

“IS THIS  
THEOSOPHY . . . ?”

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4 ILLUSTRATIONS

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## CHAPTER I

### JUVENILITY

#### § I

**A**MONG the warmest and clearest of my early recollections a dirty old field stands out pre-eminent—if I may describe as a field a patch of ground, abandoned for the time being by a discouraged suburban builder, between the backyard walls of two rows of houses facing two parallel streets. Very little grass there was on this field, but it was pitted all over with delightful holes full of sticky reddish-grey clay, and right across its centre it was diversified by two parallel lines of kerbstones, marking the place where in some remote future—too far off to disturb a child's enjoyment—another street would run, flanked by two more rows of houses, which would eventually obliterate this paradise and subject it to utility instead of joy.

Standing out more clearly than my brother and the few shadowy boy friends who played in those delightful holes of clay—I can recollect no girls, or else I was unconscious of any difference between girls and boys—were several strange creatures from other spheres.

There was a fox-terrier dog, dressed in white with black patches, which attracted my gaze again and again—something outstanding and interesting, as not of my world, but more the material of which fairy tales were made. There was a very old woman who hung round about with pieces of grey-black cloth. Even her face and hands were of almost the same colour. She was always bending. I cannot recollect that she ever straightened herself up. And she was always poking about among the old cans and other rubbish that obscured the earth in those parts. The little boy watched her with untiring and almost breathless

fascination, as she gathered together her peck of dirt, the which presumably to eat before she died.

Other foreign beings—somewhat midway in shadowiness between these two outstanding figures and the other play-fellows—used to emerge at eventide from sundry back doors, and presently, passing the time of evening to one another, these would urge their offspring through backyard gates to the inevitabilities that lay beyond.

My mother is not to be counted among the foreign or shadowy beings. Far from it. She was a very substantial young woman, the daughter of a Shropshire tenant-farmer, aged about nineteen when I was born. Even at the early age of five, of which I am now writing, I remember regarding her as a beauty, not perhaps that I used that word or idea to myself, but I know that I particularly liked the line of her cheek and her dark colouring. Although the æsthetics of touch—especially with reference to clay, sand, pebbles and water, and I remember, too, a very keen appreciation of velvet and an equal abhorrence of leather—were much more in my department than those of sight, I was not without eyes for a handsome curve, of which my mother presented many, composed, as I again knew by tactual experience, of good firm muscle.

In the early mornings I used to go from my bedroom—where I slept with my elder brother—to hers, and watch her dress. She never laced or unlaced her stays, but simply put them on or off, and yet—as I learnt later, when keeping my ears open in the course of shopping expeditions—they measured only twenty-three inches at the waist, which was not to be considered much under the circumstances, even in those days of eighteen- and nineteen-inch figures, and indeed looked small beside her muscular shoulders and neck, especially when covered closely with cloth and presented in photographic form in the family album. There were many mysteries of dress in those latter years of the eighteenthies. I could never understand why she tied a big pad on the back of her (they were days of the bustle).

My mother's muscularity I remember well also on bath nights. A zinc tub would be brought into the kitchen—a cosy place with a roaring fire, for my father and mother, however poor at the time of which I am writing, were never mean with reference to their children's needs and comforts—dumped down on the oilcloth before the fire and filled

with hot water. My brother and I were then invited, and if necessary commanded, to enter the water, where we sat side by side immersed to the neck, while our heads and faces, and afterwards the rest of our bodies, standing, were subjected to a merciless application of soap and elbow-grease, with regard to which also there was no parsimony, though I would have welcomed it in that sphere.

The water was painfully hot to me, though not to my mother's hands, and not apparently to my brother's skin ; but she never understood my complaints and protests in this particular, but always thought me fanciful or wayward, and supplemented her commands when necessary with physical force. However, what would you ? When a muscular young female of our species has embarked upon a career of mass production at the age of about eighteen, one cannot expect too much discrimination of particulars, but rather what the poet has described as the method of Nature—so careless of the single life, so careful of the type ! Still, I must add that economics had their say then, as to-day, and the mass production stopped with me for more than five years, when came my younger brother, whereby presently will hang a tale.

I had my mother very much to myself for several years, as my elder brother was not much in evidence. Somehow he did not make a very strong mark on me during this period, although we played together constantly. I used to follow my mother about the house and watch every little thing that she was doing, and must have been a great trouble, always getting in her way, watching and listening to everything, though not speaking very much. In some respects I was a disappointment to her : she had very much wanted her second child to be a girl. In fact, she kept me dressed as a little girl as long as she could ; the family album shows me in that form at the age of about three or four. There is a picture in a velvet dress. I wonder if it was then that I acquired my love for the touch of velvet and other soft textiles, and consequent dislike for hard or homespun cloths.

Vivid domestic pictures of my mother remain in my mind : (1) at her treadle sewing-machine—she used to make all our clothes, as well as her own, which she fitted upon a revolting headless and legless dummy, whose presence quite spoilt the pleasure of our empty back bedroom as a playroom ; (2) in

the kitchen, with her sleeves turned up, rolling pastry with an uncomm only large rolling-pin—she was, and still is, an excellent cook ; and (3) in the cellar, at the copper, which had a fire underneath, and was filled with boiling water and clothes, where she wielded a three-legged dolly with immense speed and vigour, while the floor swam in water, and an atmosphere of tropical heat and moisture intrigued my skin and my sense of smell.

During those years I thus acquired much feminine lore, though no art or skill. I was just a looker-on. If it had been New York, instead of a suburb of an English commercial town, they would have called me a rubber-neck ! But our houses and streets were miniature, and not overstrong at that. I recollect that a few years later, when I came to a more athletic age, and had rigged up an old broomstick or something as a horizontal bar, fastened to one of the beams of the roof, the man who had built the house called upon my father and told him that it must be taken down or else I should bring the whole roof upon their heads.

This close association, and my mother's thoughts towards me for several years, must have influenced my psychology very greatly, for still I do not distinguish very clearly between the sexes, except when I specially think of it, and I am more at home with women than with men, not because they are women, but because of their ways, their gentleness, their delicacy, their freedom from earthiness, which I tend not to admire from a distance so much as to absorb for my own. As a consequence, I am afraid that I am much more of a friend than of a husband to my wife. Recently a travelling companion asked me : " Done any shooting lately—ah ? " Taken aback, I could only stammeringly reply : " Er—not since the war."

With all that, though short of stature, I was not an effeminate boy. Sometimes on the rather rare occasions on which a neighbour might have ventured into our very self-centred home, there would be an exhibition of the heavy muscular development of my shoulders and legs, of which my mother was proud, though unreasoningly, as they were quite out of proportion, and in competition with the bones my calf muscles had got the best of it and caused my legs to become slightly bowed. Generally the display of two crowns (whorls in the hair) would conclude this entertainment.

My brother was much more effeminate in appearance and build than I. He was tall, thin, fair-haired (like his father) and languid; I was just the opposite; short, dark-haired (like my mother), muscular and energetic. Later, in my schooldays, I remember I was occasionally censured for being too rough at football—though I know now that all that was a semi-conscious revolt against my own feminine complexes. Again, at the age of about eighteen, I sported a long, dark beard, which used to make people ask which was the father and which the son when I took walks with my father in the village, as we called our suburb. And later still, when the Great War came, the doctors put me into the A class without hesitation, notwithstanding my meagre five feet six inches of height. But I digress.

## § 2

My father used to come home from his business in the city every evening about seven o'clock. He was then manager and buyer in one of the large stationery warehouses in the city, and in conjunction with that occupation he contrived to give my brother and me an almost Montessori education, by the constant supply of otherwise useless samples that he used to bring home. Every evening, when we heard his key in the lock, we would rush into the lobby to greet him like a pair of young puppy dogs, and almost his first act would be to draw from his pocket some small sample-books of coloured tissue or printing paper, or two or three sample playing cards, or something of the kind. After that he would take off his coat, go upstairs two or three at a time—he had been an apprentice in a sailing ship—take off his collar and tie, turn down the neck-band of his shirt, remove his cuffs and roll up his shirt sleeves, and subject himself to such a washing of neck and ears and face and arms as I never ceased to marvel at, in view of the fact that it was not compulsory in his case. Then he would dress himself carefully again and come down to tea, which was our chief meal of the day.

A good meal it was, too, for, as I before remarked, my mother was an excellent cook, with an unerring instinct for the proper moment to take things off the fire or out of the oven. She made also our supplies of jams and pickles, while I used to stand by with discs of paper and a saucer of



flour paste, putting on the "lids" of the jars, as she filled them with the steaming jam—there were no screw stoppers then. But I remember that her one solitary attempt to make the household bread was a failure; it came out as hard as bricks and was eventually used instead of coal.

In the midday our meal was much simpler. My father would take a few sandwiches to town with him, and eat them somewhere privately during the lunch hour, or else go to one of the cheap little vegetarian restaurants which abounded then—there were twenty-two of them in our city—and spend a few pence on a bit of something to eat. My mother, at home, would be equally frugal in the middle of the day; at that meal we could not have jam and butter on our bread both at the same time, but only one or the other. I recollect that it was then that my scientific proclivities began to manifest themselves, in the discovery that I got more taste out of my bread and butter or my bread and jam by eating it upside down than right side up, for thus the tasty portion rather than the mere pabulum would most fully and immediately strike the tongue; though I cannot say that this discovery of mine was highly approved in the family from the æsthetic point of view. Another bit of science was my formula for learning right and left—"If I stand beside the oven and look through the window my right arm is on the oven side." For a long time I had to picture this scene when I wanted to know which side was right or left. I remember also systematically finding out that it took ten minutes to count a thousand.

In the early mornings my father used to get up and make the kitchen fire, clean the boots, and make his own breakfast and a cup of tea for my mother, which he took up to her bed, for he firmly disapproved of her getting up until he was off to his business. Often he had a sausage for breakfast, and when we came down my brother and I used to find the two ends, each about an inch long, standing up neatly on a plate, titbits greatly relished by us, not only for their taste, but also on account of their interesting appearance and shape. My father used playfully to call these "sassengers," until one day he went into a provision dealer's shop and asked for "a pound of sassengers," thereby attracting in his direction more eyes than he was accustomed to meet at one time. Notwithstanding the charm of these titbits, tea remained the chief gustatory event of the day for all of us,

though it was probably marred to some extent for my father by my insistence upon sitting so close up against him at table that he could hardly use his arm.

My father and mother had no friends. They never went out to tea or evening functions, and no one came to see them. Occasional advances of friendliness by neighbours they quietly but firmly discouraged. Their time was entirely devoted to their children and to reading. Tea being over at about half-past seven, my mother would clear the table and then sit down to read by the fire, while my father would play with us and teach us. It was in this way that we learnt to read and to perform the operations of simple arithmetic, long before going to school. Somehow our father made this learning into a kind of play, so that we were never conscious of any effort, or indeed that we were learning anything. These occasions were enlivened, however, by a certain amount of undesirable competition, especially in mental arithmetic, in which my brother used to become annoyed because I was quicker in answering, and seldom gave him a chance to reply.

Those evening studies were mingled with games—among which I remember particularly wall quoits, tiddleywinks and the flicking of marbles through holes in a board, or at rows of toy soldiers. I was always good at marbles, but my brother would not touch them at all, declaring—though not in exactly these words—that they were too plebeian for his lofty taste. Our father never brought in playing cards—except snap cards, with ugly faces and mottoes on them, such as “Away with Melancholy,” of which I could never see the sense. Nor did he bring in any of those games which depend upon the throwing of dice.

I suppose that no children could ever have had a more companionable or entertaining young father. When we were tired of games or of reading he would tell us thrilling stories of his schooldays, which were very amusing when not painful, and of his adventures at sea in sailing ships, and in various distant lands, especially South America and Australia. He would talk, for example, of the long walk that he undertook across country from Melbourne to Sydney, of the trying experience of a sailing ship held up for six weeks off the south of Cape Horn, heeling over on its side on account of the shifting of a cargo of guano, while all hands dug the unsavoury substance back to its proper position,

hard put to it to prevent the handles of the spades from freezing to their fingers and taking away the skin. He would talk of quarrels and fights at sea, bordering on mutiny, in which his sympathies were always with the men in their complaints of rough treatment and of live stock and decay in their food. He would talk of the desolate nitrate tracts behind Iquique and the more pleasant country around Valparaiso and Concepcion, all of which I was destined to see for myself in years to come.

My brother and I acquired many fragments of economic and scientific knowledge from these histories. Once our father had decided, after leaving a sheep farm, to stay in Sydney and look round for work there. He did look, for weeks, until he had come to the last of his money. He was wandering on the Circular Quay (which, by the way, is square) wondering what to do, when—the last straw—the sole came off one of his shoes. He was looking at this with stunned helplessness when he heard a voice calling his name. Looking up he saw the face of a ship's sailmaker whom he had known protruding over the gunwale of the famous ship *Thermopylæ*. The sailmaker stitched the shoe, and took him to the captain, who gave him a job as rigger.

Among the scientific bits, we learned that in a storm at sea a man on deck would go and shut himself in a cabin in order to hear more clearly the voice of a man up aloft.

### § 3

Sundays were dreadfully dull, especially the mornings, as, although we were never troubled with religion in any form, we were not allowed any but very quiet games. Sunday afternoon walks brightened things up a bit, and often we used to go to a dell called Daisy Nook and pick flowers. Although we lived in a street composed of rows of houses, the front doors of which opened straight on to the pavement, the neighbourhood was not heavily built up, and there were some nice walks. Opposite our house was a neat little municipal park, to which our mother used to take us in the afternoons, while our father was in town. There we used to play ball on the grass or sit while she read to us from picture and story books. Nursery stories were followed by Grimms and Andersen. Grimms I liked, with their caverns and magic, but I could not bear Andersen's habit of making

leather and broomsticks talk. And I wanted to know, if a princess was shut up in a tower, what arrangements were made for her sanitary convenience. Later *The Arabian Nights' Entertainments* proved a glorified Grimms. Saturday afternoons were devoted to shopping. I remember standing outside a greengrocer's and looking at tomatoes. They were something new. It was remarked that they were "an acquired taste."

Twice, I think, my brother and I went to Sunday-school, upon the solicitation of a young lady who called at our house and volunteered to take us. But our experiments in religion came to an abrupt end. Somebody had been talking about Hell, to which my father seriously objected. He was a keen admirer of Mr. Charles Bradlaugh and in a lesser degree of Mrs. Annie Besant; he took me once, at the age of about four, to one of Mr. Bradlaugh's lectures, but I do not think I profited much by the occasion, as to which I can only remember a big broad back blocking my view.

Still, like many other children, I was not without my own private hells. One of these was called "the bury hole." Who put this into my mind I do not know, but I had a good deal of vague fear in connection with it. I thought that little boys called naughty—not really naughty, of course, for there was no such thing! I was quite destitute of what the clergy call the sense of sin—were driven away in a big black hearse, drawn by two black horses hung round with black tassels, to a barren land, where they were then buried up to the neck with their heads sticking out, or were put into a deep hole which was then filled entirely with earth, and thus left to their future. I had no idea of death as a termination of consciousness.

Night I dreaded. My especial trouble for a long time was a dreadful man who had secreted himself under the bed and was always about to plunge a sword right through the mattress into some part of my defenceless anatomy; I always had a dread of this sword, and used to picture quite in detail the events of its playing about in my abdominal regions. And what a trouble my father had to persuade me to go to the barber's shop for the first time! Our mother had always cut our hair before that. Though he remained beside me the whole time, I expected every moment that the barber would cut my throat with one of the razors of

which he had a handsome display, or else would jab the points of his scissors into my eyes.

At night the gas jet used to be left on low in our bedroom. Nevertheless, as I looked at the patch of light on the wall I used to see there malignant grimacing faces. There was always a great battle of wills with these. By force of will I used to convert them piecemeal into portraits of my father, whom I regarded practically as God; but always the portrait would escape control and would change again into some new horror, and so the contest would go on until I fell asleep from sheer exhaustion. I do not think there were any pleasant imaginings to compensate for these. Only sometimes I used to put my head under the bedclothes and deliberately imagine that I was passing along some underground corridors which were literally lined on either side with thousands upon thousands of toys, but only once did I succeed in making it seem at all real to myself.

I kept all my fears entirely to myself, and endured them privately until they gradually faded away, to be replaced by another implanted by my mother. She had a fear of her own, much more real than any of mine, and she did not keep it to herself. It was that her husband might fall ill. He had a delicate appearance, and in some ways was, perhaps, not very strong, especially being a restless sleeper and sometimes subject to biliousness. She considered that after a hard day in town the attention of two boys in the evening might wisely be subjected to a little moderation, which she administered by telling us to be very gentle with our father, lest he fall ill and lose his employment and we find ourselves in the workhouse, pictured as a sort of prison—as indeed it was in those days—or wandering the streets as dreadful, loathsome beggars—objects of which we had plenty of ocular evidence. I then learnt that food, clothing and shelter did not drop as manna from heaven, but that certain means had to be taken to obtain them, and at best it was a precarious business indeed. This thought pre-occupied me for many years. This new sword was all the worse because it not only hovered over myself, but harried me with regard to all sorts of people, some of them quite imaginary.

My mother was not altogether to be blamed for this. She had felt poverty. When my elder brother was born she and her husband had lived in one room in a ramshackle house in

Liverpool, and a moderate gale had sufficed to blow the window in, frame and all, while she lay in bed—a situation distressing enough to two young love-birds who, though they had roughed it a bit before marriage, had known gentler days, for my father had been to a school where the young gentlemen wore toppers, and my mother's family was not without dignity of name.

These two young people had quarrelled violently with their respective fathers, on the subject in each case of a second marriage of the latter, as those were times when fathers were fathers (somewhat as in some remote parts of the world, men are still men, if our modern novelists are to be believed). It was also true that some boys and girls were boys and girls—at least my parents were, though they also proved themselves to be men and women, for they left their respective homes, practically penniless, and subsequently met and loved and married on the munificent income of fifteen shillings a week. However, my father was well educated, trustworthy, intelligent and painstaking, and so he made his way steadily up the ladder of commercial life, ill adapted to it though his previous life had been.

## § 4

At the time of which I am writing our little family had progressed through four houses (materially, not astrologically) since my birth. I was born in one of those houses which are now becoming scarcer, which have no backs, not of course that they are open to the atmosphere, but because the back wall of the rooms is also the back wall of the rooms of another row of houses facing another parallel street.

I do not remember living in that street, but I saw it afterwards, and also heard talk about it. My mother and father always dressed carefully, and even fashionably, and the neighbours, lounging at their doors, were wont to pass audible remarks about them, sometimes more euphonious than classical. So their days were not long in that land. They moved as soon as possible to something a bit better, and again moved, when circumstances permitted, to the place of my earliest recollections, at 52 Bell Street.

Here I became a collector, and even something of a connoisseur, the subject being not pictures, nor china, nor

numismatics, nor philately, but the more modest one of handbills—handbills large and small and of every conceivable colour—which remained for a long time piled in a neat heap in a corner of an empty back upstairs bedroom, until my mother decided that they were harbouring too much dust and too many spiders, and swept the whole lot away.

While we lived in that house, we watched the building of a new row of houses further up the street, and when they were ready we moved—from number 52 to number 26, a mathematical curiosity which stuck firmly in my young mind.

It was in 26 Bell Street, when I was five years and nearly ten months old, that my younger brother was born. That disturbing event happened in the following manner, as far as my share in it was concerned. On a certain evening I had been playing in one of the clay pits, and by dusk I had accumulated about a dozen small clay models, some of them very neatly rounded by rolling between the hands. These precious objects had to be taken home with me. When it came time for sleep I was not allowed to take them into the bed, but after some discussion a compromise was struck and they were placed on a saucer on a small table at the side of the bed.

Evidently I was of a mystical temperament, and quite prepared to regard myself as a modern Pygmalion capable of producing even a round dozen of Venuses, for when I was awakened in the night by thin squeaking and piping sounds and an occasional wail, I was fully prepared to believe that the clay figures had come to life and were beginning to express their individuality and independence. This frightened me, I confess, and I shut my eyes tightly and kept the clothes well pulled up about my head. The next morning I was taken into my mother's bedroom by my father—an unusual procedure, calculated to awaken excitement as well as curiosity. But oh! what a disappointment when I entered the bedroom and found my mother lying in bed with something resembling a large slug beside her, as to which I could see no reason for the fuss that was being made. And my clay images were as dead as ever they had been. I do not think I ever played in the clay pit again. My temper seems also to have been affected a little, for I remember, while my mother was still in bed, threatening

both nurse and housemaid to joint combat with a diminutive cricket bat, because they had eaten all the jam.

Somehow I realized that this thing had come to stay in our house. Probably I had put the question of its departure and had had my feelings dashed by a negative reply. In any case, my misgivings were justified, for, though it was interesting to watch my mother washing and powdering the thing in the mornings, I was often called upon during the day to "mind the baby," an occupation—or rather lack of occupation—which I loathed for its monotony, and also because I very much disliked its dirty ways. What with one thing and another my relations with my mother lost their intimacy, and even, I fear, some of their affectionateness for some time after this.

I would date real affection for my mother from about the age of twelve—too old to show it. I can remember awakenings to love—they were always sudden, and distinct events. One must not expect love in small children. It was related of myself—though the incident is not in my memory—that my father once asked: "You would not like your mother to die, would you?" The disturbing answer was "No; who would get my breakfast ready?" I remember, however, an evening on which my father came home without any plaything in his pocket, and I looked disappointed. He made some remark that showed that he was hurt, and I immediately became aware of his consciousness and was filled with remorse. Before that he had been something in my life. Now his life appeared as something in itself, though coming into mine.

## § 5

After this, world-shaking events began to occur in my life in quick succession. First came the death of my paternal grandfather's second wife (who had been the cause of my father's troubles and poverty, though also the cause indirectly of his alliance with my mother—such is the law of compensation) and a consequent armistice and even slight *rapprochement* between my father and his father, familiarly alluded to as "the Gov'nor." Not that I knew much about this, and it did not appear that there were any pecuniary benefits attaching to it, but its results manifested in my life in the appearance in our house of some dozens



of old school books which had belonged to my father and his elder brothers and had now come to us consequent upon my grandfather's desire to simplify the contents of his household.

I did not myself see the old man until many years later, and then I did not harmonize with him, for I found him to be a short-tempered and dominating old gentleman, though I tried, not very successfully, to be polite. He was a man of some importance in his own world, being proprietor of a wholesale business which was the second largest of its kind in England, and he could not forget it in private life. When later on I went into business on my own account at the age of sixteen, and was quite proud of the sixteen clerks in my office, his patronizing air irritated me much, and I am afraid I caused some anxiety to my father by showing my irritability a little sometimes. "The Gov'nor" and I had too much in common—our short stature, big noses, instinct for money-making and incorrigible obstinacy.

It was my grandfather who made "the warehouse" into a really big business, though his grandfather had established it, but the big nose must have been there before that, for tradition had it that it was brought over from the Continent by some Norman ancestor who had been given a *jaghire* in Yorkshire, but my grandfather's grandfather had degraded it to commerce after recklessly ruining himself in racing and betting on horses in the neighbourhood of London.

This third commercial generation, allied to a country girl from the south of Ireland—where my grandfather frequently went on business—who smoked a long churchwarden clay pipe while sitting in her hooped skirts (although she was the descendant of semi-divine kings!) presented my grandfather with numerous offspring and also the companionship of a brother of hers, rejoicing in the name of Aloysius Gonzigu, who could patronize even my grandfather, and would enter a shop with the command: "Show me the overcoat that you would show to the Prince of Wales if he came in here," and would buy it, too! But I digress once more.

Those books which I mentioned some time ago became almost my principal playthings. Many of them contained intriguing diagrams, particularly Newth's *Natural Philosophy*, as Physics was then called, and Todhunter's *Euclid*; while the root-signs in Colenso's *Algebra* and some trigono-

metry books puzzled me exceedingly. Among the reading books, which were entirely unillustrated, one attracted me especially because it contained a series of stories upon "The Transmigrations of Indur," which I read again and again.

A few months afterwards we brothers caught scarlet fever, and nothing would console me in bed but that about a dozen of these books should be arranged in two piles, one on either side of my pillow, and though they fell down again and again they had always to be replaced. I remember, too, lying in bed and watching some pigeons and sparrows which flitted past the window, and wondering whether, if I died, I should become a pigeon or a sparrow. There was a Dr. Hamil who came to visit us, with his little pointed black beard—a very charming and agreeable gentleman, who quite prevented us from developing any fear of "the doctor." I remember him at an earlier period in our previous house, turning our trousers down and our behinds up to see if we had chicken-pox.

When we were better of scarlet fever, but still not allowed out of the bedroom, my mother went out by herself one afternoon, leaving us locked in the house. I remember how pretty and buoyant she looked as she came back into the bedroom. I think she was very happy about the successful termination of our illness. It was almost a Christmas occasion, she brought back with her so many toys and books. I remember among the books some of the Hesba Stretton series—*Christie's Old Organ*, *Jessica's First Prayer*, and *Max Homburg*—the last a story of Strassburg during the Franco-Prussian war. The advent of these books was the beginning of a sort of religious career of mine, which took place at dead of night, was never made known to anyone else, and was quite short-lived.

It happened that my brother was a much steadier sleeper than I. Not infrequently I would wake in the middle of the night, and feeling cold, would complain against him for taking all the clothes to his side of the bed—until I found that I was lying on the floor, having fallen out of bed. The actual fall never woke me up, but the subsequent cold did. Again, I was much troubled with colds in the head and I would turn periodically from one side to the other, with the stuffed nostril on top, so as to get some relief in breathing, for I resolutely refused to open my mouth. My mother took

what precautions she could against this, rubbed goose grease on my chest and placed hot oven plates wrapped in old blankets in the bed. And she well knew the warm virtues of newspapers and brown paper when laid between the blankets. No, I was not cold, but very restless, while my brother was a steady sleeper.

Thus the stage was well set for my bout of religion, when the handy little books arrived. Waiting till dead of night, when all the household was perfectly quiet, I would silently slip out of bed, creep across the room and turn up the gas sufficiently for me to read. Then I would creep back into bed, draw my book from under the pillow and revel in it for one or two hours. *Christie's Old Organ* was the book particularly suited to the circumstances of my mood. I shuddered over the evils of drink and untruth; I was thrilled with the beauty of kindness and unselfishness. God was a magnification of my father, somehow invisible, yet ever-present—the last an important point. Jesus was my ideal self. I wanted to go about with Him and even more to melt myself into Him. I did not pray, but I yearned. Somehow the references in the stories to persons going to church and praying and performing ceremonies made no impression on me. I would hurry through those portions and seek for passages of human life. Surely if God is really omnipresent these things constitute the reverse of devotion—I felt this, but I did not think it. I was seeking the fulness of life, not trying to understand it.

## CHAPTER II

### PUPILARITY

#### § I

SCHOOL came in its appointed time. My first school lasted a short time for me, mercifully brought to an end by the arrival of the scarlet fever already mentioned. My brother had been going to that school for some time before I started. I think that was how he escaped my fate of having to mind the baby. It was a dame's school run by two sisters. I remember the two ladies—or rather my vision of them—quite well. One was old and dry and always dressed in black, and as stiff as a ramrod, the other very much younger, rounded and playful. We were taken to this school by some elder girls who lived on the opposite side of our street, midway between the old house and the new, but these girls have left no impression upon my memory except for their legs—black boots and stockings. I suppose I was so small that these constituted the chief part of the scenery when I walked with them.

I cannot remember anything in the school except that we sat bunched on benches in an open square waiting for closing time. The elder schoolmistress put the lid completely on this misery, as far as I was concerned, by expecting me to kiss her, or allow her to kiss me. Though it was only a matter of routine—for she went round the whole class systematically, and I remember watching with a sinking heart the deadly peril coming nearer and nearer—when it came I openly and violently rebelled, and thus created quite a sensation and I think a precedent in the school. That school did not see me many times more. I had been so upset that I was quite ill and unfit to attend. I am sure I lost nothing by this absence. It did not seem that they really taught anything, and if they had done so the

memory of the indignity would have driven it from my thoughts.

My second school was a more business-like affair. I was much impressed by the huge building—a large main half curtained off for several classes, and a number of separate rooms. I joined that school on my seventh birthday. My first memory of it is that of standing before one whom I may call the reception clerk, along with three or four other boys. Do what I would I could not make that man understand that it was my birthday.

" How old are you ? "

" Seven " (years understood).

" And when was your birthday ? "

" To-day."

He persisted in thinking I had misunderstood him, and what he ultimately wrote down in his record I have no idea. I paid my tenpence—it was tenpence a week—and that was that.

That school was a great place for misunderstandings. Sometimes the teachers misunderstood me ; sometimes I misunderstood them. I remember an occasion when our class was confronted with a large map of Egypt and the land of Canaan. The teacher was instructing us in the wanderings of the Jews. I was somewhat interested in this, for I thought he was talking about the migrations of some kind of black birds. Crows were interesting ; ancient Jews not at all. It was only afterwards, in another school (my fourth), that I learnt what ancient Jews really were, though I remembered very clearly the configuration of the map, and understood that quite well.

It was in that same class and on that very occasion that I was first threatened with physical violence at school—first, that is, if we omit the kissing from that category. There were about four rows of boys in that class, arranged on the gallery system. I was on the second row. At the beginning of the lesson the teacher used to appoint one boy to stand at the end of each row and watch the others, and call out the names of any boys who appeared to be inattentive to the teacher, such boys being then required to stand out in front of the class. There would usually be about half a dozen of these boys by the end of the lesson, each of whom would receive a whack on the hand from the cane of the teacher and then would go back to his place.

I remember that my name was called out on the occasion of the wanderings of the Jews, but I pretended not to hear, and for some reason the monitor did not insist.

Teachers differed very much in their temper and degree of cruelty. There was one man, whom we called Toby, who was constantly and ferociously cruel, until one day the father of one of the boys walked in and gave him a thorough thrashing before the whole class, which laid him up in hospital for several weeks. There was one horrible schoolmaster, very often half-drunk, who used to beat little boys, but leave the bigger ones alone, and that was commented upon privately by all the boys.

Another schoolmaster, a thick-set man with a very dark beard, assembled the whole school of perhaps five hundred boys, and then, holding one small boy aloft by the back of his coat, with one strong hand, administered to him a merciless beating with a stick held in the other. In whispered consultation with other boys I tried to learn what the boy had done, and understood that he had been guilty of soiling the wrong portion of the school latrine. This was what was called "an example." Of what? Quite apart from any abnormal soiling, those school latrines were dreadfully noisome; it was necessary to go into them sometimes, but always a torture. There were obviously sins of omission as well as of commission in connection with them, but the former were excused.

I remember another misunderstanding in that same school. There was to be an examination. We were taken into a big room with individual desks on which paper, pens and ink and other articles were laid out. Cards were then handed round, containing questions which we were to answer. There was no pen on my desk, so I sat still, while the others were either writing or chewing their penholders, as the case might be. Presently a pleasant young man came along and looked at me.

"Have you no pen?"

"Yes," I replied, meaning, quite logically, that I had not a pen.

He went away, and I waited patiently for him to bring the pen, but it did not come. After a long time someone else came up.

"Where is your pen?"

"I don't know."

I assumed that there must be a certain pen intended for me, since he talked of my pen, but I did not know where they had put it. However, after some further confused discussion he seemed to understand that no pen had been placed on my desk that morning. I had lost about half my time, but came through the examination all right. All these things occurred in somewhat of a dream, which only occasionally took on the aspect of a nightmare.

Many years afterwards I had a similar experience in a High Court in India, when I happened to be one of the witnesses in a rather celebrated case.

"Did you," asked the advocate, "on the night of August 22nd, sleep in the next room with a big stick, intending to prevent anyone from molesting So-and-so?"

I hesitated, and was about to try to explain what had really happened.

The Judge thundered: "Answer the question, Yes or No!"

With obvious discomfort I answered "No," though in fact it was only the date that was wrong. And later, in the written judgment of the case, in the Appellate Court appeared the interesting remark: "I do not believe—(another witness's name, very similar to mine!) when he says that he did not sleep in an adjacent room with a big stick for the purpose of preventing any interference with——"

The only other thing of note that I remember in that school was the spelling lessons, held in the same examination room. They did not give me much trouble, as I seem to have had an eye for the form of words, but I was much struck by the lack of uniformity in the spelling of similar sounds, and I theorized to myself on the vast amount of time wasted and trouble caused to children thereby. No wonder the English do not learn many languages, when they have to spend so much time and energy learning their own.

St. Luke's School was about fifteen minutes' walk from our house. I remember walking there by myself sometimes, with a satchel over my shoulder. After passing the spot where I had formerly seen the old woman gathering her peck of dirt, one came to a road which ran along two sides of a square field which was fenced in. I remember that field very well because of an incident that happened one day on my way to school.

While walking along beside the fence I had been enter-

taining myself with a little cinematograph which I carried in my hand. Perhaps I had better explain. One of the early childhood toys which my mother used sometimes to make for us consisted of a large button, through two holes of which a circle of thin string or thread was run and the two ends tied together. Holding the thread taut, horizontally, by looping it over the two middle fingers, with the button standing vertically in the middle of it, one gave the button a number of turns so as to twist the threads, then started the button spinning by gradually drawing the threads tight so as to untwist them, and then allowing the momentum to twist the thread the other way, by gradually reducing the pull on the thread, and so, alternately increasing and reducing the pull, one caused the button to spin with great speed. The cinematograph was somewhat on that principle. A stiff card, with pictures on the margins, was mounted on two pieces of string. By making it to revolve at a certain speed, one caused the pictures partially to blend, and lo, the cow jumped over the moon.

While I was strolling along engrossed in this interesting occupation, I suddenly heard a loud shout from the rear. I looked round, and there, to my horror, was a large policeman, shouting and gesticulating and hurrying towards me. Having no more confidence in the law outside school than within it, I fled for my life, the policeman after me.

After running some distance, I looked fearfully round to see how far away my pursuer was, and then observed that he was not running very fast and was holding up to my view, as he shouted, a school satchel. I suddenly realized that mine was missing—I must have dropped it—and that this was it, which he wished to return to me. Half-reassured, I warily approached the policeman, and as he held the satchel at arm's length, I took it from him also at arm's length, and once more fled. One never knew what trick a policeman might play to get a little boy into prison, so that he could enjoy himself by gloating through the bars, and saying: "Fee, fi, fo, fum," or something equally dreadful.

Teachers, too, were a bit ogreish. When they asked a question they did not want you to say what *you* knew or thought on the subject, but they wanted you to guess what was in their minds. It was a sort of idiotic game, having little to do with facts. I remember that we were once asked to write a small essay on the telephone—a typical subject



for small boys coming chiefly from penurious homes!—and got myself much abused for mentioning, among other things, that there had been telephones in Egypt—yet I had read that very thing in a weekly paper of snippets or titbits. I do not suppose that one single boy in that class had ever seen a telephone instrument. I was fortunate enough to have had a toy one—two little parchment drums connected by a thread. My father had played with us with it, and talked about it, so I had something to say.

On another occasion, on a sixth of November, we were asked to write on our experiences of a Guy Fawkes' night bonfire. I said that it was a wonderfully big fire, and that it actually had not gone out until ten o'clock at night! The teacher, having more spacious ideas and experience, insisted that that must be altered to ten o'clock the next morning, though what I had said was perfectly accurate. The school day was one round of bickering. If it was not oneself, it was someone else in the class.

## § 2

I did not stay in that school more than a year. As soon as circumstances were favourable my parents decided to move further out of town, into what was then a little old-fashioned country place, but near enough to town for my father to go and come by train daily. But before I relate what occurred in our new residence I must mention The Four Events of the Year, far more important than the Christian or any other Calendar. These were—in order of importance in our eyes—a week at Blackpool, Christmas, a visit to Hamilton's Panorama, and a Saturday afternoon at the Zoological Gardens.

At Blackpool the prime thing was to dig in the sand and let the waves supply water to the moats of the castles which you made. It did not outrage our sense of the fitness of things when the waves overdid their business and flooded the whole works. Rather the young mind rejoiced at this opportunity for a spectacle of destruction. Niggers were there, but I admired only their athletic exhibitions, not their blackness, nor their buffoonery, which hurt my feelings, which were over-sensitive to human dignity. Lucky packets absorbed a large number of our pennies. The sense of height was satisfied by walks and play on the pier,

especially when the waves roared and bounded about beneath, as waves can at Blackpool. The pier also contained many slot machines, and when I saw other people about to drop their pennies therein I used to buzz along to see the fun. There was only one slot machine that tempted me—a “try your grip” machine, which would give you your penny back if you could ring the bell. I put my penny through again and again, joyously listening to the ringing of the bell when I pulled, until at last I lost it. There must have been something wrong with that machine—a small boy could not have been so strong in the wrist. Another attraction was a phrenologist, with his curious diagrams and little lectures outside his tent. I sunk sixpence on him once and learned that I ought to become a doctor, or failing that an auctioneer, though to this day I cannot see the connection between the two.

Talking of the pier reminds me of my father's next younger brother, whom we always liked for both his jollity and his largess. He was in “the warehouse” (and, in fact, inherited it when my grandfather died) and consequently was well-to-do. Nearly always when he visited us he would slip coins into our hands on his way to the front door. I recollect that at a very early age he held out before me a large brown coin and a very little white one and asked me which I would have. I chose the threepenny bit, having been born canny in such matters. He and his wife came to Blackpool when we were there. The latter was a profoundly respectable lady, daughter of a clergyman in a family which took religion and social restrictions very seriously. Once my uncle was riding in a tramcar and talking to a friend, and his wife's father happened to be sitting on the other side in the far corner (the seats used to run the length of the car). The friend got out, and the father-in-law came over and sat beside the son-in-law.

“I am surprised,” he said, “to see you so friendly with that man. Don't you know that he is a Roman Catholic?”

Well, my uncle was always very jolly (except when he was, not infrequently, steeped in profound melancholy) and at Blackpool there occurred a grand opportunity to have a little game with his wife. She was sitting on a seat at the side of the pier, my father and his brother and we boys being on the sand beneath. Suddenly my uncle looked up to the

pier, cupped his hands at the side of his mouth and shouted in the broadest possible Lancashire dialect: " Eh, missus! 'Ast 'ad ta baggin' ? " to her great confusion, and to the amusement of the numerous onlookers, who certainly thought they had discovered a shining example of the new rich. Still, she could not be displeased for long with my uncle; he was so genuinely good-natured, even if his playfulness was sometimes embarrassing. Perhaps, by the way, his remark needs translation. It meant nothing more than " Have you had your lunch ? "

The journey from our home to Blackpool in the train occupied about an hour and a half, but that was all too long. I used to sit whenever possible with my face to the engine in a corner window seat. I would put my hand against the side of the frame of the window and push as hard as I could, to speed the train along. We used generally to return at night so as to make as much of the holiday as possible. Looking into the darkness through the windows I was much frightened in my younger days by the horrible faces that were to be seen there. Only later on I learnt that they were the reflections of the faces of my fellow-passengers.

Children have a great capacity for looking forward. I believe we began to think about Christmas as soon as the summer holidays were over. Its chief events for us were the presents to be found at the foot of the bed on Christmas morning, a visit to the pantomime, and a tour of the decorated shops. Of all the things ever found at the foot of the bed the most exciting were two watches complete with chains—watches that really went, and told the time, and made us feel very grown up. They had been sent by our jolly uncle. The only thing to mar the full enjoyment of them was the fact that we should have to write letters of thanks—rather a formidable task.

Perhaps some readers of these recollections will remember that the three great symbols of initiation into the brotherhood of men are the first watch, the first pair of long trousers, and the first cigarette. Those watches at least made us feel our novitiate, although we knew that the long trousers and the cigarette were still far ahead.

As to the pantomime, one never understood the story, but the transformation scenes gave a glimpse of other worlds, perhaps of real fairylands in which the hard facts of our world could be escaped at will. One heard some ladies call

these scenes heavenly, and formed one's pictures of heaven accordingly.

Hamilton's Panorama used to put in its appearance in the largest hall in our city about half-way between Blackpool and Christmas. It must have been a gigantic undertaking for Mr. Hamilton, or whoever was behind the scenes. For about two hours scenes from all over the world would unroll themselves across the back of the stage, accompanied by the most realistic sound and light effects. A ship would come sailing through a smooth starlit sea. Gradually dawn would appear, the sun would rise, and as the day wore on clouds would make their appearance, a storm would blow up and lash the elements into fury. Then lightning, rain and wind would afflict the scene until at last the ship either sank before our eyes or won its way through the storm to a peaceful harbour—and all in the comfortable space of about ten minutes. Within a similar period the Bay of Naples would present its charm, and Vesuvius its fearsome possibilities, while a gentleman in evening dress and a huge moustache explained in an Oxford voice the implications of the scene. And interspersed between these grander demonstrations, a Chinese juggler or conjurer would perform for us in a street in Hong Kong, and Hungarian acrobats would imperil their lives for our delectation in marble halls of Italy or among the minarets of India.

In anticipation of Hamilton's Panorama, before leaving Blackpool we used to buy little panoramas for twopence each. They were shaped like a stage front, and there were about twenty pictures mounted on rollers. Unfortunately the pictures consisted mostly of scenes of such doubtful educational value as the murder of the little princes in the Tower. I will give them credit, however, for being very realistically executed.

The visit to the Zoo was a movable feast, occurring some time between Christmas and Blackpool, and much dependent on the weather. It was literally a feast, in the restricted modern use of the word, as it always included a period devoted to the consumption of ices—not ice cream, but real ices, which were composed, I suppose, of ice chopped up small and sugared and then served in small saucers. This and the elephant ride were the two chief features of the Zoo. There were animals to look at, but they were not very interesting, being shut up in little enclosures behind bars, and for

the most part looking very bored. It was much more interesting to feed the ducks in the park, to see them swim under the little bridges and come out on the other side, though when they put down their heads and stood with their tails out of the water one did not know whether it was proper to continue staring, and wondering at the suppressed giggles of the young ladies standing near by.

## § 3

One day there came to our house two big furniture vans with splendid heavy-weight horses and three men in thick green aprons, who clumped into the house, drank glasses of beer at one draught, and in a marvellously short time deposited all our belongings on the pavement outside in a sea of straw, for the covert scrutiny of the neighbours, prior to packing them in the vans.

Leaving them to finish their work, my mother took us off by bus, train and foot, *seriatim*; first, through the suburbs into a big railway station, then in the train—one never ceased wondering how it could go without horses, nor fearing that it would mount the platform as it came with a deafening roar into the station. For five minutes the train clanked across a veritable sea of railway lines, among chimneys and factories; then it went through a long and perfectly dark tunnel, and finally it ran for another five minutes in a cutting with grass on either side, ultimately depositing us in a little country station, with nothing outside but fields and fences.

Fifteen minutes' walk brought us to some new building activities, a few rows of little houses with small spaces for gardens in front. One of these, number 30 Brookfield Avenue, was our destination, and there really were both a field and a brook within forty or fifty yards—or I should say one brook and many fields, as far as the eye could reach, containing occasional thatched cottages and rambling farm-houses—one of them with black and white gables and the distinction of having been slept in by Queen Elizabeth on one of her journeys to the north.

This was indeed a new world. Often we used to watch the builder's men preparing for new rows of houses by cutting down the old oak and beech trees, watching with an illusion of participating in the work. In the mornings we would

walk the long distance—on a footpath, with a field of poppies on one side, an orchard on the other, through the cobbled yard of a farm, then along a road through “the old village,” past the smithy—often lingering to see a horse shod, or a piece of iron hammered into shape on the anvil, to the accompaniment of glittering sparks, which never hurt the big strong man in the leather apron—past a few little shops with window panes six inches square, and round a corner to the old school, which stood in a garden, looked like a church, and was a thousand times nicer outside than in. In front of the school was the village green—a small triangle of land, having at one point “the old church” and on the other two sides of the triangle respectively, a little thatched farm and a public-house with a swinging sign.

In the school—twopence a week this time—we were taught by a fat girl with a big flat face. I remember her name, but forbear to mention it. She liked history, I think, for she awoke our young English blood to patriotism with her accounts of Caractacus and Cassivellaunus and Boadicea, and dropped us to depths of gloom and horror with her grim stories of the many civil wars of England. She added also to our already awakened pessimism a picture of probable wars to come.

The boys were a rough lot, speaking an only half intelligible language. The first day, at close of school, a big fellow came up to me.

“I can fight you,” he announced. He did, too, in a ring of ghoulis onlookers, but I do not remember to have been much hurt, and nobody troubled me any more with attentions of that kind.

There was, however, a disagreeable group of boys who used to shout from the other side of the road when some of us were walking home. One of these—the most troublesome—rejoiced in the name of Livingstone. One day, these boys were shouting something particularly offensive from a distance behind us, and in exasperation I picked up a flint from the side of the path and threw it at them, not intending to hurt but only to frighten them. With beginner’s luck—ill-luck this time—I hit Livingstone fair and square on the head. It was several weeks before he could return to school.

I expected dire consequences, but nothing happened. Evidently the boys kept the matter to themselves and

invented some excuse for the broken head. But they must have regarded me as a potential Chicago gangster, something quite the reverse of truth, for I was physically nervous. I did almost everything from a motive of cowardice. Our teachers seemed to encourage that ignoble motive, for they were always telling us to study hard so that we might save ourselves from being among those whose faces are walked upon in the battle of life, to take physical exercises so as to avoid disease, to be honest so as to avoid prison, to be good so that God would not send us to hell, and finally and above all to obey themselves, in order to avoid a whacking.

I was really sorry that I hit poor Livingstone on the head, for I bore him no malice. Nevertheless, by some peculiarity of fate or coincidence, I have been repaid in kind and with interest for that injury. In the half-dozen or so motor-car and other accidents in which I have since participated I have invariably been injured on the head and nowhere else. Fate began to work in this direction comparatively soon after the incident I have mentioned. One day I had been much out of sorts, and I was lying on the sofa while my mother was sewing near the window at the other side of the room. Suddenly I said to myself: "It is all nonsense lying here feeling sick. The thing to do is to get up and do something!" With a leap I jumped up from the sofa, only to meet the corner of an open cupboard door just above my head.

I have never seen a woman cry as my mother did as she took me into her arms in a rocking-chair and mopped up the blood with several towels. When I was able to go back to school I was the proud bearer for weeks of a conspicuous patch of sticking plaster on a partially shaved head. The spot still remains without hair, although it is now threatening to merge itself into that bright and shining place where there is no parting.

Perhaps I owed something in the bank of fate, too, on account of the numerous jacksharps, tadpoles, moths and caterpillars which had met an untimely fate at my hands, having been incarcerated in various bowls, jars and boxes which were evidently not suited to them. But I was never cruel, like some of the boys, who used to catch frogs, insert straws into their recta and blow them up until they burst. Or like the cartmen who were bringing bricks to the houses opposite, who, when language failed, used to kick their

horses in the stomach with their hobnailed boots in order to force them over the rougher parts. Or like the farmer whom I once watched through the hedge of the village green as he walked about his garden, picked up one duck after another, slit its throat with his penknife and then put it down again on the ground, where it walked a few feet and then threw a somersault backwards. Or like those other farmers who hung the squealing pigs by the back legs while they poured boiling water over them so that the bristles might come out more easily afterwards. But once more I am in danger of digressing.

I was speaking, I think, of luck, in connection with stone-throwing. I had another stroke of luck one day, or rather one night. Once a travelling fair came to our village and set itself up on a vacant plot of ground beside the police station. One evening my brother and I begged twopence each and went off with a few friends to enjoy ourselves thereat. First I turned my attention to the roulette wheel. One put a halfpenny on a chosen number on the circle which surrounded a spinning pointer. The man in charge spun the wheel, and if the pointer stopped opposite the number containing the coin one received a coco-nut. Failing that, the halfpenny was irretrievably lost, with nothing to show for it. Down went my halfpenny, I got a coco-nut. As I did not want the coco-nut, I sold it back to the man for twopence. I suppose he thought he would get the twopence back. Thirteen times running this phenomenon was repeated. Calculate—thirteen twopences, minus thirteen halfpennies. I was beginning to be in clover. On the fourteenth turn I lost, pocketed my balance and, with a deaf ear to the man who was urging me to try again, turned away. I shared the money in equal parts with my friends, who quite logically maintained that they deserved it as much as I did and watched them spend it on swings and roundabouts, while I kept my portion, to go home triumphantly about as rich as I had come out, which could be said of few people who attended that fair. I think I shall never play at Monte Carlo, for no one can expect such luck twice in a lifetime. Only once have I ventured to lay down any stakes at roulette—in the Casino at Santos in Brazil—when I found this axiom duly confirmed.



## § 4

We had the luck of being removed from the twopenny school after a few months. Whether my grandfather had suddenly melted, and decided no longer to visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, or whether my father had made one of his periodical advances in the business world, I do not know. Anyhow, we were sent to what was considered the best private high school within reach. It was rather a small affair—about a hundred boys.

We were excited by the playground, which was actually composed partly of grass, on which we could have splendid games of leap frog and "cappy" without hurting ourselves too much. The idea of the last was that one boy would make a back over which the others had to go in turn, each leaving his cap behind. Sooner or later one of the leapers would upset the caps, and would then have to make a "back."

There was also a greenhouse in that playground, but I fancy the chief thing about it was the schoolmaster's son, who used to sit there smoking a pipe, to keep the insects off the plants, he said. I suppose this exhibition must have started many boys smoking surreptitiously. I was once induced to go shares in the expenses of a packet of cigarettes. I tried one of them behind a wall, and decided that as an amusement smoking was overrated, and though as an assertion of manhood it might have its points, a halfpenny in the pocket was much more desirable than a cigarette in the mouth.

It was about this time that my brief musical career began. When our piano first arrived I had solemnly announced to my father that I did not intend to learn to play in the ordinary way; I simply wanted to make a noise by knocking on the keys. However, he firmly informed me that I must learn properly or leave it alone. The upshot of it was that once a week my brother and I went to the house of a little old lady (that is what we called Miss Nash, though probably she was only about thirty—for such is the judgment of the young) and made a sufficient progress with her help and an hour's practice every day. It was a tiresome obstacle that my hands were too small to stretch an octave, though I gradually overcame this difficulty with regard to the left hand only, by forcing my thumb to become double jointed at the root, thus increasing my span by nearly an inch.

At Blackpool I had been much impressed by the sound of a mandoline, played in a concert on the pier, and nothing would satisfy me but to add this also to my musical accomplishments. My indulgent father immediately bought one of the instruments and brought it home. For some time I learnt to play alone, and afterwards at the big school of music in the city, where they brought me to the point of playing in public. I nearly became a professional musician at the age of thirteen, as will shortly appear.

It was now time for us to remove again to a new house. My mother always absolutely refused to have one which had been occupied by anybody before. She seemed to have an idea that it would retain emanations from the previous occupants. We removed a very short distance to a high-standing three-storied house directly overlooking a beautiful meadow containing many oak and beech trees. This meadow had the form of a valley, the brook already mentioned running down the middle. It had also the great merit of being accessible for play, as a public path ran across it. It was a fine place for flying kites, which we used to make for ourselves often in fantastic shapes. One of mine took the form of a phrenological head marked with the localities of the various faculties, copied from a chart issued by the professor of the art on Blackpool sands.

Safety bicycles now came within our ken. The word safety has long been dropped, but it was used then to distinguish the new bicycles having wheels about the same size from the old ones which had one big wheel in front, with pedals attached to its hubs, and a tiny little wheel behind. We used occasionally to watch performers on the old type of bicycle—I say performers because they were rarely riders, but seemed to spend most of their time getting on and falling off. We saw, too, the big roller skates, with wheels which appeared about nine inches in diameter. A man ran from London to Manchester on these and we saw him pass. It seemed terribly dangerous. I wondered if he had any sort of braking arrangement. I saw, too, one of the first motor-cars, with a man running in front shouting and waving a red flag, as required by law.

The new safety bicycles were heavy things, with solid rubber tyres and no free wheel. My father bought one cheap from a man who had been stopped in a country road by a burly fellow who grasped his handlebar and demanded his

money. Though the cyclist had saved his money by pulling a spanner out of his pocket and with it dealing a smashing blow to the hand on the handlebar, and then riding swiftly away, the incident had spoiled his taste for cycling in the country.

A second bicycle, for my elder brother, soon appeared. Then, of course, the question of one for me arose. One Saturday afternoon my father and mother and I looked at a small-size bicycle in one of the big shops. It was, alas, very expensive—about five pounds. We had walked some distance away from the shop in silence and gloom, when I heard my mother say quietly to my father: "Think of the child's feelings——" My mother was that said-to-be-rare phenomenon, a woman who does not speak much. She could always convey a lot of meaning, however, in half a dozen words.

My father went back to the shop alone and later arrived home, having ridden with great difficulty on the tiny machine, with his knees knocking the handle-bar at every rotation. So I became the possessor not of a heavy old hard-tyred second-hand bicycle, but of a brand new machine having the marvellous pneumatic tyres, which had only just come in and about which we and apparently even the shopman knew so little at first that my father had actually ridden it home on flat tyres, not knowing that they had to be pumped up. Fortunately it did not spoil them.

How my brother and I cleaned those bicycles, down even to the ball bearings, in preparation for the Sunday morning rides which our father took with us all over the surrounding country-side! My mother, however, could not be persuaded to become one of "the new women," who at that date began to go on bicycles and were generally treated to rude remarks and sometimes to stones. She was free to come, as we had by then a maid, or rather a succession of maids. One of them, I remember, new from the country, blacklead all the spoons, with disastrous effect when we started to eat our boiled eggs!

## § 5

Although our new school was considered to be very highly respectable, and intended for the "sons of gentlemen" (there might have been no ladies involved from the little one heard of them in this connection) things were not

entirely what they seemed. There were some rough boys, a few bullies, and some worse than that. I remember an occasion when two of these bullies hoisted me on their shoulders to carry me off somewhere for purposes of petty torture, but I managed to free myself at the expense of a nasty bump, by giving one of them a kick in the ear with all my force. They dropped me to the ground, upon which I ran across the street, put my back to a large plate-glass shop window, and from that vantage pelted them with stones until they went away.

I used sometimes to see some of the boys rolling on the grass ; one would be on his back and the others apparently playfully pulling off his clothes. I did not like that sort of rough and tumble, and I vowed that if any of them subjected me to those indignities I would not stop short of killing them. Only years afterwards I learnt from one of them that those invasions of one another's privacy were a prelude to private instruction in sexual vice. In the vista of years I do not think as badly as I did of those boys. I realize that heredity varies enormously in respect of the sex-excitement and sex-imagination that is such a peculiar and unnatural feature of humanity. It never troubled me. Years afterwards, in translating from Sanskrit, I wrote with regard to a certain type of sinner : " He will be reborn from the womb of a wild cock," and never noticed the incongruity until somebody showed me a marked copy of my book !

In our family there was always more education in the home than at school. We were voracious readers of weekly papers and novels. At an early age, my brother and I had read all Dickens and a great part of Walter Scott and Thackeray. While still in Brookfield Avenue I had an exercise book containing a list of all the books I had read, and it then numbered over eighty, though among these I included serial stories which I had read in *Chums* and *The Boy's Own Paper*. Also, my father was always willing to teach when we were willing to learn. He started us off with French when I was eight years old, and he taught me also Pitman's shorthand, in which I ultimately attained the respectable speed of a hundred and eighty words a minute, which I could keep up on the average for an hour and read completely afterwards, and he taught me also a good amount of commercial book-keeping, including double entry.

I think our school was almost useless for learning anything, however excellent its respectability. If a boy could teach himself in it, well and good, not otherwise. Practically nothing was ever explained.

"Form III. Open your geography books, page 54. Study to the end of page 55. I will hear you at four o'clock." The master would then go out, to obtain a drop for his thirst, duly return in an irritable mood, call our form "up," and question us. There was much indignation if we had not learnt the lesson, though the idea of teaching it never seemed to enter his mind. He used to give us marks on the results of these questions, and call them out for us to enter in our mark books at the end of the day. Still I got on pretty well. I was eager to learn, and was always running neck and neck at the head of the class with a boy named Carver, about two years older than myself. I had ambitions, and used still at home to make use of the old school books in subjects not taught in the school at our age. I would get down on the floor of the bedroom—somehow I was able to study better on the floor—with *Initia Latina* until again and again my mother would come in and literally drive me out unwillingly to play.

We had in our school a real army sergeant, full of talk about the Crimean war. He conducted real army drill with wooden imitation rifles, in the playground, often with errand boys jeering over the wall. I detested those wooden rifles, and the sneering tongue of the sergeant, and wanted to have as little as possible to do with them. One day he offered me the corporal's stripe in our platoon and his indignation when I declined it knew no bounds, I hated the sham of it all.

Two of our fellow-students were Greeks. I very much wanted to make a beginning with Greek, and begged of the elder to teach me the Greek alphabet, which he could rattle off with alluring speed. But the mercenary young scamp demanded too high a price—as much as sixpence, I think—which was more than I could make in a fortnight by selling marbles at half the shop prices, since it had become known that I could win all the marbles that came within reach.

One of our favourite occupations in the school was map-drawing. The son of the schoolmaster, himself a junior master, used to supply us with railway maps from various parts of the world, which we would copy on full sheets of

printing paper pinned on our drawing-boards. We had large and expensive drawing-boards, which we were expected occasionally to carry home in black alpaca covers, as also those wooden rifles; this no doubt being a subtle advertisement for the school. It appeared that each boy had one or two favourite colours for doing the outlines of the countries in his maps—mine was pale chrome, and sometimes we used to quarrel on account of our loyalty to our respective colours. We had also favourite towns. Two that struck my fancy particularly were Boston and Philadelphia, and another was the smaller Hyderabad in Sind, where, curiously enough, I was to become Principal of the College later on.

Crayon drawing was also a popular subject—it gave such a good opportunity for many of the boys to stand round the hot stove sharpening their pencils. My brother was a born artist, could draw and paint as well as write beautifully without an effort. Me, I could never write on the line, and drawing was an effort that fatigued me enormously, and produced results that exasperated the drawing master. When he saw such little and such poor results he accused me of idling, and when I denied that, he accused me of lying, for which he lost every atom of respect I might have had for him, though he probably cared as little for my good will as I cared for his.

I had a curious experience, which might be called psychic, about this time. As I was walking home from school, crossing a little street, I seemed to hear a voice, which asked me whether I would rather be tall or short "this time." I will not attempt to say what peculiarity of the subconscious mind or other cause may have produced this, but will only record that it was perfectly clear, and took me in such a mood that I did not till afterwards wonder what it meant by the curious expression "this time." I had been for some time in a mood of humility. I wanted to go through life inconspicuously, and I had some subtle and indefinite dislike for anything in the world in the shape of pomp or display. It may have been this which caused me to give the reply, after the slightest hesitation, that I would choose the short. In any case, I scarcely grew for several years, though fortunately I made a bit of a spurt after sixteen, which at last gave me my meagre five feet six inches of height.

At last my brother left school to go to business. I wanted to leave at the same time, for I did not think that school could teach me any more, and I was impatient to be a man and independent. I was then twelve years old. However, everybody decided that I was too young to leave, so I had to spend another year in a class by myself at the top of the school—a little fellow, and younger by years than many of the other boys. Practically I studied by myself for that year. I took some of the ancient school books and showed them to the schoolmaster, and he permitted me to study them by myself, saying that he would help me when I came to any difficulties. His help did not amount to much. I remember going to him with some difficulties in Colenso's *Algebra* (I still have the book—about seventy-five years old). Poor man, he had to confess that he had forgotten, and suggest that I should look at the answers and try to work from them backwards.

I had ambitions. I wanted to become a doctor, or failing that a student interpreter in Japan. No luck. What with shortage of money, unkind reports by the schoolmaster—to cover his own shortcomings—and the tradition of business, it was decided that I should become an apprentice in a wholesale warehouse. I was far too young for a shipping firm.

## CHAPTER III

### JUNIORITY

#### § I

WHEN I left school my mother pressed that I should be allowed a holiday for some months before being sent to work, and gained her point. But it proved disastrous. I became one of the unemployed even before I was employed. I must have presented myself to twenty or thirty heads of firms before I got a chance. I would be called into the private office and questioned on my scholastic attainments, which were quite satisfactory, and then the trouble would begin, always the same.

“ You are very small. You look pale. Are you strong ? When did you leave school ? ”—and then the dreadful question, which I soon learnt to recognize as sealing my fate : “ What have you been doing since you left school ? ” And finally : “ Well, we will let you know, ”—which they never did, even negatively. I believe there were always anything from twenty to two hundred applicants for those posts.

Some of these people who interviewed me were kindly, but most of them were rude, and a few bullies. One disagreeable man asked if I knew all the streets in the city, and when I replied “ Yes, ” thinking quite naturally that he meant the main streets, since no one could possibly be expected to know all the others, he blackguarded me disgracefully for a young liar. And this, when I was suffering from truthfulness with regard to the date of leaving school ! My discomforts as a truth addict began early.

However, I got a position at last as an apprentice in a millinery warehouse. The proprietor who engaged me was



a charming gentleman, and spoke very kindly and encouragingly—he would give me five shillings a week for the first year and I was to go through a three years' apprenticeship. But unluckily he had as practical manager (the devil for steward, as so often!) a younger brother of his who was rather a freak, six feet three inches tall, and proportionately disagreeable. He had a curious manner and way of speaking which made me wonder whether he was right in the head and was not put there out of a compassion which would be very natural in his brother.

I was in the ribbon department. We supplied some hundreds, I should think, of retail shops. In the early morning I had to see that all the reels of ribbon were neatly arranged on the long counters in the enormous showroom, and, with a feather duster, to see that they were kept free from the minutest speck of dust. In the afternoons our customers would generally come in. Most of them were ladies, probably milliners, for ribbons were much used in ladies' hats. In the evening two of us would cover everything up with large dust-sheets.

It was part of my work to tie up some of the parcels, for the ribbons could not be sent to the packing-room in an exposed condition. The senior apprentice, after having been told to show me how to do everything, did all in his power to prevent me from getting to know how things were to be done, so that it was some time before I discovered the best way even to turn the string and form the knots of the parcels. Once he demanded money to show me something, but soon came to the conclusion, I think, that if I had not come from Aberdeen I must have had an ancestor who had.

The hours of work for everybody were fairly long in those days. I used to go to town on my father's train, which left the station at five minutes to seven. He would awaken me at six o'clock, and then we would have an intensive hour working together (it was a period of no maid) making the fire, cleaning the boots, preparing and eating our breakfast and—I look back upon this with surprise—doing ten minutes Sandow exercises, also together (I used dumb-bells weighing eight pounds each), in addition to all the business of getting ourselves ready, including the fixing of stiff collars and cuffs which were very hard on the thumbs.

My father used to wear "solitaire" cuff-links—the kind

which came in two pieces, and of which you punched the stem of the head into the socket of the lower piece. I remember a curious incident that occurred before I left school in connection with these. I was walking home, when I saw lying on the pathway the head of a gold cuff link. I put it in my pocket. That evening my father told us that during the day he had lost the head of one of his cuff links. I pulled my find out of my pocket and handed it to him. It fitted perfectly, though of quite a different design from the one he had lost. I never found a cuff-link head before, nor since, nor did he lose one.

Thus our day began with forty minutes' miscellaneous rather strenuous activities. Then ten minutes' quick walk in the dark (for a large part of the year) brought us to the railway station. After getting out of the train I had another fifteen minutes' walk through the city streets to the warehouse, and so I would arrive in good time. The warehouse hours were from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., with an hour's interval for lunch. Then back through the city streets to the train and through the country lanes from the train home—wash, tea, a game of chess with my father and at last bed. Rather a heavy day for a boy of thirteen, especially in a city where the presence of sulphur in the air, from burning coal, necessitated the weekly removal to the country of the decorative plants growing in tubs in the city square. We were keen chess players at that time; I entered for the "Hobbies" correspondence tournament and came out in the third place.

I lost my job after two or three months. It was decided to remove one of the departments to another room in a distant part of the building. Nothing was to be done during the day, lest a customer come in and find us disarrayed. But at 6 p.m. we were told to start carrying the things. I was already very tired with standing all day, having nothing to eat since breakfast except a very meagre lunch, but I tried to do my share of carrying. By eight o'clock I could hardly walk, but when I said so I was merely rebuked for laziness. By nine I was on the verge of collapse, so I told the department manager that I simply must go home, and I went—without his consent. The next day the general manager came along, about six feet three inches towering above me. He poured out words of indignation, and the end of the conversation, or rather monologue, was that I must

leave when the month was up. I left that night, and forfeited whatever wages were due.

## § 2

Then began again the answering of questions. As I had no reference I had to say I had not been engaged before, which was very galling. And the question as to what I had been doing since I left school was more formidable than ever. Luckily, after a month or two, a warehouse in which my elder brother had worked wanted an apprentice. I applied, and because they had been delighted with my brother they gave me the job, merely remarking: "You don't look strong."

At first I was in the ready-mades department—workmen's shirts, women's aprons, children's frocks and what not. Attached to our department was a workroom, with thirty or forty girls incessantly toiling at sewing machines, the sight of whom moved me to the profoundest pity. By working in those dismal surroundings from morning till night for fifty-one weeks in the year they could just keep body and soul together, but they could not clothe themselves well, nor provide themselves with decent and sufficient shoe-leather.

I had once more to keep the stock clean and tidy, open and pack up parcels, box shirts and other things in dozens and half-dozens, lay out orders and list the things for sending to the packing room. It had been impressed upon me at home that I was an apprentice and must not allow myself to be put upon for inferior work, particularly that of an errand boy. So I acquired some unpopularity when the head of my department and his first assistant desired me to go out to a little restaurant near by and bring in their tenpenny lunches on a tray, which I refused to do.

After about three months I was transferred to the shirting and quilt department. It was a heavy job to keep those large pieces in order on the racks, to get them down, unpack them and pack them and put them back. In this warehouse we were allowed only half an hour for lunch, but hot water was given to us on the premises, so I had my little store of mixed tea and sugar, and bread and cheese—how glad I was to learn from a magazine that the cheapest kinds of cheese were the most nourishing—and a tin of condensed milk,

which was quite dark brown in colour before I had done with it.

This department was managed by one of the partners, who was seldom in. Next to him there was one man, then a senior apprentice, then myself. The conversation of the senior apprentice and his friends who used to drop in from other departments now and then was not edifying. It was mostly about what they called "tarts."

After I had been in the department some few months it happened that the assistant manager was taken ill and could not come to work, and then the senior apprentice left, so that I was alone in that department, except when the partner in charge happened to come in. Customers rarely came in person, unless they had already made an appointment with him. I had now the task of laying out the orders for the day, entering them in the daybook, making out department invoices, writing letters to the customers when necessary to regret that certain goods were out of stock and to explain when they might be expected, and preparing all the orders for the packing room. In addition to this I had to telephone to various other warehouses and manufacturers' offices, ordering patterns which had run out of stock, or to explain to other apprentices on outdoor duty for the day where to look for various necessary items, for which I would give them samples, with written orders. All this I managed to do to the satisfaction of my employers—and all on the munificent pay of fifteen shillings a month. Of course, as an apprentice my compensation was supposed to lie in an opportunity to learn the business, which I certainly had in that department.

Now, unluckily for me, it happened once in the middle of a day that one of our biggest customers—a man who would think nothing of ordering a hundred pieces of shirting of one kind at a single time—came in. When he arrived I ran round the warehouse looking for the partner in charge of my department, who would certainly have wanted to see him, but failed to find him, he being out for his two or three hours' lunch. So I served the customer myself. There was a line that we called "Diamond" shirting, which we sold at 5½d. per yard, and which our customer sold at 5¼d.—it was by cutting prices that he had such a volume of trade. He wanted some of that.

A new book of patterns had come from the manufacturers

a day or two before, but I first let the customer make his selection from the old pattern book and then said : " Would you not like some of these new patterns as well ? " bringing out the new cuttings. He was rather amused at my little trick ; it mattered nothing to him to order another fifty or sixty pieces, though he had already taken as many as he originally intended. But this was to prove my undoing. When he next met the partner he seems to have indulged in some jocular remark about the size of their " manager " in the shirting and quilt department, though he spoke highly of me. The pride of the firm was wounded. They sent down a young man from another department into mine and requested me to teach him all about everything, and he was then to be my boss ! This was too bad, from my limited point of view, and I protested that I was quite capable of carrying on alone.

The head of the firm was a venerable old gentleman, whom we all respected very much. He would even take the trouble to say " Good morning " to all the employees whom he passed, even though they were worth only 3s. 9d. a week ! He called me into his private office and reasoned with me. But it was quite hopeless. I could manage their department, but I could not reason. He begged me to have patience, and pointed out how well I might expect to succeed later on. I was an obstinate young donkey. One point I remember very well. He said : " Suppose in your father's warehouse such a thing had happened. Do you not think your father would want an older man in the department, because of what customers would think ? "

But the surly boy only replied with a logical rudeness born of wounded pride : " But it could not happen there, where they have eighteen or twenty men in every department ! "

What patience the old gentleman had ! Here was I threatening him with notice, and at last he gave in with a sigh for my sake and accepted it, and I for the third time joined the army of unemployed at the age of fourteen.

The mention of my father's warehouse here requires some comment. I have mentioned that my father had become the manager of a stationery concern, but it happened that by the time of which I am now writing he had joined our family warehouse. " The Guv'nor " had died, and my jolly uncle who, out of five brothers, had solely inherited the

business, invited him to join him, which he had done. The two warehouses knew each other, being among the biggest in their respective lines, and the proprietor of mine took it for granted that my father was a man of greater importance in the family concern than he really was. It was only later on that my father became the head of the family business, after my uncle died. In the meantime, my uncle was sole proprietor, and the natural course of things was that his two sons should go into the business and inherit from him, while the rest of the grandchildren should keep outside and be content with certain monetary bequests which "the Guv'nor" had bequeathed them, to become theirs on the death of their parents.

It might be wondered by those who do not know the customs of city merchants why my benevolent proprietor did not expect me to go into the family warehouse. The explanation is simple: it was not usually considered desirable for the character and development of youngsters that they should serve their apprenticeship in their own family warehouses, where they might become slack in work or in character on account of family indulgence and the superior respect with which the other employees might treat them in view of favours to come.

I must also explain that my brother had left the warehouse where I now worked because he had taken a fancy to retail business. He had gone into a "gents' outfitters" to learn the business, having been promised a shop of his own—he had a chain of shops in his mind's eye—when he and the time should be ripe. He had always been interested and careful in his own dress, and therefore was quite at home in that business. In our Sunday afternoon walks when we were still at school, when we had come to the stage at which we were expected to walk along sedately without shaking our bowler hats off our heads, it had been I, not he, who had raised objections to this uncomfortable headgear. I had objected to stiff cuffs and collars and fronts, as well as bowler hats, but had had to submit to them.

It must have gone against me in business that I was careless in dress. As a young man, in fact, I refused to wear anything but cloth caps, which put me rather in the "workman class." But I had another reason for that. I had been taken one day by my father to see one of the big felt hat manufacturing works at Denton, near

Manchester. I saw the chopped fur being blown on to the revolving cones, and in a later stage of the process the felts being washed in steaming vats over which several people were bending. All those workers seemed rather hollow cheeked, but one man was worse than the others. My father commented on this.

" Yes," replied the proprietor, " he will not last long now. They never last more than about five years at this job."

To my vivid young mind, the wearing of felt hats was thenceforth to be regarded as nothing short of indirect murder. I had already seen the unhappy girls in the shirt factory. I learnt from my father of other and even worse cases. There was one factory known to him where he had asked why better ventilation was not provided. He learned that there were plenty of windows that would open, but the workgirls objected to their being opened, because the fresher air made them hungry and they could not afford to buy more food.

### § 3

My third bout of unemployment was more trying than ever. It went on month after month—some six months of the hardest and most soul-destroying kind of work—that of looking for a job. Do not talk to me about unemployment in the nineteen-thirties; it was hellish enough in the eighteen-nineties. My only solace during those days of searching in the city was the public art gallery, where I used to go for an occasional hour, no, not to rest, but to look at the pictures and escape from reality into a more heroic world. I lingered also at the booksellers' windows, and especially longed for those little books which told how to achieve success in life with nothing but ability and honesty to recommend one, or how to perform miracles of development of character or memory.

I have spoken of our new house. The address was officially 6 Nell Lane, but the inhabitants, not wishing to be regarded as living in a lane, generally called it Clough Road. It had attics, which we had not enjoyed before. One of these attics had been put at my disposal, and I had seen it through several transformations—a gallery for archery, a gymnasium, a theatre—in which I had been sole actor, in various capacities, to an audience of imaginary people on imaginary

chairs—and lastly a sort of Venice, which I announced on a placard on the door as

VENICE  
on the  
ADRIATIC SEA  
(A dry attic. See ?)

I was a little disappointed that nobody ever laughed at it ! Sometimes I used to go up there, play my mandoline, and imagine myself in quite another world.

Now, it happened later, during my unemployment, that the biggest department store in the city—Lewis's—fitted up a tank in its large basement, decorated the entire floor in Italian style, and called the ensemble " Venice." There was a charge of one penny to enter, and another penny for a tour, which was quite extensive, in a real gondola.

Two or three times when I was searching for work I went down there and lingered for hours trying to make up my mind to ask for the manager, in order to put before him a business proposition which had entered my head and also, in fact, my heart. I thought it might be an additional attraction if they had a small boy playing the mandoline on one of the gondolas. I could play it well enough for public purposes, in fact as well as the average professional, almost as well, I thought, as the German professor and his two daughters who had taught me for some two years in a class of about fifteen girls in the school of music. However, I could not screw up my courage to the working point. I was also afraid of what my mother would say, that she might think I was disgracing the family by becoming a cheap musician in a public place. The incident reacted badly upon my interest in music. I announced to my father, much to his regret, that I must now give up all my music and devote myself entirely to the thought of making money. I rarely played the piano or the mandoline after that, and soon gave them up altogether.

#### § 4

My third period of unemployment bade fair to become permanent, but at last a vacancy arose for an apprentice in a " gents' outfitting " shop which had been newly opened in our suburb at the end of a row of shops near the railway



station. It was thought that I might follow in the same path as my brother and ultimately have a shop—or a chain of shops—of my own.

This time the apprenticeship was a more formal affair, and I had to sign on for three years. Apparently, as the formalities increased the emoluments diminished. I had sunk from five shillings to three shillings and nine pence a week, before, and now the salary was to be nothing for the first year, five shillings a week for the second and I forget what for the third. The hours of work also increased, from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. on weekdays (except for Wednesday, which contained a half-holiday), but to 10 p.m. on Saturdays, with an hour for lunch and an hour for tea. The work was not hard, but some ten hours' standing and one hour's quick walking every day proved fatiguing, and often I used to arrive home so tired at night that I had to go upstairs to bed on my hands and knees. I was left alone in the shop a great deal and used to consider it a pleasant thing when a customer came in. I was soon able to do everything connected with the business, except the actual buying of goods—on that side the proprietor seemed anxious that my tuition should be delayed as long as possible. I think that all he wanted was a cheap salesman, which he certainly got!

From beginning to end I disliked the year and a half which I spent in that shop. I used to get tired, as already mentioned. Sometimes my attitude when alone—which was constant, as the proprietor more and more stayed at home, and once he was away for weeks in hospital—might have served as illustration for a modern murder story, as I lolled across the counter in a state of mental as well as physical despair. To add to my distress, my clothes gave me endless trouble. My socks were always coming down (it was before the invention of sock suspenders). My hands were always tensely curled up, trying to hold up my loose cuffs. The stiff loose shirt front was always trying to get through the opening of my waistcoat. One size of collar was too small and the next size was said to look too big. My shoes were heavy and clumsy, but this was my own fault, for I bought them myself and got them like that to thwart a craving in myself for something quite the opposite.

Sometimes in the long idle hours of waiting for customers I used to picture how I could be quite cheerful and comfortable in that shop if I could dress in a style of my own,

combining the conveniences of dress worn by all kinds of people—I never thought of sexes as such. There would be long stockings, supported from a light corset, which would save me from the need of lolling on the counter, would give my back comfortable support through the long hours of waiting and provide a convenient place for a belt to hold knickers buttoning beneath the knee. There would be some soft kind of tennis shirt—emphatically no collar, nor front, nor cuffs, nor hard hat. There would be no waistcoat, but a simple coat. There would be light shoes, shaped so as not to press the toes sideways, and with perhaps a two inch heel to add a little to my height, which I was then beginning to desire increased, for practical convenience in association with other people.

I think that for the most part I hit in my imagination upon a costume which would have made mankind healthier and happier if it could have been introduced, though it was certainly not in keeping with aspiration for success in the "gents' outfitting" business! It would have made all the difference in my own life. It may be that there was some morbidity in part of it, but as I look back upon it I see that it contained not only a desire for relief from very real and constant discomfort, but also a longing for something positive in the way of lightness and refinement—a desire for material spirituality.

But all that was not to be, and I remained thoroughly out of accord with my environment. The demands of a ridiculous and cruel orthodoxy in dress, associated with caste ideas (in America they talk of the "white collar" class, but we had no word for it in England), have always been inexorable. I remember when I was at school that one day there came along the street a gentleman wearing a soft felt hat dented in at the top. The boys ran after him shouting, "Trilby, Trilby!" I was the only one not to share in that pursuit, though I too thought the hat an absurd shape. Perhaps the masculine element of mankind is a bit cynically acceptive of coarseness and earthiness. A rough assertiveness, even if clumsy and unintelligent, adds to its sense of personality or life.

It would be interesting to record the beginnings of adolescence. But that does not seem possible. Either there was nothing in particular or I cannot remember it. Such slight physical discomfort as I may have had was not

associated with any sexual imaginings. I am quite sure that I never dreamed or thought about girls or women. I knew that men and women got married and set up joint establishments, but I did not know that there was any physical connection between men and women, either for pleasure or the production of children. I must have been unusually unknowledgeable for my age in such matters.

Where did my thoughts run? I am afraid they were mostly negative, preoccupied with present discomforts and future economics, with only an occasional lifting of the imagination to pictures of freedom, open skies, sunshine and foreign travel, though at the same time I knew that these could not satisfy me, for I wanted to solve the economic problem for everybody, not only for myself, though that came first.

Two or three times I had been to the city to an old house which had fallen on evil times, to get the shirts cut to measure by my employer for his richer patrons. My destination was one room, bare of furniture but for a sewing machine, a crooked table, some broken chairs, a screen, and a dirty mattress laid on the floor in one corner. There were an old woman and two girls, the former bent out of human shape, with red eyes, an underlip hanging far over (from constant wetting of thread) and a thickened flattened thumb (from pressing the cloth), the latter preparing for the same dreadful fate. With my own eyes I had seen something which might well have inspired Hood's

Stitch, stitch, stitch . . .  
In poverty, hunger and dirt.

I had not been at the shop more than a few months when I was saved the long walk several times a day by our removal from Clough Road to 12 Silverdale Road—I am bound to say that builder had a genius for inventing fetching names for his streets. The new house was only two or three minutes' walk away from the shop, and this time it was not rented but bought outright—a nice semi-detached house with a good-sized lawn, on which one could, and did, play croquet. On this occasion my employer earned a bit more of my dislike by quoting, I suppose for want of something else to say, that three removals were as bad as a fire, which I—absurdly sensitive as usual—took to be a criticism of my father, which I could not tolerate.

It was at this period that I made my first experiments in Indian Yoga. I found an article in a popular magazine, describing how the yogis developed extraordinary powers by means of special methods of breathing. I felt that I needed special powers, since the ordinary ones seemed of little use in life unless conjoined by some chance with special opportunities. So once, in the midday, when I had the shop to myself, I went into the back room (which had been newly acquired and contained a chair) and sat down to practise the breathing exercises prescribed. I did it for about forty minutes. At that point I heard somebody come into the shop. I rose from the chair and walked to the front room without feeling the floor I walked on or any sense of my own weight. My employer entered and asked for a pair of scissors, which I found and handed to him without any feeling of the article or sense of its weight. I must have looked peculiar in some way, for I remember he stared at me very hard and with a surprised expression. The incident passed off. Gradually my sense of touch and weight returned. I did not perform the experiment again, as I considered it to be dangerous. Still it remained in my mind as an interesting possibility, to be pursued further if an opportunity for greater knowledge in connection with it should turn up.

Another occult possibility came within my ken about this time. When we were out cycling one Sunday morning my father told me about a lecture of Mrs. Besant's which he had just attended. She had spoken of visits to the worlds of the dead, describing the modes of life of the departed as continuing the mental and emotional interests with which they had left the earth, and she had concluded by saying that almost anybody who would take the trouble could develop the use of astral and mental bodies so as to move in those worlds and observe for themselves. I vowed to myself that I would hear Mrs. Besant on her next visit, and would do this thing myself if it were really true. These were dangerous subjects, I knew—*populus vult decipi*—but I would be scientific about them.

## CHAPTER IV

### MASTERY

#### § I

LIKE many other boys, I had in my schooldays collected foreign stamps, and in my last year at school I had been in the habit of exchanging and selling my duplicates, and had even done some selling for a London firm on a commission which I shared with the purchasers. It happened that while I was at the shop I one day saw an advertisement of an old stamp collection for sale for £7. I went to see it, and knew it for a rare bargain. I had, however, only £2 saved up. I borrowed £5 from my father, promising to repay the amount soon, and bought the collection.

I started to sell the collection piecemeal. Within a week my father had his money back—much to his surprise—I was some pounds in pocket and I had still most of the stamps in stock.

I began to deal. I advertised cheap packets of stamps in some of the weekly and monthly magazines, and with the packets I sent out "approval sheets" of a better class of stamps than those which appeared in the packets. Within a month I was doing a roaring trade. There was a good element of luck in it. I happened to get that collection and to hit the market at a favourable moment, not at the time of financial depression. I was thus able to obtain the business of a large number of boys in the public schools and also a certain number of more mature collectors. I opened up trade connections with prominent dealers, and began to import the cheaper stamps in sacks containing a million each, from the collections made by Swiss convents. I was also selling these by tens of thousands by weight, after picking them over and extracting the unusual kinds. This

work occupied my Sundays, my Wednesday afternoons, my early mornings and the greater part of my lunch and tea hours. My father, always ready to help his sons in any way, used to come up into the attic to help me in his spare time. My elder brother had by now gone to live in another town, where he was employed. My younger brother was at school.

After some time and discussion my employer consented to the cancellation of my agreement of apprenticeship, so, with a joyous heart, I bade good-bye to warehouses and retail shops, to stiff collars and fronts and loose cuffs.

Very shortly afterwards I rented the living quarters over a large stationery and toyshop, and began to employ clerks. At first two, then three and more until at the age of sixteen I had sixteen clerks in my office. These were all girls.

I employed girls instead of men, not because they were cheaper, but because my father emphatically assured me that they were steadier for simple work, more honest (my business offered many opportunities for theft), more contented, and less likely to learn my methods of business in order to go away and start rival businesses, perhaps with a list of my customers in the pocket. He also hinted to me that apart from business this method had, however, its dangers, and impressed upon me again and again the blessings of a bachelor's life. He was not thinking of immorality; I fancy he knew that I was as safe from that as the Bank of England, so to speak; but there might be several young ladies who would not object to marrying my business, however lacking in charms the proprietor thereof.

I did, in fact, fall in love with the very first girl I engaged, and even before I engaged her, during the five minutes' preliminary interview. She was a handsome girl, with large brown eyes and a smile which, when she let it loose towards the termination of our interview, nearly carried me off my feet. She was a typical "Gibson girl"—the style of the period—of the same age and just as tall as myself, with a pompadour, a blouse and skirt costume with an unbelievably small waist, and shoes—which I disapproved, for anything in the nature of voluntary deformity always made me feel quite sick—which must have been pushing her big toe very much out of line.

I never gave her the slightest indication of my devotion, though it lasted for several years, and we were together all day, laughing and chatting over our work. There is no

doubt that I should have let myself go sooner or later—a little later rather than sooner—but for one fact. She used to come to business by train, and some weeks after our first meeting I heard, from her conversation with the other girls—which was not concealed from me, as I did not try to stop my employees from talking, since I wanted them to enjoy themselves while they worked—that she had met on the train a young city clerk or secretary in a good position in the Ship Canal (which turned out to be perfectly true) who had become very much attached to her and used to take her out to theatres and other entertainments. She liked him, too.

That was enough for me. I reasoned it out that the young man concerned was in a better position to make her happy than I was, untrained as I was to society and theatres and dancing, and my business after all was not a very safe one in economic emergencies, as I dealt only in luxuries. I had indulged in pictures of good business and a happy wife with a little child in her arms (though, believe me, I did not yet know that there was such a thing as physical connection between man and woman and the birth of children thereby), but I put these aside decisively and finally when the other young man appeared on the scenes, and rigidly confined myself to a "fatherly" interest after that. Years afterwards they were married. I met her again some fourteen years after we parted; she was happy and well kept and very fond of a little daughter.

## § 2

This girl became my head clerk, and manageress whenever I was not on the spot. She was very intelligent, and flung all her vivacity and energy into the business as if it were her own. She was an expert typist, playing the whole keyboard with one finger of each hand, after the fashion of those days. She could rattle off letters by the dozen, once given the idea of the points to be written about. I had a card-index system of my own invention, which was a great time-saver. It was a little tricky, but she understood it and could handle it perfectly. It was no mean business that I was carrying on, for it was not at all unusual for me to have to open five hundred letters in the morning mail, and I used to make it a practice to clear out all orders on the same day,

even those which came by the afternoon post. I had an old four-wheeler "growler"—horse cab—to take my mails to the post office; nothing so musty exists on earth now, I think.

I took care to pay wages about fifteen per cent above the market, and most of the girls were fairly happy. One, an orphan, had a cruel time living with a distant relative who expected her to be general servant as well as to bring in some money every week, but I could do nothing about that. One was absolutely alone and entirely dependent upon the small wage she received from me; I could never send her away, though she proved to be very slow and incompetent. Two or three of them were rather down at heel, especially one girl who had some younger brothers and sisters to help to maintain. One was a clergyman's daughter, a delicate, pretty girl, with a club foot; she was the only one who objected to take her turn at making the fire, because she said she was afraid that her mother would take her away if she did, and then she would not have her pocket-money. We had all sorts.

The conversation of the girls was always interesting and laughter was constantly passing round the tables. It was always clean, in contrast with that of the young men I had known in business. Rarely, there was a little bit of spitefulness. I remember an occasion near the beginning, when the head girl was wearing a blue serge dress, which was probably home-made and had represented a good deal of economy and care. One or two of the other girls made fun of it, quite unnecessarily. She was greatly upset and did not wear it again. I very much wanted to tell her that I liked her better in that dress than any other, but I dared not rise to such intimacy. Altogether, the company of those girls was much to my taste, even if it did partake somewhat of the nature of a musical comedy scene. When my religious aunt was visiting our house one day she expressed wonder that I did not fall in love with one of them. I startled her by replying—without thought—that there was safety in numbers.

I was a firm believer in the adage that it pays to advertise. Every week I used to make a careful estimate of my profits, and at least half of them I would immediately put into advertising, while most of the other half went to increasing the stock. I was also quite willing to sell some stamps at



a loss in order to make a profit on others. The cheap packets of stamps which I advertised and sold at twenty-five per cent less than the actual cost to me of the stamps contained in them brought me thousands of customers, from many of whom I obtained further business, once my catalogue and approval selections were in their hands.

In my regular lines I did not raise the price to compensate for these losses, which I regarded as part of my advertising expenses, but on the whole I sold well under the general market, as I worked on the principle of small profits and quick returns.

Another little stroke of luck came for me at this time in the sudden enthusiasm for penny post throughout the Empire. It became possible to send letters under two ounces weight to all parts of the Empire, except, I think, Rhodesia, for one penny. This may seem a small matter, but it instantly increased my trade with the Colonies about tenfold. That postal arrangement was entirely reciprocal, very much in contrast with the present, when the Englishman sending his letter to India puts on it a  $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. stamp, but the poor Indian posting his to England must put on  $2\frac{1}{2}$  annas, equal to about  $2\frac{3}{4}$ d.

After about a year I began to find my premises altogether too small. As no suitable building was available for rent I decided to build. My father disliked the idea of my stock lying practically unprotected in a vacant office at nights, so he suggested selling his house and building a new one along with my proposed new office. First we planned a house with a huge basement for my business, but my mother objected to that idea because it would bring business and employees actually into her house, even if there were a separate entrance to the basement. We then decided on a two-storied office, each floor sixty by eighteen feet, to stand in the garden at the side of the new house. All this took many months to build, as it was a year of abnormal rains and the contractors also got themselves into some financial difficulties.

Before we moved, however, I had an experience which bade fair to terminate the entire proceedings, as far as I was concerned. My upper lip began to swell and become hard, then my cheek and forehead, and then the side of the head near the temple. I lay in the front bedroom in Silverdale Road. It was an abnormally hot season, and I could

hear the hum of a mosquito in the room—a rare thing in the north of England.

The doctor came and did what he could. He opened the swelling, but nothing would come out. Then I heard my father and the doctor talking in the adjacent bathroom. They forgot that the walls were very thin. My father said, in a broken voice: "He was a good boy"—*was*, mind you. The past tense was quite unequivocal. I told myself that I did not want to die, just when I was beginning, at the age of seventeen, to get a bit of success and fun out of life.

The doctor said that if I survived the night he would make another trial to get the stuff out in the morning. He duly arrived with an instrument shaped like a glove-stretcher, made an opening in my lip, pushed the long end of the instrument in gradually, about as far as my eye, and stretched it open a bit by means of the handles, which he then told me to hold while he knelt on the side of the bed and pressed his knuckles on my face with all his weight behind them. I thought the bones would cave in under the pressure. Fortunately he succeeded in squeezing out some of the bad matter, a hard greenish substance. The doctor insisted that I was a brick, but I rather thought it was the bones that had proved themselves of that category.

That day the weather broke. Rain fell in torrents. The trains were running a foot deep in water in the railway cutting. The air became cool. I felt immediate relief, and in a few days was able to attend to my work in a modified degree. In the interval my father had carried on the selling end of the business with the aid of the head girl.

## CHAPTER V

### FRATERNITY

#### § I

**S**HORTLY after we removed, Mrs. Besant came again to our city, and gave two lectures in a small hall seating about six hundred people. I went with my father to hear her. She had a sort of superhuman halo or atmosphere about her. She did not carry herself or act like other people. All the people present seemed to believe that she walked as easily in the worlds of the dead as in those of the living, or at least were impressed by her sincerity and held the idea that "it *might* be so." Her fluent words, impressive voice and holy manner, and the importance of the subject combined to produce an atmosphere intense, devout and even aspirational. I was quite carried away, though I cannot remember the subject of her oration.

On the occasion of a second lecture I bought at the door a book of hers called *In the Outer Court*. I was greatly impressed by it and read it again and again. The heights to which a human being could climb thrilled me; the practical ways in which this could be done called for instant endeavour. They were simply the old time-worn formulæ of virtue, but carried to their climax with uncompromising rigidity—spotless truth, love for all, even for those who hate and hurt, perfect control of thought, the building of character by imagination, purity and above all self-sacrifice. The climax dwelt upon words quoted by her from another book, as follows :

Before the eyes can see they must be incapable of tears.  
Before the ear can hear it must have lost its sensitiveness.  
Before the voice can speak in the presence of the Masters it must have lost the power to wound.  
Before the soul can stand in the presence of the Masters its feet must be washed in the blood of the heart.

Mrs. Besant held the crucible theory. We must make ourselves into crucibles, standing in the fire while in us the evils of the world are transformed to good. My father was not quite so much impressed as I. He remarked that when such a little book was sold for two shillings, somebody must be getting something out of it.

It happened perhaps a year before this time that my jolly uncle gave to my father an extract from *The Light of Asia*, which had been given to him in turn by a doctor friend of his who was a student of mystical literature. My uncle had a passion for poetry. One afternoon, when my elder brother was with us, I entered the kitchen and found him leaning against the dresser, obviously thinking hard, with a slip of paper—this extract—in his hand. He said: "Have you read this?"

I took the paper, and read of Buddha carrying the wounded lamb down the hill-side to the hall of sacrifice, and speaking to the king such words as made the priests hide their crimsoned hands:

While still our Lord went on, teaching how fair  
 This earth were if all living things be linked  
 In friendliness and common use of foods,  
 Bloodless and pure; the golden grain, bright fruits,  
 Sweet herbs which grow for all, the waters wan,  
 Sufficient drinks and meats. Which when these heard  
 The might of gentleness so conquered them,  
 The priests themselves scattered their altar-flames  
 And through the land next day passed a decree  
 Proclaimed by criers, and in this way graved  
 On rock and column: "Thus the King's will is:  
 There hath been slaughter for the sacrifice  
 And slaying for the meat, but henceforth none  
 Shall spill the blood of life or taste of flesh,  
 Seeing that knowledge grows, and life is one,  
 And mercy cometh to the merciful."

My brother said: "If you will become a vegetarian, I will."

"All right," said I.

From that moment we were vegetarians, though my mother put up a good deal of opposition, fearing that we would lose our health. My father also would have become a vegetarian then, but for his consideration for her feelings.

We listened to all the arguments against vegetarianism, but none of them was sufficiently convincing to counteract

the moral issue. It was said by some that the animals would overrun the earth if we did not destroy them for food. The Chinese might as well argue to the American that his continent would be overrun by frogs if he persisted in his foolish policy of not eating frogs. On the contrary it is found necessary to breed animals by the million to fill the meat markets. This very aspect of the matter, however, constituted in my eyes the greatest argument in favour of flesh food.

I was once, years later, speaking to a lady on a boat, and she put me this issue: " But do you not realize that if we did not eat meat there would be millions of animals which would never have any life at all? "

A bit Irish, perhaps, but I understood, and replied: " Yes. I could be reconciled to that idea, if we could have an agreement that every animal before being killed should be given its share of the bargain, that is, a reasonable long life, at least to the other side of maturity, and there should be no lamb and sucking pig on our tables, and no horrors such as *pâté de foie gras*, goose liver produced by nailing the bird's feet permanently to a board so as to deprive it of all exercise, and stuffing food forcibly down its throat so as to enlarge its liver."

There was no answer to this. Besides, if it is on the ground of providing life to other creatures that we ought to eat them, we ought on the same ground to insist on using horse-carriages and refuse the use of motor-cars for ordinary short-distance traffic. A city taxi-cab should be an object of execration and our streets ought still to be filled with growlers and hansom cabs. There must be millions fewer horses on earth than there were twenty-five years ago.

Speaking of vegetarianism reminds me of an amusing incident with reference to smoking. My elder brother, always rather thin and fragile, was obviously smoking too much. My father used to advise him strongly against it. One day my brother suddenly said to himself, as he was going along a path across a field which led to our house: " What is the use of smoking, anyway? " and he took out his pipe from his pocket and flung it away. A day or two later my father was crossing the field, when he happened to see the pipe lying in the grass. He recognized it and brought it home.

" It seems a pity," he remarked, " to throw away a good pipe that cost several shillings."

The next day my brother was puffing away as hard as ever at the same old pipe.

I never smoked. I preferred the money. I was very careful about money—except on one occasion when I was travelling on the top of a tramcar at night, and on reaching home I found that in the dark I had given the conductor two sovereigns in mistake for two halfpennies to pay the penny fare!

## § 2

After Mrs. Besant's lecture the chairman announced that there was a branch of the Theosophical Society in the city and there would be a meeting on Tuesday evening at which the public were invited to ask questions. My father and I attended. We were both thoroughly dissatisfied with the answers to the half-dozen questions put by members of the public.

My father asked: "If there were a good power or principle as the basis of all things, how could there be imperfection, pain, cruelty or any evil in the world?" Several people tried to answer this—quite hopelessly. One illogical answer was that God had given man free will and it was man who produced the evil—quite innocent of the obvious implication that God must have produced man as an evil being and therefore have produced the evil.

The only man there whom we appreciated and respected was the chairman, a venerable gentleman (afterwards to be my father-in-law) who explained that members of the Theosophical Society were only students, and that though man could not yet solve such ultimate questions, it was still worth while to study and find out what we could. He himself felt that were there not some good principle gradually emerging and increasing its sway, there could be no good at all in man, since no purely material being could be unselfish or could rise to the heights of self-sacrifice. Such a thing would mean that matter could overstep the nature of matter. And besides there was that mysterious divine discontent which at last left no one completely satisfied with any material pleasures or gains. He begged the audience not to go to extremes in any way, but to use reason just as far as it would go with the very limited data at our disposal. My father was very much taken by this old gentleman who was old enough to be his father. We went

to the meeting a second time, only to find a man reading an extremely dull and futile paper. We went no more, but decided that we would hear Mrs. Besant whenever she came to the city.

It was not long before I obtained a copy of *The Light of Asia*. It affected me so deeply that I had to read it in the privacy of my own room. Here at last was true religion, from my point of view. The life of Buddha, as given in this poem, was supremely gentle, beautiful, unselfish ; but what was it that Buddha had discovered which brought hope into the world ? It was the law of *karma*. Why ? Because it showed that man was making himself through a series of lives, and if it was somewhat hard that such a puny being was faced with such a herculean task—that he could obtain nothing except by his own efforts—there was at the same time the assurance that he could never suffer in the least except by his own doing, that present cruelty and injustice to himself was but the payment for his own past cruelty and injustice to others, and that the door was open for him to make of his own future just what he liked. Here was no capricious God who, if capable of creating cancer on earth, would be equally capable of providing dreadful hells hereafter. No blind unmoral chance also, which could so easily bring to naught in a moment the most strenuous endeavours.

I still thought of Mrs. Besant in connection with all this Buddhism. It was one thing to have a theory or a voice from the past, however beautiful and eminent. It seemed quite another to have at hand a living person, a noble, trustworthy, and unselfish character, who could add to that theory the living testimony of direct super-sensuous vision, who could declare these things to be true, certain, scientifically sure, in a ringing convincing voice.

### § 3

In the new building, I invited my elder brother to join me in the business. He left the shop that he was then managing, and we opened new departments in the upper floor of the office. We started making rubber stamps, and by following the methods that I had already found successful, succeeded in developing a large postal business, importing most of our raw materials and small mechanisms from America and Germany. We opened out also in the sale of picture post

cards, and luckily got in right in the height of the craze, selling especially Continental views, most beautifully collotyped in Germany. We missed, however, a good trade in safety razors and some other small articles, through over-caution.

In my new offices on the ground floor I had partitioned off a portion as private office. Here I used to attend to my account books and also retire occasionally to practise various mental and physical exercises which I had found in Mrs. Besant's book, and in some books on hypnotism and cognate subjects which I had obtained elsewhere, particularly one called *Your Finer Forces and How to Develop Them*. I practised breathing exercises but not of the Hatha Yoga kind. I had had for some time after my experiment in breathing at the shop a romantic notion of curing large numbers of variously afflicted people in practically no time by means of mesmeric passes.

Some months after the visit to the Theosophical Lodge I began to desire more knowledge about it. I remembered to have seen a small library there and thought it might possibly be open to the public. I was determined to read extensively, if I could find suitable books. So one evening I went again to the Theosophical Lodge premises. I found there, sitting at a table, an oldish gentleman with a bald head, a small "horse-thief" beard, and a snuffle. Later I learned that he was by profession a knocker-up. He lived in the mill area and made his living by going round the streets in the early mornings and rattling on the bedroom windows of his clients with a long stick. This occupation gave him plenty of time to indulge in his hobby—the study of Greek and Neo-Platonic philosophy, in which he had read profoundly. Anyone would have taken him for a university professor of the old style, or a second-hand book-seller. I also found a notice saying that books could be borrowed for a penny a week, or two shillings and sixpence a year.

I walked over to the table, and when the old gentleman looked up at me I put down a half-crown and said I wanted to join the library. He stared owlshly at the coin for a few moments, then pushed it back towards me and said: "No, take a book; pay a penny when you return it. Perhaps you will not want to read any more."

This negative sort of salesmanship took me, a business



man, very much by surprise. But I had made up my mind. Pushing the half-crown back again I replied : " No, put me down for a year's subscription. I am going to read them all."

It happened at that moment that two small middle-aged ladies entered the room. One, I learnt afterwards, was the wife of the president to whom my father and I had taken a liking on the occasion of our first visit to the Lodge ; the other kept a small toffee shop in the mill area. They spoke to me—words of welcome. I was shy, and wanted to get away with my book. Would I not give them the pleasure of my company at the meeting that was about to take place ? I preferred not, I explained that I had come only to obtain books to read, to find out more about Mrs. Besant's philosophy. Oh ! But it would give them so much pleasure if I would stay. So I went with them into an adjacent, larger room, which was by day a sort of board-room connected with a solicitor's office. They sat me down on a large settee and brought me a number of photographs to see. " This is Mr. Sinnett. This is Mr. Leadbeater. This is Mr. Mead. This is Mrs. Mead. This is Mr. Keightley"—and so on.

I said : " Yes ; yes ; yes ; yes," very politely, though full of inward wonder at this sudden transition from an atmosphere of rare philosophy to the intimacies of something resembling a family album. And the persons represented in the portraits did not resemble the perfect men or Mahatmas of whom I was in search, though Mrs. Besant had done so to some extent, with her priestessly robes and manner.

After several other people had drifted in and the chairman had called the meeting to order with two minutes' silent meditation, I listened to an hour's lecture by a parrot-faced and parrot-voiced lady, on the theory that the earth came from the moon and not the moon from the earth, and then went home, having given a promise to attend again the next week.

#### § 4

Though the lodge-meetings bored me, the literature had the reverse effect. At the beginning I read mostly books written by Mrs. Besant, of which there were a large number, and five largish volumes entitled : *Isis Unveiled* and *The*



DR. ANNIE BESANT  
IN HER PRIME

*(Lafayette)*

*Secret Doctrine*, by Madame Blavatsky, chief founder of the movement. With the portrait of the author in *Isis Unveiled* I almost fell in love.

In both of these authors I read about Mahatmas. I was already prepared for the main ideas of Theosophy (as this philosophy was somewhat erroneously called) by my reading of *The Light of Asia*. I was a worshipper at the shrine of Buddha as depicted therein. I had read that other people could follow in his steps and bring to an end the procession of their lives (or rather bodies) by attaining Nirvana, a state which could not be defined, but certainly bore no resemblance to any sort of heaven.

According to Buddha, this Nirvana was to be attained not by any external means, not by breathings or posturings, not by prayer or supplication, not by the aid of any teacher or guide, but simply by surrendering absolutely all selfishness and turning the full light of reason upon the imperfection of the world and all human fancies, and thus reaching "illumination" and the "true life kept for him who false puts by." I understood that thousands had attained Nirvana, the state of Buddha, the Wise, just as he himself had done, and had gone on into Nirvana.

But in these works I read of Mahatmas, men who had attained Nirvana but were nevertheless actually living in human Indian bodies in Tibet. Though they had attained perfection, they had not accepted the full liberty of Nirvana, but remained in touch with man on the threshold of that state, so that they might help others to attain.

I wanted above all things to find one of these Mahatmas, to serve him, to learn and practise at his feet. Notwithstanding my coolness towards the celebrities of the Theosophical Society, my lack of response to the contents of the family album, I was completely captivated by the greater, though similar attraction of the Mahatmas.

I found from conversation with my new friends that they were very humble in these matters. They worshipped the Masters or Adepts from afar. They said that if they behaved themselves in the station in life to which they had so far attained, they might hope, after some more lives, to approach the feet of the Masters and begin to tread the Path which led—usually through seven or fourteen lives of intense endeavour—to Their estate. In the meantime they sat at the feet of those who were already Their disciples.

This was not good enough for me. I had pictured myself as another edition of the Buddha himself, a Nirvani in this life. I was prepared to surrender everything, *everything*. I wanted this joy not only for myself. I wanted everybody to see that they suffered from themselves, that none else compelled them to hug the wheel of birth and death, and kiss its spokes of agony. The Theosophical Society was founded by the Masters for the purpose of spreading this knowledge of the open door to Nirvana above and brotherhood on earth. I would work for it with every ounce of my strength, with every gasp of my breath.

I gave my name for membership to the President, vowing in a broken voice that I would do my best to help the great work. My vehemence disturbed the members standing by ; it was perhaps a little unseemly to be so religious in public. My name went up to higher quarters, and after several months' delay I received from London a certificate of membership, though I was only at the age of nineteen. Their rule that minors could be admitted only with the consent of their parents and guardians seems to have been overlooked in my case.

In my reading I had pictured one of the Mahatmas as particularly suited to myself. I wanted to go to him and learn. In the privacy of my room I would throw myself on the ground in my longing, like any medieval devotee. Life was barren, unthinkable, impossible. It could not go on without Him. I doubt if any hart panted after the water-brooks as I after the Master. I wrote to Mrs. Besant about this. She replied that I had a good brain, deep devotion, a great gift of expression, and would certainly go far in this life. She said that her own literary and scientific education had been of great value to her in her work, and advised me to prepare myself by completing a sound education. Old people must be taken as they are, she said, but young people should study and make themselves worth having.

Some little time afterwards Mrs. Besant came to the city again and I was told that I might have an interview with her. She stayed at the house of the President. I went there on the appointed day. There was a hushed atmosphere. Several people were sitting tensely on chairs in the drawing-room, waiting for their turns, while our hostess, the little lady mentioned before (who was destined to become my mother-in-law, though I did not know it then), busied herself

with the arrangements. It was a large well-appointed house, for the President was a successful business man, proprietor of a fairly large ironworks.

In due course my turn came. I had had time to work myself up into a considerable state of agitation, the suppression of which produced an outward state of abnormal stiffness. I entered Mrs. Besant's room. She was sitting on a chair at the far side. I balanced myself on the edge of another chair at a respectful distance, very conscious of my clumsy boots, my tennis shirt and my long dark beard—I would have been very promising material for a caricaturist of Bolsheviks. I waited nervously for her to speak the words which would change the whole of my life and even future eternities, deeming no words necessary for me in the presence of practical omniscience! She looked at me intently for what seemed a long time—it was characteristic of her great heart that she did not burst into laughter or else into tears. At last she asked me what my plans were. I told her my desire. She advised patience and preparation—strangely like the advice given to me by the kind old gentleman who was the proprietor of my second warehouse. This time I had the sense to take the advice. I was consoled to some extent by her suggestion that I should keep in touch with her by correspondence.

It was in that house that I became acquainted with a little girl who was to play a big part in the future that was then troubling me so much. I was frequently invited there, with other friends, and occasionally we used to sit for a kind of group meditation. Eight or ten of us, very much in sympathy with one another, used to gather at a big round table in one of the spare rooms, for an hour's meditation, after which we would tell to one another our experiences. In order to counteract to some extent the impure "magnetism" of our daily clothing, at these gatherings we used to put on white robes, all alike. Afterwards we would generally return to the drawing-room and have a little refreshment and conversation before proceeding to our various homes.

It was on one such occasion that I first met the little girl above mentioned. Ordinarily she was not in evidence at any of our gatherings or tea parties, being sent to play somewhere or being entertained by the maids. But she was brought to meet the visitors and to receive a good night kiss

before going to bed. She drove me nearly out of my wits by starting to go round the whole circle of visitors for this good night kiss. I was in a mild perspiration when my turn came, but I managed to do my duty by planting a most undexterous osculation somewhere in the neighbourhood of the parting of the hair. I had not kissed anybody, not even my mother, since my dreadful experience with the school-ma'am, and I was not sure now but that it was a most dangerous thing to do, leading to one could not tell what lengths on the downward path !

Although the little girl was quite willing to kiss the visitors, she nevertheless most obviously regarded us with the greatest possible scorn. I had never before seen such a proud child, nor indeed any person so expert in giving a snub or showing the cold shoulder. There was, of course, nothing deliberate in this ; it was simply that she did not hide her thoughts or feelings. She had her own views about the white robes !

### § 5

Mrs. Besant's advice sent me back to school—the last thing in the world I could have expected. Not satisfied entirely with the theosophical library, I had developed the habit of going to the big city reference library. There I became a voracious reader whenever I could find time. Every book was interesting—philosophy, science, travel, biography, history. Once more I wanted to read them all. But my ardour for this was damped when one day I made a calculation and discovered that if I spent eight hours a day reading in that library I could finish the job in about five hundred full life-times ! I must select. One thing, however, I would not set aside—the Sanskrit books.

I had read in one of Mrs. Besant's printed lectures that the philosophy of Shankaracharya—an Indian metaphysician who lived about three hundred years B.C., according to some, but about a thousand years later than that according to others—could not be fully understood unless one read it in the original Sanskrit. The implication was that she herself could do this. She also spoke of him as the greatest of Masters.

To me her words had the force of divine authority and imperative necessity. At the city library I called for their

small collection of Sanskrit books, including several grammars, and was overjoyed to find that it was a language one could learn by oneself, without a teacher. There were no difficulties of pronunciation, since the script in which it was written was purely phonetic. The grammar books were not all quite clear about this pronunciation, but by comparing three or four of them and making my own deductions I arrived at what I was afterwards very pleased to learn (when an Indian friend visited us) to be the correct pronunciation, according to South Indian standards. Then I wrote to Bombay for grammar and other Sanskrit books of my own.

Hanging on the side of a screen near the entrance to the library I one day noticed a pamphlet of the University Tutorial College of Cambridge, which told about the London University examinations, and how one could prepare for them by postal tuition. Here was my opportunity to complete the sound education advised by Mrs. Besant. I would give point to my studies by reading for examinations as explained in that booklet. I wrote to the College. I wanted to take their course for the Matriculation Examination first of all ; but I did not want to take Latin or French for my second language, though I had learnt both at school. I wanted to take Sanskrit, which was permissible at the examination by payment of an extra fee of £2. But when I learnt that the tuition fee for Sanskrit would be £10 extra for every ten lessons by post, I dropped the Tutorial College and decided to learn everything by myself.

I bought the books, settled down to three or four hours' study every day, part of it in business hours in my private office. For the scientific subjects I attended the Municipal School of Technology—a magnificent affair, costing half a million pounds, modelled somewhat on the lines of the famous Boston Technological Institution—for two and a half hours every evening, except Lodge nights. Thus in about a year I matriculated in London University, having passed in my coveted Sanskrit as well as the other subjects required by the University.

I had then to decide whether I would go in for the Arts or the Science course for the Degree. Philosophy and metaphysics were to me the veriest child's play. I decided, therefore, in order to avoid a bias in my education, to take up science, to which I devoted a large part of my time for four



years, in chemistry, physics, geology and mathematics, attending the Technical College nearly every night.

I loved that College, and the teachers ; they were real teachers, in complete contrast to what I had known in my schooldays. I no longer had any qualms about going back to school. The College was part of the Victoria University, but the night students were not allowed in those less democratic days to have the degrees (as they are now) so we had to content ourselves with the numerous certificates of the Board of Education in separate subjects of study. I obtained many first classes and numerous prizes, which more than covered the cost of my fees. Meals necessarily became very irregular at this time, and I expert at poaching eggs and toasting cheese on a gas ring.

## CHAPTER VI

### MYSTERY

#### § I

THERE were not many members who cared to attend the Theosophical Lodge regularly; the average was perhaps eight or ten, though there were about thirty members on the rolls. Lecturers would come occasionally from London and other places, and then the Lodge room would be filled with members and their friends.

The President's wife, who was hostess for the Lodge, had the difficult task of bringing about a closer association of the alpha and omega of society. She would go much out of her way to encourage any visitors of education and culture to come more intimately into touch with the Lodge; but she would also do what she could for the poorest and the most ignorant, and invite them also to her house.

There was one old man, a boot and shoe repairer from a back street, who was half-crazed with incoherent visions, and *would* talk on all occasions. The problem was accentuated by his indifference to soap, water and nail scissors. She was always kind to him, yet tried firmly to quieten him and prevent him from unconsciously insulting other people who happened to hold views differing from his. There was a highfalutin' widow of the semi-artistic world, with two marriageable daughters. Our hostess thought it would do me immense good if I could hit it off with one of those, and did her best to make suitable opportunity. But it meant nothing to me in my then mood. My position was rather that of a pedigreed cat belonging to a friend, which turned up its nose at the pedigreed partner thoughtfully provided for it, and preferred to devote its amours to a rapscallion which lived in a convent near by—in my case the great orphan, humanity.

The membership was not permanent. There were always some coming in and some going out, for various reasons. One gentleman, who had been in the habit of reading papers at the meetings, showed me a new book one day. It was full of coloured plates of astral and other auras of various kinds of people. He said it was impossible to believe. Did I not think so? No, I did not think so, nor apparently did any of the others. We had a rational argument, even if there was a weak spot in it. These things were probabilities. Those who claimed to see them were good people. Therefore what they said was probably true. The gentleman went home and came no more.

There was one professional man whom we had made our treasurer. He was very ardent, but the annual meeting finished him off. There was a deficit of £9. What was to be done about it? He suggested we should increase the annual dues to wipe it off. But, as had happened year after year before, the President paid it. Thereupon our Treasurer resigned membership, saying he was unwilling to associate with such irresponsible people, who came there for what they could get and had not the dignity to pay their way even when they could.

Gradually the attendance at meetings diminished. Only five or six would turn up. Our financial position grew worse, so that we had to remove to inferior premises. I was then librarian. I said we must have Sunday evening lectures for propaganda purposes. But who would lecture? I would, if no one better could be found. Hm! But I knew I could, for I used to lecture my studies in my empty office on Sundays in order to impress them on my memory. The situation gradually became acute. I pointed out that few people in the city had even heard about Theosophy. The public ought to be given a chance to know about it, to accept or reject. We had all come into this splendid thing, which had changed our lives, by some accident; let us make some more accidents! If they would not do anything, I must go and take a room somewhere and try by myself.

Very well, they would make a trial (no doubt the lesser of two evils). I must arrange the meetings and take the responsibility. The President's wife would come to help, though she was no speaker. One or two others volunteered to be present. I put a two-line advertisement in a newspaper; there would be a discussion on Reincarnation at

the rooms of the Theosophical Society on Sunday evening, all welcome.

Twelve people turned up, all tongue-tied. To save the situation I had to get up and make a speech on the subject. They would like to ask one or two questions, that was all. I did the answering.

I followed my old business methods, took a collection to pay for the advertisements, spent it all on the advertisement for the next week, and was rejoiced to find an audience of sixteen people. The third week twenty came, and so on. Some came again and again, became friends, joined the Lodge. The membership rose to about ninety and the Lodge meetings began to present quite busy scenes.

Week after week I lectured. Audiences began to average nearly a hundred. The Lodge had to move again into larger premises. I was a wonder, a phenomenon, a lecturer in our midst, inspired, etc. ! They made me Vice-President. Other Lodges wanted me to speak for them. Tours were arranged in different parts of England, and I would take an occasional holiday from my business to carry on this good work.

Once I undertook a walking tour in Yorkshire—three lectures in seven towns—Harrogate, Leeds, Wakefield, Sheffield, Huddersfield, Halifax and Bradford. By day I walked from one town to the next, an average of perhaps fifteen miles ; in the evenings I lectured. I certainly proved to myself the accuracy of Emerson's saying that no man would break down in a speech on the day in which he had walked ten miles.

Behold me, tramping along—clumsy boots, cloth cap, tennis shirt, long beard—which would not grow on the front of the chin—ardent expression, mackintosh over arm, and, above all things, in hand a large green umbrella which would not close up closely, which had belonged to my grandfather ! It spoke volumes for the self-control of the English people that I was only once awakened to a sense of how others saw me. It occurred in a tramcar, when one workman sitting opposite me said explosively to another : " Oh, Christ ! " and everybody stared. Yet I vow there was no pose in my composition. I was quite unself-conscious. When friends had occasionally suggested the removal of the beard I had always replied that I did not see why I should scrape myself with a piece of iron, and the beard was quite natural—as truly it was !

Really, I was quite scientific in my dispositions. It was the world that was full of absurd customs. Why should I bow to these follies? If there was love and truth and beauty in the world, why all this nonsense of preserving unnecessary fashions, habits and customs? In the Theosophical Lodge itself I used to feel uncomfortable when there were expressions of blind faith. I was all for reason and a scientific basis for belief. It was on that account that I started and carried on what was called a third object group.

## § 2

The " Third Object " of the Society was : " To investigate unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in man." About twelve of us took part in the Third Object group. Our aim was not to experiment with mediumship, but to see if we could obtain first-hand knowledge of clairvoyance and such faculties, under test conditions. We had successful results from the very beginning.

The first experiment was the " battery of minds." We all sat round in a semicircle, except one member who was seated at the centre of the circle and blindfolded with a thick scarf. I sat at the end of the semicircle, wrote the name of a simple object on a bit of paper and passed it round for all to read. We all then concentrated on a picture of the object written down and tried to send it into the mind of the subject, whose business it was to keep the mind quiet but alert—like that of a person looking out of a window with wonder as to what might pass by—and to state whatever arose or appeared in the mind. After a short time, the lady who took the first turn as subject said : " I am afraid I do not see anything at all. All that has happened is that I seemed to hear someone calling ' Puss, puss, puss.' "

We were quite satisfied, for the word which I had written on the paper was " cat."

Then I wrote the word " watch," and she was at once very accurate and precise : " I can see the dial of a watch." Other members took their turns. One gentleman received the messages with about fifty per cent of correctness. I remember that in his case penknife came out as a table knife, and dog as a pug dog. Of all the experimenters only two or three had a zero result in reception.

We tried many experiments in reading words written

on a paper placed inside a closed envelope. The first time, I wrote HEAD. The subject spelt it out: "H—then a vowel—two vowels—E and A—one letter more—I cannot see it clearly—it is R, or rather D."

On the next paper I wrote XMAS. Immediately on touching the paper she said, laughing, "O, Christmas." "Got it in a flash," she added, "without seeing the letters at all."

Generally the letters were spelt out. When asked how she got the word, our subject said that in most cases she actually saw the letters. That must have been so, for on one occasion when I wrote the word STEAMER she spelt it quite methodically: "S-t-a-i-m—no—s-t-a-r, star." This showed that there was some broken kind of sight. None of us had thought about a star, so it could not have been thought-transmission in this case.

In a variant of this experiment each member in the semi-circle wrote his own word on a separate piece of paper. I collected the papers, shuffled them and handed one to the subject, without knowing what was written upon it. She took hold of the paper and presently said: "I see a dragon-fly."

The word written on the paper was "fly." In this case there must have been visualization of a thought rising from the written word.

One of the most interesting experiments gave us a probable answer to the question: Is the thought conveyed by some sort of wave in ether, like wireless telegraphy, or is something tangible transmitted from mind to mind, like a letter through the post? We obtained evidence of something tangible—at least that the thought could impress itself on material objects and could be taken from them by the receptive mind.

For these experiments I prepared a number of small pieces of paper by trying to impress pictures upon them by thought; on one I would imagine a house, on another a tree, and so on. I wrote something in the corner of each paper in tiny almost illegible writing, so that I would know them again. Then I shuffled these papers and put one out without looking. The subject said: "I can see a hen in a farmyard. She is surrounded by chickens and is scratching the ground to get something for them to eat."

I looked at the paper. It was the one with the word "hen" written on the corner. I had pictured simply the hen, not the chickens, the farmyard and the scratching.

At the second paper the lady shuddered: "Ugh! I do not like this. It reminds me of vermin." Then, after a moment: "I see an underground archway and a sewer. It is swarming with rats."

I had thought only of a rat, not consciously of any underground place. None of us knew which paper had been put out. My thought must have impressed the paper in some way, and that impression could be seen or received direct from the paper by the sensitive person.

It is interesting to notice that in every case the sensitive added something to what was transmitted by the sender. When we experimented with proverbs instead of simple objects there was much scope for imagination. For example, "Too many cooks spoil the broth" elicited quite a story: "I see a large room—a kitchen. A lot of men are hurrying about and getting in each other's way and spilling things. O! I know"—with a laugh—"Too many cooks spoil the broth."

A different kind of experiment was that of sensing the presence of a person. The subject was blindfolded, as before. Then one of the experimenters would quietly stand near, while the rest of us remained at some distance. On one evening this was done fourteen times with our best subject, and every time she named the person correctly, frequently adding further information, such as: "You have been in the presence of death, lately," or "You have been sick so that you could not eat"—remarks in every case admitted to be correct.

The fifty per cent gentleman was remarkably good in this experiment. Out of seventeen trials he named ten correctly immediately, five correctly on the second attempt, after the word "No" had been called out once, and the remaining two on the third attempt. In a variant of this experiment we scattered chairs in different parts of the large room; then moved about, stamping and making clapping and other noises, until we suddenly sat down in the chairs which we happened to be near. Then the subject pointed to us individually and correctly named us all. When we asked for explanations of the process, the answer was: "I can see colours round you, and recognize you by those colours." One curious detail was that when I stood near to the subject and strongly imagined myself to be in a distant place, the subject could not identify me.

Outside the group another sort of experiment (highly recommended by Mr. W. T. Stead) was undertaken by myself and one of the members. We sat for ten minutes each morning in our respective homes and alternately "sent" and "received" a thought, keeping a record, which we compared only at the end of six months. It showed no results for about a month at the beginning, then some correct transmissions in increasing frequency, until in total there was an average of more than ten per cent correct.

Our group ultimately broke up through the illness of some of its members and the departure of others to new homes.

### § 3

As far as I ever heard, ours was the only Lodge of the Theosophical Society in the world in which such scientific experiments were conducted, under test conditions. The prominent clairvoyants in the Society, Mrs. Besant and Mr. Leadbeater, and in a minor degree two or three others, always said that they were not allowed by the Masters to give any definite evidence of their unusual faculties or powers. Mme Blavatsky, however, had performed many remarkable experiments in the presence of numbers of persons who had signed their names to written statements of what they had collectively seen.

Most of the members of the Society accepted unquestioningly anything said to be seen by Mrs. Besant or Mr. Leadbeater. When, later, I was in intimate touch with them, I learnt that they frequently received letters somewhat as follows: "It is not necessary for me to describe my trouble. With your wonderful powers you will know everything when you receive this letter. Please help me, or advise me. . . ."

In reply to such letters they always explained that it was not right or permissible to use psychic powers in matters which could be attended to by ordinary physical faculties; it would be a waste of power; if the writer would explain his case clearly, and briefly, they would see what could be done!

Some members declined to believe without evidence, notably Babu Bhagavan Das of Benares, who used to say: "I am sorry. If you are not permitted to show, I am not permitted to believe."

In this he followed the tradition of the Indian yogis,



who always show their powers to their prospective pupils, as I had occasion to learn in my own experience in India.

Dependence upon leaders was always a weak point in the Society, although the original intention had been to base everything on rationality, even in the study of abnormal things. Some would say: " See how the mother cat has to carry her kittens about while they are small. Why should it not be so in occult matters ? "

Others, thinking this a trifle extreme, would prefer the simile of the young monkey, which clings to its mother with its own hands. This " monkey policy " was often put forward by leaders and would-be leaders who considered that the act of choosing a leader to be approached for orders and hints to be obeyed implicitly constituted all the positivity of character necessary for occult development. Only a few held that if members of the Theosophical Society had not yet been weaned it was about time to begin ; I was one of these, and therefore destined for ultimate unpopularity. But I anticipate.

My membership in the Theosophical Society brought into my life a social element which had been lacking before. At first I used to walk part of the way home from the Lodge meetings with a young business man who was very much taken with a literary young lady who used to bore us with her excessive enthusiasm for Plato. They tried to supplant our President, and put the young lady in office instead, but the scheme was not a success. The young man did not remain a member for very long.

After that, I generally walked home with a lady who was about thirty years my senior, but as lively as a cricket, and I am almost tempted to say as small. She had been manageress in some sort of factory where many girls were employed, and had retired on a tiny pension. We used to talk much about systems of yoga and methods of meditation, in which I was greatly interested.

She was a member of the Eastern School of Theosophy, an organization composed only of members of the Theosophical Society, but not officially connected with it. There were frequent references to this school in the writings of Mme Blavatsky and Mrs. Besant. When introducing new members to the Society Mrs. Besant would often speak of the " further step " which they could take after some time by joining the E.S. Its proceedings were entirely secret,

under pledge, so I could not ask what its methods of meditation were. But I used to tell my friend that I was puzzled by the fact that its members appeared to have no more knowledge and no more self-control than other people, and I disliked the slight atmosphere of superiority and sacerdotalism which seemed to surround it. When it came to matters of election to office, or the selection of speakers, membership in the "E.S." was certainly an asset. At the time of the election of Committee members for the British Section of the Society, lists of "suitable people" were sent round privately.

I joined the School after some time, and did not find its systems of meditation as good as those which I already knew and had been privately practising. In saying this I do not break any pledge, for I do not say what those meditations were.

I was always very much against anything which might have an hypnotic effect in meditation. Repetition of formulas; dwelling in thought on Masters' forms, with vows of fidelity and obedience; prayers to the Masters, asking them for guidance and blessing—all seemed to be bad psychology and bad reverence. If Masters were there, surely they would do their utmost without being asked. And the habit of thinking every day of them or of their disciples with requests and hopes for orders or guidance seemed to me to lead to paralysis of initiative, in which alone I thought either intuition or inner guidance could find its opportunity.

I was ready to admit the principle of mystical union with higher intelligence than my own. That was a matter of both logic and experience. Logic, since in the world visible to the senses our physical powers are enchained by harmonious co-operation with the laws and forces of nature. I disliked the formula "the conquest of nature" often employed in connection with scientific achievement. In the use of wind, steam, electricity, we were simply co-operating or associating intelligently with the forces of the greater world outside our personality.

To one convinced of thought-transference such association mentally was also a reasonable idea. When a thinker has a flash of intuition, as is common among scientists and philosophers, I could regard it as a kind of mental contact with a deeper intelligence, or a world of ideas, even a universal

mind or some great world of life in which live the liberated souls. That also was in accord with experience. Many people had declared that they sometimes felt themselves illuminated with an intelligence altogether greater than any which they felt that they could call their own. I had myself had such experience a number of times. Even if the Masters did retain actual human form, their aim would be to advise men to become responsive to that world, not to become worshippers of themselves and mere followers to carry out orders or hints given by them. Such were my thoughts. Certainly above everything I wanted to meet a Master, not to worship him externally, but to be of his company and his mode and order of life.

#### § 4

The new social contacts of the Lodge were most precious to me. Here was friendship and brotherhood, without safeguards such as those of the drawing-room, where religion and economics are tacitly avoided. I resented the E.S. a little, as forming a cleavage within our brotherhood. How could we discuss important subjects if some among us were pledged to mental reservations, or if you assumed that they knew what others did not know and were not allowed to know ?

Another movement which seemed to me to harm our brotherhood was the Co-Masonry, which was taken up eagerly by some of our members some time after I had joined the Lodge. I was perhaps a little jealous of this, as the members who would not help the Lodge in its financial difficulties could find much money for the new Masonic movement. We had had various proposals to reduce expenditure. We had even removed the Lodge to smaller premises, comparatively obscure and inconvenient. Scarcely had the removal taken place when up came this question of starting a Co-Masonic Lodge. All the leading members were canvassed on the subject ; it was whispered round that the Masters were keenly anxious to have the new movement promoted, and would give of their power and force to or through those who joined it. In a trice the members hustled to ransack their monetary resources, and very soon hundreds of pounds were forthcoming. Most of those who could afford it could not resist the concreteness and the

pomp of a ceremonial movement, backed by the statement of its organized access to the Masters' power and blessing.

Again and again prominent members pressed me to join the Masonic movement. Did I not believe that there was a European Master behind it? He would probably manifest himself visibly to the members; it might be at the meetings to be held during the forthcoming Theosophical Convention in Budapest. One leading member told me about a doctor who helped a certain poor man as soon as he learned that he was a Mason. This was real brotherhood, was it not? No, communalism. But that was a step towards universal brotherhood? It did not seem so to me; it was a step downwards from it. Later, I joined the movement in India, on the proposal of Mrs. Besant. After the first meeting I was chatting with Mr. Leadbeater.

"How did you get on?" he asked.

"I have told more lies to-night than in all the rest of my life," I sadly replied. This was, of course, no criticism of Masonry. It is no secret that there are rituals and formulas. It was simply that I had said what I had been told to say, but again and again it did not agree with my own thought and belief.

After I had been Vice-President of the Lodge for two or three years, our President fell ill and it became my duty to carry on his work. At last he died, and I was elected President in his place. During these years a deep friendship had grown up between us. I had been a frequent visitor at his house, and had even been on holidays with him and his wife and little girl. We went to the country and to the Isle of Wight. It was something new to me to pick flowers in the woods with a little child. When the father died, I was there to help, to console, to fill the gap to some extent, or rather to be a distraction from the emptiness. Often after that I took the little girl, now thirteen years old, for bicycle rides. Something new, clean and simple came into my life, which till then had consciously known nothing but struggle and conflict.

I had no intention of going to India. That was brought about by psychic experiences. I cannot say whether these in turn were brought about by some activity of my sub-conscious mind or were actual occurrences. I can only report what happened, or seemed to happen.

One evening, when I was sitting in meditation with the

group of friends I have already mentioned, I suddenly became aware of a Master standing opposite me across the table, and speaking to me. He put me through a kind of catechism. Did I understand what honesty meant? Did I know the importance of it? Did I consider myself honest? Somehow I was made to see the tremendous value of perfect honesty—not simply honesty in speech and in dealing with others, but also honesty in knowing oneself. Yes, I was very honest according to the world's standards, but I could not say that I was always fundamentally honest to myself. After some time there was a pause and suddenly I became aware of a hand lightly resting on my left shoulder. Looking that way—though I do not think that I opened my eyes or made any movement—I saw, or thought I saw, Mme Blavatsky (who had then been dead for about seventeen years) standing beside me. She was laughing, and looking not at me, but across in front of me towards my right. Following her gaze I saw Colonel Olcott standing there (he had been dead about a year). Mme Blavatsky spoke to him, merely the words: "He's ripe, Olcott; we'll send him to India."

Then the vision faded. I opened my eyes and became aware again of my friends sitting round the table. At the time the vision gave me no surprise. It seemed perfectly natural that the Master should be there; he was as familiar to me as my own father. It seemed quite natural also that Mme Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott should be there, like familiar friends.

It was not this vision that decided me to go to India, however. I was not prepared to give so much credit to visions. Besides, had I not seen in our experimental group that even reliable clairvoyants unconsciously embellished what they saw with elements drawn from their own personalities? I went on with my life as usual, merely wondering whether I would ever go to India or not. Something more happened, however. One night, as I was going home alone on top of a tramcar, I seemed to see Mrs. Besant in front of me, asking me to come to her. Still, I took no notice. In my opinion there was nothing decisive enough to call for any action. Then another vision came. I was going down some steps from a railway station at night. The steps were roofed in, and only dimly lighted. Suddenly the whole cavern-like place was brightly illuminated, and

I saw Mrs. Besant standing before me in a golden radiance. She spoke : " I want you to come and help me."

That night, when I reached home I told my father that I had a fancy to take a trip to India for three months. Would he help my brother to look after the business in my absence ? Yes, of course. I did not tell him nor my friends at the Lodge of my reason for going, though I had told my friends in the meditation group of my vision there. I took a Japanese steamer to Colombo from London, in November, 1908, and my father came with me to London to see me off. I meant to go for a three months' trip to see what would happen. I had no idea that India would become my home and that I should not see England again for over thirteen years.



# BOOK II : INDIA





## CHAPTER I

### A VOYAGE TO INDIA

#### § I

IT was with a sense of emptiness that on the evening of departure I watched the white cliffs of England disappear into the dusk, having established myself on the extreme edge of the poop deck. That became my favourite spot on the ship. From there I viewed the coast of Portugal and watched Gibraltar go by. From there day after day I gazed down into the swirling, churning waters, which were so sympathetic with my mood. There, when we had stormy weather, I enjoyed the lift and fall, as of a child's swing, with no uneasiness save the thought that something might break, when the propeller rose clear of the water and raced madly, vibrating the ship with its superfluous energy. Sitting there on a stanchion, I had no sickness, did not even think of sickness, only remembered vaguely having seen people sick years before on an Isle of Man boat, among them a lady who kept on saying, in her anxiety: "Oh! I am sure I shall be sick," and was sick even before the vessel left the landing stage.

During that voyage I suffered great hunger, physical as well as spiritual—the former because I would eat nothing that had ever wagged a tail. There must be no trace of such impurity in the body that was going to the Masters' land, and perhaps to his immediate society! There must also be no pollution of the mind with trashy novels or magazines; I took with me only books of Hindu philosophy. As to the spiritual hunger, it was absolutely indefinite, a kind of protracted gaze into a formless sky.

Only occasionally my fellow-voyagers drew me out of this mood to some extent. Sometimes the important question of the day was: who, standing on one foot and toeing a

certain line, could place a little block of wood furthest away? Sometimes we would watch a small Japanese professor of ju-jitsu—who had gone to England to make a living by teaching the art, and failed to do so—and a gigantic Scotsman—who was going out to be a policeman in Singapore—wrestling on a large mat spread on the deck. The Japanese always won, though the Scotsman constantly thought that next time he would be able to escape his opponent's wiles.

Sometimes I would play *igo* or "fives" with the Japanese officers and passengers—in fives you put counters on the crossings of the lines of a chequered board, not on the squares, and you try to get five of these in an unbroken line, while your opponent, placing counters of opposite colour in his turn, tries to prevent you and to make a five of his own—quite a fascinating game, requiring, however, a board of about twice as many squares as an ordinary chess board.

Once I gave a lecture explaining, with reference to many experiments made in France and other countries, the peculiar activities of the mind possible under hypnosis and in other abnormal conditions.

Frequently, two young Japanese salvationists, who had been to London for study and training, would try to convert me to Christianity, as they understood it. I was fond of those two boys, and went with them for a walk on shore at Port Saïd, our only port of call between London and Colombo. We had much in common temperamentally though little in beliefs or ideas, and so, ignoring the curio shops, we walked far into the interior of the town to see life there in the gathering darkness, until an urchin, running alongside us, called out: "Want my sister, sah? Want my sister, sah?" when we turned back to the ship with something of a shudder, and some fear that where such things could be there might also be robbery with violence.

When we ultimately parted one of those friends gave me a little Bible, with a suitable inscription in the fly-leaf. Though they had argued much with me about the contents of the Bible, they did not realize that I knew the book far better than they did, having read it through and through at school. It had been the one intelligent act of our school-master, I think, to make that our reading book in English, in daily use year after year.

My cabin companions, three burly men of mature age and

language, going out East to police duties after some furlough, also went together on shore. On returning, one of them stepped from the boat into the Mediterranean Sea instead of on the ship's ladder, to the great amusement of his companions and the lookers-on.

One respectable police officer travelling with a large family—florid wife and six or seven children—would constantly talk of sex adventures in China. He assured me that if a European man went with a Chinese woman, the children his own European wife bore to him afterwards would show some Chinese peculiarities. I did not notice any such features in his own children, so assumed that this was his way of warning the young idea not to shoot!

In addition to the three policemen there were other companions in my cabin, namely, hundreds of cockroaches; actually in my bunk, which was back to back with the washing-up table of the steward's pantry. They were a smallish, rather ethereal type of cockroach, mostly pale brown and whitish in colour, and gifted with considerable speed of movement. It did not occur to me to complain about these. I had a sort of idea that such things were to be expected on shipboard—my father had talked of cockroaches on sailing ships. I knew there were not many of them, perhaps none at all, on the other two sides of the cabin, where the policemen slept, but did not change over to their side, though there was a vacant bunk, as the proximity of beetles was preferable to a stronger smell of whisky than that to which I was subjected even where I was. Besides, was I not going out to India to face anything, *anything*, and perhaps these cockroaches would serve as a small apprenticeship?

## § 2

After twenty-three days at sea we arrived at Colombo. One of my friends—the very gentleman who had told me the story of the doctor and the poor man, in support of my coming into the brotherhood of his Masonic circle—proved superior to his creed, and wrote to a friend in Ceylon, introducing this inexperienced young man and recommending him to tender care.

A messenger came on board to meet me and took me in a little boat to the quay. We went through the Custom House

with my luggage, consisting of one rather large gladstone bag. "Any firearms? No? It seems very heavy. Let us see." They saw—one side filled with clothes, the other with books and lecture notes.

It was not till I was out in the street that I realized that I was drinking hot air into my lungs. I think the greatest trial in Ceylon and South India is never to be able to get a breath of cool air. The messenger guided me a short distance to the premises of Volkart Brothers, a large Swiss shipping company, and into a private office where a kindly Cingalese gentleman, who occupied an important position in the firm, received me most affably and entertained me for a while with conversation containing more than a spice of humour.

I waited while my host finished up his business for the day. He then hailed two rickshaws, and we bowled off to his bungalow in the Cinammon Gardens, where he entertained me for four days. I had my first introduction to Oriental expressiveness when the rickshaw coolie tried to extract from me, as being a greenhorn, double the proper fare. My host vituperated him with violence of language and gesture and threw the money on the ground, leaving him to pick it up. The East is full of contrasts.

What a pleasure it was to walk in the mornings in the red roads, and to see the blue and white sky through the leaves of magnificent trees forming a natural archway overhead! Seldom in England had one known such a clear atmosphere, such a blue sky, such splendour of twisting trunks and lengthened arborages, and never such red roads—which, however, have long since disappeared, buried under tar surfaces required by the new motor traffic.

Notwithstanding my host's kindness, my hunger was not yet to be dispersed. He was a bachelor, well served by a variety of attendants—one for the bathroom, another for the kitchen, another to tidy the bungalow, and several others whose occupations I could not discern at all. In the mornings he went to his office quite early, having arranged for my morning meal. This duly arrived—dry boiled rice in a fluffy heap, soup in a little silver bowl, vegetable curry, some small savoury cakes, and two or three bananas on the side, all served at one time, with an attendant in the offing, waiting to put out a little more of anything which I might consume to the end.

The attendant waited in vain. My meal actually consisted of rice and bananas. As to the soup, curry and cakes—these gentle little Cingalese, were they provided with leather interiors to compensate for external softness?

In the evening my host came home, hoped I was comfortable, had been well served with all that I needed, and so on. Oh, yes. The inexperienced young man was not going to look the gift horse in the mouth, nor to hurt anybody's feelings.

In the evening we called on friends, and sat in wicker chairs under the trees. While we partook of fruit and cool drinks, the mosquitoes were busy on other richer juices not yet thinned by sojourn in the tropics, drinking in through little trunks put up through the interstices of the canes, and dexterously punched through the seat of my pants. Ah, the generous tropics—generous to one and all! No wonder in the East men do not regard themselves as quite different and separate from the rest of creation. Their greater sense of unity with it is only the counterpart of a greater intimacy in actual living; in the air above, on the ground beside us, in the earth beneath, life surges in a restless tide.

It was at one of these evening parties that I first met Mrs. Musaeus Higgins, a lady of German birth, who had determined to bring modern education to Cingalese girls without making it a means to draw them away from their own social and religious traditions. She was working at the development of a school on those lines. At the time of my visit she was writing a volume of stories of Cingalese history, and I had the pleasure of helping her with the final edit, especially to give English instead of German structure to the sentences where necessary.

She had had her experience of the life beneath. She told how one day as she sat in her former school hall she had looked up and seen the roof swaying. Quickly she had called to the girls. They all ran out of the building just before it collapsed in a cloud of dust and palm leaves.

The white ants had eaten the entire interior of the posts and roofing timbers, leaving only a shell, and now it had reached the point at which a puff of wind could do the rest. This spectacular disappearance of the old school building had, however, been good publicity, and funds had soon come forward for housing the school in a modern bungalow. Later it grew into a splendid and most modern institution.

The book of stories also prospered ; it rose to the position of one of the favourite text books in schools all over Ceylon.

### § 3

On the fourth evening I was placed in a steamer bound for the Indian port of Tuticorin—a night's journey. The entire hold of the steamer was filled with plantation coolies, men, women and their children. It was a stormy night. Ever and anon I woke to hear the wails of the crowd below, rising even above the sound of the wind and the lashing waves.

The daily mail train from Tuticorin to Madras appeared to me phenomenally slow. It was so, in fact, for it took twenty-four hours to accomplish a journey of less than 450 miles. New as the country through which we passed was to me, it did not excite my interest very much, for I was intent only upon reaching my goal. Sometimes I would look out of the window and watch the deeply-coloured country-side slinking by—large, flat shrub-covered plains for the most part, often under water at that time of the year, browns of the dry crops and the fallow lands alternating with the greens of rice fields—richest green in the world.

Now and then we would clatter over a level crossing, and see a small scattery crowd of wayfarers waiting at the gates—men clad in two white cloths or one cloth and a shirt, the lower garment reaching just below the knees if they were workmen, to the feet if they were of the land-owning or the literary class—women in one long check-patterned cloth of reddish-orange or brown or, occasionally, blue, and a little bodice skin-tight over the shoulders and breasts, with children clustered beside them or sitting astride the hip, and sometimes bundles or baskets upon their heads. There would also be occasional two-wheeled carts with round covers—matting stretched on canes—and drawn by bulls.

Two things repelled me ; the trident marks on the foreheads of men who wished to advertise that they had done their morning worship according to the rules of certain sects, and the betel-chewing of men and women alike, with its attendant spitting and, even worse, its display of unnaturally red mouth and discoloured teeth.

Men were there with long hair, fuzzy hair, and no hair at all, except a tuft at the crown. All were shaved at

least round the back, the sides and the front, leaving only a circular cap to grow. None had the scissor crop of Europe, though it has come into vogue since then. The women had, all alike, a centre parting and a bun low on the neck. The tradition of the Hindus is to avoid scissors and tailoring, which are left mainly to the Muhammadans. But all this as regards the men is much changed; relatively few shaved or long-haired men or decorated faces are now to be seen.

There were lengthy stops at the larger railway stations and junctions—sometimes as much as half an hour. As the stations were never in the towns, but some distance away, the transition was sudden from the open countryside to a raging sea of human beings on the platforms. Hurrying and scurrying people crossed one another in all directions in search of room in the long train—some having started at one end and some at the other—amid a babel of noise created by their own excitement and the effort to keep large family groups together, and by cries of vendors of cooked foods and fruits and drinks and coloured toys and cloths and cheap imported trifles. At length someone banged discordantly and deafeningly on a length of old railway-line suspended to act as a bell, someone else whistled, and we clumpetty-clumpetty-clumped out of the station and away into the fields again, the carriages swaying on their narrow track.

The passengers varied enormously. How different all this from the uniformity of English life! There was a man travelling without a ticket; he had done it many times by judiciously changing from one carriage to another. He did not seem to have any other business on the train. Perhaps it was his hobby. But seemingly no one would give him away, even if they disapproved. There was a man looking for a man travelling without a ticket. He was fierce with his muttered threats that he would get him sooner or later. Both were in my carriage for part of the journey. There was a stout Muhammadan merchant, with loose white trousers, silk coat to his knees, and a golden hat. There was a young priest, fresh from his training in Ceylon, who somehow gravitated to me and fell into a discussion on theology—which ended when he affirmed a belief in hell-fire and I asked him if he in heaven would be able to look on happily while his mother or someone else whom he loved was burning in hell, and he replied that God would somehow



make it acceptable to him, and I remarked that I liked his God even less than his hell.

All along the train, except in the first class, occupied chiefly by the insular English, people were talking volubly. In the third class they seemed to have wonderful power of concentration or selective attention, as well as of the lungs. The huge carriages seemed to contain anything from fifty to a hundred people, who travelled in a roar of the globular liquid sounds of the Tamil language, which, to the uninitiated ear seemed to be composed entirely of vowels. The faces, too, matched the voices, large, soft and round, all feminine, though the eyes very occasionally might be acquisitive and fierce.

At night came sudden dusk and dark, the short twilight of the tropics. Upper bunks, loosened from hooks, were dropped to the horizontal. Passengers unrolled their bedding and laid themselves to sleep. But the bustle and babel at the stations—all shouting, none listening—went on as before, whatever the time of night. When we drew up in the morning to the orderliness and comparative quiet of the Egmore station in Madras, coolie porters leaped into the carriages, passengers poured out and away in a great stream, mixed with the coolies bearing bedding and boxes and bags and baskets and bundles of every conceivable description and no description at all, and passed out through the gates to the bullock carts, the pony carts and the horse carriages waiting outside.

## CHAPTER II

### A "MOTHER" OF INDIA

#### § I

IT was a long ride to the suburb of Adyar in a dismal victoria hired at the station, behind a horse which had learned syncopation in advance of the times, on a seat whose springs had known heavier passengers than I and had not forgotten them. Down road after road we went, all very similar, past large dilapidated bungalows standing in spacious compounds with broken walls or perforated hedges. Everywhere was decay, but everywhere also the glorifying feature of magnificent trees—mostly banyan and peepul—meeting overhead.

At length we came to the Elphinstone Bridge across the Adyar river—the bridge a furlong in length, the river varying constantly from half to four times that width—a quiet sheet of water, a lake rather than a river, disfigured only by two or three mud flats in the centre. My eyes were all for the headquarters' building of the Theosophical Society, standing out prominently on the opposite bank—a bungalow transformed by additions until it resembled a rambling monastery.

We were soon across the river, in at the gate, along the drive, under the corrugated iron porch—and presently I was out of the carriage and into the office of the Treasurer, Mr. Albert Schwarz, who received me kindly and took me upstairs to the sanctum of Mrs. Besant. Shoes off on the terrace outside her door, a kind welcome inside, enquiries about the journey, a statement that a room had been prepared for me at the Blavatsky Gardens' Bungalow, an appointment for the next morning to discuss plans, and I was guided along narrow paths, through a grove of palm trees, to my temporary abode.

Mrs. Besant looked more at home in her Indian surroundings than in Europe. The chief furniture of her sitting-room or office was a large square *chauki* or platform about one foot high, on which were placed a thick round white bolster for her back, a carpet for her seat, and a large low desk for her writing as she sat cross-legged and bare-footed in her white or cream Indian woman's garb. At the back of the desk were racks for papers, and office conveniences in great profusion—a dozen pencils ready sharpened at one hand, correspondence waiting to be answered at the other.

Mrs. Besant never varied the arrangement of that room during the twenty-five years that I knew her there. Never varied her own posture—leaning back to read, leaning forward to write, and so growing rounder and rounder shouldered year by year. Of all people I have known, Mrs. Besant had the greatest habit of repose. Her body would be quiet, her features placid, while her hand ran rapidly over sheet after sheet of paper, producing page after page of small, neat, beautiful and—when one knew its little tricks—uncommonly legible handwriting. She liked to be alone to write ; would have no secretary and no typewriting machine for this, even to the last, and when services were offered in these directions would always reply that she could think best at the end of her pen—which was, however, a lead pencil.

As I sat with Mrs. Besant, discussing plans, my thoughts were more on her than on the plans. Here was cleanliness and peace of body and mind ; not simplicity by any means, but an orderliness that achieved simplicity.

In person, then about sixty years old, she was short and corpulent, but not clumsy or coarse. Her face, long ; forehead, tall and rather narrow ; lips, wide and rather thick ; nose, long, straight and rather fleshy ; eyes always round and wide-open, and only to be described as starry and conspicuously beautiful (her daughter inherited them) but not quite far enough apart for modern taste ; expression, saintly and human at the same time, with no trace of anything cryptic, reserved, aloof, self-considering or superior ; hair, pure white, short and curly, equal all over the head ; smile, dazzling.

I had written to her before my arrival telling her of my visions, of my plans to take a three months' trip to see what

would happen. She did not comment upon the visions, and I did not question her about them. She told me that she would like me to stay there and write for the *Theosophist*, the Presidential magazine of the Society. Would I do so? Yes. Money? I had sufficient for the simple life at Adyar, if I sold out my business and invested the capital. She would help me with money from some funds that she had. No, I could manage; I was there to help, not to be a burden on anybody. Still, I felt uneasy at the idea of living on interest, consuming the fruits of the labour of others without taking any part in the world's work myself. No, I really ought not to feel like that, for I was not intending to live in idleness but to give my best to the collective life of humanity. Very good, then; settled. It was decided that I should stay indefinitely, so I wrote to England, parted with my share of the business on reasonable terms, and in December, 1908, at the age of twenty-five, settled down at Adyar to my new life, which was to be more varied and eventful than I imagined.

## § 2

The estate or compound at Adyar stretched for nearly a mile on the river side, and it was about half a mile long in its greatest width, which was along the seashore, at the farther end from the Elphinstone Bridge and the road leading to Madras. Most of this land had been acquired since Mrs. Besant had become President. The original compound, of the time of Colonel Olcott and Mme Blavatsky, was about a tenth the size of what it became by the purchase of surrounding properties in the years during which Mrs. Besant was President. She wanted to make the headquarters into a settlement for Theosophists from all over the world; not that they should live there permanently, except a few workers in the estate itself, in the book department or on the staff of the magazine, but that they should come to reside there for about two years' devotion to study and meditation, so as to prepare themselves for better Theosophical propaganda work afterwards in their own countries.

There were several bungalows scattered over the estate, suitable for the European style of living, as it is known in Madras, and other smaller buildings—converted stables and

a few cottages—providing rooms for those who wished to follow the Indian mode of life. I commented on the use of the word bungalow for such large solid two-storied buildings as that in the Blavatsky Gardens, with spacious rooms having ceilings fourteen or sixteen feet high, and massive verandas supported on huge round pillars. My idea of bungalows had been the English one; little one-storied houses, detached from one another in garden plots. Now I was informed that the word bungalow was derived from the word Bengal, where a new mode of suburban dwellings had become popular even among Indians, in preference to the old system of dwelling in flats or tenements or in town houses which, though they were entirely individual in architecture and alignment (differing from the rows of town houses in Europe and America in this respect) formed one solid block all along the street.

The diversification of frontage on every street is one of the pleasing features of Indian towns. Diversification of interiors is likewise one of the charms of Indian homes. When an Indian enters the house of a neighbour he will find certain principles which are common to all. He will find a small veranda in front, then an entrance hall—a little room with a raised platform or sitting place in the portion not devoted to passage-way. Beyond that he will find an interior courtyard with verandas on all sides and rooms opening from the verandas. But all these will be different in arrangement and shape from his own. I do not think anybody in India ever built a street of houses, except the British, who have built them for the use of policemen or railway workers, and then they have had the grace to call them "lines"—"police lines," etc.

The houses in an Indian street have been built individually by each family, and most of them have passed on in the same family for many generations. Where the Indians have had reason to develop the bungalow system, as in the city of Bangalore and some of the suburbs of Madras, they have retained their old liking for individual design, so you will find one resembling a palace and another a cottage standing in adjacent compounds ("plots" sounds too small) in the very same road.

The bungalows of Adyar stand amid magnificent trees. The biggest banyan tree, in the portion of the grounds known as Blavatsky Gardens, is regarded as the second

largest in India, and possibly in the world. I have seen audiences of three and four thousand people sitting comfortably listening to lectures in its shade. When I first went to Adyar it was thronged with birds, and squirrels constantly chasing one another along the horizontal branches and up and down the pendant roots, but now the squirrels are few and the little birds almost none, for the Theosophists brought in town-life habits—leavings which have attracted and bred innumerable noisy crows, and cats which have reduced the population of squirrels to a tenth of what it was.

## § 3

At the time of my arrival there were perhaps fifty human residents at Adyar, more or less equally European (as all the white-skinned people are called in India, even if they come from America, Australia or South Africa) and Indians. Among the latter there were two from the north, different in shade of brown and in dress from those of the south. One was a well-known—famous in India—thinker and writer, Babu B. Bhagavan Das, a close friend of Mrs. Besant's; the other a young prince of a Punjab ruling house. The former wore long coat and trousers on important occasions, the latter long coat and cotton riding breeches extending to the ankle.

The South Indians all looked very much alike to me at first, as my eye was struck by the main features of colour and form until it became used to those and could attend to minor differences—short of stature, stocky of build, and dressed mostly in a pair of white cloths with coloured borders, the upper cloth cast over the shoulders like a shawl, often leaving hairy chest and prominent abdomen exposed to view, the lower cloth twisted round the waist and pendant to the ankles.

I soon committed two solecisms in the matter of dress; the first, when I went out in the garden in a tennis shirt and grey flannel trousers; and Mrs. Besant told me it shocked the Indians to see the lower part of the trunk not loosely draped; the second when I took to Indian dress and failed at first to drape the lower cloth sufficiently over the ankles! There was no eight-inch skirt-line for men. Two inches was quite a maximum, unless you were willing to be mistaken for a workman! All the same, the European

ladies at Adyar were still wearing blouses and skirts in the Gibson style, and some of the Indian ladies, when they sat down or walked about, exposed a three-inch ring of bare waist, except where it was crossed by a strip of the *sari*, which was wound round the lower part of the body a number of times and then carried diagonally to the shoulders.

There was one European, rather tall, with cropped fair hair, and wearing a cloth or a pair of cloths—this was difficult to distinguish—whom I saw first when we were all walking through the gardens one evening with Mrs. Besant. I asked my neighbour whether it was a man or a woman—a question which was material for a ripple of whispered amusement among the Europeans for some time, though I think it did not embarrass the lady it chiefly concerned, who was intent upon her own thoughts. She had been one of Mrs. Besant's helpers many years before in the working girls' club in London.

I was received among the residents not as an unknown Theosophist, but as a lecturer and a bit of a celebrity in my own country, and President of one of the biggest Lodges in the world. I had already written two booklets which were much in use, and some copies of which had found their way abroad. Mrs. Besant had also spoken of me as "very promising." So on the very first Sunday morning at Adyar I was requested to give a lecture, which I did, on mental training and meditation. Besides the residents of Adyar there were a good number of people from Madras, so the hall was comfortably filled.

After the lecture a stout young Brahmin with thick spectacles got up and asked some question about memory, which led me to tell a story I had heard about a young man who went to work in a Custom office. One day the head of the office gave him a booklet showing the rates for all kinds of articles, and asked him to familiarize himself with it. The young man—an extremist evidently—did not turn up at the office for several days, and when he returned the boss wanted to know why he had been absent.

"I have been learning the code," replied the clerk, much hurt at being misunderstood. He had taken the trouble to learn the whole pamphlet and could repeat it by heart. But when it came to the application of his knowledge to practical things he was all at sea.

"The young man's name was Subrahmanyam," I con-

cluded, showing off my knowledge of an Indian name. To my surprise the audience dissolved into fits of laughter. Was my pronunciation so very funny? No, it merely happened that Subrahmanyam was the name of the questioner, and he was well known as a talkative, theoretical and not practical young man.

## § 4

There were plenty of occasions for personal contact with Mrs. Besant. On the morning of my arrival she looked in at my room to ask if it were comfortable, and not content with my answer, to inspect it for herself, make some inaudible irritable remark—could she be irritable? Apparently so—hurry out of the room and reappear in a few moments carrying a cane chair nearly as big as herself.

A day or two later she suddenly startled me, standing at my side and watching me make notes for a review she had asked me to make of Babu Bhavagan Das's new edition of *The Science of the Emotions*—a work of his which I valued highly.

I also went with her and several others to visit different Panchama schools, which had been founded by Colonel Olcott to provide free education for the poorest of the poor—once known as Pariahs, then as Panchamas (fifth caste—orthodox Hinduism admits only four castes), and now as Harijans (God's people—God help them!) as politeness and democracy have advanced.

Picture several irregular cottage-like buildings round an open plot of ground, and three or four hundred tiny children, some of them clad in space (to use an Indian expression), some in a brass fig leaf on a piece of string, some with a shirt reaching to their middles and nothing below, some with a skirt below the middle and nothing above, some—the biggest—with both shirt and skirt or shirt and little pants.

It would be a special occasion when Mrs. Besant visited the school, and all would gather under the shade of a big tree or temporary palm-leaf shed. There would be an opening song or prayer by the children. There would be some collective dancing by the girls—one dance something like a maypole dance, and another in which the girls with a short stick in either hand wove themselves into patterns to the tune of a song and the clapping together of the sticks,



as they passed and wound round one another. There would be brave recitations and dramatic scenes by the boys. There would be speeches by the Superintendent, the Headmaster and the visitor. There would be distribution of sweetmeats. And there would be hurrahs and farewells and departures in horse carriage and pony carts, and an aftermath of scattered conversation among the visitors and wide, open-eyed and open-mouthed wonderings by the children as to what was going to happen next or was it all going to end in just nothing at all ?

Mrs. Besant had a horse named Sultan. Like the early motor-cars it had the defect of possessing no self-starting arrangements. She would sit in the carriage all ready to start, and several coachmen and *syces* would coax and pull and push, sometimes for ten or fifteen minutes before it would go. When it did go it went like the wind, with a splendid high-stepping display. She would never allow the whip to be used, but would sit smiling in her carriage, confident of reaching her meeting or train in time, as she invariably did—partly, I think, because she always used to go much earlier than was necessary to the railway station or to any appointment.

Shortly after I reached Adyar someone presented Mrs. Besant with a motor-car—a rare thing in India at that time. She learnt to drive it herself, and used to take us out one by one with her for a ride in the early mornings. She seemed a little disappointed when I told her, being overly addicted to truth, that I did not enjoy it very much. I was interested in other things—not the road nor the telegraph poles at the side of the road, for she was a good driver. On the platform and in the meetings so much was talked about glorious occult matters, it was not really my fault if I took them seriously and was impatient of ordinary occupations and amusements.

Every evening Mrs. Besant held a meeting on a roof some forty feet square outside the door of her own set of rooms. It was delightful under the stars and, sometimes, the moon, the only artificial light a hurricane lamp on a teapoy at her side. In the centre of the square a large carpet was spread and round this was a row of chairs. The Indians and a few of the Europeans sat on the carpet with faces turned upwards. Mrs. Besant sat on a basket chair, and the others in a miscellany of chairs collected round the square.

Some doubted whether those who sat on chairs could be as spiritual or as "highly evolved" as those who sat cross-legged on the floor!

"Our Teacher"—a usual expression among the Hindus—used to expound a book of her own on one day, give answers to questions on another and discuss some subject on a third. Once only she tried the system of questioning us. It fell very flat. She started by asking what difference the knowledge of the law of *karma* should make to our conduct. No answer. A long time passed, and still no answer, while Mrs. Besant regarded us with an uncomfortable smile. I do not think she could see our faces as well as we could see hers. If she had she would have seen them stamped with fear—each was afraid to make a fool of himself before the others, and most of all before the Teacher! At last, after sizzling for a while, I blurted out: "None whatever." The tension was relieved. Mrs. Besant's face broke into a real smile. "Quite right," said she. "Presumably you will all do the right for its own sake and not to gain reward or escape punishment in future lives."

Mrs. Besant was very downright in those days. Once, when some member was injured, she told us that it would not be right to wish that she might get better quickly, for who was to say what was the blessed lesson that the experience was bringing her? Ours only to send thoughts of sympathy, not to indulge in ignorant wishes. (Strange how she changed later on, and approved of ceremonials involving prayers for aid, intercession and mediation.) In her own person she seemed to object even to sympathy, though she was lavish of it to others. One morning when I went to her room I found tears streaming down her face and a newspaper in her hand. She could not speak, but handed me the paper, and pointed to a paragraph about a mining disaster in Wales.

I was with her once at Mayavaram, a city approaching two hundred miles south of Madras. We had been to a theosophical gathering in a large high-school, and had been given rooms for personal use in the upper story of the building. The meetings being over, and our train soon due, we came out of our rooms and proceeded down some rough stone outside-steps which led to the garden below. In the dark, she slipped on one of those steep irregular steps and fell, bumping on her back, down about six of them to the

ground below. I hastened after her to assist her to rise, but my expressions of sympathy met with a curt response. She let no one else know of the incident, but went to the train, and had a bad night's journey with headache and pains, as she told me when we reached Madras the next morning.

### § 5

Sometimes Mrs. Besant could be very rough, uncompromisingly so, when she thought we were failing in some duty, but generally she was very gracious, quite in the Victorian manner.

Early in the year 1909 some South Indian Lodges had decided to hold a general gathering in a town in the Tanjore district. The secretaries called upon me, asked me to be present and to deliver one or two lectures. I went to Mrs. Besant to see if I could be spared at that time.

"Why," she exclaimed, "I have promised to go and preside for them. They cannot expect two of us"—two of us!—"at the same time." Then, after a moment's thought: "I will tell you what we will do. You go and preside on the first day and I will come on the second"—and it was arranged accordingly. She wanted to give me a chance to show what I could do.

It was further arranged that I should make a tour of seven towns ending at the place of the general gathering. I was immensely impressed by the brilliance of her public lectures at the gathering. I think that in Europe and America, where she was by many regarded as the foremost orator of the day, in days when oratory was not in disfavour as it is to-day, she never rose to such heights and powers of moral appeal as she did in India. Yet, with all that eloquence, she had no small talk. I remember an occasion when we were together with some non-theosophists (amusing, but familiar expression); notwithstanding my lack of *savoir-faire* I had to come to her rescue in conversation. In that she was quite the opposite of Mme Blavatsky, who had been a brilliant conversationalist at a time when conversation was a great art, but no public speaker at all.

## CHAPTER III

### WONDERS

#### § I

**T**RAVELLING with sympathy for Hinduism and with vegetarian and teetotal habits, and a spiritual or at least a philosophic purpose, and staying in Indian houses, I soon had an opportunity of knowing India as no tourist or merchant or official or schoolmaster or even missionary ever can. My first stop was for two days at Madura. My new friends met me in force at the station, flooding the platform as the train came in, and heaped me about with garlands of flowers and coloured metallic paper and filled my hands with limes, while they introduced the celebrities among them. Apparently official position constituted social rank also: "Mr. So-and-so, our Sub-Judge; Mr. So-and-so, our Tahsildar (a revenue officer and magistrate); Mr. So-and-so, Headmaster of our high-school; Mr. So-and-so, Vakil (advocate)"—and so on.

They carried me off to a simple lodging. One corner of a lecture hall was screened off as a room for me. Two benches were put side by side to act as sleeping couch. I had already learnt to sleep hard. The common type of bed at Adyar was a cot frame with webbing drawn tightly across it as warp and woof, but I had taken to the wooden benches provided in the Indian quarters. It happened that Mrs. Besant spoke to us one evening about the way in which she had learnt to sleep on a bench, so that she could do so when necessary, though she usually slept on a webbed bed. That night found me sleeping, or rather lying awake, on an old dining-table which happened to be standing on a veranda at Blavatsky Gardens. The second night, however, I slept soundly. I have always been able to sleep comfortably on a bench since then. The secret of this art is relaxation, for

that allows a maximum of contact with the surface of the board. It was said that one could sleep better on a board than on the softest bed, because relaxation was there compulsory. I attained this by imagining that my body was loose and could collapse like that of a cat, and at the same time that I was sinking into the board.

This trifling accomplishment greatly increased my prestige, and caused my words to be received with an amount of consideration and credibility which they otherwise would not have attained. The Hindu is essentially a pragmatist; he will judge a man's philosophy by seeing his life. Contrary to popular idealistic fancy, I am convinced that this is the most utilitarian race in the world. They will not move a finger to do anything that is not absolutely necessary to achieve a precise result. Even the religious ceremonials are each based upon a clearly stated *quid pro quo*. The people have little sympathy with play. Either work or be still—and both these they can do marvellously well. Talking too, but always talking with a purpose in view. They are not conversationalists. They credit the Englishman with similar practicality. When he enters a village or a town, the whisper goes round: "What has he come to get?"

By judicious placing of screens and matting, a bathroom had been fixed up for me in the courtyard, which was a pretty little enclosure with some flower-beds and a well in the centre, fitted with a pulley wheel and surrounded by a paved platform from which the water ran off to the flower-beds. I discarded the bathroom and took my bath at the well in old Indian style. Naked but for a loin cloth I stood at the side of the well, drew up pots of water and poured them over myself, soaping and rubbing between. This was a luxury I had learnt at Adyar, in the Indian quarters, where I had developed a friendship with the young Brahmin Subrahmanyam Aiyar, already mentioned. We used to draw water for each other in turn. One sat cross-legged near the parapet wall of the well, while the other drew large pots of water and poured them mercilessly over the head of his friend, who gasped for air as the flood burst upon him from time to time.

The water was never cold in Madras, and as it came direct from the well the touch of it had a richness and fullness like velvet—a feel which cannot be described. The

same water left to stand for a while in any vessel, and then used, as in European bathrooms, felt harsh and hard. My friend Subrahmanyam was deservedly proud of his physical strength. He would insist on my having the "fifty-pot bath," the "seventy-five pot bath," and even sometimes the "one hundred-pot bath," while I used to give him about twenty-five pots. A pot would equal an ordinary bucket of water. When the bath was over we would towel ourselves vigorously in the sun, and at the proper moment would slip off the loin cloth and substitute a towel therefor, the same to be replaced by the lower cloth or dhoti in its turn. Orthodox Hindus do not bathe naked, even in a private bathroom.

With all my sympathy for Hinduism, I never liked the system of worship—the shrines, the temples, the ceremonies. Of course, there is no idol worship, but there are thousands of statues and symbols, and there is some belief in material agencies for approach to Ishwara (God—literally, the ruler) or His agents, such as one finds still among ritualistic sects in the West. In Madura there is a gigantic temple covering acres of ground. Several times I wandered in the twilight of its vast stone corridors and chambers, and lingered to admire its innumerable statues and legendary figures, or the four great gateways with pagodas rising hundreds of feet into the air, and covered with symbolic and legendary figures. It was here that I first learnt the peculiarity of Indian art—that its main intention is to suggest. A statue is beautiful to a Hindu for what it suggests to his mind, not what it displays to his eye.

I will not trouble my reader with a description of my dwelling-places in other towns, or of the other massive temples which abound in South India. I was not interested in them myself. To discuss philosophic questions with small groups of people who would call at my quarters, or to expound my views before large audiences seated upon mats, was more to my taste. Instinctively I held to the adage that the proper study of mankind is man. But man is very unsatisfactory as he is and the idea therefore was to find in man something superior to the ordinary, for which India has always had a great reputation, and to discover the steps by which those superior elements might be developed and increased.

## § 2

There are various wandering conjurers in India, who generally gravitate to places where great gatherings and festivals are being held, but there are also men of extraordinary powers who hide their lights completely under the bushels of simple religiosity and even pretence of madness, and are prepared to open their hearts only to very sympathetic souls.

It fell to my lot to be introduced from time to time to men of this latter kind, when it became known that my mode of life and aspirations were so close to their own.

It was in Trichinopoly that I first met a man with remarkable powers of mind. The invitation came from him, he having heard of me through my lectures. One morning two Hindu acquaintances asked me if I would go with them to see this gentleman, so we took our way in a pony cart to the foot of the " Trichy Rock "—really a rock mountain, precipitous on one side but sloping on the opposite—and then on foot along a passage leading between small houses up the sloping side. Some distance up, we were guided into the interior of a little house, where I was introduced to an elderly man, well educated, speaking English, who offered to show me some interesting things and to tell me how they were done. He wanted, and received, no money, nor anything else.

I think the most interesting of his experiments was one which he did with a pack of cards. First he handed the pack to me for examination. They appeared to be quite ordinary. Then he wrote something on a small piece of paper, folded it up, gave it to me and asked me to place it in my pocket.

" Now," said he, " shuffle the cards as much as you like, spread them face downwards in front of you, and pick up any one."

I was sitting on a kind of platform with my two friends, they being on my right, forming a row. The Shastri was sitting down below in a chair, directly in front of me, at three or four arms' length. I shuffled the cards and spread them over a large portion of the platform in front of me with their faces downwards, allowed my hand to hover above them, moving about, then suddenly dropped the hand casually and picked up a card.

" Now take the paper out of your pocket and look at it."

There on the paper was written the name of the very card that I had picked up.

Next, I gathered the cards together, passed them on to my friends who reshuffled them, spread them out, and had the same experience with regard to pieces of paper which had been given to them.

I then thought I would like to try a little experiment of my own, so I requested my host to give me a new paper. We went through the same procedure, but this time, as I was allowing my hand to drop among the cards, I fixed my thought upon him and said mentally: "Now, whatever card you have chosen, I will not have that card."

I took out the paper and found that the name of the card written upon it did not agree with that which I had picked up. When I showed this to the Shastri he was much surprised; but when I told him how I had willed not to have the card of his choice he smiled with amusement, and said that that explained everything, because his method was to concentrate on a card and transmit the thought of it to my subconscious mind, which could know where the required card lay and could direct my hand to it. My two friends then decided that they would try the same experiment. He gave them new papers, but in each case—not being taken unawares—he compelled them to take the cards which he had written down.

It will be in place here to relate a curious sequel to these experiments, which occurred about ten years later when I was sitting one evening with one of the Professors of the college where I was Principal at Hyderabad in Sind. This professor was entertaining me and my wife with some conjuring tricks with cards which he had somehow picked up while a student at Oxford University, where he had taken a brilliant degree. While this was going on, I suddenly heard a voice speaking strongly and clearly, as though in the middle of my head. It spoke only six words: "Five of clubs. Try that experiment."

At once I wrote "five of clubs" on a piece of paper, folded it up, and gave it to the professor. Then I asked him to shuffle his cards, spread them out face downwards before him and pick one up. This having been done, I told him to take out his paper and look at it. His astonishment was great. I believe he thinks to this day that I played a very clever trick on him. But my own belief is that the Shastri



whom I had seen in Trichinopoly had somehow become aware of what we were doing, and had performed the whole experiment somehow, after speaking telepathically to me. There were other psychological possibilities, of course, but considering all that I have seen done by such people, I think that the most probable explanation.

The same gentleman showed me the power that he had over his own bodily functions. He asked me to put my ear to his bare chest and listen to the beating of his heart. He would, he said, stop it at my bidding, and keep it in suspense until I told him to start it again. This he did with perfect success. As soon as I said "Stop," the heart stopped, and when a few seconds later I said "Start," it went on again. I took care not to keep it long in suspension, as I was rather afraid of the possible consequences!

He then showed me his control of the flow of blood. He took a nail and stood it upright above his knee, a little to the inside of the centre line of the thigh. Holding it with one hand he hammered it down to the head with the other. He was a fat man, so there was plenty of room. Then he pulled out the nail, leaving a small wound, and said: "Tell me when you want the blood to flow, and to stop."

Several times I said: "Flow" and "Stop," and it obeyed my words. Afterwards he wiped the place and said: "Now I will show you the healing of the flesh."

He slowly passed the ball of his thumb over the spot with a little pressure, and when it had passed the skin was perfectly normal and there was no sign of the wound.

It might be suggested that the old gentleman used some form of hypnotism in connection with his exhibition, but that would be inconsistent with his friendly desire to talk about the various items, and with my having tried a little trick of my own and taken him by surprise.

### § 3

It was on the same tour, but in the town of Mannargudi, that I was taken to see an astrologer who certainly knew a thing or two. In that town I was accommodated in the public travellers' bungalow, a spacious building a little distant from the town. About midnight I was awakened by a knocking on the door. I got out of bed, turned up the lamp, opened the door, and observed with some trepidation

a group of men standing in the darkness, dimly lit by a hand lantern. They proved to be quite harmless, in fact, benevolent. They were students of the local college, who had been to my lecture and had taken a fancy to me.

"There is a certain astrologer," they informed me, "who would like to meet you and make your horoscope. Will you please us by coming to his cottage?"

I went with them through the dark night, with the aid of the lantern. We came at last into a little whitewashed room, and found a bearded man with grey hair sitting on the floor, with a palm-leaf manuscript beside him. After salutation, we all sat on the floor in a group, quite near to him.

I had no prepossession in favour of astrology. The lady who had given such accurate tests of telepathy in my home town used to practise the art. She had made horoscopes of most of her friends, which gave very accurate diagnoses, within the limitations of a certain vagueness which seems to pervade most astrology and to prevent any very definite proof of its general accuracy. Moreover, a leading London astrologer had given to the President's wife (my future mother-in-law, as before mentioned) three several dates for the probable death of her husband, which had occasioned her considerable anxiety each time, but proved inaccurate.

The astrologer whom I now met did not know English, but one of the students acted as interpreter. Would I tell him my place of birth? Yes—Manchester, England. Date and time? I understood that I had begun to appear about ten minutes past twelve Greenwich time in the early morning of August 18th, 1883. That would be about midnight according to the sun, would it not? I supposed so.

The astrologer looked at his palm-leaf manuscript and fixed his time, then drew a diagram of twelve "houses" in the form of a square. Translating into English—the Sun was in Leo, in conjunction with Venus, in opposition to the Moon in Aquarius; Cancer was the rising sign; Jupiter was the rising planet, and so on. Then he began to interpret the meaning of these relationships, with the aid of his palm-leaf manuscript, and I kept notes of what he said.

"You have money," said he, and he named the amount which I possessed in England after the selling of my business!

"But, sir," exclaimed one of the young men, reproach-

fully, "we thought you were a *sannyasi*"—a penniless, wandering preacher, who has renounced all possessions.

I explained that I was a Theosophist, paying my own way at Adyar, but taking no money for writing or lecturing. There were some professional Theosophists, who made a living, and quite a fortune out of it, but I was not one of them. I thought it was best to retain my small capital, live on the proceeds and do what I could without being a burden on those whom I was trying to help.

They were pacified, and the astrologer proceeded: "You will marry at about the age of thirty-two."

I thought it unlikely that I would marry, but I did so, seven years later, at the age of thirty-two.

"The lady will be of a smiling disposition, and she will have a small mole in the middle of her neck."

Yes, the smile was all right; people have sometimes asked me if my wife's portrait represents a "movie star." It looks like that—or a tooth-paste advertisement. She has acted on the screen, as I also, but only once, in a film bearing the dreadful title, *The Devil and the Damsel*. She was not the damsel nor I the devil. I was a perfectly respectable judge on the bench, and she a hospital nurse. The devil was DRINK; the damsel a stoutish young lady—very charming, however—whose husband, a veritable hero otherwise, had been caught by the devil, but was of course ultimately saved by the sweetness of a little child.

As to the mole, I found it some years after marriage, when my wife one day succumbed to the new fashion, a little belatedly, and cut short her hair. It revealed itself exactly in the middle on the back of the neck.

The astrologer gave me five or six other items of information about my future wife, all of which turned out correct, except one, her age. He went on:

"You have two brothers." Correct.

"One is younger, the other older." Correct.

"Both are still unmarried." Correct.

A description of the brothers and their future wives followed—accurate enough, but I abstain from publication!

"You will have five children, three boys and two girls." Wrong. We have had no children. A curious incident was that some time before our marriage, and while my future wife was engaged to someone else, a wandering conjurer—who had turned rupees into scorpions in her hand and

performed other alarming and impoverishing feats—told her that she would not marry the man to whom she was then engaged, but would marry a small man and have five children.

I think, however, that I can explain this lapse. There was a highly respectable friend of mine, Mr. Sitarama Shastri by name, who at the time of our marriage told us that it was considered the height of spirituality among Brahmins for husband and wife to abstain from actual marital connection for seven years. My wife had already told me that she did not wish to have any children for several years after marriage, as she was so young. So we decided on this seven-year plan—or absence of plan. Unluckily, when the seven years were over, nothing happened. I went to a doctor and he told me that he thought there must be some atrophy in my case, on account of disuse until nearly the age of forty.

“You will write many books.” I have since written about fifteen of them, and here is another.

“You will become well known in many countries.” To some extent. I have undertaken lecturing tours in about forty different countries in almost every part of the world, and some of my books have been translated and published in several languages. One of them is computed to have circulated to the extent of about a quarter of a million.

“Karma will bring you no bad disease.” A trifle ambiguous. Though I have had dangerous illnesses, they can be traced to immediate causes.

“You will not tell lies.” There is some hope for me then as an autobiographer!

“This will be your last life on earth; you will not need to reincarnate any more.” Let us wait and see.

“You will return to England in a year and a half.” This did not come about, though it nearly did, as I shall relate in due course.

It will be seen that most of the predictions were fairly sound. As I write I have before me the horoscope and the written notes that I made in the little cottage while the astrologer spoke and his words were being interpreted to me,

## CHAPTER IV

### FEATS

#### § I

**I**N contrast with these high accomplishments of the Hindus I had some very humble and elementary ones to attain myself. It was in the small town of Tiruvallur that I essayed my first pair of sandals—not the kind specially made for Europeans, with a criss-cross of leather enclosing the toes, and a strap round the back of the heel, but real ordinary Indian sandals, with a band across the instep, a strap between the big toe and the second toe, and nothing at all but the sole at the heel.

By some peculiar fate I started to wear these in that particular town, which has the sandiest streets that I have seen in any town or village of perhaps three hundred which I have visited in India. As it happens that sandals are the footwear most unsuitable for walking in sand—why on earth are they called sandals?—I made a most amusing exhibition of myself. When I put my foot forward with any degree of confidence, the sandal, like John Gilpin of immortal memory, could not stop in the proper place, but would continue on its way and end up two or three feet beyond the place where my foot would touch the ground.

My friends roared with laughter and the public joined in, as I pursued my languid, though by no means elegant way. I persevered—as I have never objected to adding to the gaiety of others; and also I think it increased the audience at my lectures—until at last my toes had learnt to work. It was their business, as the foot lifted from the ground, to press downwards and a little together, so as to grip the sandal until it reached the ground again. Afterwards, I never had trouble with sandals, and I can recommend them to all who wish to have strong and shapely feet!

Another accomplishment was the twisting of the dhoti or lower cloth about the waist so that it will not fall off. The Hindus use no belt or pin for this. After draping the cloth behind and crossing it in front, you hold it with each hand at its own side of the body, give it a little twist at those two points with the finger and thumb, and there you are, at least until you begin to walk, and then you wish you weren't, like the celebrated conductor of an orchestra whose buttons came off in the middle of a piece. No one seemed able to say how the dhoti holds up, but after a little time you have the knack and all is well.

Still another accomplishment was that of eating by hand. This proved to be less difficult than it looked, even with semi-liquid foods. As a result of my own experience my advice is that one should not try it at a table, for then you must carry the food through an angle of perhaps forty degrees with the surface of the table. But if you sit cross-legged on the floor, you lean forward a little as you raise the food to the mouth, and as you now have an angle of seventy degrees or more you are less liable to drop the food by the way.

The speed of movement of the arm also bears upon this science—there must be a certain momentum to carry the food from the fingers into the mouth—for it is bad form to put the fingers in the mouth or even, in some parts, to touch the lips at all. If the speed is too little the food will slide down your chin, if too great there is danger that you may choke, if indeed you do not receive it in the eye, instead of the orifice which nature intended.

My friends were tolerant of spoons; they would provide them, if necessary, for the ignorant and unskilled; but still, how could the European continue that dirty habit? The same spoon had been in many people's mouths, and everyone knew that you could not wash metal perfectly clean. The spoon had also been in one's own mouth in the previous mouthful, and had therefore gone away unclean. But hands were washed before you ate and skin was very easily cleaned—could one not see that bare feet were far easier to keep clean than feet which wore shoes?—and besides you had your own magnetism, not someone else's. In drinking, too, it was cleanest to pour from the cup into the mouth without touching the lips with the cup, though it might be admitted to be somewhat less artistic. This

last feat I never learned, though I might have done so if I had practised in private. Instead, I carried my own tumbler and washed it myself when I washed out my mouth, as was the custom, before and after each meal.

In most of the houses I ate by myself, generally with an audience, ostensibly to attend to my needs. But some of my hosts and friends, defying convention and caste rules, would sit along with me, saving the situation by sitting at right angles to me, not in the same line or row, except in recent years, as caste rigidities have decayed. The orthodox ladies would never sit with us. That would have been a terrible disgrace. They held it their duty to see that the food was properly cooked and properly served, and the greatest honour to the guest was to serve it themselves.

First a large plantain leaf would be placed before one. Then would come dish after dish, little heaps, ladled direct from the cooking pots, placed along the far edge of the leaf. Then two small bowls of brass or stitched leaf would be put alongside, and filled with water and soup (generally mulligatawny—literally "pepper water"), and perhaps another containing buttermilk, or sweet milk with raisins, nuts and spices cooked in it. Then would come a large heap of rice in the centre and on that a thick soupy mixture of vegetables and grains.

From time to time you take portions from the little heaps, mix them with the rice, according to taste, give a little circular motion to form a loose ball, and then with the proper motion, as explained before, convey the bolus to the mouth.

When several are dining together none must rise until all are finished; it is very bad form to "break the row;" then all rise together and troop off to the veranda, where water is placed at the edge for washing the hands, rinsing the mouth and pouring over the feet. Hands must never be dipped into the washing-bowls. The water must be poured over the hands. In bathing, too, one must never sit in the bath. If you do you are getting your own dirt back against the skin again and again. One must take up the dipper, dip it into the tub of water, and pour it over oneself again and again, allowing the water to run away, unless one bathes at the well and pours directly from the pot attached to the rope.

## § 2

When I returned to Adyar I took up my residence in the Indian quarters. These were converted stables, with the addition of a few new rooms, the whole forming a quadrangle with a large well in the centre, which for a long time was delightful for bathing, until the water, much neglected by the management, became dark in colour and unpleasant in odour on account of the fine rootlets of trees coming through the brickwork and growing into large tufts inside the well.

The only drawback to life in the quadrangle was that the Hindus would read aloud very early in the mornings. That gave no trouble to themselves, for they have wonderful powers of concentration or selective attention, due perhaps partly to lack of privacy from earliest childhood, and partly to the method of teaching in many elementary schools, where a large number of children in one room or veranda read and repeat aloud their individual lessons, while the schoolmaster sits in the midst listening to them all and picking out and correcting any mistakes which he may hear.

Besides, there was no harm in early waking, as it was our habit to go to the shrine room at headquarters for an hour's meditation at five or six o'clock in the morning. In this Mrs. Besant used to join. Some of us would also make use of the room for an hour or a half-hour during the day. We used to sit on the floor, or on little mats or cushions. I was proud because Mrs. Besant lent me her antelope skin. Among Hindu devotees it is considered best to use an antelope skin of a dark colour, or as explained in that most popular of Hindu religious books, the *Bhagavad Gita*, straw on the ground, and on that a cloth, and on that a skin.

Mrs. Besant had ideas of a very monastic life in those days, but these were brought to an end by the introduction of electric light, which tempted people to sit up at night and even to have supper parties, and gradually put an end to most of the early morning meditation.

For the Indians food was cooked in the back quarters of a little old cottage, the two rooms of which were set aside for Brahmin and non-Brahmin caste dining-rooms. It was not until 1913, when Mrs. Besant took up political work in India, that she turned against the caste system and told us that it



must be brought to an end. Before that she spoke and wrote strongly of its essential excellence, and in favour of attempts to rid it of excesses and abuses so as to make it again what it was reputed to have been in very ancient times. There was no objection to hereditary occupations, because, in accordance with the theory of reincarnation, one would be born into the circumstances or the caste suited to one's needs. Abnormal cases could be adjusted.

Mrs. Besant was in favour of strictness among the Hindus in pursuit of their ancient customs, except the early marriage of children, the ban on widow remarriage, and the habit of men of forty marrying girls in their teens. When the father of my friend Subrahmanyam Aiyar died, and the young man, being very modern in his views, and much opposed to the priest-craft which prevails in connection with ceremonials, which anyhow he regarded as superstition, declined to perform the orthodox ceremonies supposed to assist his father's soul in the beyond, she gave him the alternative of performing them or leaving Adyar, for she said his neglect of them would bring the Society into disrepute among the orthodox, especially as his father had been a well-known man in a good position. I sympathized with Subrahmanyam.

There was no general dining-room attached to the Hindu kitchen, so Mrs. Besant allowed me the use of her private dining-room—for she ate the food from the Indian kitchen—which she had built near by, until some jealous person reported to her that I was inviting stray dogs in to eat the leavings, which she believed—what is a king to do when spies hand in their reports?—notwithstanding my protest that it was not so, and further, that even if she believed it had been so she could rely upon it not occurring in the future. It was my first experience of a sharp temper which sometimes appeared. After that I used to sit and eat on the outer veranda of the cook-house itself.

"But what did you eat in the European dining-room before you changed over," some voice seems to ask. Oh, stewed guavas. I admit there were other things preceding it at the meals, but somehow stewed guavas constantly dominated the spread. Guavas are cheap beyond compare in Madras. You see, the butler was paid a fixed price of ten shillings a week per head for feeding us, and he was expected to do it as well as he could. So there were soup, boiled rice and curry, some vegetables, cutlets, bread with white

buffalo butter on the side, and stewed guavas. Yes, and bananas. I did not mind bananas if they were fully ripe; otherwise they proved themselves—as some of the members used to say with brutal frankness—nothing but wind and water.

I took up my literary duties seriously. It was the time of the beginning of many new activities. One member, Mr. Sitarama Shastri, had started a little press in a closed-in veranda of a store-room. That grew into the large Vazanta Press, which afterwards printed the *Theosophist* magazine (theretofore printed in Madras city) and a great variety of books, supplying the theosophical market all over the world.

A little book of mine, entitled *A Guide of Theosophy*, was the first published book to be printed on the Vazanta Press. Mrs. Besant liked it much and put it into her advertised list of "books recommended for study." That was followed by my "Tanjore Lectures"—a selection from the lectures given during my tour in the South. Mrs. Besant herself reviewed this little book and said it ought to be on the shelves (I supposed she meant in the hands) of all Theosophists, as she said it contained interesting elements of original thought. I was the first to point out, I think, that *karma* could not be taken as punishment for our sins, but it must be a scheme for presenting at each moment the very best opportunities to each individual. Even yet that idea has penetrated the intelligence of comparatively few Theosophists. Others still go on speaking and writing of "bad *karma*" as something that can retard a man on the upward way until he had "paid his debts." In later years I followed it up with a statement that there could be no material casuality, nothing material to connect my striking a man two thousand years ago and somebody else's striking me to-day, but that the casual connection must be in our own will—in the depth of my nature I choose to "pay the debts" of yesterday, because the experience of what I willingly do to others is the greatest need of my own nature, with a view to my realization of the unity of life.

While I was on tour someone had said in a meeting that one of the old Indian books, the *Garuda Purana*, dealing with death ceremonies, conditions of life after death and the means to liberation, was similar to the teaching of Mrs. Besant on the subject. I therefore took up the translation

of that book as an additional literary work, with the aid of Mr. Subrahmanyam Aiyar, who had the capacity of a walking dictionary. Afterwards I carried the manuscript on tour through many towns of North India, discussed with many pundits in different towns the possible meanings of obscure passages, and finally completed it and prepared it for the press, when it was published in *The Sacred Books of the Hindus Series* in Allahabad.

### § 3

In 1909 two people came to live at Adyar who were destined to play a large part in my life. These were Mr. C. W. Leadbeater and J. Krishnamurti—the latter then a schoolboy.

For many years Mr. Leadbeater had been established in the minds of most Theosophists as the principal psychic investigator of the day. True, Mrs. Besant was credited with psychic powers, but she had not written extensively, as he had, about personal experiences of the astral and mental planes, of the modes of life of the dead, and of the auras and the thought-forms of men.

His presence at Adyar was a great relief to Mrs. Besant, who had borne the whole burden of the daily meetings until he arrived. He now sat beside her and shared the work to some extent, and took the meetings himself in her absence on tour.

In the early summer of 1909, Mrs. Besant having gone to lecture in England and America, I took the opportunity to make another lecture tour, through Poona, Bombay and many towns to the north of Bombay. In Poona I spoke in a large theatre, with Mr. G. K. Gokhale, the famous politician and social worker, in the chair. After the lecture, questions were invited. It then appeared that a large number of people had come to the meeting for an opportunity to question and heckle the chairman, not to hear the lecture. Up jumped several of these, followers of Mr. B. G. Tilak who were bitterly against Mr. Gokhale, and began to speak against him. Others got up and protested, and the meeting was soon out of hand. As the ferment increased, Mr. Gokhale caught me by the arm and we made a precipitous exit by a little door at the back of the theatre, and so removed the chief cause of the excitement. I continued

my tour to Bombay and other towns, and on into the promontory of Kathiawar.

It was in Kathiawar that I first saw something of life in the States ruled by Indian Princes, which retain old-fashioned manners and customs much more than British India. In four different States I was the guest of the Raja.

It happened at Morvi that I fell in with one of the Indian "memory men," or *ashtavadanis*. This title is a very modest one. It implies memory of eight (*ashta*) things, but generally the performers show the memory of fifty or a hundred things. I was invited to the exhibition. We sat in a large hall in the palace. The memory man—Mr. Nathuram P. Shukla—took his place on the carpet. Immediately in front of him sat twenty selected people, while the rest formed the audience. He attended to each one of the twenty people five times, that is, going along the line five times. Several of them gave him sentences composed of five words, each person using a different language, and these words were given out of their order in the sentences, such as "My third word is 'field.'" One man gave him moves in a game of chess. Two others gave him figures to be multiplied together. Another carried on an intricate conversation. Still another struck a bell a number of times on each round. After all the items had been given, Mr. Shukla sat in meditation for five or ten minutes, then answered questions relating to the items, and finally repeated the whole.

It was here that I had a sample of real old-world politeness. After the exhibition was over I was talking with one of the Raja's ministers, and I expressed admiration for the hall. He told me that it was about thirty feet high. I happened to say that it had appeared to me about forty feet. Then he said: "Oh, yes, it is forty feet." I was quite sure afterwards that it was only thirty!

While in the train I was surprised at one of the way-side stations with a visit from a gentleman who brought a message from the Maharaja of Limbdi, who had his special carriage attached to that train. The Maharaja expressed a desire to see me. I went over to his carriage, where he received me with formal and yet intimate politeness. He wanted me to come over for a while to his State and give two or three lectures. I did so, was most kindly received

and ultimately presented with two big red embroidered shawls, such as are given to pundits on special occasions. As I wanted no possessions I posted these off to my mother in England, which was just as well, for during my next tour my room at Adyar was burgled stark naked.

It was in the guest house at Limbdi that I again met Mr. Shukla. We spent a good deal of time together and experimented a little with thought-transference, in which we had a fair measure of success, apparently due largely to sympathy of temperament. He was good enough to explain to me some of the methods of memory culture in vogue in his profession.

I had already taken great interest in this subject. I now obtained from Europe all the books I could about it and was fortunate enough to secure a variety of them, one of them as much as a hundred and fifty years old, some of them giving very full information about the systems in vogue in earlier centuries in Europe, when it had been a popular subject amongst the monks. These, and a considerable amount of personal practice, enabled me to perform the *ashtavadana* feat occasionally for the entertainment of friends and in public—the latter very rarely—as I shrank from display and did not want to become an entertainer of any kind, only a very serious philosopher and preacher! The last time I performed the feat, with fifty things at once, was at the Jubilee Convention of the Theosophical Society in Madras in 1925. Since then I have refused all requests to make any of these exhibitions as I consider them dangerous to brains more than about fifty years old. All these things, however, enabled me to produce a system of memory training which still appears to me to be the best extant, superior to many expensive and well-known courses.

## CHAPTER V

### A EUROPEAN YOGI

#### § I

ON my way back from Kathiawar I broke my journey for a few days at Surat. What was my surprise on receiving there a letter from Mr. Leadbeater, enclosing a cable from Mrs. Besant: "Please stop Wood's proceedings may cause serious trouble in work." Mr. Leadbeater wrote very sympathetically, telling me not to be uneasy, that he knew what was the matter and would explain everything. By the time I reached Adyar a letter also arrived from Mrs. Besant saying that she thought, after all, that my proper work lay in England, that many people wanted me there, and I would do well to make arrangements to return—quite forgetting, however, that I had given up my business and would be, to say the least, financially strained if I attempted to live in England on my small resources.

I learned from Mr. Leadbeater that somebody, at Adyar had heard about the disturbance in the Poona theatre and had written to Mrs. Besant to the effect that I was taking part in politics, so she hastened to stop my speaking lest the Theosophical Society come under suspicion of being associated in any way with political thought and activities. Mr. Leadbeater wrote to her and explained the whole matter, so that on her return she told me that everything was quite all right, and requested me not to trouble about it any more.

The incident threw me into very close contact with Mr. Leadbeater, whom I had met previously only rather casually. I had called on him one morning to ask for his opinion on some subject. When we had finished talking, it occurred to me to offer to help him in his literary work. He was much pleased at the idea. He opened a drawer full of

letters. " Could you answer these for me if I give you the points ? " We went over the letters, discussed the hundred and one questions that they contained, and I cleared them all up in two or three weeks. In the evening meetings I took notes of his answers to the various questions raised in the meetings. I became his constant companion for a long time, to such an extent that in 1913 I was in a position to write an article about him entitled " Ten Thousand Hours with Mr. Leadbeater."

Mr. Leadbeater lived in a small octagonal room with a little dressing-room and a bathroom at one side and a broad veranda round the rest of it. As he sat at his roll-top desk in the middle of the room he presented a striking figure, notwithstanding his sixty-two years of age. He was a massive, muscular man, five feet eleven inches in height, and some sixty inches round the chest, with arms to match, fair hair, almost white, a straggly beard, and an abnormally great development of forehead at the centre just above the eyes, with a sharp retreat above that. He might have sat for a portrait of an ancient Dane.

He wore only cotton trousers and shirt, with throat and feet bare. He would go out in the hottest sun without a hat and would enjoy it, and never experience the slightest ill effect. Though prepared always to work from early morning till far into the night, having his meals—such as they were (for a long time I estimated the cost at twopence each)—on a cleared space amongst his papers, he would nevertheless take an hour off every evening for a walk down to the shore to bathe in the river mouth or in the sea.

He was very fond of long walks also on occasions. One night, when we were taking a walk to deliver some proofs at the printing-office in Madras, as we went along the five-mile marina, the famous water-front of Madras, he fell over a heap of road metal in the darkness. He was somewhat shaken, but nevertheless completed the twelve-mile walk almost as if nothing had happened. On another occasion we took a walk of twenty-four miles in the mountains near Kodaikanal, a hill station seven thousand feet high. On that occasion he did a bit too much for a man of his age, and had to lean on my shoulder for the uphill climb of the last two or three miles. We had been to try to find the men who, according to some guide-books, lived in trees, but our search had been in vain.

Once, when I was being carried out to sea by a treacherous current—several swimmers have been drowned in the Bay of Bengal at Adyar—he managed to help me in, standing on a sandbank and reaching out for my hand. Inch by inch he edged backwards until we were out of danger. Though a powerful swimmer he could not have overcome the current if he had lost his footing.

## § 2

It was during one of these bathing expeditions that Krishnamurti, soon afterwards to become famous as the prospective vehicle for the impending return of the Christ, burst upon our view.

It happened that a certain Brahmin widower, with four sons, retired about that time from Government service, and offered to come and live at Adyar and give his services in some capacity. Mrs. Besant, however, objected to having any boys living on the compound, so it was finally arranged that he should live in a little cottage which happened to be let just outside the estate, and should come in daily to do some secretarial work.

There was nothing, however, to prevent the boys—seven in all, four sons and three wards—from coming into the compound, and on the beach, as Mrs. Besant never liked the idea of closing up the compound walls, so as to prevent our neighbours or others from coming in and enjoying the gardens and the shade of the trees. So ere long we had for our swimming parties quite an audience—highly interested, these boys from the country, who had scarcely seen a white man in their lives, and were now presented with an uncommonly full view.

Krishnamurti was one of those boys. He was tallish for his age, about thirteen, but woefully thin, with almost every bone showing.

The boys also came to the Indian quadrangle at nights to see Mr. Subrahmanyam Aiyar, who was a particular friend of their father's and to obtain from that genial young man, who was always ready to help anybody in almost any way—and very soon from me also, as I was living in the next room—some help in connection with the home-work set in their school. Subrahmanyam was frequently one of our small bathing party, which included also a Dutchman, an



old friend of Mr. Leadbeater's. This Dutchman, too, was very genial and sociable, so before long he and Subrahmanyam were inviting the boys into the water and offering to teach them to swim. After a few days' preliminary hesitation, our party was regularly increased by the inclusion of the boys.

Now, it happened that I raised a question about the method of reincarnation of Indians. Almost every Indian I had met regarded the idea of a possible future incarnation as a European with the utmost alarm. Yet there was an idea current among Theosophists that the ego took birth in different races in succession, so as to obtain a variety of experiences. Mr. Leadbeater had in the past made psychic observations with regard to the past lives of several Europeans, and had seen them moving from America to China, India, Egypt, Greece and Rome, and later Europe. There was one intriguing life in which he and I and about half a dozen others were declared to have lived in far Eskimoland and apparently spent most of our time eating blubber! That was regarded as rather a lapse!

The question now was, do the Hindus go through exactly the same course? Mr. Leadbeater said he would look into the past lives of some Indians, and see what had happened in their cases. "But," said he, "it is better not to look into the lives of the members here. Theosophists are always abnormal anyhow! I must find somebody else, who will agree to be examined."

Then came up the suggestion; why not these boys? Mr. Leadbeater asked the father's permission, which was instantly and delightedly given. Then he began to write a series of lives, which appeared first in the *Theosophist* and later in book form under the title *The Lives of Alcyone*—Alcyone being a pseudonym under which to hide the personality of Krishnamurti. The other boys figured in these life-stories, as well as some of the Adyar residents and a few people whom Mr. Leadbeater had met before.

Mr. Leadbeater explained that he could run his vision of the past backwards at any speed. He thus first made a list of the last thirty appearances of Krishnamurti, without looking into the details at all. He told me that he fixed the dates by observation of the position of the stars and by counting the precession of the equinoxes. He had been an enthusiastic student of astronomy. Then, every evening,

after the roof meetings were over, we would retire to his room. I would sit at his roll-top desk, writing down the dramatic incidents of a life, as he clairvoyantly looked at them while he walked round and round the room to keep himself awake. Thus we would go on far into the night, sometimes until two or three o'clock in the morning, until the life under review was finished. At any moment I might interrupt him with questions or suggestions.

Mr. Leadbeater would become much absorbed while thus walking round, and more than once he kicked his bare toe against the corner of the desk with a force sufficient to draw blood, but without at all noticing it. So far as I could see he had no time during the day to invent these stories; only occasionally he would consult a book or encyclopædia with reference to some point that he wanted to verify.

The lives were written mostly in reverse order, but they were numbered successively, as the list of thirty had been made in advance. The first to be done was the twenty-ninth life, in which Krishnamurti figured as a disciple of the Buddha, and his next younger brother as proprietor of a temple at a centre of pilgrimage in North India. In telling the story, allusion would be made to but few other persons by name, but afterwards Mr. Leadbeater would sit by himself and draw up a genealogical chart containing the names of some thirty people, with their relationships in the particular life. In writing these down it was considered advisable to avoid the actual names of persons who might, after all, be in a position to sue for libel, especially the villains of the piece, who attained to heights of melodramatic villainy worthy of the stage of half a century ago. So Mr. Leadbeater kept a list of pseudonyms, which came to be called the "star names" of the people concerned, because they were mostly names of stars. The identities were supposed to be kept secret, but they somehow leaked out, and members used to go about with little books exchanging discoveries with one another to complete their lists!

When the series of thirty lives was complete the investigation ceased for a while. Years later the charts were enlarged to contain over three hundred persons, and the number of lives was increased to forty-eight.

## § 3

I had much confidence in Mr. Leadbeater. I grew to like him very much. His whole life was that of a man who took himself seriously and had no interest beyond the " great cause " for which he was working. It was, however, more than a " cause " with him ; it was a mission. He was still of the disposition which had made him a very serious curate of the Church of England in his younger days—a position which he had left in order to plunge himself into the work of the Theosophical Society, which he had approached through the half-way house of table-turning. So he was interested much more in lifting people rapidly on the road of evolution of the soul—which persisted from life to life, or rather from body to body—than in—what some of us preferred—the mere search for truth, and the spread of truth, leaving others to uplift themselves by its aid. He believed in the personal element in soul-evolution—the domestic animals had awakenings of superior intelligence because of their contact with man, and the flowers and fruits as well as the animals were brought to greater perfection by being bred under human guidance.

These ideas I accepted as rather obvious for a long time, until I later came to have much closer experience of many kinds of animals and men and to reflect upon their progress. Then I discovered that the monkey, having had no contact at all with man, is ahead of other animals, even the dog and the cat, in intelligence, and is unsurpassed for loyalty and reckless bravery in defence of the human or other creature whom it loves. It will cry for you in your absence, and when you return it will put its arms round your neck in a tight hug, and its cheek against yours, and " yum-yum " with great satisfaction, giving a little bite or nip, which is its kiss, and may probably be the origin of all kisses. If impersonal character is the test, I have noticed that when you say or do something in the presence of both a monkey and a dog, the dog will perk up and come along to be taken notice of, but the monkey will look at your eyes, follow the direction of your gaze, and take an interest in what you are referring to, without apparent thought of itself.

The cat ? Beautiful and pleasant companion as it is, it will come to you when it is in the mood to be stroked or tickled, and will even give you a soulful glance while the

process is going on, but it is much more likely to convert you into a sort of a cat than you are to change it into a sort of a man or woman. I observed also that the elephant, caught from the wild and trained only to subjection and obedience displays remarkable intelligence. But I digress too much.

The point is that the intellectual and emotional uplift of the animals does not depend upon man. Those who think it does are apt to imagine that the uplift of the "lower orders" among men depends upon the paternal administration of the higher, and is at its best when the lower remember their places and cultivate themselves with due respect and obedience to their superiors. Mr. Leadbeater was adamant in this point of view. Notwithstanding the progress of democracy in the world, he remained an entire disbeliever in it and a good old Tory of the early Victorian style. Though so much with him, I was never in the least converted to his social and political outlook, which always seemed to me reactionary and uninformed in the extreme.

Although I was quite satisfied that Mr. Leadbeater was sincere I had no decisive evidence of the accuracy of any of his visions. Some people believed that those visions were constant, that he was aware of almost everything that was going on in his neighbourhood and a good deal far away.

That was a belief based on exaggeration. I was a little disappointed that neither he nor Mrs. Besant ever took decisive steps to scotch that belief with regard to themselves. It may have been that they found it difficult to make clear just where the line of belief ought to be drawn.

I never knew one occasion on which Mr. Leadbeater was in the least aware of any thought that was going on in my mind, and in ordinary matters he certainly used no clairvoyant power at all. Often, being busy at something, he would ask me if I would go and see "whether our President"—a word he always used with a reverential pause and deep old-fashioned impressment—"is in her room," though that room was only fifty paces distant and her aura was described as blazing like the sun for a hundred yards all round. Often he would say, with regard to a point of interest: "Come along, let us consult the President about this," and we would rush off together (we would run on these little excursions for the mere joy of living), sometimes to be brought

to a halt a few feet inside her room and utter the disappointed exclamation : " Why, she is not here ! "

The incident nearest to evidence that I ever saw occurred as follows. We were working away and all was pitch darkness outside, when a knock came at the door and in response to Mr. Leadbeater's " come in," a young Englishman, newly resident at Adyar, appeared and said that three Indian gentlemen were sitting on the bench outside. They had come from Madras eagerly seeking his help with reference to a baby belonging to one of them. Mr. Leadbeater leaned back in his chair, looked at the messenger, and said without hesitation : " Which one is it ? Is it the one with the fuzzy hair ? " The messenger did not know, but when the men were called in it proved to be one of them who had hair of a frizzy kind, which stood far out from his head.

I should mention here that callers were rare and generally discouraged, but a large part of Mr. Leadbeater's correspondence referred to dead people. On account of his books describing his first-hand knowledge of the dead and how they were living and what they were doing, people used to write to him from all parts of the world, sending photographs of their departed relatives (or pieces of paper on which they had written, or scraps from the clothing which they had worn), with requests for information about them, for help to them, and for messages from them.

Mr. Leadbeater would " look them up," and reply. Generally the departed were seen enjoying themselves with friends they had met or made on the astral plane, they needed no help—but when necessary it would be given—and it was quite forbidden to bring messages from the dead to the living. It was, however, permissible to take messages from the living to the dead, but that was seldom necessary, since most educated and cultured people were quite capable of mingling with the departed during the hours of sleep, when their astral bodies were released from the physical integument, though it was rare for anyone to remember these experiences on waking, on account of the lack of responsiveness of the physical brain to impressions from higher planes.

Another incident approaching the nature of evidence occurred somewhat later. An old gentleman and his wife arrived seeking consolation for the loss of their little son, a schoolboy. They had come from the Telugu-speaking

country to the north of Madras, from which Krishnamurti's father had also come. They wanted Mr. Leadbeater to talk with their little boy. He remarked to me that he could not do so on account of the difference of language, but this might be an opportunity to see what Krishnamurti could do. Krishnamurti was sitting studying at a table against the far wall of the room. Mr. Leadbeater called across to him: "Come and see if you can help." Krishnamurti then sat with the two old people on a couch just inside the door, while Mr. Leadbeater and I went on working together at the other side of the room. The three carried on an animated conversation in the Telugu language for, I think, about half an hour, presumably in reference to the dead boy, and then the old people bowed themselves out with expressions of profound gratitude and satisfaction.

On the other hand, there were occasional incidents which shook my confidence in the reliability of Mr. Leadbeater's clairvoyance. Though I admired him and loved him, and was convinced of his sincerity, it did sometimes cross my mind that as he was obviously much more interested in uplifting people than in the investigations themselves, that great interest might easily colour his psychic vision. He practically never took up any investigation on his own account, but only when the subjects were requested or suggested by others, and he was always ready to break them off in order to spend his time with promising boys—a matter which irritated me a little because I was bent upon gathering material which might turn out to be of real scientific value sooner or later.

I noticed that as we proceeded with the writing of the lives of Alcyone, boring further and further into the past Krishnamurti seemed to grow greater and greater; in more recent lives he was a humble individual, though pure and good, but in the earlier lives he appeared as a personage of great eminence, playing a leading part in the political and social life of his time. If the book of lives is now consulted, it will appear curious to the critical reader that Krishnamurti, one of the right-hand men of the Manu, semi-divine king of the new Aryan race seventy-two thousand years ago, should gradually diminish in importance to become an ordinary man, though of fine character, in the last ten or fifteen lives. I commented to myself that Krishnamurti was obviously growing upon Mr. Leadbeater,

and that imagination was seriously affecting the visions, though that would be no reason to regard them as fundamentally unsound.

#### § 4

There were three attitudes of the residents of Adyar towards these lives, which created quite a sensation as they were read at the evening meetings on the roof. Most of the residents accepted them without question. They were " wonderful, and surely Mrs. Besant would not have upheld them unless she was satisfied that they were correct." Some few rejected them altogether, used to laugh at them and were not above composing comic verses about them :

" In the lives, in the lives,  
We had plenty of husbands and wives," etc.

One of them, a Parsi, said that in the Persian life Mr. Leadbeater had mixed the names badly, somehow confusing male and female names ; that was one of the few lives in which he did give names of the period to the characters referred to, and it was one of the rare occasions on which he had consulted a book in connection with it.

The same resident maintained that he had confutation of another item which had some appearance of evidence. One night Mr. Leadbeater had with much hesitation given me a few words in Sanskrit, to which he told me he was listening. There was much difficulty, he said, in getting words of foreign languages clearly. He asked me if I recognized the language. Yes, it was Sanskrit, quite recognizable. It went down into the first draft of the lives. On the next day the Parsi friend happened to be talking with Mr. Leadbeater in his room when this item came up in conversation. The friend said he felt convinced that he had come across the sentence somewhere else before, and they both wondered where it might have been. At that moment the Parsi gentleman's eye happened to fall upon a book which was out of alignment on the shelf. On the instant he remembered that the passage that they were talking about was quoted in that book.

" Why," he exclaimed, " now I remember. It was in this book, *The Dream of Ravan*, which is out of line, that I

read the sentence." Mr. Leadbeater, he said, looked confused, remarked that the servant had been dusting the books, and diverted the conversation to some other subject.

Another friend, a European doctor, quietly severed his connection with Mr. Leadbeater altogether. He was the only person, as far as I know, who ever tried secretly to put Mr. Leadbeater to the test. They were very friendly and had been together to a theatre. This gentleman deliberately pretended that he had a vision of two gigantic figures one on each side of the stage, standing up there like the guardian genii of Indian temples, or Japanese doorways. He described them, and Mr. Leadbeater, he said, told him that he was correct.

There was an explanation for this, however. Mr. Leadbeater always gave great credit to imagination as verging on clairvoyance. When you imagine something, he would say, there is nearly always something present to cause that imagination. He held that the best way for most people to develop clairvoyance was to let the imagination play in the first place.

A striking conversation took place in my presence on this point. One of our prominent members had been through an important ceremony on the astral plane during the sleep of his physical body, and had thereby become what was called "an Initiate." It happened that he was to be called as a witness in a certain case. He was full of anxiety about it.

"Whatever shall I say if they ask me about my being an Initiate? I do not remember anything at all of it."

Mr. Leadbeater's reply was: "But why don't you remember? You ought to be able to remember."

"Well, if I let my imagination play on it, I can get a sort of impression about it."

"That is just what you ought to do. There is a cause for such imaginings. How can you expect your clairvoyant power to develop if you destroy its delicate beginnings?"

The member followed this advice and became one of the prominent clairvoyants in the Theosophical Society, though years later he mentioned in conversation, that he never really *saw* anything; only he received an impression so vivid that he felt it must be so, and he was justified in saying with confidence that such-and-such a being was



present and was saying such-and-such a thing. His position was not without rationality, though I personally never considered it sound enough to warrant a claim to great leadership and the guidance of others in important matters.

It is doubtful whether any clairvoyant operates through senses in any way comparable with those familiar to us as sight, hearing and the rest. It is more than probable that when impressions are clearly received in terms of these (as when I heard the sentence relating to the five of clubs) it is due to "visualization" superimposed upon the impression, and forming a species of interpretation. When I put this theory before Mr. Leadbeater he quite agreed to it and wrote a passage to that effect in one of his books.

My own position with regard to Mr. Leadbeater, therefore, was midway between the extremes of acceptance and rejection. It was that of one who had otherwise had convincing proof of the existence of clairvoyant power (though not on anything like the lavish scale presented by Mr. Leadbeater, nor of the perfect accuracy which he always took for granted in his own case), who did not see any reason why Mr. Leadbeater should cheat, but many reasons why he should not do so, who, knowing him and liking him, was prepared to give him the benefit of the doubt where at all reasonable, who at the same time knew that human nature was streaky (like bacon, as it has been said) and did not expect Mr. Leadbeater to be perfect in all respects, even though the devotees thought him to be so.

I found, on the other hand, that most of my friends were rather in the position expressed in an article which I read recently, in which the writer said: "I accept that as true, being ignorant of the matter." Some few were actually a little afraid of disbelief. They might miss something good, or even "something" might happen to them. I was reminded of the story of the old lady who bowed whenever the devil was mentioned, and when asked why she did so, replied: "Well, minister, it's best to be ready for everything."

There had been charges against Mr. Leadbeater of very reprehensible actions with boys, but Mrs. Besant had been satisfied that they were unsound, and had readmitted him to her closest friendship. I am convinced to this day that he loved young people and would do nothing intentionally to harm them, and during the whole of my close contact

with him, intermittently covering thirteen years, I never saw in him any signs of sexual excitement or desire. Only once or twice we talked of the attacks made upon him. He said that evidence had been manufactured against him. He had given advice, in good faith, and with the best intentions, which Mrs. Besant had disapproved. In deference to her wishes, he had promised not to give that advice again, although his opinion still was that it was the best under the circumstances.

One "streak," however, that did trouble me was his liability to irritability, which would sometimes become quite explosive and verging on the cruel—a quality common enough, however, and accepted rather as a matter of course among old English gentlemen of the Victorian school. My first introduction to this occurred when one morning a German countess, who had undertaken to supervise the house-keeping, came fluttering at the doorway. Only ten feet away from her, he bellowed out at the top of his great lungs: "What does that woman want here?"

"Oh, Mr. Leadbeater," faltered the stricken lady, "I was only looking to see if the servants had done their work properly."

This fault of irritability was, however, recognized by Mr. Leadbeater himself, and he used to tell me that some day he would conquer it. I thought to myself: "Great people have great faults, but they disappear suddenly; little people have little faults, but they seem to go on for ever."

Sometimes, when ants and beetles invaded his desk—a common occurrence in South India—he would completely lose his temper, and then he would methodically press them individually to death with the flat of his paper-knife, with such an unpleasant expression upon his face that it made me feel quite sick. When I showed my unhappiness, he would laugh at me, call me over-sensitive and finally say that the life in those creatures was infinitesimally small. I was perhaps anthropomorphizing their feelings to some extent. But could they not have been swept off in a gentler way, and without that sadistic delight?

Still, I knew well that kindness was really the biggest thing in his life, and so I was quite ready to forget these lapses. When anyone, especially a child, had been admitted to the charmed circle of his immediate friendship—and he was very exclusive—he would sacrifice his comfort, his

money, everything, for him. But he was uncompromisingly short with anybody outside that circle who showed the least intrusiveness or made the least disturbance.

I was a very favoured person, and could discuss these things with him. He had a definite theory on the point—that he existed only to do good, and it would be folly to spread himself out too thin. If he succeeded in doing great good to a few, then in their lives they would extend that good in ever-enlarging concentric circles. He admitted that "our President," with her magnetic personality and her magnificent gift of oratory, could work on a larger scale, but such greatness was not for him; he knew his limitations.

I agreed that his position was logical. I knew that though he would angrily rebuff outsiders, there was no venom behind his anger. It was a sort of smoke screen in self-defence, though generally quite unnecessarily effective. He wished well to all, and would injure none, but his company and services were reserved for those upon whom he had focused his affection. He would have a garden of beautiful and delicate flowers—weeds were all right in their place, but they must keep out of here.

## § 5

Before leaving this subject, I must give another instance of Mr. Leadbeater's work that impressed me very much at the time. One morning I found him lying on his couch, with the Dutch friend, whom I have already mentioned, sitting in a chair at his side. Mr. Leadbeater was saying that he had had a visit from a *deva* (a non-human angelic being) who had shown him some living pictures of scenes to occur in a community which was to come into existence in Lower (now Mexican) California about eight hundred years in the future. He said from the points of contact given to him by the *deva* he could now observe the entire life of that community of the future. Our friend, always eager to gather knowledge, suggested the compilation of as much information as possible about that community. He always held the view that we were at the stage of compilation of occult information and would be in a better position to correlate and criticize the points later on.

Mr. Leadbeater agreed to the proposition, and after that

for about three weeks he and I spent three or four hours every day working on the subject. My part was to put to him every question I could think of, on every conceivable topic relating to such a community. His was to lie on the sofa and look up the information required. In this way we betook ourselves, so to speak, into the streets, the factories, the restaurants, the homes, the temples, everywhere, and he described the appearance of the people, their dress, language, habits, food and a hundred other things.

They were an advanced community, living in a kind of garden city under the leadership of two Masters who would incarnate especially to establish this community as the nucleus of a new race, for it was intended that these people should at some stage of their development begin to migrate and multiply themselves all over North America. It was a highly technical civilization, with machinery carried to an advanced point, with new inventions, including tiny individual motor-cars, aeroplanes for distant service, talking pictures and television, the last including even the actual reproduction, from the ether, of historical scenes.

I wanted information about some of the new scientific methods, but this was not permitted. There was also a new system of writing the language, which was English, in very brief form, with apparently an ideographic foundation, but the main features subject to inflectional marks. I was told with reference to this that if I succeeded in working it out for myself I would be informed if it was correct! I worked at it for a long time, but could not make a system of shorthand on that basis!

To obtain knowledge of not very evident things, such as the economic system, it was necessary to put questions to the people then living, so I held conversations on these points with various people in the future, through the agency of Mr. Leadbeater! For example, I wanted to know about conditions in a certain factory.

"There is a girl here working in the factory. Let us ask her."

But the girl was frightened when she heard a ghostly voice addressing her!

"Well, here is a fellow coming along the street. Let us put it into his mind that he would like to see the factory and to know about the points you ask. We will get him to go inside and ask questions."

The man proved responsive, went inside and asked the questions, while Mr. Leadbeater listened to the future conversation and told it to me. We discussed the curious phenomenon—would this man actually walk up the street and go in and ask these questions eight hundred years hence? Oh, yes. And would there be a ghostly voice from the past, frightening the girl in the factory, and wanting to know back into the past what was happening then? Yes, inexplicable, of course, but there it was.

In the end I had hundreds of questions with their answers, each written on a separate slip of paper. The Dutch friend and I sat together, classified all these, and arranged them in order under suitable headings. Mr. Leadbeater then went through them, dictating afresh and smoothing out the language according to the literary form he desired. We were struck by the remarkable consistency of the result. There was no confusion or clash in the material. Still, as we knew that Mr. Leadbeater was very fond of H. G. Wells's scientific romances and the adventure stories of Rider Haggard and Jules Verne, and had often told stories on these lines to boys, we did not consider it beyond the bounds of invention by his sub-conscious mind. Mr. Leadbeater used to tell us how stories sometimes wrote themselves before the eyes, so to say, of some novelists, the characters in them taking matters into their own hands and conducting the whole affair, and how Conan Doyle would take up his pen and write an imaginative story without knowing at all what he was going to write.

The series appeared in the magazine under the heading of "The Beginnings of the Sixth Root Race" and was afterwards incorporated in a book containing other investigations entitled *Man: Whence, How, and Whither?*

In connection with this investigation Mr. Leadbeater also talked to us of other future incidents which came within his vision, to occur within fifty years. The force in the atom would be tapped and would replace electricity, far within the fifty years—of which, by the way, twenty-six have already gone. There would be a great war, in which Germany and England would be opposed. Germany would be defeated and Holland would gain an accession of territory in Europe! It was thought advisable not to print such items as the last. Mr. Leadbeater always had the coming war much on his mind, and when early in 1914 I was thinking

of accepting an invitation to become National Lecturer of the British Section of the Society, he advised me strongly not to go : " It will be of no use ; that war will be coming on soon." I took his advice and remained in India.

## CHAPTER VI

### KRISHNAMURTI

#### § I

**A**N incident big with consequence occurred when one day Krishnamurti's father came to Mr. Leadbeater in great distress. The boy had been treated most cruelly at school. It was true that he was a very dreamy boy, and therefore not good at his lessons, but this cruelty was really unbearable. Mr. Leadbeater's advice was simple : " Take him away from the school."

It was not practical, the father replied, since the schools were registered by the Government, and if a boy did not pass through this Government system he could not afterwards take up any of the traditional occupations of the literary classes—government service, the law, medicine, engineering, teaching, etc.

Mr. Leadbeater said : " But anyhow you cannot allow that cruelty to go on. And it is all the worse in the case of such a sensitive boy."

Regarding Krishnamurti as one who was destined to become a great spiritual teacher, Mr. Leadbeater then said that if the father liked he would write to Mrs. Besant and ask her interest in the boy's career. Knowing the importance of his future, she would probably arrange for him to be educated in England—the desire of the heart of many Indian fathers, for English education brought in its train considerable economic advantages. In the meantime he and his friends would see that Krishnamurti did not lack private tuition, pending Mrs. Besant's return from America, where she then was.

The father accepted this solution of his difficulty, and the result was that Krishnamurti and his next younger brother, Nityananda, became constant members of our party.

Several people volunteered to give them private tuition, two subjects falling to my lot, including Sanskrit after the departure from Adyar of Mr. Subrahmanyam Aiyar, who was their first teacher of Sanskrit. I had thus the best of opportunities of knowing Krishnamurti, who was to become a celebrity later on. Indeed, a strong affection grew up between us.

Krishnamurti was a very delicate boy, Mr. Leadbeater's first concern was for his health. Caste difficulties stood in the way of some dietetic changes which Mr. Leadbeater would have liked, but there was no objection to a frequent drink of milk during the day, and an occasional resort to a large glass jar full of prunes. Though Krishnamurti did not like these, he took them, in obedience to the desire of his friends. At the same time the young Englishman mentioned in connection with the episode of the baby supervised a course of athletics, outings on bicycles in the early mornings, and tennis in the evenings.

Mr. Leadbeater was very motherly in all these things. While they were out cycling, he would go to the bathroom and himself prepare the proper mixture of hot water at the moment when we saw the cyclists returning in the distance over the Elphinstone Bridge, and I would go there with him, so that we should not lose time in the discussion of our literary material, for Mr. Leadbeater was a prodigious worker. As a result of all this attention Krishnamurti picked up considerably in health.

Krishnamurti was extraordinarily unselfish and affectionate for a boy of his age. When asked as to what they should do or where go at any time, his invariable answer would be : "What *you* like."

This sometimes irritated Mr. Leadbeater, who could not draw him out further, and he would exclaim : "Oh, confound these bairagis." (A vairagi or bairagi is a Hindu holy man who takes no interest in anything in the world.) Krishnamurti was not fond of studies. He would often say with reference to arithmetic : "Why do you trouble me with these things? I shall never need them."

I had better luck with the Sanskrit, but not much. We would retire to the empty drawing-room, next to Mrs. Besant's rooms. There was a big couch there. Krishnamurti would sit on the left, Nityananda on the right, I in the middle, one arm round each of them, Krishnamurti's



arm round my neck. Thus huddled together, with the book precariously balanced on my knee, and frequently falling upon the floor, we would attempt our study. Nityananda was a playful boy, so that sometimes our studies would degenerate into a tussle, myself the referee trying to separate the two pseudo-pugilists. Sometimes Mrs. Besant would pass through the room, after she had returned and undertaken the legal wardship of the two boys, and would be much amused and pleased at our appearance. But Krishnamurti could concentrate when he liked. One day when I reproached him for inattentiveness to the lesson, he said : " Well, give me the book." He went off by himself for a little while and came back knowing the lesson very well.

In the early mornings Krishnamurti was encouraged to write down his dreams, partly for practice in English composition, and partly for the sake of psychic training. He had a little black book and also some exercise books in which he used to write. I never looked into those, but it was said that the dreams were very coherent and of great interest. Sometimes also Mr. Leadbeater would experiment with thought-transference, putting his hands on Krishnamurti's temples and asking him what he saw, with, I understood, very interesting results.

To Mrs. Besant the wardship of the boys was a very sacred duty. She shared in the belief that Krishnamurti's body would probably be used for a new appearance on earth of the great Master of Masters, whom both she and Mr. Leadbeater declared they knew as having entered into the body of Jesus for the brief ministry in Palestine of which accounts appear in the Gospels. She herself spent about two hours each day teaching them, and used to take them with her for private meditation in the shrine-room. In the roof meetings Krishnamurti was put to sit between her and Mr. Leadbeater. The arrangements for tuition and physical culture continued as before. To the latter the young Englishman added with great devotion the duties of personal attendant and valet.

Although Krishnamurti became the centre of much attention, and presented a conspicuous figure, with his unusual arrangement of hair, cut to the shoulders and parted down the middle, forming a glossy black aureole to his face, his personality did not become affected with any signs of a sense of superiority to others. How far he grasped

the idea of the great honour that was to be his in becoming the vehicle for the Christ or World-Teacher I do not know ; he never made any allusion to it, and there was no conceit at all in his composition. His younger brother might have traded a little upon the situation, being not insensitive to its material advantages, but Krishnamurti seemed entirely unspoiled, even when a number of people who were impressed with the greatest devotion to him in view of his impending greatness began to assume central partings in their hair and to vow themselves to do everything possible to help him to prepare for his mission !

For this purpose, indeed, they were formed into a special body or Order, with coloured robes and symbols of the rising sun. I was not attracted to this. Let the Christ come, and I would follow him into the last ditch, but in the meantime I would not part my hair down the centre (although more than one friend assured me that I would look very Christ-like) and I would make no vows. Vows were quite unnecessary, and I detested the spectacular. I would spontaneously help Krishnamurti, and I think I did so more than most, even to the extent of copying out in my large print-like writing of Sanskrit characters a whole volume of ancient Sanskrit stories to be used as a lesson-book by him, to save his eyes from the dangers of the execrable type and impress of the cheap school-books printed in India.

I do not pretend that I presented any less peculiar spectacle than my friends ; but if my hair and beard were long it was because of a mixture of neglect and shrinking from modern artificiality—as I then regarded it, for my childhood and youth had induced in me very little respect for Western civilization. It was certainly not as a pose, even to myself. In my own way I was as lacking in extra-spection as Krishnamurti himself. A visiting friend once tried to convert me to modernity. He pointed out that I was trying my friends very hard, but I regret to say his words could not produce any living picture on the screen of my mind, occupied as it was with what to me were infinitely more important things.

Some months later Mrs. Besant went to pay visits at several places in the north of India, ending up with a long stay in Benares, where she had a bungalow of her own near to the Central Hindu College, in the management of which

she was the most prominent figure. She took the two boys with her, to give them experience. Mr. Leadbeater missed them very much. I often thought what a devoted mother he would have made but for the accident of sex. He would occasionally sigh for them, and he told me that, although he was fully aware that there was really no separation, the physical brain could not help feeling it. We busied ourselves more than ever with literary work. At least fifty per cent of the whole literary output of Mr. Leadbeater's life was done during the ten thousand hours I worked with him at Adyar, discussing, suggesting, arranging, sometimes contributing an idea and even a vision or two, and always preparing material for the press.

## § 2

While Mrs. Besant was away I had a week's vacation under curious circumstances. One night, as I was sleeping in my room, I was suddenly awakened by something unknown. I sat up and looked before me, and it seemed as if the wall of my room had disappeared, for I could see far across the field outside, at the back of the quadrangle. In the distance a group of Hindu gentlemen was to be seen approaching, and as they drew towards me a figure in the centre became very clear. He was an elderly man, with long and shaggy grey hair and beard, very distinctive features and a peculiar manner of bending his shoulders and knees as he walked. As they came across the field they seemed to exude a soft light, which illuminated the familiar trees as they passed them.

When they had come near to me, the central figure drew my attention so that the others seemed only very vaguely present. He told me that he was the father of one of the boys who had come to Adyar with Krishnamurti. I knew the boy quite well, and liked him. The father was very anxious about his son's education. He asked me, in the easy way in which such things are done in India, whether I would be so kind as to do what I could to improve the boy's opportunities; at present the educational arrangements were far from satisfactory. I replied that I would look into the matter and do my best to help him. With an expression of satisfaction the elderly gentleman faded away, and only



KRISHNAMURTI

then did I experience surprise, and realize that something unusual had happened.

This boy was one of those who had already been to me frequently for help in their homework. I did not like the school that he was attending, on account of Krishnamurti's experience there. I considered whether my modest means would permit me to send him to England for further education, after some preliminary work in India—perhaps study for the Cambridge Local Examination with subjects that would exempt him from the university entrance examination in England. He was a bright boy, and might even succeed in entering the Indian Civil Service. I spoke to Krishnamurti's father about it, and he was quite pleased. I took opportunities to see more and more of the student and to talk with him about his home. He came from a village about two hundred miles from Madras. His father and his uncle, though not rich, were the joint owners of most of the land in five villages. His uncle managed all the business affairs of the family, as his father, having found some old yoga books among the effects left by his wife's father when he died, had taken to meditation on the river bank, and was looked upon as lost to the family for all practical purposes.

There was to be a vacation at the school shortly. The boy asked would I come and pay a visit to the village and his house? That was the sort of thing an Indian boy could arrange without consulting his parents. Children are not treated as inferiors in India to the extent that they were in England in my time. In the conduct of family affairs they often throw out opinions which are treated with the same respectful attention as those put forward by grown-up members of the family, even though the final decision is reserved for the father or the grandfather. I accepted the invitation with thanks.

The vacation arrived, and some days after most of the students had departed to their villages I put on Indian clothes and started off for the village. In the train I had the experience of being mistaken for an Indian, and told to "get out" of the compartment by an Englishman who had already established himself there, who, however, subsided sheepishly when I looked him straight in the eye. Probably he thought that I was a criminal intelligence man disguised as an Indian *sannyasi*. About twenty hours brought

me, after two changes, at country junctions, one from midnight to three o'clock, the other from about six o'clock to eight o'clock, to the nearest station to the village.

Outside the station I began to enquire my way. The people there were delighted to see an Englishman who had taken to Hindu ways. They insisted on my going to a house and taking food ; wanted me to stay a few days and proceed on my way afterwards. But I was firm in my desire to make the sixteen-mile walk through the forest by night, as I would find it trying in the heat of the day. A local policeman volunteered to accompany me, and bring his lantern.

We had an interesting walk along the jungle pathways, listening to the forest noises, and fording two or three streams running swiftly down their rocky beds, and by no means easy to negotiate, as the water reached our waists. After midnight we slept two or three hours in a little ruined temple almost overgrown by the jungle plants. There were snakes, of course, but we took our chances with them. We were very near to nature, and nothing seemed repulsive, scarcely anything dangerous. We heard the cries of cheetahs in the forest. It was all very beautiful, romantic, free ; one did not fear death under such conditions. Resuming our journey we reached the house at dawn. Without a moment's delay my friend the policeman took his leave and started back. There was no question of offering him money. That would have been an insult. He was sufficiently recompensed by having done a kindness. As to the distance, he would enjoy a little jaunt of thirty-two miles. Nothing under a thousand miles seems to be regarded as a long distance in the Indian mind. And a walk of many hours is nothing, for there is no hurry ; it is not the destination that is the important thing. Both the walk and the occasional rest by the roadside constitute the height of luxury.

Mounting the plinth, I knocked at the door of the family house—the only pukka (that is, solidly built) house in a village of perhaps fifty thatched houses and huts nestling among the trees, amid cultivated fields, and orchards of plantain, mango, lime and pomelo. The pomelo, by the way, is the ancestor of the grape-fruit ; larger than the largest orange, with a very thick rind and, when you get at them, pulp and juice having a strongly quinine-like flavour, which, however, grows upon one and soon becomes an attractive acquired taste,

Indian doors, with their heavy brass-studded cross-beams and elaborate carvings, stand open all day, but are shut at night. In response to my knock I presently heard heavy bars being removed. The door opened inwards, and there was standing the man whom I had seen in my vision, the father of the student in whom I was by now taking almost as much interest as if he had been my own son.

Very soon the student himself appeared from within the house, introduced me to his father, and acted as interpreter. Saying nothing of my vision, I expressed recognition. "Surely we have met somewhere before?" No, was the reply, it could not be so, for this gentleman had never been far away from the group of villages. But somehow I was very familiar to him. He felt as if he had known me for a long time. Again and again, during the week that followed, in which I stayed with the family, he remarked upon his puzzlement that he knew me so well and yet we could not have met before. I never told him nor the boy about my vision of his appearing to me at Adyar. The uncle was a hard-headed man of business, and I did not think such confidence would increase his confidence in me. But the father spoke to me about his son's education. He did want him to have better opportunities, and he wished that I might help.

After about a week, I took my leave, walked back to another railway station, and so returned to Madras. At the country station I nearly missed my train. As I arrived on the platform it was steaming out, with only the tail-end visible. But a *sannyasi* had come! More than that, a European *sannyasi*! The station-master blew frantically on his whistle. Great alarms! The train slowed down, stopped, paused, and backed into the station, all heads sticking out of the windows.

A moment for a few mutual expressions of esteem between the station-master and myself, and off went the train again, with me inside, the only fussing thing in that countryside, notwithstanding its achievement of a mere ten miles per hour. Nothing would satisfy the guard but that at the next station I should change over into his little compartment and spend the rest of the day exchanging experiences and opinions with him, until it was time for me to return to my compartment and sleep. He could not understand how I, being an Englishman, was not able to share with him his meat sandwiches. Vegetarianism had never come within



his ken, though he lived in a country where the vast majority of the population were vegetarians. Such is the separative effect of race and caste in India. He was an Anglo-Indian, and carried about with him a portrait of his father, which he showed in proud proof thereof.

Later, when I told some friends at Adyar of my having had that vision in the night, and having afterwards in the village seen and recognized my visitor in the person of the boy's father, they doubted the accuracy of my memory in the matter. Notwithstanding their belief in such matters, when it came down to brass tacks they were doubtful that anyone (except their chosen leaders) could have had such satisfactory physical proof. But I knew that I had not deceived myself. For one thing, in the third train on my way to the village I had fallen into conversation with several Indian villagers of the zamindar (landlord) class, and it was of the intimate character common to such occasions. A casual acquaintance will ask your name and address, occupation, income, whether married or unmarried, children and their education, health of the family, immediate business. These questions are quite essential to politeness, and in discussing them you may be sure of rejoicings with you in your good fortune and sympathy in your sorrow. So ; where was I going ? to Kotala. Whom to see ? One Ramappa. Had I known him before ? Oh, yes. No doubt he had been to Madras. No, so far as I knew. How then ? Out it came ; he had appeared to me in some sort of astral body. Sensation ! And further talk about yoga, *et hoc genus omne*.

### § 3

A year or two later when I was making a lecture tour in another part of India, I had a further curious piece of experience relating to the nocturnal activities of the same gentleman. I had at that time a certain Muhammadan friend, Mr. Wazir Ahmed, who was a Sufi, that is, one of the more mystical or theosophical type of the followers of Islam, such a man as must have been the Hindustani poet who wrote :

Raze the Mosque to the ground,  
Bring the Kaaba to the dust,  
But do not break a heart,  
For it is the dwelling-place of God Himself.

My friend used to come and see me a great deal whenever I visited that city, as I did occasionally. He was a disciple of a great Sufi teacher and yogi who, he told me, had no fewer than sixteen thousand disciples scattered over that part of India, living in their villages, pursuing all sorts of ordinary occupations, and visiting the home and mosque of the teacher occasionally, or else being visited by one or other of his senior disciples. This friend was one of his most successful pupils. Several times he showed me his psychic powers.

One morning, as we were sitting in the garden, Mr. Wazir Ahmed was telling me about some of his experiences while travelling in his subtle body during sleep, which he said he regularly remembered. He used to tell me that I was much more active in that way than he was himself, and to reproach me a little for not confiding more in him on that subject. He could hardly believe me when I told him that I very rarely had any memory of any such thing, and even then I did not regard it as particularly reliable.

On this occasion he suggested an experiment. He wanted me to will before going to sleep that night that at a certain time he and I should meet in our astral bodies on the veranda of the bungalow. We were then to try to remember when we awoke in the morning what we had done together, and afterwards compare notes. It happened, however, that I forgot all about the matter, on account of some social activities which kept me very busy that evening, and next morning I had nothing to tell. I thought I should have had nothing in any case. When my friend arrived he was brimful of experience :

"It was a curious trick you played on me last night," he said.

"Oh," I replied, "I do not recollect it. I am sorry if anything unfortunate occurred. What happened?"

He told me that after he had left his body he came to the appointed place on the veranda, but found there, instead of me, another man, a stranger, who repulsed him vigorously and said :

"You shall not come here. My son is sleeping here, and I am protecting him."

I did not realize whom he had seen until he went on to describe the man. Then he gave me a point for point

description of the gentleman who had appeared to me in Madras, whom I had afterwards found in his village—who now had evidently appeared again in this distant city. And his son was staying in that bungalow, for I had taken him on a visit to some friends so as to broaden his experience of the world.

It was on another trip to the same town that this Muhamadan friend took me to see and to stay with his teacher. We had a long and complicated journey, but at last we arrived. I cannot give the name nor the place of residence of the teacher, nor any description of the strange things which he showed me, for I gave my solemn promise to keep all these things private. I may say that he was a man of magnificent physique, much more than six feet in height and broad in proportion, looking about eighty years old and having a long white beard. Hearing of me, he had requested a visit, and now he invited me to stay as long as I could. There were some twenty or thirty disciples with him at the time. We all assembled in one of the rooms opening upon a central courtyard of his large house. Then he put to me the typical question of an Indian teacher: "What is it that you want?"

I told him. I wanted to know the *atman*, the one life. Again and again he put the same question, trying to force me to a kind of introspective realization of what I was aiming at. I kept to my point. That was the essential thing in my eyes. We discussed it the whole day in all its bearings. But then, was there not something else I wanted in the meantime, in a more practical ordinary way? Yes, I could say that there was. I wanted to be able to look into the minds of men, to understand them, and to be able to help them.

This gentleman was very pleased with me. He took me to participate in the worship, along with the disciples, in their private mosque. He showed me his psychic powers before putting a proposition before me. The proposition was that I should become one of his disciples. He said he could see that I was ready for the opening of considerable psychic powers. With three months' training they would be in full working order. But I must give up my excessive pride, and must moderate my excessive asceticism, which was too hard on the body. And he would expect me to become a

Muhammadan and to help the Sufi movement. I told him that I could never consent to become a member of a particular religion ; so he waived that point.

On the second day we discussed again. I thanked him for his offer, told him it was extremely attractive, for I had long had great regard for the Sufi movement and considered that its promotion would be of great value in the world. But I wanted time to think the matter over, and I would like to consult Mrs. Besant, to whom I felt that I owed a certain loyalty.

Mrs. Besant he said he knew. He admired her in many ways, but her powers were of an inferior order. Why should I not make my decision at once instead of losing time ? I almost said "Yes." It was at that moment that I saw standing behind him the Master whom I had seen in meditation in England, who had questioned me about honesty and other things. There was a warning expression on his face. (Was it a subconscious way of talking to myself ?) No, I could not decide now. I would write as soon as I had seen Mrs. Besant. He must give me permission to tell her what I had seen, though I would tell nobody else. The permission was given.

I resumed my tour, completed it, went to Mrs. Besant, told her. She said she would ask the Master about it. After a few days she told me that she had put the matter before him, that he had said that he knew the teacher to whom I had been, that he was "All right, but not quite on our line," and the decision must rest with me. These words were sufficient to determine my purpose. I wrote to the Sufi teacher regretting that I did not feel that I could put down the work that I had already taken up, in order to change over to his.

It was while on the same tour that I had some further experiences with thought-transference. One man told me that if I would think of somebody or something, he would not only read the thought in my mind, but would transfer it to the mind of a third person, and make him tell me what I was thinking of. He performed the feat several times with the greatest ease. I thought in one instance of the head and face of a gentleman whom I had known—the late Colonel Olcott. The experimenter looked at me intently for a few seconds, then turned his gaze on a young

man sitting at the corner of the group of people who were there, and the young man gave an accurate description of the Colonel's head and face.

#### § 4

I must return to what happened at Adyar after I had been to the village to see the father of the student in whom I had become interested. It proved to be a critical moment. Great changes were impending among the members of the Theosophical Society.

Arrived at Adyar, in the early evening, I went over to Mr. Leadbeater's room—a new apartment, upstairs, to which he had comparatively recently moved. He was typing away on his little Blickensderfer. He looked up with a greeting, continued typing for a few minutes, and then finished with a flourish and an air of great satisfaction. He gathered his papers together while rising from his roll-top desk, and came over to the square table in the centre of the room where we usually sat to work. He put a manuscript into my hand and told me it was Krishnamurti's first book.

Krishnamurti had made a great impression upon some members of the staff and some senior students of the Central Hindu College, particularly the then principal Mr. G. S. Arundale. Some of them had been at meetings in the evenings in Mrs. Besant's bungalow, and at these he had been answering questions for them, and giving them some teachings from the notes which he had made of his morning memories. The notes had now been put together, and here was the result, a little book. Would I take it home with me and tell him—Mr. Leadbeater—in the morning what I thought of it?

The Introduction began: "These are not my words; they are the words of the Master who taught me." I read the manuscript through with great pleasure. I thought it very pleasing and of flower-like simplicity. It dealt with the qualifications of character requisite for spiritual unfoldment. There were two kinds of people in the world, it said, those who know and those who do not know God's plan for men, and those who know cannot help working for it, because it is so glorious. The book was divided into four parts, following the course of the four qualifications

expounded centuries ago by the famous Indian philosopher Shankaracharya, but with the terms newly translated as "Discrimination," "Desirelessness," "Good Conduct," and "Love." It was something far simpler than the works on the same subject commonly in use among Theosophists—*The Path of Discipleship*, by Mrs. Besant, *The Voice of the Silence*, by Mme Blavatsky and *Light on the Path*, by Miss Collins.

I delivered my opinion—a delightful little book, but extremely simple. Would the instructions contained in it be sufficient to bring one to the "Path proper," to the First Initiation, which Mrs. Besant had described in her book? Yes, said Mr. Leadbeater, more than that, if completely carried out these instructions would lead one to Adeptship itself.

I remarked that there were one or two curious things about the manuscript. It was very much in Mr. Leadbeater's own style, and there were some sentences which were exactly the same as in a book of his which we had already prepared for the press. He told me that he wished indeed that he might have been able to write such a book himself. As to the sentences I mentioned, he had usually been present when Krishnamurti was being taught in his astral body by the Master; he remembered these points, and had made use of them in meetings of Theosophists; I had noted them down and had incorporated them into the material of his book. As to style, it was but natural that he himself should have adopted something of his own Master's style after himself being taught by him for so many years.

Mrs. Besant very soon returned from Benares, with her retinue. She selected a title for the book from a large number submitted to her for consideration. She had a decided flair for the selection of fetching book-titles.

The little book was published under the title: *At the Feet of the Master*. It created a sensation and practically a new cult, in view of its containing the actual instructions of one of the Masters, and being the output of a child who was to become in effect the very incarnation of the Master of Masters himself.

Not long afterwards the band devoted to Krishnamurti made themselves into a public body under the name of "The Order of the Star in the East." Its declaration of

principles began, " We believe that a great Teacher will soon appear in the world, and we wish to live now that we may be worthy to know Him when He comes." Then followed a series of clauses saying that they would try to keep the Teacher in their minds always, to do their work, in His name, to do something to prepare for His coming, to make devotion, steadfastness and gentleness prominent characteristics of their daily lives, to devote a little time morning and evening to asking His blessing upon the work to try to recognize and reverence greatness wheresoever shown, and to co-operate with those felt to be spiritual superiors. The " Protector " of the Order was Mrs. Besant, the " Head " Mr. Krishnamurti, the Private Secretary to the Head, Mr. G. S. Arundale. There was no fee for membership, but one could buy a silver star to be worn to draw attention to the new movement. Golden stars were permissible only to the Purple Order, an inner group, and the National Representatives in each country.

Thousands of the members of the Theosophical Society flung themselves into the new movement. Some held aloof, among them myself. Some few criticized it on various grounds. One or two pronounced the opinion that Krishnamurti did not know enough English to write the sentences in the book. I quite agreed with them, but I explained the difficulty away to myself by saying that the preface announced that Krishnamurti had not written it himself—they were the words of the Master. Still the difficulty remained that Krishnamurti could not have linked the sentences together and punctuated them so well. Nor could he have written the preface, in my opinion. These problems I left in suspense. We could very well wait to see if the Teacher came. In the meantime, the ethical teaching in the book was of rare value and beauty.

Later, when Krishnamurti and his brother were in England, with Mr. Arundale as private tutor, and there had been a quarrel in Central Hindu College circles in Benares in connection with this matter, and Krishnamurti's father had grown dissatisfied and instituted a case at law for the recovery of the custody of his sons—Mrs. Besant indeed could not give them up, as they themselves flatly refused to go back to their father—a case which was finally lost to him when carried up to the Privy Council, the question

of the authorship of the book was brought up in court, but the judge himself pointed out that there was no cause for complaint as the preface began with the statement that these words were not Krishnamurti's own words but those of "the Master who taught me," and there was no statement as to who that master was.

This subject was to be the undoing of my friend Subrahmanyam. He said that when questioned by his father in his presence Krishnamurti had said in Telugu : "The book is not mine ; they fathered it on me." Mrs. Besant was indignant about this. She called Subrahmanyam to her presence, told him that Krishnamurti could not have said anything so false, and presented him with the alternative of recantation or banishment from Adyar. Right or wrong, Subrahmanyam believed that he had heard that declaration. He regretted that he could not deny it.

I went to Mrs. Besant and pleaded for Subrahmanyam. Believing that those words had been said, he had repeated them in good faith ; could she not put them down to some misunderstanding or confusion of language, and leave it at that ? No, she was adamant. I talked with Mr. Leadbeater about the matter. He gave to Subrahmanyam the highest praise that he knew by saying that he had always been a gentleman. He believed him to be telling the truth ; but there must have been some mistake. Subrahmanyam returned to his native town, and died there shortly afterwards, while still himself little more than a boy.

The same circumstances proved also the undoing of the student whom I was trying to help. Krishnamurti's father, now turned against Mrs. Besant and Mr. Leadbeater, communicated his sorrows to the boy's uncle and he, as head of the family, put his foot down firmly on my project of education in England, which he thought might turn the boy against his own father, as Krishnamurti and Nityananda had evidently been turned against theirs. I went again to see the uncle in another village where he had gone, Subrahmanyam with me to act as interpreter, but could not move him to a change of decision.

It was on that visit that I had the interesting experience of sleeping one night in a barn. I must have been tired out indeed, for in the morning I awoke to find myself leaning against the body of a huge cow, which must have settled



down beside me with surprising gentleness—I was thankful that it had kept its horns still; while cuddling against me on the other side for warmth—it was rather high country and the nights were cold—was one of the homeless, half-wild dogs which abound in India.

## CHAPTER VII

### AN INDIAN YOGI

#### § I

IN my earliest days in India I had developed a particular friendship for a certain Mr. K. Narayanaswami Aiyar, who had been a High Court Advocate, but for some years had given his time entirely to the activities of a travelling lecturer, an avocation in which he had shown great ability and had acquired a reputation all over the country. He looked the part of a wandering religious teacher, having a very enthusiastic and impulsive manner, a humorous and happy disposition, long shaggy grey hair and beard, and a nose which had originally been aquiline but had been flattened by an accident in his younger days.

We once spent a considerable time together in Benares. It was winter, and too cold in the north of India for the bare feet usual in the south. To meet this contingency Narayanaswami had bought a pair of yellow boots, with no idea as to fit. They were altogether wrongly shaped for his unspoiled feet, and too small for him anyhow. But he persevered in forcing his feet into them, much to the entertainment of Babu Bhagavan Das and myself, who were his particular friends. He made a curious spectacle, with his yellow boots and his otherwise yogi-like dress and countenance, but inside he could bear pain as only yogis can.

Many times we walked together the whole length of the steps and terraces of the Benares water-front, poking our noses into everything and learning much about the miscellaneous Hindu life that finds its way to Benares. His favourite spot on these walks was the burning-ghat. We would stand for a long time watching the bodies being placed on the pyres, covered with wood and finally enveloped in flames.

He used facetiously to remark that he wanted to get used to this process before his own turn came. Perhaps there was something of sincerity in that remark, however, for it is consistent with a certain type of Indian mind to inure themselves to trouble before it comes, like those perverted yogis who hold their arms up until they wither, or sit on beds of spikes, or surround themselves with fires in the heat of summer under the blazing sun, and thus, in the brief but expressive words of Sir Edwin Arnold, seek to "baulk hell by self-kindled hells."

Narayanaswami was a man of great learning, and considerable ability in the handling of the Sanskrit language, his subject of especial interest being Yoga, and the study of the Minor Upanishads in which there is much yogic lore.

One day he came to me at Adyar and told me that he and some other friends had met a great yogi, who was actually one of the Masters, who lived in a little cottage within a mile of the railway station of Tiruvallam, about eighty miles from Madras, on the line to Mysore and the west coast. He proposed that we should go and talk with him. He was sure that this was the great Master alluded to among the "star names" as Jupiter, the Master of the Master who had taught Mme Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott.

Mr. Leadbeater had often spoken to me and to others of a great Master corresponding to this description. T. Subba Row, an occultist of the preceding generation, now dead, had taken Mr. Leadbeater one day to see that Master, and he had explained some points and given him a diagram which he had used in one of his books. Mr. Leadbeater did not feel at liberty to say much about that Master. He did not think that anyone could find him unless it was his desire. At the time of his visit the Master occupied a little cottage within a mile of the railway station, living as a small landowner, his greatness unsuspected by the people, among whom he moved freely. He was elderly, a little short of stature, had a white beard and had lived there for a long time.

I was decidedly open to conviction as regards both these accounts, but I was always ready for experience, so one morning Narayanaswami and I set off by train. We arrived at the Tiruvallam railway station in the middle of the day, walked across the fields along the little ridges of earth which form the borders between the cultivated plots, and came to the cottage, which stood on a little rising ground beside the

main road leading from Madras to Calicut. We found there only a very old woman, said to be over ninety, who told us that the *swami* had gone some days before to a certain village. We went there. He had moved on. In this search we travelled in several ways—on the railway, in bullock carts and on foot by both day and night.

At last we came upon him early one morning, sleeping in the front room of a little house in the main street of Muttuku, a large village. We sat quietly near his feet on the platform on which he lay, and waited. Soon the old man awoke and sat up. Narayanaswami said a few words to him in Tamil. Then he spoke to us by name, told us that he had specially waited in the village that night because he knew we were on our way to see him, said he had seen us at the railway station and in certain of the villages to which we had been—gave us in fact quite a sketch of our wanderings in search of him.

He was a blind man. When a little later on I stayed with him for a week at his cottage, alone except for the old woman, I used to see him groping his way round the walls to find the doorway when he came in from the fields. Often the old woman or I would lead him. Yet he had a little bullock cart, in which he used to make long journeys from one village to another.

I can form no theory as to how he drove—perhaps the little bull knew where he wanted to go and also knew the way—or how he avoided the traffic on the roads, little as it was. In all these accounts I am only recording what I have seen, and rarely attempting explanations. I have not tried to explain, for example, how it was that Mr. Leadbeater could not converse with the dead boy because of the language barrier, and yet could understand what people were saying in the past lives, or how the student's father conversed with me on his nocturnal visit though we had no language in common, and spoke also to my Muhammadan friend under the same conditions.

The old gentleman spoke very freely of occult matters, talked about the various Masters familiar to Theosophists, and of the coming of a great teacher whom he called Nanjunda, said that I would not leave India soon, as I expected to, but only after Nanjunda came. He remarked: "Your pupil will be your teacher," referring I supposed to Krishnamurti, from whom in fact I did afterwards learn a good deal of common sense, and whom I also came to regard as

much more deep-sighted than either Mrs. Besant or Mr. Leadbeater—though he would not pronounce himself to be or not to be the great Teacher whose coming had been predicted, even when in 1928 to 1930 Mrs. Besant was publicly proclaiming him as such, and saying that there had been a blending of the consciousness of Krishnamurti and that of the Teacher.

Narayanaswami and I enjoyed conversation with the old gentleman for an hour or two. He expressed great liking for me, presented me with a string of beads (rudraksha berries) taken directly from his own neck, and also his rather worn deer skin, and sent us both off thinking that life was good, and was going to be marvellous indeed in the future.

## § 2

A month or two afterwards, in the same year, 1910, I visited the old gentleman at his cottage and stayed there about a week. The cottage—built of irregular pieces of stone—consisted of one oblong room with a small portion partitioned off by a low wall at one end. There were only two doors, front and back, opposite each other in the middle of the long sides. Between the doors, exactly in the centre of the room, was a seat hung from the central beam by chains. Hanging from one of the chains were a drum and a horn. The old gentleman, whose name was Nagaratnaswami, though he was usually known as the Kurruttu Paradeshi (meaning a blind wanderer) or the Mottu Paradeshi (a wanderer living on a mound), used generally to sit on that swing-like seat. For food, the old woman would spread his leaf on the floor, as she did mine also. For bathing, he would sit outside and pour water over himself with one hand while he rubbed himself with the other. The water-pots used while I was there were very small, as there was quite a drought at the time.

When I arrived, some villagers were digging a deep well for him—really a large hole in the ground, a pit, perhaps twenty-five feet in diameter, slightly narrowing as one descended the circular pathway cut in the side. Several men dug, while women carried up baskets of earth. In the afternoon we went out to this well. My arrival had been very auspicious; water had just been struck in one corner of the excavation, so nothing would satisfy the Paradeshi

but that I should be the first to bathe there, while he and the workpeople and a few young men who had come up from the village to satisfy their curiosity, sat on the pathways on the shady side of the pit, which was opposite to the little hole of extra depth, perhaps six feet in diameter, where the water had been found.

Wearing a single loin cloth, I got down into the yellow clayey water, splashed about in it and then sat on the side of the hole. It was while I was sitting there that frogs began to appear—any number of them and of various sizes. Their inevitable appearance on such occasions is almost as much a mystery as many of the occult happenings in India. Although blind, the old gentleman laughed heartily when the frogs began to jump on me, and called out with increased amusement when one of them got itself entangled in my cloth.

I did not mind the contact at all. I had always liked frogs. They had been frequent visitors, almost residents, in my room in the quadrangle. There, in the nights, various kinds of flying things would come in, seeking the light; then lizards would come out of their corners and frogs would hop in from outside, seeking the flying creatures which would fall from the lamp or cluster on the shining parts of the white-washed walls. Most people used to chase the frogs away from their rooms, for they feared that snakes would follow the frogs, as they sometimes did, though in several years only about half a dozen ever came into my room. Once I killed a snake which was on the window-sill, by slamming the shutter so as to trap it and then beating it with a stick. Never again! I thought the sight of that unhappy snake would follow me to my dying day. Two or three times a snake glided past my foot while I was sitting, once actually touching it; but under such circumstances I think they are quite harmless, as they are not aggressive. The numerous cases of snake-bite in India are due to accidents. A villager, working in a field or walking along a path or a lane, happens to tread on one of them.

Only once I was in such danger. I had gone to my bathroom in the night. There was bright moonlight outside—such as I have seen only in India; one could read by its light, and could see the colours of the leaves and flowers. Moonlight can give colour when there is enough of it. But in the bathroom there was only a glimmer of light coming

through the slats of a venetian window not perfectly closed. I put my hand out to open the venetians a little further, and rested it quite firmly, though gently, as it fortunately happened, on a snake which was lying along the cross-piece in the middle of the shutter. I felt it, of course—very nice to touch, smooth, cool and not damp. It moved very slightly. I withdrew my hand gently, went back to my room, returned with a lamp, and threw water from a tin dipper at the snake until it took the hint to depart and slipped away between the partially open slats. The student in whom I was interested also once had a very narrow escape. He was going to take dinner with the English Sub-Collector and his wife and had dressed himself in European clothes for the occasion, and was wearing boots. That was lucky for him as going along the drive he happened to tread on a snake. But I was talking about frogs in the new well at Tiruvallam.

While we were sitting in the pit the Paradeshi kept up a running commentary of remarks, of which I have kept some notes. " Wood has come here because he is my brother. I understand him when he speaks English. He was a king at Hastinapura about eight hundred years ago, and I was his son. He was then named Dharmaraja. His subtle body looks like glass, without any dust ; yours are full of dust. He is all gold. I am having this well dug for him. I knew him even before his birth. The northern people worship a white Krishna. Colour of skin depends upon climate. There are only four real spiritual gurus (teachers or guides) in the world. Etc."

These remarks were spoken in Tamil and translated to me by a young man from the village who happened to know English.

I stayed in that cottage simply waiting to see what would happen. Sometimes the young man knowing English would come up and then there would be conversation. One day I happened to say some words of sympathy which drew forth an explanation of the old gentleman's cheerfulness, which was constant, notwithstanding the inconvenience of his poverty and blindness. He laughed at me and said that my sympathy was wasted, for he was a very happy man. He said that he knew the reason for his blindness and poverty. In the past life which he had mentioned, although I had been a good man he, succeeding to my power and wealth, had been extremely selfish and had used his position

to do injury to people whom he disliked. His present difficulties were the outcome of those injuries done to others. But it had all turned to good. The villagers round about had been very kind to him and that was a happiness beyond anything that material wealth could give. He had come to learn to love others. If he had gone on as a rich man he did not think that he would have changed his nature voluntarily, but the law of *karma* had taught him.

## § 3

One afternoon, when I was alone with him, except for the old woman hovering in the background over some household task, the Paradeshi motioned to me to sit on the threshold of the front door. I sat sideways, half inside and half outside the door. He then established himself more carefully than usual, cross-legged on his swinging seat, facing the door. For perhaps half an hour he chanted verses, softly at first and then in an increasingly loud voice, while I sat wondering at this unusual procedure. Suddenly the verses came to a halt. He unhooked the drum and beat upon it with increasing force for a few minutes. Then he put the drum aside, took up the horn and blew upon it a long loud blast. At that moment rain began to fall, at first large heavy drops, like pennies—as the children used to say in England—then faster and faster until there was a steady shower, which must have lasted from five to ten minutes. Abruptly it ceased and the sun was shining as brazenly as before. The shower appeared to have covered a large field at least. I went out. Women had come from various cottages some way off, and were filling little pots with water from the various holes in the stony ground.

Another afternoon as I was lying on my mat spread on the earthen floor of the cottage, waiting for the heat of the day to pass, I had a striking vision. Up above me, at some little distance in a sloping direction, I saw the form of a young man of most serene and yet most positive aspect, looking towards me. He stood in an aura of what I can call only blue lightning. I cannot describe the impression of power that it gave to me. I thought this might have been the teacher Nanjunda, he whom Mrs. Besant and Mr. Leadbeater called variously the World Teacher—a translation of the term Jagatguru used in Hindu scriptures—the



Lord Maitreya—the teacher to be successor to the Lord Buddha in Buddhist tradition—and the Christ. When I got back to Adyar and told this to Mr. Leadbeater, however, he did not agree with that idea, but referred me to a description of another Master whom he called the Lord of the World.

Towards the end of the week the Paradeshi told me that he wanted me to stay there and take up the work that he had been doing for many years, so that he could retire from his old body. I asked him if that was the Master's wish. A bit huffily he told me that it was his own wish. There were, he said, certain Bhairavas there—exactly what he meant I do not know—and he had to look after them. He was responsible in some way for quite a large territory. Would I stay and take over the job and release him? I did not understand the situation very clearly. I was not satisfied that the interpreter was correctly explaining what he said. I told the old gentleman that I would go back to Adyar and come again with a friend.

I persuaded Subrahmanyam to accompany me on my third visit to the Paradeshi, though he could spare only a single day. Then I elicited the information that he had not told Narayanaswami and others that he was the Master of the Master known to Theosophists as the Master of Mme Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott. They had misunderstood him; what he had said was that that Master was his own Master. The same Master, he said, was my Master. In that way we were brothers. According to him the name of our Master was Sitaram Bhavaji. That teacher had come to the south many years before. He had visited a temple standing in the river bed not far away. The Paradeshi had met him then, had become his disciple, and had afterwards seen him and been instructed by him clairvoyantly. That Master used to travel occasionally. He had been to England about the year 1850. Working with him there was a Kashmiri Master, a younger man, who had been educated at Oxford. There was also a greater Master living in the mountains north of Tiruvallam, who was very rarely seen. Mme Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott had both visited the Paradeshi. They had "dragged him out of his obscurity," and it was Colonel Olcott who had taught him to smoke cigars. I explained to him that nothing but the Master's direct wish could induce me to give up my present work; that I was sorry to leave him but it simply had to be.

When I told Narayanaswami and the other friends who had been with him on his first visit to Tiruvallam that the Paradeshi had explained to me that he was not the Master of Sitaram Bhavaji, but that Sitaram Bhavaji was his Master, they insisted that the mistake must be mine, and continued in their conviction that they had met the great Master himself.

More than twenty years afterwards, in both 1933 and 1934, I happened to pass that way by motor-car. I found that the Paradeshi had died in the interval, and that some devotees had built a shrine beside the old cottage, now tumbled down, and were worshipping there the sandals, staff, drinking-pot and other small articles which had been used by him when alive. *Sic transit gloria mundi.* (Much the same was to be done to Mrs. Besant later on.) But I saw no trace of any successor who might be directing the "Bhairavas" in that somewhat desolate spot.

## CHAPTER VIII

### TEACHING

#### § I

IT seemed as if I had settled down permanently into my new life in India, which was divided between two occupations—literary work and occasional lecture tours. Within two years I had helped Mr. Leadbeater to produce seven books and very many articles. I had produced four books of my own, and I had travelled fifteen thousand miles in India, visited about seventy towns, delivered three hundred public lectures and given two hundred talks to Theosophists. I had ranged from Colombo to Calcutta, from Calcutta to Delhi, from Madras to Bombay and Kathiawar and back again. I had seen India in many aspects. I had lived in palaces and in hovels. I had slept also on verandas, under trees, in caves and temples, and once on a flagstone over an open drain.

I did not suspect that all this was to change and that I was to go to school again.

Going to school had been one of my worst nightmares during my youth. I had visited many schools and lectured in them during my travels, and thought that the Indian high-schools were far superior to anything of the kind I had seen in England, except my Municipal School of Technology, which was really of Collegiate grade, preparing students for degrees. But I had never thought of going to school again. Yet I did, in an old-established high-school, in the capacity of Headmaster.

It was Mrs. Besant's doing. She had visited the birth-place of Krishnamurti, Madanapalle, a little town of some ten thousand people, situated in an out of the way part of the Telugu country, but on high land, about 2500 feet above sea level, cool, healthy, old-fashioned, and beautified by its

situation within a circle of mountains, some of which stood up as large monoliths in a sky-line of rugged shapes—in some parts like the battlements of a castle, with which the sunset could play artist with great effect, while cool evening air-currents soothed the skin with softest touch.

Mrs. Besant had received a tremendous ovation at Madanapalle and in the neighbouring railway stations on the way. The local Theosophists had most efficiently spread the news of her coming. Never before had thousands of women thus crowded to greet a visitor, women of all classes—the delicate rose-leaf women semi-secluded in the homes of the well-to-do, the work-worn women of the labouring classes—some but children, others withered to an unbelievable degree—most of them full of humble wonder, yet a few of the female sergeant-majors who govern with a rod of iron the big joint families of moderate means, all of them expectant of blessings and better fortune from the mere sight of the holy woman from the West, who had made her home in India from love of India, from admiration of India's ancient heroes and India's religious thought.

While in Madanapalle, Mrs. Besant learned that there was an old high-school managed by gentlemen of the town with funds subscribed by themselves and collected from their friends. The school was on the verge of collapse. It could not afford modern buildings and the latest equipment. The missionaries were bringing money from America for a new high-school of their own. Government would give their Recognition to that school and close the Indian school. because the missionaries could win in the race for better buildings and equipment, and two high-schools could not be permitted to exist in such a small town, on account of the danger to discipline and economic stability involved in their competition.

Mrs. Besant, come to our aid! Mother, save our school! You, the foundress of the great Central Hindu College of Benares, extend your help to the old school in the birth-place of Krishnamurti, the school which surrounds the boys, the future townsmen, with thoughts of their own ancient cultures, of their own religious ideals, the school which can save them from the necessity of singing Christian hymns and perhaps even learning portions of the Bible—for though that might not be compulsory did not everybody think, be it right or wrong, that the student who gave

pleasure to his teachers in their prime object of spreading their form of religion would be favoured in marks and in promotions, even if only unconsciously ?

The Mother went back to Madras. She thought it over. She decided to save. She promised the school a good monthly donation and she asked me if I would go there as Headmaster. Of course I would go ; anything in her service. That is, if the Government would allow it, for they required Headmasters to have university degrees and also a degree in teaching and I had not troubled to take my degree, not thinking of such an eventuality, though I had done the necessary studies. Mr. Leadbeater added his enthusiastic support. Madanapalle was to be a centre of enormous pilgrimage in the future, as the birthplace of the great Teacher, to be looked back upon with reverence after he had come and gone. It would be well that we should keep a hand on the public institutions, especially in education, which the Teacher would probably reform.

## § 2

I became busy immediately, collected about ten thousand rupees (£700) in a few days by canvassing the matter among Mrs. Besant's and Krishnamurti's friends, took myself off to Madanapalle, and started to build and to teach. I had already done a bit of designing of buildings in England, before my father and I had pitched upon the final plan of the house and office which we built there. As to teaching I had seen it at its best in my beloved Technical School. I had studied the little tricks of the mind thoroughly. I had done a certain amount of private tuition, and I was accustomed to speaking and lecturing and never at a loss for a word.

I first designed and built what was called the Krishnamurti Institute of Science, a school laboratory 69 feet by 18 feet, adapted to both chemistry and physics, with a tank, water-pipes and drainage system, benches built of reinforced concrete, and a demonstration table and gallery system for lectures constructed in the same material. I also invented a mechanical black-board—or green-board rather, for it was dark green in colour—which could change position and turn on a vertical axis, so that the teacher might at his convenience swing it away from the wall to which it was

attached, nearer to himself and the students, and also make use of both sides. This board was not a success, because no one would treat it gently enough, and the supporting rods and joints would bend. But the laboratory was pronounced the newest thing of its kind in sight for teaching science in high-schools, and the Government Inspector had full drawings and specifications made from it for circulation as models to all schools within his circle.

The Inspector came within two months of my starting work. He was a man who took his work seriously and pressed hard for the last point of efficiency. I sympathized very much with the teachers, for he drove them nearly frantic with his criticisms. I had to teach four classes before him, and had the satisfaction of hearing afterwards that he had spoken of me as the best teacher he had ever seen. On his report the Department of Public Instruction issued a notice that I was approved as Headmaster, and so I was regularly installed in my new profession, from which, however, I received no money, for I felt that I could not draw what was nominally mine, on account of the condition of the school and also because I had notions of still being a *sannyasi*.

I do not say that the Inspector's criticisms were unjustified. The teaching was often peculiar. But what would you in a profession that was ill-paid, and was often the last resort of men who had failed to become advocates or the first resort of those who intended to become advocates.

In the teacher's training colleges they had by then learned the question method of keeping the attention of the class on the subject-matter. Sometimes it turned out like this :

*Teacher* : " Now—er—hrrmm—(andante) Queen Elizabeth was very fond of the Earl of Leicester—(crescendo) who was Queen Elizabeth fond of ?—WHO ?—YOU (pointing to some luckless sleepyhead in the fourth row)—urrh—(staccato) Queen-Elizabeth-was-fond-of-the-Earl-of-Leicester—now, Queen Elizabeth was fond of WHOM—(catching sight of another sleepyhead in the third row and pointing an accusing finger) YOU, Duraiswami, what was I saying ?—No, no—Queen - Elizabeth - was - fond - of - the - Earl - of - Leicester—of whom was Queen Elizabeth fond ?—(no reply)—Come, come ! Queen Elizabeth was fond of—(waits as though for a voice from the ether)." At last a thin voice

rises—"The Earl of Leicester, sir." (Beaming smiles) "Right." (The teacher turns to the black-board, writes the word Leicester, points to the letters, and pronounces) "Yell-ye-yi-see-ye-ess-tee-ye-arrrr—Leicester. Now—(turning to the class)—Who was it who was fond of the Earl of Leicester?"—and so on. I have heard the questioning degenerate into: "Now, who said WHAT?"

All this shouting was bad for the students' manners. He often shouted afterwards in private conversation. Some of the boys quite excusably thought that these were our English manners. Once a gentleman was telling me something in which I was not much interested. Suddenly his finger shot out at me, followed by the loud interjection "What was I saying?" He must have seen a wandering expression in my eyes and involuntarily taken the regular steps to remove it.

### § 3

Following the laboratory I built a hall and then a large dormitory, and then bought some adjacent bungalows and fields. The school began to flourish. It could not now be closed. The missionaries were allowed to have their high-school as well, but it did not prosper, and after a few years they reduced it to lower status. Attracted by the new management, boarders began to come from other parts of the country.

In the beginning we arranged to board and lodge the boys for about ten shillings a month each. I had one keen disappointment in connection with this. I had arranged with several farmers to give us bags of rice free. But the boys refused to eat their own country rice. They were not working people, to eat village rice! They must have the large-grained polished rice from Nellore, about two hundred miles away. In vain I explained that the unpolished rice was far better food than the polished. That did not matter. It was a question of dignity.

No dignity would have been involved in receiving the rice for nothing. According to Hindu tradition the student quite properly expects householders to give food and even lodging when necessary. Poor students were wandering everywhere, asking for their school fees—which amounted to about six shillings a month in the high-school classes

during the working months. We were allowed to admit only a small proportion of free boys into the school; if we accepted any beyond that number we should have had about half the school fees that were prescribed deducted from our teaching grant, which might easily have been reduced to zero by this method. This was only one of the ways in which something of a clash occurred between the modern and the ancient methods. In the old elementary schools of the country it would have been a great insult to offer money to the schoolmaster.

The situation troubled me, as I considered the modern school fees economically unsound. There was a gentleman I knew—to give one example—who was a clerk in Government service with a salary of sixty rupees a month. He was considered to have done well in attaining this position, which had become possible for him only because in his youth he had passed the matriculation examination of the Madras University, which was also the passport to Government clerkship at thirty rupees a month, from which one could rise by diligence to sixty rupees in middle age. He lived in a small town where there was no high-school. He had three sons, and wished that they should all rise to his own level in the world. This meant that they had to go to a high-school for at least three years before school leaving or matriculation, because there was no admission to the examinations by private study but only through recognized high-schools. The cost per month of sending one son to high-school was somewhat as follows: Fees, Rs. 4; books, Rs. 2; hostel charges, Rs. 12; railway fares, etc., Rs. 2. The cost of educating three sons at this rate would consume the whole of his salary, leaving him nothing on which to maintain himself and his wife and two daughters. But he would send his sons to school and borrow money at ruinous interest for himself and the rest of the family for the time being, and the sons would help to face the debt later on, until the appearance of their own sons brought new problems for them.

The old idea was that all boys could come to the school, and each should bring on festival occasions whatever presents the father thought fit to send to the teacher, which were regarded as tokens of esteem and not as payment. I knew one school that was going on in this way until the village elders decided that they would like to make it more



modern, with the help of Government grant. The Government officers maintained that the teacher would act unfairly under the old system, giving his best attention to the boys who brought the best presents. I do not know whether this was the case, but I do know that two years after the change there was no school at all, for it had not been possible to find cash for the teachers' salary regularly, little as it had been.

Besides science, I emphasized Sanskrit among the optional subjects for study. I held it to be one of the best things in life that the students should grow up able to read the *Bhagavad Gita* in its original language. I induced no less than sixty students to adopt it as their third language—English being the first, Telugu, their mother-tongue, the second.

This enthusiasm of mine was to meet with an unexpected reward. One morning when we were in assembly at the opening of school, some strange gentlemen entered the hall and mounted the platform. Before I knew what was to happen, one of them had thrown a red shawl over my shoulders and was addressing the assembly in their own language. He was the Head of one of the great monasteries of South India—Shri Jagat Guru Shankara Charya Swami of Shri Shringeri Shivaganga Samasthanam, Mysore Province—an Archbishop, so to say, of Hinduism. He was praising me and bestowing upon me the title of Sattwikagraganya, and stating that if I would come to the monastery he would admit me to worship at their shrine—an honour never before extended to a European. The title itself, I blush to relate, being an Englishman, means: "Foremost among those who are pure." It was intended to be a tribute to my well-known simplicity of life.

Strange that the simplicity which won golden opinions from the Hindus should be a matter of contemptuous amusement to many Europeans. I remember an occasion when I was introduced to two charming young ladies of fashion (the somewhat unnatural fashions of those days, by the way) who were quite unable to surpress their giggles at my beard and my country clothes. I am bound to say, however, that the high Government officers whom I met—Collectors, District Judges and others—never showed a trace of risibility, and were always ready to appreciate and encourage the work that was being done.

I had the honour, too, of being the man to start the first Boy Scout Troop for Indian boys. Scouting was already in motion among European and Anglo-Indians. I thought it would be good for Indians also. I obtained a copy of Baden-Powell's *Scouting for Boys*, gave it to one of the teachers and induced him to carry on as well as he could. This work was very inexpert at first, but later we obtained a trained Scoutmaster, Mr. Aryaratna, from Ceylon, and he in turn taught others, including Mr. Ratnasabhapati, who now plays a big part in South Indian Scouting. I was never good at Scouting, but I had been a father to it, and years afterwards when the Indian Boy Scout movement was fully organized they made me Scout Commissioner for the Province of Sind, and offered me a position on the Scout Council of the Governor of Bombay.

#### § 4

When vacation came I had to go collecting. Much money was needed for both the maintenance and the improvement of the school. One of the first things I collected was a living tiger—one of the largest and finest I have ever seen. Really it was a present to myself, but I dedicated it, as it were, to the cause. What would that magnificent animal have thought if it could have known that it was dedicated to the education of a lot of moth-eaten human beings, miserable spavined objects at the best! I was paying a visit to a Raja who lived about seventeen miles away from the school, in the midst of tiger country. He had at that time in his permanent cages two splendid tigers caught by himself. I admired them. Beware how you admire anything that belongs to an old-fashioned Indian gentleman! In a moment one of them was presented to me. I accepted the beautiful beast with many thanks and requested him to keep it for me until I could have a travelling cage made for it. When next in Bombay some months later I went to see the Superintendent of the Victoria Gardens, and got an offer of one thousand rupees for my tiger, provided it should come up to the standard of my description of it on its being delivered.

But I lost my tiger as easily as I had obtained it. It appeared that another Raja visited my Raja, and he admired my tiger very much. My Raja was sure that I

would have given my tiger to the other Raja if I had been there to see how much he admired it, and so he gave it to him by deputy. And the new recipient was wise enough to remove it to his own gardens without delay.

I never owned another tiger, though I have been near enough to them. On one occasion when I was staying with the Maharaja of Alwar (I cannot always mention names, but it is permissible in this case) he took me for a walk one afternoon in his gardens. As we were strolling across a large lawn or grassy field, I became aware of two tigers a little way off. I was a trifle nervous about them, but I thought I had better preserve a calm exterior. As we drew near it became evident that there was a wide, deep, circular trench around the plot occupied by the tigers. It was the first time I had seen that mode of keeping animals in captivity.

I think the animals, if such they can be called, which I really feared, were the white ants, not that they could harm me, but they could destroy my good works. They made my building operations very costly. Practically the only wood which they did not eat was Burma teak. For most of our woodwork we had to use this imported timber. I tried various woods from Malabar, especially the *irul* or iron-wood, which was so hard to work that it injured the workmen's tools, and only the stoutest nails could be driven into it. Still, the white ants would get even into that wherever a little crack or split appeared, though they could not eat it all away as they did most kinds of wood.

One of my students learned to have quite a fear of the common black ants which I used to welcome to my room with small offerings of sugar, because they kept the white ants away. The student had earache, so I poured into his ear a little olive oil and told him to lie down and rest. After some time I was startled by a loud yell from the student. He had awakened with a procession of ants going into his ear!

Sometimes there would be battles between the black and the white forces, when the white trenches had become broken open by some chance. It was, so to speak, a hand-to-hand conflict. A black ant would grab hold of a white one and they would wrestle, rolling over on the ground until at last the white one was paralysed or killed and carried away. In these encounters no white ant ever won or escaped.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE WOMAN WHO DID NOT EAT

#### § I

**M**Y collection and lecture tours brought me many interesting experiences. On one occasion I stepped out of my way to take a bath with at least one hundred thousand other people. It was the occasion of the great twelfth-year festival called Pushkaram, at Bezwada, near the East coast. It was estimated that two million persons were there, but I doubt if more than a hundred thousand were able to get into the water of the river Krishna at any one time. It was a strange experience to be one of such an enormous mass of people all intent upon one object. There was a Brahmin priest there who threw to the winds his caste restrictions, and recited for me all the necessary verses and did the other performances proper to the occasion.

It was at that time that I slept one dark night in one of the Kondapalle caves, beside an ancient reclining figure of the Buddha cut in the rock. Unfortunately, I and the friend who accompanied me had both forgotten to provide ourselves with any means of procuring a light, so we had to lie ourselves down at the approach of darkness and stay where we were until dawn.

At Buddha Gaya, in the north, I slept under the bo tree which stands now on the spot where grew the tree under which Buddha attained illumination two thousand five hundred years ago. The present tree is said to have grown from a slip taken from the old one. The occasion was a little marred for me by the kindness of the Head of the neighbouring monastery, the Mahant who had charge of the temple and the grounds containing the tree, which stands up against the temple in its rear. He sent out for my use a nice mattress, thereby taking away some of the

romance of my experience and introducing "magnetism" foreign to that which I was seeking at the time.

I gathered many fallen leaves from the tree—it is not permitted to take leaves from the branches—and afterwards presented them to friends.

I spent some time in the monastery. The Mahant showed me some *yantras* or diagrams used in yoga practices, and we discussed them, though I do not think either of us could enlighten the other very much. I admired his collection of camels and elephants—I have always had a special attraction for those two animals—but after my experience with the tiger I took care to keep my admiration of them to myself.

As time went on I took more and more opportunities to go out on collection work. I would wander for days in the main streets of the large cities, calling on all the lawyers and big merchants, and sometimes for weeks together in the most remote villages, travelling chiefly by bullock cart at the rate of perhaps two miles an hour, huddled under the round top of the cart, with a cloth tied in the opening at the back to keep out the heat of the sun, which struck up from the hot sand of the rutty lanes. Often during those hot hours the driver would be dozing at the front of the cart, while the bulls quietly found their own way. Sometimes we would cross large rivers, the cart immersed to the axle or even to the floor-boards just above it—on a few occasions the cart slightly floating, myself partly walking, partly swimming behind.

I have never met such reckless people as the Indians in the face of common dangers, yet most of them shudder at the sight of blood. I have seen boatloads of them crossing a flood which had swept away a modern railway bridge. The passengers sat quietly while two men paddled like mad in the turbulent waters, which at last they crossed safely, after being carried about two miles down stream. In many of the towns there were pony carts which the drivers urged along with the most hair-raising speed over rough and sloping roads, sometimes on one wheel, sometimes on the other, sometimes racing one another on narrow embankments with steep slopes and a possible fall into water on either side.

I have been in several nasty accidents with these carts. Once in Madras I was bowling along in one of these light vehicles. An electric tramcar was coming in the opposite direction and there was not room to pass on account of

heaps of road metal blocking the way. Neither my pony driver nor the driver of the tramcar was willing to yield place. As they approached head-on my man at the last moment tried to run over a heap of road metal. Pony and cart were thrown over headlong in front of the tram, the ironwork of which burst through the covering of the cart, while I was thrown about inside like a pea in a drum—relatively rather a large pea, or rather a small drum. However, I suffered no more than some bruises and a few knocks on the head, and after a heated discussion between the two drivers we all went our respective ways, I walking the rest of my journey. I was then nearer to real injury than I had been on a former occasion in an electric tramcar in England when it leapt the rails, performed a perfect quadrant, crossed the footpath and finally landed against a garden wall, fortunately without capsizing. I had another similar accident in Calicut when one of the wheels of a rickshaw in which I was riding suddenly made a little excursion on its own account.

## § 2

But it was in the north of India that I really nearly lost my life, and in quite a different way. In a certain large state of Rajputana (which *must* be nameless) I undertook at the request of the Maharaja to investigate the case of an old woman who was reputed to have lived entirely without food for over thirty years. The old lady was quite willing that the investigation should take place. There had been a previous investigation at the instance of the then Maharaja's father, but its lack of strictness had left possible loopholes for eating in secret.

I first met the old lady in the palace garden. She sat on a white cloth under a tree near the road. Her hair was black, with a little grey, and shaved for some space at the front. On her forehead were drawn three vertical lines—two white lines, with a red one between them—bent at the bottom to meet at the root of the nose. Such shaving and signs are usually confined to men, but she wore them on account of her peculiar holiness. For clothing she wore a pale yellow flowered lower cloth and a thin white shirt. She carried a little red cloth bag, a red fancy cloth, a white sheet and a little round fan.

I told her that the Maharaja had sent me for me to investigate and report upon her case. She assented, and then in answer to questions said :

" It is about thirty years since I took food. I became a widow at the age of six. My mother-in-law and other family members told me that I must not sit and read *The Thousand Names of Vishnu*, as I was fond of doing, but I must go out into the forest and bring back fuel, being a woman of a poor house.

" One day in the forest there appeared before me a boy who looked about five years old. He had a light complexion, a *mukat* of hair, four arms and a cloth of bright yellow colour, and on his forehead a *tilak* mark. He wore no ornaments. It was Shri Krishna. He spoke to me :

" ' Why do you come here ? You had better spend your time worshipping me. '

" ' But how can I spend my time in worship, if I have no food ? ', I replied.

" The boy simply gave me a rosary and told me to worship, and said : ' From this day on you need not eat. Take this rosary and think of me. '

" The boy did not walk away. He simply vanished. All this happened in a thick forest about two miles away from my late husband's house and eighty miles from here. After that I went and sat under a peepul tree, about thirty yards from the house, and I remained there for three years without food.

" My relatives and everyone in the village came and asked me to take food, but I did not. They said I would die, but I did not. After three weeks they told the inspector of police, and he informed the Raja. The Raja ordered an observation for forty days under the inspector's supervision. If I did not eat, he said, he himself would see me. So the inspector made a fence round me with bamboo and other materials, so that no one could enter, and he kept me there for forty days without food. Then the Raja came to see me. He built a house for me and provided for all my needs. That was a house with arches in front, about twenty-four miles from here. The tree is still where it was, but the house has fallen down. Now I live in an old temple which was restored by the Maharaja and given for my use."

Sitting near the old lady, whom we will call Mataji, was a boy who looked about fourteen years old. I took him

aside and questioned him. He told me that they had come by railway that morning at the instance of the Maharaja. He had never seen Mataji eat, though he had been with her since he was five years old. Nor had she even drunk water, though she bathed at the well and cleaned her teeth. She spent most of her time outside the house, turning her beads or talking with the many people who came to see her. He himself was her sister's son. For a long time his mother had had no child, so she had appealed to Mataji and said: "If a child is born, I will give you the first." But Mataji had replied: "Three children will be born to you; keep two and give me the third." He was the third son.

The next day I met Mataji again. She sat under the same tree, but had now a woollen carpet. She told me that she had seen other visions of Shri Krishna occasionally. In one of them which had occurred only a month and a half previously, she had seen him sitting with his playmate Radha on a swinging seat, a Brahmin pulling the rope of the swing, and other people standing by, including his foster-brother, Baladeva.

"What became of the rosary given to you by Shri Krishna?" I asked.

"It contained one hundred and eight beads. I gave them to the wives of state officials and others, and have still about twenty or thirty of them at home."

"Why did Shri Krishna appear to you and not to others?"

"It was his will, and my karma."

"Why did you come away to your present abode?"

"His late Highness arranged it, because where I was there were many wild beasts and people were afraid to come and see me. He repaired the old temple and dug a well for me."

I was curious to know what she carried in her bag. She smiled tolerantly, amused at my possible idea that some food might be secreted there, and turned it out for my inspection. It proved to be quite a modern vanity bag! There were a small looking-glass, a small wooden comb, a round tin of red powder, some money tied in a white bag, a little brass spoon, a piece of *gopichandran* (a substance looking like chalk), a small piece of dried mud from the Ganges, some thread in a bit of red cloth, a very small red cloth containing incense, and a small thick brass disc.



In the afternoon I went with the Maharaja's private secretary to see an old palace situated on a peninsula jutting into a lake. It was a beautiful old building, surrounded on three sides by water, behind which stood a ring of mountains. It was approachable by only one road and a small path along the edge of the lake.

The next day we prepared this building for our experiment. We started at the top, on the roof, and examined the whole building. I padlocked the doors which closed off each story separately from the stairs. I set a carpenter to screw up one outer door and a mason to build up another. This left only one entrance. I padlocked this with a lock of my own and kept the key myself. The top floor had been originally the women's quarters. This I assigned to Mataji and her nephew. The floor next beneath I locked up empty. Underneath that was the ground floor with a courtyard and the main entrance gate. I established myself there with an interpreter. Beneath us were servants' quarters, approachable only from the outside. We had several servants, including a cook. Outside the gate, barring the approach to the palace, we encamped a company of infantry, with instructions to allow nobody to pass without orders.

Mataji was admitted to the top floor after she and her belongings had been searched by a lady doctor from the hospital. The boy was allowed up and down. He took his meals with the interpreter, but every time he came the door was unlocked and locked by me and he was searched.

My method was to keep guard and to weigh the old lady every day. I wished also to make a test—by means of lime water—of the output of carbon dioxide in the breath, and to keep a record of her temperature and pulse; but these scientific preparations alarmed her, so I had to be content with a record of daily weighings. I noticed, however, that she was perspiring freely—a loss of material which would have to be made up somehow. To see that the weighing machine remained uniform I weighed on the first day a block of marble ( $13\frac{1}{2}$  pounds), which I kept in my room and carried up and down the stairs for testing the machine on each occasion.

On the first day Mataji lost 2 lb. weight; on the second day, 1 lb. In my eyes fraud was already proved. She breathed and perspired as other people did and so must be losing weight. One could advance a theory of pre-

cipitation of matter in the body by yoga *siddhis* or supernormal powers, but that idea was invalidated by proved loss of weight. Was it likely that the supernormal agency of Shri Krishna which had sustained her for so many years would be withdrawn at the moment of this test? No. Day after day Mataji's weight declined, giving the following record: July 18th, 1911, 76½ lb.; 19th, 74½ lb.; 20th, 73½ lb.; 21st, 73¼ lb.; 22nd, 73 lb.; 23rd, 72¼ lb.; 24th, 71½ lb.; 25th, 71 lb.; 26th, 70½ lb.; 27th, 69¾ lb., 28th, 68¼ lb.; 29th, 68 lb. Thus the total loss of weight in eleven days was 8½ lb., an average of over ¾ lb. a day.

By the ninth day the old lady was showing decided signs of weakness. She also expressed great anxiety for the welfare of her cows at home and declared her wish to depart. In the evening the Maharaja came and decided to have her taken home on the following day. So, on the 27th, after we had weighed the old lady, she was taken to the principal palace garden in a phaeton, in the care of the lady doctor, and left there with soldiers on guard. After assembling there we all went by train to the place of her home.

Five minutes' walk from the railway station brought us to her garden, which contained a square building—open in the centre, in which at one side there was a large image. The rest of the garden was occupied by our encampment—a multitude of tents. On arrival we took every medical care of the old lady. Her pulse was 82, her temperature under the arm 96. The doctor stated that she was in good condition except for weakness due to starvation. Her intestines gave a sound symptomatic of starvation.

When the old lady found that the experiment was to continue in her own grounds, and that everywhere we had posted three guards, to watch out and to watch one another, she became very angry and cried out: "I eat! I eat! I eat!"

We knew that she would afterwards tell the wives of the officials and others whom she was deceiving that she had said that only to get rid of us, so I informed her that we were ready to pack up and go as soon as we had actually seen her eat.

In the afternoon of the 29th July, the Aide-de-camp to the Maharaja arrived and we together interviewed the old lady. She informed us that she had been eating various kinds of food, to the extent of two to four *chataks* daily,

and she would now eat in our presence. All being arranged, at nine o'clock we went to her on the roof of her temple. Her dog was with her. Before her was placed a metal tray containing some flat cakes, some round balls made of rice-flour and sugar, and a small basin of milk and rice. She broke up some of the cakes with her fingers, and threw the pieces to the dog. She ate some of the milk and rice, and a little of the rice-flour balls, which were soft and crumbly, but the rest she rejected, saying that her stomach felt very weak after the long fast. During this meal Mataji looked cheerful, and in the end there was a grin of humour upon her face as of one who would say: "Well, you have found me out, but I don't care."

For my part, I was glad that the incident was over. But was it?

The next morning we began to strike tents. I had been walking in the garden and happened to go into my dining-tent, where the cook's assistants had put some of the food upon the table. Inside I found the nephew of the old lady prowling about and looking into the dishes. I rebuked him, told him he had no right to be there, and sent him away. Shortly afterwards I ate my early lunch. Within a few minutes I felt dreadfully sick. I went to the door of the tent and vomited a chalky mass. Then came a raging fever. As I lay on my cot outside the tent, I saw the old woman dancing on the roof and flinging her arms about in manifestations of joy. She was calling out something which I did not understand.

Somehow they got me back to the guest-house. I was delirious. Another guest (an American who had come there to give a course of physical culture to the Maharaja) found me lying in a bath of cold water in which I had apparently permanently settled myself for some relief from the fever. He sent at once for help. The doctor said that someone had given me arsenic, but, fortunately, I understood, far too much. They nursed me for several days until I was fit to travel. The Maharaja pressed me to go and stay in Simla at his expense, but I declined, as I wanted to get back to Madanapalle. He thought it best not to make the incident public, and I agreed to his wishes, for which reason I now conceal the name of the State.

At last I went off, with expenses paid and an extra five hundred rupees in my pocket to be spent upon the school.

## § 3

The incident put an end to my headmastership after a little time, for the fever kept coming again and again. I moved about for several months collecting money for the school. At last I went to get relief in the cool climate of Mussoorie in the Himalayas, but the fever grew worse in the mountains instead of better, until one day I was carried unconscious to the cottage hospital, where I had to stay, a large part of the time unconscious or delirious, for three and a half months, having had my own weight brought down—a karma perhaps—to less than that to which the old lady had been reduced. When I could rise it was a long business learning to walk again. A month after leaving the hospital I managed to make my way to Benares and then to Adyar, where I hobbled about for a time with the help of two sticks, until gradually my strength returned.

In the hospital I had had my physical troubles, but they were nothing to the mental miseries. Delirium can be a very unpleasant experience when it is somewhat consistent and prolonged. I had some vague liking for the European surgeon when he called, but I was quite convinced that the assistant surgeon was deliberately inoculating me with some foul substance to keep me weak. The point was that I was rightfully a Raja, but I was being kept in secret confinement to prevent me from claiming my own. I used to contrive by bribery—so I thought—to obtain a sword and secrete it under the bed-clothes, and I would wait my opportunity to spring out of bed and lay low everybody who might try to bar my path to escape. I was always losing my sword and getting a new one by further scheming.

Day and night nurses were watching in turn, and they, being in the pay of the villainous pseudo-doctor, were always ready to push me on my back whenever I attempted to rise. They were powerful young women. Indeed they seemed to have positively superhuman strength. One night I actually sprang, but got my feet entangled in the bed clothes. I was fortunately caught in the arms of the nurse before I hit the floor. But the nurses—such nice girls—could not be really bad! They had been misled by the villain. Sometimes I tried to bribe them with promises of large sums of money and high position, and they agreed to help me,

but when the time for action came they always failed me in one way or another, greatly to my disappointment. They bore my reproaches, made their excuses, and were forgiven on promising to do better next time.

On one occasion it seemed to me that my father and mother visited the hospital, but the devilish doctor had drugged me and thus driven me to desperate wildness, so that, although they stood and looked at me, they failed to recognize me and passed on, while I shouted to them in vain. This was the most distressing thing of all.

I had a great hunger. I was being systematically starved ! Several times I thought I got out in my astral body and went to a large neighbouring room, a dining-room full of little tables laden with food, prepared for a large number of people—the very people who had captured me—who were about to be called to their meal. Quickly I went from one table to another and ate everything, and laughed with unholy glee at the consternation of the people when they came in and found nothing to eat !

There were not many such items of enjoyment ! There were mostly troubles and anxieties. There were, for example, my children. Somehow I had given birth to about twenty young living things, more or less in the nature of lizards. When I heard anyone coming I would tie them up like bundles of firewood and push them down under the clothes near to my feet, full of anxiety lest some of them be suffocated, as was the case !

Once, I remember, I gave up the struggle. I wandered away into a rocky region above the sea. I settled myself to die (I wonder if animals die deliberately and happily, like that ?) in a depression in the rock ; I was comfortably swooning away, dreaming of something indefinite but quite pleasant, when the two nurses appeared on the scene, caught hold of me and called me by name, saying they wanted me back. I resisted them. I complained : " Why do you trouble me, why do you trouble me ? Can't you see that I am dead ? " But they continued to trouble me, and they lifted me and brought me back, and I liked the warmth of their hands, for I felt cold. I learned afterwards that that had been a critical time, and that I had actually shouted out those words.

It was after about two months (I see by my diary) that one day I opened my eyes and my head was quite clear.

One of the nurses was bending over me. "Be still," she said, "You have been very ill."

I looked at her in astonishment. "Well," I said reproachfully, "Why did not you tell me so before, instead of all those lies?"

"We did," she said, "but you did not understand."

After this moment of brightness my senses seemed to leave me completely, and it was only very gradually that I recovered the ability to see, to hear, and to speak. For some time the nurses had to write anything they wanted to say because I could not hear, though I could faintly see. The return of the senses was accompanied with much pain, the slightest sound and the light from the windows being very trying. As I was getting better I was very much troubled, and I think set back, by a person called "the Deaconess," who used to call two or three times a week and would insist on trying to convert me to her orthodoxy, which she wanted to do not by theological arguments, but by abusing my friends, particularly Mme Blavatsky and Mrs. Besant.

I will record here two visions of the type that I had seen several times before, which occurred while I was still in hospital. In one of them I found myself on a gently sloping hill-side, looking upwards. I saw before me a figure like one of the Masters, but with reddish hair and beard. Near him were standing the Master whom I had frequently seen and another, called by the old gentleman of Tiruvallam "the Kashmiri." I saw the central figure, whom I then took to be the coming Teacher, raise his hand, and from him there came a wave of love, not seen but felt, which caused even the grass and little bushes to rise and expand for a moment visibly. The effect upon me was that I stepped back a pace with one foot and exclaimed to myself: "I have never before known what love is." The other vision of this kind occurred shortly afterwards. The Master asked me to go with him somewhere and as I stood before him along with another person he enveloped us both in his aura in some way, and it gave a sensation of great freedom and rippling joy of life which one felt must be his normal condition.

I am not assuming that these visions had a true foundation, but am merely recording that they occurred as of a quality different from ordinary dreams, on account of a greater vividness of consciousness and experience which

they seemed to contain. Do all people have such experiences, and take no notice of them, classifying them as imagination? I remember one philosopher said that the only difference between people who talk of their visions and those who do not is that those who do do not realize that those who do not also have the same.

#### § 4

On my way from Mussorie to Madras (in the train, by the way, a big suitcase fell on to me from the upper berth and nearly sent me back to hospital) I stayed a few days in Benares with Babu Bhagavan Das. Mrs. Besant was also in Benares. My beard had come off while I was in the hospital. Now, when I met Mrs. Besant, for the first moment she did not recognize me, and then she exclaimed: " I like you much better without your beard."

Thenceforth, of course, I had to encumber myself with a razor, shaving brush, shaving soap and a strop, and the beard became only a memory of the past! It was my first compromise with civilization. We discussed the school at Madanapalle. Fortunately, a German lady with high qualifications and ability—Dr. Louise Appell—turned up about this time and was able to relieve me of the work of Headmaster.

When I arrived at Adyar I was received very cordially by Mr. Leadbeater, and fell into the work of helping him again. At that time he had taken up once more his researches into the lives of Krishnamurti, under the star name of Alcyone. He was writing more of them—further back, as far as 70,000 B.C.—and was introducing new characters and so enlarging all the genealogical charts.

It seemed strange to me that the people whom Mr. Leadbeater now knew well and liked were all linked together in families throughout those past lives. Generally in a life story there were only one or two main families, and nearly all the persons recognized were born within those families. In the present incarnation the reverse was the case; the very same people, though nearly all in the Theosophical Society, had now been born in different families all over the world. Mr. Leadbeater explained this sudden change by pointing out that the lives before the present were of a preparatory nature, but in the present life

these characters were scattered all over the world so that their services would be available in many different countries for the great work of the World Teacher who was about to appear.

It was the enlargement of the charts by the addition of more characters which completely undermined my confidence in these psychic perceptions of Mr. Leadbeater's. It happened that three boys a few years younger than Krishna-murti and Nityananda had now come under Mr. Leadbeater's notice as being of great promise. Their names were Maung Maung Ji, a Burmese, and Yajneswara Shastri and Rajagopalachari, South Indian Brahmans. They were expected to play important parts in the forthcoming great events, and they were found in the "Lives."

While looking up these boys Mr. Leadbeater thought it would be interesting to enter into the charts other people who might probably be identified by close inspection. He added a number, and a little later decided upon a still further extension.

"You know a good many people," he said to me, "who are prominent workers in the Society and are likely to be in the 'Lives.' Could you suggest some names?"

I wrote down thirty or forty names and Mr. Leadbeater himself added another thirty or forty likely people. With the exception of three or four he found all these, and they were found to appear regularly throughout the charts.

As the charts were being thus enlarged, it struck me as incongruous, and indeed improbable to the point of impossibility, that the persons found in the previous investigations should have intermarried almost fully among themselves, and now the later lot of people were mostly intermarried with one another. Out of about three hundred people for example, in a typical chart, divided roughly into two groups, which we may call earlier and later (the term later meaning the people selected as I have just mentioned) the approximately 150 marriages would be about 95 per cent between an earlier and an earlier, or a later and a later, and only 5 per cent between an earlier and a later, so that the lots picked at random kept very much to themselves!

A further difficulty was that most of the later were in a later generation. And it was a great defect that there were practically no barren marriages—only two or three



cases out of over six thousand marriages—different from what occurs in any known community in the world. Still a third improbability was that the characters always married in their own generation, sometimes the oldest child of an oldest child of an oldest child with a younger child of a younger child of a younger child. Thus in the cases of large families, according to my most conservative calculations a frequent difference in age between husband and wife, would be fifteen years or more, as often as not the lady being the elder.

Not to trust too much to memory, I later analysed and confirmed these figures from the published book (*The Lives of Alcyone*), and while doing so was struck by a further peculiar feature. The above-mentioned percentages apply to standard charts of the lives of Alcyone, which were completed before the later people were added. But in other additional lives written at the last moment I found that the intermarriages between earlier and later are usually increased about fivefold!

When the number of persons in the "Lives" had grown to over three hundred, the list was closed, as the investigation was becoming unwieldy. I used to keep a ledger showing each "star" name and where the character was in relation to others in all the lives. With this ledger I assisted Mr. Leadbeater to complete his charts, by informing him of the periods during which a given character might so far be missing, so that he might be looked up and accounted for throughout the whole period covered by the investigation. We regarded the use of such a ledger as quite legitimate for the saving of psychic energy, though it deprived the "Lives" of any evidential value for those of us who knew the process. This theory did not disturb me, as I knew the fatigue involved in the work; but with regard to the conjunctions of the characters in the "Lives"—especially as many of the new names had been suggested by me—I could not deny to myself the mathematical impossibilities. Further, what would have happened, I thought, if someone other than myself had been helping Mr. Leadbeater at that time? Would other characters have appeared in the places occupied by some of those suggested by me?

Another question in connection with this arose in my mind, when Mr. Leadbeater left Adyar and settled in Australia. Then a new set of people swam into his ken and

became prominent people in the Society, and in the preparation for the coming Teacher. Most of these new people had no place at all in the "Lives." Why should the previous three hundred have been born closely together in the families of the previous lives, and not this newly found group of people, who, even if the investigation had now continued, could not have been accommodated in immediate relationships?

And suppose that Mr. Leadbeater had had occasion to add the prominent members whom he met still later on in his work, there could scarcely have been room for them to intermarry at all with either the earlier or the later of our lists, they being all paired off, with very rare exceptions. Further, threequarters of the people found in the "Lives" and thus closely intermarried belonged to or were residing in three countries familiar to Mr. Leadbeater (the British Isles, the United States and India) and almost all the remaining quarter were in three other regions well known to him (Australia, Holland and Java, and France); in connection with this I asked myself whether the thousands of Theosophists in other countries (Latin America, Spain and Portugal, Scandinavia, Africa, Central and Eastern and Southern Europe) belonged to a different "crowd," or a later generation—a matter of great improbability. No, I was bound to conclude that the lives as recorded simply could not be.

There were several small incidents also which drove me towards the same conclusion. In relating the experiments in thought-transference made in England, I have already mentioned a lady who was a hundred per cent correct in reading our thoughts. That lady also saw, or thought she saw, past lives. She told me that I had had a life in Mexico long ago in which I had not married at all. I told all this to Mr. Leadbeater. One of the series of Alcyone's Lives was in Mexico, and when the chart was made up I found myself in it as unmarried. It remained like that for a long time. At the time of making up the chart Mr. Leadbeater had laughingly remarked: "I hope that will satisfy you!" It was one of the very rare cases of anyone remaining unmarried in those past lives. However, at the very last minute, when the "later" people were added I found that Mr. Leadbeater had provided me with a wife!

Ten years later, when I was travelling in Brazil, I learned

that Lord Cochrane, Tenth Earl of Dundonald, was a great hero in the eyes of South American boys, on account of his wonderful exploits on behalf of Brazil, Chile and Peru in their struggle to free themselves from the Portuguese and Spanish yokes. Now, it had happened that prior to the appearance of Krishnamurti on the scenes, Mr. Leadbeater had been greatly interested in an American boy, and had written some of his past lives. In those lives two striking public characters had figured prominently—Theodore Roosevelt (then President of the United States, and a great figure with American boys) and Lord Cochrane. Mr. Leadbeater had as a boy lived in Brazil, where his father was then a railway contractor, and he had no doubt shared in the common enthusiastic admiration for the Earl. At any rate, he used constantly to tell of Lord Cochrane's exploits in South America to the American boy I have mentioned and to other boys who then surrounded him in a group which was broken up in 1906 when some people in America attacked Mr. Leadbeater's moral character, as I have already mentioned.

I may take this opportunity to mention that at Adyar Mr. Leadbeater often spoke to me with sorrow of the way in which that attack upon him had destroyed his most cherished dream. By careful training of character in an atmosphere of refinement of mind and body he had hoped to produce a band of people very near and sensitive to the things of the inner world, a band which would have the special function of linking together with a perfection never known before that world and ours and thus leading to a great betterment of humanity. He did not know when speaking to me that he would shortly have a better opportunity than ever of establishing such a band in Australia.

## CHAPTER X

### HOW TO BE HAPPY THOUGH—

#### § I

**I**N the summer of 1913, when I was staying along with Mr. Leadbeater in the lofty and cool health resort of Kodaikanal, in the Palni Hills, in the south of the Madras Presidency, for the purposes of a summer school, I received a letter from Mrs. Besant suggesting that I should help her as Honorary Secretary in a new educational venture which she called the Theosophical Educational Trust. She said that she would take up in connection with that the further development of the Madanapalle school. Would I go over to Madanapalle, study the conditions there and report to her?

I went, and found that the Madanapalle High-School could probably be developed into a college affiliated to the University of Madras, but that would mean more buildings, equipment, staff and endowment. After full discussion we came to a personal arrangement in the matter. She would undertake to satisfy the University in the matter of the endowment (no small matter, for they demanded a fund of about £7000 in the background) if I would find everything else. It was a long struggle. More collection work and apparently endless negotiations—but success crowned our efforts and within two years Lord Pentland of Leith, then Governor of Madras, had come to Madanapalle and formally opened the new College.

One by one other schools were started or came under the banner of the Theosophical Educational Trust, until we had thirty-seven in all. Some of them I organized, others already existed. Most of them I had to visit, as I combined the duties of inspecting officer and collector of funds with those of Secretary of the Trust, but Mrs. Besant as President

was the chief executive officer of the Trust and to her all plans and ideas were submitted for approval before being put into effect. The idea of the Trust was not to teach Theosophy, but to provide a more balanced education, which should awaken the emotions of the students along social and spiritual lines, and not confine itself to the intellect as was the prevailing mode.

Early in 1914 Mr. Leadbeater settled in Sydney, where already existed the biggest Lodge of the Theosophical Society in the world, of which I afterwards became President for a year. I did not go with him, as my devotion was primarily with Mrs. Besant and I was now helping her with the educational work.

## § 2

In 1913 Mrs. Besant began to take an active interest in Indian politics. Early in 1914 she founded the Home Rule League—daring words "home rule" in those days. She urged with all her eloquence the immediate establishment in India of home rule within the Empire, by which she meant Dominion Status somewhat similar to that enjoyed by Australia or Canada. She had instructions from her occult sources for this work. She was told that the end would be a great triumph, but she must take care that the process was not stained with violence. Often she used to say that she would see home rule before she died.

Apart from sentiment, Mrs. Besant's view of the political situation was simply this. Ninety-nine out of every hundred thinking Indians were glad that India should be a part of the British Empire. That arrangement was conducive to stability and peace. There was no reason why they should have sentimental affection towards the British, but they had a feeling of esteem, and they had common sense. There was then no appreciable desire for separation from the Empire. But Indians wanted self-government, so that they themselves could determine such important matters as the development and protection of Indian trade and the expenditure on education.

Mrs. Besant believed that delay in the grant of Dominion Status would gradually arouse among the intelligentsia a national feeling, as in Ireland, containing a powerful element of mistrust and dislike for the British. Twenty years

afterwards those of us who had lived in close touch with educated Indians could see that her judgment was sound. Hers was a middle policy ; many others were driving to the extremes of repression and rebellion, which could excite each other to the destruction of all reasonableness.

Opponents to her point of view kept retorting : " But what would happen if the British army withdrew ? " They ignored the fact that it was the British who had converted India into a disarmed people and had denied to her intellectuals the military profession, that a moral obligation was involved in the matter, and that in fact under Dominion Status no sudden departure of the British army and British military officers would have been contemplated. The opponents also emphasized the absence of unity of opinion on many subjects in India as a barrier to political independence, forgetting that in no nation in the world is there such unity.

Mrs. Besant's judgment was extremely moderate, and free from any trace of fanaticism, and was later justified by time and events. There is now a large and growing body of national feeling surging round the idea of complete independence for India, which has resulted in a situation which may become embarrassing to Britain and highly dangerous in India if Britain again finds herself immersed in serious warfare in other parts of the world.

When the Great War broke out Mrs. Besant used all her influence with Indians to induce them to help Britain to win. In the political field she vigorously combated the policy of civil disobedience, and broke with Mr. Gandhi on that ground. One might resist a particular law, she once told me, in discussing this point, if one felt that it was unjust, and take the consequences personally, but she could not see that it was right to break a law as a demonstration of discontent. That would also leave bad after-effects. But on the other hand India was not to be patronized. India is the elephant of the Empire :

Give thy dog the merest mouthful, and he crouches at thy feet,  
Wags his tail, and fawns, and grovels, in his eagerness to eat ;  
Bid the elephant be feeding, and the best of fodder bring ;  
Gravely—after much entreaty—condescends that mighty king.

HITOPADESHA.

A few weeks after Britain had entered the war I was

travelling with Mrs. Besant in the train from Madras to Madanapalle. I had been dreaming about battles and felt that I ought to do my bit, though detested the idea of doing bodily injury even to a venomous enemy. I told her in effect: "I don't want to leave you, but I think I ought to go." Her reaction was not flattering: "Huh, a nice soldier you'd make."

Of course, she knew about my illness and my frequent fevers, from which, however, I was free at the moment, and it is highly probable that I should have broken down in health in a few days under trench conditions. But I must have looked rather rueful, for she soon broke into a laugh which took the cutting edge off her remark, and said: "But seriously, there must be a few who do not go, and with this complicated educational work on hand, which is very important, I do not see how you can be spared."

Later, conscription was introduced, the examining doctors put me in the A class, and after a few months of training in the Madras Guards, with a lot of civilians who seemed to be keeping their chests where their tummies ought to be, I became a sapper in the Electrical Company of the Second Garrison Artillery in Madras. My chief duty was to instruct the company in electrical science, pure and applied, for which I was selected on account of my knowledge of physics (in which I had specialized in electricity) and my then position as principal of a University College. My other duty resolved itself into reclining in a deck chair at night, looking after the searchlights used in the harbour defence, waiting for a second *Emden*, which never came. A commission was offered on condition of my going to Mesopotamia, but I refused it. Anyhow, I fell ill.

When training in the Madras Guards we used to wear a bayonet at the hip. In my case it rubbed the sweating body, even through the khaki stuff, so as to cause a sore, due, I understood afterwards, to a remnant of the poison still lingering in my body. This developed into a carbuncle and I had a very unpleasant sequence of two dozen of those inflections, accompanied by fever. Once the fever ran so high that I felt the necessity of making my will, and so I sent out and called in two ladies who were passing by to act as witnesses thereto. Fortunately for me I was well nursed by my wife and her mother—I had married the little girl I had known in England—not a child marriage, of

course, though something near to it, according to modern standards!

I must explain that at the outbreak of the war my future wife was in Paris, being "finished." The French Government instantly called nearly all the men to military service, transport was disorganized, and it was several days before the Government allowed a train for civilians to proceed to the coast. In the immense crowd and confusion all luggage had to be left on the railway platform, though it turned up in India three years afterwards. At the gangway of the steamer the captain stood with a pistol threatening to shoot if any more of the people tried to get on the boat. In England my future wife's mother had been told to go to Egypt for the sake of health, but she had decided on India instead. After an exciting voyage on the S.S. *City of Marseilles*, on which they missed the *Emden* by a hair-breadth—on account of fortunate delays in Port Saïd and Aden and some trouble with the searchlight in the Suez Canal—they arrived at Colombo, took train and settled in Madras while I was up country in India.

### § 3

When I returned to Adyar I was full of delight at meeting old friends; but was this weedy object the knobby little girl who had played marbles with my heart in England? Anyhow, I had no need to think of any possible danger to my bachelor liberty, for she had become engaged to a young man in Ceylon who wrote poetry to her, and—the damnation of it was—very good poetry, too.

Time went on, and it happened that the mother and daughter were staying in a bungalow at Ootacamund—the fashionable summer resort of the Madras Presidency, in the Nilgiri mountains, where even the Government of Madras betakes itself for six months of the hot season—and I was staying in a little cottage near by. The daughter was ill in bed. It seems that an elderly friend, belonging to a mountainous country in Europe (I do not want to disclose his name, as it is fairly well known) had induced her to try a tiny amount of arsenic—a habit of his—and this had disturbed a colony of worms—politely called "little brothers"—and occasioned the sickness, which lasted for several days.



Hearing of this sickness I was sufficiently concerned to determine that I would try thought-power as a help towards a cure. So every day I sat in my room, and in my imagination pumped along the ether enough imaginary vitality to resuscitate a regiment of gassed elephants! Thanks to a local chemist, the illness was soon over. The ladies betook themselves to Madras, not along with me, but with a wretched yellow cat over which we had some words, because I thought that it was an imbecile cat, and could not be persuaded to say otherwise.

Later, when I returned to Madras I heard that the engagement had been broken off. The young man had wanted to kiss his fiancée too much, and she had not liked being kissed so much, at least by him. According to the inevitability of things we were duly engaged, and what is not so inevitable, married. What fun, even though the spectre of "duty" and "the cause" hovered over us. My wife had allayed her conscience by going to Mrs. Besant and telling her that she would not marry me if that would be at all harmful to "the work."

"Of course, it would not"—Mrs. Besant melted into radiant kindness at the touch of romance.

"I have been suspecting it," she told me.

We had a grand wedding in the hall at Adyar, Mrs. Besant in the place of priest. She made a speech and handed to me the ring to be put on my bride's finger, and by her presence and words and actions gave sacramental character to the occasion.

In the morning before that we had been to the registrar of civil marriages. What a hectic procedure that had been, for such civil marriages were rare. I first went to the Government offices in Madras to learn the name and address of the official in my district, Mr. Daddy, I was informed. I searched for Mr. Daddy, but Mr. Daddy had been dead some time. I felt I could compose a sarcastic little song entitled "Daddy is dead." I made further enquiries. In another village, five miles away, there was a Mr. Hart. He functioned properly.

Prophetic names and events. As a daddy I was a deader, as I have already related, but there was nothing the matter with Mr. Hart, nor with my heart. I knocked Mr. Hart up at dead of night, even as my heart had been awakened from its slumber. He came to the shuttered door and spoke

fearfully, thinking thieves were about, even as my heart had done. But he opened the door. Yes, he had been appointed registrar of civil marriages, and the late Mr. Daddy's box of records was over in the corner, and he would go through it and find the necessary papers. After appropriate legal delays, he pronounced the commonplace words which produced the uncommon effort of making us man and wife, and as I have said, Mrs. Besant lent her glory to the occasion afterwards.

As I have been talking about curious coincidences in names, I may mention that I once entered a doctors' chambers in the city of Hamilton in Canada, and found there, among others, the following name-plates: Dr. Payne, Dr. Kill, Dr. Death and Dr. Cottyn. Believe it or not, this is absolutely true. The reader may if he likes verify it in the local telephone directory for 1921-22.

After the wedding we went off to the railway station in Mrs. Besant's motor-car, *en route* for Madanapalle and Proddutur—another place where I was building a large high-school, which is now the municipal school.

At Madanapalle I had undertaken to put nine thirty-six-foot iron trusses on the twenty-four-foot high walls of the main hall, with a minimum of scaffolding material, which was very scarce in those parts. I fixed two short strong projecting beams on one end wall, well above the height of the side walls, hoisted the truss by these—a little diagonally so that it would not strike the side walls—and then twisted it and lowered it so that the ends rested on the walls.

The next process was even more ticklish. I posted a strong man on each wall with a crowbar. It was their business to edge the truss along the wall inch by inch—a distance of ninety feet for the first truss, eighty feet for the second, and so on—while two gangs of workmen held on to two ropes attached to the apex of the truss, and moved inch by inch as the men on the wall moved, so as to keep the truss vertical all the time. There was no talking. The movements were all made in co-ordination, in response to my signals with a bell, which I held in my hand while I stood directly under the truss so as to give confidence to all concerned.

A man's work this, I felt. But fortunately there is room in the male body for common sense as well as for such romantic things, about which it can be so proud and foolish.

My wife could soften this grim builder. " As others did not hear us " this process would go something like this :

" Look——" (she wanted to tell me something and this was the equivalent of the American " Say ! " or the military " 'Shun ! '").

" I am always looking."

" Don't be silly. Go away."

" Don't ask the impossible."

And the conversation would continue without words, its original subject forgotten.

I soon withdrew my unspoken thought about weeds. One morning there was no towel in the bathroom. I heard a voice :

" Darling, bring me a towel."

I handed it through the slightly opened door, without intending to look, but I caught a glimpse of the whitest, straightest and most compact little body that the sun had never shone on. I had never dreamed that such things lurked under the fluttery garments of that day.

#### § 4

After a week or so at Madanapalle we entrained for Proddutur—most of a night's journey. At three o'clock in the morning we got out at Yerraguntla station. In the darkness a large bullock-cart, big enough to sleep in, awaited us, and two big bulls lay near by. To the tune of " Giddap ! " (in the vernacular, of course) our bulls arose and allowed themselves to be yoked and started on their way, while we lay on straw heaped on the floor of the cart.

About six o'clock there was a river to cross—generally a sandy bed perhaps two miles wide, with a small stream to ford in one part of it, but in the rainy season a huge torrent, which sometimes came along at great speed and filled the sandy bed with a swirling mass of waters, which had again and again took carts and people by surprise and carried them away. The surrounding country was treeless and flat for miles. One lone tree constituted the half-way house between the railway station and the river bank. The rest was rich black cotton soil, which was a veritable gold-mine for the indigo planters before synthetic indigo came in.

It was on this journey that I had once remarked with surprise on the immense size and strength of the bulls—

they were of what is known as the Nellore breed—in view of the fact that the straw on which I lay was the chief part of their prospective food. The driver wanted to know if I had ever tried eating straw myself. No. Would I take a little and chew it for a long time? After ten minutes or so I found a small piece—I would not venture on a large one—quite succulent. I speculated by analogy that perhaps the long mental and emotional chewing of the cud of past experience common among old people brings out of that apparently unpromising material some succulence unknown to others, just as in the reverse a child's emotions can draw wonders of delight from a doll which is little more than a "rag and a bone and a hank of hair."

Arrived on the further bank of the river-bed, we had an hour's journey to our destination. At the entrance to the town we were received with great rejoicings and special honours—many people, garlands, a horse and dog-cart, borrowed probably from some Englishman in the neighbourhood, and a brass band. Greetings and felicitous enquiries over, we climbed to the back seat of the dog-cart, which was not intended for swift transit to our destination, but as a chariot of honour and a moving pedestal on which we could be seen.

We started at a walking pace, a man leading the horse. Soon the brass band started also, in its own inimitable way. On the instant, the horse bolted, knocking down the man leading it, and we sped at breakneck speed through the narrow streets, between the stone houses set at many and various angles on either side. It would be impossible to keep our seats, I thought, even if the horse avoided the jutting corners, for every time that we struck a stone or irregularity in our path the light cart sprang into the air. It behaved more like a tin can tied to the tail of a frenzied dog than a cart behind a horse. I began to climb over the back of the seat. I thought I would try to crawl along the shafts to the neck of the horse and there gather up the reins, which were trailing on the ground. While I was still climbing, my wife was thrown out headlong at one side, and a few seconds later we crashed against the corner of a house.

I got to my feet, staggered back to where my wife was lying still in a drain, picked her up in my arms, commandeered an empty country cart, similar to that which had brought us from the railway station, lifted her inside,

the country's youth. Under the circumstances she declined to parley with reference to the teacher, but herself threw off the affiliation, and joined with a large number of reformers to produce a new educational body named The Society for the Promotion of National Education (briefly the S.P.N.E.). The governing body was composed of a hundred people active and well known in the country. The idea was to form a new independent national University, issuing private diplomas and degrees, without the authority of Government (which, it was argued, was using educational organization for political purposes), and having colleges and schools affiliated to it all over India.

The Madanapalle College was pitched upon as the first college of the new University, and to recognize my services Mrs. Besant proposed that its name be altered to Wood College, and so it remained as long as the University lasted. The various schools of the Educational Trust were given the option of joining the new body, setting up an independent existence, or going under other management. The Proddutur High-School, for example, went to the Proddutur Municipality.

Our new policy was not really different from the old ; students should not take active part in politics, but should learn as much as they liked about politics. The elder students were to be instructed in the theory of government as it existed in various countries ; the younger were to be given a course of Civics, for which I was commissioned to write a text-book, which duly appeared under the title : *A Text Book of Indian Citizenship*.

For what precise reasons I do not know, in the summer of 1917, shortly after the formation of this new educational society, the Government served internment orders on Mrs. Besant and two of her colleagues who had been particularly active in connection with her daily newspaper. They were given a choice of several cool and healthy places of residence, and decided to occupy the bungalow of the Theosophical Society at Ootacamund. There Mrs. Besant insisted on flying and saluting the Home Rule flag, despite the objections of the authorities.

This internment suspended for a few months Mrs. Besant's own personal educational activity in its third transformation. First she had had the Central Hindu College, which was ultimately absorbed by the Hindu University,

which bestowed upon her an honorary Doctorate in recognition of her services. Thenceforward she was known as Dr. Besant, which I always thought much less effective and pleasing than the simple Mrs. Annie Besant which we always heard before. Secondly, she had the Theosophical Educational Trust. Now came The Society for the Promotion of National Education, of which she, as Chairman of the Executive Committee, was the life and soul, though that body contained many distinguished people, including Sir Rash Behari Ghose and Sir Rabindranath Tagore, in its high positions of President and Chancellor.

## CHAPTER XI

### SOME PUBLIC MEN

#### § I

**M**RS. BESANT being interned, I threw myself heartily into the new movement, to do what I could in her absence. I wrote an article almost every day on some topic related to national education, and these appeared in nearly all the Indian dailies—except those owned by European interests—sometimes under my own name, sometimes as leaders.

A young man in Sind offered a start of Rs. 20,000 if I would go up there and try to found a college similar to that at Madanapalle. I accepted this prospect. It was an interesting journey to the north. I made three principal stops on the way—in the first I stayed with Mr. B. G. Tilak at Poona, in the second at Baroda, and in the third I spent a day with Mr. Gandhi at his home near Ahmedabad.

Mr. Tilak, very fiery as a patriot, was the gentlest and softest of men in private life. My wife and I slept on cots set up for us in his old and closely-packed library. There was only just room between the shelves set in parallel rows across the floor. I felt happy with thousands upon thousands of books for bedroom companions. Books are restful things—perhaps that is their chief or only fault.

Mr. Tilak spoke sadly of the slice which had been cut out of his life by his deportation, for no fault that he could see, and most of all sorrowed that the death of his wife should have occurred during his absence from home. He took the chair for me at a lecture which I gave in a theatre in Poona, which for all I know may have been the same theatre as that in which Mr. Gokhale had presided for me years before, when the followers of Mr. Tilak, then an unwilling guest of the Government, had made a disturbance.

At Baroda I lectured in the college hall, with H.H. the Gaekwar in the audience. A square had been cleared at the centre of the first few rows of chairs and a rich carpet laid there, with two chairs in the middle of it, one for himself, one for my wife. His Highness made it the occasion to speak, after my lecture was over, of his own rule and his own State, and to explain how much internal distinctions of caste and the like were standing in the way of his hopes and efforts for social and constitutional advancement. On the following day he called us to the palace and questioned me closely on many points of educational reform. He was obviously seeking for clear-cut workable ideas and the fruits of experience, and was not the man to occupy himself with hopes, fancies and dreams. Certainly his State reflected much of his high purpose and business-like methods.

Baroda was educating nearly eighty per cent of its boys and close upon fifty per cent of its girls, while in the territory of the British Raj only about eight per cent of the population was literate. There were also 45 town and 655 village libraries, serving sixty per cent of the population of the State. I was particularly struck with the travelling library system. A box of books was sent to each village, kept there in the charge of the local schoolmaster or some other official for some time, and then exchanged for a different one. That system served the whole State, and would be a blessing in other parts of India as well, for India is a land of villages. Ninety per cent of the population is scattered in some three-quarters of a million hamlets, and it is not economically possible to have a permanent collection of books in each of these. Not least among the improvements in Baroda was the children's library, up-to-date and resembling those of America.

At Ahmedabad we spent a day with Mr. Gandhi. He was one of the very few prominent Indian leaders who had not lent their names to the Society for the Promotion of National Education. We spent most of the morning talking about education and political matters. He would not join our new scheme. He did not like our system. To him it was highly distasteful on account of its glorification of the fruits of modern science and its appeal to young Indians to develop modern industrial and commercial organizations, as the Japanese had done. To him, that was all wrong. It could not make for human happiness, which was to be found in



the midst of such simple work and such simple society as may be required to maintain humanity in the natural state and in contact with nature. Of factory systems with their soul-destroying labour and competition he would have none ; hectic work followed by hectic pleasure, both loaded with opportunities for many forms of human conflict, were all that they could bring to mankind.

Mr. Gandhi was a disciple of Tolstoy. In the afternoon we rested in his library upstairs ; a large room lined with books and portraits—dozens of them it seemed—of Leo Tolstoy. How attractive was that personality, which did not seek human applause and company, but nevertheless received it, which worked against the growing tendency to convert humanity into a hive of ants or bees, which revered the completeness of the human individual as something to be cherished, to be preserved if possible against the inroads of social and economic specialization, the new efficiency. Tolstoy lived as he thought, an example of his own theory of distributed activities of the day—manual labour, creative activity, reading, personal intercourse. His vegetarian ideals have recently gained much ground. We were told later, when travelling in Bulgaria, that more than half the population of that country had been converted to that form of diet by his life and writings.

Understand Tolstoy, and I think you have understood Gandhi. We took meals with him in his simple dining-room which might have been any dining-room in any village cottage, but his food, in contrast to that of his contemporaries, which stung and burnt and almost blistered the mouth and tongue, was devoid of all condiments. " Simplicity is best," it seemed to say. " Do not seek artificial enhancement of natural appetites, and happiness will take care of itself." I was reminded of a verse of Blake's :

He who takes to himself a joy  
Doth the wingèd life destroy,  
But he who kisses the joy as it flies  
Lives in eternity's sunrise.

My own theory of industrialism for India was somewhere midway between that of Mr. Gandhi and that of Dr. Besant, who was all for the whirling wheels of modern mass-production, though she frequently deplored the passing of handwork in arts and crafts—some feminine inconsistency

in this, a wanting of things both ways at once, which worked well on the platform of the orator, but not so well in the courtyards of ordinary life.

I looked forward to the days when industrialization, minus competition, plus social organization, would provide for all common needs in a maximum of a few hours' work a day, as it should do if there is truth in the estimate that machinery provides an average of fifteen slaves for every man. But I thought it would be well that India should delay the development of her factory system until the more modern world had solved its worst economic problems, had fought its most dreadful economic battles and found a place of peace. Let peaceful India remain simple; afterwards the fruits of Western conflict could be hers without the conflict.

However, I had always been encouraged to believe that "Mother knows best." I set aside any thought of my own and discounted any others, such as those of Mr. Gandhi, which conflicted with Mrs. Besant, and went on my educational way with energy and enthusiasm, though not without misgiving.

## § 2

We pursued our journey into Rajputana and across the desert. At length we saw before us in the hazy atmosphere a vast army of the sheeted dead, stretching ghostly arms gesturing eternal despair by aimless flight. Strangest of travellers' visions in all the world this, when first seen, I think, but a vision soon to fade in actuality into a mass of wind-catchers erected on the roofs of the town of Hyderabad, which my wife and I were to learn to know as one of the hottest cities of India's torrid land.

Hyderabad, Sind, I count one of the most picturesque towns in India. At close quarters it fulfils all the romantic promise of its strange appearance when viewed across the desert. Running along a hillside there is a mile-long street which serves as main bazaar, scarcely wide enough for two of the rich merchants' carriages to pass—rich carriages and glossy horses, the pride of Sind, and merchants in simple white clothes and white hats costing perhaps only a day's keep of the horses.

A guttural warning, and all foot-passengers must squeeze

themselves into the shop fronts or the narrow lanes, to let a camel train pass by. It will pass anyhow, so they had better get out of the way. Four or five, ten or twenty of the lordly creatures pass, stepping with long and even paces, slow in motion but swift in effect, supercilious eyes looking from on high along lifted noses at the scurrying human rodents whom their passage has disturbed. Big feet, shaggy knotted knees, huge bundles on yellow matted sides, long necks, horizontal heads and noses—we must shift our gaze several times to take in these spacious particulars, and put these views together to form a synthetic picture of this lordly visitant rather than denizen of our earth. Only the hanging lip and the tiny tail seem out of concord, lacking both beauty and power.

We were to know camels well before we were finished with Hyderabad, and my wife proved to be a first-class camel rider and driver, as she was of all things rideable and driveable—horses, mules, motor-cars, bicycles and all the ilk, except swings and roundabouts, for which she always had a veritable camel's scorn. Many a jaunt did we take on camel back, she handling the reins, I sitting behind, over the desert, with its beauty of light and colour as lovely as any garden. The desert has a constancy which captures the heart and makes parting sadder than any leaving of the flowers, with all their teasing and breath-taking reddened lips, plucked brows and inviting eyes. But to be perfect the desert needs a river, and that we had in the Indus, most majestic of flowing waters.

The lanes of the city where the merchants dwelt, on either side of the bazaar, were narrow enough for only two persons to pass and uninviting with a trickle of waste water down the centre and mud or dust on either side of this. You step up a lane and turn off through a doorway in the walls that rise high on either side, and you are in the courtyard of a palace, for only so can be described the homes of the wealthy merchants of this trading centre—the Bhaibund community who, with singular courage and ability, have established themselves in every port of the world where East meets West and, in the words of Kipling :

. . . There is neither East nor West  
Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,  
When two strong men stand face to face,  
Tho' they come from the ends of the earth !

Bhaibunds and Amals—the Hindu Sikhs of Sind—and Mussulmans all rejoiced at the prospect of a National College in their midst—no, not exactly in their midst, for there was no room in that crowded hive—hive for its busyness, not for its regimentation—but on its outskirts in an old farm, standing on the banks of an ancient canal that skirted the town. All came forward to help, some with their thousands of rupees, some with their tens, some with their annas and pies.

In a week we had five thousand pounds in hand. In a fortnight building alterations were under way. In three weeks furniture, desks and seats newly designed—standing on only two legs the *pais*, planted in the floor—began to arrive, along with science apparatus, books, typewriters, cooking vessels and many other things. In a month the staff was engaged. In five weeks from our arrival on 24th of August, 1917, the machine was ready for the road—adventurous as it was to prove—professors and teachers at their posts, students at their tasks, their gossip or their games. On October 1st, 1917, by general desire I opened the new College in the presence of all the distinguished people of the town, and many of the undistinguished, who almost filled our large main quadrangle.

The College has survived all the vicissitudes of the interim and remains to-day one of the First Grade Colleges of the Bombay University, a position it assumed even before the dissolution of the Society for the Promotion of National Education and the National University. In my day it had the unusual degrees of B.Sc. in Industrial Science (we prided ourselves on our wood-distillation and other apparatus, presided over by Professor Muirson Blake, from Canada); of B.Ag. (with many acres of experimental plots and produce-yielding fields around the College, watered by our own pumping engine on the banks of the canal—we even supplied the army with fodder for a time—managed and taught by Professor Menghraj Jagtiani); of B.A. in Political Science, taught by Professor Bhagat Ram Kumar from the Punjab and Oxford (now in 1935 Principal of the College, and one of the best); and of B.Com. (with its pomp of charts and gleaming typewriters under Professor Appudurai Aiyar, from Madras). In that romantic moment these towered above the more commonplace degrees of Arts in history and languages, pure science and mathematics.

## § 3

After about three months' internment Mrs. Besant was released. Everywhere she went India went wild with enthusiasm, and drowned her in flowers and garlands. Mr. Gandhi's civil disobedience, and her opposition to it, were in the womb of the future, so there was no conflict to mark the joy and the unity of that moment, when it seemed that India would ride swiftly to the victorious goal of Dominion Status, Home Rule within the Empire.

Mrs. Besant was named President of the National Congress for that year. We joined her in Calcutta in December, where the Congress was to be held, which my wife and I also attended as delegates from Madanapalle. Fifteen thousand people in one huge tent ; speeches that could not have been heard but for the stillness and tenseness that prevailed ; men from all over India, leaders in their own towns and villages, listening mostly with trained keen brains to the close reasonings, irrefutable arguments, carefully marshalled facts, and occasional indignant outbursts of the speakers, the proposers, the seconders and the supporters of resolution after resolution.

Looking and listening impartially one could not but see that here were men sincere, sober, capable, practical, such as no country in the world could surpass, and few equal. Only they lacked the power, the weapons, the opportunity—these being withheld, the disturbances of India have never represented India ; they have originated and operated only as riots of the ignorant and distressed.

One of the features of that Calcutta Congress was the appearance of hundreds of women of all communities, purdahless, and seemingly as brave and free as the national songs which poured from their throats—the national songs of India which speak little of fighting, or heroism, or triumphs, but much of the beauty of sky and earth, of villages and trees and rivers and cultivated fields—the poetry of Wordsworth, the music of Swinburne.

Congress over, we went with Mrs. Besant in the train back to Madras, talking national education most of the way.

In carrying out her bold campaign Mrs. Besant was very concentrated. Once a plan was decided upon and the work set in motion she had no time for any side issue or amusement and no use for any person who did not fit into

that plan. Yet it seemed to me that it was not her nature, as many have thought, to take joy in battle, and that her greatest happiness took the very quiet form of enjoyment of the company of a small circle of harmonious friends.

Thousands know of the appeal and charm of her personality on the public platform, of her unremitting activity in a great variety of social and political efforts and also of her great intellectual powers expressed in the literary field. But perhaps only her friends know of the extraordinary affection which it was her nature to lavish upon them and how closely her sympathies would go with them, even sometimes in what she knew to be their foolish desires.

In her latter days some of her immediate adherents persisted in calling her "Chief" and even "General." I do not know whether she liked it, but I would never do a thing like that, and I found her always simple and unpatronizing. It was always my view that, though great, she was not without weaknesses. Her very modesty was a weakness which sometimes put her at the mercy of others whom she credited with knowing more than herself in certain directions. It appeared to me that she was most praised as a "Ruler" by those who really ruled her, and could inherit the substance of the power engendered by her greatness.

During the ensuing year my wife and I must have travelled in the train with Mrs. Besant for at least four thousand miles, and invariably, although by far the oldest member of the party, she would be the first to rise in the morning, herself prepare coffee on her little oil stove in the bathroom (quite against the railway regulations!) and hand it round smilingly to all. It was a habit of hers to take coffee in the mornings and tea in the afternoons, both of the strongest. In the train her extraordinary calm and poise showed to the full. She would sit quietly and peacefully for hours and days, while other members of the party chafed and fretted, and often she would write an article on her knee—almost the acme of bodily and mental training, to think and write legibly in that noisy, dusty, hot and shaking environment.

## CHAPTER XII

### AN INDIAN COLLEGE

#### § I

IN the autumn of 1918 the Sind National College, which I had started the year before, almost came to an untimely end. Mrs. Besant's policy of forming bands of people devoting themselves with vows and pledges of service was always effective for getting things done, but it seemed to me to have a bad effect on the character of the people concerned, who would often assume, at least inwardly, a superiority to others which made it quite impossible for them to work with those others on the level. If anyone had different opinions he must necessarily be wrong, for "ours" had come from a lofty source, and one need not waste time thinking or arguing about it! Argument and discussion were characteristic only of "difficult" people. The proper thing was obedience—not blind obedience, of course, but intelligent intuitive response to spiritual superiors! This method of Mrs. Besant's when making her plans was an old one. Mme Blavatsky had rebuked her for it in London when she had issued orders in the working girls' club that only those who joined trade unions would be eligible for the privileges of membership.

Although those who obtained the power in this way subscribed to the doctrine of tolerance, and the dissentient voice was generally allowed to speak, in the magazine or on the platform, it would be once only and then it must lapse into silence in the presence of an unthinking majority whose leaders would go on waving their flags and singing their songs of praise of each other. The least breath of criticism of this policy was "in bad taste," and marked its perpetrator out for oblivion, as guilty of breach of brotherhood by his criticism of another. Differences were natural and

permissible, but you must differ in silence. It created a vicious circle, leaders making followers and followers making leaders who had to believe in themselves because so many others depended upon them.

When this policy affected the schools it expressed itself in favouritism and arbitrariness. The Sindhis, people of originality, capability and independence, would not stand for that kind of thing. A large part of the staff and students of the Sind National College were soon in revolt. One day Mrs. Besant sent for me, told me about this—I had not known of it, for I was no longer Secretary in the educational work, after the new organization took charge, but Mr. G. S. Arundale, who had lately returned from England, was in that position—and asked me to go to Sind as Principal of the College, failing which, she said, there would be no alternative but to close down, for she knew no one else who could pull it through the crisis. “And,” she added, “you had better stay there until you can find someone capable of taking your place.”

So I became Principal of the College, and took up the work of Professor of English and Physics—the latter only temporarily, to fill a vacancy, as my knowledge of that exacting subject was even then drifting behind the times.

Suffice it to say that when the old Principal left and I came in all went well. Every morning we all assembled in the main hall for fifteen minutes, for roll call, patriotic songs and a five minutes' talk on some ethical or civic subject or the news of the day, after which the students proceeded according to subject and grade to one or other of the twenty-four lecture rooms and laboratories. We did good work for a year, well appreciated by the students and the public, until external events shook the institution to its very foundations.

## § 2

It was on the 30th of March, 1920, that Mr. Gandhi set up in connection with his civil disobedience movement a *hartal* which was to have far-reaching effects. A *hartal* is a general temporary strike or suspension of business of all kinds, usually for one day. This was announced to take place on the Sunday after the passing of the Rowlatt Act, which conferred power on the Executive uncontrolled by



the Judiciary, and was regarded by Indians as a very poor reward for their help during the war. Owing to some confusion, this *hartal* was arranged to be held on the following Sunday, April 6th, in some places, including Amritsar.

Four days later, in that city of the Punjab, Government arrested two political leaders, Drs. Kitchew and Satyapal. A crowd of people went outside the city to the railway crossing leading to the Civil Lines, escorting a deputation which wanted to interview the Deputy-Commissioner on the matter. There they were stopped by the police and the military, some stones were thrown and shots fired, resulting in the death of ten people, while the crowd grew to the dimensions of about thirty thousand. In the meantime, inside the city a riot began, nobody knows exactly how. Three European bank officials were killed, a lady cyclist was assaulted and left for dead in the road, but afterwards succoured by some Indians, two subordinate officials were killed at the railway goods-yard, and much damage was done to public buildings and communications.

Military reinforcements began to arrive from various places, and the city was quieted, but there was a tense situation. On the 12th April, Brigadier-General Dyer, who had arrived from Jullundur and taken charge, signed a proclamation forbidding all processions and meetings of more than four men, and that proclamation was read in several public places on the morning of the 14th, though there was difference of opinion as to whether the proclamation had been given reasonably sufficient publicity. An announcement appeared that there would be a public meeting in the Jallianwalla Bagh, a large oblong of waste land between the back walls of houses, entirely enclosed except for a small entrance,

Someone went through the streets and told the people that there was nothing to fear and that they could come to the meeting. The meeting gathered. They had assembled to a number variously estimated from six to twenty thousand people when, at about half-past four in the afternoon, General Dyer marched into the Bagh with fifty men with rifles, and posted them in line near the entrance, where the ground was higher than at the other end of the enclosure, where the meeting was being held. Order was given to fire. For ten minutes firing continued, independent, but controlled for direction, until nearly all the ammunition was gone.

The crowd was not allowed to disperse. On the contrary, the firing was directed especially to a spot where the people were trying to escape over a wall which had been partially broken down and was low enough to be climbed over. I saw for myself, visiting the place shortly afterwards, that the bullet marks were numerous in that low piece of wall, but comparatively sparse elsewhere. There was no warning and no permission to disperse.<sup>1</sup>

News of this disaster spread like wildfire throughout India. It reached us early in the Province of Sind, adjacent to the Punjab, and caused an intensity of feeling of which nobody could estimate the outcome. In a morning class in our high-school department, which my wife was taking, a small boy got up and cried out passionately: "It will be your turn next." She laughed at him, but we went to bed that night with misgivings, nevertheless. However, the danger passed over. But it left our College in a powerless state, because its Principal and its management were not supporters of Mr. Gandhi's civil disobedience, even subsequent to this dreadful event, which converted millions to its standard.

In ten minutes General Dyer had destroyed the pre-disposition of Indians to appreciate the British. Before that, the Briton visiting an Indian country-place was welcomed with smiles, even though the inhabitants would whisper among themselves: "What has he come for?" But after that event a sullen look would replace the former smiles. Harm was done that day which can never be repaired, and it was made the worse when it was known that a strong group in England acclaimed General Dyer a saviour of the prestige and power of British rule in India.

Called to account for his conduct, General Dyer explained that he wanted to inflict a lesson which would affect the whole of the Punjab and perhaps all India. But if every subordinate officer, even a Brigadier-General, were to assume the authority to punish, what would become of the power of the central Government? Firm measures may sometimes be required, but the authority to punish and to "teach a lesson" cannot rightly be assumed by an individual. Such action was flagrantly out of keeping with the principles

<sup>1</sup> An excellent account of the incident may be read in *Imperial Policing*, written by Major-General Sir C. W. Gwynn.

which have become traditional among the officers of the British Army.

The days of immediate excitement passed off, but a division was created in the ranks of the home rulers. The extreme followed Mr. Gandhi in his policy of civil disobedience.

Such as I have liked and admired Mr. Gandhi, and friends as we have been, if I may say so, in the few opportunities afforded by such a busy life as his, I personally have always felt that his policy was unpractical. Truly, as he said, if the people had followed him fully he would have won home rule within six months, but it seemed to me easy to predict that the people would not follow to the extent needed for that. It was not in human nature, not even in Indian human nature, with its marvellous capacity for suffering in silence, to preserve perfect non-violence when exasperated by the sight of the suffering of women and children. When I remarked upon this to one professor of history he replied : " Do I not know it ? I am a professor of history, and I tell you that never in the history of mankind has a subject nation gained its independence without violence."

But he was willing to be a pillar in the non-violent movement at least for the time being. I thought it was only a question of time before the movement which Mr. Gandhi started would swell to a torrent, sweep over him and leave him far behind.

The new left wing in our locality then turned their attention to our College. " You call yourselves a National College," they said, " but you will not urge your students into the activities of the national movement."

Mr. Patel visited our College, and we gave to him, as to all others, the opportunity to address the students. He said : " These are abnormal times. They are not the times for learning arithmetic and other such subjects. If self-government is to be won within a year, you students should go out and do propaganda in the villages." Two or three students went away.

The local Nationalists now demanded that the College should be given over to them. And when we would not do this they advised the people to withhold donations, and with considerable effect. The situation was exacerbated because Mrs. Besant had written with reference to the Amritsar shooting that it was only to be expected that brickbats would be followed by bullets. Her stock went down to a

very low figure. She did not care what happened to her popularity. But as she was the chairman of the managing committee of the body that owned our College, this reacted upon us. Students' societies were formed outside our gates, and in those they were urged to active political work.

We held our position. Students should hear all political points of view, but if they followed our advice they would abstain from actions and even from making important decisions. I thought that if sufficient elders could not come forward to practise civil disobedience with great self-sacrifice it was wrong to urge children into the firing line.

The principle of non-co-operation invaded the details of our work. Again and again there were strikes about small matters—ordinary strikes, lightning strikes and sympathy strikes. What our students did not know about strikes was simply not known. But we weathered the storm, though I personally fell ill again afterwards, of both fever and carbuncle.

### § 3

With regard to my malarial fever, I had an interesting experience with an American mission doctor. He told me that he had a sure cure for malaria, but practically nobody would submit to it. I told him I would if it did not involve me in anything to which I objected on principle. He smiled. Quite the reverse: it involved a certain amount of fasting.

His point was roughly as follows. Germs are being born in the blood when you get a bout of high temperature. Those germs can be killed by means of quinine when they are five days old; before that, quinine merely holds them for any length of time in a state of arrested development. Quinine acts best when there is little or no food in the stomach. So, take frequent doses of quinine for two days and nights, fasting entirely, and thus kill off the old germs. Then, for five days take no food but clear soup, without any quinine, while the youngsters are growing up. After that, for two more days and nights, fast, and take quinine periodically, to kill the new crop of elders. Then none will be left to breed again. I followed his advice, and was freed completely and permanently from malarial fever.

But the carbuncles started again in my back. I had been

playing football with the students and one of them came at me with full force with the sharp point of his elbow in the middle of my back. A carbuncle developed there, which surpassed all its predecessors. It would not come out, so at last I lay on one of my physics tables and had it cut out by two Indian surgeons. They told me afterwards that it was within a hair-breadth of the lung and they had operated only just in time.

As I lay getting better from this operation I had a strange occult experience, which—as I have said before with regard to such matters—need not be taken seriously. I simply record. A voice seemed to say to me: "That is over, you will have no more carbuncles. But there is another thing: you will have some trouble in the respiratory tract. Will you take that all at once now, or little by little?" My wife had been dreadfully pained by my suffering with carbuncles, and by the operation, so I chose little by little.

Sure enough it came; now and then I have been troubled with asthma, and recently when I had my lungs X-rayed in hospital they told me that I had at some time had some tuberculosis of the lungs and had got over it—though I had known nothing about it.

Talking about X-rays, I once had an amusing experience in Cyprus, where a doctor friend had a fine outfit of apparatus which he was showing to a party of several people, including myself. Each of us stood in turn on a little platform while he and the others looked at the visible radiograph on the screen.

"How strange," said the doctor, "you have a drunkard's liver."

He knew I was a life-long teetotaller, and of generally abstemious disposition. He could not at all understand how I had acquired a drunkard's liver. Some time afterwards I realized what had happened. In the fob pocket of my American trousers I was wearing a rather large hunting watch, given to me by my father before I left for India. This it must have been which had masqueraded as a drunkard's liver. In confirmation of my theory, there was no trace of such a liver in my X-ray photograph taken later in hospital.

To confirm my health we went for the summer vacation to Kashmir. A month on house-boat and ponies, and in camps beside the glaciers and among the mountains of the

Zoji-la Pass leading into Tibet did all that was required. Crossing some of the glaciers was dangerous; we dismounted from our ponies and trusted to our hands and knees. In the pass we were mistaken for thieves. Our Indian friend thought of buying some jewels from a merchant on his way to India from the Tibetan sources of his wealth. We looked at the stock and had some preliminary talk, but when we arose from sleep we found that the merchant had struck camp and stolen silently away. Twice before I had been similarly suspected. Once, in Madras, Subrahmanyam and I had taken a long walk in the moonlight (thirty-two miles—what youth will do!). As we sat resting in a field beside the road, a small party of villagers came along. As soon as they saw us they tucked up their dhoties and fled at top speed! The third occasion had been when I disturbed the registrar of marriages in the middle of the night.

After another year's work in the College I thought the time was ripe for it to try its luck with an Indian Principal. I say luck, for the success of an institution depends much more on the character and personality of the Principal than on his knowledge or learning. It was also more than high time for me to pay a visit to my father and mother in England. I took a year's leave, having arranged for one of the senior professors to act as Principal, and arranged with Mrs. Besant to take a year's lecturing tour round the world. Our first objective was Japan.



# BOOK III : THE WORLD





## CHAPTER I

### WHERE BEAUTY RULES

#### § I

FOR a sea voyage let me commend a cargo boat of five or six thousand tons. It sits nicely in the water, makes its nine or ten knots without quivering (in Bombay harbour we could not feel the difference when the tug boats cast off and we were moving under our own steam), rolls steadily when it rolls and pitches steadily when it pitches, and it does not fill you with the restless sensation that it is racing to its destination—the subtle suggestion which the big liners give that the open sea is something to be done with, to be away from and forgotten as soon as possible. And when you arrive in the small ports on the way it generally goes right inside and lingers and becomes your hotel—instead of standing far out and aloof—so that at any moment you can take a walk on land and take a look at local life, often in unfamiliar ports.

Our ocean wave was calm from Bombay to Colombo, from Colombo to Singapore, from Singapore to Shanghai, but in the China Sea, in the Inland Sea of Japan and off the coast of Japan we had a lot of weather. The *Calcutta Maru* treated the storms as it treated the calms; it was hilly road instead of flat road, but bumpy road scarcely ever. It toddled up one side of the big waves and down the other with the same cheerful restful disregard of time with which it had moved round the south of Ceylon and the north of Sumatra, skirting the land closely to shorten the journey, to economize the coal.

All on board were Japanese except our two selves, who were the only passengers. Japanese ceremonial politeness replaced for us the matter-of-factness of India. The serving-boy would enter our cabin with cat-like quietness and

suppleness, put down his tray, lift his cap and bow, with a smile comfortable, warm, but self-sufficient and seeming to require no response, resume the tray, arrange the articles on the cabin table, and depart by inverse process. In the dining-room one table was for us, one for the officers, who knew English only in the Japanese way, that is, enough for business, but not enough for conversation, except the most meagre. On the decks we had full freedom—sitting, talking with the captain, popping into the chart-room to see what was coming next, watching the sailors at work or at play, or bathing and sunning themselves, stark naked and rightly unashamed, on the forecastle head.

Japan is the land of literal beauty. Insert the mind, begin to interpret, and the beauty is lost. In India it is quite the reverse. No one will say that the figures of the images which constitute Indian sculpture are literally beautiful. I believe that the statues in temples produced with so much devotional care and worshipful attention in ancient times were done with no thought of beauty. It was power that the sculptors worshipped. Power in the deity represented by numerous arms and symbols. Power sacrificed by the artist on the altar of the divinity's power, in the production of these glorifying images. So though one says "How beautiful" in the presence of these things, it is the beauty of something held in the imagination, in a thought revived and stimulated by the form. An Indian will give you a monster bouquet, because he thinks of power. The Japanese will give you one flower, because he thinks of beauty.

Beauty and simplicity go together in Japan. It is the function of the artist to lay bare, not to ornament; he discloses something simple which is at the root of things. The mountain Fujiyama—a constant theme of the Japanese artist, who does not want "a hundred miles of eternal snow"—we were able to see on rare occasions from our window in Yokohama, seventy miles away. It was just an exquisite line poised in the air, the base of the mountain being unseen through the denser atmosphere, a line of pure beauty, not rooted in mass. For beauty on paper and canvas, few lines suffice in Japan. But I had better be silent, for beauty speaks for itself, and our mental analysis can do nothing better than remove a few scales from our eyes and then remove itself and leave beauty unalloyed.

One of the first delights of my wife and myself in Japan was to see the working men on the wharves and in the streets, in their loose black and white coats—black ground, white figuring. An adaptation of these coats, flowering in brightest colours and masses of pattern, we found later in the European and American market, under the designation of "happy coats." We were struck by the simple designs of the original, though could we have read them no doubt some of our pleasure would have gone away, for we were told afterwards that they were only the names or symbols of the firms to which they belonged, who evidently definitely believed in either marking their property or advertising themselves. In somewhat the same manner my wife has among her trinkets a charming little pendant in the form of a bell. She had had it for a long time before she met someone who could read the inscription on it, which was in Russian, and contained the sage advice to drink somebody's beer—after paying for it, of course!

Another simple pleasure, with no illusions, was the long narrow envelope, decorated with a few scrolls or a simple flower, in which you would receive even the most commonplace missive, be it only an advertisement from a store. There, too, the wrapping paper was a thing of beauty, though most of the Japanese customers dispensed with it, for they brought their own wrapper—a dark-coloured silk or woollen square, one corner decorated with a strong design, sometimes geometrical, sometimes picturing a natural object of special affection, such as a pair of flying swans or a golden carp.

King of shops is the toy shop—dolls for girls, kites for boys, trick boxes and I do not know what bewildering variety of other things for all.

It is part of the Japanese taste for beauty and simplicity to love children above all other things, so that that country is a veritable children's paradise—the rod unknown, the child unprovoked into conflict with massive and dictatorial elders. One of our greatest delights was to walk in the theatre street of one large town after another in the evenings and see the families strolling up and down—up one side of the street and down the other—all wheeled traffic being forbidden in that street in the evening hour, for their convenience. Father, mother carrying the baby on her back,

its big head rolling about with every motion in a most alarming manner, big children carrying small children, toddlers held by the hand. Seeing this one sympathizes with the desire of the Japanese for more territory for their increasing families and would be tempted, were it in one's power, immediately to present them with half Australia to be put to such good use.

## § 2

To see Japan properly one must walk, I think, as we did in both town and country. Miyanoshita to Hakone and back was a nice day's walk (18 miles)—blown to pieces since we were there.

Outside Miyanoshita we found the Miyauchi (goldfish) Inn, at Kiga, settled into this pleasant inn—with a delightful garden containing waterfall, pond, goldfish, stone lanterns, stepping stones, and indeed all the beautiful adjuncts of the typical Japanese garden—and walked a few miles to the Great Hell (Ojigoku), a barren region among the hills, where boiling sulphur springs and their vapour covered the whole hill-side. This was not a place in which to linger, with its trembling earth and its threat of instant dissolution to itself and whomsoever might have the temerity to remain there for any length of time. We hurried back to the inn and sat up to our necks in square baths, sunk in the floor, containing hot iron-bearing water, which was piped into the inn from natural springs.

We stayed always in such Japanese inns, not in the large hotels provided for foreigners here and there in tourist centres. We would arrive on the doorstep, I with a little book of Japanese and English sentences in my hand. Again and again I would repeat a sentence which meant, "We want a room for two nights for two people." This pronouncement would for a moment petrify the perennial smiles of the management of the inn, mingling them with a look of grave concern. These stupid English had evidently come to the wrong place. Sentences would be spoken in reply to mine, but in vain would I search for something resembling them in my book. Sometimes I understood a little, to the effect that this was not a hotel for Europeans. I affected not to understand. At last someone would find a youth who knew some English. He would tell us that

this was the inn for Japanese travellers. Yes, that was what we wanted. Surely not? Yes. But to remove shoes, and to sleep on the floor? Yes.

After much hesitation on their part and insistence on ours, and a little bout of price fixing, we would be invited to the interior, escorted to a room upstairs, a six-mat or eight-mat room (mats are of a standard size) containing a fire-box and a shrine of beauty. The fire-box was for keeping warm the tea, light yellow in colour and drunk in little handleless bowls without either the cream and sugar of Europe or the butter of Kashmir. The shrine of beauty was a recess containing a *kakemone* (picture) on the wall, and a vase standing on a little stool beneath it—specimens of two-dimensional and three-dimensional art which are changed occasionally, to prevent any loss of freshness in their appeal to the senses. At night maids appeared with rolls of bedding, and spread them on the floor, and men put up wooden shutters all round the verandas, closing in the air and smell—the only defect of the Japanese inn.

Which came first, the instinct of the Japanese for cleanliness, or the floor-mats of soft thick grasses, neatly sewn? The mat floors being there, you simply cannot treat your house as a street, as the Europeans do, walking into it with their shoes on. Or, the instinct for cleanliness being there, you cannot be satisfied with earthen floors, like the Indian, who is perpetually washing his feet and his cloths. We may leave the problem unsolved, like that of the hen and the egg, yet cannot but muse upon the far-reaching effect of little things. In England our medieval barons kept their floors in an abominable state, covered with rushes and straw containing the remains of refuse from the tables thrown carelessly to the dogs, and as a result we must now live up in the air on chairs and tables and couches, and preserve stiff creases in our trouser legs, and grow into a generation as stiff-necked and stiff-backed as the chairs we inhabit. However did we come to speak of getting up in the morning, when really we get down from our beds? The Japanese actually do get up.

On our nine-mile walk from Miyanoshita to Hakone we always stopped to admire the Jizu, a sitting statue by the side of the road (one of Japan's greatest sculptures, it is said, carved in the solid rock by the famed artist Kobo Daishi), representing the god of little children. On his lap

was a heap of small stones, put there as reminders to him of children needing his care. Sometimes when a child is teething the mother will take one of its bibs and hang it upon the statue.

The Japanese seem to believe in the power of thought. We heard that one of their pretty customs when a child is sick is for the mother to go round to thirty-three families and ask from each a bit of cloth. With these she makes a patchwork coat for the child to wear. Is it that the good wishes of the thirty-three donors, stitched into that coat, work for the benefit of the child, or is it simply that human sympathy is something precious to remember in the midst of a mother's sorrow for her ailing child ?

Arrived at Hakone, we took lunch in a restaurant and then went for a walk in a boat on the lake. This curious phrase occurs to me not because it is Japanese, though it might be. I had it from some of my students in Sind, who came one Sunday morning with the hospitable intention of taking us to enjoy a motor-car ride. " Let us go out for a walk," was their proposal. But when I replied : " I am rather tired and do not feel much like walking," their disappointed reply was : " Oh, but we have brought a motor-car." Hearing that, I agreed quite cheerfully to take the " walk." I ought to have remembered that if they had meant an excursion under our own power they would have said that we should " foot it out," the local idiom, no doubt, but sounding strange in the English language.

Anyhow, we went on Ashi-no-ko in a boat, and when we were in the middle of the lake a cloud descended upon us and at a moment's notice we could see nothing but mist and fine rain. It was a nervous afternoon we spent in that boat. Only by the expedient of keeping ourselves in one direction to the wind we at last found the shore, and crept round it for about two hours until we came back to our landing-place. After that, we took food again in the restaurant and walked back to Kiga in the mist, to the comfort of the Goldfish Inn. It was a nice experience of the soft mist and straight rain which before we had seen only in the pictures of well-known Japanese artists, who are unique in their portraiture of rain.

The walk from Miyanoshita to Hakone was our favourite, rivalled only by that of similar length from Nikko up the mountain-side to Lake Chuzenji—with a pause to admire the

Ke-gon waterfall-waters dropping three hundred and thirty feet.

In the streets and roads of Japan one of the things we first marvelled at was the Japanese smile. If we stopped to look at anything, people would stop to look at us, and smile, and even giggle together. At first we would hurry on but soon we learnt to smile back. How simply the Japanese were pleased! Why should we not add to the gaiety of the nation? But later we came to still another stage of understanding of that smile; we realized that it meant a pleased interest and at the same time an offer of help if required. We learnt also that smiling is good manners. If you have a trouble you must smile all the more so as not to pass it on to others. We heard one story about an Englishman who employed a Japanese clerk. One morning the clerk came late—an unusual thing among the Japanese—and the Englishman enquired the reason. The clerk smiled and said that his mother had died. The Englishman stiffened with distaste, until he remembered that there was not a hard heart, not even stoicism, behind that smile; it was simply a form of culture and a civic idea.

You may weep, however, in the theatre. At one of the Nichi-ren plays which we attended at Kamakura, the ladies, sitting in their little pens, wept openly at the misfortunes of the hero and heroine. They had come there to weep. Real religion was combined with drama; at a certain point the audience threw money in screws of tissue paper, to the shrine depicted upon the stage.

The Japanese cinematograph (pre-talkie) also attracted us. There were some slap-stick comics which we could not understand, but the main theme was Samurai traditional stories—square warriors, with square swords as big as themselves, and fighting on the square, so formal that one wondered if it really depicted intent to hurt, or only a game—but it must have been the former, for somebody was always killed! While this play was going on two men, sitting on either side of the screen, supplied the dialogue, one of them talking in a gruff voice to represent the male characters and the other in falsetto for the females, while both clattered sticks together at any moment of special excitement in the picture.

It was at one of the cinema theatres that we had our first experience of Japanese honesty. I had left my um-



rella, through forgetfulness, at the seat where I had been sitting. The next day I went to the booking office and told them about it. A few words to an attendant, and he came out with an armful of umbrellas; "Which is yours?" I could theoretically have improved the shining hour, for my umbrella was one of the poorest of the lot, but who, under the circumstances, could do more than take his own?

Another time, in an inn in Nikke, I left a heavy gold finger-ring of quite ordinary local design at the side of the hand-basin in the men's general washing-room, and forgot all about it until later in the day, when a chambermaid came to our room with something held daintily in a bit of tissue paper. "Is this yours?" It had been found in the wash-room, turned over to the management, and was now being carried from room to room, with the question: "Is this yours?"

One could wander for weeks in the streets of Tokyo and Yokohama, Kobe, Osaka and Nagoya, or among the gardens and temples of Kyoto and Nara and Kamakura. We could spare only a few days in each place—we had only three months for the whole country. Time was limited then, as space is now for these descriptions. Let me mention only the Daibutsu which stands in a lovely garden in Kamakura. It is a bronze statue of the Buddha seated in meditation, immensely reposeful, without the playful smile of the Burmese Buddhas. Above its pedestal it sits fifty feet high, with eyes of pure gold, four feet long, and a thirty-pound silver boss on the forehead, representing the third or mystic eye.

### § 3

After our tour in Japan we were due to return to Shanghai for a month's stay there. Our second voyage across the China Sea was less fortunate than the first. After leaving Nagasaki—with its quaint streets on the hill-side—we struck a fair specimen of the Japanese typhoon. Our steamer, the *China*, battled bravely against the crushing waves that beat upon her prow like giant hammers, gave her the staggers, and swept swirling across her decks. In forty-eight hours we registered four miles of progress.

Returning again to Japan, across the same sea, in a very small steamer, the *Chikugo Maru*, we again struck heavy

weather, broke our steering chain, and wallowed all night on a restless sea. However, we were this time compensated by beautiful weather in the Inland Sea of Japan, which we thus saw properly for the first time, with its pretty coast and islands, and its occasional view of typical Japanese skyline of gentle mountains fringed with pines.

We could not go into the interior of China up the Yangtse-kiang, as we wanted. No one would book us, on account of the fighting that was going on at Ichang and other places. But there was plenty to interest us in Shanghai itself. The Nanking Road in Shanghai was then one of the seven wonders of the world, at least of our world at the moment. It was said to be next in rank to the theatre section of Broadway, New York, as a "Great White Way." Certainly we had never before seen such a display of electric lights. And I, at any rate, had never seen such a great department store as the Wing On—which surpassed even the Mitsukeshi and Shirokiya in the main streets of Tokyo. These stores, while not entirely devoid of foreign goods, are filled with articles produced in their own countries (how different from India!) and the display was for us one of the most interesting introductions to human nature, which is everywhere to be known through its daily desires and chosen utilities and ornaments of the home and person, more than through the theoretical life of its literature, its politics, and its non-industrial arts.

We had plenty of first-hand opportunities of seeing Chinese life. Long slender coats reaching almost to the ground, presumably with men inside, were plentiful and animate in the streets, as well as the smock and loose shapeless trousers of the working men, and the little jackets and coloured trousers of the working women, going off quietly to their factories in twos and fours on wheelbarrows. Very clear minds and rich voices sometimes lived in the long coats. One of the interpreters at my lectures could orate with all the bell-like tones of a xylophone.

We admired, too, the conscientious devotion of the labours of the craftsmen. Captivated by the charming workmanship, I purchased a nice set of chessmen carved in tea wood in very realistic human designs. The Indian chessmen I had known were all similar to one another in form, differing usually in little but size, and one had to remember which was which. But, alas, when my luggage

was being passed through the Indian customs, someone evidently thought that out of so many little dolls I could surely spare a few, so there were only twenty-six pieces, instead of thirty-two, when I tried to play with them later on. They ended up literally as dolls, for I gave them to children.

Interiors of ordinary houses in China did not differ greatly from those in India, but the Chinese proved to be more concrete in their outlook than the Indians, though a little less extravert than the people of Japan. There was one Chinese doctor, at whose house we were spending an evening, who told us that his greatest pleasure was to sit and imagine that he was in heaven. He said that he felt his imaginings with such realism that it was almost as good as if he were already there. Such imagination is great in China, yet it does not appear to run to abstractions, as in India. The Indian will meditate upon heavens and the forms of deities, but he always has the thought that they are not really like that, but are something quite different from our sense-objects. Chinese imaginings, on the contrary, lean heavily to the concrete. One friend raised the speculative question as to what a traffic policeman would do with himself in heaven. The Chinese seemed to think a lot about heaven. Would there be traffic for him to regulate there? I ventured to suggest that he might like a rest or a change. But no, it would surely be very hard for him to surrender the splendid authority to direct the motor-cars of the great. He was a guardian and guide of humanity.

The problem was left unsolved, but I caught a glimpse of a point of view from which the great kings and statesmen and preachers of the earth might appear in very much the same category as the traffic policeman. Evidently the Chinese can see the greatness of the commonplace, and that faculty seems to make them singularly free from personal ambition, according to European standards.

One day we took tea with a priest in charge of a temple in the Chinese city. It was a curious experience to sit there sipping the strong concoction, making polite conversation, and looking all the time at the rows of statues on galleried shelves, representing arhats, who might still be shedding their blessings upon mankind from above, little as one would expect it from the simpering wooden expression of their countenances. Once more I reflected—how China

makes one reflect!—with amusement mixed with concern, how the gallery of statues of arhats was beginning to accumulate also in the headquarters of the Theosophical Society at Adyar, and I wondered if the complacent Chinese arhats when alive had looked forward with pleasure to the prospect of sitting thus in effigy, as our Adyar arhats seemed to do.

## CHAPTER II

### “ NAUGHTY ” AMERICA

#### § I

IT was a contrast from Japan to America, even though a sea voyage across the far from pacific Pacific Ocean, and two days at Honolulu were sandwiched between. We did not know it at the time, but Honolulu is a bit of California set far off in the ocean—all sunshine and ordered shrubbery. There is something similar about the Polynesians and the Americans, whereby they fit well together—a smoothness, an absence of spikes, a cleanliness of person—though there is also the contrast that the Polynesians do not preserve themselves well, as the Americans do above all. Both are supremely feminine people—in contrast to the masculinity of India, China, Japan and Europe.

We landed at San Francisco. What bustle! And yet nothing to compare to that of Chicago and New York, as we were to learn. Four trams abreast up Market Street, and a couple of motor-cars on either side. As we were driven from the pier we ran along within three inches of the giant tram-car. What nerve! But our driver did not know that he had any nerve. By the way, why “street cars” instead of tram-cars? For surely taxi-cabs and private motor-cars—I beg pardon, automobiles—are also street cars, not parlour cars. Some called them “trolley cars,” and I had visions of hanging by a thread. But I give in; street cars, automobiles and elevators (“we went down in the elevator,” but “lift” is just as bad) shall figure in these otherwise austere pages.

I had a big lecture programme in the United States—in the evenings and at lunches—covering one hundred and eight cities. The daytime was mostly free for us to indulge in our habit of walking and looking. We walked for hours at a time, and looked up at all the tall buildings and peered

down into all the boweries. We progressed through the million-dollar town halls (in that case a little in the spirit, I fear, of the American who, it is related, coming out of the National Gallery in London, met some friends on the steps and said : “ Well, that is done ; it took me half an hour, but I could have done it in a quarter if I had had spikes in my shoes, ”) and lingered in the dime eating joints and the five and ten cent stores. Fifth Avenue (I am now speaking of New York) and Broadway alike entranced us—though progress on the latter, both on the side-walk and in taxis, was generally slow—the former for its shops, the latter for its people. America is full of people. All Americans seem to be people, whether rich or poor. And here people greatly impress people. A Dutch gentleman whom we knew abandoned his business in San Francisco and fled back to Holland with his family, alarmed at the rapid Americanization of his children in the schools. It is a curious sensation in New York to be in the midst of ten million people. London does not give one the same impression ; somehow its eight millions are not people, though excellent homological horticultural specimens.

But San Francisco. The best part of San Francisco is the Muir Woods, and Mount Tamalpais, with their giant sequoias or redwood trees and these, after all, are not in San Francisco. Go out into Market Street on a Sunday morning early in fine weather, and you will see hundreds of girls in riding breeches and long boots, making their way to the wharf at the end of the street, to take ferry-steamer across the harbour to Sausalito, and, after a short railway journey to Mill Valley, to walk to the Muir Woods to lose themselves for the day in that bit of country, extensive enough to absorb them all without noticing the difference. These were mostly school girls and business girls—seeming not to need the aid of young men for their week-end divertisement—a rare sight to anyone who for years in the Orient has been accustomed to the restraint, especially the self-restraint, and obscuration of women, at least in public places.

Yet in America the elder people do not walk. The English who do, so are considered a bit freakish—a little reminiscent of the view of the same people in Eastern climes were, in the words of a popular song :

The mad dog of an Englishman  
Goes out in the midday sun.

Perhaps it is the immensity of their country (twice as big as India) which discourages the Americans from walking. Or perhaps it is that they cannot walk. The numerous shoe advertisements almost suggest the latter, dealing as they do with (a) shoes with built-in arches "to save your feet," and (b) shoes with perfectly flexible shanks, necessary because "the arches of the foot must be completely free to move at every step, or else they will grow weak." Brains applied to feet have produced this paradox—no doubt a case of extremes meeting. Perhaps since the depression Americans are walking more, for I see now frequent advertisements of "shoes to fit your feet in motion." In any case, even if they do walk now they also ride—the old slogan (Sanskrit *śloka*) "One man one vote" has been supplemented by "One house one automobile." Even the poorest sits on high in his ancient flivver, bought for twenty-five dollars, veritably riding a cock-horse, and with rings on his fingers and bells on his toes, so to speak, he does have his music wherever he goes.

At San Francisco we saw also the seals on the rocks, as everybody does. In those days there was in the museum on the cliff an old stuffed seal said formerly to have been leader of the herd for about a hundred and twenty years. The story goes that one day a younger seal came up from the south and made battle with the old king; they fought for three days and then the old seal, wounded in many places, swam to shore and died. It was said to be a striking example of "Nature red in tooth and claw with ravin." But I reflected that these creatures cannot enjoy rumination in old age as man can, and it may not be too bad that when their powers begin to decline they should be brought to an end in a grand climax of excitement, in which actual pain may be little felt.

We had a nice motor-drive from San Francisco to Los Angeles, a small matter of nearly five hundred miles, which our driver proposed to accomplish in one sitting, with but brief pauses for lunch and tea; and he would have done it too, but that we broke an axle on a particularly foul bit of road sixty or seventy miles out. A telephone call for reinforcements brought a new car for us from San Francisco in two or three hours, and we bowled steadily along, racing "The Owl" (name of a train) in the dark, though we had had to be more cautious in the daytime, for U.S. laws are

very inflexible, and thirty miles per hour was then the speed limit, with five miles extra for grace. Our driver's plan was to set his speedometer wrong, so that he could go at thirty-five while registering thirty, and have another five on top of that. It was risky, all the same. Only shortly before Bebe Daniels had been run in and jailed without the option of a fine, for being caught doing fifty on that very road. The Judge who sentenced her was criticized a bit for jailing a beautiful young lady who was also a popular idol, but he replied: "When I was a barber I was a good barber and I did my work properly, and now I am a judge I am going to be a good judge."

On our way we stopped at Modesto, one of the many new towns of California of which the citizens are justly proud, even if it be called Modesto. The broad main street offered almost everything that a big city can give, but on a smaller scale, and its sides were lined with cars which had brought the farmers into the town for the evening's life and fun. It was as hospitable as it was clean, which is saying much. On arrival we entered through an arch "Welcome to Modesto," and on passing away we went through another "Thank you, come again." It was there that we sat for the first time on high stools at a counter, consuming American sandwiches—two huge slabs of bread with a generous allowance of cheese, lettuce and small pickled cucumbers between.

In San Francisco we had already sampled the cafeteria—an institution which had our approval. There is a long counter with two brass rails in front of it. You start at one end, pick up a tray and a little roll of table cutlery in a paper napkin, slide your tray along the rails, and pass in turn the cakes, pies, sandwiches, hot savouries, ice creams and drinks, taking from the counter or the shelves the plates or dishes you fancy, only at the hot counter being served by an attendant with whatever you choose.

At the end of the counter you find a young woman sitting at a sort of typewriting machine. She casts a critical eye at your tray, then makes a smashing attack upon the machine with capable fingers, but succeeds in producing only a ticket—which nearly smashes your pocket-book, for of course from all these tempting things exposed to your eye you have chosen three times as much as you can possibly eat. You now carry your tray to a vacant table, eat what



you can, leave what you can't, and pay at the door as you go out. I learnt that in one of these big cafeterias the proprietor assigned ninety-nine per cent of the profits to the employees, and did himself mighty well on the remaining one per cent.

It was a palatial cafeteria in Los Angeles that I saw a countryman, after helping himself from the bottle of tomato sauce, lick it all round the neck to clean it before replacing the cap. But enough of these intimacies.

Los Angeles ; mushroom city, it is called, but I would say bamboo city. The bamboo shoots in our garden in Madras would rise six or nine inches in a day and night and leave the mushrooms panting near the starting-point. Besides, the poor mushrooms soon faint by the way, and Los Angeles does not. I never could get the hang of that city, though I was quite sure that it had not much to do with angels. But all round it, in Southern California, there are dozens of little towns as chic and understandable as you please. In one of them, Riverside (a beauty, with rows and rows of flowers down the main streets), we were to stay at a walnut ranch. One half expected walnuts to be capering about, humpty-dumpty bodies on spindly legs, hotly pursued by brave boys highly skilled with the lasso and mounted on prancing fire-nostrilled mustangs. Might not anything be, in a land where alligator farms (" a thousand on exhibition ; some of them five hundred years old "), ostrich farms (" including the tallest bird in the world " and a family scene of pa and ma sitting alternately on the five-pound eggs) and lion farms abound ? But no, the walnuts were quiet and well behaved, just like our own walnuts in our own back garden of Ootacamund in the hills of South India ; and you could not have found a cosier little homestead anywhere. Well, well, reality was good enough, especially after one had learnt that " lasso " meant simply rope, and " sombrero " merely a hat.

Hollywood held us for several days. We spent some time in the film city and saw, among other things, Jacky Coogan shadowing a grim old sailor-man, dodging across the village street and hiding behind a large barrel at the critical moment, when the sailor looked round. The poor little chap must have done the scene half a dozen times before it was declared satisfactory, but no matter, he is a millionaire now, for his father and mother, who were in attendance, invested

the proceeds safely for him at compound interest. It is hard work, this picture-making, but deucedly attractive.

§ 2

Back we went to San Francisco and from there over the mountains by the beautiful Shasta Route to Portland, and on to Tacoma, Seattle and Vancouver and the Rocky Mountains of Canada, with their blessed snow, that was expected to be, and was, a joy to dust and heat bitten eyes from the deserts of Sind.

We saw that snow at its best, and were lucky enough to experience a more than usual allowance of it, because a tunnel fell in upon the train in front of ours and we had to make a long detour of some twenty-four hours along Lake Windermere and Columbia Lake, with their gorgeous background of snowy peaks, past Crow's Nest, and thence via Macleod to Calgary. By special invitation we rode through most of that region, during the daytime, in the "caboose," in a little observation chamber overlooking the roof of the train, whence the guards looked out for trouble, whence we looked out at one of the greatest scenes in the world. Among other things we saw the place where Turtle Mountain had turned over without warning and entirely buried a little town, leaving only one baby alive.

The north-west is a lovely corner of America in which to ramble. We sampled Tacoma, Seattle, Victoria, Port Angeles, Nanaimo and Vancouver by boat, so we saw a good deal of the Puget Sound, as well as Vancouver Island, which we crossed from Victoria to Nanaimo by automobile. Shall I enter into the controversy as to which is the most beautiful harbour in the world? San Francisco, Rio de Janeiro and Sydney are usually grouped as the three rivals for first place, but something is to be said also for the Puget Sound, Cork, Pang-Pange and Trincomalee. San Francisco harbour is disappointing in the neighbourhood of the wharves, and miserable on the Oakland-Berkeley side, but is lovely towards the mouth of the Sacramento river. Sydney lacks grandeur, though it has the most attractive shape. Rio wins the heart, with its bright colours, its ring of towering and picturesque rocks (including the thousand-foot Sugar

Loaf, the two thousand-foot Hunchback and the Organ mountains with the Five Fingers of God), and its trim palm-fringed boulevards running for miles round the bay.

But the Puget Sound has also a charm of its own, making it quite a rival to the Inland Sea of Japan; at least we thought so as we sat in the stern of a little steamer and threw bits of bread into the air to be caught with wonderful skill by the seagulls, which we watched for hours, wondering how they could alter speed and direction so much, whirling round and overtaking or lagging behind the steamer with only rarely a few flappings of the wings.

Vancouver city, on the mainland, has two special attractions—the Stanley Park to the south (where one walks in a natural forest and looks out on the beauty of the bay from its headland), and the Capilano Cañon to the north where one crosses the cañon by a long narrow flexible suspension-bridge.

From Vancouver to Chilliwak by electric car was an interesting journey. There we walked about eleven miles, looking at the farmsteads. From Chilliwak we went through the Kettle Valley to Summerland, where apples grew by the million in lovely surroundings and co-operative marketing of them was carried to a fine point, then across Okanagan Lake by steamer, to Vernon by automobile and on to Sicamous junction by train.

Sicamous railway station at night is eerie—frightening, in fact—set as it is in the almost unexplored forest about Lake Shuswap. A curious name, Sicamous. We heard a story about it. It was said that a raw Scotsman had come there and had seen a moose which had been shot by a friend, and asked what it was. He had looked at it contemplatively for a moment, and then declared he had never seen " sic a moose " before. Sicamous was our stepping-off place for the grand journey amongst the snows of the Rockies right round by Macleod to Calgary and then to Banff—Banff with its splendid hotel with perhaps the most gorgeous prospect in the world.

The Rocky Mountains have a sudden termination. You descend from Banff to Calgary, and lo, in a moment, as it were, you are in the plains, flat as a pancake for a thousand miles, all the way to Winnipeg, where we encountered a temperature of 72 degrees below freezing point (or 40 degrees below zero, where Centigrade and Fahrenheit meet)

which continued with us as we moved south into the United States again, to Duluth, Saint Paul and Minneapolis.

Western Canada overshadows humanity with its natural magnitude and magnificence, so that one scarcely notices the people—big, strong and rough as they are, the men often clad in cow-boy hats, high-heeled boots with spurs, and short coats. The few Red Indians we saw were poor specimens of humanity, short, fat and shapeless, totally different from the Red Man brought to England in my boyhood by Colonel Cody, “ Buffalo Bill.”

But back in the United States we began to see the people again. Why is it that so many in the Middle West, especially women, look rather like Red Indians, with their dry, somewhat flat faces and broad cheek-bones, which throw the nose into prominence? Can it be that the Red Indians are coming back again and transferring by mental influence some elements of their past into new bodies, mingling them with their new heredity? Or is it something in the air and the soil which modify the human form and features?

I should have liked an answer to that question by some reliable clairvoyant, if such there be. Why was it that people who claimed great clairvoyant powers would never properly tackle questions of this kind, but would dwell always on the remote? Mr. Leadbeater would count the atoms in atoms and talk about their shapes, but I could never persuade him to give attention to their properties and reactions. He would tell of people’s lives in the far past and future, but never of yesterday or to-morrow, about which he gave constant indications of knowing nothing. All clairvoyants I have known have had the same defect. There is one who lectures frequently on the vast importance of clairvoyance in medical research, saying that it would be easy to train a number of observers for diagnostic purposes. But will he settle down steadily to that sort of work? Not a bit of it. He will spend his whole life writing about his conversations with angels and travelling and lecturing to emotional people.

Well, it was Christmas, and we were in Saint Paul, and it was our first American Christmas, and the Americans take their Christmas very seriously in their practical social way. It is not that God is in His heaven. God is in His own country—America—and He sees that it is good.

Christmas in America is not merely a Santa Claus day, a children's day with much blowing of gaily painted and tasselled tin trumpets in the morning and much pulling about of wooden horses in the afternoon. It is a day of presents for everybody, of packets wrapped in paper printed all over with holly and mistletoe and fastened with small seals or scraps of gummed paper bearing seasonal designs and greetings.

Perhaps I ought not to have said gummed paper, but mucilaginous paper. I once made a sad mistake in this connection when I was sending directions for the distribution of some circulars. I wrote: "They should be stuck at the top left hand corner with gum." Dreadful thought; the young ladies of the office knew something of the use of chewing gum for "perfecting the facial angle" (see advertisements), and must have been shocked at my sacrilegious suggestion. I ought to have said "mucilage."

The family and friends in the house gather together for the opening of these packets, with eager wonder as to the contents. Presently the mucilaginous strips and the holly paper lie in torn fragments on the table and floor (for the American does not remove them carefully, fold them up and preserve them for a subsequent Christmas) and leave disclosed to view numerous fancy handkerchiefs, silk stockings, and a hundred different kinds of "notions."

In the railway station, the post offices and other public places Christmas trees abound for general enjoyment. When we were in Montana we found that it was the custom in one small town for parties to board the long-distance trains and give presents to the children who could not enjoy their Christmas at home.

### § 3

My wife and I did not go to America for sight-seeing, but we did see the Niagara Falls, several times, on our six visits there, passing between Hamilton and Buffalo. We stood below, looking up when all around us was ice and snow, and again when the waters boiled and swirled between verdant banks. I cannot compare it with anything else. I can only say it invigorated and refreshed us. To some, I am told, such grand phenomena teach humbleness; they feel like something very small in the presence of something very big. To

me they give strength. I suppose the difference depends upon whether our habit is to admire from afar or to enter into everything as if it were our own or natural to us. The same psychological habit applies to many things. I have seen students who could make nothing of chemistry or a foreign language because they looked at it from the outside and could not then flow, as it were, into the sanctuary. In the same way some religious devotees remain eternally stupid on the subject of God.

I think the great cities of the eastern States, human Niagaras, affected me in much the same way—New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and to a lesser degree Washington and Baltimore. Down in the subway at Times Square at five p.m. we would stand in a corner and watch the tide of faces pouring by—not a fierce, angry, hungry, restless tide, I think. Legs moved quickly, bodies pressed together without repulsion, feet hurried, but hearts here seemed to be singing—a truly lovable river of life, warming our coldness, cooling our heat, and bearing us with it in, not to, an enchanting life. True, not all the same, without variety. Faces there would be, seen but for a moment, from which it was devastation to part—a lifetime lived in ten seconds. It was not merely “blessed, beloved humanity”; the drops were not lost in this ocean. New York has no landscape, but its “homoscape” is lovely with innumerable human flowers set in picturesque craggy heights.

Pittsburg was funny; I cannot tell why, but rather a comedian, a pathetic comedian of the stage, sorrowing for itself, appealing notwithstanding its wealth, very Lancashire-like or Lanarkshire-like with its hills and dales. There we stayed in an hotel in which we wiped our faces on little towels bearing the inviting legend:

STOLEN FROM THE KING'S HOTEL.

I have spoken of heat and warmth. It reminds me of some townsmen in India who said, when presenting a memorial to a retiring and departing British revenue officer, expressing appreciation and affection and a sense of loss: “Your heart was always cool towards us.” Tinkling ice, evidently, in that glass.

New Orleans somehow was not quite so kind. This was, perhaps, not America. And yet it was America, only its pleasures and its cruelties were more subtle. It, too, had

brotherhood, which has a long range—good, bad and indifferent.

In New Orleans we heard of an extreme example of bad brotherhood. A house was shown to us in which a foreign lady had lived long ago. One night the house caught fire. The fire-fighters broke into the top story, and there they found a torture chamber. The lady had been in the habit of torturing slaves. I reflected that even here was incipient brotherhood, for it would have given her no pleasure to torture lumps of wood. She could not be happy without tasting the feelings of her fellow-men, but unfortunately her appetite ran to caviare and *pâté de foie gras* rather than to corn and grapes. I do not hide from myself the fact that brotherhood always exploits, and the flowing life which entertains a harmless man like me is also my sacrificial victim.

In New Orleans we also visited the old dwelling-place of Paul Morphy, a wonder at the chess board in his day. I have always liked a game of chess; it is so clean, so free from pretence. You win or you lose, or else it is a draw, and there is no doubt about it. That is the joy of games which are not of chance.

When in Boston we went out to Concord, Massachusetts, to see Emerson's house. My father had enjoyed and enriched himself with Emerson's *Essays*, and had introduced me to them when I was still a boy. Their consciousness of the hidden good, and their teaching of individuality without individualism, had played their part in giving me the grit to face my disappointments of youth without despair. After looking at the "Old Manse," and the bridge of the "minute-man," where the first blood was shed in the War of Independence, and passing through the delightful little country town, or rather village, we approached the four-square unpretentious house of Emerson's maturity. Though it was not open to the public, the professor from abroad was admitted and shown round as a privileged person. (Not that this professor particularly looked the part, or had ever qualified for it by any act of absent-mindedness other than that of going out in Chicago with two hats—one on head and one in hand.)

I remained in the library by myself a little while, looking at the books on the shelves, and the table and chair in the centre of the room. The library contained many of the

translations of Sanskrit books available in Emerson's time. I looked especially at these, and in some of them I found little bits of paper placed there to mark the points in which he took especial interest. By these it was easy to see where Emerson had found inspiration similar to his own, which may well have strengthened him in his resolves. (On a second visit, some years later, I found that the library had been tidied up, and the scraps of paper removed.) When I sat in the chair I was suddenly overwhelmed with a strange mood. All thoughts ceased, but not consciousness. This was my room, these were my books, that my old writing-pad lying on the table. The mood passed, and I went upstairs to the ladies. Hanging on the wall where the stairs turn was a picture which brought me to a standstill. My wife. My wife of now, I mean, as she will be thirty or forty years from now. I could not distinguish her from the wife of Emerson, who survived him by a number of years—the same quiet expression, broad eyes, actionful features, little laughing nose. This was the lady who had said, turning to her chickens: “It is wicked to go to church on Sundays.” Strange fancies. I certainly shall not try to explain them, so let me write “whim” on the lintel of my door.

§ 4

America showed us many curious little evidences of the development of the communal consciousness, promise for the future of the human race, one hopes, when mutual trust and trustworthiness (twin deities of economic progress) shall have become the norm. When we were staying in an apartment in an old brownstone house in 55th Street, New York, I used to go down in the early mornings to buy a newspaper at a store near the corner of 6th Avenue. It was not at that time of day exactly a store, for no one was within, and the door was locked, and the stock of newspapers was outside, placed on a large board in front of the shop window. There were arrayed five or six piles of different morning papers, and on each lay a quantity of coins of the realm, or rather of the Union—*E pluribus unum*.

I put down my nickel (five-cent piece), took up my two-cent paper and three cents for change, and went my way. Other people were doubtless doing the same, and not



stealing either the papers or the money. Or else, why should the man or woman concerned continue the business, which went on unchanged at least during the months when I was staying there? We had seen also in many cities of the United States and Canada piles of newspapers placed on little stands attached to suburban lamp-posts and street-car standards. It was the habit of business men to take their morning papers from these supplies and drop their money into little boxes fixed to the stands.

One striking experience was that of lunching at the Exchange Buffet, of which there are several branches in New York City. You enter the restaurant, take whatever you like from the counters and eat at one of the tables. Everything is marked in plain figures, so that you can add up the prices of what you have taken. On your way out you tell the cashier the total of what you owe him, and pay, without giving any particulars. The statistics of the company show that in the course of a year the takings do not deviate even one per cent from the value of the food put out. I heard it said that there are some office boys who, when their money is running short towards the end of the week, make a practice of telling the cashier less than they owe, but they tell him more on Monday so as to make up for their defalcations of Thursday and Friday!

On one occasion we made a long stay in New York, necessary because my wife had to lie for three months in bed in our apartment, on account of a motor-car accident in which her pelvic bone had been broken through in two places and cracked in a third. Wonderful to relate, she had come through a stormy Atlantic passage from England in that condition. It was on an icy New Year's day that we were coming down a long hill in Holywell, in Wales, and a man—a doctor—coming up the hill in his car emerged without warning into our side of the road, to avoid a parked car on his side, and we met with a staggering, sickening crash. I had seen it coming, by a second. I had shouted out to my wife, "Duck down," and had myself dived into the bottom of our big car, and so escaped with nothing more than some blows on the head and nose, since, fortunately, a basketware suitcase was in front of me. But my wife (who would never do a thing without first knowing why) got the blow in her side.

We were carried to cottages on opposite sides of the

street. At one door the people cried out : “ Do not bring her in here. She will frighten the baby.” The doctor, for a wonder unhurt, patched us up. He said that no bones were broken, but that my wife’s muscles were badly wrenched. Three days later I carried her on board the S.S. *Megantic* at Liverpool. The ship’s doctor advised an X-ray photograph in New York, and that revealed to us the broken bone and led to three months in bed—three months which, my wife said, were among the most pleasant of her life. For a year afterwards, wherever we went, though she could walk on the level, I carried her up and down all stairs. Now, I am glad to say, she plays tennis again with the best.

During those three months I became almost an *habitué* of the ladies’ shoe shops in New York. I used to make a selection and take them on approval, to be tried on the sound foot. “ You will need some new shoes, and here are some bargains too good to miss.” I bought so many pairs of shoes that my wife is still wearing some of them, seven years afterwards. And why? The doctor had told me that probably she would never walk again. A little psychology, despite Pope’s teaching :

A little learning is a dangerous thing ;  
Drink deep or touch not the Pierian spring.

Just at that time I did, however, nearly suffer fatally for “ a little learning ” with reference to the street-car system of New York. I had gone out on 55th Street and was moving eastwards towards Broadway in search of an up-town car. Crossing 6th Avenue I asked a policeman where I could get such a car, and he indicated the corner of 55th Street and Broadway. Arrived there, I saw a car coming with about fifty automobiles in attendance. I stepped into the roadway and held up my hand, as I would in England at a “ stop by request ” corner. But the car would not stop—nor its satellites : I stood stock still, and every one of those cars missed me, mostly by only two or three inches on either side, though they could not see me in advance. I take off my hat to American auto-drivers.

It was while we were staying in that apartment house that I gave four lectures on India in the Community Church in New York, and afterwards wrote, at the request of friends, my reply to Miss Mayo’s attack on that country, her book being called *Mother India*, and my reply to it *An Englishman*

*defends Mother India*—which subsequently had a large sale in India and England, was much liked by several Cabinet ministers, and I hope did some good in restoring a decent angle of vision towards the Indian people. Mine was a big book, crammed with facts—at least 600 pages, until the publishers compelled me to cut it down to 400.

The book had to be written in a hurry, so I had six secretaries for it—three stenographers and three copyists. I would dictate to one after another, and out of office hours would correct the typewritten material, while in the very early mornings I would prepare my notes for dictation during the day. In this work my wife and a Cuban gentleman were helping me, and they generally sat together at a card table at the other end of the long room in which I dictated to the stenographers. One night my wife went to stay with a friend and she did not return until the next afternoon. On the morning of her absence the Cuban gentleman took a bad cold and could not come to help.

In the middle of the morning, while I was dictating, there was a terrific crash, followed by a cloud of dust. My stenographer—a Miss Waterson—gave a tiny squeak, like that of a little mouse. I ran to the landlady, who fell fainting on the threshold, to which she had just come. The whole of one half of the old plaster ceiling, thickly encrusted with floral designs, had fallen in. It had smashed a typewriter right through the card table, and would surely have killed both my wife and our Cuban friend if they had not been absent that morning. The plaster had become softened because plumbers had been working upstairs and by some mistake had allowed an overflow of water which had sunk through the floor above into the ceiling. The only other case of the kind I have known was where some malicious persons, wishing to injure the progress of a new theatre, allowed steam to escape between the ornate ceiling and the roof, before the plaster had fully set; it was discovered in the nick of time. I was taken up under the roof to have a look. Such a queer place none of the audience ever think of, looking up from their seats far below. That was in Chicago. Fortunately there are really two Chicagos—poles asunder.

These incidents occurred in 1928, during our third visit to America—I am not writing a travel book, but just some observations of men and things, including myself. Let me not omit to mention, however, that we were served in New

York by three Negro maids, as black and velvety as night (and none the worse for that), but illumined with the names of Blanche, Lily and Pearl.

On our first visit to America, as I have said, snow and ice were especially dear to us. We had seen them in western and central Canada and the middle West. Mother Nature kept up the supply until and beyond the point of our departure from North America. St. John, New Brunswick, where we embarked, was deliciously cold. Halifax, Nova Scotia, where we spent the next day, was almost ice-bound. Ice-breaking craft were at work nosing about the harbour and breaking up the crust before it could grow too thick. We saw coming into harbour a sailing ship, with auxiliary engine, which had evidently been in lively weather as well as cold; it was literally covered with icicles, hanging from every part where anything could hang—a most unreal picture, possible in fancy, one would have thought, but not in fact.

## CHAPTER III

### THE OLD FOLKS AT HOME

#### § I

**T**HE Atlantic treated us well and we encountered nothing sad until we entered the port of Liverpool one Sunday morning in the dismal month of March, and beheld beneath us from the height of our deck a crowd of haggard faces, hollow cheeks accompanied by hollow eyes, looking for a job to keep them from becoming hollower still.

After America, Japan and even India, England had a great air of poverty in the year 1922. In England the people looked poor ; in India, their surroundings. England was apparently a land fit for heroes, and only heroes to live in. Others could surely not survive. It was a land for the English, a race so accustomed to suffering that it can scarcely enjoy anything else, a people of stout hearts, well-governed tempers, and above all disciplined minds, a race of horses plodding through mire and rain in constant inexpressiveness, not expecting to enjoy itself much, or horses prancing over the meadows in pursuit of foxes, and wondering in the evening why they had not enjoyed themselves. But they console themselves : good old England, steady, dependable England—no typhoons, no hurricanes, no revolutions ; heaven for climate, even if we must dispense with company, which belongs to a warmer place.

While we waited at the wharf two or three hours for some official to get out of bed, dress himself and come on board, I wondered how much extra coal we had spent to save a few hours on the Atlantic run, and whether the gentleman was aware that hundreds of passengers were missing, for his small pleasure, morning trains to all parts of England. But perhaps nothing could please him, not even the sight of some hundreds of early morning faces

looking for a welcome on return to their native land. No, he would leave them standing awhile, to wonder if this were really the Old Country, gone older than they had expected, gone dead, in fact, and buried too.

But there was some illusion. England was not quite dead yet. At long last passports were examined and the overdressed passengers (so different from the people on deck the day before) descended the gangway, were swallowed up in the huge Customs shed and, a little later, by taxi-cabs and railway stations (for few wanted to stay in Liverpool—England's premier doormat), after more or less sharp encounters with the human ferrets who gravitate into the Customs department—strange contrast from the jolly dogs who played ball with our belongings on the wharves of San Francisco and New York, and took a pirate's hearty, if grim, interest in the personal idiosyncrasies revealed by the interiors of suitcases and trunks.

At Liverpool the youthful inspector allotted to me was about to drop the lid on the contents of a cabin trunk, when a sharp-faced senior mongoose hurried up. "Ha, what have we here,"—he jerked out a little pile of yellow paper-backed books. But he soon retired before the austerity of the National Geographical Magazine, after looking at me with an injured air, as upon one who had played a dirty trick on him, and might be expected to steal bread from the mouths of England's defenceless widows and orphans.

In Liverpool, as in other places, some things catch the eye more than others, and generally they are the incongruous. As we stood about the deck of our forlorn steamer on that cold Sunday morning our gaze was troubled, but yet fascinated, by a huge artificial bird balanced perilously on top of one of the prominent buildings. The high visibility of several iron rods absurdly holding it in place did not detract from the uneasiness occasioned by the sense of its insecurity. Only compassion for those in the place beneath prevented us from wishing that it might immediately fall and be done with its misery and ours. I jerked myself back to normal.

We went, as I have said, through the Customs, and then a porter took our stuff to a waiting cab, and whispered: "Don't let him see yer give me anything"—him being a foreman who kept count of all luggage and collected so much

per piece from the taxi driver afterwards. I thought for a moment that there was some new and unaccountable conspiracy afoot for the protection of travellers—until I learnt at the railway station that I had to pay the taximan a substantial sum for each piece of luggage.

As at Liverpool my eye had been caught by the preposterous bird, so also at San Francisco something peculiar had attracted my attention, a big "57" standing out above the town. I wondered what it was for. Some direction to the shipping, perhaps, and to-morrow there would be 56 or 58? Our American friends were much amused at my not knowing that this was an advertisement—the Heinz company, with their "From tree to bottle in one day."

I like advertisements. They form almost the best Baedeker to the minds of the people. They instruct that mind on the good points of ordinary useful things, and awaken it to desire for a constantly higher standard of living. I appreciated the hoardings of America, which are not rough planks pasted over with printed bills, but neat individual structures bearing well-painted designs. "Keep that Schoolgirl Complexion" can excite interest, with its variations upon one theme. These new advertisements enter in softly, arm in arm with reason and beauty, unlike some of the old style publicity, which tried to bludgeon us into taking somebody's pills.

## § 2

I will draw a veil over the family reunion. The English are sensitive about their private affairs, both their defects and their virtues. If I am somewhat different in my willingness to expose my life and thought with all their defects and follies, as data for psychological study in the interests of science, I must none the less respect the probable sensitiveness of my father and mother, my brothers and their wives, and even my elder brother's daughter, albeit she appears in the Christmas pantomimes. Suffice it to say I renewed my close personal friendship with my father—something additional to the ties of a thousand appreciative memories—appeased my mother's resentment at my long absence, sympathized with my elder brother's despondency at the loss of his business (which had been closed down when he went as a cavalryman to Mesopotamia, and could not be

revived afterwards), re-recognized my younger brother (now a watch and clock maker and, strange to relate, almost twin brother in appearance and manner to a gentleman I had stayed with in Washington who was in charge of the clocks in the Government buildings in that city), made the acquaintance of the two new wives (who corresponded to the descriptions given by the astrologer in India) and the niece, a bouncing girl distinctly belonging to the new age, with its new ideals in children.

My wife and I also acquainted ourselves with more of England than we had known before. We purchased a second-hand three-wheeled two-cylindrical two-seater Coventry Premier car, for £170—what a price cars were in 1922! I learned to drive it on Saturday, taught my wife on Sunday, and on Monday she drove it a hundred and twenty miles, to the home of an aunt in Anglesea. After that we drove five thousand miles through England and Scotland.

It was a nice little car, I liked the swaying motion resulting from the single back wheel, but that very merit made for trouble. It was difficult to avoid the pot-holes (as numerous then in England's roads as the hollows in English cheeks) with the third wheel, and dangerous to drive in towns on account of the tram lines from which the third wheel would come out only with a jerk and the start of a fine skid in wet weather. I remember a perilous occasion on which we performed several circles on the long hilly road near the Crystal Palace in London. Fortunately it was Sunday morning, so we hit no other traffic.

It was a devilish little car to start, having no self-starter and a powerful compression from which the most ardent garage boys used to shrink. My wife would sit in the car, I would crank her up for periods varying from half a minute to half an hour, until the engine started, then I would go outside and warn the public that something was coming, and out she would leap through the garage door with a roar, like a clown in a circus going through a flaming hoop. Then I would jump on the running board, step over the door and away we would go, feeling like Kaye Don himself. We were always losing pieces of that car, but generally we retrieved them and stuck them on again. The driving chain especially kept coming off. I do not think we ever went a hundred miles without some running repairs. Ultimately we lost our little car. When we went abroad we left it in the



garage of a cousin, who volunteered to sell it for us for £10, but he never replied to our questions regarding it, and after some years went bankrupt and disappeared from our lives.

In those days we used to think we were reckless persons if we swept along at twenty-five miles an hour, and to expect a collision at every corner—most of England's roads were so constantly winding and so shut in with hedges that one could not see far ahead. This was quite symbolic. In England the future is always just round the corner, so we must be on the look out and not "let her rip," as in the long open roads of more spacious lands. So the English have learned to live from moment to moment, relying upon character more than calculation.

The English are not kind to themselves. They seem to have accepted labour as the lot of man. Therefore they do not take steps, as the Americans do, to eliminate it from their lives. There is much room for compassion in this respect. On the tramcars and omnibuses, the conductor must perpetually be running up and down the steps. One day I tried to pay my fare on the platform before mounting to a seat on the roof, but the conductor would not take it. He must follow me upstairs, collect my twopence there and go down again, and do the same with the next passenger. I did not wonder at the busman's holiday; think of the luxury of sitting up on top for a whole journey without having to run up and down those steps ten or twenty times. And all that ticket-punching for every halfpenny difference in the stages!

I preferred the one price pay-as-you-enter or pay-as-you-leave system I had seen elsewhere. "One price!" said a gentleman to whom I broached this idea. "But that would be grossly unfair. Must the people who live four miles out pay only the same price that I pay for my two miles' ride?"

I pointed out that he was not riding for enjoyment at so much a mile, that all were riding for the same purpose, namely to get to or from their destination, so all really received the same service. Besides, a one-price system helped to spread the city and to keep down the rents in the inner residential zone. But that idea is still too communal for England, and those poor busmen will have to run up and down for some time more. Well, well, Britons never shall be slaves, but it is their capacity for self-imposed slavery that has put them at the top of the world. You won't catch

an Indian, nor usually an American, doing to-day what can just as well be left till to-morrow, or altogether—such a waste of time, which may be spent in sitting or romping in the sunshine.

### § 3

By invitation we went to Finland and the Baltic states to lecture. Finland gave us a surprise. In England we had thought it "off the map." But it appeared that it might very soon be near the centre of European civilization, which has been shifting steadily northwards from the Mediterranean shores these last two thousand years, and may easily blossom anew in Leningrad and Helsingfors.

Is there another country in Europe which has made so much use of its water-courses for electric power and has gone forward in its own special industries at such a rate in recent years? In a paper age it has the largest paper mill in Europe. In education—Finland has no illiterates, and its bookshops are prominent in the big towns, instead of being aside, as in many other countries. In the arts it has produced Sibelius and Gallen. In architecture it speaks the latest word—clean, bold lines, and ornament announcing only essence and power—a combination producing beauty such as I have not seen elsewhere.

In Helsingfors we stayed in a large apartment house which was deserted by its normal occupants, who had gone to the lakes for the holiday season. One day we stuck half-way up in the automatic lift. Fortunately it was built on a spacious and open plan, I dropped my wife over the tall iron gate into the arms of a postman, before clambering out myself.

Finland is not sufficiently known as a holiday resort. In summer its sunshine and lakes are delicious. It is called the land of a thousand lakes, though I was told there are more than thirty thousand of them. These lakes are studded with tiny islands covered with pine trees. Only Minnesota can elsewhere show this kind of beauty.

It is part of the pleasure of Finland that one can travel far by water. Our longest trip in that way was from Kajaana in the interior to Uleaborg on the coast, in the northern part of the country. In one section of that journey we had to shoot the rapids called Kissakoski (about 7 miles)

and Pyhakoski (about 14 miles)—the most powerful rapids in Finland. This was done in a large narrow boat of the kind used to convey the tar which is made from the resinous fir trunks in those parts, with a crew of two—an oarsman in the prow and a steersman who worked with a paddle in the stern. Our lives certainly depended upon the skill with which they avoided the numerous rocks lurking beneath the surface of the water and peeping through it, while we sped along at some forty miles an hour, with the water tossing occasionally over the gunwales.

In a tiny steamer on one of the lakes we had a drunken skipper-steersman, who took a delight in ramming the pine logs in the water, and once actually ran us on the bank. Everybody was anxious, including his subordinates, but nobody dared interfere with him.

I lectured in most of the big towns of Finland, after opening with a series in the fine hall of the University at Helsingfors, put at my disposal as "a brother educationist." We saw most of the holiday places as well as the big towns. In Abo we went into the old Cathedral to look round. It happened to be just the critical moment for an unusual sight, for workmen were digging trenches under the floor and taking out hundreds of human skulls and thousands of miscellaneous bones.

Kuopio presents one of the fairest scenes, with its lovely view of lakes and pine trees and an ancient island castle. It gave us also a small psychic experience. I do not take much account of dreams, but I have noticed that sometimes they seem to be connected with other people's thoughts, apparently left in the atmosphere or upon objects, much as my thoughts had been impressed upon paper in the experiments in England which I have already mentioned.

My wife and I had travelled from Hull, through the Kiel Canal (is there anything more trim in this world?) and up the Baltic Sea to Helinsgfors, in a little steamer, the S.S. *Astraea*. After the first night on board my wife described to me a peculiarly vivid dream that she had had. She had seen beautiful lakes stretching as far as the eye could reach, and full of tree-clad islands. She had then no knowledge that Finland was a land of lakes—had seen no pictures, read no guidebooks and taken no interest in the subject. I brought her a book of Finnish views from the saloon and showed her the pictures of the lakes. She expressed her



**BISHOP LEADBEATER**

astonishment and said they resembled what she had seen in her dream, and later, when we stood on a hill in Kuopio, she declared that there was a picture exactly like that of her dream.

In the dream the scene had been only incidental to a little drama. A woman with a little child had run away from an erring husband; the husband had followed and found them sitting on a hill overlooking the lakes, and had there effected a reconciliation. It seemed to me probable that such persons had travelled in our cabin and left their thoughts behind, because I had had a similar experience when inspecting a country school in India. During the night I had had vivid and prolonged dreams about South Africa. I wondered what could have caused me to dream like that about a country which was not at all in my thoughts. The explanation was that I had been occupying the room of a lady teacher who had recently come from South Africa, where she had lived for many years.

A similar incident occurred when I was staying in the island of Barbados, in the West Indies. I had been talking with a man who was interested in thought-transference and I happened to remark that, of course, not all dreams had such an origin, and I said: "Only last night in this little hotel I had a strikingly clear dream about drilling for oil, and certainly here in Barbados there is nothing of the kind." (Quite a mistake on my part. Afterwards I learnt that oil-development in Barbados had begun seriously four years before my visit there.)

"Well, that is curious," remarked my companion. "Only recently this hotel was occupied by a party of men who had been over from Trinidad, looking for oil."

Any mention of experiences in Finland would not be complete without allusion to the Finnish bath—not that I went in for it myself. The bathroom is usually a log house built at the bottom of the garden, near the edge of the lake. There is a sort of stove with a flat top, which grows hot when wood is burnt inside. As soon as it is well-heated water is thrown over it, so that the room becomes filled with steam. We will suppose a young man is to have his bath and his mother has thus made everything ready. First he lies on a low shelf while she rubs him all over and gently switches him with sweet-smelling tender pine branches which have been dipped in hot water. Then she throws

more water on the hot stones, so as to increase the steam, and the young man climbs up to another shelf half-way up the wall where the steam is denser, and he is again rubbed and switched. The process is repeated a third time on a shelf near the ceiling, in still denser steam. Finally, he springs from the shelf and rolls himself in the snow on the edge of the frozen lake, or jumps into the water if it is summer-time, so as to prevent himself from catching cold after the hot steam bath.

We crossed the Gulf of Finland to Reval and after a week there we went to Riga by a tiny steamer, the *Mailand*, which had a long sleepy roll, the deck reaching down very near to the water on either side. From Riga we returned to Reval by train—or trains rather, for one must change at the frontier of Latvia and Esthonia.

The people of both countries were enduring great poverty. The bulk of the population had had no new clothes for many years, as might be seen in the picturesque gatherings in the cobbled market-places. On the tramcar in Riga I gave a small silver coin for fare, and received as change a bundle of about one hundred pieces of paper money, sounding, in copecks, a formidable sum. Here and there were commission shops containing jewellery and personal articles deposited by Russian refugees in the hope of procuring a little cash in exchange for them. There were grand churches of the Russian type, with splendid domes. Out of curiosity we went to the last service to be allowed to be held in the Russian language in the church in Reval. Both countries were in constant fear of their big neighbour to the east, so I was permitted to lecture only after explaining my subject to the police and receiving from them an authorization heavily marked with rubber stamps.

From Reval we again returned to Helsingfors, and from Helsingfors to England. My wife and I always travelled with a single passport, bearing our two photographs, of which we carried a number of extra copies, known to us familiarly as "the grinning apes." In a small consulate, without thinking I asked my wife if she thought we had enough grinning apes—the smaller the country the more photographs required—causing some quite simian lifting and waving of eyebrows.

On the pier of Reval I was talking with a friend, one Madame Sokoloska, a Russian refugee, while my wife,

according to her wont, was playing about on some part of the pier where passengers were not supposed to be. The passport inspector asked for my papers, looked inside, scrutinized the photographs, made a grumpy survey of Mme Sokoloska, removed his shaggy eyes once more to me, and coughed out the words: "Mit Frau?" I thought it was simplest to say "Ya," even if I did give grounds for divorce. Meantime my wife had reached the proper side of the barrier, by means best known to herself.

She was always doing things like that. She persisted in walking on the deck at the Kiel end of the canal, despite the wavings and guttural ejaculations of a burly German policeman, until he took her firmly by the arm, and walked her to the ship's steps, where I stood. I believe she thought that I ought to have biffed him on the nose for this indignity, but I knew that where German law and order were involved there was nothing to do but submit. You may take liberties to a certain extent with a London bobby, even with a New York cop if you have a dazzling smile, but nothing can divert the devotion to duty of a German policeman, let even the heavens rain movie stars.

I sent word to my college in Sind that I was ready to return if really required, but would continue my travels if the management were satisfied that all was going well. In due course I heard that they could carry on without me, so my wife and I returned to America after a brief interlude among the clogs and cabbages of rural France and the cafés and Russian ballets of Paris. Do the nightingales sing anywhere else as sweetly as in the environs of Paris on a moonlit midnight?

#### § 4

In America I was to meet Krishnamurti again after ten years. His movement, the Order of the Star in the East, was lagging. He thought that with my experience I might be able to help him to revive it, so one day I received a telegram while at Duluth, asking if I could come to California, where he was living, and discuss the matter. We went to the little town of Ojai, in Ventura County.

I must explain that although disliking it heartily in the beginning I had paid my penny—booking fee—and joined



the Order at Adyar, some little time before Mr. Leadbeater left for Australia. It had happened in this way. One day I said to Mr. Leadbeater: "What I especially don't like about the Order is that you announce to the world that there is to be a coming Teacher, and that there is great expectation of this event among Christians, Buddhists, Muhammadans and others, but you do not say that you have a World Teacher in preparation, in the person of Krishnamurti, though it is known to us that he, the nominal Head of the Order looking out for a World Teacher, will himself blossom into that Teacher. When it is plainly and openly said that Krishnamurti is to be the World Teacher, I will join."

There and then Mr. Leadbeater wrote a letter to a man in America stating plainly and definitely that Krishnamurti's body would be taken by the World Teacher, unless there were some improbable mishap. A few minutes later I was down in Don Fabrizio Ruspoli's Star Office, entering my name. So I was a member of the Order when Krishnamurti called me to Ojai, where we stayed a few days, and then travelled with him to the home of Dr. Ingelman in Hollywood.

I studied the situation. There were eighty branches of the Order in the United States. It looked fine on paper but I found in fact that among them all only about four meetings had been held in a year. They would awaken when a speaker came round and then go to sleep again. All the members were looking forward to the glorious leap forward that the world would take when the Teacher came (who, it was predicted, would concern himself with public affairs, not merely ethical teachings) and the joy and benefit of being personally in his service. But the question in the mind of Krishnamurti, who had been persuaded, I understood, that at some time his own consciousness would depart from his body and its place would be taken by that of another (the World Teacher, known as the Christ and as the Lord Maitreya, the successor of the Lord Buddha), was: "Were all these people living in a dream, or were they really preparing for the coming of the Teacher?" It seemed to him that the Order had gone to sleep.

I diagnosed the situation and gave my opinion: "It is your fault. The people look to you for a lead, and have not received it. If the movement is to be revived I think it

needs your personal activity, not merely nominal existence as Head."

What to do then ?

I thought out a plan, which was that of the "self-preparation groups." The point was that there should be groups of people who would refine their own characters and develop their own capacities so as to be able to respond to the Teacher and to be serviceable to his cause when he should come. And Krishnamurti must himself write every month a little message which would be printed and sent to all members of these groups, who would thus have the guidance of their leader who, it was to be presumed, would be most sensitive to the influence of the coming Teacher and therefore able to instruct them according to his wishes.

The method met with great success. As "National Representative" I issued it for Krishnamurti in America. The system soon extended to the whole world, and continued for several years. Only one hitch occurred as far as I was concerned. I advised the members not to keep Krishnamurti's messages, but to make the utmost use of them month by month and destroy them as new ones came in. This I did because I knew something of human psychology. I knew that if the messages were stored up and bound together the members would not make every possible effort to absorb the contents of each one while it was current, and so be ready to give full attention to the next, but they would fall into arrears, feeling that they had the past lessons to refer to. However, my advice produced some indignation. What, Krishnamurti's messages to be destroyed ! And I think Krishnamurti himself was affected, for he issued a notice that they should be kept and bound for future reference. Anyhow, the Order of the Star in the East obtained a new impetus, which continued until the great climax of 1929, which I will describe after disposing of my own affairs in the meantime.

## CHAPTER IV

### MERCURIAL BLOOD

#### § I

**I**N 1923 my wife and I went to South America for six months—a land of prodigious enthusiasms, and of great thirst for the occult. Spiritualism flourishes in South America as almost nowhere else, and, incidentally, most of the spirits preach the doctrine of reincarnation, quite in contrast to most of the spirits of Great Britain and North America, who preach infinite progress in the spirit world. I always thought that if infinite progress in the spirit world were the destiny of man, this world of ours might very conveniently have been dispensed with altogether. Its lessons could not be regarded as a necessary spring-board, when even babies dying at and before birth could continue upwards and onwards for ever in the realms of light.

Our first call was at Rio de Janeiro. Could anyone describe this beauty of colour and tropical vegetation, and rocky mountains thrown all around against the sky—soft greatness (not the rugged greatness of the Rocky Mountains of the United States and Canada, of the grand Cañon of Colorado, of the castellated gorges of the Rio Grande, of the Niagara Falls), harmonizing with the soft greatness of human artistry in the buildings and the mosaic pavements of the spacious Avenida Rio Branco, chief street of the city, and with the floral architecture of the Avenida Beira-Mar, the grand boulevard along Botafego Bay.

We stayed for the first fortnight on a hill—the Morro de Santa Thereza—high above the city, reached by a tramcar that comes tearing with screech after screech down the curves of the hillside, and across the old two-story aqueduct (Ponteo Arcos)—arch above arch in perilous loftiness—built

four hundred years ago by Portuguese prisoners brought to Brazil especially for this work. Or again it was reached by an escalator hauled along sloping rails up the steep cliff-side by means of ropes. Such escalators are a common feature of the cliff-side of Valparaiso, in Chile, and there is one also in Beyoglu, in Istanbul, of which we frequently made use. On the same principle we found the whole train taken up and down the cliff-side—about two thousand five hundred feet in height—between Sao Paulo and Santos, the famous coffee port to the south of Rio de Janeiro. In South India, at Pykara, there is a trolley on the same principle, which goes over a cliff at an alarming angle, with a vision of endless plains five thousand feet below—but this is for the use of the staff of the electrical works, not for the general public, except by special arrangement, and even then not for the ladies, who are expected to lose their heads rather easily—while gentlemen are only prone to lose their hearts, which do not matter so materially.

Brazil is a land of mixed blood. Its official motto is brotherhood. After liberating the slaves over fifty years ago, the white population mingled freely with them—a great contrast with the social colour-bar which is so strong in the United States of North America. (The Brazilians will not speak of the “United States of America,” because they also designate themselves the United States—the United States of Brazil—and they also are in America. They always speak of the sister Union, which is a little smaller than Brazil, as “Norte America”—pronounced “naughty”—with amusing effect upon the English visitor.)

The result of this Brazilian brotherhood has been that today most of the people have some negro blood, which helps to produce an uncommonly soft and agreeable disposition. Truly, the negroes in North America are mostly tinged with a little white blood, but here it is the white that predominates, and the negro influence is seen only in the slight shade of the skin. Once only I saw in Rio a pure negress, in a tramcar, suckling her baby; she was strikingly beautiful, the characteristic features being in their proper place.

In Brazil the brotherhood tendency comes out even in the treatment of criminals. We were taken to see and to speak at a prison called the Caza de Correccion. Here were some hundreds of men, mostly convicted for violent offences. The institution bore more the aspect of a residential school

than of a prison. The men had plenty of games, both indoor and outdoor, and the windows of their rooms overlooked most beautiful scenery. Each prisoner had a decent bed and a shelf full of books, borrowed generally from the prison library. Moving about freely among the prisoners for several hours, I found them a sociable lot of men, not distinguishable except in a few cases from the people outside, and their psychological state seemed much the same as that of the ordinary citizen. There appeared to be no resentment against society in their minds, and what they wanted in their future was an ordinary life with ordinary pleasures.

Talking with the Superintendent afterwards, I put to him the usual question as to the efficacy of his method: "What percentage of men who have been in this prison come back again?"

He told me that very very few ever came back to the Casa de Correccion, although they looked back to it as a cheerful place. It was rather in contrast to the report of the Prison Committee presided over by Lord Sandwich in England, which found that of the men in English prisons no less than twenty per cent had been sentenced six times previously.

## § 2

Brazil for feeling; Argentine for intellect; Chile for material activity—such is the triad of leading countries of South America to-day.

In the Argentine our career was more adventurous than in Brazil. Buenos Aires has a natural location in great contrast to that of Rio de Janeiro, as it stands on the flat banks of the river La Plata. So flat is all this part of the country that on the other side of the river, on a low promontory between the ocean and Horseshoe Bay, the capital of Uruguay, to which one comes a hundred miles before reaching Buenos Aires from the sea, bears the singular name of Montevideo, "I see a mountain," the said mountain being but an isolated cone.

Still, Buenos Aires is none the less beautiful, as cities are made beautiful by man, that is, with the beauty of buildings and of plazas and parks and promenades, and monuments and statues, and floral supplements to all of these. My visit

there was opened with a grand reception and concert—more than three hundred in the orchestra—in the St. George's Hall (there is much English influence in Argentina) at which I spoke on "Pleasure, Pain and Happiness" ("El placer, el dolor y el gozo").

In the streets of Buenos Aires we were struck (figuratively speaking) by the tiny South American Indian policemen, regulating a mass of traffic which seemed to take but little notice of them. We saw one of them knocked down by a passing vehicle. He got up, and while dusting himself appeared to be apologizing for obstructing the traffic!

I was thanked by the President of the Republic (in evening dress in the middle of the day!) for coming to do good among "our people," and we were provided with free tickets on the railway by which we proceeded northward to Rosaria de Santa Fé, Tucuman and other places, until we reached Jujuy (pronounced Hoo-hoey), and finally La Quiaca on the frontier of Bolivia.

Tucuman especially seemed an interesting town. We saw there the little house, now enclosed within a large hall with a glass roof, in which the Independence of the Argentine was signed in 1816—somewhat similar to the little house enclosed in a larger hall in Philadelphia—the place of the Declaration of Independence of the United States.

At Tucuman we saw also the evening promenade which is a feature of very many South American towns. This took place every evening in the central square (Plaza Independencia), which was pleasingly lined with trees charmingly laden with oranges—an inedible variety. The young men sat on garden seats on one side of the broad pavement, while the ladies walked to and fro in small parties, giving full opportunity for admiration and comment, which is considered the very reverse of impolite, for the Spaniard is a Latin, sensitive but also frank, and indeed full of contrasts—a paradoxical character to the more strictly concentrated "nordic" types. Not that any of the people call themselves Spaniards; no, not for a moment. They are Argentinos, whether bearing the name of Madril, or Gossweiler or Robertson.

It was between Jujuy and La Quiaca that our train ran through an immense cloud of locusts, which I estimated to be several miles in diameter. The day was darkened by them, and full of the smell of their burning as they fell into

the engine. They settled all over the train and seemed as if they might have smothered us had we not closed all the means of ingress. Some of them got in, through what crevices we could not tell. Looking through the windows we could see nothing but locusts covering the ground as well as every tree and shrub that was near enough not to be entirely obscured from view. At length the cloud thinned, and we then soon emerged from it and passed for many miles through a countryside in which remained no vestige of vegetation. I reflected: "If the locusts can multiply like this why do they not multiply even more until they reach the limit of their food supplies and no vegetation at all is left? Is life limited in its various forms?"

But it was at La Quiaca that the adventurous part of the journey really began. Already high in the mountains we had now to find our way for about a hundred and fifty miles up a gorge to Atocha, where one could get a train to Uyuni, a junction on the railway connecting La Paz with Antofagasta and other parts of Chile.

But before leaving Argentina I may refer to our second visit to that country, when I was engaged to lecture for the Educational Department of the Government of the Province of Mendoza. In Mendoza I gave a series of addresses afterwards published by the department and circulated free to all teachers.

During that visit we three times made the long railway journey from Mendoza to Buenos Aires, across the immense flat plains of the Argentine. Once, there had been a great storm, and we saw clusters of carcasses of cattle which had sought shelter, but in vain, beside the hedges in the corners of the fields. The skins had been removed by men, and the grisly remains were being torn to pieces by wild dogs. On one occasion we saw an ostrich careering across the plains. On another we changed in the night at the little junction of Rufino, and sat in a tiny café, playing chess and observing local life, until our train was ready to start in the small hours. But to return to our main journey.

### § 3

There is now a railway between La Quiaca and Atocha, but when we passed that way it did not yet exist, and the

only direct means of transport from Argentina to the uplands of Bolivia was that afforded by a few daring motor-car drivers, who would take passengers along the river-bed (there was no road) for a consideration, very moderate in view of the difficulty and danger. We found a Japanese who undertook the task for us.

Between high cliffs a river ran down the gorge. At first we could run on the hard ground beside the stream, but afterwards the gorge grew narrower and the river wound about, striking the vertical cliff at one side and then on the other. We had to ford that river more than fifty times, and as we went on it became deeper and deeper, with the increase of gradient. At each crossing we had to get out and pack the engine closely with cloths, to prevent the water from getting into it, and as soon as we were over we had to get out again and take the cloths away to allow the engine to cool, for the water was boiling, although at the same time icicles were hanging from our head-lamps, frozen almost instantly from the water thrown up in front of us as we crossed the river.

For many miles this process was repeated, with no signs of any habitation, nor of any human, animal or vegetable life in that rocky desolation, except when two rough-looking men appeared apparently from nowhere and held us up. At first we thought they were robbers, but though they looked and spoke like operatic brigands, and commandeered the back seat of our car, apparently without payment (my wife and I established ourselves beside the driver), they were content to travel some forty or fifty miles and then leave us as suddenly as they had appeared.

At length we finished with our climb up the river-bed, and came out at the little town of Tupiza, where we were to spend the night.

Our Japanese driver took us to a little hotel with a big name and inside of it a crowd of men drinking and playing billiards. Enquiries for a room at last caused one individual—the proprietor—to separate himself from the rest—hair black and shining, eyebrows of a grand distinction, moustache beyond compare, teeth white and bare, manner excitable, the total indeed fearsome.

I had been warned against being overcharged, so with my few Spanish sentences I beat him down to what I afterwards learned was an unreasonably low price. But the little



Englishman with the pretty and dainty señora, of a figure rarely found among the Spanish ladies, who was attracting many eyes, though quaking in his shoes, had to put on a bold front and make it seem (no great exaggeration) that he had but little money to attract any covetous eye.

Really behind the wildness of our host's demeanour there was quite a gentle heart, but it was disturbed, even somewhat angry, with my meanness, and when evening came he would give me only half a candle and no matches. However, I went out into the streets and found an old woman with a little stall at a corner, and obtained from her the matches necessary for the production of light.

Night being sufficiently advanced, our host, with the aid of one servant, closed his saloon, barricaded the doors and windows with every chair and table that could be moved, and retired to some mysterious region in the rear, there to sleep, while we refreshed ourselves with a little supper from a square tea canister—in which we had previously made a mixture of raisins, nuts and breakfast cereals—and slept with clear consciences till dawn, when we arose, paid our modest bill (no thanks), found our car and driver (welcome sight—fearless, dependable, silent, unobtrusive Japanese, who had come to this unlikeliest of places to make a fortune to take home to his family in far Nippon) and were soon speeding on a more favourable road in the uplands of Bolivia.

A wait at Atocha, another at Uyuni, and we were in the main-line train for La Paz, trundling along the stony plateau, which bears a striking resemblance to the high plateau of Ladak, on the road to Leh, in Kashmirian Tibet, beyond the Zoji-la Pass, up which we had gone when we visited Kashmir. Very similar to Tibet is Bolivia; the people, too, are very similar to the Tibetans, with their flat faces and reddish-brown skin.

The city of La Paz, although twelve thousand feet high, is approached from above. The railway, after passing over stony plateaux and between many groups of fantastic rocks, comes suddenly to the edge of a great natural bowl, down the side of which it carefully dips, until it reaches the city more than thirteen hundred feet below.

Here I gave four lectures under the auspices of the University of San Andrés (University of La Paz) in its *Salón de Honor*. The Governor of the Province was present,

and was so strongly impressed by the subject-matter that he gave orders for verbatim reports of all the four lectures to appear in the leading newspaper, in which they occupied many pages. That subject-matter seemed rather commonplace to my wife and myself—not exactly that familiarity bred contempt, but that there is something in human nature which requires constantly new fields to conquer, since it is always trying to equate itself with its infinite possibilities. We were more interested in the life around us than in our own.

La Paz, we found, contains three kinds of humanity—the trim Spaniard in his faultless European dress, the Indian with his sandals, bare legs, brightly striped blanket and helmet-like cap or hat, and the people of combined Indian and European stock, distinctively dressed, at least as regards the women, in voluminous skirts, high-legged, high-heeled boots, laced both top and bottom and with fancy bows stitched on the toes, and a high-crowned, flat-brimmed stiff bowler hat, generally made of straw thickly covered with white paint. The women move about freely, like the Indians, and indeed conduct much vigorous business in the market, but the Spanish ladies are little to be seen, except in carriages at evening time.

The three kinds of human beings appeared to be more or less equally distributed, but in the animal world one predominated above all—the llama (pronounced yama)—standing and sitting about everywhere, in groups, or bearing loads along the roads—a beast that will stand no nonsense, silly and conceited as it may look.

In La Paz we stayed in the house of a poor man, who had many little daughters, but had lost his wife. He was honourably and indeed familiarly acquainted with the great men of the university and the town—such is the influence of caste, which can make bonds and cleavages across the social strata laid down by money, as in India, where I would find a village postman, earning one pound a month, sitting upon the veranda of the millionaire and joining as an equal in the conversations with friends—because both were Brahmans belonging to the same group.

We lived in a poor quarter and fared simply. This was much more agreeable to us than would have been a sojourn in the hotel kept mainly for foreigners in the central square, even though we were not able to preserve our vegetarian

principles intact, on account of thousands of small flies which found their way into the soup! Still, who knows the ingredients of food? I have seen, in the large "electric kitchen" of a palatial luxury liner—while the chief steward proudly showed a party of passengers round his spotless domain—a stream of perspiration dropping from the eyebrows of a kitchen-boy into the vegetables which he was peeling and cutting up for the coming meal.

From La Paz we made a side trip to Copacabana, on the shores of Lake Titicaca, and to the Islands of the Sun and Moon (inti-Karka and Coati) where Manco-Ccapac and his sister-wife are believed to have descended from heaven for the founding of the Inca race and civilization, which the Spanish *conquistadores* brought to an untimely end.

Our arrangements for this trip were as follows: Train from La Paz some forty or fifty miles to Guaqui on the shore of Lake Titicaca; motor-boat over the lake to a little landing-stage; motor-car from the landing-stage to Copacabana, and thence whatever might turn up.

The first part of the journey took place according to schedule. The train behaved itself as good little trains should do, and it stayed long enough in Tiahuanaco (very different from the Tiahuanaco in Mexico where the horses race and the fashionable world gathers from over the border) for us to fill our pockets with little images of the ancient pre-Inca statues of that place, carved in replica but in miniature from the soft stone of the ancient temples.

At Guaqui, we slept the night in a little hotel, and in the early morning entered our motor-boat, in which there was just room for us along with some twenty Indians, including a surprisingly large proportion of babies, and some two hundred baskets of vegetables and cocks and hens. We chugged across the waters of Lake Titicaca "highest navigable lake in the world—12,550 feet; in which steel will not rust"; we broke with our ripples the reflection of the "seventy-five miles of eternal snow" ending in the handsome peak of Illimani, twenty-two thousand feet high; we saw the reed boats with reed sails used still by the Indian fishermen and ferry-men as in the Inca times, and we endured a dreadful cold wind seeming impossible to endure, for it was July—mid-winter in those parts, though too near the equator for ice to form on the lake.

When we reached the shore there was no road and no

motor-car to take us over the mountain to another part of the lake, where lie the sanctuary of Copacabana, and the islands of the Sun and the Moon. Road and motor-car were going to be, and that was almost as good as if they already existed, in the vivid Spanish imagination, developed in a land where the sun never fails to shine. But there were mules, and the mules were willing to go home, and willing to carry us, without grudge and without respite.

Fortunately those mules knew their way, for there was no guiding or stopping them as they sped along the tracks of the mountains and slid about on the little stones of the cliff-side and—after several hours, or was it weeks?—scampered into the little town of Copacabana and decanted us in the courtyard of a hotel. Or rather there was one stop, when I found myself with my back resting gently on the ground, my hands clinging to the ventral segment of a mule—for all the world like a baby monkey clinging to its mother—and its surprised face peering down at mine. The girths had given way, and I had executed a graceful semicircle into this new position, while the novelty of the situation had brought my otherwise unmanageable steed to a complete halt.

We arrived at Copacabana two hours in advance of our guides, who came along behind with another mule bearing our small kit.

The chief feature of Copacabana is the church of Our Lady of Candelaria, who is reputed to have materialized in order to rescue the Apostle Thomas from the wrathful natives by carrying him off in a boat on the lake—though he was afterwards martyred at Copacabana (as in several other places, including St. Thomas's Mount outside Madras). The church is full of tinsel and votive offerings, distasteful to one of the modern world, who regards appeal to the supernatural or the super-physical for the satisfaction of material desires as a great obstacle to the progress and happiness of mankind, for which man should trust to man himself, since man himself has all the necessary power. And the islands, with their ruins—peace, peace, peace.

#### § 4

Our next move was down into Chile—two countries, two lands, one in the north, nitrate fields bare and terrible,

another in the south, smiling green meadows. We descended from La Paz into the clouds—a strange sight on the railway leading down to Arica on the coast, where we were to take steamer for Iquique, the nitrate port. We looked down upon a sea of clouds lit from beneath by a rising sun, passed through them and down, with ears popping, to the coast, where pelicans by the thousand sat upon the rocks and filled their baggy beaks with fish for which one would think they could not possibly find room in their interiors.

Chile carries with it an atmosphere of commerce. Even the audiences going to the lectures strode along as if on business bent—a sort of Manchester march, as sharp as a military parade, as intent and individual as the pursuits of a mongoose. It was in Chile, where mostly the fine public library halls were placed at my disposal, that while walking to a lecture I was disturbed by the sight of large crowds of people going the opposite way. What had happened? Why were the people going the wrong way? Was there a football match, or something? No, these were the hundreds being turned away from my own lecture for want of room. In Talcahuano we had a cinema theatre, crowded with workers from the dockyards, who nevertheless seemed to find in my talk something much to their taste.

Unexpected as it might seem, the businesslike people of Chile were very eager to know about Indian yoga (which was not the usual subject of my lectures, though I had studied it deeply and practised it to a considerable extent). Really the explanation was simple. Yoga is businesslike religion; more mystical people might be content with mere metaphysical thought (as in Argentina), or devotional exercises (as in Brazil), but here were people who wanted action leading to definite results.

It was part of the organizing instinct of the Chilenos to have identification cards even for comparatively temporary visitors, and one had to provide finger prints. They insisted on adding the mother's family name, so I was known officially as Ernesto Wood Egerton.

Santiago de Chile is beautiful. We went to the races there, run on a glorious course, with the snowy peaks of the southern Andes for a background. We won something, too, on the second race—on a beautiful black horse named Puff—exactly what we had lost on the previous race. By this

time I had been in South America long enough to become a convert to judicious gambling—they seem to be able to do it in this part of the world in such a balanced way.

It was in Brazil that my conversion to the lottery took place. I found many people getting their weekly wages and paying out of them a small regular amount which might at any moment bring in a fortune. This possibility is a bright ray in many otherwise ordinary lives—I cannot say dull lives, for life in South America is never dull.

It is nonsense to talk about saving that shilling a week for old age. As a boy I had looked upon the dreary years ahead, and I had made my calculations. I had figured that if I was lucky enough to obtain £4 a week and to save one of them, I might in twenty years have capital which would bring in one pound a week, and save myself and prospective family from the workhouse! No, give me a shilling a week less and the open door of opportunity, and for the Government an income which is not wrung from the people in an atmosphere of irritation and resentment. The Latin can be trusted to gamble. They are a versatile people, but they do not run to extreme lengths. I am not sure but that my Hindus, if allowed, would kill themselves with lotteries, they are so thorough in all they do, and don't do. But if I were Dictator I would take the risk to-morrow, to brighten four hundred million lives.

## CHAPTER V

### ANTIPODAL EXPERIENCE

#### § I

WE were in California again in the spring of 1924. There we met Mr. A. P. Warrington, former President of the American Section of the Theosophical Society and still a prominent figure in the movement. He had recently been to Australia and was filled with enthusiasm for Mr. Leadbeater's work there. He told my wife that Mr. Leadbeater had been asking about me, and wishing that I would come there, and saying what a great opportunity there was for me to make rapid occult advancement—"three initiations at least." He and she both wanted me to go.

I hesitated for a long time, because of my lack of confidence in Mr. Leadbeater's clairvoyance in connection with the past lives of Krishnamurti, and also because my personal affection for the old gentleman might cause me to get caught again (as I put it to myself) in the work of book-making for him. However, Mr. Warrington was very impressive on the point and I at last yielded, fulfilled an engagement to lecture for the British Section of the Society, returned again to America to complete engagements there, and sailed from San Francisco for Sydney in October, 1924.

In this and other trips across the Pacific Ocean my wife and I had opportunities to see several of the Pacific Islands. The Cook Islands, with Avarua on Rarotonga as capital, are boldly beautiful. Papeete, on Tahiti, chief of the Society Isles, has less rocky and more floral charm. Pango Pango, on Tutuila, of the Samoan or Navigator Islands, is superb—mountains and the sea at their best in a lovely land-locked harbour.

The Samoans are said to be the tallest race in the world.

Those at Pango Pango seemed more accessible than most of the Polynesians, perhaps because of the sociable tendencies of the Americans who govern it and use it as a naval base. When a ship comes into harbour these people seat themselves in rows in the public gardens, with specimens of their handicraft spread in front of them—mainly carved wooden bowls and model catamarans, beaten bark "cloth," and bead work. These articles are for sale, but also for exchange, especially for your umbrella. The people have a passion for umbrellas and pyjamas; we exchanged nearly all we had for wooden bowls and bark curtains. No doubt they felt towards us as our English felt towards the Maoris when they acquired land in exchange for a few Birmingham toys (with the difference that the Maoris afterwards maintained that they did not understand that they were parting with their land).

Fiji was somehow a pathetic place, no doubt because of the unhappy condition of the colonists from India, who number two-fifths of the population. Apart from economic conditions, there seems always a touch of pathos about Hindus—and Spaniards. Lost glories, felt in the blood.

New Zealand and Australia, which are usually felt to be near together from the distance of England, though really they are more than twelve hundred miles apart, stand in considerable contrast, as regards both their natural features (New Zealand has all the rugged beauty of Japan—both volcanic countries, which might well compete for first place in a beauty contest) and their people (the New Zealanders are very British and the Australians rather American in appearance and mode of life).

We travelled throughout New Zealand. In several places we saw the Maoris at their farming work and travelling on the railway—very gentle people they seemed. But the women who act as guides at Potarua were altogether too pushing and personal. They seemed to think that we wanted to see them rather than the natural wonders of the place. We looked at the giant geyser, which happened to spurt while we were there, at the ponds of boiling mud, which jumps up in little lumps, giving one the illusion of a colony of lively frogs, and at the people cooking their food in vessels placed in the waters of the boiling springs. In the South Island, Christchurch especially seemed a little bit of old England, with its Avon (river) and its very English population.



One day I rowed some ladies on that Avon, and as we were going round a bend a man cutting off the corner ran his prow on one of our rowlocks, causing our boat to heel over and half fill with water. I begged him not to back off but he did so, with the result that we rolled over on the other side, completely filled and slowly sank. The ladies behaved with perfect calm, sitting still, and only rising to their feet as the boat entirely disappeared under the water which was fortunately only about three feet deep. It was very amusing to see them holding up their little handbags and wading in three inches of mud and three feet of water to the bank, whence we hurried home in motor-cars.

Sydney is a crowded town with narrow streets, but beautiful suburbs, containing over a million people of the finest physical race in the world. I have said that the Australians are something like the Americans, but physically they have got them beat. The Americans are a little soft, but not so this outdoor race, everywhere fond of physical sports and pastimes, especially swimming, which is convenient for the Australian population, as it resides mostly round the coast. It is a race good for the eyes, I never tired of looking at them, although they made me feel rather small.

## § 2

Our destination was a suburb named Clifton Gardens and a fine old house, renamed "The Manor," when it became the residence of Mr. Leadbeater and his colony of Theosophists. I must, however, now call him Bishop Leadbeater, because since I had met him last he had become a Bishop of the Liberal Catholic Church, a new organization which some Theosophists had founded, with ceremonials closely following those of the Roman Catholic Church but a platform intended to allow entire freedom of thought with reference to all religious dogmas, except of course the belief in Jesus Christ as "our corner-stone."

Bishop Leadbeater had always said that churches and their ceremonies radiated "force." Long before, he and Mrs. Besant had inspected at Rome the holy water of St. Peter's and also that of an independent preacher who had not the Apostolic Succession, and they had found the unofficial water more influential. But this was regarded as an exceptional case, because of the superlative goodness of

the independent preacher, while the organization of the Apostolic Succession, on the other hand, provided for an allowance of force to pass through the body of any person properly initiated into the Succession, if the sex be male, even if the personal character be quite immoral and the body unclean.

Bishop Leadbeater had attained his rank in the Church through the agency of two or three other Theosophists who had obtained their Succession through a man named Willoughby, who had been a Bishop in the Roman Catholic Church, but for some reason had left that body and had been experimenting with a new church of his own.

In addition to joining the Liberal Catholic Church Bishop Leadbeater had entered the Co-Masonic movement (which admitted women and men on equal terms) and become a leading figure in that also, with the aid of Mrs. Besant, who was at the head of that movement as far as the British Empire was concerned.

The great attraction of both these movements from Bishop Leadbeater's point of view was the sacramental force of their rituals. Some of the ceremonies were directed to help the individual—as, for example, those connected with absolution, marriage and death. Absolution was not regarded as removing the effects of sins but only as turning the sinner's face back into the virtuous direction and putting him right, so to speak, with God. But the most important sacramental actions or ceremonies, such as the Mass, were considered to distribute "help" over a large area.

Both these movements were held to be vastly important for the work of the World Teacher who was still to come, and two Masters were in charge of them, personally directing their renaissance through Bishop Leadbeater, who was helping to revise as well as revive and popularize the ceremonial forms. The Master Jesus, now living in seclusion somewhere in Syria, was held to be in charge of the Church. Since his incarnation in Palestine he had been incarnated, it was declared, in South India in the twelfth century as the reformer Sri Ramanujacharya.

I already knew that Ramanujacharya had led a highly devotional revival in South India and had established one of the largest and most vigorous sects, in opposition to the old widespread Hindu belief that the soul of every man is absolutely one with God. Afterwards I learned that he

rejected the movement for the substitution of "flour-substitutes" for living victims in the sacrificial ceremonies, and as such support of animal sacrifices did not seem consistent with the traditional character of Jesus, I was led by this to further doubt as to the reliability of Bishop Leadbeater's clairvoyant powers.

In charge of the masonic movement was a Master, it was announced, living incognito in Europe, a man of great culture, formerly incarnated as Roger Bacon, and again as Francis Bacon, who was responsible for the chief part of the writings attributed to Shakespeare. Both these Masters were devoted to a still greater Master, the World Teacher, who had used the body of Jesus, and was now to use that of Krishnamurti as soon as the occasion might be ripe.

Being of an open mind I did not regard these propositions as inherently improbable. There are plenty of things in heaven and earth which are not yet known to the man in the street, the man in the laboratory and the man in the church. And I always had been predisposed to the belief that the best is the true, that goodness sprouts from something fundamental in the Universe and is not merely a superficial accident in man. But I disliked the ceremonials. They seemed to me to obstruct the good and the true, and make them dependent upon externals. How absurd to think that certain gestures and words could be vehicles of spiritual forces. Love, truth and the will were the only spiritual forces, and virtue was its own reward, or it was not virtue. Spiritual force could not be ladled out like soup, nor distributed to the worthy as Sunday-school prizes, nor inherited like grandfather's pantaloons.

When I saw what Bishop Leadbeater had been doing during the eleven years that I had been away from him I could not help thinking that there was little to show for the unique clairvoyant powers of which he believed himself to be possessed. I knew, of course, that it was "forbidden" to use those powers in any way which would give proof of their actual existence to a public which might easily, if convinced of such things, throw overboard its rational progress and indulge in an orgy of revelation and magic, or might at least prostitute the new science to selfish ends. In material matters, seemingly they could be used only for providing such information as that jazz music attracted revolting "elementals" and dead negroes, onions polluted

the astral as well as the physical body, and the wearing of black delayed occult progress. In my younger days, in the thoroughness of my passion for perfection, I might have dyed my hair golden, and recommended the whole Indian nation to do the same. But by now I was a confirmed disciple only of goodness, truth and beauty—perfection lay in the balanced synthesis of these, a terrific task, since the conditions of human life constantly called for the sacrifice of one virtue to another.

I think that Bishop Leadbeater had come to the conclusion that his clairvoyance and the powers associated with it were useful only for occult purposes. He wanted humanity to undergo a change of heart. People were too self-centred, thinking of personal comfort, pleasure, ambition, pride and acquisition. Could they be persuaded to come out of themselves, and look at life from the standpoint of the general good instead of individual desire, the whole world would change. This was the one essential of progress, from his point of view, both for the individual and the world. One could do little for the world at large, for who would take heed of the preaching of this truth? Therefore he would (1) concentrate his attention upon a small community of people, especially young people, earnestly trying to become unselfish in thought, feeling and life, and (2) work for the ceremonial movements by which occult forces could be caused to play upon the auras of the people, and thus facilitate the impersonalizing process from the outside.

Impersonalization, he held, would naturally lead to occult progress, that is, to growth on other planes, to discipleship to the Masters (who were working always at the distribution of forces for the uplift of mankind), and to Initiations, of which there were five, of which the last was the gateway to adeptship or masterhood. He agreed that in this there was a subtle danger—one must take care that one's impersonality be not tainted by personal desire for these achievements or rewards, for such self-induction would certainly counteract the purpose of the effort.

I wanted to know why those who believed in the efficacy of the forces released by the ceremonies did not practise them more. If I felt that I had such great powers to help I would want to do the ceremonies a hundred times a day, not once or twice. There was no satisfactory answer to this question. It could only be said that one must not give too

much force. Well, then, the force was only medicine or a tonic, not a gift of life itself, and I would on the contrary prefer to devote myself to promoting the direct means by which life sustained and evolved itself. Bishop Leadbeater sighed at my obstinacy. He would say: " I find it much easier to develop the people with the aid of the ceremonies than without them, and as long as I find that to be so I shall go on using them."

I think he was suffering under an illusion in the matter. He thought that the smoothing and refining of the auras indicated progress. He was running an occult beauty parlour. The auras may have come to look prettier to the clairvoyant eye, but it appeared to me that the people specially cultivated by him lacked in essential qualities of character as compared with others whom I knew, and that the atmosphere of his community encouraged the lack. He was painting dolls.

I have alluded already to the analogy which he used of the cultivation of flowers and animals by man. It was really useless as an argument, for that cultivation is generally of one quality at the expense of another, and besides it is done by selective breeding of the plants or animals, not by pumping anything into their veins. I saw little use in making black salamanders turn yellow by keeping them in yellow boxes.

### § 3

On arrival at " The Manor " I did not at first find myself in the midst of the ceremonial activities, though the new dispensation was evident in the conversation and occupations of the community. I heard the church music frequently, both in the regular services and the practices, as the Manor Chapel was next to my room.

I liked the music, which was well played and nicely softened by having to come through the wall. But I found that it had some hypnotic effect. Sometimes, when the mind was faced with a special difficulty requiring clear thought, it would jump the rails and one would find oneself humming a church tune instead of thinking. This hypnotic effect is one of the defects of all ceremonies, and of meditation involving repetition of formulas. I remember one young man at " The Manor " who was very devout, and used

always to speak with bated breath. On one occasion he made a small *faux pas* in conversation, and immediately crossed himself, involving himself in still greater confusion.

I found Bishop Leadbeater in bed. He had been suffering for a long time from rheumatic fever, and his hands, which lay outside the bed-cover were terribly twisted. My sympathy flamed up. I did not know how to express myself. After a little time our conversation turned to the subject of his books. He told me that he did not know whether he had much longer to live. He would like to have all his latest discoveries and thoughts put into books, that they might be correctly stated and recorded before he passed away. He had given many talks, and there were reports of these which would serve as a basis for books. During the eleven years he had written only three books—only one of real importance, *The Science of the Sacraments*, a study of the church rituals, describing what was clairvoyantly seen in connection with them.

I remarked that there were some twenty or thirty fine-looking people in the community, and no doubt as soon as he was a little better they would rally round and help him to bring his literary works up to date.

"No," he sadly replied. "If you do not stay they will never be done. Several people have tried, without success." So I stayed, for over four years—with some small interludes of travel.

The first book we selected was intended to publish all he knew about the Masters and discipleship to them. It was called *The Masters and the Path*. Some material had already been gathered together. I collected all the reports of Bishop Leadbeater's talks touching on these subjects, and then every day sat at his bedside and read what I had written up from these and from notes of our conversations. One of my little accomplishments acquired at Adyar was the ability to write in the style of either Mr. Leadbeater or Mrs. Besant, and neither of them could tell that paragraphs written by me had not been written by themselves. Then there would be questions, discussions, and alterations and additions where necessary.

In all my work with Mr. Leadbeater at Adyar there had seldom been any actual dictation, except in *The Lives of Alcyone* and in the last rescension of *The Beginnings of the Sixth Root Race*. Now there was no dictation at all. I must

have written about half of *The Masters and the Path*, some parts of it containing my own ideas, as well as language, submitted to him for incorporation. A new thing was his statement that, surprising at it might seem, he had seen God (the Solar Logos) in personal form; I wrote it up suitably and put it in the book.

A curious thing happened a few days after we had started work. I was sitting near his bed one afternoon when I suddenly felt something break open (like the bursting of a seed pod) in my head, and from it a cold current flooded my whole body, passing down the spine in waves and radiating from every part of the body. It seemed to me that this was not my own force, but was coming into me through my head, and that it was going out from me direct to Bishop Leadbeater. I was also aware that it was a healing current of some kind. After several minutes it died away, and I never mentioned it to Bishop Leadbeater, nor to others, except in a letter to Mrs. Besant. I do not know anything more about this phenomenon, which occurred quite outside my will. But it did coincide with an abrupt change in Bishop Leadbeater's condition. In a few days he was able to move about, and then it was only a matter of weeks until he had straightened himself up, and even his hands assumed their normal form.

When we were about half-way through the preparation of *The Masters and the Path* Bishop Leadbeater one day showed me a document which he said had been given to him by a Master at Adyar many years before. It was simply a table of the rays or types of humanity. He thought it might be incorporated into the book, but there were some points he could not understand—he indicated three items in particular. I looked at the diagram, and at once exclaimed: " But I can explain these items."

I gave him my explanations of the points in question. He was much astonished and asked me where I got this knowledge of a rather obscure subject. I told him that before leaving India I had been now and then receiving what seemed to me like internal communications on this subject of the rays or types of men. Sometimes there had been a voice, but generally ideas had been, as it were, insinuated into my mind, quite distinctly with the feeling of the presence of an intelligence other than my own. In this way I had accumulated a quantity of notes on the subject.

I had been speaking on it occasionally at theosophical gatherings in America, without saying anything about occult experiences in connection with it, if such they could be called. It happened in Chicago that some of the members, particularly one, Dr. Beckwith, a leader there, had taken my information very seriously, and I was consequently much troubled, as I had no wish to lead others where I was myself somewhat blind. Late one night, as I was travelling along in an otherwise empty carriage on the elevated railway in Chicago, and I was brooding in a troubled way over this point, something electrical in my immediate atmosphere caused me to look up and I saw, or thought I saw, the Master standing there; and he said: "Do not be troubled about that information about the rays. It is quite correct. I gave it to you."

When I had recounted this to Bishop Leadbeater, he said: "Well, we will not do any more of my work until you have written a book of your own on the seven rays." He put his work aside. I set to work on my own book. Early every morning I made notes for the day's dictation. During the day I dictated. In eight days my book was ready for the press. I gave the manuscript to Bishop Leadbeater with the request to point out any errors or defects, but after a few days he returned it to me saying: "I should not like to interfere with anything coming from that source."

The book was duly published, and created quite a sensation among the Theosophists, who translated it into several languages, but no mention was made of the history I have recounted above. Afterwards, whenever I raised my voice against "authority" in the theosophical movement, Bishop Leadbeater would say to me: "But we regard you as our authority on the rays!" I could not, however, agree with him. Such experiences as I had had might very well be the work of the subconscious mind.

My abnormal experiences in Sydney were not all connected with psychism. One morning I opened the newspaper, and this is what confronted me in massive type on the front page:

PROFESSOR WOOD'S

TRAGIC END

BELOVED UNIVERSITY MAN FOUND HANGED



My photograph appeared under this, and then two columns of letterpress: “ Professor Wood was found hanged in his room. . . . ”

There was a Professor Wood in the Sydney University and he had hanged himself—the result of a distressing illness. Only the photograph was wrong, but letters of condolence poured into the office of the Broadcasting Station for which I was then speaking every week. Some of the writers must afterwards have been surprised on hearing my voice from the tomb—or rather the morgue—as it were, if they had not heard the explanation of the mistake.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE NEW APOSTLES

#### § I

**T**HE year 1925 was to be momentous in the history of the Theosophical Society. In August, in Holland, Mrs. Besant made pronouncements of great import. She said that the coming of the Lord was very near at hand and that he had chosen twelve apostles. This followed the Palestine tradition, but this time the apostles were to be prepared for him in advance. Seven of these apostles were already prepared and these were of the rank of arhats, or initiates of the fourth degree.

She and Bishop Leadbeater had already pronounced themselves to be arhats. Many others had reached the first degree and some few the second degree on their lists. Such an extensive group of initiates was declared to be possible (it had not existed in the Society before nor, it was thought, in the world, except perhaps in the time of Buddha) on account of the coming of the World Teacher. Not that the standard of the examination, so to speak, had been lowered, but that the Lord would need many helpers, and so a little "cramming" or "forcing" was permissible, though not generally advisable.

The seven arhats who were then named as included among the apostles were Mrs. Besant, Bishop Leadbeater, Mr. Jinarajadasa, Bishop Arundale and his wife, Bishop Wedgwood and the Rev. O. Kollestrom. Three of the four men had been "Mr. Leadbeater's boys" and the fourth a close friend in early manhood. Three of them by now pronounced themselves clairvoyant, and in direct communication with the World Teacher. It was announced that Bishop Arundale only just managed to become an arhat by submitting himself to the stimulating influence connected

with his becoming a Bishop of the Liberal Catholic Church, and his wife, an Indian lady, was outside the circle for a little while, but was soon ready to be admitted.

At the same time it was announced that the Liberal Catholic Church Co-Masonry and a proposed World University had been officially accepted by the Lord as special means by which he would help the world when he came.

Mrs. Besant accepted all these predictions and became the mouthpiece of them. She had always been modest about her own psychic powers. She believed that she could have been superlative in this respect if she had cared to practise the use of them frequently, but she adhered to the principle of the division of labour and its logical complements—a loyal co-operation with others and a willingness to bear the burden if mistakes were made and trouble arose. Her position was that she was on the "ruling line," and therefore her chief part in the work was to decide policy, organize campaigns and take the leading part in carrying them out. In this division of labour it was not her method to distinguish between the workers, but to proceed collectively, so it was not her custom to say through whom she received any statement she might give to the world.

While this was going on in Europe Bishop Leadbeater, in Australia, was significantly silent on the subject of the pronouncements. He would not make any statements openly about them, but said to me: "I hope she will not wreck the Society." Really he did not like the idea of the twelve apostles, and the speculations about a coming Judas also, which Mrs. Besant highly dramatized in her speeches at that time. The fact was, from his point of view, the movement was getting a bit out of hand. Many times he had said to me and others that really the only fault of "our President" was that she *would* catch at the least hint of the Masters' wishes and act upon it impulsively, getting the principle of the thing right, but not what was exactly intended to be worked out. She used to say that she would rather make mistakes than miss the slightest hint of the Masters' wishes.

All through the years Bishop Leadbeater had been writing to her with hints and suggestions, very delicately worded: he had had such and such information; no doubt she also knew about this, etc. Practically she always rose to the suggestion. But it now happened that among the group of

initiates who met in Europe during that fateful summer of 1925 there were several who were "bringing through" information and messages on their own account—particularly Bishop Wedgwood, Mr. Kollestrom and Mr. Arundale and his wife. Mrs. Besant felt that the whole situation was quite safely in the Masters' grip, that for the sake of conservation of energy the Masters would use the instruments easiest to work with, and that because of her dedication to the ruling department it was only natural that much information should come through these co-workers.

Krishnamurti "remained quiet," to use a familiar Indian expression.

There was tremendous enthusiasm in most of the sections of the Theosophical Society. The Society reached its peak of membership, as the statistics showed, in the subsequent two years. There was a great Jubilee Convention at Adyar between Christmas and New Year. An electrical expectation filled the air, that something decisive would occur with regard to the coming Teacher. It did occur. Krishnamurti addressed a large audience under the banyan tree. He spoke of the great Teacher. He comes, he said, for those who are in need, etc. Suddenly there was a pause for a second and he spoke in the first person, repeating the "I" three or four times—"I come for those who have need of sympathy. . . ." Afterwards Mrs. Besant said the Lord had now definitely spoken through his disciple, and we might expect Him to make use of the body occasionally, while Krishnamurti would stand aside for the time being in his subtle body.

I did not attend very many of the Convention meetings. Bishop Leadbeater and I were engaged in every spare moment on a book on Masonry which he wished to spare through the press. He used this piece of work as a means of avoiding intimate conversation with Mrs. Besant. He was afraid to talk with her at that time because he could not agree with her but did not want to say so. Besides, he was a little hurt at her taking important information from others in Europe without even consulting him at all. To give an example—there was one young man, admitted to the inner circle, whom Bishop Leadbeater regarded as quite outside the pale. At the door before entering a meeting the Bishop quietly said: "But surely it is not right that So-and-so should be here?" Mrs. Besant walked over to one of the

European arhats, spoke with him, came back : " — says it is quite all right."

Bishop Leadbeater became very quiet ! He would never contradict Mrs. Besant. In fact, he would not contradict any lady. This Victorian code of manners of his necessitated avoiding as much as possible any contact with ladies on the level. His secluded life made him an anachronism in this and some other respects. While tremendously loyal to Queen Victoria, King Edward and King George, in the belief that a divine afflatus pervaded the kingly office, he was a determined Jacobite and would often speak of the House of Stuart as rightfully entitled to the British throne. But although thus deferential to Mrs. Besant he nevertheless marked off from his own list more than eighty occultly titled persons as not being really such, although they had been informed by other arhats that they were.

## § 2

After the Jubilee Convention of 1925 Bishop Leadbeater and his party of some seventy people returned to Australia, but I stayed at Adyar for some months to attend to literary work. I had compiled a huge volume of theosophical ethics from rough reports of hundreds of lectures (which must have amounted to about two million words) given by Bishop Leadbeater and Dr. Besant during thirty years.

I must now refer to Mrs. Besant as Doctor, as she had been given an honorary doctorate by the Benares Hindu University, which she had done much to promote. Titles of all kinds were highly valued in the Theosophical Society. Notwithstanding allegiance to the teaching in *Light on the Path* : " That power which the disciple shall covet is that which shall make him appear as nothing in the eyes of men, it was thought wrong to hide one's light under a bushel, as one could not then do so much good—an instance of the peculiar habit of wanting things both ways at once. Bishop Leadbeater would urge his young men to secure a University degree, though he used to say that more good was done by an initiate lecturing than by anyone else, even if the matter and manner of the former was inferior.

Dr. Besant was much pleased with her part of the large book entitled *Talks on the Path of Occultism*. She wrote me from Benares that she had no idea that those old talks of

hers had been so good. Though an expert and exacting editor, she had not found it necessary to make more than half a dozen alterations—and those only typographical. One part of the work I had had to write entirely myself, on account of the total absence of notes in that section. As regards Bishop Leadbeater's portion, he gave up editing it about half-way through and did not even trouble to read the remainder.

Some amusing incidents occurred in connection with these writings. When we were doing *The Masters and the Path*, I was reading to Bishop Leadbeater a portion relating to some talks to young disciples. Suddenly he burst out: "Where did you get that drivel?" It was not his habit to dissemble his feelings, whether of pleasure or the reverse. I traced out the offending portions, and discovered that it consisted of some talks by one of his colleagues which had been included among his notes by mistake. However, the material was adapted and put into the book.

On another occasion he exploded to me with: "That's just like your little mind!" What had annoyed him was an opinion expressed to me by Mrs. Besant about five minutes earlier, which I had happened to repeat! On another occasion he threw down a bundle of manuscript in front of me and cried out: "Can *you* do anything with this ranting stuff?" I boiled it down to about half and linked it together a little, and it finally emerged as a book—dealing with nirvana—by another of his colleagues, who, however, never knew anything of this portion of the history of his own book.

There was an old member at Adyar who had been somewhat opposed to Bishop Leadbeater's outlook. When I returned to Adyar I found him quite converted. He told me with what joy he had read a portion of the "Talks" dealing with Nirvana and liberation. I had supplied the whole thing, both ideas and words, but I did not mention this, as I thought it might devalue the ideas, since things had now reached the stage in the Society at which it mattered very much who said a thing, not what that thing was.

That had come about in the natural sequence of events. There had been a steady increase of literature in the nature of revelations and many people had come to feel that study and thought were not essentially profitable, being too speculative, and that the important things were *facts*, which

were to be obtained with the aid of psychical faculties rather than by thought. It was true that Mme Blavatsky's work of thirty years before, especially *The Secret Doctrine*, was said to be derived from the Masters by psychic means, but that dealt with main principles forming a system, while the later literature, due almost entirely to Bishop Leadbeater's researches, was a vast mass of detail relating to objects or facts.

### § 3

While at Adyar in 1926 I had much talk with Dr. Besant about initiations and similar matters. Of occult recognition she gave me “ all that is in my power ” and said that she was diffident about it because she felt that “ it was not good enough. ” She told me that my participation or non-participation in Masonic or other ceremonials would make no difference to this recognition or to further progress—yet some years later when she was ill and helpless, others cut my name out of the list when I ceased to take part in those organized mysticisms !

I returned to Sydney trailing some clouds of glory, and resumed my work with Bishop Leadbeater. To compose new chapters for a revised edition of his book, *The Other Side of Death*, I read dozens of the latest books of spiritualistic research, and found that such works as those of Dr. Geley, the Rev. Drayton Thomas and Dr. Crawford contained investigations of great scientific value in that connection. For another book, *Chakras*, I placed before Bishop Leadbeater all the information on the subject available in Sanskrit works known to me. This book lagged for a long time, so I tried to make some investigations myself. Concentrating on the chakra between the eyebrows, I became aware of a double rotation like that of two plates revolving in opposite directions. I put this idea before Bishop Leadbeater. For several weeks he told me that he could not find it, but at last he did find such a double rotation in all the chakras, and explained it in his book.

There was no doubt in my mind that, whatever they may have been, Bishop Leadbeater's psychic faculties were declining. Shortly afterwards, his principal helper on the astral plane died unexpectedly, but the Bishop did not know it until informed by ordinary means, and actually

wrote a letter to him after he was dead. His next important helper also died unexpectedly. He had been ill. One day a friend asked Bishop Leadbeater how he was. Oh, yes, he had seen him; he was going on much the same. Actually he had been dead for two days.

During this time I had a little stream of psychic experiences which I need not detail here. I used to tell these to Bishop Leadbeater and ask him about them, and he constantly replied: "I should advise you to take them at their face value." They were very mixed. Some had to do with Masters and initiation; others fell to the level of the following. One morning I awoke with the sound of a cat mewling and in the half awake state I heard a voice saying: "You were Nathaniel; look it up in the Bible. Promise that you will remember." Why anybody on the astral plane or anywhere else should wish me to believe that I had been Nathaniel in a former incarnation I am completely at a loss to understand. My wife was convinced that there was some kind of hypnotic influence brooding over the Manor, to which she, however, refused to yield in any degree.

My own theory at present with regard to such experiences, whether mine or occurring to others, is that there is a *small* foundation of fact in them. I had physical confirmation of some of them, as in the experiments on thought-transference and some experiences with Indian yogis which I have already related, and also there is a very convincing sediment of good evidence in such works as those of Dr. Geley, where they record experiments done under test conditions—more convincing on that account than one's own psychic impressions. But there is also a vast superstructure which is completely false, being the product of that state of mind in which dreams originate, dreams which become perfervidly important and take the rank of truer visions in any atmosphere in which they are cultivated or encouraged in connection with a mission, or strong interest in oneself as a person or a character.

Even the part which is true (which anyhow is impossible to determine, except by other means than those of the visions themselves) is not important. If one's conduct improves as the result of such knowledge there is no gain in character. Virtue is spoiled by calculation.

People say that they get thrills and encouragement and uplift out of psychic experience, but after much observation



I have come to the conclusion that these are essentially of the same nature as the thrills and encouragement and feeling of well-being and elevation that others obtain physically from the cocktails preceding dinner. There is something in man which is struggling for birth, but it is surely not to be liberated by stimulating the emotions and the mind, any more than by over-feeding the stomach.

As to devotion to the Masters—whatever their true form may be it is not logical that they should want that, either for direct personal purposes or for setting up a new authority to govern this playground of human fancies and desires. Nor does a thing improve by being dressed in a halo of its origin ; we can admire and love children without waiting to be guided in the matter by knowledge of their ancestry, and without thinking of the incidents which preceded their material births.

Sometimes in the mix-up of occult experiences the error can refute itself, as when in America I had been wanting to set my thought beside that of the Master and find out by feeling whether an action of mine was right, and I thought I saw that Master and heard him say : " You must not do that. You are spoiling our unity. What you do I do." With that somewhat cryptic utterance I may have been talking to myself, from the subconscious to the conscious mind. I accepted the proposition—because it was logically sound. One must not look to God or Masters to do one's work or to make one's decisions. Could one do it to perfection one would not only miss the benefit of effort, but would become an imbecile, as so many religious fanatics do—" O God, shall I wear my blue dress or my green to this party ? Which will have the best influence on the auras of the people ? " The same tendency destroys intellectual brotherhood, for you cannot converse with a man who has his thoughts and ideas ready-made from above, and quite unchangeable.

#### § 4

As the new tendency in the theosophical movement increased it offended me more and more. My object all along had been to sift the gold from the ore, but now it seemed that the ore was growing more and the gold less. Theoretically there was freedom of thought and opinion, and

the Society was a truth-seeking body, and our truth-seeking was to be done as a brotherhood, without distinction of race, sex, creed, caste or colour. In this spirit we were to study and investigate for the promotion of knowledge of the truth, especially about man, his relation to his environment and his destiny. But in practice there was more than a tendency to give the platform to the believer and to squeeze out the critic or the independent thinker. Instead of the subjection of all doctrines to a co-operative inquisition, "You must respect the faith of your fellow-members."

By 1925 prayers of all the materially powerful religions were introduced on the Society's official platform, and the movement definitely degenerated into a brotherhood of creeds. Criticism of other people's ideas became "un-brotherly!" And besides, it "spoiled the work," and the work was largely a conveyance of blessings and forces by those who were admitted to the systems of organized access to these things. On these grounds offices were filled, and invitations were issued to leaders to preside and lecture at the Society's gatherings nearly all over the world.

Bishop Leadbeater was one of the worst politicians in this respect, especially as he grew older. He detested argument and criticism—such a waste of time; such a dissipation of energy. He said to me: "We must try to get our own people in as General Secretaries in as many countries as possible." He wrote many letters hinting that certain persons were the best. I did not question his earnestness and sincerity, but I thought that he ought to have gone out and started a new society on his own lines, which were quite different from those for which the Theosophical Society was intended. But he won his way, on account of his extraordinary persistence.

Bishop Leadbeater and his agents were eminent in the theosophical weakness of wanting things both ways at once, though that was quite illogical. The Society must be quite without dogma, and yet its councils must be governed and its platforms occupied by those who were eager to promote certain beliefs, leaderships and objectives, and members who opposed these must be kept in the background.

There was no question but that the Society must be neutral, just as a good scientific society is neutral, though providing a platform for professors and investigators to discuss and publish the results of their researches. The

difference between a church and a society is that the latter does not give its support to any one professor or doctrine in particular.

I remember a meeting at which someone wanted to pass a resolution against capital punishment, but a delegate, a young Indian lady who was sitting beside me, got up and said she would consider the advocacy of the death penalty more in accordance with brotherhood, for she herself would prefer to be hanged and on the way to a new incarnation rather than to be kept in a degrading prison for a long term of years !

The chairman decided that the meeting could not rightly pass the resolution, but there was such a body as "The Theosophical Order of Service," which could do so. That body met immediately afterwards, passed the resolution and sent it to the newspapers. So they had it both ways. But the public could not distinguish between the Theosophical Society and the Theosophical Order of Service. The Society was in the anomalous position of sponsoring the Order and lending to it all its conveniences. In the same way there was the Eastern or Esoteric School of Theosophy, constantly being referred to on the Society's platform as "the heart of the Society." In that heart there were dogmas, beliefs and mediation, but not in the Society !

## § 5

In 1927 Dr. Besant was in America with Krishnamurti. He had now become very active and independent. He wrote charming poetry at that time, full of sympathetic feeling and penetrating thought. Dr. Besant announced that the World Teacher had definitely come, not as she had expected by the occasional stepping out of Krishnamurti and stepping in of the Lord, but by a constant mingling of the consciousness of the Lord and that of his disciple. To this belief she adhered to the end of her life, and she made it the topic of her greatest enthusiasm, as can be seen in all her subsequent annual presidential addresses to the Society. In 1928 she closed the Eastern School, as the Lord had come, and it was his guidance that the people should now seek, not hers. But it was soon strongly represented to her by Bishop Leadbeater and his close adherents that many of its members, released from the discipline of the School,

were becoming slack in their personal conduct, and in consequence of this pressure she opened it again a year later for those who felt that they could not discipline themselves and wanted a routine laid down for them.

Meantime, the intensive production of disciples and initiates continued. In Australia I was occasionally present at the selections for recommendation. The following was not untypical: Bishop Leadbeater would say: "So-and-so has been an accepted disciple for more than seven years. I think it is about time for her to take a further step." His companions would reply: "Why not?" Within a few days she was an initiate—quite a useless person from the external point of view, but very faithful to the Church and perhaps therefore useful for the radiation of forces. This "force" was the dominating thought in the later part of Bishop Leadbeater's life. The office of Secretary for the Order of the Star fell vacant in Melbourne, and he asked me to suggest a name. I did so, and he said: "But do you not think that the Lord would prefer to have one of his priests in that position?" And the priest was put in. He carried the force.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE NEW KRISHNAMURTI

#### § I

**E**ARLY in 1928, when I was in New York, writing my book on India, Krishnamurti came there and gave a lecture in the Chemical Society's Hall. I was asked to preside. I found that, as he expressed it himself, the picture had come out of its frame.

Krishnamurti was administering truth from his own point of view to the people who had built up various organizations for his use. He declined the disciples announced for him, rejected all the modes of organized access to the forces of inner planes, said that the system of master and pupil was injurious, declared that ceremonies were hindrances, not helps, and reverted uncompromisingly to the position that in order to have spirituality a man must lean upon no thing or person outside himself. He cast off his connection with the Theosophical Society because, he said, it was addicted to these things. A year later he closed down his own Order of the Star, because its members were inclined to lean upon him, and he was determined that no cult, dogma or system should be built round his personality.

Some persons, including Dr. Besant, not realizing at first the completeness with which Krishnamurti was rejecting all material and mental props to spirituality, said that of course it was quite understandable that he should not want the ceremonials himself, but they would be useful and indeed necessary to carry on the life-giving power which he brought to us after he had gone, just as Christ was present in the transubstantiation of bread and wine into His Body and Blood on the altars of the Catholic Church.

This idea also Krishnamurti severely rejected, but some of the arhats continued in the belief none the less, now

saying: "Krishnamurti does not know everything about the Lord. We too have our direct connections with him. Krishnamurti is only authoritative in connection with a special and limited mission."

Dr. Besant speculated that Krishnamurti might really be speaking for the future, and said that his utterances were probably intended for the people of the coming sixth race, hundreds of years hence, more than for the world to-day. She said that her policy was to take as much as she could understand from Krishnamurti and leave the rest for the future to deal with. On the other hand Bishop Leadbeater at the same time wrote that the realization claimed by Krishnamurti had already been attained by "ourselves" and he was now really preaching to the horse-racing and fox-hunting outer world, rather than to the theosophically inclined! These views well illustrate the difference in character between Bishop Leadbeater and Dr. Besant, the former always sure of himself, the latter modest and seeking, and therefore yielding.

It became very clear to me that the movement was going to be shivered from top to bottom if something was not done to relieve the Society from all connection with other movements which were advocating material means to spiritual goals.

In the middle of 1928 Dr. Besant was re-elected President of the Society for a fourth seven-year term. She appointed Mr. A. P. Warrington, of America, Vice-President, and continued Mr. Albert Schwarz in the post of Hon. Treasurer, which he had occupied for over twenty years. On my return from Australia at the end of the year she completed her trio of officers by appointing me Hon. Secretary of the Society, fully knowing my views with reference to the undesirable influence of other organizations upon the practical affairs of the Society.

At the same time she spoke very seriously to me on that subject. She told me that she was anxious to encourage everybody in their laudable undertakings, but she was afraid of crystallization in the Society. She praised highly the enthusiasm of those who had launched various movements, but was at the same time anxious to prevent any bias from establishing itself in the Society, or even from appearing to do so. She spoke of the difficulty which she felt on account of the pressure upon her of the religious

enthusiasts on one side, and finally said on that point : " I wish some of you would push equally hard on the other side. It would make it much easier for me." She told me of her policy of co-operation with others, and that she had scarcely used her own psychic powers for years, but had been relying on her co-workers in that respect.

This last was, I confess, a blow to me. I had all along been trying to sift the gold from the sand in connection with the many occult pronouncements made in the Society, and had relied primarily on her testimony to the existence of that gold. But now I was informed by Dr. Besant herself that she had been and was accepting without critical examination or first-hand confirmation many of the statements of those whom I positively knew to be incorrect, at least on some points. The amount of gold in recent statements diminished in my eyes almost to vanishing point. Although positive, recorded evidence of the earlier days as to the abnormal powers of Mme Blavatsky and the inherent reasonableness of the system which she had expounded under the name of theosophy remained untouched by this, the *living* testimony had now vanished as far as I was concerned.

And here also was Krishnamurti, declared to be the World Teacher in person, stating that ceremonies were hindrances to a spiritual life, and even that explanations of life, such as those of reincarnation and *karma* were soporific, for only the aid of pure action in the present, making the most of the present, was consistent with spirituality, liberation, or the clean and self-fructifying operation of life itself. To hold a theory that we must work for the development or accumulation or acquisition of opportunities or powers to be attained at some future time was simply to spoil the living present.

### § 3

I saw much of Krishnamurti during his visit to New York and on subsequent occasions. I tried to grasp how life appeared and what it meant to him. That was difficult, because it did not *mean* anything at all. It stood for itself and required no interpretation. He said he had reached liberation ; he was free, but he could not describe that freedom. Mind could no more grasp life than teeth could bite the air. Life was knowing itself direct in him, not

through the veil of mind, with its clumsy categories of past, present and future.

I could see clearly what he was driving at in describing so many things as hindrances, but I was not able to grasp the positive and superior life of which he spoke. After all, his position seemed to be that of the yoga school of India, which I knew well. It was simply that the mind (perception and reason) is not the instrument for knowing the positive element of being that is, life itself, but is concerned with the limited department of production and understanding of forms. Its enhancement could not lead to discovery of fundamental truth any more than could development of abnormal muscularity. On the other hand its suppression could not lead to it, any more than material suicide.

We ought not, therefore, to picture our evolution into some godly or angelic type of being, and stultify our present power by waiting or working for that. That would not be different from the way in which stupid devotees set aside their own judgment and waited for orders from above. Nor, on the other hand, should we discredit our present capacity by going backwards, as it were, to the peaceful animal state of mind. In short, the secret of the real is to click with the present, to be fully what we are. Consolation, hope, remorse, and any philosophy which softens the incidence of life upon us in the present stands in the way of life's realization of itself. The mind can help only by removing the obstacles, the errors created by itself. To think of life in its fullness is to make only a picture on canvas. Life is life, and cannot be known mentally by comparison with any object. You cannot put God in a box.

Several times I discussed with Krishnamurti the function of the Theosophical Society. He said: "You cannot organize truth."

I pointed out that the Society was intended to be only a business organization. It existed for the promotion of truth, but did not say what that truth was.

"I am afraid you cannot have such a brotherhood," was his reply. "Consider the weakness of human nature. Some creed will get control of the thing, or will be fighting for it and giving trouble all the time."

I pointed out that the position is maintained in scientific and learned societies; the Chemical Society does not advocate the use of any particular brand of soap or matches.



" People can be impersonal with reference to soap and matches," was the substance of his reply, " but your society proposes to deal with man himself, and you will find that people simply will not face the truth with reference to themselves."

" Let us put it to the test of experience," said I. At any rate I am going to try to make the position clear, since there ought to be a society where people may meet to discuss and criticize their various efforts to find the truth.

" Go ahead," was his conclusion. " I shall watch the effort with great interest, but I think there is little hope."

I had still to learn that there are no truth-seekers, because really to want it would be to have it : it is because we do not really want it that we are what we are, embodiments of wanting something less.

#### § 4

My first active step was to join with several others in January of 1929 in a renewed effort to establish freedom in the Society, not freedom of individual belief, which was constantly being asserted and accepted, but with regard to the platform of the Society, so that no party could use the organization mainly for its own purposes. We were highly conscious of the acute situation arising in the movement between those whom I may call the catholics, who wanted to organize a system of living, with stations on the road and all the rest, and the protestants, so to speak, who wanted private judgment, individual freedom and ethical purity, rather than ceremonials, disciplines and obedience.

The position was becoming exacerbated. The big guns began to urge that the Star Office be not allowed on the Adyar estate, although it was full of churches and temples administered by their several sectarian bodies. No one could tell, it was argued, what Krishnamurti's attitude to the Society was going to be.

Some of us, therefore, put before Dr. Besant the idea that she might take the lead in a reconstruction, a reformed society, such that membership of it should give not even a flavour of sectarianism, and would thereby be a suitable instrument for the teacher to use, though it would not as a society advocate his views any more than those of any other person. Dr. Besant was willing to make alterations some-

what on those lines. At least she went the length of putting forward a tentative proposition which was defeated in the Council, that the stated objects of the Society should be replaced by one simple statement that its sole object was to seek for the truth.

## CHAPTER VIII

“GOOD-BYE, PROUD WORLD !”

### § I

**M**Y wife and I settled down from our wanderings in our little house at Adyar. In 1930 I acted as Treasurer as well as Secretary, as in that year Mr. Schwarz took a year's leave to visit Switzerland, his native land. In correspondence with Dr. Besant, who went to Europe, I conducted the business of the Society, held meetings and edited the *Adyar Theosophist*.

The *Theosophist* had been removed to America, because it could be carried on better from there ; but shortly afterwards the *Adyar Theosophist* was started to replace it at Adyar, to satisfy a condition in Colonel Olcott's will. When Bishop Leadbeater returned to live again at Adyar at the end of 1930, not knowing that Dr. Besant had said in Chicago that the magazine had been transferred to America by Master's orders, he brought forth a statement from the Masters that it should be returned to Adyar, as it had never been their desire that it should be removed from there.

I also found time to continue my Sanskrit studies for several hours every day, reading with a number of pandits in succession the original source books of all the principal *darshanas* (views) or schools of Hindu philosophy. After what I had been through I was immensely impressed by the straightforwardness and thoroughness of the Indian philosophers. Their very quality of honesty makes them tedious reading for most people, but I could conceive nothing more agreeable than their method, according to which each writer collects together all the possible arguments against his own view and systematically demolishes them, with argument and counter-argument, bringing in

every implication and side-issue that he can think of. No *suppressio veri* here. Advocacy, yes, clear and decisive, but always the position that the reader is to be the judge of truth, and is to be provided by the writer with every bit of information or of thought which may bear on the subject.

It is curious that the very completeness of old Hindu thought has brought about some apparent inactivity of the modern Hindus in that direction. India is full of philosophers, but they do not rush into print with every new thought that strikes them. They know that generally it is a very old thought, and that it has already been well presented for those who are sufficiently interested to take the trouble to read. And he who will not take the trouble to read and think is not worth bothering about—there can be no kindergarten in philosophy.

I found something of the same attitude towards art in Athens. It was obvious that the Greeks are still philosophers and artists. Yet they do not display it. On visiting the museums in Athens I put to some friends the question: “Why do you not do these things now?”

The answer was: “Why should we? We cannot improve upon these.”

Thousands upon thousands of exquisite shapes continued their unwinking millennial gaze at us from the shelves of the museums, and seemed to add a conclusive note to the argument.

But my wife and I were not Greeks. We took the trouble to collect nearly fifty specimens of Greek pottery to take back with us to India—what a trouble, taking these as passengers’ luggage through Cyprus, Palestine and Egypt—some of them bought from village potters by the roadsides, some of them ancient pieces from Athens and Kyrenia.

It was an unusual collection of things that we accumulated in our little house at Adyar, for side by side with Greek and Oriental and South American pottery and Buddhist sculpture there reposed my collection of paper weights—stones from everywhere, from the pyramids of Egypt and the bathing beach of Limassol, to “the Chilli-wack potato” and quartz from the Himalayas bearing shining traces and sometimes more than traces of rare metals all picked up in rambles in the wild.

Always fond of nature and of architecture, in the midst of

our groves of banyans and bamboos, and flowering trees and palms, I decorated our house with Spanish and Greek gardens, with oriental patios and fountains and tanks of goldfish. We brought the goldfish ourselves from Cyprus by hand, and they gave us no little trouble on the way.

When we were trying to enter a train from Alexandria to go to Cairo the Egyptian officials stopped us, saying: "No live stock allowed on the train."

We disputed whether goldfish were live stock or not, but a local friend knew a better way, and after a little whispering in a corner the goldfish were allowed to continue their journey, no one caring further whether they were alive or dead, since certain small discs of life-supporting matter had gone to enhance the life of its recipient. On the Italian boat from Port Said to Bombay the authorities were good enough to furnish the goldfish with a bath-tub, and on the train from Bombay to Madras they reposed in another bath-tub in the bathroom without even the cognizance of the authorities.

Still, the most charming addition to our house was my wife's collection of animals—her tame mongoose and monkey, and her deer and peacock, for which I made an enclosed Japanese garden, with proper artificial mountain, and stepping-stones, and stone lanterns and statues, and an irregular pond complete with red lacquered bridge and a fountain in the centre. With these she refreshed herself in the intervals of her work for village schools and trade unions and co-operative stores.

But I must not linger to detail these things. I will only say that the mother mongoose probably saved my life on one occasion, when she pulled out a big snake that was hiding in my bed and dispatched it on the floor. She would play charmingly, too, pretending that my wrist was a snake and performing her unique feat of coiling into a ball and jumping from the middle of her back with the force of her uncoiling. She loved to sleep with human company except when her babies came from time to time.

Mongoosees never have more than two babies at a time, but once ours had three. Someone else had a little baby mongoose and she happened to catch sight of it. At once she pounced upon it and carried it away upstairs to a little den which she had under the roof, and for some time thereafter she ran about trailing three youngsters instead of two.

§ 2

At the end of 1930 Dr. Besant returned from Europe in broken health, and never recovered. Her memory with regard to material affairs had been failing a little for some time. It was not unnatural at her advanced age—she was eighty-five—and would not have seemed so pathetic had not a few devotees who looked after her physically tried to hide the facts of her decline. She spent her time in reading and quiet reflection, they announced, and was really doing more work than ever before by radiating beneficial forces upon the world. But the fact was she did not attend to the practical work any more because she could not. The Society was carried on by the officers (the Vice-President came over from America) and the Executive Committee.

The last business transaction I did for her was the purchase of a Ford car. Three times she told me to buy it—twice after it had been bought. Before completing the purchase I asked her if she had no objection to going about in a Ford instead of a Rolls-Royce. Her reply was characteristic: “I shall be proud to co-operate with Mr. Ford, even in this small way.”

Afterwards, some devotees persuaded her that it was not dignified for her to ride in a Ford. She called me: “I have decided not to buy that car.” I explained that it was already done.

“What do you mean,” she demanded imperiously, “by buying a car without my orders?” She had forgotten. I had not the heart to tell her that her memory was at fault. I apologized for the “misunderstanding,” and by a stroke of luck sold the car without loss the next day.

In 1931 Dr. Besant made a new will. In it she directed that her living quarters (the traditional residence of the President of the Society) should as far as possible be left in their then condition, as a sort of shrine, and put in the custody of the Outer Head of the Esoteric (Eastern) School of Theosophy. This was quite contrary to her earlier character, and contrary to the scrupulous regard which she had always had for the property of the Society, for the E.S. was a separate organization, and she had always before carefully distinguished it from the Society. From about that time her strength gradually declined, without specific disease or pain, until she died in the September of 1933

and was cremated with great pomp and ceremony at Adyar.

A few years earlier I would have considered severance from Dr. Besant a great calamity. Now it was a relief, for really Annie Besant had left us years before. In these last years her few utterances were almost confined to expressions of anxiety lest the Society become "crystallized." In the Convention of 1931 she appeared for a few minutes, and then for a brief moment she recovered her former fire, and flung to us again the heroic message that each should seek the divine within himself and never in any external place or form.

That statement was of a piece with a birthday resolution which she had written down on the preceding first of October: "I will patiently try to tune my daily life into fuller harmony with that of the divine Master who lives within my heart." It was quite contrary, in my opinion, to the outlook and methods of the group led by Bishop Leadbeater, which grasped her name for their activities and beliefs, and afterwards indeed went so far as to claim the word Theosophy for these and deny it to the views of Krishnamurti and others agreeing with him.

Krishnamurti unconsciously helped them in this, for he spoke often against "your theosophy." Theosophy had become identified in his eyes with the operations of what was really a sect, inasmuch as it claimed evolutionary advantages (the modern equivalent of heavenly rewards) for those who believed in it, and had "sufficient intuition" to follow and obey its leaders.

My own last conversations with Dr. Besant were saddening, they revealed so intimately the pathos of all material greatness. She could speak only of the "little fairies," and wonder why so many pretty little animals died so young. Her loving heart was never impaired by her decline in other respects. It shone all the brighter when she was released from material affairs. The world overcame her. It broke her strength and her mind, but it could not stain her heart, though it were betrayed by many a kiss.

### § 3

Now commenced a painful period for me. As Secretary of the Theosophical Society I had to call for nominations

and to conduct the election to the office of President—a process which was to take nine months, since the electors were scattered all over the world. Sure that if I were President the Society would not be one thing in the proscenium and another behind the scenes, many members requested me to accept nominations. I did so, and on the same day resigned from the office of Hon. Secretary.

Only one other nomination came in—that of Bishop Arundale—and he had the great advantage of me that he claimed to be the candidate wanted by Dr. Besant and her Master, though she had left no evidence to that effect, but had on the contrary repeatedly declined to express an opinion or do anything that might influence the members with reference to her possible successor.

It had happened that seven years earlier she had accepted for a time an occult statement made to her that Bishop Arundale was to be her successor, and in two private and very affectionate letters to him (in which she said she did not wish to miss any hint of the Master's desire) she mentioned it, said she thought he would make a splendid President, and advised him to begin some pre-electioneering in America. These old letters, with others, Bishop Arundale gave to Mr. Jinarajadasa shortly before the death of Dr. Besant, and Mr. Jinarajadasa circulated facsimiles of them as a first move in his election campaign on behalf of his nominee, Bishop Arundale.

In reply to this some members who had been closely in touch with Dr. Besant requested the President *pro tem.*, Mr. A. P. Warrington, to prevent backstairs propaganda by printing Dr. Besant's letters and also their own testimony to her later views, in fairness to the electorate. But he declined to publish anything more than the names of the candidates, and would not allow me a statement of policy, even in the paid advertisement pages of the magazine.

We then had the extraordinary spectacle of a great world-wide Society conducting its presidential election (which was of the nature of a referendum on policy) with no statements published in the presidential magazine—in which the business affairs of the Society had always theretofore been published—and no publication of the electoral roll.

The Society was thus delivered into the hands of other organizations, for Mr. Jinarajadasa had the advantage of possessing lists of active workers in the Eastern School and



other movements to whom to send out his circulars. Those enthusiasts could be relied upon to do all the necessary propaganda among the members of the Society all over the world.

Mr. Jinarajadasa followed up with one circular letter after another. With reference to my memorial lecture on "Dr. Annie Besant and the Theosophical Movement" he circulated and supported an electioneering canard to the effect that in it I had made a studied depreciation of her. He did not quote a single word of the lecture nor allude to my refutation of the canard in the Indian newspaper which first printed it. He misrepresented my policy, ignoring my manifesto, and only one of the General Secretaries in various countries who printed his letters gave me an opportunity to reply. At last came a circular saying that supporters of Professor Wood—acting no doubt under instructions—accused Dr. Besant of misuse of funds. A French lady had so written to him. He circulated her statement in lands as widespread as Europe, India and Australia, with his own testimony to Dr. Besant's honesty. That was going too far. I insisted upon a public explanation, which was ultimately forthcoming—too late, however, to repair the damage done. Though I could forgive him for the harm done to my name among Theosophists and also for thus depriving me of many votes, my regard for Dr. Besant made it impossible for me to forget that some of this mud flung round the world would surely stick to her.

Thus the election which ought to have been a courtly record of policy and opinion—a manifestation of brotherhood in a society established "to form a nucleus of the universal brotherhood of humanity"—degenerated into something worse than any political election I have ever known. Alas, that every experiment in brotherhood should fail, on reaching a modicum of material prosperity.

Since Krishnamurti's announcement that he would have no disciples, and that he disapproved the methods prevailing in the Society, there had been a stream of resignations and lapses, which lost the Society 28,000 (out of 45,000) members between 1928 and the time of the election. This decline was not due to economic depression, as some thought; the biggest part of it took place in 1928, the year of the boom, and besides, the Society had always maintained its upward trend through previous depressions and wars.

The result of all these things was that I received less than five thousand votes while my opponent scored more than fifteen thousand. It was a victory for Bishop Leadbeater, who had at last attained practically full control during Dr. Besant's illness, though he himself, then at the age of eighty-seven, did not live to see the result of the election.

He was entirely sincere in wanting to guide things by his own psychic experience. But in such an atmosphere psychic experiences were bound to come to many people—and to conflict. One afternoon, as I was about to enter the bathroom to wash my hands (I had been gardening) I was told by an inner voice to go at once to the library. When I arrived there I found the Master standing near the table, and the whole room throbbing—as it appeared to me—with his aura. He thanked me, for himself and his colleagues, for what I had done in connection with the election. I record. The true inwardness of it I do not know. I am quite prepared to believe that a thought-form or entity which can be created by a group of people, having psychic influence but no intelligence of its own, can hover above all and impress each sensitive person according to his own subconscious desire.

§ 4

The new President, Mr. Arundale—he now dropped the use of his title of Bishop outside the church activities, as he had announced his intention to do—or Dr. Arundale, if we are to recognize the honorary degree conferred upon him by the short-lived National University—wrote me that his intentions were to pursue a thoroughly liberal policy. I could not congratulate him on his election, considering the way in which it had been conducted, but I wrote wishing him success in the liberal intentions expressed in his letter to me.

But I saw no landing-place for the weary unwelcome foot of the white dove of truth in the new interpretation of the Society's principle of tolerance: “Thou shalt not find fault with a brother's views or activities.” What a convenience that sort of tolerance would be to lawbreakers in general, if only it could be adopted in the outside world!

I learned to detest theosophical politics, with their hiding of everything that does not redound to the credit of

those in power, and their perpetual circles of mutual admiration, but I was left with a high regard for the theosophists scattered over the world as a lovable—albeit most innocent and childlike—body of people.

It is not here, nor is it there, that pure life or truth shall be found. There are no secret passages to truth. No hocus-pocus of incantations, of word or of the subtler word that is thought, can light or fan the central fire. No establishment can establish it ; no communications communicate.

THE END

