vice versa*. These four pairs make the four points of the compass, or quarters. The fifth pair, the fourth fingers, sticks up in the middle and represents Mount Meru, the central axis, which is itself the path of Exaltation, of ascent from the partial and limited to the integral and infinite.

The passage from small tangible offerings to undefined imaginary ones, is intended to evoke the idea of non-duality, of the basic unity of everything, which lies behind all the Tibetan metaphysic. An analogous idea can be read into the sacramental sentence taken from the Christian liturgy of St. John Chrysostom: "Thy own of Thine own to Thee we offer, in all and for all."

The office consisted of psalms, some sung to a marked chant, others merely droned in a low voice, diversified with symphonies rendered by the orchestra. The oboe-players, who held the main tune, blew their reeds before starting, with a familiar quack-quack that carried the mind back to the tuning-in of the London Philharmonic, or any other of our orchestras. Some of the chants were metrical and supported by drum alone; with others, handbells were rung. A precentor with a deep bass voice led the service, giving the signal with his cymbals to start or end each section. He had a peculiar way of indicating the final cadences, letting his voice sink in a long chromatic *glissando* into the depths of the bass, not unlike bagpipes from which the air is being emptied. Every ten minutes or so there was an interval, when everyone could relax and look about him; during actual prayers in the strictest Tibetan monasteries, inattention is apt to be summarily dealt with by a censor, who surveys the congregation from a point of vantage, his leather

scourge kept handy for administering instant correction. Woe to the man who stares about or shuffles his knees or makes a whispered remark and thinks he can elude the watchful eye. He is seized by the scruff of the neck and led out into the middle, where he can only bow down humbly and take his punishment like a man. When officiating, the monks are expected to sit motionless, though without stiffness; their hands only move in the ritual gestures. In the pauses for relaxation, novices who sit by the doors, get up and fill the wooden bowl set before each monk, with tea out of a monster pot; they drink, and sometimes also add to the tea a little of the parched barley-meal which takes the place of bread; this is kneaded into a lump and then eaten.

When the service was over it was time to think, reluctantly, of departure. Many were the requests on the part of the good monks that the three friends would return later and make a stay of several days or even longer. The ponies were led round by a groom; before mounting, the visitors saluted the kind old prior who, bending, imprinted on each of them a light tap with his forehead, bestowing a blessing. Then they turned and disappeared down the hill. How often since that time have they dreamed of Likhir and of the day when, like the foretaste of a beatific vision, they were admitted to the threefold joys of Nature, the Arts, and Human Intercourse combined in one single all-embracing synthesis. Now they are back in Babylon: how shall they sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

CHAPTER XVII

The Bursar of Spituk

THE ride from Saspul to Spituk, where the road enters the wider portion of the Indus valley, is on the whole monotonous, with sandy stretches strewn with round pebbles—an unpleasant surface, whether for riding or walking. At first, abandoning the Indus, which is only rejoined close to Spituk, the Likhir path is followed for a couple of miles to a fork; there the Leh road turns off to the right up an extremely hot and sandy pass, and leads on to a wide plateau, which it crosses before descending into the next cultivated strip near the village of Basgo. This village is surrounded by apple orchards, and dominated by an ancient ruined castle built to command the entrance to a long side valley through which it is possible to approach the river Shyok. Possibly in olden times Turkoman raiders may have followed this route.

We had heard that a party of four Europeans, consisting of a French doctor and his wife, a German-American and a Russian lady, were on their way back to Kashmir. As we were crossing the plateau we suddenly caught sight of a long train of baggage, with Kashmiri servants in charge; soon afterwards a lady and gentleman made their appearance. Taking them for the doctor's party we greeted them in French. They were astonished at hearing "Bonjour, Madame" from a party of "Tibetans"; in the conversation which ensued they never managed to disentangle the nationalities and languages. Actually they proved to be, not the French pair, but the American and the Russian, though the latter spoke fluent French without a trace of accent. She asked a lot of questions about our clothes and where they had been purchased and kept on exclaiming "Mais qu'ils sont chics, ces costumes-là!" When questioned on her own impressions of Ladak, she said it was a boring, uncomfortable country: nothing to see except a few mouldy monasteries. "Il est

moche, ce pays," summed up her view. The party had been looked after, she said, by an elderly German-Swiss missionary at Leh, who usually took complete charge, almost *ex officio*, of the interests of every European visitor. We made a mental note that our case would be the one exception, and that we should only call on him after we had settled our own programme.

Another village, Nimu, lies on the route before the final long stretch to Spituk. It is a regular stage and possesses a rest-house; but it is worth pushing on farther, in order to put the dullest bit of the road behind one. The notable thing about Nimu is the headman's house which is exceptional even in this land of fine houses.

After so many days in stony gorges the open scenery round Spituk came as a refreshing surprise. The banks of the river were marshy in many places, with reeds and low bushes, and strips of damp meadow where cattle were grazing. Spituk itself is dominated by a famous monastery of the Yellow-hatted Order; its silhouette stood out sharp in the evening light as we approached from the west. The main road to Leh passes, not on the river side, but between the hill on which the *Gompa* stands and a low line of fantastic limestone cliffs, where, we were told, the lime is collected which is used for the foundation coating of sacred paintings. On passing through the opening, one enters a great sandy amphitheatre, the meeting-place of several valleys. On the south side, the Indus, now broken into two or three shallower channels, is fringed on either side with a broad green belt of cultivation, set here and there with clumps of poplars. At the entrance bay of each subsidiary valley there is a fan of irrigated land; the nearest of these to the north contains the city of Leh itself. Across the Indus, in the shadow of a snow mountain, stands Stok with its castle, half monastery, half palace, in which resides the descendant of the great line of Ladak kings, a State pensioner, who still bears the courtesy title and owns the fief.

As we wished to visit Spituk monastery at leisure, we decided to stop the night in the rest-house and to postpone entering the capital for one more day. An abrupt staircase, up which we were taken at a breathless pace, led to the main buildings, which occupied different levels on the hillside. The amiable monk who guided us, stopped at a small chapel near the steps and began to unlock the door. Just as we were about to cross the thresh-

hold he asked if we were professing Buddhists. We explained that some of us had begun to study the Doctrine, that we felt great love and reverence for it and that we did indeed find a great profit in its study, but that we did not feel that it would be right for any of us at that stage to use the name in an exclusive sense. We were not even sure whether, in certain circumstances, a man might not almost call himself a Christian and a Buddhist at the same time: at which he started to lock the door again, saying that none but unqualified adherents were allowed inside. This was surprising, since Buddhists, being free from the notions about pollution which cause Hindu temples to shut their doors to non-Hindus, never show any objection to visitors penetrating into the most sacred of shrines; so we asked the reason for the unwonted prohibition. "A divinity in fierce form dwells in this temple; if you were to suffer some mischief at his hands, we should be distressed about it," he said, and turned an enormous key in the lock with a decisive click.

Next we were led into the main temple, a fine building containing mural paintings and festooned with scrolls. There we made our usual offering of five precious stones, which were taken over by a tall and lithe-looking lama with a very keen, vivacious face, who discharged the office of bursar. He asked if we preferred to have the stones set in a decorated *chorten* at the end of the aisle or in the gilt diadem of Tsepagmed, whose beautiful image stood on the right of the Buddha, behind the altar. We chose the latter as the most suitable setting for jewels.

From the first moment we felt powerfully drawn towards the personality of our new acquaintance, whose name was Dawa (Moon); he seemed to reciprocate the feeling, for he spoke to us as if he had all along been expecting our arrival and knew that our fates, already connected by an unseen link, were predestined to move along parallel lines in the future. Looking back, I think that the bursar of Spituk is one of the most remarkable people I have ever met, though the abbot of Lachhen must probably be accorded the first place. The lama Dawa was a man, who, both in theory and practice, realized the highest ideal of the religious life. He was not only a well-informed exponent of the Doctrine, but he was the very thing itself. It showed up in his smallest action and in his lightest

word; above all it revealed itself in the extreme detachment of his judgment. It had even affected his bodily movements, which had a peculiar flexibility that seemed more than just physical, a reflection of the suppleness of his mind. To this list of qualities there must be added a trenchant wit, conciseness of style in writing, and a sweet and lovable disposition. He told us that he had three pupils, whom he was coaching before they went off to Tibet for their final studies. He considered that a teacher could not adequately deal with more than that number at one time; certainly they were greatly to be envied in their master.

From the temple we were led to an upper chamber containing fine *t'hankas*; carpets were spread, and tea and rice pudding were served. The room belonged to the Incarnate Abbot of Spituk, the Lord Bakula. We remembered the tributes paid to the good taste, wisdom and urbanity of that prelate in various writings of the eminent Italian anthropologist, Professor Giotto Dainelli. But his Bakula was no more to be found among the living and the monastery was being run by a prior, in expectation of the day when the newly-chosen Bakula, now about eighteen years old, should return and take his seat on the abbatial throne. He had been found by the process of divination used for discovering the child on whom the influence of the deceased abbot had again descended, and on reaching the age of about sixteen he had been duly sent to Lhasa to the vast college of Drepung, where the men of Spituk, as also those of Likhir, usually take their course in divinity. The young Bakula was due to return only after obtaining his degree of *Geshé* or Doctor, which demanded many years of work.

Among some framed photographs hanging on the wall was one of the old Bakula; the nobility of his countenance certainly bore out the high character that Signor Dainelli had assigned to him. There was also a photograph of the present Bakula taken at the age of twelve, clad in the vesture and mitre of an abbot. His was also a face of rare distinction and beauty; he looked a born prince who, if appearances did not belie him, would prove a worthy ruler over his community. There was a good deal that needed attention at Spituk, for a certain mustiness, mental as well as tangible, seemed to have settled on the place. The prior must have been rather slack, and inclined to let things slide, pending the return from Lhasa of the rightful



DESERT TRACK BEHIND SPITUK



THE LAMA DAWA, BURSAR OF SPITUK



A NOVICE OF THE GELUGPA ORDER

lord. There is a modern Greek proverb which says: "The eye of the owner is manure to the field." The field at Spituk certainly could do with a little fertilizer! Among the lamas, the bursar Dawa's vigour seemed rather the exception; and my impression of a service in the temple was none too favourable, for there was a good deal of inattention, always a sign of decay. This *Gompa* must be rated only mediumly good; it is much above the degenerate houses like Yuru, but falls equally far below the ideal state of Likhir.

We invited the bursar to supper: towards sunset he arrived, but would touch nothing but a cup of tea, since, as he told us, he never took anything after the midday meal. He was very strict in abstaining from alcohol and meat, and pronounced severe censure against those who were self-indulgent in these respects. According to him, most of the monastic houses in Ladak had deteriorated markedly of recent years: even Rigzon, reputed to be of the purest observance, had somewhat lowered its standard, while certain of the other *Gompas* were falling into deplorable laxity and were simply vegetating, with hardly a thought to spare for the Doctrine. In Tibet he declared things to be, on the whole, much better, though even at his own university of Drepung he considered that devotion needed rekindling. "There are nine thousand monks and students there," he said, "but go any day into the temple and you will find it far from well attended." On the other hand the University of Sera, also near Lhasa, was still a model, he thought, while at Ganden, the third of the great trio of Yellow-Hat Houses at Lhasa, the standard was about average. There were, however, scores of excellent teachers to be found scattered over Tibet, but rather in the smaller monasteries, both Yellow and Red, than in the richest ones.

Our newly-found friend was much amused by the story of the fierce god in the chapel to which we had been denied admittance. This led on to a discussion as to what really constitutes a Buddhist and by what test, if any, he is to be recognized. Any form of inquisition into a man's private views is considered impious. Buddhism, as well as Hinduism, has never been guilty, even where its votaries have been least faithful to its principles, of any attempt to enforce uniformity by violence or to place legal restrictions upon the discussion of any and every question; it has not tried to restrict thought or to discourage it on any

plea whatsoever. Indeed the duty of subjecting the doctrines one professes to the final test of realization, is the advice given by every teacher, good and bad alike. There is no real Knowledge other than the realization of truths already immanent in the mind, waiting to be unveiled as soon as the obscuring passions and self-delusions have been cleared away. Moreover, though reverence for the person of the teacher runs through the web of tradition like a central thread, it is not expected of the pupil that he shall blind himself to the fact of human deficiencies in his master's life. His private faults are not supposed to impair the authority of his teaching for the disciple, or to diminish the latter's obedience and devotion to the master. It is, however, bad form for the latter ever to speak disparagingly of his master to others. Whatever he may notice, he must continue to treat him with the respect due to an inspired guide. In this matter the wording of the books is emphatic and allows no loophole for evasion. The Master-pupil relationship, in a regular Tradition, is something far transcending the actual personalities concerned. The chain is more important than any single link. If some of the links are made of baser metal, it matters little, provided that they hold. Moreover a man may have something infinitely precious to communicate and yet suffer from weakness and even grave faults. A professor of mathematics need not be reckoned less qualified for his job by the fact that he drinks or is unfaithful to his wife. An observed fault of character does not, in the Tibetan's opinion, invalidate the truth of a man's doctrine, which, in spite of his personal failings, he may be correctly transmitting according to the tradition which he has himself received. Conversely, there may be flaws in the lessons imparted by men of the highest private virtue; care must at all times be exercised against letting the scales be weighed down by irrelevant moral considerations.

It must not be forgotten that the teaching is not presented in the guise of a dogma to be accepted as of Faith, as might occur in a doctrine taking on the special "religious" form: here the actual realization of the doctrine by the pupil, is, for him, the ultimate authority. A doctrine is handed down through the personal teacher, the Root-Lama as he is called; but Knowledge springs into being within the pupil himself. "Be ye lamps unto yourselves," the Buddha said repeatedly. And to His cousin and beloved pupil Ananda, He gave this

warning:—"It might happen, Ananda, that this thought should be born in you: the word of the Master is no more, we have no more a Master. It is not thus that you must think. The Doctrine and the discipline which I have taught you, these are your Master when I shall have disappeared."

The bursar's view on the touchstone for recognizing a Buddhist, was summed up as follows: "If the Refuge is present there is Buddhism: if the Refuge is absent there is not Buddhism. The Refuge is a question of understanding and of action based thereon. This meaning must be grasped and experienced and all actions must conform to its spirit. Except in the Refuge seek no other way of Deliverance."

The Refuge is a triple formula which has sometimes, inappropriately, been described as the "Creed" of Buddhism. It runs thus:—

I take Refuge in the Buddha
I take Refuge in the Doctrine
I take Refuge in the Church

To these three Refuges there has been given the name of the Trinity of Most Precious Things. The line one must follow in order to realize them, is suggested by the following passage, copied for me by my next teacher, the lama Gyaltsan of P'hiyang, whom I shall introduce in a succeeding chapter. It is taken from the works of Dagpo Hlardjé, surnamed Gampopa, who was a pupil of Rechhung, the disciple of Mila Repa:—

This is the lesson to be learned of how to go for refuge to the Three Most Precious Things . . .

In the real lesson are contained six special lessons and five general ones. First of all, the special lessons contain three renunciations and three attainments.

To start with, behold the three things to be renounced:—

1 Having gone to the Buddha for refuge, do not worship the gods who err in the Round.
2 Having gone to the Doctrine for refuge, do no injury to living creatures.
3 Having gone to the Church for refuge, do not form associations with heretics.

Here are the three things to be attained. For as much as you attain them in conformity with the word of Buddha, do so without forgetfulness and with reverence:—

4 Respectfully raise on high even a mere fragment of a sacred effigy.
5 Having gone for refuge to the Doctrine, strive to hear, ponder and meditate the imperative Doctrine. The writing, which enshrines the Doctrine, even were it a tiny shred, raise reverently on high.
6 Having gone for refuge to the Church, to it—the Church—that is to the followers of Buddha, also show reverence.
Associate with the friends of virtue; lastly also show respect to the yellow robe.

Here follow the five ordinary precepts :—

1 Even at the sacrifice of your life, do not abandon the Three Precious Things.
2 Even for a very important reason, do not seek any other method.
3 Do not cut off periodic offerings.
4 Do not invent another Refuge.
5 In whatever direction you may be proceeding, worship its presiding Buddha.

A few comments on this passage may help to make it clearer. I have compared it with a corresponding passage in the *Lamrim* (" Stages in the Way ") of Tsong Khapa, the most authoritative book of the Yellow Lamas, and which therefore represents a separate, though parallel, strand of tradition. The wording is almost the same, which makes one suppose that both were based on the same original, probably an Indian writer; for the reference to the monastic robe as " yellow " in the last of the " three Attainments," does not suggest a Tibetan prototype, since the ordinary lamas' dress has usually been red. The Yellow monks wear yellow caps, but red robes like the others. In any case, the Yellow-Hat Order did not exist in the time of St. Gampopa, the author of my quotation. But in Indian Buddhism, as in Ceylon and Siam and China to-day, clerical dress was yellow.

The numbering of the various injunctions and their subdivisions is typical of Tibetan doctrinal books. They delight in numbered lists and it would be possible, could a sheet of paper large enough be found, to draw up a scheme of the whole development of a doctrine in all its ramifications, like a sort of family-tree. The *Lamrim*, for instance, reads in parts more like a Government White-Paper than an abstract treatise, with its broad classifications, and then its clauses, its riders, its listed

grades of knowledge: and there is never a metaphor, hardly even a simile, to break the severe economy of its language. Tibetan sacred writings are often voluminous, but they are the reverse of discursive. Sometimes, indeed, they are contracted to such a point of pithy condensation that, without the help of a teacher, it would be difficult to extract any sense from their bare phraseology. *The Lantern of the Path*, by the great second Apostle of Tibet, the Bengali St. Atisha, occupies about ten small sheets of wood-block printing; yet it contains the kernel of St. Tsong Khapa's vast volume, the *Lamrim*, which was based on it: and the *Lamrim* itself, though so long, is far from diffuse; its every line is fraught with meaning, demanding unflagging concentration from the reader.

To revert to the Three Refuges—some of the phrases explain themselves and ask for no comment, but a few might give rise no doubt as to their exact significance:—

The gods who err in the Round. They are one of the six classes of beings who share the Round of Existence (See Chapter XI, page 151). Though temporarily possessed of superior powers, they are our fellow-creatures, subject to the same vicissitudes of birth and death as ourselves. To worship them is senseless and therefore idolatrous. Real worship can only be paid to what is permanent and truly divine: that is, to the Buddha, apart from whose substance nothing is, though we know it not, because of the illusion of individual existence and the dualistic notions to which it gives birth. Reality and permanence can only belong to That which contains within Itself Its own sufficient Cause and That can only be One. To offer real worship to anything else is idolatry, though reverence of a qualified kind (that in Christian theological language was termed *dulia* as distinct from *latreia* or true worship due to God alone) is offered to Saints and Heavenly Personalities of inferior grades, who play the part of Teachers, Protectors and Intercessors. This statement of doctrine is practically the same as that which has obtained in the Catholic Church since the Council of Constantinople, which settled the controversy over the revering of images and the invocation of Saints. It is furthermore interesting to note that all these heavenly Lamas and Divinities, including the Bodhisats like Chenrezig, who fulfil the redemptive function on behalf of all suffering creatures, are comprised in the Third Most Precious Thing—the Church. They correspond

in idea to the Church Triumphant, while the lamas on earth, members of the Order set up by the Buddha, the authorized transmitters of His Tradition, correspond to the Church Militant. This last remark disposes of the Sixth Special Lesson—the third of the Attainments—for it explains what is meant by the word "Church" to which we are bidden to show reverence. The concordance with Christian doctrine here revealed, is a striking illustration of the common thread which, under many external differences of form and expression, runs through all traditional teachings.

To return to the Renunciations:—The second one, which orders us to avoid inflicting harm on other sentient beings, is interpreted very strictly, and a man is considered to have fulfilled his duty in this matter, in proportion as he finds it possible to avoid occasions for injuring even the lowliest creatures. Like many of the Jains in India to-day, the ancient Buddhist monks swept their path as they walked, lest they might tread inadvertently on an insect, and they carried a filter so that the water they drank might be cleared of animalcules that would otherwise have been swallowed. One of the first things that a Gelugpa, or Yellow monk, must do on getting up in the morning, is to anoint the soles of his feet with spittle as a sign that he prays that any animals which he may trample on by mistake, will be reborn in the happy sphere of the Western Paradise.

The third renunciation is open to slight misconstruction. The word which, for lack of a better, I have translated as "heretics," is given in the original Tibetan as *Mutegpa*, which literally denotes a Brahmin devotee. It comes down from the early centuries when regular debates used to take place between rival teachers in India. There are many tales of the discomfiture of the spokesmen of one or other party—which party, depended on the sympathies of the teller; but there is also little evidence that religious emulation ever led to bigotry: in this respect the historical record of all the Indian schools of thought is singularly blameless. I discussed the point about *Mutegpa* several times with a lama, and as far as I can tell, the passage means no more than that one should avoid associating constantly with people who are likely to try to lead one astray; it must never be read in the sense of authorizing an unfriendly, stand-offish attitude even towards aggressive opponents of the Doctrine. There is a slight ambiguity in the passage, and it is, I think, fair to admit that

the wording is capable of misinterpretation. It is the nearest thing to a sectarian remark that I have come across in all my Buddhist reading: but in practice I have found no lama who used it as an excuse for intolerance.

Turning to the three things to be Attained, one notices that the first proposition, the latter half of the second, and the third, are all concerned with treating sacred objects with reverence—images, books and persons who have the right to wear the sacred colour. The most positive of the Attainments is the first half of the second precept, which describes the process by which Knowledge is to be acquired. First one must listen to the Doctrine, then one must think it over in a rational sense, and finally realize it through the higher intellect in Meditation. Then only can it be spoken of as Known.

" The Writing which enshrines the Doctrine "—that is, books or portions of books—is reverenced almost more than anything else by the Tibetans. They will not pack up their belongings for a journey without making sure that the books have the place of honour on top and will not be crushed under everyday objects. If a Tibetan is handed a book he will lay it on his head, murmuring a prayer that he may be helped to profit by its wisdom. I remember one day, at the *Gompa* of P'hiyang, when we were sitting on the floor of our cell talking to our friend the lama Gyaltsan, that Dr. Roaf, who had just finished looking up some reference in a *Textbook of Pathology* by Professor Boyd, happened to put his feet lightly on this massive black tome. Suddenly Gyaltsan noticed it and, stopping in the middle of his discourse, said in shocked tones: " Excuse me, you may not know it; but you are treading on a book! " Dr. Roaf at once apologized and Professor Boyd's precious volume was duly picked up and laid in a place of safety. I think its learned author would have been surprised to hear of the honour done to his book by a lama in far-off Tibet, an honour which it has probably never received from one of his students in his own laboratory at home!

The five general injunctions call for little comment: the only one which is not quite clear is that which refers to periodic offerings. I fancy that it means that those who devote themselves to the religious calling, deserve the alms of the faithful for their support, but I am not quite sure if I have read this sentence aright.

One final remark must be added to this commentary on the Refuge. When a Tibetan is about to invoke the Three Precious Things, he usually precedes them with another Refuge phrase :—

" I go for Refuge to the Lama."

The Lama here referred to is not synonymous with the third Precious Thing, the Church : it denotes the disciple's private spiritual director—" his own Lama," or *Guru*, as a Hindu would call him—through whom the Doctrine is transmitted and in virtue of whose teaching the pupil is made an effective participant in the Tradition from the beginning of time. In the Lama is seen personified the Teacher function, the highest that can be conceived in the Universe. To him boundless reverence, obedience and devotion are enjoined and no important step must be taken unless preceded by his formal authorization. He is the symbol of Tradition, through which the Three Precious Things are revealed.

These explanations about the Refuge are the fruits of several discussions. On that first occasion at Spituk we naturally could only begin to approach the subject. After talking for some time of the traits which denote the Buddhist, the lama Dawa, in his turn, addressed a few inquiries to us about the teachings of Christianity. " I have noticed that Christians, as a rule, seem indifferent to the sufferings of animals. Not only do they all eat meat freely, but they do not seem to mind killing animals on the slightest provocation. Tell me, have they the authority of their Founder for this? Did He really teach that sentient creatures can be used without restriction in the service of man and injured for any and every motive? It is the one thing which appears to me evil in what I know of Christianity."

There is an instinct of loyalty in man which makes it repugnant to him to run down his own countrymen before a foreigner; one feels a strong impulse to present the least unfavourable case. I believe that Christianity has been one of the great traditional avenues for the revelation of true Doctrine, and I also think that the general idea of Charity as taught in the Gospel is utterly incompatible with the heartless exploitation of animals for supplying man's material wants. I deny that it is reasonable to practise Charity towards one's fellow-men, and callousness towards one's fellow-creatures of the animal world, acting

tenderly towards the former and cruelly towards the latter; though it must be confessed that some quite saintly people have attempted to justify such a policy. The theory that creatures endowed with any degree of sensibility were created to be used at the unrestricted will and pleasure of one species, singled out of the whole of creation, seems to make of the Creator not a God, but a fiend of unexampled malignancy. I can still remember at school, asking a master how the story of the drowning of the Gadarene swine could be squared with the rest of the life of Our Lord; the lame explanation that I received shocked even my boyish intelligence. Now at Spituk, I would gladly have given the lama Dawa a simple statement that Christ's teaching on animals was as precise as he expected it to be, and that the deplorable practice of Christians in this matter was simply a falling away from the professed ideal.

But to a man of the highest intellectual honesty like Dawa, I felt it impossible to give any answer that suffered from bias; he and his fellow lamas showed such a freedom from all special-pleading tendencies when discussing the condition of their own Church, that anything short of an equal frankness towards them would have been rank dishonesty. I have been surprised how rare false loyalty is among Tibetans; I have said rare, but I must confess that I cannot at this moment recall a single instance of facts being doctored, or evidence selected, in order to show up their institutions in an excessively favourable light. It does not seem to be one of their temptations, for the basis of their whole philosophy lies in the undoing of illusion. Whatever ostensible success is built on a groundwork of misrepresentation, is for them *ipso facto* poisoned at the root; its fruits therefore, however sweet their temporary flavour, must in the long run prove to be bitter. There are liars for personal gain to be found in Tibet as elsewhere, but, in their heart of hearts, they do not so often cherish the lurking belief that out of a deception of themselves or others, ultimately happy consequences can somehow be made to flow. This error is precluded even by a partial understanding of the doctrine of *Karman*, which is inexorable in declaring that as the sowing, so shall be the eventual reaping. That is why the nature of the religious label affixed to a person counts for rather less among them than among ourselves: nominal conversion to Buddhism, based on insufficient reasons, is worthless and can

only turn out disadvantageously for the person concerned, as well as for the Church.

The answer that I gave to the lama's question was roughly as follows:—"In the recorded life of the Founder of Christianity, contained in the four Gospels, it must be admitted that there are hardly any but the most passing allusions to animals. One can find two or three passages which could be read in a favourable sense, for example, the sparrows, not one of which can 'fall on the ground without your Father . . .' and 'the lilies of the field'; but there is nothing that could not be explained away as being merely a figure of speech." It is therefore just to admit that in the Gospels the question of animals is practically not touched on and appears to be treated as a matter of no great urgency. It is my own personal opinion that the teaching of Christ, in regard to the cultivation of a generally merciful and loving outlook, is impossible to realize if it excludes animals. The Sermon on the Mount and the sermon of the Buddha in the Park of Gazelles are, in their ethical teaching, singularly concordant. I readily grant that the absence from the Gospel of any specific mention of our duty towards animals seems a rather big omission.

If one considers later Christian writers, again one is forced to admit that, for the majority, the question of animals hardly arose. More often it was taken for granted that animals were created primarily for the direct service of man, and that any kindness shown them was an act of supererogation. The frequent use of disparaging terms such as "brute" or "beast" suggests that animals possess no rights of their own. On the other hand, quite a number of saints, especially the early hermits and, of course, St. Francis—but there are also many others—seem to have felt as the lamas do, that to limit love is to denature it altogether. While believing that these men represent the true spirit of Christ, nevertheless I should be exaggerating if I pretended that theirs has been an average view. Christian history has, on the whole, shown a negative attitude on this matter, and the awakening of conscience which has taken place in recent times, is often traceable to influences which are not specifically Christian, such as the humanitarian movement born of the French revolution, which was partly associated with religious doubt. The salutary example of smaller Christian groups like the Society of Friends, has doubtless made notable contri-

butions to all humane causes, especially in England. We owe it largely to their influence that our country, to its lasting glory, which outshines that of all its more spectacular victories, has played the part of a protagonist in many of the struggles for the abolition of cruelties both towards men and animals.

Much cruelty to animals still exists, and though few English people would now tolerate intentional cruelty, many still refuse to forego activities which indirectly result in cruelty. If any extension of European influence in the Tibetan countries were to take place, it is to be feared that the thousands of wild animals that now live unmolested in the neighbourhood of the monasteries, would become an immediate target for the fur-hunter, the collector and the sportsman. More disastrous still, their example would arouse the acquisitive instincts of the local inhabitants. To give one example, the tragedy of the Giant Panda is a recent object-lesson. This adorable creature had been left in peace for centuries until the exhaustive search for it, organized by a few thoughtless travellers, suggested to the natives that there was money to be made in attacking the Panda; with the result that in several localities it is already threatened with extinction, a disaster which the original collectors might well have thought of. A similar fate is likely to overtake all the wild animals of Tibet if that country were to open its gates to foreign influences. For though several explorers and climbers who have been privileged to enter Tibet have commented with delight on the number and tameness of the animals which they have seen there, I suspect that were it not for the prohibition against shooting, enforced by the Tibetan Government, those same travellers would have found it difficult to resist the temptation to collect trophies and to shoot "for the pot," even at the cost of destroying for ever the idyllic conditions which they have praised.

One other question was touched upon that evening, the question of Peace. The fear of war has held such a large place in men's thoughts during recent years, and there has been such perplexity of mind as to the duty both of Christians and non-Christians in respect of bearing arms, that the chance of obtaining an opinion from a Buddhist teacher of the highest authority was one not to be missed. The trend of Buddhism has, on the whole, been markedly more pacific than that of Christianity; but there have been schools of thought, notably that

of Zen in Japan, which have accepted the theory that war is justifiable in a good cause. A large number of the warrior patriots of Japan professed this militant philosophy, though in other respects their standpoint was not so widely separated from that of the lamas of Tibet. Even among the latter, there are differences of opinion; we know that several of the monasteries of Kham played a big part in resisting the Chinese early in this century and that the Lhasa Government's forces were actually placed under the command of a churchman, the Kalon Lama. Nevertheless the views of the Spituk bursar are probably fairly representative of a large section of opinion. He expressed himself as an out and out supporter of non-violence. "Whoever wishes to act in conformity with the Refuge, the same is bound to abstain from every sort of injury towards sentient fellow-creatures whether by thought, word or deed. You cannot pretend to go to war without trying to inflict injury. If you fight there is no Refuge; if there is no Refuge, you are not a Buddhist."

Those who, with our lama, share these conclusions, recall the story of the Sakyas, the clan from which the Buddha Himself sprang, and who inhabited a territory in the foothills of the Himalaya. News was brought to them of an impending attack by a hostile tribe and it was debated anxiously whether resistance should be offered or not. Eventually they decided that, as followers of the Doctrine, they were debarred from offering armed resistance, but must welcome the invaders as friends, so they threw down their arms. Pacifists among us are sometimes apt to say that Peace is not only right, but will pay automatically. The heart of the enemy will be changed and victory will rest with the non-resister. While not denying that in many cases the example of returning good for evil may produce incalculable results, such as a revulsion of feeling in the aggressor, one cannot encourage the belief that such would be the result as a matter of course, nor yet, as the lamas would add, allow a faint appeal to potential self-interest to fog the issue and taint the motive.

However, the Tibetans, not being sentimentalists, admit that the story of the Sakyas ends as it might very well end in any similar case—every convinced pacifist must face this possibility: the enemy arrived and the Sakyas were massacred to a man, the gutters of their streets ran with blood and their race

was blotted out from mankind. Some people may argue that the sacrifice of the Sakyas was useless; but, viewed in relation to the law of Cause and Effect, the chain of consequences derived from their brave refusal to compromise, even if all memory of the deed should fail, would add itself to the general store of merit on the Cosmic plane, the *Karman* of the Universe as a whole. In addition, as a recorded historical event, the slaughter of the Sakyas might, by force of example, affect many individual *Karmans*. To the Sakyas themselves there was no obvious profit; that is as it should be. Also we must ever remember that their own personalities were to be regarded as dissoluble; it was idle for them to trouble their heads with hopes of reward, or regrets. The fruit of the Sakyas' sacrifice was nothing less than the Enlightenment and ultimate Liberation of all creatures.

Before we quitted Spituk the lama Dawa made us promise to return to him. He was most anxious not to lose touch with us. "If you have a doctrinal difficulty, please put it in writing, so that I may have leisure to think it over. And do come back after you have been to Himi." (We had told him that we proposed to visit that celebrated monastery.) "And be sure to tell me your impressions." So he spoke, before we rode off across the last five sandy miles towards Leh.[1]

[1] An additional note on the subject of "the Refuge" may prove helpful, in the light of experience gathered long after this book was first published. In turning the formula into English I hesitated for some time over the choice of terms, especially over the use of the word "Church" for the third Refuge, because the picture it evokes in Western minds does not correspond exactly to the Buddhist conception. The Indian word originally used, *sangha*, means "assembly", which is also the primitive meaning of the Greek *ekklesia*: "congregation" was another possible choice. But this word suffers from a similar objection in that it suggests the whole body of "church-members" in our sense of the word, whereas in the Buddhist sense it is restricted to the assembly of dedicated persons, followers of the Order established by the Buddha, and not to "Buddhists" all and sundry. It is the Order of lamas, heavenly and earthly, that constitutes the third Refuge.

Similarly the second Refuge is not easy to translate, as the original Sanskrit word *dharma* (Tibetan *chhö(s)*) has no real equivalent in our languages. I have rendered it by "Doctrine", but this must be taken in the sense of the Truth itself and not merely its formal expression. Another usual translation, which has much to recommend it, is "the Norm", that is to say the "manner of being" proper to each existence in accordance with the inherent possibilities that determine for it its proper "path" and "law". Each being or natural grouping of beings therefore has its norm, which can be expressed by a doctrine that teaches the method of its effective realization; all apparently separate norms are cancelled out in the Supreme Knowledge of the One, Eternal and Universal Norm.

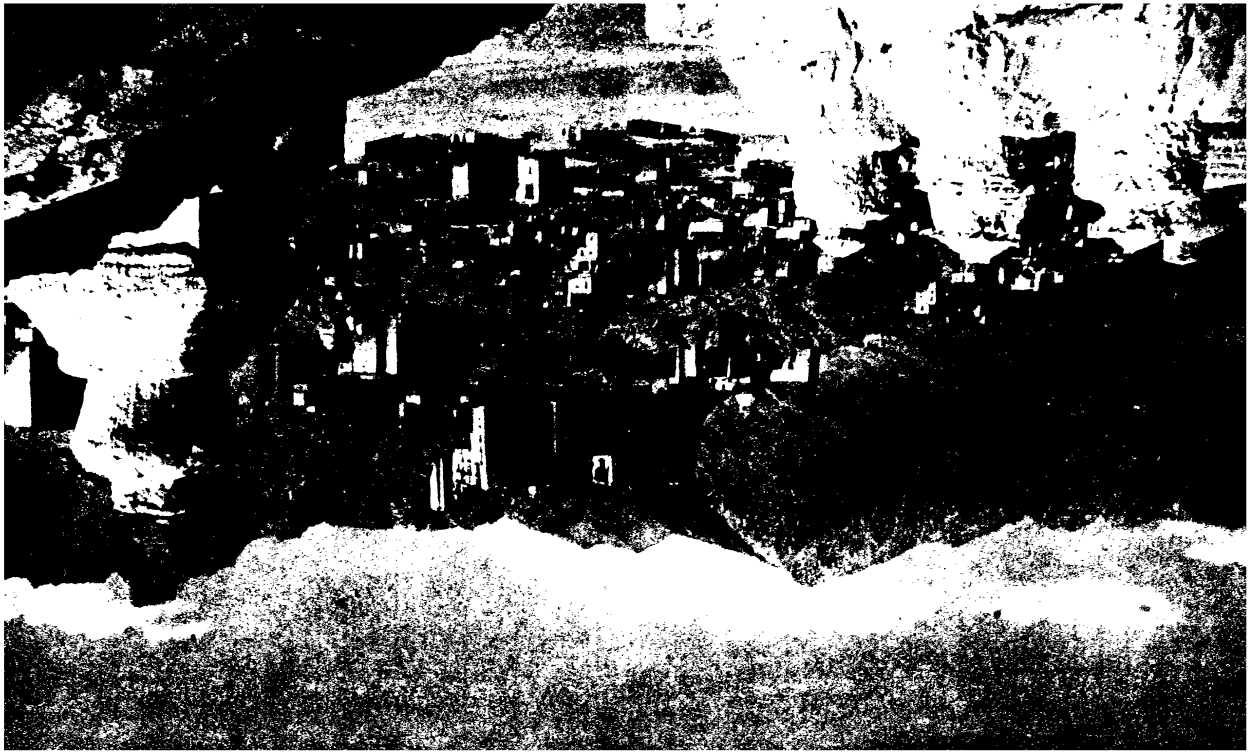
CHAPTER XVIII

Leh

A BELT of willows standing in rather dry ground marks the outskirts of the city. As we came to the houses, our baggage animals turned off the road abruptly. The ponies stepped over a wooden bar at the base of a gateway, and we followed, thinking it must be some short cut, and found ourselves all at once in the main bazaar, a broad and stately street flanked by rows of immense pollarded poplars. The vista is closed by the prodigious castle of the Ladak kings, its lower stories of Egyptian severity, while the upper ones are pierced with larger windows leading out on to wooden balconies. The scale of the building is colossal, dwarfing the rest of the town; though most of it is unoccupied, it is in a fair state of preservation. It is built at the end of a rocky spur, at the foot of which nestles Leh.

Immediately below the castle is the mosque—for there is a large Mussulman community—built in the usual Ladak style of architecture. Later on, it became one of our regular pleasures to walk down to it at night and wait for the muezzin's call. The first time that we happened to be there, standing in the darkness of the unlighted street, we heard from the balcony of a house a tenor voice of rare sweetness singing a melancholy rhapsody. The man now and then paused in his song and then began to sing again. His mellow notes floated out into the surrounding stillness; he seemed to be expressing some deep joy that lay close to tears. In style his songs reminded me of those of Greece, so that I at first suspected Turkish influence, for many Turkish traders come down from the north to Leh; but on inquiry the house proved to belong to a Panjabi.

Eventually he ceased; spellbound we lingered in the hope of hearing him sing again. A bell clanged somewhere above our heads, and then the *Azan*, or Call to Prayer, resounded in





YAKS FROM A TURKI CARAVAN

ringing tones through the night, making known that: "There is no God but God and Muhammad is the Prophet of God! God is greatest!" It was the first time that we had listened to these words; we fell, for the moment, under the spell of the directness and simplicity of the Mussulman faith, which proclaimed, in terms that clove like a sword, the unity of the Principle of all Being and the dependence of all created beings upon It, its Prime Cause.

But this is anticipating: on that first day, as we rode into the bazaar in the noon sunlight, we could overhear the remarks of the people. "They must come from Lhasa." "I hear them speaking the dialect of Tsang." We passed through the crowd to the far side of the town, where we sought out a secluded lodging in a garden to which we had been directed: it belonged to a native Mussulman called Ghulam. We pitched our tents, whilst our host, who proved to be the kindest and most attentive imaginable, regaled us with bread, a long untasted luxury, and tea prepared in the Turkish way, with plenty of sugar forming a thick syrup, and scented with roses. Among teas it corresponds to our after-dinner coffee and is too sweet to be thirst-quenching.

In Leh one can buy three kinds of tea, Turkish, Tibetan and "Lepton"; the last-named is the denomination under which all brands intended to be brewed in the English manner are sold, whether they be the most expensive or really packets sent out by the late owner of the yacht *Shamrock*. We had been in our garden only a few moments when Khan Muhammad Din came to call and invited us to a tea-party at his office, where we were to meet the principal merchants of the town. There were two of these; one was an old Mussulman of seventy-five called Hadji Muhammad Siddiq, who traded with Lhasa and Gartok and knew the former city well, a humorous and hearty old man with a large family—the second one was also a Lhasa merchant, a Ladaki Buddhist, Nono Tőnyod Sha, quiet and courtly; we used to see him almost every day and we owe much to his kindness. They both asked us to their houses at once, so the next day was occupied entirely with visits.

The interior of the better Ladaki house is usually extremely elegant, with spacious chambers bordering on a courtyard, windows with translucent paper in fretwork frames after the Chinese fashion and attractive painted woodwork, on which

floral and dragon motives are applied with an almost endless power of invention. The ceilings are of unsquared poplar logs laid across the main beams. The furniture does not differ in principle from that used by the peasants, except in its greater richness and finer workmanship. There are carpets, Yarkandi, Tibetan and best of all, Chinese, divans round the walls, and painted chests and cupboards; apart from these there is little else. In the old Hadji's house there were also Turkish pipes. He and his family wore the usual costume of Tibet except for the head-dress which, in their case, was a turban or red fez. We have since heard the sad news of the Hadji's death: it is surprising, for he seemed in such good health. It is difficult to imagine Leh without his merry presence.

Nono Tőnyod, the other merchant, possessed a magnificent house, but his taste appeared to have been affected by his journeys to Kashmir; in the midst of many beautiful things we saw much worthless junk. A cabinet contained, for instance, some lovely chased silver stands for teacups from Lhasa, side by side with cheap English earthenware adorned in the style favoured by third-rate landladies at the seaside. A painted tea-table, a perfect specimen, stood side by side with a packing-case stencilled with the name of Messrs. Brown & Co., Bombay. Appalling modernized Yarkand carpets swore loudly against the soft texture, the warm browns and blues of the Tibetan products. It was a curious, untidy medley, an indication of the mental confusion that follows interference with the traditional sense. In fact Tőnyod was a typical transition case. In theory he was still a faithful adherent of the old ways; whenever he pronounced judgment on something that fell within the scope of his knowledge, he was a faultless appraiser of quality. But in regard to novelties, his standard was chaotic and he could tolerate things that most of us would have been ashamed to possess, and allowed them to disfigure his house. The symptoms were those of aesthetic indigestion.

He showed us his treasures, not forgetting to serve delicious Tibetan tea and trays of dried kernels and sugar-candy. He had a prodigious collection of teapots, magnificent examples of the silversmith's art, also teacup-stands, one of which, made at Lhasa, was a real marvel. Later on we asked him if he would part with it—it is quite in order to offer to buy things seen in a private house—but he said we could only have

it if he first sent it to Lhasa to be copied. He had also some fine jewellery of gold filigree set with choice turquoises. Strangely enough, the central jewel of a magnificent pendant was only a cheap piece of red glass that might have come out of a Christmas cracker; but though this was intrinsically unworthy of its setting, the effect was not inartistic.

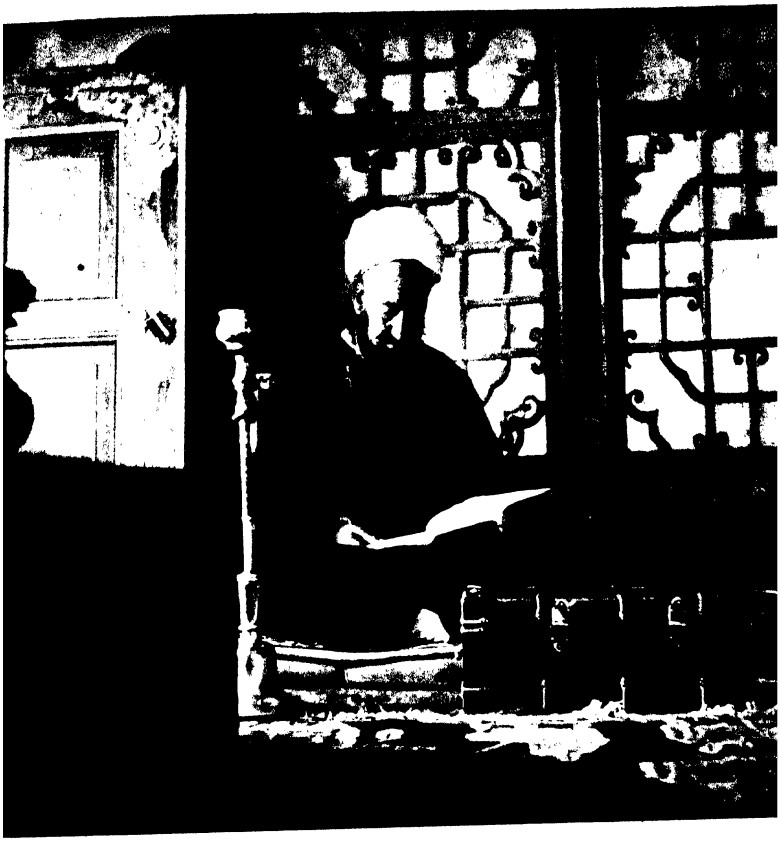
Nono Tőnyod proved a kind friend to us throughout our stay. He had all the polished manners of the Lhasa-bred man. One day he invited us to lunch and served a kind of spinach, with meat cakes which we, as vegetarians, could not take, and excellent *chapattis*, like huge muffins but of almost paper thinness. He started by apologizing that his cook had unfortunately spoiled the dinner. Not yet being accustomed to Tibetan etiquette, I answered naïvely that to my taste, far from having spoiled it, he had excelled in every dish. "No," he said, "it is not good to-day." We later discovered that it is good form to disparage the food that is set before a guest. This was always our host's custom when entertaining us; eventually we realized the position and made suitably ceremonious replies. This custom has probably reached Tibet from China.

The merchant had a manager called Ishé Gyaltsan, a young man of energetic appearance, much more like a Tibetan than his master, who was a typical Ladaki of mixed blood. The manager looked after the Tibetan part of their business, while Tőnyod himself dealt with the Indian side. Ishé Gyaltsan usually wore yellow shirts which matched his face, so that we called him the "Yellow Man." Occasionally he wore vivid magenta, which suited him equally well—I envy those who have a complexion that enables them to wear so strong a colour. We were surprised that he should wear yellow, for he spent some months each year in Tibet and had, so he said, lived there without a break for fifteen years, and it is forbidden for any but members of the clerical Order to be clothed in that colour. "But I am of the clerical Order," he protested, "I was brought up as a novice at Tashilhunpo and I still can stay there whenever I like, though I have taken to trading." There are many similar cases in Tibet. He also wore his four-eared cap in a queer way, with three of the flaps tucked in, out of sight, and only the left ear sticking up asymmetrically. It gave his face a peculiarly comic air: again we asked the reason for this and were told: "It is the privilege of anyone who has served tea

before the two great Lamas. As a boy I served the Panchhen Lama and now I always wear it thus, for if I did not, people in the road might say to themselves ' What sort of a man is this ? ' —now they know."

He told a story with great animation, and his face and hands helped to act the part, so that one could picture the whole scene. His description of an unworthy treasurer making off with the monastery plate to sell it on the quiet was a screaming farce—one could see the teapots being stuffed under his robe and the man slipping out to meet the foreign art dealer to dispose of his ill-gotten wares. Yet though he was so amusing, we never saw even the flicker of a smile cross his face. He was a curious, self-sufficient character, extremely concrete in outlook and of untiring industry in his work, for which he had a passion that had little to do with the mere making of money. Rather did he treat trade as an adventure; he spent a large part of his life in solitary expeditions with only his own picked servants, all pure Tibetans, for company, going first to Gartok to the great fair which takes place there every autumn, and then eastward to Shigatze, Gyantse and Lhasa, a three months' journey on horseback.

He was just then organizing a caravan of forty ponies with Yarkandi merchandise such as carpets, green jade cups and felt rugs, also Indian cotton, to take to Lhasa, whence he would return with the precious brick tea, grown in West China, which the Tibetans in the remotest places love to drink in preference to more easily obtainable Indian-grown varieties: Ceaseless tying up of bales continued all day long on Tőnyod's veranda, while piles of saddles were ready stacked in the porch. The Yellow Man himself had not had his taste upset like that of his employer. He was quite clear in his mind about the excellence of his own country's customs and of the undesirability of exchanging them for ours. All his private possessions were of the highest quality, from his sturdy horse splendidly caparisoned, with high peaked saddle and fine blue pile saddle-cloth, to his boots, riding-whip and other personal objects. He had a critical eye for quality of material and workmanship. His own servants were picked men from Shigatze, a more vigorous and lively type than the heavy, mild Ladakis. They were employed under a similar indenture to the one described in connexion with the boy T'hargya at Lachhen, that is to say, they earned pocket



THE LATE HADJI MUHAMMAD SIDDIQ



THE YELLOW MAN "



THE ART OF POURING TEA

money, not wages, but were kept, fed, clothed and treated familiarly; if they married, their families were also adopted into the household. They appeared entirely contented and devoted to their semi-feudal employer.

The Yellow Man had another amusing characteristic. Whenever he felt excited, he would repeat the last word of a phrase many times at great speed, for emphasis. He might be asked: "Do you think this is an excessive price?" "No, it is quite reasonable, not excessive at all, at all, at all, at all, at all . . ." Or he would say, "To sell the sacred books to foreign collectors is entirely unlawful, unlawful, unlawful, unlawful . . ."

He and I became fast friends; he seemed to make the overtures soon after we met. One day he explained himself, "You know, I loved you from the first moment, because it is plain to me that you really love and understand our Tibetan customs and know how to do things just as if you were one of us."

Another friend in Leh, of whose generous help we cannot speak too gratefully, was a Christian called Joseph Gergan who, however, in spite of his change of religion, had not attempted to become like a European, as is too often the case with converts. He was a man who truly deserved the name of Christian; for never have I come across anyone in whom the love of Christ and the imitation of His life were more manifest. There was no attempt to slur over the inconvenient portions of Christ's teaching; in him was seen the simplicity of a child, side by side with the wisdom of a cultivated, well-read mind. When very young he came into contact with missionaries and felt impelled to embrace the Christian faith. At that time his brother, in un-Buddhist fashion, had attempted to bully him. When Joseph reached the age of full discretion, he decided that so serious a step required to be taken with open eyes, so he proceeded to devote some years to a careful study of the other two Traditions possible for him, namely, the Mussulman and the Buddhist. After three years he decided against the first but it took him eight years fully to make up his mind about the second. His Christianity, as may well be imagined, had both justified itself and remained free from bitterness: for a man who so impartially tried to weigh up alternatives and to find out the good in them all, was not of the stuff that bigots are made of. We always spoke of him as "Gergan the Translator," borrowing the term

from St. Marpa and the other eleventh-century importers of sacred books into Tibet, for Joseph too was a man who only tried to impart to others a doctrine which he had first practised himself. He had been occupied for years on the tremendous task of turning the Bible into colloquial Tibetan and had actually reached the end of St. John's Gospel.

In the summer, when caravans from India and Turkistan enter or leave Leh almost daily, the scene in the bazaar is most picturesque. Here can be seen tall, thin, hawk-nosed Kashmiris in their unbecoming Euro-Indian rags. Across the way saunter some stocky Baltis in thick grey-brown homespuns and close-fitting caps. Tall Turks, fair as Englishmen, but with narrow slits of eyes and rather unintelligent faces, stalk about the market, clad in white shirts, sheepskin caps and high Cossack boots. Some of them add a Bolshevist touch in their drab Russian semi-uniforms, probably exported from the factories of the Five Year Plan. Their women wear fine orange or rose embroidered dresses and are closely veiled, while their Ladaki sisters move about freely, for their position is high in society and stands in no need of protection. A few red-cloaked lamas are always to be seen and occasionally a true Tibetan, or an Afghan youth of great beauty, with white skin and long eyelashes and oval face, an amorous prince from the brush of Persian Bihzad come back to life.[1]

Huge yaks ruminate contentedly in the courts of the Turkoman caravanserais, over which, like a shower of wool, floats the clinging white down of the poplars. The average condition of the animals is quite good, but many ponies or mules employed on long-distance traffic show the usual sore-marks from the hard pack-saddles, suffered during the protracted journey across the Karakoram. I have heard that many animals fall from fatigue and are abandoned on the passes there, where wolves put an end to their sufferings. The Turks are extremely callous and frequently inflict cruelties out of sheer stupidity. I cannot say that I have witnessed any cruelty in Leh itself, even from Turks, or heard an animal abused; so I am prepared to believe that insensitiveness, rather than actively sadistic instincts, is responsible for the evil.

[1] Since writing this description I have heard that the regular caravan traffic from Turkistan has been suspended owing to opposition from the Bolshevik Government which now dominates the province of Sinkiang.

The Ladakis, on the whole, treat their animals well and in their attitude do not differ from other Tibetans. The only form of ill-usage that is common among them is the chaining of watchdogs. Most large houses, and even monasteries, have one or more mastiffs chained up in kennels by the entrance, and never let loose, so that their friendliness becomes perverted to the point of extreme ferocity. When a stranger approaches, they bark savagely and strain with all their might at their chains in a mad impulse to fling themselves at his throat. Although all Tibetans are born dog-lovers, they have come to treat the presence of a chained dog as a piece of household furniture and are no longer conscious of the cruelty involved. In a peaceful country like Ladak, this practice is absurd as well as unkind. In parts of Tibet there might be some excuse on the score of defence against robbers, but even that is inadequate when one remembers that the dog, if well trained, could do its work just as well unchained. We tried several times to draw people's attention to this evil, but without much effect.

An over-simplified interpretation of the injunction to avoid inflicting injury upon sentient creatures sometimes leads to cruelty, as when an injured or incurably sick animal is allowed to suffer, because no one wishes to shoulder the responsibility of putting it out of its pain. We were told that sometimes when a goat has to be abandoned in the mountains the herdsman will cut off a horn to bring as evidence to the owner, but is quite unwilling to take the life of the animal first. At Gangtok, in Sikkim, we had been much distressed by the the sight of scores of pariah dogs, mangy and underfed, that infested the bazaar. People meant to be kind to them and fed them with scraps, but to put them out of their misery would, to the majority, have seemed unthinkable.

We had occasion to discuss the ethics of killing in order to spare suffering, with our servant, Norbu, who was an intelligent and kindly man and must be regarded as typical of his class. One day we came across a small black kitten in the bazaar, which had an injured paw as if someone, possibly some mischievous boy, had given it a blow with a stone. The poor little thing took refuge in a shop, running on three legs, so we inquired who was the owner and the shopkeeper said, " No one owns it. If you want it, keep it by all means." We carried it to our tent in the garden and there Dr. Roaf examined it. He thought

that the limb was not fractured, but it had received severe injuries which might or might not be curable. It was decided to try to treat it, putting the paw in plaster of Paris; but we also said that if the doctor later pronounced it a hopeless case we would kill it painlessly. "That would be a great sin," said Norbu, "I would never do that." He much approved of the efforts to nurse it, but had they failed, he would certainly have left the animal to its fate, while continuing to feed it. We endeavoured to explain to him our point of view, saying that after all the Buddha enjoined the non-infliction of suffering generally, not only with reference to killing; but we failed to convince Norbu. One must remember that this common attitude of Hindus and Buddhists towards compassionate killing, derives from the same motive that debars Europeans from relieving human suffering in extreme cases by inflicting death. The story of the kitten has a happy ending, for the injured paw was duly put in plaster, to the great interest of our landlord's son, a delightful boy called Aziz, who promised to give the kitten a good home. It was solemnly adopted and given the name of Dolma, the equivalent of our Mary. I have since heard that the limb healed up satisfactorily and that the kitten grew into a fine cat.

From Nono Tőnyod we managed to collect a good deal of information about the local craftsmen. The principal metal-worker of Ladak, who was the maker of many of the best examples in our friend's possession, did not live close to the capital, but in a village a couple of days' journey away, in a subsidiary valley on the south side of the Indus. The place is called Chhiling, and one large family, probably including cousins and brothers as well as children of the master, supplies most of the high-class copper and silver work for all Ladak. The master makes periodic visits to the capital for a few weeks to take orders and carry out repairs. He luckily happened to be at Leh at the same time as ourselves and Tőnyod took us round to a house on the outskirts of the town where he was at work. He had set up his furnace under a huge tree and was busy mending teapots, assisted by a pupil. Later he came over to Tőnyod's house to discuss with us the price of a new brass teapot. Several examples from his own hand were shown to us, in every degree of elaboration, from one covered with silver appliqué to a plain copper one tinned inside, with a particularly

fine dragon for a handle; its spout was inserted into the mouth of a tusked marine monster. We decided on one of the latter pattern as the proportions were the best and the price was very reasonable. This teapot reached me in 1938 and proved to be a masterpiece of the art of the hammer; it is reproduced opposite page 875. The same smith was also asked whether he could make a faithful copy of Tőnyod's best silver teacup-stand, to save sending it as far as Lhasa for reproduction; but, after thinking it over, he said that though he might possibly manage it, he was not sure: and it would necessitate the forging of a large number of special tools. The fact was that he was not keen on the commission; he was too honest to disguise his doubts as to whether his own skill could quite rise to the heights required for producing a replica of a work by a still greater master.

Though the Chhiling silversmith was so renowned, it was generally admitted that for more finicky jobs, such as jewellery and filigree, he was surpassed by a Moslem jeweller who lived in the city itself and worked on a veranda, assisted by his young son. We paid him a visit, in company with Tőnyod, having seen one brilliant example of his work, a gold filigree necklace with turquoises. He showed us one or two minor things in the making and we noticed that the workmanship fell far short of the standard of the necklace. It was only another example of these people's attitude—for good material, good workmanship; for good workmanship, great care over the details of the design, and *vice versa*. To them the material forms a relatively high proportion of the price, while the work counts for little. Everything is sold by weight; for gold so much, for silver so much, for copper so much. The time is not reckoned separately.

We wished to purchase a couple of small tea-tables of carved and painted wood called *chogtse*. Nono Tőnyod made us a present of an old one carved in the Tibetan province of Purang near the source of the Satlej. For the other, he indicated to us the best woodworker in Leh, whose house was situated on the edge of the city, looking out across the forest of *chortens* which rises out of the surrounding sands. He was a large man of cheerful appearance, with very little of the Tartar in his features. He came to us in our garden, holding an adze in one hand and a baulk of wood in the other, which he had

hastily carved to show what he could do. The moment we caught sight of him we cried: "One of the Mastersingers of Nürnberg!" The price for a carved and pierced folding table, with dragons and birds, came to about three pounds. We impressed on him that there was no hurry, and that he could take his time; one of our friends would post it to us later. He also promised to see that no foreign paint was used on it, but only the regular traditional materials. He said that he would not carry out the actual painting himself, but would get a specialist in the colouring of furniture to do it, who lived at Sabu, a village some six miles away.

It is instructive to note the distribution of the leading artists in Ladak. The chief woodcarver and also the best jeweller lived in Leh itself. Gonbo, the silversmith with the greatest reputation, dwelt at Chhiling, but the potter whose wares were most valued belonged to the Likhir valley. Rigzin, the leading painter, came from down the Indus, while at Kalatze, where we had crossed the river four days short of Leh, lived the only man with any reputation for weaving rugs. Besides these there were many assistant craftsmen and painters, both lay and monastic.

We were given an introduction to another merchant, this time a born native of Lhasa, who was married to a Ladaki lady and lived out of the town in a country house at Sabu. I rode out to pay him a call across a stretch of desert which, being free from stones and not too heavy going, gave the opportunity of an enjoyable canter. The house, which was on the usual plan with the family apartments on the first floor, was approached through a courtyard in which three chained dogs, veritable hell-hounds (but made so by man's folly), growled threateningly as I entered.

The squire—for such a title seemed to fit him better than that of trader—received me hospitably and accepted my present and a white scarf, offered in accordance with etiquette. I had chosen for him a silver ring with a cornelian; it had been designed to slip over a finger of normal size, but he had great difficulty in discovering one thin enough to take it. He was huge and burly, and surely one of the ugliest of men; he was dressed in a dirty old shirt and greasy gown, with high velvet boots such as are affected by smart Lhasa society, all smeared with mud. On his head he wore a pointed hat of violet silk,

also in the latest fashion. He was rough of speech and hearty, and he certainly might, but for the clothes, have figured as the typical squire in the days when John Bull was John Bull. He had two sons, eighteen and twelve years old respectively, both of them exceedingly beautiful and well brought up. They waited on me at table with the grace of medieval esquires, bringing a basin and pouring water over my fingers from a ewer between the courses: and when it was time to leave, they ran out to hold my stirrup. Our servant Norbu was given food in the same room; he squatted in a corner and interrupted the conversation when he thought he had a useful comment to offer. After a pleasant afternoon's small talk with the worthy squire, we returned to Leh, which we reached at sundown, when a light breeze was rising after the torrid heat of the afternoon. A soft tinkling, as of elfin bells, was wafted towards us; we found that it came from tiny peals attached to the pinnacles of the *chortens*.

Next morning we had hardly finished breakfast when who should appear but the squire himself! Had we been more versed at that time in Tibetan customs, we would have known that it is conventional to return a call at the earliest possible opportunity. Luckily we managed to behave as though we had been expecting him all the time. "Please sit down," we said, "the tea is nearly ready,"—meanwhile hastily whispering to Norbu to make the tea. While our guest drank tea we had a breathing space in which to cook lunch. Actually someone had to be sent post-haste to the market to buy bread and eggs, so that omelettes, always so handy in such emergencies, could be prepared. In a few minutes lunch, or rather brunch, was served, to which, after the polite show of refusal prescribed by custom, he did full justice. When he had had enough of a dish, he passed his plate to his own servant to polish off the leavings. At the end we gave him a stiff tot of the medicinal brandy, so we felt that, though nearly caught napping, we had not fallen short of Tibetan standards of hospitality.

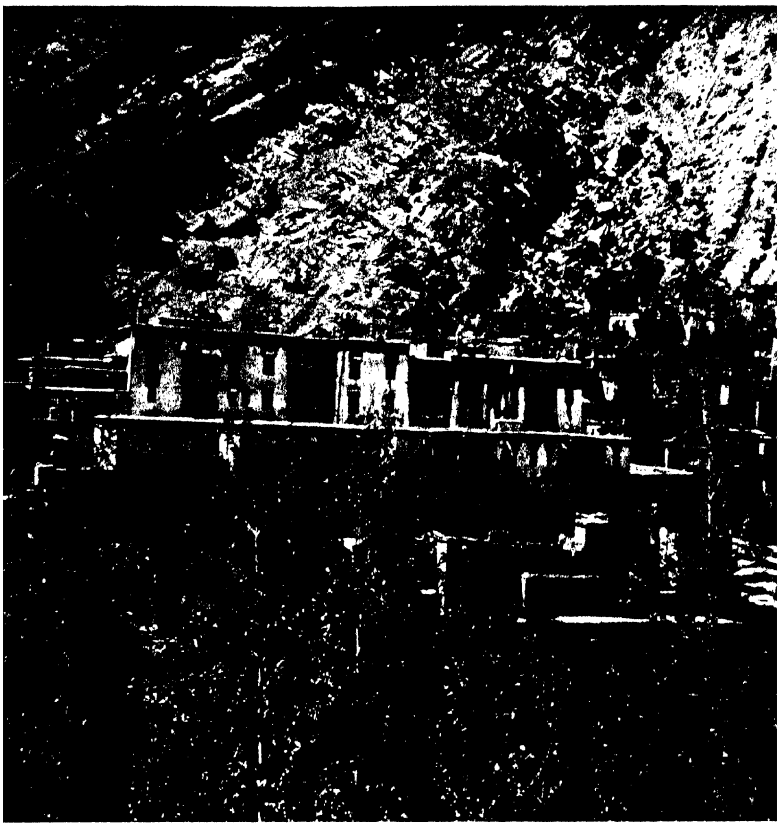
I must not take leave of Leh without mentioning yet another kind friend, the principal Kashmiri officer of the province, who bore the title of Wazir. In former years, officials had been posted to Ladak who regarded their stay there as banishment among savages, which could only be compensated for by doing as little work as possible and feathering their nests at the

expense of the inhabitants. However reprehensible this may sound morally, it actually worked out to the advantage of Ladak, for the institutions of the country were not tampered with through over-zeal, and the officials did not spend precious money upon "progressive developments." In circumstances where a district of intact culture happens to fall under the government of an Occidentalized suzerain, the best one can wish for it, is that it should be treated with indifference and be preserved from the conscientious and active, but unimaginative, functionary. However, in our year, the office of Wazir had at last been entrusted to a sympathetic and enlightened official, a Hindu of the name of Rao Rattan Singh, who was doing much for the country in really useful directions, such as extending the plantations of trees so as to shade new sources of water. That is the greatest material service that can be rendered in a desert country, and has from time immemorial been held to confer special merit on the man who undertakes it. Everyone to whom we spoke paid an enthusiastic tribute to the integrity and justice of the present Wazir and contrasted him with his self-seeking predecessors. To us he was always most kind and encouraging, and took a great interest in all our doings.



GERGAN THE TRANSLATOR





HIMI GOMPA

CHAPTER XIX

"Where Rust Doth Corrupt"

THE most celebrated as well as the largest of the Ladak monasteries is that of Himi, situated some thirty miles from Leh on the farther side of the Indus. It was founded by one Stagtsang Raspa ("Tiger's Den Cotton-clad"), whose remanifestation the head Lama of Himi, premier ecclesiastic of all Ladak, is held to be. The present buildings date from about three and a half centuries ago, having replaced an earlier foundation that was destroyed by a landslide.

Himi is rich, owning considerable estates in various parts of the country; its subordinate houses are numerous both in the vicinity and even as far afield as Mulbek, on the border. The names of five hundred monks are inscribed on its roll. It belongs to the Order called Drugpa which, besides possessing several lamaseries in Central and Western Tibet, can claim for its own almost the entire body of clergy in Bhutan.

This monastery is considered to be one of the sights that must not be missed and most visitors to the province make an excursion there. We had come provided with a letter of introduction to the abbot, since we imagined his home to be a seat of learning, where it might be worth while staying for some time in order to study. The letter, wrapped in a silk scarf of the best quality, was despatched to him by messenger, together with our customary offering of five stones, among them an aquamarine. In a gift of this sort, coins, or whatever else is tendered, should add up to an odd number, as an even one is deemed unlucky.

The bearer of the missive completed the journey from Leh to Himi and back in an amazingly short time, having started homewards the very moment an answer was handed to him. This is typical of the Ladakis when they travel; they pause as little as possible till they have accomplished all their business and can relax freely. Their speed never fails to astonish

foreigners. The abbot's reply, duly signed in English " Yours sincerely S. Raspa," conveyed an invitation to visit him as soon as possible, since he was on the point of leaving for a tour of the neighbouring province of Spiti.

The ride from Leh to the great *Gompa* is sometimes taken in two stages; a halt can be made at a half-way house, the Mussulman village of Shushot. After crossing the Indus, which here splits into several channels, the road follows the edge of a riverside strip of farmland for several miles, before entering the desert. A long and scorching ride lies ahead, over a tedious stretch of sandy ground. The reflection of the sun's rays from the dazzling sand is so fierce that fair-complexioned people are well-advised to use some kind of protective ointment just as if they were crossing a snowfield. If this precaution is neglected, their faces may be severely blistered.

The monastery itself lies concealed inside a narrow side-valley running down to the river from the south-west. Approached from Leh, it is not visible at all; the only indications of its presence are two long *Mani* walls flanking the two chief roads, the Leh road and the one leading along the Indus from the south-east, which converge towards the entrance of the glen. On nearing the point where the two *mendongs* meet at an angle, fields and a few trees appear, framed between the rocky hill-sides, with a stream rushing merrily down the centre of the trough. Along the road stand numbers of *chortens* of exceptional elegance, some of which are pierced by gateways with ceilings that were formerly decorated in bright colours, but are now half perished; under these pylons the track passes. Soon, the glen narrows still further, and the view is blocked by a small wood; no big buildings are visible anywhere, and it is hard to believe that so extensive a place can remain thus hidden. It undoubtedly merits its title of *Gompa*, which means literally " a solitary place."

At length, after going past the houses of the village, one arrives suddenly close under the monastery, which forms an impressive block of buildings nestling up against the side of the mountain. From its upper story projects a row of wooden galleries of charming design, which give it an unusual lightness in contrast to the fortress-like severity of other *Gompas*, which are almost always situated on rugged eminences, out of which they seem to grow; this magnifies the apparent size of the

buildings, whereas in the case of Himi its real proportions are overshadowed by the mountain towering above.

Just under the lowest terrace there is a small guest-house, with a pillared portico, that faces into a garden enclosed between high walls, with a strip of grass down the middle and a row of poplars along each side. As soon as we arrived we were met and conducted to this lodging by the *chyagdzŏd* or bursar, a rather villainous-looking old monk dressed in grimy garments. To do him justice, however, he had arranged the little rest-house cosily, with fine brown and blue Tibetan rugs on mattresses along the platform under the porch, and a separate tea-table for each guest. He asked if we would eat meat and drink barley-beer or *chhang*—his eyes lighted up as he pronounced the word. We replied that we would gladly drink one cup each, and that we did not take meat. We then took our seats upon the dais, while food was cooked and served by our own men. The bursar came and sat down beside us, after directing that a big brass *chhang*-pot, like a jug with a very long lip and a lid, should be set before us. We drained our cups, and then there ensued a contest between us and our host who did his best to refill them, while we resisted, covering the cups with our hands.

From this it must not be supposed that the beer is very potent. The *chhang* that we tasted in Ladak seemed mild, rather like a sourish cider; it is not a specially exciting drink, though acceptable after a parching ride over the desert in the noonday heat. The peasants keep it deliciously cool by storing it in red porous jars. It is said that on occasions of prolonged festivity people do get drunk on it; if so, a vast number of pints must be consumed, unless a much stronger brew than the beer given to us is produced for special occasions. It is made by boiling barley-corns and then introducing a ferment which is allowed to stand from three to five days. The reason why we were so determined not to drink more than just the single cup, was because we judged that the old toper would never leave us in peace unless we impressed him from the first with our firmness. Though he filled his own cup time and time again, it seemed to hurt him cruelly to think of all the good liquor being wasted, while there were still more throats down which to pour it. It is the sign of a confirmed drinker to derive inordinate satisfaction from vicarious tippling. At length we

were able to pacify him with the offer of some blocks of chocolate, which was found to rank next to beer in his affections, so he went off happily, inviting the party to call on the lord abbot in the morning.

That day a small incident occurred which helps to throw light on a certain trait of the Ladaki character. We had ridden ahead of our baggage, but did not expect it to reach its destination very long after us, since experience had shown that the pony-drivers on foot could keep up with the riders extraordinarily well, in spite of the latter trotting their horses on favourable ground. We were rather annoyed therefore, when the transport did not turn up for several hours. So unusual did this seem that we even began to feel a little anxious; but eventually the men appeared, looking fresh and unhurried, so we asked them somewhat sharply to explain the delay. They frankly admitted that they had lain down to have a good sleep; though they knew they had done wrong and were liable to a scolding, and even to some loss of pay, they did not try to make excuses. This is very typical; these people hardly know how to lie. An official subsequently related to us that when any small offence is committed, it is only necessary to question the suspects in order to elicit a truthful version with full details. There is no regularly organized constabulary in Ladak, though the Wazir, in addition to his other offices, holds police rank. Apparently it is thought that among such an honest and law-abiding population, the police having no crime to repress, could only pass their time in creating it! "For by the Law is the knowledge of sin." How this story would have delighted Kropotkin.

Our first contact with Himi did not seem too promising, nor was a walk round the monastery reassuring. The whole area was polluted, and the air was charged with nauseating smells which, owing to the place being so shut in, never drifted away. We had been warned in Leh that the water was liable to produce a form of diarrhœa like a minor dysentery; but it is just as likely that it is not so much the water itself, as the filth-infected dust, which causes the trouble. By walking to a point well above the monastic settlement, water can be drawn where there is no reason for doubting its purity; whereas it is hardly possible to avoid consuming a certain amount of foul dust with one's food. Naturally any water drawn from below the inhabited

area must be regarded as the most dangerous of all.

In the rest-house a visitors' book is kept in which foreigners are asked to inscribe their names. Our immediate predecessors had written: "We are much disappointed at the degraded state of Lamaism." As we were still feeling the elation of our recent visit to Likhir, we felt it only just to append a note to the effect that, though they could not be blamed for their harsh criticisms if they had only visited Himi, it was, nevertheless, unfair to generalize about the condition of a whole Church on the strength of a single bad experience. We mentioned that other places were known to us where, on the contrary, good order, cleanliness and a true devotional spirit reigned.

After a night lying on fine pile carpets—surely the most restful of all couches—we made ready for the visit to the Lama himself. Passing through a vast and stately courtyard, where several ferocious dogs struggled, howling, at their chains, we mounted a staircase to the upper story, holding our noses to keep out the stench of a leaky drain, and were ushered into a lofty chamber, magnificently painted with floral designs, carried out with the utmost delicacy and taste. The staring white dial of a huge post-office clock disfigured the farther wall, while the floor was strewn with a litter of papers, boxes, small mechanical toys and nameless junk, out of the midst of which, like a reef half-submerged by the oncoming tide, rose a platform on which the prelate was sitting, while a secretary and the old bursar stood by and assisted him with correspondence.

The man himself was a heavy, insensitive-looking person, from whose countenance any traces of learning or intelligence, if he ever possessed them, had long since faded. He signed to us to sit down before him and welcomed us with a string of inane banalities, which made us feel every moment more depressed and uncomfortable, and we keenly regretted having sent that beautiful aquamarine!

We spent the rest of the morning in a tour of the temples, which are of great size and magnificence, or rather were; for the state of the interior is enough to break the heart of any art-lover. Massive brass-studded doors, with bosses cast in the form of wreathed dragons, gave admittance to the three main halls of worship, which opened on to the central courtyard. They were crowded to the ceiling with works of art, in various stages of disintegration. Marvellous paintings, executed when

the art was at its acme of creative power, had once lined the entire wall-space. Fairly large expanses still kept their rich colouring, though the colours were mellowed by time to a certain sombreness which did not detract from their beauty. But elsewhere, the plaster had cracked and flaked off badly, exposing the rubble-masonry beneath. Here the face of a Bodhisat, his finely chiselled features still composed under the impenetrable calm of Knowledge, looked out on us, though his body had all but crumbled away. There we saw a torso, there a pair of hands that still made the gesture that bespeaks mercy. In a corner we discovered piles of books, volumes upon volumes, wood-block prints and manuscripts, all jumbled together, their loose leaves in hopeless confusion: who could tell what wisdom was on its way to oblivion? Passing along a side-aisle, we came upon a stack of *t'hankas*, some tied up and others half-unrolled, all cracked, torn and thick with dust. The piety of generations had turned Himi into one vast treasure-house; on every side were to be found scrolls, Chinese embroideries, statues, and a throne covered with exquisite flowers that we took for Persian lacquer, but which may have been Kashmiri work, the gift of some former ruler.

In a small upper room, as if a sharp contrast were needed to point the sad lesson, we discovered a wonderful set of *t'hankas*, a riot of figures, birds and halos, which sent out luminous streamers that glowed like rainbows, all still in perfect preservation; also a collection of books, equally well cared for. Some of the volumes were bound between thick boards, with scenes in relief: the undersides were of gold lacquer, on which line-patterns were traced with a finesse that might have been Japanese. How this one corner came to escape the general dirt and untidiness was a mystery; it was probably due to an accidentally happy choice of sacristan. There was a separate keeper for each temple; they one and all loudly claimed a tip under the very nose of the Buddha. This was verily the abomination of desolation standing in the holy places.

We wondered if any of the treasures would survive; in that climate the process of decay is slow, and a little timely energy might result in cleaning up the place and restoring some, at least, of its ancient glory. But with such a governor in charge the outlook seemed almost hopeless, for the community had become utterly demoralized. "Fish stinketh from the

head," as they say in my own country of Greece. I was told that a certain sum was once sent by the Maharaja of Kashmir for repairs to Himi; but there were no signs of recent restoration to be seen. Unless a miracle happens, I fear that Himi and its treasures will soon have to be written off on the debit side of history.

In the afternoon we received another summons to the presence of the lord Raspa; reluctantly we re-ascended to his apartment, where tea was served. At the Lama's right hand was placed another low platform on which sat an aged and decrepit priest, with one wall-eye which intensified his look of dotage, yet he was evidently a man of some rank, for a silver-mounted cup stood on the little table in front of him, which attendants refilled at intervals. No further notice was taken of him, however, but a number of European volumes were produced for our inspection, chiefly books of travel or albums of photographs. The abbot signed to us to approach, and rapidly turning over the pages, stopped at one which showed a photograph of himself seated under some trees, together with the late "Raja" of Ladak, father of the present holder of the courtesy title. He pointed to the picture of the former Raja, and then suddenly turned with a curious gloating look towards the miserable old man on his right. "That's the same man," he said. We felt a wave of horrified pity sweep over us. Could that dried-up half-wit really be the lineal descendant of the talented dynasty which had reigned in the far west of Tibet for so many centuries and had covered the country with the monuments of its marvellous culture? Truly "all is vanity and a striving after wind. One generation goeth and another generation cometh; and——"

"Can you get me any stamps of this country?" broke in the voice of the abbot, while his finger pointed to the title "Czecho-Slovakia" at the top of a page in a small stamp album.

"This thing isn't working, can you mend it?" A broken bicycle bell was handed to us.

"Could you please translate this set of instructions into Tibetan and write them down?" This time it was the secretary who handed me an old dry-cell battery, with explanations for re-charging attached.

Borrowing Sir Charles Bell's dictionary, which they happened to have, I tried to make a paraphrase, ingeniously dodging

unfamiliar technical terms. Finally an old catalogue of the Bombay Branch of the Army and Navy Stores was brought out and we were all kept busy trying to find descriptions and prices for various small machines. The amassing of gadgets was evidently a ruling passion with the abbot of Himi; this characteristic of his was even remarked on by De Filippi years before. His room was full of knick-knacks, none of them in working order. As soon as we had dealt with one problem to the best of our ability, he produced another and it was apparent that this was to go on the whole afternoon. We felt that if we stayed much longer in this lunatic atmosphere we might ourselves go crazy, so after a hurried whisper of consultation, one of us deflected the next proffered gadget with a desperate parry and we all three rose and bowed our farewells as briefly as Tibetan etiquette would allow, and filed into the outer air. But even that seemed to be pervaded with a miasma of mouldy decay. After leaving Himi a full day passed before the nightmare atmosphere created by the sight of the old Raja could be shaken off.

The visit to Himi made us feel very downcast and we grudged every minute that had to be spent in the neighbourhood. Nevertheless it was too late to continue our journey the same day, so we had to sleep one more night there before we could shake its dust from our feet. The old bursar, who, gross as he was, did his best to be hospitable, gave us a supply of rice, butter and tea for the road. It was our intention not to return to Leh by the same track, but to penetrate beyond the Ladak range by an 18,000 foot pass, the Chang La or North Pass.

Apart from the interest of seeing new country, we wished to call on another important Lama, the Abbot of Sgang-Ngon *Gompa*, which is situated not very far from Leh, at P'hiyang. Later on we spent a very happy time there. This dignitary, who ruled over Yuru and a number of minor dependencies in addition to P'hiyang, was believed to be staying at the distant *Gompa* of Satsukul two days beyond the Chang La. He enjoyed a reputation for holiness which, after seeing Himi, we might have doubted, but for the fact that Khan Muhammad Din himself had described him as a sincere, God-fearing man. There is none whose certificate of godliness could be more safely relied on than that of the Khan. If he used the term " God-fearing " it was because he himself knew what that meant.

There used to be a bridge over the Indus just below Himi, but it had broken down under a flood and we had to make a long detour south-east and then return along the other bank, before we could strike off towards the north-east into the cultivated valley of Chimre, dominated by the village and monastery of that name. Further up the valley, at the foot of a branch valley leading to the pass, lay the pleasant village and camping-ground of Sakti, where we stayed the night; we were received in friendly fashion by a small landowner, a friend of our servant Norbu.

The morning appointed for the ascent of the Chang La dawned stormily; we had hardly passed the last of the crops when showers of rain, turning to sleet and snow higher up, made us dismount, shivering, to warm ourselves by walking. Fortunately the storm did not last as long as we feared; by the time we had advanced well up the torrent valley, the sun began to break through fitfully. After some time we crossed an alp, with scanty pasture, in which some specially magnificent black yaks were grazing, and we saw the final slopes close ahead. It was gratifying to note that we might have been walking at sea level for all the effect that altitude made on us. It was evident that our acclimatization in Sikkim had been thorough.

Just short of the crest of the pass there were many flowers growing among the stones. It was a joy to see the Alpines again after so long: there were yellow Welsh poppies—rather a surprise—, a pinkish mauve pyrethrum creeping close to the ground and mauve delphiniums with heavy blooms, the same kind that we had found in 1938 on Riwo Pargyul. In addition there were nettles, of a kind new to us, which, as Norbu reminded us, had been the food of St. Mila Repa.

The story is a famous one. The saint had been spending several months in a favourite cave of his, called "White Rock Horse's Tooth." His principal food consisted of nettles, which grew round the entrance to his retreat and which he boiled in an earthenware pot. One day, weakened by fasting during an unusually protracted meditation, he slipped and fell on the threshold and broke the handle of his pitcher, which went rolling down the hill. It was smashed to bits; but the accumulated layers of residue from the nettles came out as a single greenish pot-shaped block. This episode forms the theme of one of Mila's best-known poems:

In the same moment I had a pot and have one no more.
This example shows the whole law of the impermanance of things.
Chiefly it shows what is the state of man.
If this is certain, I, the hermit Mila,
Shall strive to meditate without distraction.
The desirable pot that contained my wealth,
In the very hour when it is broken, becomes my teacher.
This lesson of the fateful impermanence of things is a great wonder.

The crest of the Chang La is marked by a cairn adorned with horns of cattle and flags. It is customary in Tibet, on reaching the top of a pass, to cast a stone on the cairn and call out: "*So, so, so, so, so! Hla gyalo, De t'hamche p'ham!*" which means "Ho! ho! ho! The Gods conquer, the devils are defeated!" Travellers in the Himalaya should learn the formula and say it either when crossing a pass or a bridge. They will find it a help in gaining popularity with their porters!

The locality abounds in marmots, which are very tame. On the way back, when the weather was sunny, many of these attractive animals were to be seen lying stretched out on boulders, basking in the warmth. Some way beyond the pass was a good, but cold, camping-ground near a lake, the resort of many waterbirds. Near by there was a hut where fuel and food were stored by Government order, for the use of caravans arriving from Turkistan. The fuel of the country is dried dung, as in most parts of Tibet. It smoulders like peat and does not smell unpleasant: a pair of bellows is a help when tending the fire, otherwise frequent blowing is necessary.

On this route we came across several encampments of *Changpas* (Northerners), nomads from the Chang T'hang, the vast grassy tract which runs across the north of Tibet, south of the Gobi desert, all the way to the edge of China. They are an unkempt, wild-looking people, extremely Mongoloid in cast; their appearance contrasts markedly with the rather girlish looks of the Ladakis, which so many of them derive from the other side of their ancestry. In dress the *Changpas* differ little from Tibetans. Their life is pastoral; but they occasionally cross the passes to trade in salt.

The sparsely cultivated valleys on the farther side of the Chang La, which lie between the Ladak and Pangong ranges, are watered by streams which flow into the Shyok. Riding about



CROSSING THE CHANG LA



BEYOND THE CHANG LA

eight miles along the nearest valley, we reached a place which was marked by a number of unusually large and clearly chiselled *Mani* inscriptions on the rocks. There the ways branched, one leading up a side valley towards our own objective, the village of Satsukul, while the other would have brought us out near the huge lake, Pangong Ts'ho, which, however, we had no time to visit. The spot where the ways divide is called T'hangtse and is famed for its cross and carved inscription in ancient Syriac, recording the journey of an old Nestorian Christian.

The tracing of connexions between different cultures is the special delight of archaeologists and some of them have not been slow to discover Christian influences in the ritual and beliefs of the Lamas. Such points of likeness are usually brought to one's attention in a tone that suggests "Now we've caught them! They're not even original!" One hardly ever opens an English book on Tibet which does not make some allusion to this question of borrowing from other traditional forms, as if that were necessarily a weakness. The prejudice in favour of unalterable adherence to earlier practice, as against a policy of assimilation of extraneous elements that can be adapted to the service of the Doctrine, is closely bound up with the Protestant, as against the Catholic, view of history. The theory that the Reformation marked a repudiation of heathenish impositions and a return to primitive Christianity, becomes a measure to be applied to all religious annals throughout the world, giving rise to all sorts of false analogies and fanciful conclusions. Naturally, each case must be examined on its merits; but the enunciation of a principle based on the antithesis of "primitive purity" and "foreign accretion" is to be deprecated. The same argument may be applied to Christianity also.

The Satsukul valley, which lies at an altitude of 18,800 feet, consists largely of sandy desert with a few restricted areas where barley can be grown. There are also small willows and a species of pea, quite pleasant in flavour, with flowers resembling those of a diminutive broad-bean. Along the streams there are marshy patches, which in the month of August are spangled with little flowers of bright gold, having one larger lip-like petal bearing a black mark. The peasants' houses are not the ample and artistic structures of the Indus valley, but are markedly poorer: it is evident that one is nearing the limit where it is

profitable to try to maintain human life. The people eke out a living under severe climatic difficulties; and they show the effects of hard conditions in their less good physique and lower average of intelligence, and by the frequent incidence of bodily or mental deformity.

The *Gompa* itself stands out in the open, not on the customary eminence. It accommodates about thirty monks; but it must be fairly prosperous since we saw an extra wing actually in course of erection. At the moment of our arrival the whole village was gathered in the courtyard; loaded ponies and riding horses stood by the gate, while there was a constant coming and going such as foreshadowed a move of some sort. On inquiry, we learned that the abbot whom we had ridden so far to visit, was on the point of eluding us by departing to an even more distant spot, to which there would be no time to follow him. Before we could collect our wits, we found ourselves hustled into his presence, in a room crowded with chattering peasants. The Lama, an elderly man with a kindly smile, was standing up, ready to set out. Though we attempted to explain the purpose of our journey from Leh, we really only had time for a mere exchange of formalities. A few moments later, he passed from the room and, donning a helmet-like mitre, mounted and disappeared down the valley, followed by his train, to the sound of the drum.

We were left a trifle bewildered by the abruptness of the good Lama's disappearance, and not a little damped at having ridden so far in vain. It would indeed have been more in accord with the habits of the country for him to have postponed his journey. Such an alteration of plan counts for nothing in a land where time is no object and where people travel for days and days on horseback. For him to have waited a little would really have been a more natural action, and politeness demanded it. However, later on we learned that the abbot, who was also reputed to be rather impulsive, did not entertain a very high opinion of Europeans, owing to an unfortunate encounter when he was in residence at his other convent of Yuru, on the main road from Srinágar to Leh.

The story told us was as follows, for its accuracy I cannot vouch :—

A traveller came along one day who was seeking archaeo-

logical treasures, and who had, up till then, been very successful in inducing unscrupulous custodians to part with monastic property. There were some antiques at Yuru which he also coveted, so he made an offer. On being refused by the abbot the man became more pressing. After repeated efforts at convincing the would-be purchaser that the sacred property was not for sale, the simple-minded old abbot thought that he might make his peace by offering the gift of some delicious tea. It seems that the collector was so chagrined at his failure to obtain his curios that he threw the tea away in a rage.

We were tired after our fruitless journey, so we spent the next day resting, except for a visit to the monastery. It proved to be devoid of artistic interest. The *chyagdzŏd*, who exercised his financial office in all the monastic houses under that abbot, was a well-fed-looking person with small, pig-like eyes and an insolent expression. We had set aside a few rupees as a contribution for the new extension and in a weak moment we handed them over to him. He hardly even made a pretence of saying "Thank you," nor did he go in for any of the polite attentions usual on meeting strangers, and, acme of impoliteness, he failed to offer us a cup of tea! This is reckoned great negligence among the Tibetans, an unpardonable offence against the code; and it was aggravated by the fact that he was aware that we had ridden hard and far in order to visit his own superior. His bad manners were the more noticeable, in that this was the only occasion, during all our meetings with Tibetans or kindred peoples, when we were not treated with hospitality and politeness.

It was in the course of the return journey that we almost charged into the middle of a herd of *bharal*. We were traversing a mountainside and had just crossed a rib into a dip when we found ourselves among them. The wind must have been peculiarly favourable to have thus concealed our scent. The whole herd, which included a number of magnificent males, and also some charming young ones, charged away at a great pace over the slopes and in a very few minutes were no more than tiny moving dots in the distance. I hope that anyone who may be tempted to shoot in the district may, both out of pity for the animals themselves and in consideration for the scruples of the inhabitants, substitute the camera for the gun. That should tax the skill and endurance of the keenest hunter!

While we were camping at Satsukul, we were soaked by tempests of drenching rain, which seemed incongruous in such an utterly dry country; but the storm cleared the air, so that we were able to enjoy a glorious panorama of the snowy Zanskar peaks as we passed back over the Chang La. After camping once again on the old site at Sakti, we did a forced march in order to reach Leh in one day. We followed the bank of the Indus over a terribly hot and dreary stretch and eventually entered one of the longest and richest belts of farming in all Ladak, the chief centre of which was the fine monastery of Tiksé, which, however, we had only time to admire from the outside. The water was conducted all over the area through innumerable rills shaded by huge willows. The farm-houses were more than usually spacious and prosperous-looking. In the swampy flats the ground was thickly covered with irises, but they were not in flower. It must be a most attractive district in springtime.

The last stage of the return journey crossed the sandy and stony plain that leads from the river up to Leh; these last miles were very tedious at the end of a long day. We skirted immense *Mani* walls; in one place some person, actuated perhaps by the wish to give passers-by an opportunity for gaining extra merit, had placed a circular *Mani*, surrounded by a wall that left only a narrow passage, barely wide enough for a man on horseback. Many must yield to the temptation of passing on the wrong side of the *Mani*, thus falling into the power of devils. Perhaps an enterprising devil built it! Out of curiosity we asked Norbu whether he could explain the injunction on all men to turn the right side towards sacred monuments and he admitted that he could only say that it was the custom. He did not even suggest that to turn the left side would bring bad luck. We quoted to him the proverb about minding the devils on the left-hand side and added that whereas the turning of the right side was meant as a mark of respect and an expression of adherence to the truth that the *Mani* formula comprised, the left side was kept for the devils as a sign of renouncing the vices of which they were really personifications. This explanation seemed to please him greatly.

Night had fallen before we entered Leh and gained the old camping-place in the garden, where our friend Ghulam gave us a splendid welcome. Turkish scented tea was brewed, and

bread, sweets and apples were hastily sent for, which kept us busy till the baggage arrived. Not many moments after the tents had been pitched, we were asleep, and the phantoms of Lamas and *Chyagdzŏds* had all dissolved into nothingness.

CHAPTER XX

The Painter of P'hiyang and Spituk Debates

LEH forms a compact little world, where the various elements necessary for a complete society are blended in nicely-judged proportions, resulting in stability and contentment; while the comings and goings of Central Asian caravans have until now contributed sufficient movement for the community to escape the danger of stagnation. This little country town gives the impression of being every inch a capital, worthy to be the nerve-centre of a country, which possessing a total population that is less than Scarborough but somewhat exceeds Margate, has produced from its deserts so wonderful a culture, with its wealth of monuments, its artists, and its philosophers, that it puts to shame all devotees of the cult of size, wealth and number.

Apart from one or two officials, the leading citizens belong to the little group of important merchants, whose operations constitute the chief link with distant countries. Next rank shopkeepers, mostly Indian, whose influence is unfortunately tending to lower the standards of taste. In addition to these there are skilled artisans, silversmiths or woodworkers, who furnish artistic requisites. Finally come those, the majority, whose livelihood depends directly or indirectly on the caravan traffic. There are also, at all times, numbers of peasants from the surrounding district who come to the town to do their shopping or to sell fruit, vegetables and fodder: the market-place is thronged with cheerful country women carrying huge loads of fresh hay in baskets on their backs: riding through the square one must watch one's horse lest it should take a sudden nip at one of these fragrant bundles.

Higher culture is the care of the clergy, few of whom, however, dwell inside the city, though some of them are constantly to be found there. In the days of Ladak's independence there must also have existed a cultured secular aristocracy. Nowa-

days the centre of fashion, in the eyes of the Ladakis, is Lhasa: it, and not the Occidentalized Indian centres, in spite of their wealth and luxury, still holds first place in the imagination of the people. As to the delegates of the paramount British power, opportunities for contact with them occur so seldom, that the respect felt for them is not untinged with a certain naïveté. When, at intervals of a few years, the Resident in Kashmir decides to pay a visit to Leh in person, he is received with almost regal honours, to the accompaniment of holiday-making and general excitement.

It so happened that the day after our return to the capital coincided with the arrival of the Resident, Colonel L. E. Lang, C.I.E. All the notables rode out as far as Spituk to welcome him, and there a procession was formed and the King-Emperor's representative was escorted into Leh amid the acclamations of the populace. School children, drawn up in the square by their loyal teachers, greeted him with a somewhat original variant on *God save the King*, to an obbligato rendered *sempre con tutta la forza* by a lama band playing in a different key. Finally, a durbar was held, at which prominent citizens were presented. In the evening we were invited to the Residency, where we were most kindly entertained.

On the following morning we were due to leave Leh for the valley and monastery of P'hiyang, about three hours' ride away, where we had been invited to stay. The monastery itself stands on the usual bold eminence, in the midst of a tract of beautiful corn-land, with fascinating views up and down valley. Looking up, one is faced by a huge amphitheatre of bare hills, which take on a myriad colours in the magical light characteristic of that part of the country. In the opposite direction, beyond the Indus, darker mountains rise up steeply to their sparkling diadem of snowy ridges and small glaciers.

The project of making P'hiyang, the mother-house of Satsukul and the seat of the elusive abbot, into our head-quarters, came about in this way:—A few days previous to the Himi excursion, we rode out for the day to P'hiyang to look at the architecture. We were led into one of the two big temples, the walls of which were covered with brilliant paintings. On all sides serene countenances of Buddhas, of every size and colour, greeted us, attended by smiling Bodhisats and saints in ecstasy. Terrifying Protectors writhed in flames and

leaped on the bodies of victims, who personified the evil passions to be subdued within the soul; the whole showed boldness in composition and remarkable precision in the drawing. These paintings struck us as being of no great age, so we inquired of an attractive-looking monk, who was showing us round, whether they were recent. "Quite new," he answered, "it is not more than five years since they were finished." "The painter was a most talented artist," we said, "was he a Ladaki?" "I painted several myself," he replied, "but I worked in collaboration with our best painter Rigzin and several junior assistants. The work took several years."

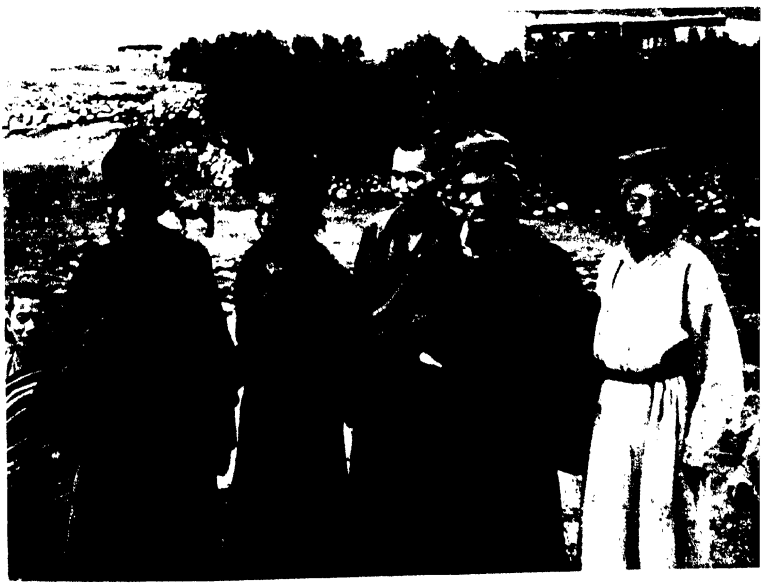
Here was a thrilling discovery indeed! We were in the presence of a gifted craftsman, who was producing work of a high order, by the methods that had been handed down to him through the long dynasty of his spiritual ancestors. The man himself, though he obviously took his work most seriously, yet spoke of it with little more emotion than a plumber discussing the installation of a new pipe.

We plied him with questions; did he also paint *t'hankas*? He said he did and brought out a nearly-finished picture of Buddha with two disciples, excellently done. Our admiration so amused him that he burst out laughing. We asked to buy the *t'hanka*, but he explained that it was being done to the order of a fellow-monk; if we so wished, however, he would paint others for us and we could select the subjects. We were much excited by this, for it offered a chance of watching each step in the processes of Tibetan painting, and of going into minute particulars of the technique.

Later in the day, at tea, we learned more about our friend. His name was Konchhog Gyaltsan, which means "Banner of the Most Precious Things," and he belonged to a peasant family of P'hiyang valley. His colleagues also told us that he was a man of unusual learning, well versed in doctrine, and an admirable teacher. Our chance had come at last. If we could make a longer stay at P'hiyang we would be enabled not only to observe the painting, but also to clear up doctrinal points at the same time. Our satisfaction was heightened by the discovery that the Order of Lamas to which P'hiyang adhered was a branch of the Red Kargyudpa or Oral Tradition Order, which traces its descent back to St. Marpa of Hlobrak and St. Mila Repa himself. The Kargyudpa include several sub-orders:

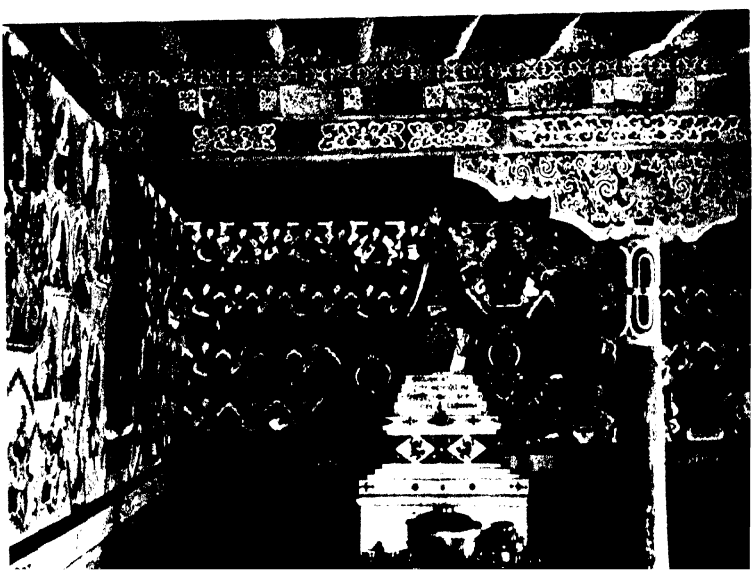


SPINNING NEVER CEASES IN LADAK





MEETING IN THE DESERT NEAR SPITUK
The author, Dawa the Bursar, and his pupil



P'hiyang belonged to one of these, the mother-house of which is at Dikhung in Central Tibet, a hundred miles north-east of Lhasa. We therefore did not hesitate, but asked at once whether we might return later as his pupils, I to study the Doctrine, and the other two for painting lessons. He agreed enthusiastically, and it was arranged that we should occupy a cell next to his own, as soon as we got back from Himi. We also made our choice of subjects for the three new *t'hankas*. Richard Nicholson ordered another Buddha like the one already seen, Dr. Roaf appropriately picked on the eight Medical Buddhas, while I asked for the three Bodhisats, Chenrezig the Compassionate, Djamyan the patron of Learning, and Chyagdor the "Wielder of the Sceptre," who represent respectively, the mercy, the wisdom and the power of a Buddha.

As to price, we had some little trouble in fixing one, since Gyaltsan was not used to asking a fee. He usually worked for his brother-monks or for his family chapel or for his own cell. After some hesitation, a settlement was reached at a modest figure, though for some time Gyaltsan refused to name a price, and our efforts to coax him into a decision only reduced him to boisterous mirth. It was stipulated that any gold powder used should be charged separately, just as would have been done in Renaissance Italy. We were also to supply dark blue silk for the mount, the canvas, and a little red and yellow silk for the double stripe in the sacred colours which always forms the border of the painting, between it and the mount.

It may well be imagined that after the disillusionment at Himi and the fiasco at Satsukul, we were looking forward with added zest to our return to P'hiyang: but that did not make us forget our other friend, the good lama Dawa, bursar of Spituk, who had been insistent in making us promise to return to him at the earliest opportunity. So we sent him word of our coming and started for P'hiyang, intending to call at Spituk on the way. We had just reached the edge of the Leh oasis when we heard a tinkling of bells and caught sight of Dawa himself, riding a white horse, and followed by one of his pupils, a grave monkling of about fourteen, on a chestnut pony. He wore no shoes but gripped the edges of the stirrups between his toes.

The lama had been on his way to the town, but learning of our intention, he turned at once and the united party ambled back

towards Spituk. The horses were left in a stable at the foot of the hill, after which we were rushed up the endless steep stairs, worse than any mountain, and deposited panting in the temple, while the abbot's apartment on the top floor was made ready. During our earlier visit we had not realized the splendour of the main temple: a wealth of good *t'hankas* hung round the central choir, and a set of excellent wall-paintings lined an upper gallery, depicting yellow-hatted saints of the Gelugpa. In a quarter of an hour a man came to summon us to the abbot's room, where carpets were spread and tea prepared. Besides Dawa and ourselves, the *khenpo* or prior of the monastery and another lama were present.

Dawa opened the conversation:—"So you have come from Himi? How did you find things there? Which profound doctrines did you discuss with the Lama?" We recounted our sad tale of corruption at the famous *Gompa*, but the bursar, seemingly unheeding, continued: "Surely the Lama talked with you about the significance of the Refuge?" "He mentioned nothing of the kind; we heard no doctrine at Himi." Dawa burst out laughing. "When you declared your intention of making a pilgrimage to Himi in the hope of hearing some wisdom, I said nothing; but I was shaking with suppressed laughter." He continued to tease us ironically. "But did you really not discuss the Refuge? Are they not Buddhists at Himi?" It seemed to amuse him beyond measure to picture us riding out there, full of anticipation of deep spiritual experiences to come, only to be disillusioned in that ridiculous fashion. "So there wasn't a word about the Refuge?" he chuckled. "It isn't doctrines you should have sought at Himi: beer and women are more in their line!"

Strange though it may seem to anyone not used to the Tibetan mentality, there was really no uncharitableness intended in the bursar's rather grim humour. His whole behaviour was characteristic. Though he knew all the time what would happen at Himi, he deliberately let us go and find out for ourselves, even at the risk of discrediting his Church, rather than try to prejudice the case by a warning. No man deplored the decay more than he did, yet he was able to discuss it quite coolly, without needing to relieve his feelings with epithets and denunciations. Of course the real joke for him was not the sins of the clergy, but the castles in the air which we had been

building. The reader may possibly doubt this explanation; but whoever knows the Tibetans, especially the lama-teachers and their ways, will not fail to recognize Dawa's attitude as typical.

Such humour is born of a certain ethical outlook, which not only deters a man from trying to screen his disciple from contact with temptation, but rather makes him prone to expose him deliberately to dangerous experiences, both as a test, and to cool down romantic enthusiasms. Instances can be multiplied when a Master has gone so far as to command his follower to commit an apparently sinful act, if he judged that it would, in the long run, make for his spiritual development. The Lama Marpa and his treatment of Mila Repa is a case in point. Innumerable similar stories could be quoted, where the means employed for testing the pupil have been carried to the verge of ruthlessness and beyond. Nor are such examples by any means confined to ancient history.

It is all a natural corollary of the attempt to strip off every illusion, however dearly treasured, which might stand in the way of the acquisition of "Just Views," the real aim of the Buddhist ethic. Charity itself, as they see it, is but ill-founded, unless it has its roots properly planted in the soil of the knowledge of the true nature of things. St. Mila summed up this idea in two lines of one of his last poems, which I quoted before:—

> The notion of emptiness (absence of real self) engenders Compassion,
> Compassion does away with the distinction between "self and other."

Loving impulses are less likely to be upset by a swing of the emotional pendulum, when they are firmly linked to definite ideas—firstly to the consciousness that we and all the other creatures of the Universe are together similarly afflicted, struggling to escape from the same Round of birth and death, from the same Ignorance and Desire, and secondly to a recognition of the falseness of belief in the enduring individuality of our Ego, to which St. Mila refers, and which is the real foundation of the whole edifice of selfish ambitions and of the craving to enjoy the fruits of action. Intellectual honesty is one of the traits most noticeable in the better Tibetan clergy, who shine like highlights against the duller surface of kindly mediocrity

which characterizes the multitude of ordinary lamas. This sincerity is evinced in their fearless facing of facts and in a readiness to discuss their most cherished beliefs without quarrelling.

To show how little favour sentimental appeals enjoy—a preacher is not specially admired for the power of sweeping his audience off their feet by his eloquence; rather is praise bestowed on the man who, speaking in an even, unimpassioned tone, expounds the Doctrine without having recourse to aids which might conceivably sway his listeners for irrelevant reasons. An unsound motive is enough to vitiate the merit of embracing any truth: its value is strictly proportional to the clear understanding of the issues. A true proposition, accepted for an improper reason, is equivalent to a lie: the inquisitorial person finds himself at a loss under a Tradition where the value of outward conformity is thus discounted.

It is perhaps needless to harp on the fact that popular piety in Tibet, as elsewhere, does not reach these high ideals. Men in their degree of spiritual discernment, show a widely varying range of capability. Yet nothing has struck me so much, in my life among the Tibetans, as the way in which the Buddhist ideal, much diluted no doubt, still permeates the outlook of the common people with its gentle and humanizing influence, and to some extent with its metaphysical conceptions, even though these may have been heard as the faintest of echoes. Yet this has been accomplished without quelling the natural high spirits of the race. One meets in Tibet much superstition, much fear of demons and of ill-luck, and a widespread belief in charms and magic; but all this is comparatively harmless, for it does not tempt people into cruelties. If their superstitions were of the type that led to the burning of witches or to the throwing of live kittens into the pit, because it was thought unlucky to kill one, it would be a much more serious matter. Some writers have alleged that real Buddhism is almost unknown in Tibet, and that superstition has entirely superseded it; I, on the contrary, was surprised to find how deeply the Doctrine had left its mark even on simple, inarticulate souls.

My criticism of the management at Himi led naturally to a general discussion on *Tulkus*, or Lamas reputed to be Remanifestations of known personalities, whether Heavenly Beings or Saintly predecessors. I had long sought an opportunity for eliciting the views of a really thoughtful lama concerning these

much-revered figures, so numerous and popular in the Tibetan Church. I put the problem thus :—

"If a *Tulku* is the Remanifestation of a Saint, and yet is notorious as an evil-doer, by whom is the sin committed?" The question was meant for Dawa, but the other lama, not the prior, was the first to enter the fray.

"It is not legitimate to say of a *Tulku* that he is a great sinner," he said, "for you must not judge only by appearances. Truly the Holy One who animates the *Tulku's* body commits no sin; nor may it be taken for granted that a sin has been committed at all, even if it seems so in your eyes. It may be planned to try your faith, or from some other motive judged in reference to standards far removed from yours or mine."

I was prepared for this explanation, having heard of it before, applied to the history of the sixth Dalai Lama, who caused much scandal by indulging in carnal delights. These were used by him as the theme of some really charming lyrical poetry, the creation of which might almost be taken to justify the theory of "higher motives." So I pressed my question, repeating it in much the same form as before. The simple-minded lama, delighted at the chance of holding forth before an audience, proceeded to cite a tale by way of illustration :—"A man who was on his way to visit a certain saint, learned that the latter had committed the crimes of murder and adultery. Horrified, he said to himself: 'This man is no saint, but a wicked criminal: I refuse to stay with him;' so he promptly departed. Just as he was leaving, the saint picked up some dust from the road and placed it in the man's pouch, telling him to take it home. On reaching his house he emptied out the pouch and instead of dust found pure gold. He repented of his rash criticism and gave praise to the name of the saint. A thing may not glitter and yet be gold: so also are the actions of *Tulkus*."

The worthy monk, by the time he had reached the end of his parable, was beaming with self-satisfaction. As for Dawa, he was convulsed with merriment at the naive sophistries of his friend. He let him have his say before contributing his own word to the debate. To him, we put a concrete case which had come under our notice in 1933 :—"A certain *Tulku* formerly known to us, secretly parted with some of the sacred vessels of the temple to a collector. He seemed to know it was a sin, for he always transacted his business under cloak of dark-

ness." (Scandalized exclamations from the prior!) "We refuse to take this action at anything but its face value, that is, sacrilege and theft. The explanation just given by our friend here seems to us absurd: find us a better." To this he replied: "If a sin is committed by a *Ṭulku*, or by anyone else, it is no use trying to get away from the fact. The holy Being who is believed to have taken up his dwelling within the *Ṭulku*, being illuminate, it cannot be his act. An evil-living *Ṭulku* is no *Ṭulku;* either the wrong person has been chosen, or else it is a fiend, and not a saint, who has taken possession."

If I had to state the case anew now, I should put it rather differently, and cite an example that did not depend on an ethical test, but rather employed a metaphysical symbolism: for, couched in this form, the problem would be easier to bring home to the Tibetan mind, and would carry greater weight. I should cite the case of the late Dalai Lama and the Panchhen Lama, who also died a few months ago in China. They had a political quarrel, and the Panchhen Lama, who by all accounts was of a gentle and benevolent nature, was driven into exile by his masterful opponent, whence he never returned. Both these high Lamas were *Tulkus*. The Dalai Lama is a manifestation of the Bodhisat Chenrezig, while the Panchhen Lama is animated by the power of Ópagmed, the Buddha of Immeasurable Light, whose disciple Chenrezig is. No deadlier sin can be conceived than revolt of the pupil against the Master, against "his own Lama." How then could the Dalai Lama representing Chenrezig make violent war against the Panchhen Lama into whom Chenrezig's own Teacher emanates? The problem put in this way, would exercise the mind of any earnest lama, and I hope some day to hear Dawa's solution of this difficulty.

Lest any Western reader be misled, I must explain that no special duties attach to the condition of *Tulku*. Such Lamas are most often, but by no means invariably, heads of monasteries; but that office confers on them administrative powers, not authority to teach doctrine. The Dalai Lama, most famous of them all, is the sovereign ruler of Tibet, but he is no Pope, and has no greater inherent right to define dogma than any of his clergy. It may happen, and often does, that a *Lama Tulku* is a learned person and a teacher; but this he owes to himself and to his initiation at the hands of his own Master, and not to his quality of *Tulku*. The service offered to mankind by *Tulkus* is

held rather to proceed from their presence among us, which in some manner localizes the sacred influence so that men may reverence it, than from the doing of any set work. It is as if the *Ṭulku* carried out all the purposes of a sacred image, except that it is formed of flesh and blood, not wrought in bronze. In that case he must be reckoned as a special example of a " support " for worship and meditation, like any other religious object. I am inclined to think that the doctrine of *Ṭulkus* is correctly interpreted by this theory of " supports " and that our raising of a moral issue was beside the point. Moreover it must be remembered that the exercise of any function of a supra-individual nature is independent of all individual contingencies, such as the private character of its ministers. It is only proper that they should provide temples worthy of the service to be offered; nevertheless, the sacred influence itself, in principle, remains unaffected by the individual imperfections of its supports.

Another question which was submitted to the judgment of the lama Dawa was whether Deliverance was attainable without first passing through the state of a human being. We were desirous to see to what lengths the belief that men and animals are, in essentials, alike, would be carried. First we referred to the fact that St. Mila Repa took what is known as the " Direct Path," which enabled him to attain Buddhahood in the course of a single life. " If that is so," we said, " is it not reasonable to suppose that a member of some other class of being, whether belonging to the animals or even a resident in one of the purgatories who experienced perfect contrition, could follow a Direct Path and actually reach Buddhahood, without having to be reborn into the human family? " The lama pondered a little and answered: " Yes, I am inclined to think one must accept this. Whosoever, whether he be beast or even the most malignant of demons, finds the strength to do what Mila Repa did, overcoming the distractions of his environment, the same can become Buddha in one life as he did; but it is still more difficult for those pitiable beings, since their life does not favour non-attachment to self. Continual suffering or the daily need to slay other animals for food are great obstacles in the Path."

I kept one more question to the last—in many ways it was the most important of all:—" The various divinities are commonly portrayed and spoken of under separate names, with distinctive attributes: and so they are taken to be by many men. The

countless forms fierce or calm, and the Bodhisats such as Chenrezig or Djamyan, the Giver of Wisdom, are these all separate beings, or should they be regarded as begotten only within our minds?" His answer was as follows:—"From one point of view all those divinities exist, from another they are not real"—he was here following St. Tsong Khapa, founder of the Yellow Gelugpa Order to which Spituk belonged. "So long as you are confined within the present world of forms and distinctions, so long will you personify them separately. But once a man has entered the state of "Subduer of Foes" (Perfected Saint, who is the subduer of passions and illusions), and stands on the threshold of Enlightenment, being freed from the Round, then for him these separate things simply *are not*: for such an one, nothing at all is, except Buddhahood."

I must here add a comment to the Lama Dawa's explanation in the hope of bringing out his meaning; but it is my own interpretation and I must bear responsibility for any error. He who enters into the realization of the Absolute, has no more part in conditioned or determined existence, which ceases to have any appearance of reality whatsoever. For such a person, it can be said that our Universe, and all forms, are illusion. But so long as we still have our being within the world of form, we are forced to clothe all our ideas in form. The stages in the path of Enlightenment become personalities, the more distinct in proportion as we are unenlightened, the more synthetized as we progress towards the goal. What concern have we with Djamyan, Lord of Wisdom, when once we have known Wisdom herself? I used the feminine of set purpose, for She is the active energy of Method, who must also collaborate if we are to hope for the unveiling of the One Light by which alone we are able to know ourselves. And Method himself, who is Compassionate Love, the same is clothed in the form of Chenrezig, for those who can only so conceive him. And he who has trodden the path of the Bodhisats and *knows* this Compassion beyond all chance of forgetting, the same knows Chenrezig, for he *is* Chenrezig. Even the Bodhisats are "supports"; when once Buddhahood has been attained, when there is Knowledge, Reality—things which at present mean nothing to us, and are *Void* of all that we can possibly conceive of—then all supports can be done away with; they "simply are not" as the lama said.

I cannot refrain from quoting at this point a passage that

might easily have been taken from some book of the Tibetan Canon, but which is, in fact, from an English work of the fourteenth century, called *The Cloud of Unknowing*, and another passage from a commentary on it, written in the early seventeenth century, by Father Augustine Baker, a Benedictine. Nothing could better illustrate the solidarity of all traditional thought, irrespective of race and period, than these teachings of an unknown Yorkshireman, who lived five centuries ago. Both the substance of the passage and its phraseology would be more readily intelligible to the bursar of Spituk than to the writer's own countrymen of to-day.

"The nought . . . is God, to whom the soul may be united when she is nowhere bodily, nor hath in her any image of creatures. And when she is nowhere bodily then she is everywhere spiritually; and being in such condition she is fit to be united with the said nothing, which also is in all places . . . And this union I have elsewhere called a union of nothing with nothing . . . What is he that calleth it nought? Surely it is our outer man and not our inner. Our inner man calleth it All; for by it he is well taught to understand all things bodily or ghostly, without any special beholding to any one thing by itself."

"And when she (the soul) being in such case of nothing—that is as no imaginable or intelligible thing, but as another thing which is above all images and species, and is expressible by no species . . . doth further apply and add her foresaid nothing to the said nothing of God, then remaineth there, neither in respect of the soul nor in respect of God, anything but a certain vacuity or nothing. In which nothing is acted and passeth a union between God and the soul . . . And so in this case of union there is nothing and nothing and they make nothing . . . This is the state of perfect union which is termed by some a state of nothing, and by others, with as much reason, termed a state of totality."

These quotations are strikingly akin to the Buddhist doctrine of Nirvana, and would surely be acclaimed by the bursar of Spituk as bearing the stamp of universal truth.

These enthralling talks we had with him were spread over two

days, and made us reluctant to leave. We got him to promise, however, to ride over to P'hiyang to see us before we left for England, which he agreed to do all the more readily as he was a personal friend of the painter Gyaltsan, whom he held in high regard.

On reaching P'hiyang we found all made ready for our lodging. A certain monk named Sherab (Wisdom) had vacated his set of rooms in our favour—we later paid him a small rent for their use—and had arranged to sleep on the roof for the duration of our stay; sleeping out is customary during the summer months.

Our cell, which had a balcony with a glorious view, was approached through a small lobby where dung for the fire was stored. From the lobby a ladder led out on to the flat roof, from which tall prayer-flags floated their messages. We arranged to have our meals up there, for a small kitchen was attached.

The cell was furnished with rugs and mattresses and low tables. At the end of the room stood the altar, of white wood still undecorated, on which two large books occupied places of honour. The walls were hung round with about a dozen *t'hankas* of varying age, some of them painted by our friend himself; they depicted the patrons of the Kargyudpa Order both in their mild and terrible shapes.

In the evening, dozens of unexpected people kept peeping through the doorway or even walked right in, squatting down on the floor to gaze at us. Sometimes it was a monk, sometimes a couple of peasants; now they were silent, now in conversational mood. The young novices, in particular, left us no peace. Eventually we got used to visitors entering at awkward moments. If they were of superior rank we had to be patient and behave as if we had been expecting them. With commoner folk we let them satisfy legitimate curiosity and then turned them out good-humouredly. But unless one is engaged in meditation, which no Tibetan will willingly disturb, one must learn not to demand the strict regard for privacy that people expect to enjoy at home in England.





P'HIYANG GOMPA

CHAPTER XXI

Painting Lessons and Leave-takings

OUR stay at P'hiyang *Gompa* was, in a way, the climax of the expedition, for in it a hope was realized, round which our plans had revolved from the outset. Time was unfortunately short: we needed some of those extra weeks that had been frittered away earlier on, in preparations for the abortive Hlobrak project. Nevertheless the results of P'hiyang cannot be measured in time; not only does it mark a definite stage in our education, but also during that brief spell so much experience was gained, so many doubts were cleared up and such wide vistas were opened, that I look back on it as a time of fulfilment and of abundant harvesting.

Life began in earnest the day after our arrival, when we went round to Gyaltsan's room, where we were to spend most of our waking hours during our visit to his monastery. It was not a particularly large room. A wooden post stood up in the middle supporting the roof-beam, and at the foot of this the lama spread his rug, upon which he used to sit at his work. In the morning the sun shone full upon that side of the building and large shutters were put across the window to subdue the glare. In the afternoon they were taken down, when the sun had moved round to fall dazzlingly upon the rampart-like white walls that faced south towards the Indus valley and the Zanskar peaks beyond. Then the room was cool, with a soft breeze occasionally blowing through it, and it was filled with an even light, ideal for painting.

The furniture was more than usually well-cared-for, and it included two large painted cabinets, which Gyaltsan had decorated with floral designs. The paraphernalia of an artist was to be seen in various corners: trays of brushes, saucers of paint, stretched canvases leaning against the wall, compasses, rules and set-squares; but all was arranged with remarkable neatness and taste. Three or four *t'hankas* hung on the walls, one

recently finished by Gyaltsan himself, and in a corner next to the altar there was a particularly fine scroll of some age, which he treasured highly. Sometimes, as I sat upon my rug by the window and watched Gyaltsan either painting or making extracts from books in his lovely handwriting, it was the easiest thing in the world to fancy myself in the workshop of a Master Jerome or a Fra Angelico.

Gyaltsan's personal novice, a boy about twelve years old, derived much entertainment from our presence in the monastery. He was constantly running to and fro between our room and his master's, and perhaps his favourite place was on our roof helping Norbu to cook the meals. I fear our coming somewhat interfered with the even course of his education. Nevertheless, on one or two afternoons, he was put through his paces and made to recite in a high piping voice, while Gyaltsan, though he might appear half engrossed in other things, would pull him up at the mistakes without ever a reference to the text. The boy also had some rudimentary knowledge of drawing. He waited on the lama when he was at work, ran errands, kept the room tidy and the floor clean and brought in the tea at the frequent appointed intervals. Gyaltsan seemed to have a very successful way with him and the boy had all the high spirits and insatiable curiosity of his age. Our parting present of a knife could never have found a more enthusiastic recipient.

The boy novices have their appointed place in community life, and besides receiving instruction, they perform all sorts of odd jobs for which children are particularly suitable. The monasteries in Tibet are so much more comparable to our universities than to their nominal counterparts in the West, at least as these survive to-day. Each lama owns or hires his own rooms, which are often like a little self-contained flat, and keeps them up out of the money remitted to him by his own family. The lamas feed separately, and except for certain prescribed gatherings for worship in the temple, each man is free to use his time as he thinks fit. This general statement must be qualified somewhat in the case of the Yellow monks, whose rule is more detailed, so that their life approximates rather more nearly to that of a Christian monastic community; but even in this case the points of resemblance can easily be exaggerated. If a lama desires to wander off on the highroad or to withdraw into contemplation in some remote spot, the

permission which he must first seek is not the formal authorization of the abbot, but the consent of his own personal tutor, *his* Lama; this is for everyone the final authority, from which the death of one of the parties is the only dispensation. Though children are dedicated by their parents to the spiritual life at an early age, before there could be any possibility of personal inclination, they are not bound for life in the sense that they have no means of release, if they should tire of their vocation. The vows are dissoluble at any age and a certain number of persons avail themselves of this right: naturally they are very much in a minority, for the lama is looked up to socially, and a return "to the world," though not penalized in any way, naturally seems rather a come-down.

One day I asked Gyaltsan in the presence of the little novice, if he had a diligent pupil. He answered: "Well, I wouldn't quite say that; but on the whole he's pretty fair." "And do you sometimes have to scold him? What do you do to him—beat him?" From the burst of merriment that greeted my words from both master and pupil, I gathered that the latter was in no great danger of a beating. I had put the question of set purpose, in order to draw Gyaltsan, since I knew that there were rather too many Tibetan supporters of the school that puts unbounded faith in corporal punishment. We came across a bad case of it at Likhir, when a young monk consulted Dr. Roaf, complaining of aches and pains in the shoulder-blade. Questioned by the doctor, he declared that the trouble started after a severe beating received in Tibet at the hands of his tutor during his last year of study. He pointed to a heavy brass-tipped staff and said: "He used a stick like this; Tibetan teachers are dirty swine." There is no doubt that a good many Tibetan educators are martinets, who do not spare the rod; even eminent *Lama-Ṭulkus*, during their years of probation, are liable to vigorous beatings, if slow at their lessons or slipshod in deportment. The preceptor, in such a case, after dealing out correction with due conscientiousness, prostrates himself at the feet of his charge to show that there has been nothing of personal pique or disrespect in his action. Similarly the young lama must prostrate himself before his corrector and thank him for his well-timed severity. This practice of beating, which is certainly liable to abuse, is understandable, though not necessarily acceptable, if one takes into account the extra-

ordinary toughness of the race. Serious psychological disturbance, which might follow such treatment when applied to a person of more highly-strung temperament, is probably almost non-existent for a Tibetan. In the case of our patient, the fault for which he had been castigated was inattention in church. We saw him at a service in the chapel later in the day and he certainly did seem rather inclined to let his attention wander; but whether his day-dreaming was a result of his beating, or the cause that earned it in the first instance, is uncertain. The doctor gave him an ointment to rub into his shoulder and thought that the pain would probably pass in time with massage.

Every monastery owns a number of "mountain retreats," who desire to spend periods of contemplation can retire from the distractions of social existence. These cells consist of four walls, with a raised platform at one end, where the recluse who desire to spend periods of contemplation can retire from sits. Food is pushed into the cell at stated intervals: those who bring it, must on no account address a word to the contemplative or interrupt him in any way. Among the Kargyudpa, many are found who, true to the tradition of their great saint Mila Repa, withdraw into caves in the cold regions of glaciers, where a cotton cloth is their only garment (Repa literally means "cotton-clad") and where they keep themselves warm by means of a peculiar art, *Tummo*, the production of internal bodily heat. Those who are interested in this question, must refer to the fascinating books of Madame David-Neel, who is the only European who can claim first-hand knowledge of the art. Many retreats are not so rigorous, but are simply small cottages, furnished like any other house and differing only in the absence of companionship. I remember talking to one Yellow monk from Lhasa, who had been telling me that he intended to retire for several months to a "mountain retreat." "Where is this retreat," I said, "is it in a cave?" The monk, who was a man who loved his comfort, made a gesture of horror. "Oh! no," he cried, "not a cave! My mountain retreat will be provided with every convenience!" It must also be remembered that the Buddhist conception of asceticism is quite unlike that which is familiar from the history of the Christian Church. There is no idea of mortifying the flesh by painful austerities. The Buddha formally condemned the extremes both of luxury

and self-torture; He was born Himself to wealth and tried to escape into violent self-repression before He discovered its uselessness. Nothing which is calculated to damage health is to be encouraged, for impaired health may create added obstacles in the pursuit of Knowledge. The austerity of a Mila has a very different motive, the renunciation of all that might distract, the cutting off of all "purposeless" activity, the lulling of the senses into quiescence, so as to permit, rather than compel, the real Knowledge-Consciousness to arise. Each man must pursue the methods that suit his temperament, and discover for himself what is "fitting conduct." St. Marpa, though he laid on Mila Repa the injunction of taking "a terrible resolution of meditating for the duration of his life for the profit of creatures," himself continued to live and work in the world: he tilled his farm and was happily married.

I must digress here a little to mention the question of cleanliness, because so many references to the lack of it are constantly made by travellers to foreign parts, and seem to be the great stand-by of a certain type of lecturer or writer, when they can find nothing else to say about the people whose hospitality they have enjoyed. It is a pleasant change to open that impartial and most amusing book by Peter Fleming, *News From Tartary*, and to turn to the chapter on his visit to the famous lamasery of Kumbum, the birthplace of St. Tsong Khapa, one of the great centres of pilgrimage of the Tibetan world. He expressly comments on the cleanliness of his lodging, and on the courtesy and intelligence of his hosts. My own impressions of P'hiyang and other *Gompas* were similar. Though there were no signs of organized spring-cleaning, there was also no evidence of great neglect. There was dust about, if one troubled to look for it; but we never caught any parasites in a single *Gompa* that we visited, not even at Himi, which really was insanitary. Nor did we see lamas scratching themselves or searching their garments for unwanted guests. The better-off peasants and their houses seemed no worse. The scarcity of furniture and hangings and the absence of beds does not favour the multiplication of pests. Dainelli mentions bugs in the village of Chhiling, where the best goldsmith lived. The lowest orders of society, such as the muleteers whom we met on the caravan routes in Sikkim, were certainly dirty. Some of them were quite black with encrusted grime and we often saw them having

their hair searched for lice. Porters were rather better, for they combed their hair and occasionally changed their clothes. Spitting is a fairly common habit, found even among people of rank, though again it is not quite so widespread as I had been led to expect. Washing is not unknown; but it is a habit that the climate does not encourage, so that it plays no great part in life. There is no doubt that domestic dirt is much more intolerable under the elaborate conditions of our countries, and the presence of smoke and corrosive acids in the air greatly aggravate its evils. A modern indoors drainage system that has gone wrong is loathsome; primitive arrangements, that cannot be put out of order, are more suited to the needs of people who do not trouble themselves about these things overmuch. The lavatories of modern-planned inns in parts of southern Europe can be a perfect nightmare; the steep open-air shoots, like those of medieval castles. found in the *Gompas* of Tibet, are far less open to misuse.

One day, while crossing the courtyard, I suddenly ran into our old enemy the bursar of Satsukul, whose office extended, along with that distant place, over P'hiyang and all its other dependencies. If I was surprised, he was astounded in still greater measure—in fact, disgusted would be a better word, for it must have come as a shock to him to find the three people whom he had treated so ungraciously, making themselves at home inside his own monastery. He did not say much, but I heard that after we left he tried to vent his annoyance by making himself disagreeable to Gyaltsan. But on the death of the old abbot, who was rather senile and easily led, the bursar's power probably diminished. By now he may have retired.

The monk, Sherab, from whom we hired our bedroom, was also a rather unprepossessing specimen, uncouth and always on the make. He was one of the bursar's chief cronies. One day when we saw them come down arm in arm (not literally so, for it is not a Tibetan habit), I could not help exclaiming: "Look at Wisdom (Sherab) and Method collaborating for the salvation of creatures!" The joke raised a general laugh; for everyone saw the reference to the mystic union of the two inseparables, and the bursar's covetousness was known to be nothing if not methodical.

The office of *chyagdzŏd* or bursar is held on a peculiar system of tenure in many of the *Gompas*. It usually lasts for three

years. On appointment, the *chyagdzŏd* receives a certain sum, out of which he is expected to provide for the upkeep of those amenities which are shared by all the residents in the *Gompa*. At the end he must pay back the sum intact, but in the meantime he can use it as he wishes, for trading or lending; any profits above the original sum, after he has disbursed all that is needed for the expenses, are his own. It can well be imagined that this post offers considerable opportunities for graft, especially in a large monastery, and is much sought after by commercially ambitious monks. The position of *chyagdzŏd* in one of the vast establishments near Lhasa must be worth thousands. It must not be supposed that all holders of this office are corrupt. Our friend the bursar of Spituk, who discharged his duties with zeal and integrity, told us that he longed for the day when he would lay down the seals, for he found it an uncongenial task and a distraction from things of greater importance. Nevertheless the system offers great temptations: but though it strikes us as questionable, it makes no such impression on those who are accustomed to it.

Most of our time was passed in study. Both the art-pupils and I found Gyaltsan an ideal teacher, clear in exposition, strict, patient, resourceful and infectiously enthusiastic. His methods had been well worked out, but were far from stereotyped. With myself he either enlarged upon some doctrinal point by word alone, or, more often, copied selected passages from the book of St. Gampopa, from which my quotations on the Refuge in chapter XVII were taken, and passed them on to me to make what I could of them before turning to him for help. I used to read them over carefully to get the gist and then look up any unknown words in a dictionary, so as to grasp the precise sense of the many technical terms used. I checked the dictionary meanings by going over them later with Gyaltsan himself; in several cases I found that the lexicographer was at fault, for there is an immense wealth of fine distinctions in the Tibetan metaphysical vocabulary for which we only possess approximations. It is only too easy to read into them some meaning which is not a strict equivalent.

After I had proceeded as far as I could, the lama expounded the passage. This method of working was slow, so that the ground covered at the time was not very extensive; but we had agreed beforehand that we should not let ourselves race on,

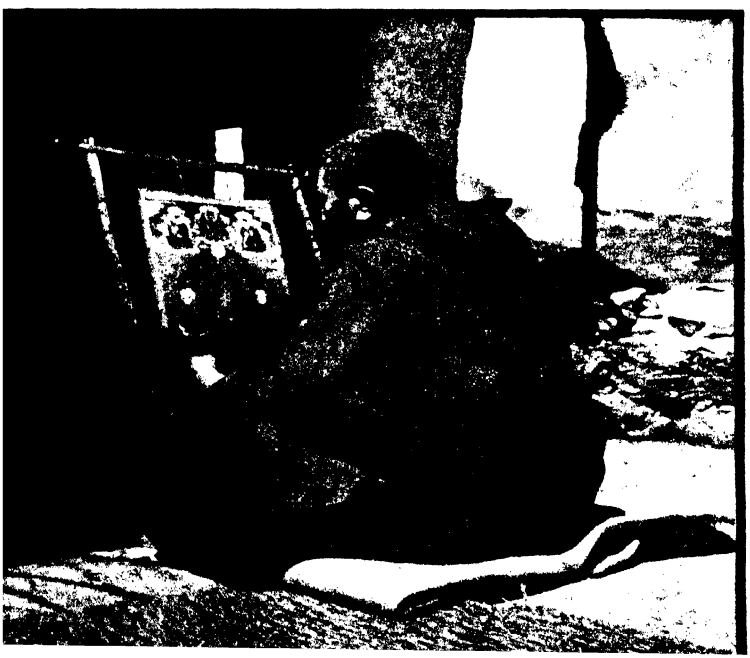
leaving unsolved doubts to harass us afterwards. To the grounding that I received from Gyaltsan I owe the knowledge which enabled me to compile the chapter on the Doctrine in Part Two of this book, though I did not gather the full fruits of his teaching immediately; it was reserved for my other good master, the lama Wangyal, to make his predecessor's work bear fruit, when he came and visited me in my Liverpool home. In my discussions with Gyaltsan I found that when I wished to illustrate this or that knotty point, I often was able to make use of stories taken from the New Testament or from the lives of the Christian Fathers, especially St. Thomas Aquinas. The quotations were always very much appreciated; the parables of the Gospel, in particular, appealed to our lama, nor did it ever occur to him to treat them as less authoritative because they belonged to a foreign religion. He was only interested in their bearing upon the points under discussion and he seemed just as ready to find truth in the sayings of " a certain ancient Lama in our country " as in those of other Lamas whose names were familiar. The lama Wangyal went still further. Speaking of Christ he said: " I see that He was a very Buddha! "

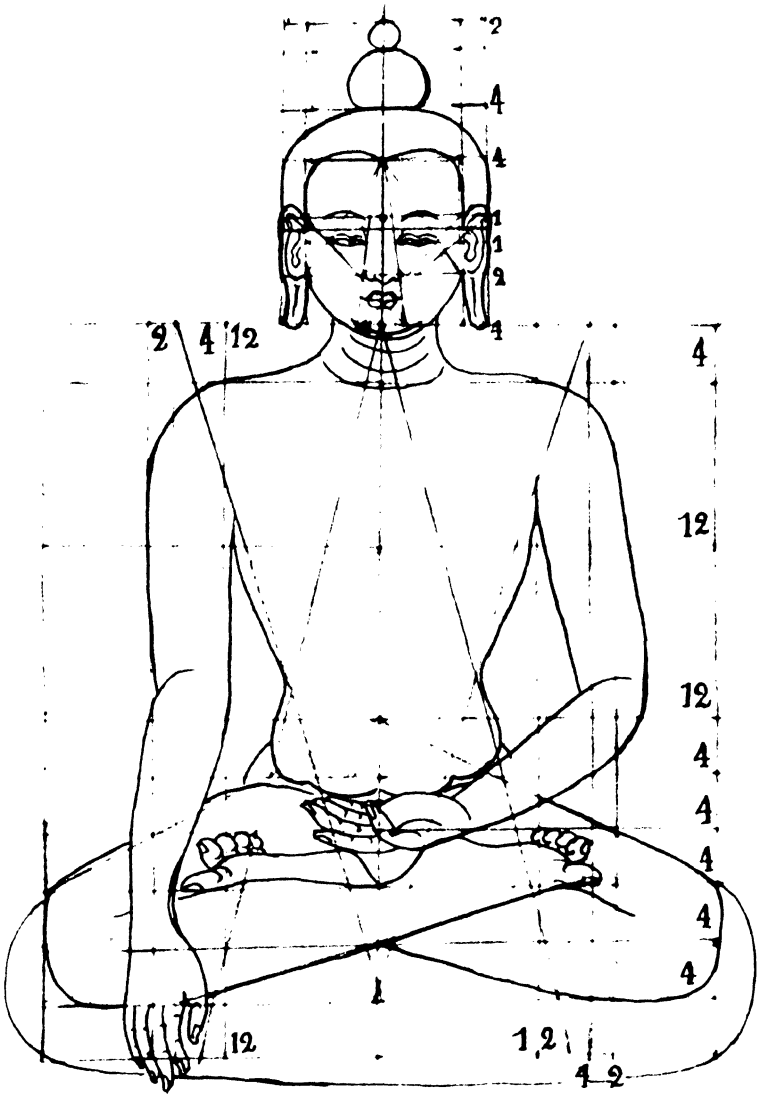
At sunset Gyaltsan and I usually made a tour of the walls, which were formed by a single huge *mendong*, which ringed the *Gompa* without a break. In hot countries this is always an enchanted hour, when the spirit seems peculiarly sensitized and ready to take wing. Gyaltsan let his mind lead him whither it would, like a rider who drops the reins loose on his horse's neck and trusts to it to take him in the right direction. I well remember how on one of these circuits, the lama began to describe the New Golden Age, the expected reign of Chamba, " The Loving One," who will be the next Buddha to come as World-Teacher. I cannot attempt to reproduce his mood of exaltation nor how it fired me as I listened to him. He spoke like a predestined prophet, and had the heavens opened in that hour and the world stood still to make way for the Second Coming, I should have felt no surprise.

While attending to me, Gyaltsan carried on simultaneously with the drawing-class. " Well now what shall we begin with? " he asked my friends the first day. " Shall we learn how to do the Teacher's hands? " He handed out to each man a sharply-pointed wooden stylus and a small drawing-board provided with a handle and shaped like a butter-pat. Then, taking one



BRINGING HIS TUTOR'S SUPPER





CANON OF PROPORTION FOR THE FIGURE OF BUDDHA

of the boards himself, he dusted it over with fine chalk and proceeded to draw with the stylus the hands of the Buddha in their classical position, one hanging down to the ground and the other supporting the begging-bowl. He made them watch carefully how he made his strokes and then try to repeat the drawing. He did one model in the corner of each pupil's board. They set to work and as they both already possessed some skill with the pencil, they made rapid progress and soon began to turn out passable copies. Whenever they made a false stroke they dusted some more chalk over the place and began again. This was the first lesson, repeated a number of times with a view to little more than accuracy.

The next lessons were taken up with the Teacher's feet, which were more difficult; then came His head, and after that His body. When they had reached a fair degree of proficiency with the separate parts they tried to combine them and so produce a complete nude. This course of study was spread over several days, till finally they were considered good enough to attempt to clothe the body. Gyaltsan's criticisms confined themselves to the question of exactitude; aesthetic considerations were left alone for the time: in fact I doubt whether they are ever mentioned as an end in themselves. When the figure appeared to have approached the model, Gyaltsan tested it with a pair of dividers, to see if the measurements of the different parts had been related in correct ratio; for the main proportions of the Buddha's figure are not left to the artists' discretion, being considered to have been fixed for all time by divine revelation. Gyaltsan related the story thus:—"One of the disciples of the Victorious One was desirous of placing His portrait on record for posterity; but when he attempted to measure His holy body he found no rule long enough, nor any measure sufficient. After repeated failures, he realized the hopelessness of his task, so he prayed to the Buddha of His grace to vouchsafe to mankind the knowledge of His earthly form. The Teacher consented and the disciple drew the first picture, which has served as a Canon ever since. For a Buddha is not like other men; He has all sorts of peculiarities; a mark between the eyes, a protuberance on the head, teeth in an unusual number, His ears are not at all the same as a man's. His eyes are shaped like a bow bent by a skilful archer—and there are many other points which must be observed if you are to portray a Buddha faithfully."

Since our return to England, Gyaltsan sent me a precious gift in the shape of a drawing of the Buddha inscribed in an oblong, with all the proportions shown and numbered. This is reproduced opposite page 885, I regard it as one of the most valuable relics of our journey.

During the early stages the whole aim of the teaching is to train hand, eyes and memory. When the pupils have proved that they are able to copy the model several times with a considerable degree of sureness, they are made to do it from memory. At the first attempt my friends found that they had remembered only a part of what they had practised; nevertheless, after referring to the model and making one or two attempts, they began to retain the proportions in their mind's eye and Gyaltsan expressed himself as satisfied with their progress. A still more advanced stage is marked by trying to draw the same figure in a material where correction by rubbing out is not possible, that is to say, in Indian ink upon paper. From time to time, for variety's sake, flowers, clouds and animals can be introduced. Drawing from Nature does not come in at all: it is a question of learning control and of memorizing the principal classical subjects. After that, it is left to the artist himself to show what he will make of his skill.

Concerning clouds, Gyaltsan had some interesting remarks to offer. One day he suddenly asked:—"By the way, about those three *t'hankas* that you commissioned me to paint, do you wish me to put in ordinary clouds or Kargyudpa clouds?"

"What are they?" we asked. "Why should there be two sorts of clouds?"

"But there are," said the lama; "from ancient times the artists of the Kargyudpa have their own special convention for portraying clouds, and also certain plants. No other Order draws them as we do; we are of course permitted to use the ordinary methods too, but we prefer our own tradition." We of course ordered Kargyudpa clouds for our *t'hankas*; they can be seen on the photograph opposite page 404, where one of Gyaltsan's works has been reproduced.

While the pupil is busy improving his drawing, he also helps the Master in such jobs as grinding the stones and earths that make the paints, pounding them in a polished stone mortar, preparing canvases and washing brushes. Later he begins to learn how to apply the paint, and is allowed to help in the more re-

petitive and mechanical tasks such as borders, grass, flowers or skies. Eventually the day comes when he may try his hand at a whole composition.

There was naturally no time for us to tackle anything but elementary drawing, so, as we were anxious not to miss seeing all the processes that go to the making of a *t'hanka*, we asked Gyaltsan to let us watch him work on some that were awaiting completion. We thus saw enough for me to be able to describe the various stages without omitting any important detail.

The first task is the preparation of a canvas. The material used is ordinary white cotton cloth of Indian manufacture. An oblong is cut to the required size, and it is hemmed round barley stalks, to give the edge a slight stiffening. Then it is fixed in an embroidery frame of much larger size, with a woollen thread running in zigzags all round from the canvas to the frame, lacing the two together. If the canvas sags at any time, the lace is drawn tighter and the tension is gradually distributed all round the frame till the free end is reached, which is then reknotted. When this has been done, a dressing of lime, mixed with a little size made by boiling yak-skin, is applied, but very thinly, so as not to interfere with the flexibility of the canvas, which must be supple enough to be rolled up. The surface is wetted and polished repeatedly with a flint, and allowed to dry between each polishing. In the end, the canvas does not differ in essence from a wall, and the method of painting is akin to fresco.

When the canvas is ready, the drawing is put on with charcoal pencils, but comparatively roughly, for the artist trusts to his brush to lend due precision to the finer lines and to obliterate all trace of what lies underneath. After that, it is only a question of applying the colours: as only body colours are used, either opaque or only very slightly translucent, it is easy to blot out a mistake. Slips of the hand are not common in the best artists; but with those of inferior grade they occur, though usually not in the principal figures, but in minor details where mistakes are due to insufficient care. The folds of clothing and the features on the faces are the last details to be put in, apart from various finer embellishments in gold. Gyaltsan's art was a typical example of pleasing but not highly inspired school-work. But for the tradition, he would have been completely at a loss, but given the help of its guiding hand, his great sincerity enabled him to go to the utmost limit of his talent.

His work on walls, where a broader treatment was called for, was slightly ahead of his *t'hankas*; for in a smaller picture, meant to be viewed from close up, questions of finesse count for more. His chief fault lay in a tendency to mix in too much white with his paints, which made his colours, especially blues, rather milky.

When drawing on a *t'hanka*, the frame is placed upright, leaning against the wall, never flat on a table or on the floor. In painting, the left hand holds a transverse ruler, which follows the hand that holds the brush, providing it with a steady rest. The left hand also grasps a sea-shell which serves as a palette. Brushes are prepared by the artist from selected hairs of goat, and even cat, which he binds on to a stick. Size is used to mix with the paints, which are first ground in the mortar. White of egg is not known as a medium; that is why it is incorrect to speak of the Tibetan mural paintings as frescoes, though they resemble them so closely in appearance.

The day before we were due to leave, some sacred dances were performed in a cloistered theatre just below our own room, in honour of the visit to P'hiyang of Colonel Lang and his party. The proper time of the year for this display is January: at that time over a hundred monks take part in the service—for it is really a religious mystery—wearing splendid Chinese costumes, and also grotesque masks decorated with yaks' horns, antlers and tusks. The dancers wear red silk skirts, banded with yellow, which describe brilliant circles of colour as they whirl round. Summer is not really a suitable time for such violent exercise. Gyaltsan, who acted as trainer and master of the ballet, allowed his troupe of about a dozen to perform three figures that lasted half an hour, after which they retired sweating profusely. At the proper season, all Ladak gathers at P'hiyang to watch the Kargyudpa mystery which lasts two whole days.

For ourselves that last afternoon brought a gathering of friends. Khan Muhammad Din was there, in attendance on the Residency party. The lama Dawa also came from Spituk and the Yellow Man from Leh. Joseph Gergan, the Christian Translator, sent a messenger bearing a kind present of cakes specially baked for us by his wife. When the dancing was over, we foregathered for the last time in Konchhog Gyaltsan's room and conversed about our future plans. "My advice to you is to go to our mother-house of Dikhung in Tibet," said Gyaltsan.

" The Dikhung Lama is a true saint, and if he should receive you as pupil, you will have the happiness of studying the Doctrine under one of the greatest teachers in the land. What do you think, Reverend Doctor? "—he turned to the bursar of Spituk inquiringly. I rather expected that the latter would prefer to recommend a Gelugpa teacher, a member of his own Yellow-Hat Order, but to my surprise he concurred, saying: " Yes, I believe you could not do better. If you should go to Tibet, seek out the Dikhung Lama. I will gladly come with you myself, if by that time I am free of the bursar's office."

Bidding good-bye to our friends should have made us sad; but after living among Tibetans, one begins to catch a little of their philosophy, which does not favour long-drawn-out regrets. Absences of months and years are such a commonplace in this land, that people settle down quickly after the departure of a friend, knowing as they do that there is little likelihood of news being received, till the absentee himself turns up unexpectedly to announce his own return. Stoicism and resignation are in the blood, and a worrying disposition is quite the exception. The lama Dawa left first for Spituk; the Yellow Man lingered a little longer, and then rode off, telling us that he too expected to be on the road within a week, for he was starting for Lhasa and might be away a year or more. Two days later, at Kalatze on the Indus, we parted from Gyaltsan, who had come there to have his eyes tested by Mrs. Driver, a lady doctor, who was doing splendid work for the sick. She and her husband were most good to us; I am glad to be able to thank them once more for their hospitality and kindness.

We reserved for ourselves one final treat, a day to be spent in revisiting our beloved Likhir. This second occasion brought no disillusionment, but on the contrary a renewal of the rapture of our first visit. When it was at last time to go, the old prior drew me apart into his cell and said that he would feel happy to welcome us back at any time for an indefinite stay, with every facility for reading or doing whatever else we wished.

The homeward stages were all taken as speedily as possible, Yuru, Bod Karbu and lovely Mulbek: when we crossed the frontier we shed our Tibetan personalities with regret, and became our ordinary selves once more. We hurried through Purig, where the fierceness of summer had given place to the keener glow of autumn. Everywhere people were stacking their last

hay, or were walking up and down the stubble-fields with an air of busy aimlessness as if to say "the work of the year is over; now for a long hibernation." At the alp of Nimarg, which we had left a garden in full flower, many plants had died down or been cropped short, leaving no trace; but a few late-flowering species still bloomed, gentians, a monkshood, and a new delphinium; they were making all haste to get through their life-cycle before the first snows condemned them once more to the enforced rest of months. We spent a day gathering seeds; there is no sound more gratifying to the ear than their metallic tinkle, as the ripe pods are bent over and emptied into the envelopes. Then at last came the Zoji, now quite cleared of snow; once across the pass and we were in India again. In the Sind valley the maize harvest was ripe and also the walnuts. Buying roasted maize-cobs in the villages made us think of Soho and chestnuts.

At last Wayl bridge appeared and "Civilization," represented by a couple of cars, stood waiting for us. A Kashmiri peasant with a badly abscessed hand, stopped us and asked for medicine, so we lighted our last wayside fire to boil up water for Dr. Roaf, who operated there and then. It was the final bow before the fall of the curtain. We stepped into our car and were whirled in clouds of choking dust towards Srinágar, conscious of a mounting nervousness that could not be kept in check, in spite of our recent study of the doctrine of illusion.

PART FOUR

AFTERTHOUGHTS

CHAPTER XXII

The Present State of Tibetan Art

WHOEVER has had the patience to follow me to the end of my journey, can scarcely have escaped gathering some impressions about art and artists, for allusions have been numerous and often detailed. But this subject has until now been linked up with casual incidents of travel; so I propose to devote the next three chapters of the book to an ordered, though necessarily brief, survey, even at the cost of occasionally recapitulating points made earlier on.

My purpose is to describe the state of the art at the present time, to show what needs it supplies in the life of the people, and to hazard some opinions about the tendencies that are at work within it. I profess no interest in antiquity as such, though the unity and continuity of the Tibetan Tradition permits old and modern examples to be used indiscriminately. Periods and origins, affinities and distinguishing marks dear to the specialist's heart, are questions foreign to my purpose. He who wishes to pursue that side of the subject, must delve among the notes and papers to be found in the journals of learned societies. He can also see for himself actual examples in museums: indeed it is to be hoped that students will not be alone in so doing; this chapter will have been in part wasted, if it fails to rouse the desire of ordinary readers to visit the well-arranged collection in the Indian section of the Victoria and Albert Museum, for in artistic matters, such people are often surer in their judgment than professional scientists obsessed with detail. One hardly ever meets a soul in that portion of the gallery—the same could be said about the entire India Museum, one of the best of London's treasure-houses—so that one is inclined to credit the truth of an anecdote related about some lamas who were brought over to England a few years ago in connexion with an Everest lecture. Their appointed

guide was showing them round the sights of London, bent on impressing them with the wealth and wonder of our civilization. As they walked through the museum he said: "There, you see all these marvellous treasures from your own and every other country. They are the property of the entire people, so that any day, without having to pay a penny, anyone, from the highest in the land to the poorest, can come and enjoy them!" "Then why don't they come?" asked the lamas naïvely, gazing round the deserted halls.

The atmosphere of a museum is unfavourable to the appreciation of works of art: when, as in Tibetan countries, one has seen them in use, handled freely—even the most precious of them—in private houses or temples, one realizes how lifeless they become when withdrawn from ordinary use into institutions where irrelevant considerations, such as rarity or date, play a big part in their arrangement for display. Still, museums are better than nothing, and should be made use of for what they are worth, until the day when mankind will become enlightened to the point of allowing the bulk of the exhibits to be set free to re-enter the service of life; always provided that by that time modern "advances" in the methods of warfare shall not have proved effective in wiping out the whole artistic heritage of the past, so conveniently assembled for that disaster in a few confined areas.

So far as I am aware, a comprehensive treatise on Tibetan art has yet to be written. To compile one that could claim completeness, it would be necessary to have examined the contents of the principal monasteries of Tibet proper and Bhutan. Nevertheless there is wealth enough outside forbidden territories, in Ladak and Spiti and the Chinese portion of the provinces of Kham and Amdo, to allow general opinions to be formed. A useful little book, *Tibetan Paintings*, by Roerich, Paris, 1926, has been published about *t'hankas* or painted scrolls, and deals with the identification of many of the personages who commonly appear on them: it also contains some good illustrations. Most other references occurring in scientific publications are mainly antiquarian in interest and correspondingly dry.

My present aim, then, is to give a picture of an art in being, with the Tradition, which is its life-blood, still active. It is the last of the great Traditions of which this can be said unreservedly, for in most countries where the artistic sense has not

yet been strangled in the grip of mechanized materialism, leaving nothing but a hopeless chaos, the lingering strands of tradition, by the decease of their unifying principle, are only comparable to the twitchings of a pithed frog. Not that Tibet has remained entirely immune to the influence of the same disintegrating forces which have destroyed art elsewhere, and with it, all that pure intellectuality which makes itself recognizable in the sense of form: in recent years a downward trend has been apparent, chiefly in border districts. The history of the last few decades in Asia reveals how quickly the virus can do its work. Three generations ago, both India, China and Japan contained many fine craftsmen who still found a market for good work; now there is a race between these three supremely artistic peoples as to which can uproot its traditions the quickest, and can produce the most grotesque travesties both of its own now despised native style, and of the European fashions that are taking its place. In these countries the wounds are severe, and to recapture the traditional spirit a tremendous change of heart is the first essential. But in the case of Tibet the injuries are yet skin-deep and might perhaps not be beyond healing, if the cultured classes, on whose taste the existence of high art is almost wholly dependent, could be made to realize what is happening, warned by their neighbours' errors.

A singular consistency of style is observable throughout the vast territories where the Tibetan Buddhist Tradition holds sway, in spite of wide climatic and racial diversity. It calls for a trained eye to distinguish whether a certain painting was executed in Lhasa or Mongolia, and whether the photograph of a building refers to Ladak or to Kham, many miles away to the east. A collection of hammered and chased teapots, assembled from all the corners of the area, is not easy to classify by local differences at a first glance. So also, going backwards in time, the dating of a picture or statue within anything nearer than a century calls for an expert. Change has taken place, as can be proved by comparing works separated by several centuries, but development has been by steps so gradual, that they merge into one another imperceptibly.

Two great currents of influence have mingled in Tibetan art, and have been assimilated and transformed by the creative genius of the race, the influences of India and China. The first has reigned in the sphere of sacred things—purely re-

ligious objects such as pictures (there is hardly any such thing as secular painting) or sculpture, still clearly show their kinship with the types found in old Indian Buddhist centres like the caves of Ajanta—while the second exerted itself more in the things pertaining to worldly life, because cultured society in Tibet modelled its manners on those of the Court of Peking, which for centuries occupied the suzerain position. The interior fittings and furnishings of houses, window-frames, tables, carpets and food vessels, borrowed many of their forms and characteristic motifs from the Chinese. Certain domestic necessities, such as crockery and silks, were never locally manufactured, but continue to be imported from China to this day.

Architecture is perhaps the branch in which native designs show least evidence of foreign influence, though the Chinese style has affected a good many of the minor details. The fact that in Chinese buildings wood always played a dominant part, whereas in most of Tibet, stone and sun-dried brick were the only materials available in unlimited supply, caused the borrowing of forms to confine itself to features where the use of timber was natural, such as pillars and the high-pitched roofs of pavilions. But though I have drawn attention to the two influences in question, an impression must not be conveyed inadvertently that Tibetan art remains a hybrid, a cross derived from two imperfectly-mated parents. On the contrary, the Tibetans have shown a superb power of assimilation in everything that they have borrowed, even literature; so that though their character, to which such a concept as conscious originality is totally foreign, has made them copy some things with extreme faithfulness, yet they have never failed to imbue their own spirit into them, welding features derived from such different sources into a logical and harmonious whole.

Another important point to note is that in Tibet a comparatively small part is played by what is usually termed "peasant art." A rough-and-ready division is often made between the two categories of "folk art" and of "civilized art," by which is meant art that appears to have been practised in a more self-conscious frame of mind. This distinction is founded on the observation that the arts that have enjoyed priestly and noble patronage exhibit great variety between style and style, country and country, period and period; whereas in the art-products that serve the needs of the peasantry, a surprising resemblance

can be observed in the work of races widely separated in time and space and heredity. Typical patterns found in peasant art are those based on simple geometrical shapes such as checks, stripes, or diapers, and highly stylized representations of men and animals. Plant interlacings are far less common; perhaps the complex nature of their curves demands a more developed mentality for its analysis. One has but to look at a few baskets and wooden bowls and embroideries, say from Rumania and Morocco, Sweden and Nigeria, Greece and Peru, to discover striking similarities of pattern and colouring. In music something of the same sort is noticeable; in "folk songs" remarkable parallelisms have been pointed out between places as remote as Sicily and Ceylon, Scotland and China. Some have explained the phenomenon by saying that "primitive" conditions of life have everywhere produced similar results; others attribute it to the survival of ancient metaphysical symbols that were once widely diffused throughout mankind.

The expression "folk art" applies legitimately where there is a marked difference of style and content between the arts of the élite and those practised by and for simpler folk; or else where a traditional synthesis is maintained on a lower plane, as among peoples leading a narrowly tribal existence. Both these cases can be called normal; but there is also the anomalous, not to say pathological, example of modern Occidental civilization, where those who would normally constitute the élite have proved false to their charge, and have substituted an anti-traditional counterfeit for true culture. In the nations concerned, the surviving folklore is the last weak link with the eternal source of tradition. Its symbolical motives, though their deeper meanings have been forgotten, are still vehicles of real power to the peasantry who delight in them, instruments of unconscious initiation. Once let these links be snapped, and the people suffer cultural death, sinking into the abyss of proletarian barbarism. The human dignity of the peasant is exchanged for the degradation and justifiable discontent of the wage-slave in the rural factory. It is no cause for surprise that some well-meaning persons, after comparing the simple sincerity of peasant work with the pretentious emptiness of modernist invention, should have been led into making a cult of folk art. If the sight of beribboned bourgeois trying to frolic round the maypole sometimes appears ludicrous, we must in fairness

recognize that these antics reveal a pathetic confession of our general failure.

(I take this opportunity of offering my grateful thanks to Dr. A. Coomaraswamy of Boston, Mass., for having detected a fallacy in my early drafting of the passage about folk art. His intervention has removed a serious blot from this book.)

We have been discussing cases where folk art can be spoken of distinctively; in Tibet this is hardly possible, because all the elements, derived from whatever source, that have concurred to give its form to Tibetan civilization, have been combined into a very completely digested synthesis, adapted to the needs of men of all ranks and capacities. Only in village songs and dances can the typical signs of folk art be recognized. In the case of other arts, even ordinary farmers possess many objects which do not differ in any essential respect from those of the aristocracy, though naturally they are rougher in execution and employ less precious materials. This is perhaps the most convincing evidence of how real and universal Tibetan culture has been, and how thoroughly it has permeated the whole of society. Many a rough fellow whom we met showed that he could look for just the right points in a rug or a teapot, with a sureness of judgment that few of our own educated folk could emulate.

I will give one striking instance: our servant Norbu and two Ladakis who had never before quitted their own province, accompanied us on the return journey as far as Srinagar: on the house-boat where we were lodging, they happened to see two carpets made under the direction of my friend Aristidi Messinesi of Neston, Cheshire, from his own designs; he was experimenting with Kashmiri labour at that time—to be exact, *one rug was locally made and the other was the work of his own* hand. The first carpet set before them was a tapestry rug of large size, and for that reason, showy. It had been woven, not at all badly, by the Kashmiris, and dyed with first-class vegetable dyes, such as the artist invariably uses. It was duly admired and handled; but when it came to the second carpet, quite a small pile rug, a very different tale was heard. The Ladakis abandoned the other, exclaiming in delight as they examined the borders of the smaller rug with expert eyes, to test the straightness of the lines and the accuracy of the right-angles. "It is a wonder!" they cried. "Not many rugs from Lhasa or Yarkand have this texture nor such precision in the lines." They

were unaware of the maker's name, but they spotted the master-hand infallibly.

The craftsmen whom we encountered on the Satlej, though sprung from peasant families, were no mere rustics in their outlook, and the style and technique of their work were not distinguishable from that of Lhasa workers. From the small villages of Sugnam and Labrang, where they resided, the two best masters were furnishing the market of a wide tract of country. The centres where they had their workshops might just as well have been in towns, for people came to them from a radius of many days' journey to place their orders. Again, when our friends at Poo wanted to commission the fine teapot figured opposite page 853, they sent specially to Hlari, a village of Spiti. The rich men of Leh gave their orders for plate to the silversmith of Chhiling, quite an insignificant place, while to Rigzin, native of the small village of Kalatze, people applied from all over Western Tibet when they wanted the best paintings. This degree of specialization, and the general recognition by the public of grades in the skill of artists, as well as the wide diffusion, in rural areas no less than in the capital, of arts of a high order, are sure signs of cultural health. Similar conditions seem to have prevailed in many parts of India till the middle of the nineteenth century, as well as in China. I remember an occasion in France during the Great War when some Chinese coolies, who had been brought over to dig trenches, were told to camouflage the dirty white walls of army huts with mud. Instead of applying aimless daubs, they covered the surface with the favourite devices of Chinese art: phoenixes and dragons chased one another round corners, butterflies flitted from peach-blossom to melons, all beautifully drawn, though the medium was only mud.

In the case of Tibet the diffusion of artistic knowledge from the aristocracy downwards into the peasantry is doubtless due to the even distribution of islands of civilization in the shape of the great monasteries and their dependent houses, where, though the domestic life may be Spartan in respect of food and dress, the highest level of refinement is attained, not only in the furnishing of temples, but in the apartments of the higher prelates. Another contributory factor is the absorption into the monastic order of a regular supply of peasant children, who are thus placed in a cultured environment at an age when their

whole being is plastic. Naturally, many remain unable to avail themselves of the higher learning thrown open to them and continue all their lives to fill subordinate positions akin to those of lay brothers; a greater number absorb only a little, while those who are sufficiently endowed with intelligence to make full use of their chances, rise far above their normal station in matters of refinement and taste. As the inmates of each *Gompa* are chiefly recruited from the immediate neighbourhood, the lamas have no difficulty in keeping in contact with their homes: many return to help their parents at harvest-time. Thus they carry back to their villages some of the polish they have acquired.

What takes place in each locality, can also be paralleled on a larger scale in the country as a whole. Most young lamas proceed for their higher studies, either to Lhasa itself, or to Ṭashilhunpo. In these places, where art and learning are to be found on a princely scale, young men from all sorts of out-of-the-way places meet, and copy something of the manners of the eminent men under whom they work. This coming and going has impregnated the entire race with artistic influences, which the superficial roughness of many of its members sometimes seems to belie. Ladak is by no means considered one of the great centres of culture, yet travelling through its villages, as well as in its capital of Leh, one gained an impression of a genuine civilization such as is missed in a great part of Europe. There may be less diversity of information in some respects, but what there is has penetrated deep.

I must now attempt a review of the actual arts as they exist to-day: instead of dividing them according to the nature of technique employed, as painting, sculpture, textiles and music —a method which always tends to run to technicalities—I will try to deal with them as a whole, in relation to the departments of life to which they minister. Starting with the homes of the common people, the peasants, I will then pass on to the houses of the richer merchants and nobles, and end with the monasteries, where the arts have received their highest and noblest exposition. To all these places we have already paid many visits in this book, so that it is now only a question of rounding off the knowledge gained.

It would be well to turn back to the illustration opposite page 286, showing a big family farm-house, arranged on a plan

which is followed, with small variations, over a great part of the country. In districts where wood is plentiful, that material replaces masonry to a greater or lesser degree and the style becomes less massive in consequence: as such districts are bound to be rainy, the roof will be sloped instead of flat and one finds a glorified chalet type of building, such as occurs in Sikkim and, to judge from photographs, attains its highest development in the superb domestic architecture of Bhutan. But the flat-roofed model, of generous proportions, with its solid walls, lightened in the upper or residential story by the wooden window-frames with their serrated arrangement of beam-ends, must be taken as normal in the dry climatic conditions which have chiefly helped to mould the racial character. Again the reader must be reminded that the house which we are describing is an ordinary peasant residence, and that its spaciousness and good taste do not imply more than average wealth in the owners. Comparing it with the homes of people of corresponding rank elsewhere, it seems fair to claim that the Tibetan small proprietor enjoys the best housing in the world: in other countries such a house could only belong to people occupying a much superior station.

Passing to the interior, one chiefly notices that there are no unnecessary possessions. The habit of using the floor for sitting and sleeping, instead of chairs or beds, protects the fine proportions of the rooms from being spoiled by the presence of bulky pieces of furniture: mattresses and rugs and low tables provide all that is needed for comfort and rest. Many objects of utility are made more pleasing by the addition of some decorative embellishments, but accumulations of pictures on the walls, vases and knick-knacks are happily absent. That evil only comes into being with cheap, large-scale production, with its bewildering wealth of opportunities for gratifying passing whims.

The rugs are usually of small size, and knotted on a woollen warp, which does not resist damp too well when exported. The patterns are derived from Chinese prototypes and usually consist of one or three circles on a central field, with a key pattern or other simple border. These rugs might almost be classified as folk art. Complicated curves such as are formed by the delicate stalks of Persian and Indian conventional plants never occur in Tibetan work: some of their rugs are fine in texture, but this craft of carpet-weaving is not often carried

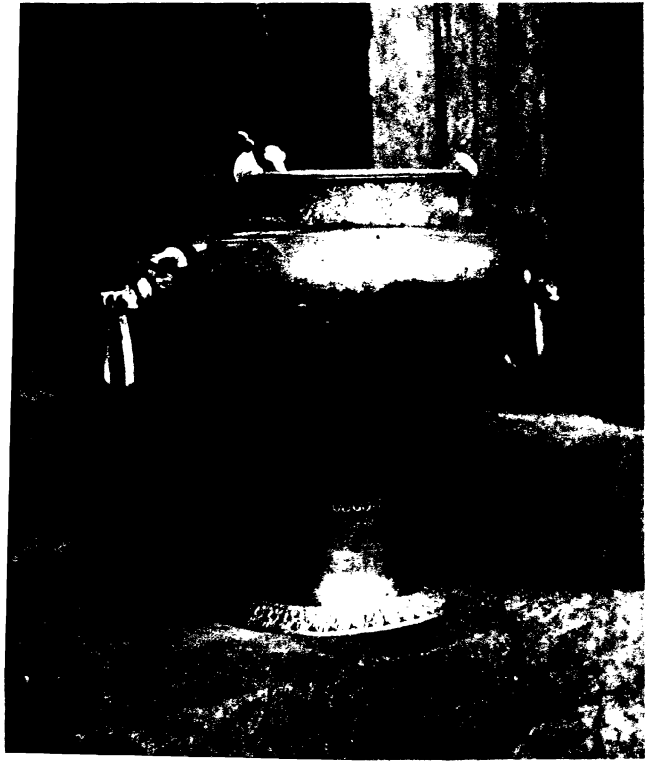
beyond the elementary stages. A favourite colour-scheme in better-class rugs is a combination of light blue, warm browns and white; again the Chinese taste reveals itself.

The little tea-tables called *chogtse*, when they are not plain, are either painted gaily with bunches of flowers on flat panels, or more rarely, carved with dragons and then painted: but these more costly tables are not usually found in the houses of peasants. Village headmen, however, often possess surprisingly good things: we saw some superior rugs and silver cups in the home of the headman of Lachhen; and our head porter Odsung's family at Poo on the Satlej, who were no more than petty landowners, numbered among their heirlooms, so they told us, some dresses of ancient silk damask which, from the period in which they were made, must be of great magnificence.

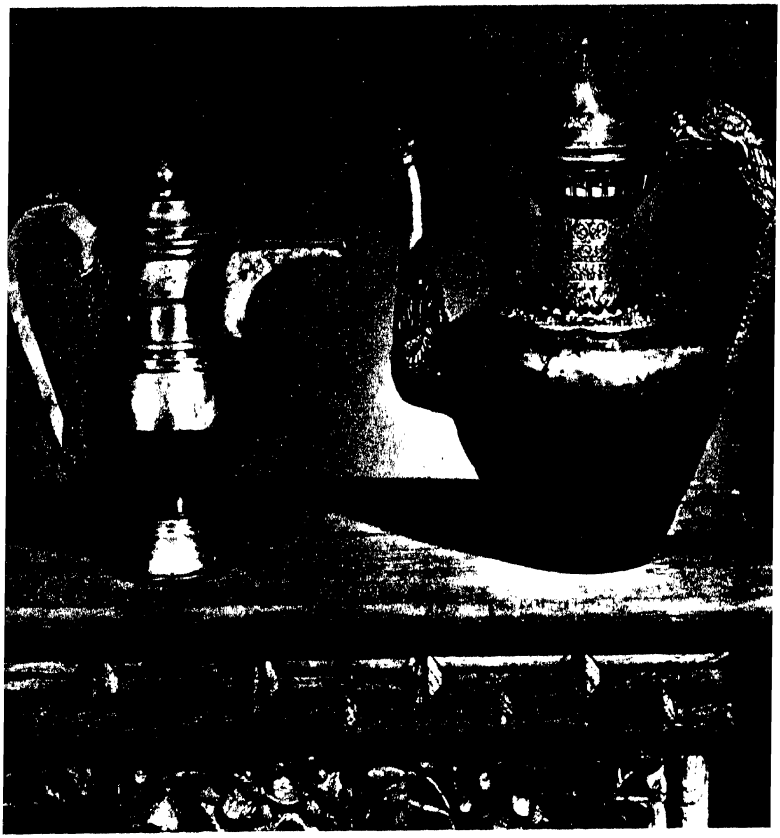
The next class of objects are those used for eating and drinking, teapots, cups, bowls, braziers for keeping tea warm, pots and jugs for beer. The poorer peasants usually drink from wooden bowls, the bases of which are sometimes embellished with chased hoops of silver: almost everyone, when travelling, carries such a bowl in the folds of his dress and is expected, on visiting a friend's house, to produce it to be filled with tea. Their teapots and the little portable stoves that go with them, are usually of brown pottery, of distinctly "classical" appearance, but depending for their beauty on shape alone. Most families, however, have one or two better teapots of brass or copper, with chasing round the neck, on the lid and at the base of the spout. The more wealthy possess several such teapots; the best have bands of silver appliqué, often chased with great skill, and handles in the shape of dragons and spouts that issue from the jaws of tusked sea-monsters.

Silver stands and lids for china teacups are common in the Central provinces but are rarely possessed by peasants in the West. The Lachhen headman had some very fine ones, chased all over with delicate floral devices and with the "eight auspicious things," in higher relief, namely, the golden wheel of the Doctrine, the jar containing the elixir of immortality, the conch-shell with right-handed spiral, the standard of victory, the coiled lasso, the lotus, the goldfish and the royal umbrella. These are among the favourite motifs occurring both on lids and teapots.

The fact that only a few personal possessions are needed for







BEER JUG AND TEAPOT

perfect comfort is one of the reasons why the average quality can be kept so high. People do not buy teapots every day and so can afford to get good ones, which they hand down to their heirs. As the materials of most of these things are not fragile, replacements are rare, and in the course of time, even at a slow rate of purchase, quite a store can be accumulated, which when displayed together makes an astonishing impression on foreigners. That is one of the great advantages of things not being too cheap; it encourages those possessed of modest means not to spend rashly, but to wait till they are in a position to acquire things that have an intrinsic value.

The clothes of the peasants, both men and women, are usually of plain but beautiful wool, spun and woven by themselves. A dark maroon is the prevailing dye in Central Tibet, but in the Western provinces lighter self-coloured wool is worn, with a purple sash. Most Tibetans wear some pieces of jewellery, especially the women, who have a passion for it. In this craft, as might be expected, the mode varies greatly from place to place. It would be tedious to give long descriptions of the silver chains, star-shaped or square or cylindrical charm-boxes, necklaces of rough cornelian, agate and matrix turquoise, ear-rings, rings and beads of red coral, with which the people deck themselves on holidays. The decoration usually takes the form of exceedingly fine filigree and far the commonest stone is the turquoise, which is secured in its setting by a kind of sealing-wax in place of cement. The richest jewellery of all comes from Nepal, where the size of the pieces, the profusion of stones, and the frequent use of high relief as well as of filigree, makes one think that the Nepalis have borrowed some of their ideas from India.

The farm-house always contains one room which is chosen out for special honour and where examples of fine arts are likely to be found—the family chapel. Here reside the household gods, and here priests are invited to celebrate rites, and guests of honour are often put up for the night. Sometimes it is an entirely separate chamber; sometimes the altar, flanked by tiers of pigeon-holes containing books, stands at the back of the chief living-room of the house. This is especially the case in smaller houses, with few rooms to spare; but in the large farms of Ladak the best room on the upper floor is almost invariably set apart as an oratory. In Khunu, private chapels are some-

times elaborate, being built on the roof, and surrounded by richly carved wooden arcades, so that the outer walls, thus shielded from the weather, can also be painted.

The appointments are the best that the family purse can provide, consisting of rugs, metal altar-lamps and silvered bowls for offerings. Behind the altar are seated painted wooden images of all sizes; the walls of the room are hung with *t'hankas* mounted on brocade. These will often be crude, done by some itinerant lama, or just harmless school-work; but occasionally good ones are found in unexpected places. One need only recall the story of our servant, Norbu, whose family were about to commission a *t'hanka* from Rigzin, the premier painter of Ladak: we contributed some gold wire ourselves to be ground into paint for it, since the gold is always charged for separately. On a rough estimate of half a million farming families in Tibet —which may be very wide of the mark in either direction—it can be calculated that there must be at least that number of altars to provide for, which at a modest reckoning would mean about three million each of statues and *t'hankas*, and a proportional quantity of minor appliances such as lamps. If to these there be added the vast quantities of higher-class objects made for the use of the wealthier laity, and the even vaster requirements of the hundreds of monasteries, where not only temples but every monk's cell has its own altar, it will be evident that the task of making good the natural wear and tear on all this, will occupy a great number of artists and craftsmen of every grade, spread all over the country, who work for a sure market in an encouraging atmosphere. As there is no outlet for spending money in the pursuit of ephemeral amusements—if one excepts gambling, to which many Tibetans are passionately addicted—a steady share of the surplus wealth finds its way to the artistic community, especially to the jewellers and the purveyors of religious requisites. The sums paid, of course, are small according to our present standards. Even in the best periods artists have never made fortunes, for the rate of work cannot be quickened sufficiently for that. But there are other compensations, and so long as payment is regular and unaffected by the vagaries of fashion, they need ask little else of life.

All that I have seen of actual artists in these journeys, has confirmed me in the belief that the traditional handicraftsman

represents one of the most intelligent, independent, stable and straightforward elements in a community, and that the value to it of his presence is beyond computation. The elimination of the craftsmen, including both the master minds who set and maintain the standards of taste and workmanship, and the equally indispensable crowd of more modest artists who minister to the artistic needs of the people and transmit to them a steady standard of taste received from above, may represent, judged from a purely economic standpoint, no great material loss. The factories which drive them out of business can show a turnover beside which the total sum paid for the arts in earlier times may seem trifling. But the intellectual wastage inherent in the extinction of a whole class of citizens noted for their sturdiness of character and for their varied gifts of mind and skill of hand, cannot be measured in pounds, shillings and pence.

In India two generations have been enough to wipe out these independent handicraftsmen, driving them, for want of clients, on to the land or into soulless industry. What the nation must have lost through this does not bear thinking on, and those who are trying, under the jeers of others who call themselves "up-to-date," to recreate that element in society, deserve all praise and encouragement. But they, and we also, must realize that for crafts to flourish there must be both a head and a body, the few who form the élite and who link the art with the ideas that give it its form, and also the many who diffuse it among the people. We in the West think we can have the head without the trunk, a few expensive artists in the midst of a tasteless mankind. But in India there is a danger that those who wish to revive the village crafts may ignore the need for an élite acting as arbiters of standards; the present reformers are perhaps rather too much taken up with the economic aspect of the question.

At Ahmedabad in 1933 I visited an exhibition held under the auspices of Gandhi himself. The plain cottons were unexceptionable; but wherever there had been any attempt at decoration one saw hand-made copies of Occidental machine-made copies of corrupted versions of ancient Indian design! This applied both to textiles and wood-carving and metal-work. It was traditional craft only in name; the tyranny of the machine was still oppressing the souls of the makers, with a slight twist towards absurdity, in that so much trouble had been lavished

on copying such rubbish by hand. Those who confidently believed this exhibition to be an advertisement for their really praiseworthy efforts at revival, had seen but one half of the problem. They wanted the headless trunk to live. Let those few corners of the earth where, as in Tibet, such disturbance of the social balance has not yet been experienced, take warning from the history and follies of the others.

The step from the richer peasant headman to the small trader or petty noble is almost imperceptible. Passing thence to the great merchants and officials, and the heads of feudal clans, there is no fundamental difference in the character of the artistic objects they use. It exists only in respect of quantity and quality; but there the contrast is considerable. An opulent Tibetan's residence is often a veritable treasure-house, and his everyday possessions are much surpassed by those that are only displayed on state occasions. Such a man numbers his silver cup-stands and splendidly chased teapots by the dozen: when he entertains his friends he pours out tea for them into jade cups, and seats them on soft Chinese rugs of the finest knot-counts—old ones for preference, since modern rugs are becoming commercialized. On his walls hang scores of *t'hankas*, old and new, by good artists, mounted on rich brocades. His exquisite little tea-tables are of pierced wood delicately gilded, while the jewellery of his wife and daughters is worthy of the *Arabian Nights*, a profusion of filigree, turquoises, corals and seed pearls. He may even employ some whole-time craftsmen for the exclusive service of his household. He clothes his servants, as well as himself, in silk damask, and his library is well stocked with volumes, all sacred, printed from wood-blocks, or manuscripts written in gold and silver letters on a blue ground, each leaf being protected by a slip of rare brocade and embellished with fine miniatures. As he owns so much property, he naturally requires some big furniture to contain it, in the shape of gilt and painted cupboards or chests. In his chapel, where a domestic chaplain is constantly officiating, there will be hung the finest *t'hankas* of all, heirlooms from the best periods, and the images will be, not of wood, but superb examples of brass casting, heavily gilded, an art at which the Newaris of Nepal excelled. The butter-lamps and other vessels standing on the altar are solid silver, and the chasing is carried out with a sharpness which has rarely been equalled except in parts of India.



PENDANT
Silver-gilt filigree and precious stones



DRIVATE CHAPEL

These fine examples of the goldsmith's craft are often found, on inquiry, to have been made in Derge, on the eastern frontier, which must be the very home of metal-work. And outside in the colonnade near the stables we find the master's saddlery hanging up, the bridles studded with silver, and the saddle-cloths consisting of small pile carpets, specially shaped, in which blue and yellow predominate. We came across a little gem of a saddle-cloth when returning down the Satlej in 1938. We stopped the rider and looked at it; but in that case the proud owner was no more than a prosperous farmer. Most of these saddle-rugs are Tibetan-made, but in the far west one comes across similar ones in the Turkish style, from Khotan, usually silvery-grey and crimson.

Lastly, we come to the monasteries, those majestic structures that seem to grow from the very rock, and which have achieved something of the solidity of the Egyptian style. Within their walls the Tibetan Tradition is continually cherished and renewed, and art, the outward visible sign of inward Grace, displays its most perfect creations. I have said so much about them that comment can be cut down to a few points.

Though the great era of building has naturally passed, as the monastic population is fully accommodated in buildings that already exist, yet construction on a smaller scale has by no means come to an end. Both at Likhir and Satsukul new wings were being put up when we visited those places, and I have been told that the exceptionally large monastery at Chiamdo, the seat of the Government of Kham, which was gutted in the Chinese wars, has been entirely renewed. Rich persons, otherwise disinclined to part with their money, frequently make considerable offerings for church work.

As for the internal equipment of the lamas' quarters, a monk's own room reflects in its furnishing the state of the home whence he came. His family is primarily responsible for his keep and each child dedicated to the lamaic order has his wants supplied by his relations direct; thus the farmer's son will enjoy the best that the farmer can afford, the monk drawn from the feudal house will be provided with still choicer pictures and altar fittings, while the highest prelates, especially those who hold the rank of *Tulku* or Remanifestation—these may be children of beggars or of lords—occupy chambers to which dignity has been lent by every means known to art. This must not imply

that such Lamas pass their time in luxury—many of them lead a life which is extremely austere: they make their beds on the hard floor or even sleep in the seated position of the Buddha, while their food is meagre and of the simplest. There are also some whose conduct is not consonant with their professions; while others again belong to the class of urbane prelates, endowed with much book-learning, but affected by a somewhat worldly outlook, with just a touch of scepticism, and who feel more at home listening to the hair-splitting disputations of doctors or exchanging courtly sallies with their friends, while they sip their subtly-flavoured tea from silver-mounted cups, than in practising the hard self-discipline of those who tread the "short road" towards Buddhahood.

The temple interior must be familiar to my readers by now; the stately pillared hall, the rows of low platforms covered with thick rugs for the choir-monks, the butter-lamps like huge night-lights in copper bowls raised on tall stems, gently glowing at the feet of rows and rows of lotus-throned figures, the well-known features of the Buddha, the Bodhisats like youthful Indian princes, the more human portraits of saints and defunct abbots, the skull-crowned visages of stern protectors who trample on the prostrate bodies of sins and passions or whirl in the cosmic dance clasping their female energies: all this shining assemblage calls up for a moment memories of Baroque churches in Southern Germany. But only for a moment—for what a gulf really separates the two. In general plan they show real similarity, and certain details such as painted statues, gilded flowering trees and carved canopies of garlands issuing from the jaws of grotesque monsters are shared by both styles. Beyond these points likeness ceases. In the Tibetan example everything is kept in due relation. Faces are either composed, or show just a faint seraphic smile playing across their features, as when thoughts are turned inward in deep meditation. Even when meant to look terrifying, they are not made theatrical: bodies are never out of poise, ornaments, however rich and complex, always avoid fussiness or irrelevancy, minor details are executed with the same care and thoughtfulness as the chief figures. We see the Baroque decorative ideal achieved in Tibet, whereas at home the result is frequently a jumble. Where a pious expression has been intended, one finds sentimentality, instead of pathos there is mere facial contortion; the seemingly complex

decoration proves to mask a simple, almost banal design, hidden under a mass of inconsistencies, the details of which have been carried out with obvious lack of thought. Everywhere are found signs of haste, and the work is apt to be disfigured by a coarseness which precludes an examination at close quarters. The one is harmonious; the other is over-dramatized and vulgar. How almost blasphemous and unworthy of their donors' genuinely devout intentions, seem the fleshy females and goody-goody cherubs on whom the demon of naturalism—one of the most deadly imps that issued from the womb of the Renaissance—has worked his will, in comparison with the classic grace of the Tibetan plastic.

The temple walls are almost invariably painted all over. Many capable mural decorators still exist in the country, though it must be admitted that their work usually falls short of the best ancient examples. It is not quite easy to lay one's finger on the discrepancy. It resides in a thousand subtleties rather than in any single cause: it is doubtless connected with the fact that in respect of the Doctrine itself, which alone gives its impulse and meaning to the art, there has in many places been a tendency to slothfulness. But even then, the old fire often is not really dead; it smoulders and only awaits rekindling. I have seen plenty of evidence of creative power, both potential and actual, reflected in the work of modern Tibetan mural decorators. As regards the actual style, the sombre colouring, sharp outlining, the manner of delineating drapery, the absence of cast shadows, and the generally flat treatment are reminiscent of the practice of the late Middle Ages in Europe. If a lama painter were suddenly to find himself inside one of the Italian churches frescoed by Orcagna or any other of the pupils of Giotto, he might for a moment fancy himself still at home. About the same degree of movement is found in both styles; there is a freedom in the curves and a fineness of line that stops short of the severe formalism of Byzantine iconography.

The subtlest, most intimate, creations of the Tibetan artist are to be seen on the innumerable *t'hankas* or banner scrolls which festoon every corner of the temples; often they are sewn at regular distances on to a band of red and yellow silk, which is hung along the transverse beams that rest on the main columns in a sort of frieze, with the banners falling like fringes. Brilliant colours, fine detail and a more individual expression on the

faces characterize these smaller compositions. In the temple, though one seems to be surrounded by all the colours of the rainbow, the range of the palette is not very big. Half-tones, and the innumerable tints required when once shading has come to play a major part in a style, are absent. It is the extreme clearness of the colours and the skill displayed in their combination which is responsible for the variegated impression.

With regard to the system of tuition followed by Tibetan art-masters, whether painters or decorative craftsmen, the brief description of the lama Gyaltsan's teaching methods, given in the preceding chapter, is of fairly general application. The essential points to observe are:—firstly, the small number of pupils working under any one master, who live with him, serve him, watch him constantly, and thus imbibe unconsciously a great part of what he has to teach them; and secondly, the preponderant part played by imitation of the teacher's own works. Copying them line for line forces the pupil to repeat, and therefore to master, every manipulation that has gone into the making of those works. Once the pupil has reached the point of being able to turn out finished copies, little remains for the master to teach him; it rests with the pupil himself henceforth to make what he can of his new-found skill. Thirdly, must be mentioned the absence of any intentional fostering of originality or of the creative instincts. They are left to develop in the pupil, once he has become in his turn, a master; but even then, he probably never recognizes their existence as such, and continues to imagine that he is reproducing or adapting, with greater or less success, what he himself was taught by his master. I do not suppose that a single case could be found where a pupil has actually been asked by his teacher to try to invent something of his own. Among us, genius tends to be looked on as a tender plant that is ready to wilt under every breath of discipline, especially in childhood: this is a notion that does not even occur to a Tibetan. The master's task is the training of his charges in precision—of hand and eye and mind—so that they may develop efficiency and control. Finally we must keep in mind the power of the master-pupil relationship, which in art, as in everything else, is the highest human tie recognized by society. The master's authority is semi-parental; from the pupil's side there is a rendering of the respect due to one to whom the pupil is related by spiritual filiation, and through whom the

pupil has been made a member of one great family, of the long line of masters and pupils that reaches back across the ages to the heavenly sources of Tradition.

Such ideas and methods have not, of course, been confined to Tibet, nor even to the Orient. With trifling variations, the same path has been followed by all the traditional schools of history, and is the one, if history is to be believed, which can best be relied on to lead to consistently successful results. A master can do justice to a very limited number of disciples at one time: they must be able to claim his undivided attention over lengthy periods. Of all branches of human endeavour, it would seem that art is the least fitted to survive under institutional conditions, or to be imparted rapidly in the form of a concentrate. The paradox is that those who have worried their heads least on the score of originality, seem to have had that quality granted to them in abundance and as if by superaddition: while those who, in their anxiety lest their precious personalities should suffer eclipse, have feared to subject themselves to discipline, have been the first to fall into banality, whether unrepentant, or disguised under a veneer of pretentiousness.

The allied arts of Music and Dancing, which, besides ministering to the lighter amusements of life, play an important part in worship, can unfortunately be dealt with only rather sketchily, because during my journeys I did not have opportunities for studying them as frequently, or as closely, as painting and the domestic crafts.

The classical music of the temples has already been described, consisting of a solemn, though animated, style of chanting, and of orchestral interludes based on the pedal notes of the long copper trumpets, with the melody taken up by oboes, and the rhythm supplemented by a multitude of percussion instruments. The hymns, though always sung by heart, also exist in written form. The notation is in the nature of a graph of the rising and falling of the voice; large curves convey the basic tune, while smaller loops represent ornaments and other by-play. Though I had hoped for a chance of instruction in the reading of the signs, time proved all too short. The only way to learn would be to practise under a master till one could reproduce a few tunes exactly, and then try to relate them to the written notes: for it is likely to be found that in reading the notation much has to be taken for granted, having been treated as a

matter of common knowledge and only vaguely indicated on the paper. Even in our own notation, people are usually unaware of how much remains a matter of convention, without being indicated by precise signs; this is especially the case in the older music. In investigating such a new notation, one should always approach the task the right way round, namely, after first learning the music in a practical way through the imitation of actual sounds. Then the way to write them down follows in due course, after which the reading of any piece that has been noted in a book should be a simple matter. An over-hasty confidence in one's power of interpreting written symbols, without prolonged experience in actual sounds, is almost sure to result in a travesty: therefore for such a study much time is required.

The singing itself is extremely moving. The words are articulated with perfect clarity and are given just the right stress, while the bodies of the monks sway gently to the rhythm of the music. Orchestral performances vary greatly both as regards ensemble and intonation. In communities which are conspicuous for zeal, the orchestral tone is pure and balanced and well in tune, while in monasteries which are drifting into slack ways, the effects usual to under-rehearsal and inattention make themselves immediately discernible in performance, exactly as in other parts of the world. In these degenerate houses, the chanting also tends to become a gabble.

Outside the temples, music seems to be of the "folk-tune" order. Simple songs, often on some humorous theme, lively and tuneful, but of no great depth, either sung solo, or in chorus as an accompaniment to peasant dances, are heard everywhere. Tunes are also played on the flute, from sheer gaiety of spirit, while people are walking along or tending their flocks. In Ladak, and perhaps throughout Tibet, one hears the shanties which workers use to mark the rhythm of their labours, while threshing or while carrying wood. One or two of these shanties are quite beautiful. In Ladak we also came across pairs of musicians called *mon*, one playing on a double-reed instrument like a musette, his companion on a drum. They seemed to be itinerant professionals who earned a few coppers playing at fairs and weddings, and accompanying work done out of doors, such as the digging of the new reservoir at Leh. Another instrument that we came across was the *damyen* or fiddle, used by

dancers, played with a bow and yielding a thin, reedy tone. Once, at Chitkul on the Baspa, we heard a man softly plucking a lute-like instrument; the piece he was playing was a sort of fantasia, of more complicated character than the usual folk music; it is the nearest thing to an abstract composition which we came across and then only the once.

Though I have inquired in many quarters, I have never succeeded in finding a satisfactory word to express "Music" in Tibetan. The common word is *rolmo* which means cymbals, though its first meaning may be derived from the word "to divert oneself" (*rolwa*). In any case, when employed as a general term, it could only apply to secular music; no one would dream of including sacred music in the same generic term. Similarly, the usual word for "song" cannot be applied to sacred singing; if a foreigner made the mistake of using the wrong word, people would hardly guess at his meaning, so far-fetched would the idea seem to the Tibetan mind of grouping under one heading, sacred music offered to the Buddha and profane music rendered for personal delectation. The much-travelled and learned Mongol Doctor of Divinity, Wangyal, who recently paid me a visit in England and attended the concerts of the Haslemere Festival of Chamber Music, was at a loss to understand how we could confuse two dissociate things, regarding them as one single Music![1]

As in Music, so in the sister art of the Dance, there is found an absolute division between profane and sacred. The former comprises all rustic styles, both the elementary ring dances in the village square and the far more complex and subtle figures of the troupes of professional dancers, like the beautiful Khambas whose photographs face page 364. Their performances are of an exceedingly high order. I do not know whether there exists any refined dancing among people of high society corresponding to the court dancing which was cultivated with such artistry in Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth

[1] Other things in England seemed strange to the lama Wangyal; for instance, I remember an occasion when I took him by car from Haslemere to Winchester to see the cathedral. Not far from the city we passed a party of hikers, with rucksacks and walking-sticks; catching sight of them Wangyal exclaimed excitedly, "At last I have seen some English pilgrims! Are they going to worship at the shrine of Winchester?" I must confess I was greatly tempted not to disillusion him! But when we reached the cathedral itself, he was completely in his element. I was astonished at his intelligent understanding of everything he saw, and at his searching questions as to the exact meaning and the particular use of every object.

centuries. That remains a point for future investigation—I have, however, heard no allusion to it, and I rather suspect that the aristocracy enjoy watching dances, but do not dance themselves. Some remarks in a book by Professor Bacot rather confirm this view.

It is in the sacred mystery plays, mis-called " devil-dances," that this art reaches heights almost undreamed of. It is part of the regular ceremonial of the Church, given at certain stated seasons of the year, mostly in the winter, which is perhaps as well, for the movements, lasting as they do for hours and even days, are extremely heating and if indulged in under the blaze of the midsummer sun would be too exhausting for the performers. Every monastery has its dancing monks and costumes for these mysteries. In the larger convents, hundreds participate, and the costumes are magnificent beyond words; the dresses are usually of ancient Chinese silk brocade and embroidery, with an underskirt banded in red and yellow, the two sacred colours. In addition, there are men dressed as skeletons and demons, and effigies which are torn to pieces when the forces of evil are finally overthrown by the heavenly hosts. Splendid ancient weapons, ornaments of interlaced chain-work made of human bone, heads and grotesque masks adorned with antlers or yaks' horns complete the costumes. To an extraordinary agility are added the qualities of a natural dramatic sense and an instinct for effective spontaneous grouping, even in the case of large crowds in violent action. One wonders whether the Russians, who also excel in these things, owe it to their traces of Tartar blood.

It must, however, be borne in mind that the Tibetan sacred ballet is primarily meant to tell a story. It is a church service, in the fullest sense of the word, and not half-way to an entertainment. For us, who have singled the dance out of the whole family of the arts for banishment from the service of religion, except in Seville cathedral, where alone it survives, it is difficult to imagine that dignity and reverence can go hand-in-hand with so exciting a performance. P'hiyang, where our friend the painter-monk acted as ballet-master, is annually the scene of a two-days' mystery depicting the symbolical history of the Kargyudpa Order; the ceremony draws a crowd from every part of Ladak. A colonnaded theatre, with a high seat for the abbot, galleries for distinguished spectators, and a covered plat-





Photos: Pamela Preston



BHUTANESE MUSICIAN



Photos: Major C. J. Morris

DANCER IN A MYSTERY PLAY

form for the orchestra, has been built on the side of the hill below the monastery. The people watch from above, looking over the sides as into a well. But the P'hiyang play must pale before the huge scale performances, involving thousands of dancers, and costumes of fabulous splendour, that take place at Lhasa and in Bhutan. Photographs shown to us by one of the very few foreigners—and long may their number remain thus restricted—who have had the privilege of entering Bhutan, give the impression of a performance which touches the heights, presented in a natural setting worthy of its perfections. One sees a great courtyard, either of a monastery or of one of the grand seigniorial castles, round which a crowd of men and women of one of the handsomest of races are watching, standing or seated on the ground, while the centre of the scene is filled by the lamas, arrayed in robes, the least of which surpasses in artistic value the coronation dress of many a European Prince. By kind permission of my friend John Morris, who was fortunate enough to have the chance of taking photographs of this sacred dance, I have been allowed to reproduce one of them.

And now having passed through the whole gamut of the other arts, I must say a word or two about literature; but it can only be the briefest reference, for I have not read enough of the classical books to permit myself to offer criticisms. Judged quantitatively, Tibetan literature is staggering; but concerning the proportion that can lay claim to the title of literature in the accepted sense, as distinct from scientific writing or mere chronicles, I am not in a position to hazard a judgment. A large part of it consists of metaphysical treatises, some of which are actually in verse. There are books too on logic and medicine, and histories in which the tale of secular events is rapidly slurred over in order to enlarge on the far more important doings of Saints and Lamas. To these must be added innumerable liturgical works, spiritual poems, an epic, and also a certain quantity of lyrical poetry, including the much admired love lyrics composed by the sixth Dalai Lama, who was somewhat of a rake and came to a bad end.

There is one book, however, to which I have already made repeated allusions, and which is accessible to European readers in translation, namely the autobiography of the ascetic-poet Mila Repa, dictated to his pupil Rechhung. The story is most vividly told, with much human pathos, the dialogue is of the

liveliest, as are the descriptions of the country and its habits. In fact it still remains the best picture of Tibetan life that I know of, and applies quite well to conditions to-day; for things have changed remarkably little, especially as regards the way in which people think and talk. It is a book which can certainly claim to be included among the masterpieces.

Two translations are to be had, one into English by the late Kazi Dawa Samdub of Sikkim and annotated by an American scholar, Mr. Evans Wentz, and the other into French by Professor Jacques Bacot of Paris. The former edition is copiously annotated with footnotes, which makes it rather heavy reading, especially as many unfamiliar Sanskrit words appear in it. The French translation is of a different quality; less attempt has been made to instruct, and the even flow of the narrative can be followed more easily. The text, which is introduced by an admirable short essay which helps to bring out salient points in the Tibetan metaphysic, has been turned into most beautiful French, yet keeps almost all the qualities of the original. I say " almost " not in order to reserve my praise, but only because there is one quality, inherent in the Tibetan language, which must needs be shed in translation, namely that of an extreme, well-nigh laconic, terseness. The power of stringing monosyllables together and the absence of true inflections, causes one line of Tibetan to require two of any European language in translation. May I urge anyone really interested in Tibet to read Mila Repa's book, if he has not done so already? If he will do this and also look at paintings in the museum, he will have made contact with Tibet and its culture far better than through any words of mine, though this book may also have served its purpose by way of introduction.

CHAPTER XXIII

Tibetan Art (*continued*)—Its Connexions with the Doctrine

BEFORE embarking on speculations concerning the metaphysical basis of Tibetan art, a few words must be said about the care of works of art in Tibetan lands. Both monasteries and private owners vary greatly in their treatment of the treasures committed to their stewardship; a well-ordered, zealous community tends to keep its buildings and their contents in a fair state of repair, while a slack one, like Himi, suffers everything to go to rack and ruin. Nevertheless, compared with our own practice, works of art in Tibet are, on an average, treated with less meticulous care, save perhaps in a few aristocratic houses. At first sight this may strike one as strange on the part of people who have shown so much taste, and who delight in all that is beautiful. Several reasons can be given to explain the paradox.

First there is the climate, which because of its dryness and the absence of insects, is exceptionally favourable to the preservation of pictures, woodwork and books. The ravages of time make their mark but slowly, so that the minds of the people are not trained to be particularly watchful.

Secondly, it has been noticed more than once in the course of history, that the greatest solicitude in guarding antiques has been shown at those periods when art had sunk to a low ebb, and when consequently there was little hope of making losses good. The great days of collecting and safeguarding have been in Roman times and in the last two centuries in Europe: in the Orient, as the arts become extinct under the influence of the West, so will the examples that survive from the past, even mediocre ones, tend to find their way into glass cases and their names on to insurance policies. Among the artistic nations of olden times one exception must be noted; in China and Japan, even in their most productive periods, people appear to have

been conscious of the permanent value of masterpieces and to have treated them more tenderly than has usually been the case elsewhere. The normal attitude in any period when an uninterrupted supply of works of art can be taken for granted, is to be somewhat reckless, even with objects that are sincerely valued and admired. One has only to think of England in the centuries when she was the acknowledged leader of Europe in Chamber Music. The great composers of the time earned instant appreciation and their works were played by every amateur from the King downwards; but the turf had hardly grown over their graves, before their music was discarded in favour of the compositions of their successors, the young men of the new generation. This process went on in truly wasteful fashion: I do not give the example as one to be followed, but as an illustration of a phenomenon which is often one of the accompaniments of artistic health. In Tibet the deep-rooted reverence for the sages of old and the repositories of their wisdom, counteracts to a considerable extent the native carelessness over objects regarded as works of art. By carelessness is meant an absence of anxiety over their preservation, not carelessness in handling while they are still in use. In this respect even rough people, such as our coolies in the mountains, are exemplary, and the breakages which ravage fragile possessions in an English home are unknown even in camp.

Two opposing ideas war against one another in the Tibetan philosophy, one of which tends somewhat to encourage neglect, while the other acts as a corrective in favour of due care. The doctrine of the impermanence of things is so fundamental, and so deeply ingrained in the people's consciousness, that whenever a crack appears in a wall or a bit of plaster flakes off, carrying with it the superimposed paintings, it is apt to be accepted as one more pattern of the dissolution that awaits everything old or new, high or low, mountain or grain of dust. Mila Repa says: "All worldly pursuits end in dispersion; buildings in destruction; meetings in separation; births in death." A hankering after individual survival, even in the next world, is reckoned the worst of illusions, so why go to any great trouble to mend this or to underpin that? Rather let it crash, as a lesson and a warning to all men, and let something fresh be put up in its place, to meet a like fate when its hour shall strike! In India the same tendency has been apparent—to rebuild

rather than to repair; it is in the West that people attach particular importance to the idea of survival in a purely individual sense, and by an extension of the habit of mind so induced, treat things as if they also could be made almost immortal. The virtue of this idea is that things are made to render service till the last possible moment; its vice is revealed in an excessive attachment to possessions, including life itself. On the other hand the Tibetan's attitude, when carried to extremes, tends to obliterate treasures of art that could still be preserved for posterity; but it is perhaps the more realistic of the two views. In practice a middle path is preferable.

The compensating influence is the universally acknowledged duty of treating sacred objects with the utmost regard. The reader will recall the commentary on the Three Refuges and the injunction that if anyone should find the minutest fragment of a picture or book lying about, he must pick it up reverently and lay it on the altar. Not to do so is a great sin. From this, it is but a step to argue that failure to set right reparable damage, omission to bestow ordinary care, or inaction calculated to bring about the dissolution of sacred objects into those very fragments that one is commanded to cherish, a day earlier than is necessary, is also a sin. Dissolution must come in the end, but the crack in the plaster may meanwhile be filled in, just as the sick man may be cured by medicine, because his hour is not yet come. In addition, the ancient teachers say that worship should be carried out in clean and orderly surroundings, and that implies some degree of upkeep. Once or twice, I have myself been instrumental in defending beautiful things from being thoughtlessly abandoned to their fate by quoting the above maxims, notably in an old temple at P'hiyang. I recommend this line of argument to other travellers similarly placed; and if they can lend a hand themselves with the work, so as to help the local people to overcome the inertia which sometimes holds them back from making a start on their task, they will earn much merit. Sins of omission always weigh less heavily on simple minds than those of commission; but there is a fair chance that good counsel, offered in the manner suggested, will not fall on deaf ears, except in cases where corruption and apathy have brought things to a hopeless pass.

In the preceding chapter an attempt was made to sketch the whole field covered by Tibetan art and to sort out the material

on which generalizations might be based. Now is the moment to enter upon this more difficult stage in our inquiry and to try to deduce some of the principles which guide the Tibetan artist. What is the aim that inspires him? One can dismiss the obvious decorative purpose, which appeals to the sentiments of a people naturally fond of colour and ornament. This purpose will tend to be preponderant in those crafts that are chiefly bound up with domestic uses, though even here, many ordinary emblems express some sacred symbolism. There is no phase of Tibetan life which is exempt from the all-leavening doctrinal influence, nor is it easy to pick out an object of which it could be said that its inspiration is purely secular.

In talking with artists or about them, the language currently used has a curiously utilitarian ring, that gives no inkling of the existence of any theory of aesthetics; it is doubtful whether such does indeed exist consciously, even in the background, so that the translation of many of those terms which are the stock-in-trade of criticism among us, is no light task. For instance, " Art " itself has no equivalent term. They do not group all the arts under one head as we do. The nearest word that I can find is " Science of Construction," which can be made to cover all the applied arts, including architecture, but hardly takes in painting. Genius, originality, inventive power—though we know the Tibetans to possess all these unconsciously—are words foreign to them. They will speak of a beautiful woman or a fine horse, but will rarely apply these adjectives to inanimate objects. For a genius, one can only say " an exceedingly capable man," underlining the technical side of his skill, rather than his gift of design. His work is either " well done " or " not well done "—again no mention is made of design, which is taken for granted. Where we tend to stress the individuality of the artist, owing to the fact that such people are now rare, and are inclined to think first of all of design as the expression of individual genius, the Tibetan relies on finding a constant supply of artists who, when they do not feel capable of aspiring to great heights in their compositions, can always play for safety by falling back on adequate, time-honoured models, to be varied according to taste. Genius, even when it is acclaimed, does not stand out in popular estimation like a mountain rising sheer out of a plain: rather is it comparable to a hill that chances to overtop neighbouring heights. According to the class of work

that a person intends to carry out, so will he lavish or spare effort on the design. Their point of view, therefore, is seen to be the exact reverse of that current among us in modern times. We often noticed in our travels that when anybody gave an order for cheap work, comparatively little trouble was taken over the fine adjustments of design, and a decent and serviceable traditional model was followed, a safeguard against any great disaster; whereas when good work was demanded, the artists took no end of trouble over fine points of proportion, accuracy of detail and quality of material. In Tibetan, when one wishes to make a specific reference to design, apart from execution, one can hardly avoid using a circumlocution such as "the shape is good and the pattern is well drawn."

The metaphor of "Creation" is one which they do not use, not even in respect of the world itself: applied on the cosmic scale, they think of it as "manifestation in form," never in the sense of making something out of nothing. As to originality and invention, most artists, but especially painters and sculptors, might even feel rather hurt at being suspected, as they would think, of irreverent self-assertion. They always conceive of everything that they value, including ethics and art, under the guise of knowledge which is susceptible of being communicated through a chain of teachers and pupils. What the latter learn they adapt capably or incapably, that is all. The former are often the ones to whom we, viewing only the results, apply the term "original"; but, whether they really deserve it or not—many certainly do, though they do not know it—they one and all maintain that they are simply carrying out, not inventing, designs prescribed by the tradition handed down to them. Readers will recollect, in the chapter about the drawing-lessons at P'hiyang *Gompa*, how Gyaltsan showed us the proportions of the Buddha's figure, which defied all attempts to measure them, till, in answer to prayer, they were vouchsafed for the good of creatures to a saint by divine revelation: to presume to alter them would be nothing short of sinful. And if the painter were to find himself suddenly face to face with one of the Buddhas, or with Chenrezig, whose "portraits"—I nearly said "whose photographs"—he had been wont to delineate, he would feel awed, but hardly surprised.

How then could one try to convey to a Tibetan the meaning

of our phrase "a work of genius," an apparently spontaneous creation by an artist, fit to become in its turn the starting-point of a new traditional chain of variations on the same theme? To try to translate the idea by bringing in the hated epithet "new" could only arouse prejudice and defeat our purpose. The sentence that would best help to convey this idea, and would therefore be the most truthful, might run something like this:—"That artist received the instructions for his picture directly from his Lama in Heaven!"

When we were visiting Likhir for the second time, tea was served in the room of a monk who happened to be away; in it was hanging a particularly fine *t'hanka*, recently made at Lhasa, showing Gautama Buddha seated in the centre, with other Buddhas, Bodhisats and awful Tutelaries of the Yellow Order with innumerable faces and weapon-wielding arms, disciples, female angels and defenders of the faith all disposed in tiers beneath Him, and a throng of Indian and Tibetan saints on either hand. The composition might well have been a "Last Judgment" of Fra Angelico, sparkling with burnished gold and azure. The subject is a classical one, found in all Gelugpa monasteries, and is named *Lamrim* or "Grades in the Way." We were told that the picture was private property, not owned by the monastery, and might be for sale; but as the owner was away for a few days there was no chance to approach him. When we expressed disappointment at this, another monk came along with a book in his hand and said: "Here is another *Lamrim*, just the same as the picture; you can buy this if you like, instead." He spoke as if it were quite a matter of indifference whether one acquired a picture or a book, so long as the doctrine set forth were the same.

This little episode illustrates a point which has been mentioned before, but cannot be made too often; painting is looked on as equivalent to a language, which can be read in the same way as the written word, by those who possess its key. The very term for painter, in Tibetan, bears this out: literally rendered it is "Writer of Gods." The colours, postures and gestures laid down for the figures, all express something perfectly definite; mercy, chastity, severity or the sundering of Ignorance. Each detail is related to the special character which is considered to be embodied in each Divinity. Similar gestures are also to be seen in real life, performed by living lamas during

temple services, while the dancers in the mystery plays will reproduce the "fierce" deities on the temple wall. All the arts are in some measure interchangeable as aids to memory or supports of the same doctrine: they all are called upon to play their parts, like actors in a drama. That is why, though purely decorative features may be varied to taste, the ritual elements are never altered. To change the emblematic colour would seem queer and eccentric; an error of taste like choosing a black bridal gown or wearing a blue rose on Alexandra day.

But we have yet to come to grips with our original question; what does the Tibetan painter or sculptor believe to be the major end in view while exercising his profession? What, in his eyes, will be the test of success or failure, the criterion of good or bad art? The answer, in the absence of any authoritative pronouncement by a qualified person, must remain a matter of inference, an opinion pieced together out of chance comments gathered in the course of conversations with Tibetans, especially with the painter Gyaltsan. I believe that my opinion is similar to the answer which might be given by any lama-painter; but if I have erred in forming it, I must take the responsibility.

The aim of ritual—and ritual must be regarded as a synthesis of all the arts, acting as the handmaids of Doctrine and collaborating towards one end—is to prepare the mind for metaphysical realization, to spur it on to pierce the veil of the finite and to seek Deliverance in Knowledge, that is, in identification with the Supreme and Infinite Reality. The latter is devoid of every determination whatsoever, even unity or goodness; that is why the least misleading title that the human mind is capable of inventing for It, is the Void Itself. No symbol can stand for It save only vacuity. The Jewish Holy of Holies, enclosing nothing except an empty space, must be saluted as a triumph of art. Apart from this special instance, all art must concern itself with forms; it is there where its sphere lies. Once it has helped to pilot the mind up to the frontier between Form and the next stage, the world of Non-form, its task is over—he who penetrates to the beyond has no more use for art.

But within the formal Universe its value is enormous; indeed it can be called indispensable, as being one of the most potent and flexible means for expressing metaphysical truth in terms that are readily intelligible to the human mind. To attain to Knowledge, wish alone is not sufficient, there must also be

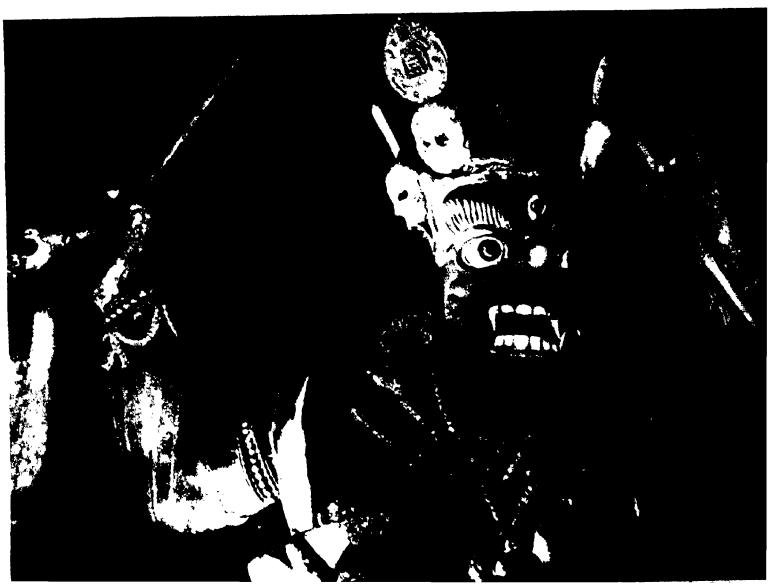
Method: that is why, under the emblems of the bell and the *Dorjé* or sacred sceptre, which every lama wields, these two, Method and Wisdom, are represented as an eternally inseparable pair, and are said to be "married." So we, dwellers under the veil of Form, make use of ritual or art, a part of Method: it is a most useful instrument for Form to use, in the attempt to pierce a loophole and look out towards Non-form, the next veil curtaining us off from the Supreme Reality. This veil too must be penetrated in its turn; but that demands the use of quite other means.

Such is the theory, underlying the sacred art of all oriental Traditions, intellectual rather than aesthetic. Ritual, contrary to the assertions of some Western writers, is not thought to be efficacious in its own power—such a notion is included in the catalogue of obstacles to Enlightenment by the Buddha—but it remains strictly a means of exercising the mind and sharpening the perceptions, of providing for each of the senses its appropriate "supports," and as a help to canalizing thought towards the point desired. In short, every possible artifice should be called into play in order to facilitate and nourish the acquisition of the one essential faculty of direct, undistracted intellectual intuition of Truth, to which alone properly belongs the name of Knowledge—with which discursive or rational knowledge must not be confounded, for that is merely one of several earlier processes for clearing the ground in preparation for Knowledge.

Whether painting is chosen, or the casting of images, or the written word, or gesture, or the science of sound—called by the Indians *Mantra*—or the public mystery plays, or the even more extraordinary dramas performed by initiates into the *Tantra* on the stage of their own minds for themselves as audiences, when actors and actresses, who are identical with the divinities murally portrayed in the temple, are evoked, amid scenic effects as unlimited as the power of imagination—whether any of these methods be preferred separately or the whole gamut of the arts be called into play at once, the end is the same, namely the attainment of metaphysical Knowledge. To one man one method is profitable, to his neighbour a second, according to their several mentalities. That which harmonizes with metaphysical truth and leads naturally towards it, is good art, that which is rightly called inartistic betrays itself by its lack of



BELL AND DORJÉ
Emblems of Wisdom and Method





TEAPOT
Worked in 1937 by the Chhiling silversmith

meaning and therefore by its defectiveness as a means; it contains contradictory implications which, if followed out step by step, would logically lead to chaos. Whether our conceptions of beauty or ugliness lend themselves to a similar interpretation is not quite certain. In principle they probably do; but the Tibetan artist expresses these things differently.

The artist may therefore regard himself as an inventor of glosses upon the Doctrine, a mediator between its pure thought and the intelligence of dwellers within the world of sense. He is an alchemist who, having been vouchsafed a vision of the truth through direct intuition, transmutes it, insulating it in a symbolical envelope, so that eyes, which cannot look upon its naked intensity, may gradually become fortified through constant contemplation of the symbol, even to bearing the sight of the thing symbolized.

Because I have gone into the doctrinal connexions of the arts in such detail, it must not be imagined that beauty is not a major concern of the Tibetan artist, as with us; but he does not conceive it independently nor regard it as providing a self-sufficient motive for his work, whereas the moderns have tended to separate beauty from meaning and purpose, forgetting that *ars sine scientia nihil*. The idea that I am trying to bring out, is the conscious attitude of the traditional artist to his own calling. Out of the various elements that go to make up a work of art, those which we usually choose to emphasize are just the ones that the Tibetans hardly think about; while we, on our side, are equally unconscious of those metaphysical implications which they delight in stressing. In the Middle Ages it would have been different, and the two points of view would have approached one another; but since the fifteenth century, the Hellenic influence upon our thought has asserted itself in the conscious emphasis laid on the pursuit of the beautiful. For us this has come to constitute an end in itself, an abstraction; the Tibetan still thinks of his art as one of several servants of Knowledge.

The iconoclast and the Puritan, who question the need for ritual and scoff at art, display a singular inconsistency in the ways in which they give effect to their abhorrence. While they are inveighing against the "mummery," "idolatry" or "luxury" of this or that rite, they nearly always continue to tolerate practices which do not differ in principle from those

which they have seen fit to condemn. A preacher denouncing the use of paintings or statues, will admit anything that is presented through the channel of literature. In the Bible or in his own oratory, he will load God and the saints with epithets, including those very attributes which move him to indignation when they appear in pictures or images. The throne of God, the angels' wings, or the golden harps of the Blessed Souls, are heathenish, so it seems, when looked upon with the physical eye; but if received through the ear and only viewed through the imagination's eye, they are edifying! The strict Mussulman who thrills us by the sheer beauty of his elocution when reciting the hundred names of Allah, is apt to forget that each one of them is a determination, and might become an idol, as easily as anything which can be expressed pictorially. The fury of the adversary rages most hotly against the eye; many condemn visual supports, while accepting music and words without a qualm. Others denounce music, but allow themselves full licence to introduce the most anthropomorphic terms into their ranting oratory. Or they contrive strange compromises, like a revivalist whom I once met, who enjoyed harmony in hymns when the parts moved note for note together, but disapproved of any attempt at movement in counterpoint!

Wherever the line is drawn, it is arbitrary, governed simply by the personal habits or preferences of the censor, who takes it upon himself to deprive his neighbours of helpful rites and symbols which he has not troubled to understand himself, or which call upon senses in which he is himself deficient; yet he tolerates the use of those aids which are his own personal favourites, as when Luther, who happened to be fond of music, overruled the objections of the more dour of the Protestant Reformers, saying that he could not see why the Devil should be allowed to keep all the good tunes. It is for this arbitrariness that Puritanism, which has afflicted most religious movements to some extent, to the detriment of a full deploying of their intellectual and artistic resources, merits the name of heresy in its etymological meaning of "choice," that is of capricious choice that will not conform to any general principle.

To the claim "*I* do not need eye or ear to help me in approaching the throne of God. What is the good of all this ritual and art? Worship may not be, save in spirit and in truth," the lama might make some such rejoinder:—"Ritual is not an

end in itself, nor efficacious in its own power; but it is a means adapted to the condition of men's minds: its diversity corresponds to their diversity. Anything can become a symbol of your high aim: things seen or heard or read or touched, your very breath. We would enlist every cosmic activity into our service, turning everything into a mirror of the divine purpose, one huge all-embracing Bible in which everyday actions, no less than Art, have their part. In the practice of this doctrine you will come to perceive the great liberating truth that distinctions are only an illusion, that there is neither This nor That, neither I nor It, neither Mine nor His. You will dispense with ritual aids on the day when you have achieved that which is the end of all ritual. He who has reaped the harvest need no longer water the field. He who enjoys the Beatific Vision needs no longer to view the Godhead through the transforming symbols of Art, nor is eloquence required for Its praise. But to argue now as if you were in Heaven already, and freed from Form, is mere conceit. To advise others so to regard themselves is utter presumption. As to the idolatry of which you are so afraid, first let us clear our minds upon what constitutes its essential defect." The lama pauses and looks up. "Surely it is rendering divine honours to a creature?" replies his friend. "You have spoken well," answers the lama, "that is the test. No symbol, so long as it is recognized to be but a symbol, can ever offend. That is how all images, and even the divinities whom they represent, are meant to be understood among us, as well as among the Hindus. Even the Buddhas of the five directions, are manifestations in Form of the five sorts of Wisdom; but they themselves are phantoms from the viewpoint of that which lies beyond Form. The mass of men sees the symbol and perhaps looks a little further; the spiritually more adventurous follow out these forms till they begin to merge into one another. Liberation is to pass the frontier of all distinctions, even those of unity and multiplicity. That, I repeat, is the end of ritual. You would, I am sure, be surprised to hear that we do not admit actual idolatry to be common in India and Tibet. Those who declare most of our rituals to be meaningless, and our art to be merely picturesque, do so only because they have not discovered the meaning—usually because they have not looked for one, having prejudged the case. Your people are ever prone to pay most attention to external appearances: one of your most

quoted Orientalists has spent years of his life in cataloguing the details of ceremonies and deities and objects used for various cults, yet, when it comes to main principles, he is wildly libellous. One wonders why, if a thing be meaningless, it is worth devoting years and years to its study. Have you nothing better than research into human folly with which to occupy your leisure? It is also surely no compliment to the rest of human intelligence for a man to be so prone to assume that those things which have no meaning for himself, are necessarily devoid of meaning for everyone else?

"To our way of thinking you should search for traces of idolatry nearer home," continues the lama, "for you sail perilously close to the wind in the language which you employ about the Infinite Principle of All, ascribing to It feelings and sympathies, even displeasure. Such attributes seem to belittle It; we, for our part, dare use no single adjective save 'Void' only. For every determination, even Unity or Goodness, is equivalent to a negation of Its Infinite character; therefore, Void of every determination, being the denial of a Negative, makes a Positive and is the most apt phrase—I ought to have said the least inept—that we can invent for referring to Its Uniqueness. It is our turn to question your wisdom in the employment of symbolism based on human attributes; but we will not do so, for we recognize that, like our own symbols, they too are intended to be used only as supports. Your greatest thinkers have tended to take a very similar view to our own. I need only remind you of a quotation from one of your Christian Fathers, St. John of Damascus:—'It is impossible to say what God is in Himself, and it is more exact to speak of Him by excluding everything. Indeed He is nothing of that which is . . . above Being itself.' Any lama would find himself on common ground with the author of such a phrase.

"The prejudice in favour of 'equality,' which has become your fetish in social matters and which you allow to invade other spheres, makes you act as if you thought that all men are equally able to grasp the essentials of the Doctrine; but this seems to us to rest neither on observed fact nor on probability. With us, it is recognized that the power of realizing a doctrine is proportional to each being's stage of development; that which is truth for one, is far behind the truth for another, just as all truth contained in this Universe is precisely nothing from the

viewpoint of Enlightenment. The truth must be given to each man as he can bear it, to some in symbols and parables, to a few, less indirectly. We do of course admit equality of opportunity, in as much as all men, nay the lowliest beast, even the very mountains, as a Japanese has said, are potentially Buddha." (How joyous a thought that we can claim some true companionship not only with birds and trees, but even with Scafell and the Matterhorn and cloud-piercing Everest!)

Then the lama adds his concluding remarks: "We are quite ready to admit that superstition—again I use it in its precise sense of something left over, a symbol which has continued in use after its original meaning has been forgotten—is to be found among us. The best cure for that, is not misapplied invective against idolatry, but an exposition of the meaning of the symbol, so that men may again use it intelligently. When that meaning cannot be recovered, certainly let the outworn practice be discontinued. But may I also suggest that deification of race, or the nation, now so prevalent in many Western countries, is a serious and destructive form of idolatry? To read eternal qualities into things so utterly temporal is a symptom of low intellectuality. Idols can be made of Work and Service too, when they are taken out of their place in the hierarchy and given precedence over ideas. This results in a restless and ultimately self-destroying world—cold comfort for humanity. I can improve on your original test of idolatry: I would define it as an upsetting of the natural hierarchy, to the over-valuing of what is lower and the underrating of what is higher. Whoever holds to this principle, is in no danger of misusing symbols, or of sacrificing to false gods, from the State or his own Ego, downwards."

Whatever part puritanical tendencies may have played in certain phases of Buddhist history, they had been eliminated by the time the Tradition began to permeate Tibet, so that the unfolding of symbolical art in that country was unfettered even by the smallest of reservations. The ideal of the lama's life, at its most austere, excludes self-laceration not only on the physical but also on the moral plane. The passion for knowledge, the thirst for direct experience of the truth, produces a certain adventurousness, free from the timidity of soul brought about by overstressing the dangers of falling into sin. This is perhaps the most striking trait that characterizes the best lamas. They

hesitate to prohibit any practice that might conceivably prove helpful to seekers after Truth. They are more concerned with the potentialities of usefulness contained in such a practice, than with the possibilities of its misuse. This boldness of outlook is a quality specially favourable to artistic achievement, because the artist is not hampered by restrictions invented by prudish and timid minds.

If in the course of the preceding pages, I have seemed to stray far afield at times, it has not been without a purpose. I have tried to demonstrate the close interdependence of every part of a normal Tradition, so that whatever starting-point may have been selected, the line of argument always leads back to the same Doctrine which gives coherence to the whole civilization, running through everything like nerve-filaments taking their origin from a central ganglion. So long as the hierarchy of values be not overturned, and intellectuality remains enthroned in the place of highest honour, both theoretically and as applied in the organization of society, health is maintained. The Tradition bears full fruit and has even the strength to assimilate to its own use elements from outside, belonging to other Traditions, if that should prove convenient, without any risk of endangering its own stability; it has also power to shed all that is found to be inconsistent with its principles. Metaphysics, ritual, law, government, art, social relations, even dress and the conventions of politeness, fit together like a jigsaw. We have been speaking primarily on the subject of Art, but any other aspect of the Tradition would have served the purpose equally well and would have led us back to Doctrine just as surely. It is impossible to disentangle or pigeon-hole the components of a traditional civilization; a dualistic ruling of sharp boundaries between body and mind, material and spiritual, profane and sacred, is the first sign that the fabric is beginning to wear thin. Out of distinctions strife is born, even to the eventual rending of the seamless garment of Doctrine itself.

Once one begins tampering thoughtlessly with a corner of the fabric one is soon committed to a policy tending towards total disintegration. The very niceness of balance between the various constituents in the Tradition, which makes its strength while it yet remains harmonious, also makes it more vulnerable when a discordant element has crept in. Let a traditional society, from inexperience, be led into accepting some anti-

traditional elements from outside—a danger non-existent when the whole world was parcelled out among different Traditions and when the anti-traditional spirit, if it ever arose, was feeble, but very critical of recent years, because of the temporary success of the modern anti-traditional movements—then it must reassert itself or go under. Herein lies the danger to Tibetan culture at the present moment, made more acute because there has been, as several lamas have testified, a certain drop in the intellectual level. Tibet is the last stronghold where Tradition rules intact, one might almost say the last authentic civilization governed by some sort of principle resulting in the observance of due precedence in the hierarchy of all its parts. Sheltered behind the rampart of the Himalaya, Tibet has looked on, almost unscathed, while some of the greatest Traditions of the world have reeled under the attacks of the all-devouring monster of modernism. It is to its credit, too, that resistance has been, in part at least, conscious and intelligent; but the partial defection of China from the traditional camp has exposed a flank, while at the same time the full force of world pressure has reached its maximum on all sides. Tibet and Bhutan are in the position of a healthy person who meets sudden and unaccustomed infection; he may succumb, when the rake and the weakling will survive. The only possible way to purchase immunity is by knowledge, and by looking at things as they are, and not through rose-tinted spectacles—a habit which, of all forms of Ignorance, generates the deadliest poisons. It is with this disease, and the beginnings of its ravages, that my next chapter is concerned.

CHAPTER XXIV

Tibetan Art—Dangers Ahead

IN the preceding two chapters I have dealt with the present state of art in Tibet under various aspects. We have seen what an important part it plays in the life of the country and how it is the expression of ideas which run through the whole social structure, binding it together and relating it to the universal values. Were I to end my survey at this point, I might seem to have given a rather idyllic picture. But such, alas, is not the case; for though Tibetan civilization is vigorous, balanced and intellectually well anchored, it is being subjected to adverse influences which it will have a struggle to resist, even with the best will in the world. Enthusiasm must not blind us to the fact that the last few decades have been marked by an unmistakable downward trend. The position is not yet desperate, because there is a genuine attachment among the Tibetans to their Tradition and because most of them are free from that conviction of their own inferiority to the West, which has turned the so-called educated classes in most Oriental countries into their own culture's worst enemies. There seem to be a few, however, who are beginning to waver, having had their judgment upset and their cupidity aroused by the sight of our luxury, our speed and our complicated amusements.

The arts are an excellent thermometer for judging the intellectual health of a nation. We will therefore begin by discussing the dangers which threaten in that field, before we consider the future prospects of Tibetan civilization as a whole.

An impartial observer cannot but admit that the thermometer shows a steady, though still slow, dropping tendency, which appears to have set in some forty years ago at the most, hardly perceptible at first, but since then tending to increase. In painting, for instance, one notes that there is, on an average, far less expression in the faces than in older examples,

a good deal of carelessness and hurry over detail, and often ill-blended, crude colouring, from the use of cheap imported pigments. In the better-executed pictures, the deviation from the old standards is harder to define, for there is still much skill in drawing and a power of composition that call for ungrudging admiration. Yet placed side by side with the works of half a century ago, there are few modern works which really excel. The difference is subtle; but one often gains the impression that fossilization is beginning, and that a preponderant part of the merit is due to obedience to the well-tried, safety-conferring rules, and only a minor part to the devotional insight of the artists themselves. Yet there are still quite a number of excellent and conscientious men plying this calling, who keep their grip on sound principles and teach them to their pupils. My fear that symptoms of decay may herald a descent into the abyss and not into a temporary furrow, rests not so much on the artists' work as on the deterioration in the critical powers of the other partner in the artistic directorate of a people, the educated class, on whose continued patronage the livelihood of the artists depends; because it is the people of education who are the arbiters of taste, whom the lesser purchasers are sure to imitate. I have several times been shocked by the poor judgment of persons who, by their social standing, and by the artistic environment in which they have grown up, should have been able to discriminate.

The cause of this oncoming blindness is not far to seek. In most cases it can be directly connected with the importation of anti-traditional objects from abroad, glittering and vulgar products of mechanical or slave-man power, which, apart from their influence exerted directly through the eye, are calculated to affect taste even more severely through the glamour which they possess for the ignorant, because they come from the countries whose arms and commerce have subjugated the whole world.

Highly-placed Tibetans who happen to travel down on business to Darjeeling, or even as far as Calcutta, come into contact with a section of European society which, in many respects, has preserved the habits and outlook of pre-war times. A socially-privileged position, spacious living conditions necessitated by a tropical climate, and remoteness from the storm-centres of world politics, have together conspired to keep alive

among Europeans in India the old nineteenth-century confidence and sense of undisturbed continuity, as well as the social customs that reflect those sentiments—to a new-comer freshly out from England, their whole mode of life seems like a strange return to a bygone period. Tibetan visitors, having no standard of comparison, cannot help basing their ideas of Europe on this apparently secure and comfortable picture. I was assured by one lama, for instance, that the inhabitants of Britain were one and all very clever and very rich!

This danger of misinterpretation is considerable; for were any large proportion of leaders in Tibet to convince themselves that we are, in most things, fortunate people and worthy of their envy, nothing could save them from going the way of so many other Orientals. This point has not yet been reached, and many of the lay aristocracy, as well as most lamas, hold the contrary view. It is some of the younger men who are tempted, having been sent by well-meaning parents out of their country to schools run on modern lines. This problem of schooling is an acute one and on its right or wrong solution the future largely depends. I propose to devote the next chapter to this question.

Some people have put forward the criticism that if the Tibetans—or for that matter the Indians or the Chinese or others who find themselves in a similar predicament—do not appreciate the good things that they own, they deserve to lose them, for they show that they have mislaid the key to their understanding—indeed everything is virtually lost already. This accusation is a specious one or, at best, a half-truth. A man may have a genuine appreciation of his own things, and yet may not possess the knowledge which will enable him to transfer his standards of criticism to the appraisement of entire novelties. Even the most highly-trained and flexible mind has a circle within which it functions efficiently. The circle may be wide; but if its limits are overstepped, some degree of bewilderment is to be expected. Even in the Athens of the Periclean age, if suddenly one cinema, one chain-store and one radio station had been opened, I wonder whether the whole edifice of Hellenic civilization would not have come toppling about the ears of its creators, as surely as one machine-gun would have mown down the victorious hoplites of Marathon. Even a Phidias might have been momentarily taken in and a Zeuxis have exchanged his brush for a camera. One somehow suspects that Socrates would have seen

through it all and stood firm; but he could always have been given his overdose of hemlock a few years earlier.

Whatever may be the correct explanation of the readiness with which people of genuine culture allow themselves to be caught on the hook of novelty, the fact remains that this failing is far from uncommon: therein lies the most acute danger for Tibetan art to-day. Any worthless machine-made trinket from abroad is apt to attract a man's fancy, so that he will set it up in a place of honour, next to the most supreme works of genius, without noticing the least incongruity. Madame David-Neel in one of her travel books relates how the learned abbot of a huge monastery of the province of Amdo, east of the Koko Nor, showed her his splendid apartments replete with the treasures of Chinese and Tibetan art. Enamel, jade and the finest porcelain filled several cabinets; but in one of them she saw a collection of cheap European glass of the ugliest and most worthless description, displayed with a care which proved that these exhibits were no less admirable than the others in their august possessor's eyes. I myself, at Sangkar *Gompa* outside Leh, saw an empty ginger-beer bottle and a postcard of somewhere in Kent on the altar of the abbot's private chapel; in another temple in Khunu the sanctuary contained an empty tin marked "Flit." In the reception-room of the richest merchant in Ladak, a whole set of sickly pink and green crockery of the most offensive type known among us, reposed in a glass case side by side with precious examples of local craftsmanship.

A specially difficult practical problem has presented itself to the Tibetans since the Chinese republican revolution. For centuries China has been the country whence the bulk of imported art-products have been derived. Silk, porcelain and the more expensive carpets, that have always come from China, still continue to do so, though their character has altered rapidly for the worse. Of these, porcelain alone can now be called harmless; it is degenerate but still pleasing, and is made by processes which employ colours and motifs that do not make it clash with the environment into which it is brought. In the case of silk, required both for clothes and for the mounts of the painted *t'hankas*, the situation is more serious. Mechanical power has begun to be applied to its manufacture, though the better qualities of damask are still copied from good patterns. The chief harm comes from the use of inferior dyestuffs. The

materials intended for the surrounds of pictures, which have always tended to be brighter coloured than those meant for clothes, are daily changing in the direction of greater vividness and vulgarity. I have been told that the Lhasa people are not accepting this change without protest, but would give much to obtain fine silk as before.

Carpets are in the worst plight of all, for that trade has come entirely under the influence of the big importers into Europe and America, who demand of the makers both rapid delivery and frequent varying of designs, just for the sake of change. They often send out "Oriental" designs from Europe to the East, inventing glaringly conspicuous ones that will catch the eye easily. The patterns grow more sprawling every year and weird animals are preferred to plants as motifs. Vegetable dyes are abandoned for chemicals, largely because the latter will stand washing in caustic, to give a "silky sheen," that is to say a hideous celluloid-like surface. By these methods, they have succeeded in destroying the art in China, as also in Turkey and Central Asia, in a very few years. Tibet continues to buy in her old market, though a single one of these rugs is capable of upsetting the colour-scheme of any room into which it happens to be introduced.

In the modern Chinese rugs, an objectionable feature is the general use of five-clawed dragons, once the privilege of the Imperial Court. Now the four claws of the mandarin and the three claws of the common citizen are extinct, and everyone sports the imperial badge. It is much as if here in England the monarchy were to be abolished, and we all hastened to head our notepaper with the royal arms.

But the blame does not only rest with these degenerate Chinese articles. A new type of rug is creeping into the Tibetan market, probably of Indian or Japanese manufacture, which is nothing but a picture, based on a photograph, and stamped on the material. They are sold at a price within reach of the most humble purse. These textiles transcend the limits of ugliness; they deserve to be banned for moral poisons as surely as cocaine. I met a lama who possessed one of these rugs, on which was printed a group of camels, with their riders, in a neutral tint that could only be described as the colour of dirt. He was a friend of mine, who knew my views, so I offered him a little tapestry-rug dyed with vegetable dyes in exchange, saying:

"Let's set fire to the other and then all hold hands and dance round it." "Is that an English custom?" he asked gravely.

Among the imports, by far the most destructive are chemical dyestuffs, many of which are fugitive and almost all of which produce an ugly and heartlessly uniform surface. The temptation to use them comes from the fact that packets can be purchased ready made up, whereas in the olden times the dyer had to exercise a little judgment when preparing his vats of indigo, bark or lac. But then he was the master of his own colours; with the new dyes he must take what he finds. The difference in actual trouble is negligible, because weaving is a slow process, so that by comparison an extra day or two spent in dyeing hardly counts. It is curious how people who are models of patience in respect of spinning and weaving, are ready to spoil their whole work by accepting the wrong colours; but the lure of the ready-made has everywhere been hard to withstand, especially for simple minds.

Here is one instance out of many:—The Bhutanese women weave stiff polychrome draperies, silk or cotton, covered with gay bands of ornament daringly blended. Latterly they have begun to introduce a cheap magenta silk, probably ready-dyed in Japan, which clashes with the remaining colours and upsets the otherwise excellent scheme. Possibly there may always have been a magenta of sorts in these pieces, for magenta is specially the Indian colour and is most beautiful when the right shade has been obtained, as it always was before aniline dyeing was discovered. Bhutan is the most difficult country in the world for foreigners to enter; but what is the use of the prohibition if such things are permitted? Unchecked they will surely destroy the native culture.

Certain notables of Gyantse, a town on the trade route to Lhasa, have also begun to organize a local carpet industry for export to India. They use the usual Tibetan designs; but already they are beginning to corrupt them, as well as to apply inferior dyes. Each year brings some further step in the direction of crudeness and lack of artistic conscience. I do not suppose that the promoters of the scheme have given a thought to the ultimate effect of the changes in technique which they have been misled into sanctioning. I have reason to believe that they are persons who would repudiate any wish to interfere harmfully with Tradition. A similar carpet enterprise is also carried

on at Gangtok, with the same result. Such mistakes are largely avoidable: a severe ban against the new dyes and an insistence that the traditional models should be faithfully followed, would help to keep the craft in the straight path.

Chemical dyes are so harmful in the influence that they exert through the eye on the general colour sense of both artists and their clients, that they should be ruthlessly excluded, under pain of confiscation. Such a policy is not without precedent. John Claude White, the first British Resident in Sikkim, saw the danger long ago and actually caused the chemical dyes to be forbidden in the territory under his control. He showed remarkable foresight, when one remembers that he lived at a time when the evil was only just beginning, and when the world was fascinated by every new discovery of science, to which the meretricious glamour of Progress became immediately and uncritically attached. I should like to see White's policy applied uncompromisingly not only in Sikkim, where at present it seems to be a dead letter, but even more in Tibet and Bhutan. If it could be extended one day to the whole of India and to China, all the better.

To be logical one would also have to forbid the use of all cloth, silk and yarn that was not dyed with vegetable colours; but this would mean interfering with a big trade in cottons and woollens. The importing of Polish or Italian broadcloth for gowns is seriously threatening the native-dyed and incomparably superior maroon cloth, and it would seem that here also restrictions are called for. But such action would affect important commercial interests, and might be difficult to put into practice. Even if people have to be satisfied with a compromise, it is worth making a beginning, and setting an example. So long as the people themselves are prevented from having access to chemical dyes, private dyeing with the good colours is bound to continue, and this art will not disappear for lack of practice.

One would like to see a policy on these lines applied to several other sorts of imports. Much could be done if the nobles and richer merchants would show their disapproval by keeping such foreign goods out of their homes. It is their proper function to insist on the maintenance of artistic standards; where they lead, the rest of the nation will follow. If they abrogate their responsibility in this matter, the half-educated cannot be expected to show superior taste. Perhaps the simplest and most effective

measure would be to legislate that no machine-made or chemical dyed objects may be used for a ritual purpose, in temples or on altars. In a country where the prestige of sacred things stands as high as it does in Tibet, this would be a subtle way of discrediting the obnoxious articles, and it would probably react on their general use even for private purposes. The lesson would not be lost on the public mind.

The best measure that could be taken to protect and revive Tibetan art would be to start making locally all those things which up till now have had to be brought from China; porcelain excepted, for which the materials are probably unobtainable in the country. But silk for clothes and *t'hankas*, and high-class carpets, could be woven in Tibet; it would merely be a question of importing a few good teachers. Willing and patient labour is there, and a general tradition of craftsmanship which ought not to find it impossible to assimilate fresh techniques. Lhasa people have occasionally complained to me that they can no longer obtain fabrics of the old quality from China: there was also a kind of gold brocade which came from Russia in former days and which is much sought after for the little vests worn by high lamas. I was told that big prices could be demanded by anyone capable of turning out these things again. I have met at least one person who would be able to teach these crafts; and others could be trained. It is worth making the suggestion, in the hope that it may reach the proper quarter and be put into effect.

In the study of the present problem, much can be gleaned from a comparison between districts where the arts are still to be found unimpaired, and others where decadence is already at work. In our Himalayan journeyings, in every place where we had means of testing conditions, artistic excellence, both technical and in respect of design, was in strict inverse proportion to the amount of European cultural and commercial influence. Where this was great, the disaster had almost run its course, where it was small there was some measure of bewilderment and inconsistency; but in places like the Upper Satlej and parts of Ladak, where the people had been left to themselves, they seemed to find it impossible to produce anything ugly. It is true that our friend the "Yellow Man" at Leh came into contact with European manufacturers in the course of his business, but this had not impaired his judgment, because he refused to

be influenced by them. He represented the more vigorous and clear-sighted type of Tibetan, in whom should be placed the nation's hopes: his attitude towards new things was quite matter-of-fact, not passionate:—"They're shoddy and I don't like them. Anyone can see that they have not been properly made."

But we met others who were less discriminating, for whom the fact that things were from Europe, outweighed questions of suitability and quality. Some of these people may have been brought to this pass by attending European schools; but by no means all of them would have felt happy had they realized that they were undermining the outer defences of the Doctrine of Buddha itself and were yielding up their own and their children's souls to the modern materialism. One can only say to such people that they are not really facing up to the facts, but are letting themselves be seduced from their allegiance to Tradition, merely because they cannot resist the lure of a few mechanical novelties. Surely this is not the moment to plunge into rash changes, for the fate of the Occidental world is trembling in the balance and even its most fanatical admirers have been somewhat shaken in their optimism about its future. It is worth an immediate struggle, even if only to mark time; lest those who till now have managed to keep aloof, find that they have come to join the flock of sheep just in time to share with them in the butcher's knife.

It is always possible that whatever the Tibetan peoples may elect to do, the decision will be taken out of their hands. Just as Japan, forced against her will to become Westernized, learned her lesson only too well and has now caught the nationalist infection as badly as anyone and has become an aggressor in her turn: so China, driven to defend herself against invasion, may find that natural self-defence has turned her also into a militarized national State, with the mentality that belongs to that condition. In that case, Tibetan independence would be precarious; and resistance to an army equipped with modern weapons could only result in a repetition of the Abyssinian tragedy. A democratic China, intent on modernizing herself throughout, might well force the Tibetans to follow suit. But till it is clear which road China is going to tread, one worthy of her glorious and pacific past or one leading to yet another version of the modern barbarism, the issue must remain in the balance.

The tragedy of the Occidental penetration of Asia has lain in the fact that it has resulted in a breakdown of Tradition, not in a mere reorientation, such as has mitigated, even if it has not justified, many of the other conquests of history. But someone might ask why the spread of Occidental influence need necessarily undermine culture. Surely, it will be argued, history records cases, both of military conquest and of peaceful penetration, when the subjection of one civilization by another has eventually resulted in the creation of a new culture, legitimate heir to the excellences of both its parents. Unfortunately the European colonizing urge came at a time when in the West there had been a definite break with Tradition as such. By the time that the impulse to expand had passed its maximum, the conquerors had lost grip even of the last lingering vestiges of the traditional sense; reversing the relative values in the hierarchy, they had become fanatical devotees of the practical, to the disparagement of the dignity of thought. The supreme aim of metaphysical realization became the concern of the outmoded few, while art was treated as one among the many minor luxuries reserved for the wealthy. To the average man, tastelessness and vulgarity were his allotted portion, justified by the typical argument of the demagogue:—"Why shouldn't the public enjoy what it likes?" Yet there was a day in the European city of Florence when Cimabue's Madonna was borne in triumph through the streets. Now it would be the captain of a victorious football team who would receive this honour.

When appreciation of the fine things in our own inheritance is confined to an ever-shrinking class at home, it is not to be expected that much of it will be carried overseas. It is humiliating to discover the things that pass for specimens of European culture in the estimation of the average Oriental. How often have I been regaled with "English music" by the proud possessor of a wireless or a gramophone, even by persons of high station, without being asked on a single occasion to listen to anything better than the crudest examples of jazz or revue, blared out by strident brass bands or bleated by voices maudlin with *vibrato*. These people's bad taste may be blameworthy, but can one say that the models which have been set before them have been characteristic of a highly-cultured society? Are the European communities in the East conspicuous on the whole

for the intellectual character of their homes or their pastimes?

To take a single illustration from music—if the influence that brought about the decline of the native music had been a wave of contagious enthusiasm for Bach or Wagner or for playing violin quartettes, though one might regret the change on the grounds that it ought in theory to be possible to enjoy both styles, one could still sympathize a little. Such swings of the pendulum have occurred before, and later a fresh glory has arisen. As far as art is concerned, I have never come across a case in the modern Orient when one good thing had been supplanted by another good thing; victory has always gone to something worthless—which we as Westerners should be ashamed to own—as if the operative law were a curious inversion of Natural Selection.

This break-down is not to be wondered at, when one remembers that the European conquerors in the East differed in one marked feature from any of their predecessors, in that they tried to organize themselves permanently on a temporary basis. The Saracens, the Mongols, the Muslim invaders of India, felt no great sympathy for the ideas of their newly-won subjects, but as they made the conquered provinces their homes, time, familiarity and intermarriage soon did their work in bringing about a fusion of cultures. Alexander of Macedon went further still, for he deliberately set himself to hasten the fusion from the first hour of his success. Not only did he marry Roxana, the daughter of his rival Darius, but he also assumed the dress and manners of the Persian Court, as if to proclaim to his empire that he placed himself at the head of the existing Tradition, and was ready to fill the rôle allotted to the sovereign by its laws—a symbolical act that abjured any breach of continuity. It is perhaps this policy which, even more than his military exploits, has earned him his title of "the Great." He became the national hero of the countries that his armies overran; if he conquered men's bodies, he also found the way to reign in their hearts. Even now his name is one to conjure with all over the East, and many an Afghan chief or Malay princeling is proud to trace his ancestry to Iskandar, as the Orientals call the famous son of Philip.

Whether one takes the view that, in the aggregate, European conquests resulted in greater or less harm, one cannot but recognize that they did not partake of the same character as

previous invasions. Both settlers for purposes of commerce and the most devoted of officials kept their thoughts fixed on the day when they would be allowed to retire to Europe with their families, to enjoy their rest. Climatic reasons and the wish to avoid racial admixture, both conspired to prevent them from striking their roots deep. But man is not willing to exert himself in a cultural direction except near his permanent home. As a sojourner abroad, he may do his job most conscientiously, but it is only in his fixed abode that he is ready to spend the surplus energy necessary to the production or enjoyment of art. "Creation is out of the surplus," according to a Hindu saying. That is why the Europeans in the East have largely kept to practical jobs, which they have often carried out with conspicuous ability if with little sympathy; but they have shown less inclination for the things of the intellect.

But the trouble is not confined to the expatriated communities. The same coarsening process that is robbing Asia of her art has long been at work in Europe itself, and the section of the population who can appreciate art and the things that make art possible, though it still survives, is restricted to small and dwindling numbers. If all works of beauty were to be blotted out to-morrow, including the monuments of the past, some tears, to be sure, would still be shed; but in the world at large, mourning would be far less widespread than over the loss of any popular sport, say, tennis, though doubtless greater than if it were a question of the disappearance of ping-pong.

At present the Tibetans are resisting with difficulty the sinister pressure of materialism, but there is a chance that these forces may begin to lose their prestige as a result of their own self-destructive tendencies. If in the West materialistic values were to become discredited, there might be a hope of the whole world re-entering the Traditional Path. If this miracle should happen, it would be more than ever important for the few peoples who have so far kept themselves uncontaminated to be ready to lend the support of their example, whenever the day comes for building up a true Occidental Tradition again, complete in all its modes and degrees.

CHAPTER XXV

Education in the Borderlands

I must now turn to the discussion of a practical problem, that of modern education, as it affects the peoples living on the borders of Tibet. We had ample opportunities for considering this question during our stay at Kalimpong and Gangtok, for standing as they do on the frontiers of modernity and of the last traditional civilization left substantially intact in the world, they offer an ideal field for the investigator who wishes to observe the inter-reactions of these two forces. Independent Tibet is the only country where some measure of consistent and conscious opposition continues to be offered in the face of the levelling tendencies of Pan-Occidentalism. In India, where there has also been some resistance, there is so much lost ground to make good that the final outcome is as yet impossible to forecast. There was a day when Japan hoped to remain like a second Tibet; but in her case, though the will was there, the menace of the guns of the squadron under the American Commodore Perry in 1854 forcibly opened her ports. Many people now living would give much to undo that chapter of history and to see their dangerous commercial and political rivals safely back in the refined inoffensiveness of their feudal ages.

Tibet has been favoured by the remoteness of her geographical position and by the possession of a mountain barrier so impenetrable, that she has found it possible to persevere in a policy denied to her larger and more powerful neighbours. Physical obstacles alone, however, would hardly have been sufficient to protect Tibet's isolation—nowadays engineers, given money and adequate time, might even force a way to the top of Everest—but Heaven, in its mercy, was pleased to make a great part of Tibet stony, sterile and unattractive to lovers of comfort. A heart-straining altitude and the biting winds of the plateau have proved to be gifts more enviable than the fertility and kinder weather of temperate climes.

This central area of Tibet acts therefore as a preserving-ground for a society constituted on traditional lines, in the middle of a world which has thought that it could dispense with the traditional safeguards and which, when not actively hostile towards the ancient institutions, regards them with contemptuous indifference, dubbing them picturesque anachronisms. This epithet fits, if it is to be taken as merely meaning a minority carrying on in the old ways, when the majority of men, for reasons valid or unsound, have discarded them: but the word normally carries with it some additional notion of censure levelled at the discarded institutions, and an implication that those things which have been abandoned by the majority as useless, have been rightly so abandoned and that the minority, in striving to row against the tide, is simply showing a retrograde tendency.

The late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries invested the word " Progress " with sentimental attributes, picturing it as a continuous straight track along which humanity, with occasional unfortunate deviations, was fated to move steadily forward towards Utopia. The spectacular victory of the Evolutionary hypothesis invested the new theory, in the eyes of the populace, with the same categorical authority that had previously been accorded to the old beliefs which it superseded. In its later developments, especially in the theory of Natural Selection, which Darwin had presented as no more than a blind force that was helping to mould the living world, Evolution began to acquire moral, or rather moralistic, attributes. It was supposed that whatever was exterminated by something else, showed, by its very weakness, that it was inferior to its destroyer and that its disappearance was required by the service of the new Juggernaut of Progress. It might just as well have been argued, when some epidemic carried off men in their prime, including eminent doctors engaged in fighting the plague, that the bacilli must enjoy a " higher " civilization than the scientists and athletes who fell victims to their attack, and that the germs deserved their victory in a moral sense.

Lest my readers should think that this suggestion is too far-fetched I quote a writer who in the year 1935 declared that:—

" An attack by poisonous gas is another form of the effect of environment to secure the survival of the fittest and the elimina-

tion of decadent and unworthy persons and races."

It is at least comforting to be assured that the gas will know how to select its victims and will pass over the brave, the gifted and the healthy, even as the Angel of the Lord passed over the houses of the Israelites in the land of Egypt—this is Selection indeed![1]

It can readily be seen how convenient such theories must have proved, when they first came into vogue, in furnishing excuses for every brutal act of brigandage, political or commercial. They seemed to set the seal of Nature's approval on the sordid tale of grab and exploitation. The victims were beaten, therefore their defeat was a just defeat, their loss a public gain. These dogmas—for theories soon harden into convictions—form the darker side of nineteenth-century liberalism; at the time of their general acceptance, they were acclaimed as the most epoch-making discoveries, the scientific Charter, legalizing the subjection of the weak and lowly to Nature's own strong men. More tender consciences consoled themselves with the pious thought that the Almighty had given them a commission to govern all "inferior" or "native" peoples for their own good; they even went so far as to dress up this duty in the garb of self-sacrifice, as expressed in the famous phrase "The White Man's Burden," surely the most smug and hypocritical that has ever passed human lips. Humane evolutionists, such as Kropotkin, protested against this travesty of biological theories, but to small purpose: the new formula was far too convenient in providing the desired theoretical basis for the working alliance between the two dominant forces of Puritanism and predatory commercialism. The former contributed moral self-confidence and the latter boundless material ambition and drive. In the firm of Messrs. Mammon & God Unlimited, the lawless trader's vanity was flattered by the fancy that in pushing his conquests he was acting under Providence as the agent of Progress, while the self-appointed guardians of everyone else's welfare found the material rewards that accrued in the shape of social prestige and all that it brought with it very much to their taste. Cecil

[1] In fairness to the author of the above quotation it must be explained that he was not condoning the use of poison gas: his aim was to goad slack citizens into taking adequate defensive measures. My quarrel is with those who accept the popularized view of Natural Selection, and invest that hypothesis with a moral purpose.

Rhodes, whose outlook was much affected by half-baked Darwinism, put the idea very neatly when he said that a guiding principle of British imperialist policy should be "philanthropy + 5 per cent."

Brawny Gospellers and empire-building adventurers, as well as the new captains of industry, stood singularly close to one another in their outlook.

The same mixture of moralizing and cupidity enters into the actions of many comparatively respectable pioneers of the period of European expansion. In England this tendency has only begun to play itself out in our lifetime. I can remember the time when the old Jingoism was still considered a respectable creed; but since then, there have been some welcome changes in public and official opinion: Imperialism is forced to look round for disguises. But the world is by no means rid of the old arrogance yet: certain nations seem only too eager to inherit our discredited theories of racial superiority.

Nineteenth-century co-operation between religiosity of the "fundamentalist" type, always peculiarly untroubled by doubts, and the new commercial enterprise, flushed with the first-won victories of mechanization, brought about a concentration of forces acting in one direction such as had never been known in all previously recorded history. The Anglo-Saxon race led the vanguard of the movement and succeeded in cornering most of the places in the sun before other nations could follow suit, an initiative for which we are now paying in bitter jealousies. But most of the races of European blood, even those who did not participate directly in the colonial expansion, shared the extrovert mentality of the Empire builders. Drawn by this new focus of attention, all Western nations devoted their energies increasingly to large-scale exploitation, and in proportion as they did so, tended to approximate nearer and nearer to one model, and this in spite of the most violent national antagonisms. To the civilization which was thus produced I give the name of "Occidental," so as not to confound it with genuine European culture; though nowadays some of its most frenzied exponents are of Oriental blood. This civilization seems totally unlike any of the others of which we possess records, whether in written form or inferred from archaeological remains. One can almost go so far as to say that there is more in common between any two traditional civilizations picked at

random—say Celtic and Inca, than between any one of them and that of modern times. Taking a bird's-eye view of history, would it be altogether far-fetched to speak of modern Occidental civilization as the one and only anachronism, the anachronism *par excellence*?

Among the ancients, nevertheless, there is one partial exception. The Romans seem to have tended, in some measure, towards a similar system. Among them we see the same preoccupation with purely practical ends, the same harping upon social applications to the disregard of the intellectual side, resulting, in logical consequence, in a deification of human society in the State. It is perhaps only the fact that post-Renaissance Europe was able, through the rapid development of the applied sciences, to harness material forces on an unprecedented scale, that has caused us to leave the Romans so far behind; but their ideals, if one can give them such a name, were in many respects akin to ours and it is doubtless no accident that the so-called Renaissance, the time of the final rupture with the regular Occidental Tradition, was characterized by an uncritical enthusiasm for everything Greco-Roman and by hatred and contempt for everything non-classical. The men who saw in Gothic cathedrals nothing but barbarous excrescences and who scoffed at the speculations of the Schoolmen, were the spiritual ancestors of those who affect to despise everything Oriental.

Post-war Europe has lost the comfortable sense of security of the nineteenth century; but it has not yet been able to shake off its habits; nor are there yet signs of any general abandonment of the notion of continuous Progress. If anything, the general trend is still all towards the elimination of lingering traces of tradition. Those who aspire to play the part of reformers usually look for their panacea, not in a rebirth of the genuine traditional spirit, but in a further development of the forces which liberalism brought into being, in more elaborate organization and in the division of labour carried to greater and greater extremes. The ideal proclaimed is that of a world reduced to one vast termites' nest: to this dream is attached the grandiloquent euphemism of "a pooling of the resources of humanity." But the pool has been carefully pre-engineered, so that the trickle that represents the united contribution of all the other civilizations, cannot help being swamped by the drainage from the Euro-American quarter.

In Tibet and Bhutan, the only wholehearted non-co-operators in this scheme, the authority of Tradition remains unquestioned, and the more intellectually conscious classes usually profess the will to preserve it. "We feel that our institutions suit us best. Possibly your civilization suits you, though some of us think it has gone astray; but that is your affair"—this verdict sums up their attitude. But these countries are surrounded by a ring of small states and racially allied districts which, though they still look to Lhasa for their cultural leadership, are living on the edge of two worlds, and therefore cannot escape having to face a difficult problem of adaptation, one that does not confront dwellers in the centre of Tibet. Residents on the border, whether they are engaged in business or in making social contacts with those, both Indian and European, who are partly or wholly imbued with Occidentalism, find themselves called upon to handle things which would not enter into their normal environment at home—to cite a few of them: cars, newspapers, wireless, the persuasive technique of advertising, modern medicine, speed, bureaucratic organization, democracy and its catchwords; some things good, others evil, and others again neutral, able to make useful servants but bad masters.

To pick a way through this labyrinth, certain knowledge is needed, mainly in the material field. Parents realizing that their children, if they are to go on living on the borderland, must solve these problems or go under, have to decide how their minds are to be equipped for the ordeal. They find that their own education, however uplifting in a cultural sense, requires supplementing in certain branches that lie outside its normal scope. Therefore the question of education is paramount and on the method of its solution depends, to a large extent, the survival or the rapid disintegration of the culture of the frontier nations. If they also become Westernized, then the invading host, having pierced the outer ring of defences, will batter on the gates of the inner keep of Tibet proper. Even now, the Lhasa-Kalimpong trade route, opened up by the treaty of 1904, offers one avenue by which a tentacle of the octopus can probe right into the heart of the land. Though foreigners are restricted from entering, their goods, less obviously suspect than their persons, do penetrate and serve to disseminate foreign taste. Also, Tibetans and Bhutanese who come south to trade, are liable to become infected with Western influences.

Effective decisions are only possible for members of the cultured classes, those whose example is bound to be a model for the less educated, and who alone are capable of taking a long view of the situation and of influencing more simple souls, whether by precept or in a practical way, by organizing educational facilities for them on safe lines. In studying this whole problem, the first step is to analyse the early reactions of these people to Occidental contacts; nowhere can this research be carried out more conveniently than at Kalimpong and in Sikkim.

The Tibetans, like all the yellow races, are imbued with an avid passion for learning and a natural predisposition in favour of education and schools and teachers, in contrast to that half-antagonism which the Englishman often shows and which, one must admit, has sometimes saved him from falling such an easy prey to regimentation as his more obedient continental neighbours. Reverence for the teacher is a great asset provided the education offered be the right one; otherwise it is better to be a lazy and insubordinate pupil.

It cannot for a moment be maintained that the Tibetan race is devoid of education. In spite of the presence of many illiterates, the culture of the country is vigorous and consistent. The clergy, natural custodians of learning, whose adequate leisure for study is effectively provided for by the social system in vogue, includes many lettered persons, whose marvellous memories enable them to repeat whole books by heart. Even among the poor, I was surprised to find how many possessed a smattering of literacy, besides a power of judgement that in no wise depends on reading. Higher education is preponderantly devotional: metaphysical treatises, chronicles of saints, legends and sacred poetry form the bulk of the reading of the laity as well as the lamas. Apart from these studies writing a fine hand and the rudiments of reckoning complete the list. Officials, in addition, must acquire a mastery of the correct styles of address, which are often rather flowery; if to these be added the rules of grammar and logic, the result is an education comparable to that of the Scholastics in medieval Europe.

When foreign educators came and settled in places like Kalimpong and Darjeeling, it was natural that the well-to-do should hasten to place their children in the new schools, as being the best locally available, without stopping to peer with an over-

critical eye into the drawbacks, as well as the advantages, of the tuition offered, and without feeling apprehensive of any possible evil results in the distant future. These institutions are of two sorts, either missionary schools of various denominations, or secular schools, endowed by Government, or, as in Sikkim, by the native State in imitation of the schools of British India. Thus the children of parents who had themselves been brought up on strictly traditional lines, with sacred studies coming first, the art of courtesy holding second place, and secular knowledge counting third, came to be placed trustingly under the care of exponents of alien systems, actuated by motives which were either frankly hostile to the existing culture, as in the case of missions, or simply indifferent to it, as in the case of lay schools. In both, the curriculum allots a preponderant share to the knowledge of material things, which is the speciality of the West and which serves as the bait to entice pupils.

In mission schools there may or may not be direct imparting of Christian teaching; but in either case, the moral code and all sorts of undefined implications and tendencies derive from what is now commonly accepted in so-called Christian Europe. The teaching is there, even if the word "religion" is not so much as named. A person who makes no secret of his hope for the eventual substitution of Christianity for Hindu or Buddhist belief, can hardly be blamed if he shows, at least, indifference to the interests of the native culture of his pupils, inextricably interwoven as it is with the threads of metaphysical thought. In appraising the legitimate methods of implanting ideas into the minds of their young charges, some doubtless try to be nicely scrupulous, while others stretch a point here and there. In the case of a missionary teacher the more zealous he is, the further he is likely to allow himself to go in the matter of deliberately undermining the foundation laid by the parents—or not laid, as is too often the case; for in a traditionally regulated society, where everything hangs together, the environment is sufficiently strong to relieve the private individual of some of his anxieties over these matters, so that the unwary may be lulled into a complacent mood that does not befit these times of crisis.

Whereas the missionary is, by his profession, inclined to regard the native beliefs as so much superstition, to the secular-minded modern teacher they appear rather in the light of primitive folk-lore, which education will force a person to out-

grow. The man with the religious axe to grind will rush to implant his own official version of the Christian code, which is not always that of the Gospel. The secular schoolmaster will probably expound a stoical system of ethics, possibly with a faint Christian tinge. He may also blend with it a sentimental belief in the magic benefits of " the public-school spirit," which regards competition as a virtue and sees in physical activity, as expressed in organized games, an automatic power to uplift; while gentleness is slightly suspect as a sign of weakness.

There are striking differences between the things that the pupil, in the traditional scheme, would have been taught and those that he is likely to acquire in an average Westernized school, even a good one. The sacredness of life, other than human, will certainly not be overstressed, even if it is mentioned at all. The whole emphasis will be on Man and his interests, everything else will be shown as ministering to these; a very different story from the Hindu or Buddhist duty of solicitude for all suffering creatures. A good many of the teachers in high-class secular schools, specially designed for the rich and aristocratic, are keen on shooting. Therefore it cannot be expected that they will go to any special trouble in order to discredit that pastime in the eyes of their charges, and the latter are likely to grow up to tolerate the idea. I turned up a few Hindu, and even Buddhist, names at random in the pages of *Who's Who*, and found that they nearly all had put down " Shooting " under the heading " Recreation " !

Secondly, the contemplative ideal placed before the true Oriental as the highest possible calling for a man, is dismissed by modern Occidentals as equivalent to laziness. For them the ideal is " practical " work, that is to say, visible activity confined to the material and social fields. The difference of point of view is so fundamental that two educators, respective adherents of these opposing philosophies, ought not to share the same professional designation.

Thirdly, the aim of our education even at its best is the development of individualism to its utmost, just as at its worst, by the cultivation of blind *esprit de corps*, it encourages the instincts of the herd, to the submerging of personal independence of thought. Both these aims are out of keeping with Buddhist doctrine, the first because it derives all its justification from the belief in a real " Ego," which Buddhism denies, and

the second because it favours an over-sensitiveness to public opinion and evokes an easy response to emotional stimulation from outside which is incompatible with that deliberate, detached judgment which the true Buddhist must ever be at pains to exercise.

Then, there is the question of language. Since Macaulay in his educational policy set out to turn the Indians into " coloured Englishmen," in the sincere belief that this was the highest boon conferrable on any member of the human race, irrespective of temperament, geography or history, English has been regarded as the chief vehicle of education throughout Indian territory, and proficiency in English has come to be the hallmark of education above all others. In higher-class schools a great part of the tuition is given in the English language and so it comes about that a child of native parentage develops all its early thought through the medium of a foreign idiom, rather than through the tongue learnt at its mother's knee.

A language is the faithful mirror of the thought and character of a people and becomes nicely adapted to the expression of its particular genius; no foreign tongue can be substituted without making it difficult for the thoughts themselves to take shape. If the means for voicing thought are perfect, thoughts rise to the surface freely in a continuous flow; this state of affairs favours, through constant practice, the coming into being of fresh thoughts. But let the pumping-machinery be gritty and ill-adapted, then the flow will become irregular, and there will be a tendency for the well itself to dry up from disuse. As language is our principal vehicle for conveying our thoughts to our neighbours and as we act as a whetstone for each other's minds, faulty, slipshod or inexact expression, and the consequent interference with communication, will also bring about a drop in the general level of intelligence. Wherever any unnatural tongue has been adopted as the common vehicle of education, whether a foreign language has been chosen or even some insincere, pedantic version of the native language, the result has always been lamentable.

Travelling homeward, we happened to have as fellow-passengers on the boat, a number of Indian students on their way to join English Universities. We noticed that a good many of them tried to talk English among themselves, especially in the public saloons. At first we thought that they must have

come from provinces lying far apart, where different dialects were spoken; but we found out that in some cases they were neighbours and that this was simply an attempt to show off their education. And what an English they spoke! It would take a Kipling to reproduce its ungrammatical and pompous verbiage. Such a practice argues a serious degree of demoralization.

I once came across two students from Burma, both of whom spoke English, the one rather well and the other passably. I happened to ask the latter what was the name of his friend. "Smith," he answered. "But surely he is not a half-caste?" I said. "He does not look like one anyway."

"Oh, no, he's a full-blooded Burman; only he went to an English school."

"How do you mean? A school run by English masters?"

He explained that there was in his country a special school to which the epithet "English" was attached, in which tuition was exclusively carried on in English, the national language being ignored. The pupils were encouraged to be as English as possible. They might not wear their native dress and, to complete the illusion, they were advised to assume English names.

The story seemed incredible: yet I could picture the assemblage of young Smiths and Browns, olive-skinned Joneses and Thomases, almond-eyed McGregors and O'Learys—Lord Macaulay's dream of "coloured Englishmen" come true. They are growing rusty in the tongue which their mothers spoke—Mr. Smith had become so himself, so his friend told me. They feel awkward when called upon to eat with their fingers, the smell of garlic nauseates them, and they laugh at the fairy-tales believed in by their grandfathers and grandmothers, and at the symbols to which they bow down. They have learned to worship the god of Soccer and the god of Rugger, the goddess of Good Form and the Spirit of the Corps. Our friend assured us that there was such a premium set on mastery of English that a number of parents, at the price of their self-respect, were willing to allow their children to submit to these insulting regulations. If that is the case, those parents are more to be blamed than the inventors of this obnoxious system.

In an education based on English, the pupil not only reads the literature of a remote country before that of his own, but



DOMESTIC ARTICLES OF EVERYDAY USE

Tea-table, teacups, bowl for barley meal, teapot on brazier, pile rug, T'hanka by Gyaltsan of P'hiyang



WHICH STYLE LOOKS THE BETTER?
Schoolboys at Gangtok



he is also brought up on history as viewed through foreign eyes. Also the excessive importance attached to games is such as to alter a boy's outlook permanently; for in many English schools games are looked on as something more than a means for recreation or health. In the question of games, Mr. Smith had come to out-English the English and showed a quite pathetic anxiety as to whether he would find adequate facilities for football in the British college for which he was bound! There is also a danger of the children acquiring some of that gaucherie and shyness which we associate with the "awkward age." When travelling in the Himalaya, I noticed that all the children were free from this self-consciousness; it made me ask myself whether its regular incidence among us was not due to some preventable maladjustment in the school system. It is not a fault to be ignored. The only Tibetan pupils whom I ever found to be suffering from this ailment, were boarders in a European school, and they had been badly affected.

And lastly, I must again mention the question of dress. In nearly all schools run by Europeans in the border districts, I saw a large proportion of the pupils wearing European clothes. In certain mission schools of a high class, this change had been imposed under the specious plea of a school uniform. That foreigners should come to a country and demand on any grounds whatsoever that their pupils should abandon their own dress in favour of that of their teachers, is outrageous, for it contains the plain implication that the native dress is the badge of an inferior culture. Were this not the case, it would be just as simple to design a uniform modelled on the local costume. Could one imagine an alien headmaster founding a school in England and requiring his scholars to adopt any style of un-English costume, let us say German or Russian school uniform? Would a single parent entrust his children to such a person, however tempting the educational facilities offered?

The intangible influences must not be forgotten either, the imperceptible effect of surroundings upon habits and taste. Furniture will be different and will be used differently. The floor will be replaced by the desk—a considerable physical change for growing children and an even greater social one, liable, later on, to make them feel uncomfortable among their own people. As soon as an Oriental begins to require chairs and tables, his domestic outlook has already undergone a

tremendous revolution. There are also pictures on the walls, in which the symbolical and decorative treatment of traditional art will have given place to the conventions of photographic naturalism, a dangerous experience for the innocent eye of a child, which may well mean that the child's own art will eventually become a closed book to it. It would be easy to multiply these examples, but enough has been said to indicate the main lines of criticism.

But surely there are the holidays, it will be argued; that is an opportunity for parents to provide a counter-influence. Firstly, it should be observed that under a fully traditional education, both parents and teachers are exerting their authority along parallel lines. There is never a question of pulling different ways. Once the two influences part company, the result is bound to be a compromise, with the scales becoming weighted more and more against tradition, and in favour of innovation, as each generation passes. In an aristocratic home, the force of example and convention, and social pressure in general, is greater; but in the case of an uneducated family, which lives from hand to mouth, the parents are not likely to trouble much. To counteract a dangerous influence deliberately needs foresight, and one cannot yet expect that from the average man.

If the foreign educators, whether secular-minded or religious, were to use their schools openly for the proselytism of the pupils, parents might be roused to action at once and would withdraw their children. But there is no need to go as far as that: indeed, no one but a fool would thus invite trouble. The insidiousness of the poison lies in the fact that children, being at a plastic age, unsuspicious, naturally docile and keen to learn, are only too ready to assimilate an unseen influence administered in small doses. The Jesuits are credited with having said: "Give me the child before it is eight; after that you can do as you like with it." They knew, from age-long experience, that early impressions, gained before the critical faculty has been awakened, count heavily in after-life and that if only a doubt can be sown early or the embryo of an idea implanted, it may continue to work like a ferment capable of destroying the most ancient loyalties. In the case of the Jesuits, of course, the end in view is not to undermine, but to preserve a certain tradition against the temptations of unbelief.

Once the sense of reverence towards ancient customs and ideas has been weakened, the power of the doctrine which permeates them is itself on the wane. If the child who has been exposed to the new schooling does not lose his hold on the Doctrine in the first generation, his own children in the next will be well on the way to deserting it; for they will start, not with a clean sheet, but from the point where their father and mother ceased their own education. Whatever traditional ideas may survive to the third generation will be mere remnants—superstitions in the true etymological sense of the word. It is at this point that the chance of proselytizing to another religion is at its greatest; though in the modern world it is still more likely that atheism or agnosticism or mere indifference, will follow.

It is almost inconceivable that Oriental children who pass through a modern schooling of the ordinary type, whether good or bad—the more efficient the school, especially if it is a boarding-school, the graver the danger—will retain a real sense of reverence. The feeling may survive for a time in an impaired form in good homes; in slack homes it will die, or only show itself in a few lingering external customs. The children will become moral and intellectual half-castes and in the following generation all will be lost. The old people will eventually realize the puzzling fact that they, who tried, as they thought, to give their children "the best available chances of education" are now regarded by them as:—

Credulous old fogies: back numbers
Half savages

The children will also think that:—

Their parents' doctrines are nothing but fairy-tales
Their art is to be put in glass cases as antiques
Their clothes are out-of-date and ridiculous

Are the teachers then to be accused of having acted dishonestly? Doubtless there exist flagrant cases of unscrupulousness; but in general, one cannot expect them to teach principles that they do not believe themselves. If they are conscientious, they do the best they can for the pupils according to their lights. If parents are willing to send their children to the foreign schools, the decision is their disaster, or rather the childrens'

and that of the whole nation. For the parents, it is a great temptation to make use of educational advantages which happen to lie so close at hand, and which call for no effort on their own part. For the sake of the lesser, but immediate, advantage, they turn a blind eye to the cost—the loss of things which they should think most precious.

From the opposite point of view of the teacher, who feels that he is the bringer of inestimable benefits to a " backward " people, the methods followed all seem justifiable and even meritorious. To influence the children has proved to be the effective way, not only in Asia, but also in every part of Europe; that is why the new absolutist states have concentrated their biggest effort on the immature, rather than on the adult, mind, with the certainty of reaping the harvest in due course. In the case of religious schools, the type of man who feels the call to the mission field, is not usually a philosopher who wishes to see both sides—philosophers do not take kindly to a life of propaganda, with its inevitable hurry and superficiality; the qualifications needed are the single eye and the sense of superiority that comes from the flattering conviction that one possesses and can dispense the message, the true message, and nothing but the message. The men who take up these tasks—but there are of course exceptions—must hold the native culture to be worthless, or at least, unimportant. It is difficult for them, even when they intend to act honestly, to judge the meaning of the word " scruple "; for in their eyes the result overshadows every other consideration. The attitude of the secular-minded schoolteacher is less positive; but he also cannot be expected to go to the trouble of bolstering up a lot of " medieval nonsense," to the prejudice of the " real, practical things " that he sets out to teach.

The fact is, that in regard to the fundamental things of life, impartiality is not easy in practice, even if the wish be present. Admittedly, there is such a thing as unscrupulous and dishonest abuse of the sacred calling to educate the young; but even apart from this, every person disseminates ideas by the mere fact of being himself. It is only one who himself participates in a living Tradition, who can be said not to be opposed to Tradition, at least unconsciously. It is not a question only of how many hours are to be spent in imparting set religions or moral teachings: it is the imponderable influences and the

general atmosphere that surrounds the pupil which count even more than dogmatic instruction. The various totalitarian opponents of the Christian Church have been vehement in their determination to wrest the control of growing children out of the hands of the Church and, to a great extent, of parents. They are banking on the effects of early school environment becoming permanent. Let this be an object-lesson. To those Asiatic parents who have proved so unsuspicious in entrusting their own children to alien cares, one would like to put the following questions:—If the Communists were to found a school in England equipped with every modern appliance, would non-Communists be likely to send their children there? Or if a non-Catholic school, giving the most up-to-date education superior to what is available locally, were to be opened in the West of Ireland, do you think that it would get many pupils?

It is not a question of approving narrow-mindedness, much less personal hostility, towards the purveyors of unacceptable creeds. Grown-up people ought to be able to look after themselves in these matters; but children are in no such position, and to expose them to outside pressure of that sort at a tender age is not a sign of open-mindedness, but of sheer foolhardiness. It is astonishing the risks that many Oriental parents are willing to take. In this we see the trustfulness and toleration of the Oriental character pushed to a vice. A little of the Occidental promptness to react, might be borrowed with advantage. Some time ago, the papers reported a speech by a missionary leader in a Buddhist country, who was speaking optimistically of the prospects of his mission, consequent upon the breakdown of the old traditions under the impact of modernity. He used the phrase "The Wall of Buddha has been smashed." This coarse expression, which should never have crossed the lips of a professed Christian, can leave no doubt as to the attitude to be expected of its author in educational matters: yet in all probability, in the schools under his control, many children would still be found belonging to Buddhist parents who had been too inert to be aware of the menace. Again it must be said that no one wishes the Orientals to depart from their excellent tradition of tolerance and courtesy towards foreign religions; but if they withdrew their children from the schools, it would be an act, not of fanaticism, but of common prudence.

If their national traditions mean anything to the parents, even were there no alternative choice, would not total illiteracy be better than the present risks? Which do they really think more important for their children:—

Buddha or Baths?

Mila Repa or Mathematics?

The Four Truths or Football?

Now is a critical hour; to drift is to court disaster. If there is a remedy, it lies in the parents' hands. The same applies to Tibetans, Indians and all races similarly placed. But though a man with his back against the wall, should be ready in an extreme case, to abandon education altogether, rather than to agree to the cultural debauching of his children, he need not give up hope of finding an alternative way till he has exhausted every means at his disposal. There *does* exist an alternative, and that is to plan a system of education *consciously founded on Tradition*, but which may be made to include any modern knowledge that local circumstances render necessary; ever remembering that as between the various branches of knowledge, the traditional hierarchy must be uncompromisingly maintained. Even so, many difficult decisions will have to be taken; the best chance of deciding rightly will fall to the man who remains with his feet firmly planted on the rock of his own culture and who takes the trouble to study its principles even more diligently than ever before. Deliberate choice is the sign of the free spirit; those who talk of political or economic freedom, without intellectual freedom, are babblers.

If, through their earlier easy-going attitude towards the pressing educational problem, the leaders of Oriental society find themselves setting out late in the day to solve it, they must accept the fact and be patient and start again from the beginning, without hoping to find a short cut. To have been caught unawares is no sin; but to persist in ostrich-like self-delusion will lead inevitably and deservedly to an utter breakdown.

To build up from the beginning in difficult circumstances needs vision, enthusiasm and also diligent attention to detail. In this, a leaf could be taken out of the book of some European races who have had comparable difficulties, often with the addition of a degree of physical oppression, which in the present case is fortunately absent. Faced with a threat either to their religious or national teaching, what Hungarian or Irishman

would tamely accept the situation, consoling himself with passing regrets?

The starting-point must be a firm adherence to Tradition, not mere pig-headed conservatism or patriotism, but reverence founded on the unbroken experience of the ages handed down through master and pupil in the intellectual elite or true spiritual aristocracy. In case of an inescapable choice between two courses of action one should always lean towards continuing the established usage; change should only be tolerated if, after due weighing up of the question, the existing practice is found to be hopelessly inconsistent with one's principles. In the same way the general trend should be against the importation of foreign usages; but that does not mean that there are not a few cases where these might be found to be definitely advantageous and could be accepted and digested into the traditional scheme, exactly like a foreign word that is assimilated into a language and takes on its character.

Let us now consider the possibility of creating new schools in the borderland of Tibet, and the practical details of their organization. They should be conducted in a manner consonant with Tradition, but they must also impart certain selected branches of knowledge borrowed, under careful control, from the West, to meet the special needs of those who are forced to dwell on the frontiers of two incompatible theories of life. It is assumed that, having experienced a revulsion of feeling against the present state of affairs, the minds of the leaders of the border peoples are cleared of all hankering after a compromise and that they are firmly determined that, unless they can act in accordance with the spirit of traditional doctrine as applied in action, they would prefer to have no education at all. A mere copy of the Occidental system, accepting all its standards, except for the substitution of say Buddhist or Hindu scriptural teaching in place of Christian, is no solution; a school run on these lines would be nothing but a masked Occidental school and its founders would betray their doubt in the power of Tradition to provide all they wanted. Ultimately it would be a sign that they valued the new material knowledge above the Tradition, but wished to pay lip-service to the latter. Mere modified copies of existing schools will not do. A clean sweep must be made without impatience; and whoever embarks on such a task must for a time rest content with small-scale beginnings.

He must be prepared to make mistakes, before he can work out his programme to be both sound doctrinally and efficient practically. Quality must, as far as possible, take precedence over rapid results on a large scale.

What elements, in the traditional civilization, exist to provide the basis for such an enterprise? What is the fundamental principle of the existing education? We must not forget that it is fortunately not a question of starting education in an educationless society, but of applying the existing experience to certain immediate problems, almost entirely confined to the material field. The training of the mind for the greatest and most essential of its functions, namely the discovery of metaphysical reality, is an art so highly developed among the intellectual élite of India, Tibet and China that it would be an impertinence to offer any suggestions in that direction. The keystone of education can continue to be the selfsame agency that keeps Tradition itself perpetually functioning, namely, the reverence of the pupil for the teacher. The fact that in the Hindu and Buddhist Traditions it has been possible to combine such devotion to the teacher with a remarkable degree of freedom in respect of discussion and inquiry, goes to prove that "orthodoxy" and narrow-mindedness do not necessarily go hand in hand, as some people believe.

Accepting, therefore, that we shall build upon the teacher-pupil relationship from the start, it is important that all those external customs which nourish that relationship should be preserved exactly as they would be in Tibet itself. All outward ceremonies, courtesies and other customs, are a language which symbolizes the inner relationship. They are in the nature of sacramentals, acting as "supports" for the doctrine. For instance, a pupil in Tibet, desiring to learn the alphabet, presents himself before his master and having done obeisance, asks for knowledge of the alphabet. Similarly his master, after having ceremonially repeated the alphabet and authorized the study, proceeds to the practical job of actually imparting the letters; thus this apparently simple and ordinary business of the alphabet becomes something more—it also affirms the master-pupil kinship, which carries the pupil through the entire chain of earthly teachers and heavenly Lamas back to the recognition of the principle of Knowledge itself.

As regards the curriculum, teaching should, in the main, be



"THE NOTION OF EMPTINESS ENGENDERS COMPASSION"



MAY ALL SENTIENT BEINGS, WITHOUT EXCEPTION, BECOME BUDDHA "

carried out in the language of the pupils. If they need to learn English or Urdu or any other foreign tongue, they can do so, provided it is taught as a useful addition, and is not turned into the main vehicle of education. Good literature, not only from the varied knowledge which it incidentally provides, but even more for its example of accurate speech and good style, must always take a high place: so should history by rights, if only it could be taught honestly and without nationalistic bias. "Modern" subjects must be fitted in circumspectly: they ought to be comparatively harmless if the foundation has been well laid in the first place. Doctrinal teaching should be carried out by the old methods, which can hardly be improved upon. It is too individual a matter to be taught through the medium of a class and each pupil cannot do better than have recourse to "his own Lama." If doctrine is allowed to take its place in a school on terms of mere equality with arithmetic or any other subject, its pre-eminence in the hierarchy ceases to be apparent. The Monday morning scripture lesson must have done much to discredit Christianity in our own schools. As the Doctrine comprises and transcends all other knowledge, it seems unsuitable for a school subject; but that does not mean that its presence will not be felt. Far from it: in the general traditional atmosphere it will always be there, as the sufficient cause for all the rest.

Both educators and pupils working on these lines, should be at pains to preserve friendly relations with local Europeans. There should be no question either of flattering them or of keeping them at arm's length. They must be treated with all the courtesy due to them as guests in a foreign land; and in the case of officials, with the respect due to their rank, as enjoined by the traditional laws of hospitality.

Certain details are specially important:—The traditional surroundings should be preserved in the school buildings and their interior fittings. Everyone should wear his own national dress, which he can be encouraged to make as pleasing as possible. The practice of doing lessons sitting on the floor should invariably be followed, unless there be a particular lesson which necessitates some other posture. Not only does this habit make for grace of pose and economize needless furniture, but it is a great safeguard against becoming Occidentalized. I believe that dress and the way of sitting are among the most decisive factors at the present moment.

There is no need to introduce a competitive system. The ideal of acquiring knowledge is the prize and privilege aimed at. To know which pupil has attained it the quickest, is no help to anyone; and in so far as it strengthens the "Ego-forming" tendencies, it is anti-Buddhistic. A gentle bearing should be encouraged and the conventions of politeness as between pupils should not be relaxed. A proper relationship with animals should be inculcated at all times, both by example and by the exposition of the correct doctrine. As regards games, national sports such as archery should if anything be preferred to imported ones; but there is no reason to restrict oneself very narrowly in this matter, provided games do not become exalted into a sort of religion; the ideal of games as a light recreation seems worth adopting.

If at any time it should be necessary to employ foreign teachers, as might well be the case for special subjects, they should be carefully selected out of the ranks of those few who are willing, for the time being at any rate, to participate, as a privilege, in the traditions of the country. If possible, not less than five years of preparation should be demanded of the teacher, during which time he should not only try to master the words of the language, but also its spirit; he should spend enough time among the people for whom he is engaged to work, to get used to their way of living and to cease to feel and act like a stranger. It is his duty and his privilege to make himself acquainted with their way of thinking and to let the spirit of their culture sink into his heart. If he will adopt their clothes and habits, all the better: for then the influence which he is bound to gain over his pupils, will not be associated in their minds with something exotic.

At first there will be obvious difficulty in finding the necessary teachers, especially for certain subjects. If they cannot be found they must be trained. Parents in educated families should be ready to take a hand themselves if no one else is available. If they want to impart something which they do not know, let them first learn it themselves and then pass it on: in so doing they will acquire much merit. It is always through the leaders of society that corruption or improvement must come. If those who enjoy traditional rights become slothful about the duties that naturally devolve on them, they can act as destroyers of the culture of their country. Where the aristo-

crat goes, there the rest will follow. He cannot divest himself of his responsibility as national ruler or mis-ruler.

In dealing with the education of children, charity must always begin at home. If so-called traditional schools were to be organized for the children of the poor, while the aristocratic children still continued to be sent to the Occidental schools of Simla or Darjeeling, no one would be deceived, least of all the children themselves. The newly-founded schools would then probably become nationalistic instead of national, anti-Christian instead of Buddhistic. The full participation of the aristocratic element is demanded in any community governed on traditional lines. Besides it is idle for a parent to profess devotion for his Tradition unless he shows that he regards it as the highest good for his own children also. That is always the acid test, which shows what a man thinks in his heart of hearts.

For the sake of anyone who may feel faint-hearted at the prospect of attempting to shut the sluice gates in the face of the flood, I should like to relate a true story about a poor woman who, with no private resources, was able to start an educational enterprise which is now both flourishing and widespread. Lest any misunderstanding should arise, it must be mentioned that her educational movement has nothing to do with the question of tradition; the example is given simply to show what can be done by conviction, even against great physical and social odds.

She was born of slave parents in South Carolina, U.S.A., and her name was Emma J. Wilson. From an early age she showed a strong desire to be educated; but in those days only white children went to school. Eventually some ladies became interested in her and helped her to enter Scotia Seminary, where, after winning a scholarship, she completed a three years' course. She hoped to take up missionary work in Africa; but on her return to South Carolina she saw that her work lay elsewhere—to use her own words she "found her Africa at her own door." She began a school in a disused shed: friends gave her a few books and the children paid for their tuition in eggs, chickens and vegetables, which her mother cooked and sold for the benefit of the work.

The school soon outgrew its shed and the need for proper premises became urgent; but there was no money and the Negro community was too poor to raise funds. Undaunted, Emma Wilson decided to start for the north where she hoped to find

sympathizers. Her minister gave her the proceeds of the Sunday evening after-collection—just fifty cents! It seemed so little that she carried it home in tears; but her mother said: "Don't cry, child, God ain't dead yet." So she started off, begging her way or doing odd jobs of work till she reached Philadelphia. A Quaker, true to the wonderful charity of his Society, was the first to listen to her story. After all sorts of rebuffs and trials, she won through, and out of these small beginnings has grown the magnificently organized Mayesville Industrial Institute, with a hundred and twenty-two acres of farmland and five hundred pupils. It is undenominational—as Miss Wilson said: "It is the Lord's work and belongs to all."

Once when her main building was gutted by fire, someone said to her: "You must not be discouraged, for you have done such wonders." She replied: "The Lord told me long ago He had no use for discouraged folks." That is the message which a great saint, Emma Wilson, sends across the sea to the borderlands of India and Tibet. If she, a poor coloured girl, daughter of slaves, and member of an abjectly poor community, could conceive and bring to success this wonderful educational enterprise, how much more ought it to be possible for wealthy nobles and merchants, heirs to an unbroken tradition of rule, and members of one of the most civilized and talented of races.

But someone may ask: "What is to be done at this actual moment by leaders of society, to prepare their children, on whom the task of continuing their work will eventually devolve, for a certain amount of time is bound to elapse before anything new is organized? If the children are not to continue in their present schools, how is their education to be carried on?" In the case of those who enjoy a certain amount of wealth the problem is really not so difficult, for they have the resources to engage private tutors, who can impart to the children whatever knowledge may be desired. It is not even certain that for those fated to rule, this time-honoured system is not, on the whole, the best. One remembers the great tutors of fifteenth-century Europe and their accomplished pupils. Even if some of the tutors engaged were not found to be perfectly satisfactory at the start, one must not forget that they will be working under the eyes of the parents, who will thus be able to exercise a much stricter control over their doings. In the case of children of the great Lhasa families I believe that private

tuition would expose them to far less danger than being sent to questionable schools. The selection of a private tutor is difficult; it is not sufficient for him to have won a good degree. The conditions that I suggested some paragraphs back in connexion with the appointment of foreign schoolteachers, should apply to private tutors with double force. A man who is willing or, better still, eager, to conform to the traditional conventions, and who possesses the right personality, can mould himself into a tutor capable of discharging his high service. For purely native subjects, doctrinal and literary, the best lamas should be sought out, for their presence will set the tone to the whole educational environment. In that way too the supremacy of the spiritual Order will be acknowledged.

If the present practice of supporting Occidental schools goes on unchecked, not only will the dangers already mentioned grow, but they will breed fresh ones, and so accelerate the process of denaturing the children. Clever pupils will eventually be encouraged, as in India, to " complete their education "—that is to say to attend foreign universities, whence they will return, a prey to a chaos of undigested impressions. Later, some parents will be persuaded, instead of placing their children in schools in their own country, to give them a " pukka " public-school education and send them over to Eton or Harrow. The results are likely to be equally lamentable. A child who has been brought up in a home still partially run on the old lines, if suddenly plunged into a whirl of complexities all new to his experience and asked to deal with them at the dangerous moment of adolescence, when all his ideas are still fluid, will be exposed to such pressure, that even an exceptional character may well be swept away by the tide of materialism.

The suggestions contained in this chapter for dealing with the school problem have not been put forward with the idea that a solution on the lines indicated will necessarily save the day. Subversive forces may be too strong, and resistance may prove a forlorn hope. To expect to discover a panacea for deep-seated intellectual poisons in this change of system or in that measure of reorganization, is a modern delusion that dies hard. If the thought, of which Tradition is the vehicle, has been affected in a vital part, nothing can resuscitate the corpse. Nor can any multiplying or reorientating of Activities replace Knowledge

as the first and last remedy against Ignorance. I believe myself that the Tibetan civilization still retains the vital spark: the facts related in the course of this book are my evidence. All that can be said on the subject of improved schools is, that in the absence of some such radical changes, the end is a foregone conclusion, for the present easy-going policy is nothing short of suicidal.

Decisive action in this matter of education lies especially in the hands of the leaders of the border districts. Their children are far more exposed to temptation than those who are brought up within Tibet itself, and they are called upon to face the problems of adaptation, due to contact with Western things, in a far more acute form. However, a few sons of great families are also being sent from Tibet to the schools of the borderland. Were schools available, organized on a sound traditional basis, those pupils, officials of the future, would surely be diverted to them instead of being placed in the charge of those who care nothing for Tradition. The border peoples are stationed in the post of honour: may they not shrink feebly from the task confronting them. Every broad-minded European can wish them success, for we too continue to suffer from the degradation of our own rich culture, due to the selfsame forces that have corrupted that of Asia. A turn in the tide, wherever it may occur, should be welcomed by men of good-will everywhere, irrespective of their religion or race.

EPILOGUE

THERE is a small book, of not more than five pages, written in verse, and called *The Powerful Good Wish*, that reveals the doctrine of One who is referred to as the "Buddha of the Beginning, the Altogether Good." He is the earliest Buddha known to mankind; but not the first in point of time, for the succession of Buddhas is eternal and cannot be assigned an origin. The book opens with these words:—"Listen! All apparent Being, whether of the Round or of Deliverance, is in Principle One with two paths and two fruits. This is the jugglery of Ignorance and Knowledge. By the good wish of the Altogether Good One, may all, entering the royal abode of the Divine Substance, manifestly and completely attain to Buddhahood."

These few sentences contain the pith of the Tibetan metaphysic, the central theme that echoes through the entire Tradition. The Principle is that which they call the Void, lest by giving it any other name, they may be betrayed into limiting or qualifying it. In the Principle will be realized the ultimate Unity that belongs to all things alike, despite appearances to the contrary, a Unity so infinitely real, that one dare not even give it the name of Unity—since this too is an idea borrowed from worldly experience: one can only speak of Its non-duality, that which shall be known when all pairs of oppositions have been resolved in the Supreme Identity. Therefore it is said that under every form and seeming contradiction, the illuminate eye will recognize Voidness alone.

But the multitude of undelivered beings cannot, by merely wishing, rid themselves of their dualistic spectacles; for these are the delusions associated with the conception of a permanent self, towards which the rest of the Universe stands in the relationship of "other." A self-centred consciousness forces one to polarize every idea into two contrasted notions. Therefore, where there is but fundamental unity, men see two

paths: Ignorance, the path which creatures are now following, and Knowledge, the path or current which they hope to enter. "Entering the current" is a usual Tibetan phrase, referring to those whose course is fairly set for Illumination. The two paths are continually diverging: the one leads back into the Round of Existence, which is the fruit of Ignorance and of its associated Desires and Activities, the other path leads away from the Round to Deliverance, which is the fruit of Knowledge.

All this is compared to the by-play of a conjuror, a perplexing succession of mirages, now delightful, now terrifying, which will only fade away, leaving Reality unmasked, when all distinctions, even those of subject and object, Knower and Known, the Round and Liberation themselves, shall have faded into the Knowledge of the Foundation, the Void which alone is causeless and uncompounded, finding within Itself Its own sufficiency.

The Good Wish is a prayer that all without distinction, having outgrown distinctions, may realize this Unity, the true Beatific Vision. Liberation, in order to be perfected, must be all-embracing—"What is it to be saved oneself, if others are still lost and suffering?" Individual salvation, with its lingering strands of attachment to the idea of self, is of no interest to the follower of the Non-dual Doctrine. Therefore this doctrine, acclaimed as the corner-stone of all Knowledge by the Tibetans is called the GREAT VEHICLE or Path, in which the Bodhisats, those embodiments of impartial Love, are the guides, and all beings, down to the last and the least, are the pilgrims. The goal is Knowledge and the Path is Method, which is non-attached and universal Compassion.

The story that has formed the subject of this book is a study in contrasts between two paths, the path of Tradition and the path of those who have cut themselves adrift from Tradition. Many aspects of the question have been considered, from the Doctrine on which all else depends, down to practical suggestions for applying traditional principles to special problems that have arisen in certain strictly delimited fields of action, such as Education. The last chapter might well have been called a study in Reform: the word must here be understood, not in its most usual sense, but having regard



T'HANKA BELONGING TO H.H. THE MAHARAJA OF SIKKIM



CELESTIAL BEINGS

From a temple at Yuru in Ladak

to its derivation of *Re-form*—the remaking of the Tradition wherever there has been a deviation from its path, and the requickening of its influence in the hearts of lukewarm or bewildered followers.

Viewed in this sense, the present crisis does not connote the impotence of Tradition itself, but rather it affords an incentive to seek ways of applying traditional principles with renewed vigour. Any evil that cries out to be righted should be looked upon as a failure to apply Tradition's teachings with sufficient intelligence: successful suppression of the evil will result in a reinforcement of traditional authority, and in a change of heart in all who accept that authority.

This is the road of Reform; but there is the other path, the one that is already being followed by some people, often half-consciously and with hesitation, but which will be followed by all and to the end, unless timely measures are taken; this second path is the path of Revolution. To enter it, is a sign that the Tradition, in spite of all professions to the contrary, is no longer trusted; or it shows that people prefer to renounce their ideals and to drift into a life of capricious opportunism. The revolutionary path, along which the West has proceeded with increasing velocity for some centuries, leads to the dispersal of thought in the whirlpool of multiple detail and action, and to the subjection of human effort to the low impulses of sentimentality, the deadly enemy of considered and consistent thought.

The derivation of the word "Reform" was suggestive; so is that of the word "Revolution." What picture does it evoke but of something that keeps turning round and round? It is perhaps no accident that associates this idea with the Round of Existence, the circular eddy in which all beings flounder and find again and again their brief joys and recurrent miseries. Revolution is the idealization of Change, which comes to be looked upon as something desirable in itself, in which case contentment logically becomes an evil and stability a reproach.

It is between these two paths that a choice has to be made. But choice itself implies intellectual detachment, a disinterested seeking after Knowledge. How can choice be exercised by populations weighed down by the fear of impending destruction and oppressed by the futility of any effort to avoid the approaching doom? The beings of the Round scurry hither and thither, listening to the glib persuasions of every quack, and trying to

charm away their anxieties by the narcotics of speed and mechanized amusements. Yet if the right choice could be made, and those who have strayed and have perhaps learned the beginnings of wisdom in the bitter school of disaster, could be guided back into the traditional path, then there might be a hope that the pernicious dualism expressed in the phrase " East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet " might disappear, together with other absurd distinctions, in Knowledge of the One Foundation. It is surely suggestive that the most violent hatred of Europeans as men, is to be found precisely among those Orientals who most admire European institutions and despise their own Tradition : it is the anti-traditional mind, that has learned its lesson well and longs to out-Westernize the West, that stoops to the baser kinds of militant nationalism as well as to irreverent vandalism directed against its own culture : the two things go together. This might serve as a warning to the Occidentals who first introduced the anti-traditional error, and even more to those Orientals, like the Tibetans, who still cling to the other path. The latter might then realize how fortunate is their present lot and how precious their intellectual independence. They would then guard their inheritance more jealously than ever and redouble their caution when tempted by the meretricious triumphs of modern invention.

Tradition is the path along which pilgrims journey towards the peaks of Wisdom : but without Method for a guide, there is ever a danger of straying from the route and being caught up in the futility of the Round, through the allurements of blind sentiment and attachment to self. The higher the doctrine, the more abysmal will be the corruption if once the doctrine is rejected. Lamas have compared the man who aspires to the Light, to a serpent struggling upward inside a hollow tube of bamboo. There is little room to turn ; one ill-judged movement may cause a fall to the bottom. This is Tibet's danger ; this has been the fate of those traditional civilizations which, by force or consent, have been led into accepting the standards of the West.

For myself, the writing of this book, and the two expeditions that led up to it, have been a single voyage of exploration into a land of uncharted glaciers and unclimbed ranges, the mountains of Tradition. From far up their slopes I glanced back, and in contrast with my surroundings, the prospect of the

lands whence I had come, seemed dismal indeed. At the outset of my story, I tried to climb peaks in a bodily sense; but in the end I discovered the Lama, who beckoned me upwards towards immaterial heights.

A popular proverb says: "Without the Lama you cannot obtain Deliverance." Every good Tibetan—and all lovers of Tradition to-day might almost lay claim to the right of honorary citizenship of Tibet—before ever he seeks refuge in the Three Most Precious Things, the Buddha, the Doctrine and the Church, first pronounces the words: "I go for refuge to the Lama." In a literal sense this refers to a man's own spiritual director, "his Lama," who is the visible "support" of Tradition: it is this quality of support that entitles the teacher to the disciple's unbounded reverence, irrespective of personal failings, just as a brass statue of the Buddha is worthy of worship, be the casting sound or flawed. But there is also an inner and more universal meaning inherent in "the Lama"; for behind every support there is the thing supported, which the symbol both veils and reveals. Here it indicates the divine guide whose hand sustains the climber as he strives to reach the summit of Enlightenment.

Taken in this sense, the Lama, the Universal Teacher, is TRADITION ITSELF.

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