

nowhere have I been able to buy it. There is margarine to be had, of course, but that cannot take the place of butter in a child's dietary.

You can buy cherries just now—at sixteen marks a pound—and very good they are. But although there is a noble crop of strawberries you cannot buy them in the big cities except in the "de luxe" establishments. You pay there from twenty-five to forty marks a pound, or if you are my little friend with the pigtails you go without. The dealers in the little towns do not stock them, they say they are too dear, nobody will buy them.

You can get bread—rye-bread—at a moderate price, but you are rationed for it just as you were in wartime. You can buy all the white bread you want, but you must pay from twelve to eighteen

marks a loaf for it. In fact, if you are a little girl or boy in Germany just now your life is one long test of going without. It is even worse than that, because you have other trials also that are the results of having lost the war. What used to be venial sins have become capital crimes. If you break a window or drop ink over your dress or tear your pants on a nail you will have wasted a week's income for the whole family. As a rule you don't, because you are rather a solemn little mortal, pathetically old in adversity and not at all boisterous and—

I do not care if it *was* wrong—I am glad I bought that little girl that candy.

OLIVER MADOX HUEFFER.

Frankfurt a. M.

## Three Hundred Million

**T**HERE is one India we inherit from the story-books: a land of maharajahs decked in plumes and sashes—of dancers swinging heavy skirts to the muffled beat of Oriental music—of elephants in scarlet trappings—of wise men concentrating on the abstract—of magicians tucking themselves in wicker baskets to be hacked to pieces with a broadsword.

There is another India of burnt plains and cholera and fever. In that India the maharajah and the dancing-girl disappear as easily as the first rain of the monsoon falling on the desert. There is one thing grim and all-pervading, and that is misery. Interwoven with it are new aspirations, old bugaboos, certain problems much like those we have at home. But it is a busy world, and for want of time to understand its far-off places better, we tag them with a symbol. A white elephant for Siam, cherry blossoms or a yellow peril for Japan; and for India, because our image is usually the compound of adventure story, swashbuckling verse, rotogravure section and the tales of travellers who know that harems are more interesting to talk about than famines, for India it is usually the maharajah and the mystic, the fakir and the dancing-girl. We credit a romantic image the more willingly because, like the South Sea islands, it comes as something of an antidote to our own less colorful existence. We are as willingly credulous about India as are those Jugoslavs about America, who come prepared to pick up gold in Bridgeport.

### II.

Tonight the kettle-drums of Agra beat in unison. They are miles apart, across the city.

Yet in every crowded street they rise together, fall together, roar out suddenly in chorus like a cataract. All Agra drums, for this is Shab-i-barát.

And once a year, on Shab-i-barát, the Mohammedans of India know that human deeds are measured and their meed allotted. Heaven pronounces judgment, earth rejoices. In every alleyway are Moslems shooting Roman candles. The black sky is striped with flame. Streets smell of powder. Rockets sail above the house-tops. Drums beat, and the nautch-girls dance around the bonfires, stamping their bare feet to the uneven rumble as it gathers speed.

Often in India there is some such festival as Shab-i-barát. Our own religious holidays are less spectacular. Christmas produces Santa Claus; on Easter Sunday the children of Washington roll colored eggs across the White House lawn. Christian fête-days are less garish. But then, in Christian lands there are world's series, dime museums, skating rinks and Coney Islands. India has none of these things. Religion, there, must work weekdays. It must furnish thrills, take the place of sport, inject a little romance into lives as dry as dust. Christianity is not so garish as the faiths of India, and does not need to be.

### III.

For Arjmand Banu, daughter of a Persian line of fortune-hunters, the Taj Mahal was built at Agra. It balances there, at the end of its lane of cypress trees, like some young dancer on a tight-rope. All lights are right for it. In the full glare of Indian noon its white flanks catch the sun like bevelled mirrors. Later, when a kinder light is

turning green cypress trees to black, shadows run along its walls and bring new contours. And at midnight, the slender arches lose their sharpness, the marble terrace turns to meadow, and the white Taj seems a cloud-bank scuttling on the tropic sky. Superlatives of home-coming travellers cannot spoil it. There is little chance of pitching hopes too high.

A temple the like of which the world would never see, was what its builder swore to make it. He was Shah Jahan, this builder—Emperor of India. And to honor the memory of his young wife, Arjmand Banu, he built this mausoleum. Barge and caravan brought marble from Jaipur, jasper from the Punjab, turquoise from Tibet. Draftsmen came from Samarkand, inlayers from Lahore.

Twenty-two years the Taj was building. And Shah Jahan? Always somethings of a libertine, as time passed he lost his grip on life. He dwindled to an old voluptuary. His son deposed him. Seven years he lived a prisoner in his own palace. And then he died, a laughing-stock.

It was fortunate that Shah Jahan happened to be an artist, but inevitable that he would build some mighty structure. For Shah Jahan was a spendthrift, a slave-driver and a nepotist—and because theirs are the right qualities for the task it is usually the spendthrifts, the slave-drivers and the nepotists who give the world its architectural luxuries. Amenophis IV was as wise as any king of Egypt we know about; but Cheops was vain, despotic and prodigal with the energies of his slaves; and so it was Cheops who gave us the Great Pyramid. Marcus Aurelius was perhaps the finest of the Roman emperors; but Marcus Aurelius left no great monument to his own selfishness behind him; and it was Nero who built the Golden Palace. Louis the Fourteenth, not the French Republic, built Versailles. The good die young, make men think, or govern nobly. It is the bad who leave their footprints on the sands of time.

#### IV.

Three hundred miles northwest of Agra the Golden Temple of Amritsar rises from a sacred lake. It is a bright copper island. One marble bridge leads out to it, lined with holy men who scourge themselves or stare into the sun until they lose their eyeballs. The pond is full of men and women praying half-submerged, or splashing as they rinse themselves in this rejuvenating water. Inside the Temple lies the one true bible of the Sikhs, the Granth Sahib, reposing on a footstool draped with crimson, green and yellow.

The Sikhs, whose chief shrine is this Golden Temple, founded their religion largely as a protest movement. Four hundred years ago they mutinied against Hindu priestcraft. A fiery prophet led them. They affirmed that God is one, the worship of idols abominable. They denounced the caste system. They forbade infanticide. They demanded that women be freed from harem prisons. They were thorough-going rebels.

The prophet has been dead for fifteen generations. The mutiny is over. Caste has crept back into the Sikh communities. Priestcraft officiates in the Golden Temple. The Granth Sahib, once a polemic against idolatry, has itself become an idol. . . . It is an interesting place, this temple, but it suggests no curious transfiguration. Often in the history of religions comes the protestant. And the disciples who fumble what he taught them ere his words are cold.

#### V.

Famine and fever climb the foothills with you, go halfway to the mountain passes, then drop back beaten. North of one spur of the Himalayas, encircled by the tallest mountains west of Everest, lies the Vale of Kashmir.

Its people call it "Happy Valley." The soil is rich. Water tumbles itself, getting down the mountain sides to irrigate the fields. Red pomegranates line the roadsides. A winding road of poplars leads between round lakes, where rafts of reed make floating gardens. You pass women with black hair and slim straight bodies; unlike most of Asia they carry burdens on their heads, and not, with bent backs, across their shoulders. There are few of India's beggars and few of India's crippled children. Here and there is a town bright green on top, with grass growing a foot high on the roofs of every cottage. And always at the end of every vista is the snow of the Himalayas.

You can imagine this valley making crusaders of each generation, sending it crusading with the word that here was something fine enough to warrant faith. New religions, you might think, would keep tumbling down from Kashmir like its mountain freshets. But that is not what happens. It was from an arid Syrian hillside that Christ came—Mohammed from the desert, Buddha from the scorched plain that lies below these same Himalayas. The Kashmirs have less need of visions. It is the badlands that produce religions.

#### VI.

Far below the Vale of Kashmir, in three cities of the plains, still stand the palaces that housed the

kings of India before the days of British conquest. All three are royal quarters: pearl mosques and peacock thrones, arenas built for pitting elephant against tiger, great chessboards where slave girls played the part of living pieces. Life could be lived comfortably in these Indian palaces, even in India's climate. Each had bathing pools, floors tunneled with narrow waterways to cool the air above, towers contrived to catch the most reluctant breeze.

The western tourist, trudging through these empty halls, sees something either to marvel at or, if his interest lies that way, to associate with an incident of the Mutiny of 1857. But to the Indians themselves these palaces are neither spectacles nor landmarks. They are reminders of a lost independence, and a line of monarchs that has vanished. Shah Jahan, who built the Taj; Baber, whose battle-front was as wide as Europe; Akbar, who founded an administrative system that survives in India today.

Time is not a standard product. To the British, Akbar and Baber and Shah Jahan seem almost legendary figures; and to the Indians—those who know their country's history—it seems they ruled but yesterday. Indians and Koreans and Mexicans remember what British and Japanese and Americans forget. Time is versatile. It can even work two ways at once. For while the Mogul emperors are recent enough to be vivid symbols for an Indian, they are far enough off for him to have forgotten the iron hand of Baber, the tax revenues of Shah Jahan, and even the fact that these kings too hailed from an alien race of conquerors.

#### VII.

The crowd inside the circus tent is spellbound. It has fought hard, through a still greater crowd outside, to get there. It does not mind the choking air, or the sun that bakes the weather-beaten canvas. It is watching Gandhi. He sits on a raised platform in the centre of the ring, preaching "passive revolution." He is a small man, sick and weary. He has no eloquence. He has not even the ability to make himself heard by the top rows of men and women who are slowly cooking. He speaks quietly and without gesture. The crowd does not interrupt. It watches him half-fascinated, as it might watch a battle. But when he has finished, top rows and lower rows bolt impetuously for him. It is not like an audience surging up to shake hands with a Congressman. It is the sudden rush of a college crowd, storming the man who saved the game, to carry him off in triumph.

This tired man is acknowledged leader of

Indian nationalism. But India does not stop with that. Through distant villages runs the legend that Gandhi is a new incarnation of the spirit Vishnu. He has power to heal the sick and bless the blind with vision. If crops fail, he will grow cotton on the banyan trees. He can stop a British bullet.

The East is bolder with its imagery, but we are all good hero-worshippers. We do not take the great man with a grain of salt. If we admire him profoundly we want him just a little more than human. The soldiers storm the enemy trench with superhuman courage. The violinist plays with superhuman skill. The home run king clears the bases with a superhuman swing. Let a man found a new religion or lead the league in batting, and if the admiration he awakens is passionate enough, his disciples will supply the miracles.

#### VIII.

Caste brands one Indian in every five "untouchable." That means it is pollution for the other four to take his hand or bump against him in the street. These other four must guard a precious social chastity. They move about in their own tight compartments of society, seldom intermarrying and never rising from a lower level to a higher one. Their castes date back theoretically to an original employment as priest, warrior, artisan and serf. The "untouchable" is not fifth. He is outside the system altogether. He is clay that would not make a man.

One fifth of India's people are "untouchable," and "untouchable" solely for the reason that their parents, and their parents' parents, have belonged in that stratum of society. They have never sinned against a code. Their sin was being born. In many parts of India they are forced to live outside the villages. They are often forbidden to draw water from the public wells. In certain places they may not even pass through streets inhabited by high-caste Brahmins. And sometimes it happens that they are not only "untouchable," but "unapproachable," "unshadowable" and even "unseeable" as well.

No one is certain how all this came to pass in India. As contributory causes, sociologists suggest poverty, a systematic division of labor, and successive layers of conquerors. But these things are not peculiar to India; China has them—and China has no caste like India's. It is easier to see what keeps the system going than be sure what started it. Caste has chiefly provincialism and autocracy to thank for its lease on life. "Untouchability" is practicable when people stay at home;



less practicable on railroad trains. It works with despotism; but once there is a ballot-box, the politician has yet to be discovered to whom any conceivable vote would seem untouchable.

India may lose the caste system while we are still searching for its sources. But that need not check our scientific ardor. We can turn our efforts, then, to rationalizing the class systems that will inevitably follow caste.

#### IX.

Whoever dies in the holy city of Benares, say the Hindus, will straightway go to heaven however black his sins. For Benares is the gate to paradise. Here Brahma sacrificed ten horses, and here a million pilgrims come each year to worship. They bring leprosy and fever with them. It is the right place to die; so there are thousands who delay their coming until death all but has them down.

It is an unattractive city. A maze of dirty alleys hides another Golden Temple. Its floor is covered with a slime of fruit-skins and crushed flowers. Its idols are sheer perversion, clumsily contrived. Red bulls are pinioned to its altars with rings out through their nostrils. They moo, and pilgrims offer sacrifice. The air reeks. There is not one square inch of dignity. Religion has got down on all fours and grovelled.

Farther on, along the riverfront, the dead wait on the pavement for their funeral pyre. It is hastily built, and it only chars these lean brown bodies. What goes to ashes is scattered on the oily water. And it is in this sacred Ganges, unimaginably foul, that men and women wash their sins away.

Benares is a rare treat for the western tourist. It caters to him with the bizarre and the exotic. But it is a pillory for India's friends. Nor is this only western prejudice and squeamishness about dirt. It is Gandhi, himself a passionate Hindu, who brands Benares "an abomination," "no longer holy."

Benares is the Hindu religion carried far beyond the simpler saga-telling and Roman candle shooting it sometimes seems to be, in other parts of India. And it is something very different from the pure theory of the Indian intellectual, and the austere faith that successive Indian protestants have sought to make it. Repeatedly has a new, purged version of the Hindu faith been put upon the market. But religions which are simple and straightforward, religions which neither feed superstition nor arouse prejudice, sometimes die for sheer want of opposition. There is a certain Gresham's law in all religions. Not only in India

has it happened that over a long period of time, with two coins in competition, the baser tends to drive the more valuable out of circulation.

#### X.

The last of India that an eastbound traveller sees is the Hoogli River twisting through a water-sodden delta. India disappears into a sky that looks as if it had been coated with the thick brown sediment of the river.

India disappears—too massive and too much a medley to leave a picture with sharp lines. Its people, one remembers, speak a hundred dialects. They are divided by religious quarrels that have led to open fighting within the last twelve months. They range in culture from the winner of a Nobel prize for verse to woodsmen who have never seen a sheet of writing paper. Customs vary—so much that fifty miles of India often change dress and manners more completely than two oceans change them elsewhere. Caste varies in rigidity. Ceremony varies. India is twenty lands, all light and shadow, a home for almost everything except the golden mean.

Over its burnt fields swarms a vast population—marching, as the legend says, in uneven stages through all the centuries from fifth to twentieth.

CHARLES MERZ.

### E. Collins, 2 b.

I READ of blunders and bigotries, of catastrophic acts of blind ignorance, of the incredible bungling of statesmen and those in high places and then my jaundiced eye, arrived at the sporting page, brightens. It falls upon a name in a column of names.

"E. Collins, 2 b," reads the heartening box-score, "a. b.-4, h.-3, o.-2, a.-3, e.-0."

With Senator McCumber, I join in the belief that God's sun still shines over us. Little Eddie Collins is still out there playing as near perfect ball as is permitted mortal man in a universe where error seems to be the order of the day.

Fifteen years ago when the Class of 1907, Columbia College, came up for graduation, its members were confronted with certain time-honored questions concerning their favorite authors, poets, historical characters, newspapers, actresses and habits. Assiduously gathered by the editors of the senior yearbook, the answers to the questions are presented every year to a waiting world as evidences of the tastes of the enlightened.