

Hyderabad

By William Frederick Dix



VISIT to the independent principality of Hyderabad, in southern India, is a plunge into mediævalism. The government of a prince who is practically a despot, the power of feudal lords or rajahs, the lack of strength in any central power, the free, adventurous life, the gorgeous costumes of the people, the pageants of petty rulers and their suites—all these bewilder the traveler. As he passes through the thronged streets of the capital, elbowed by Afghans and Khurds from the north, by Bengali, Brahmins, and Punjabi, all garbed in glittering brocade or brilliant cloths from Kashmir, or in pure white, all armed with sword, dagger, and enormous pistols, he feels that he is indeed living in the days of chivalry or of the Arabian Nights.

Hyderabad, the country, is in the center of southern India, and is still free from British control, although a British "Resident" lives in the capital, and it is said that before the Nizam ever does anything important "he has a chat with him." This prince has always been friendly to England, and England has followed the wise policy of giving him, at least in appearance, autonomy for his country, which has about ten million inhabitants.

Hyderabad, the city, is the capital, and is a walled city of about three hundred and fifty thousand people, and is entered by thirteen gates. From the railroad that runs diagonally across India from Madras to Bombay, a branch road has been built, through the country of Hyderabad (which is about equal in size to Ireland), to its capital in its center. Of all places in India, this dazzling city is the most turbulent and unsafe. Within its walls each man is his own guardian. The two ruling classes of society, the Mohammedans and the Hindus, are at enmity with each other, and petty chieftains coming down in quest of adventure from the wild districts of the north, with their bold retainers, eager for a fray on any excuse, make life exceedingly interesting, for there is almost no police or military surveillance.

As these maharajahs, rajahs, and chieftains vie with each other in the splendor of their apparel and the number and magnificence of their weapons, the streets, lined with rose-colored buildings carved in arabesque designs and thronged with scarlet-caparisoned elephants, with camels, and with chariots drawn by white bullocks, and *tongas* with two horses, are more brilliant and spectacular than can be described.

In the town itself there is no place where the European traveler may stop, but six miles away a Eurasian has a comfortable bungalow for the entertainment of the infrequent visitor.

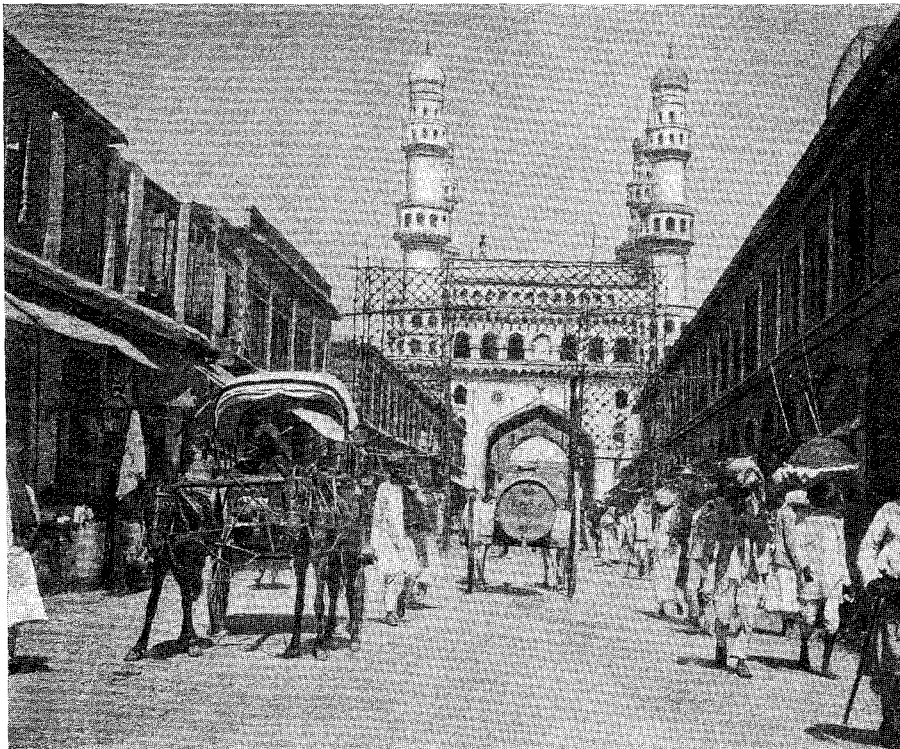
In the morning one is called early by his *khitmighar*, who has slept at his door-sill. A native servant is indis-

pensable; he attends to all his master's personal wants, acting as a valet, table servant, and courier. He buys and cooks his own food, and at night, when all are asleep, he unfolds his turban, wraps himself in its generous folds, stretches himself outside the doorway, and finds surcease from the day's labors in the temporary Nirvana of night.

At seven o'clock he arouses his master, and bears in a tray with the tea, toast, and plantain of *chotta hazree* or "little breakfast." Not waiting for the more substantial meal at nine, we enter the *tonga* or two-wheeled, basket-roofed cart and are driven over the level, dusty road to the city. It is a continuous settlement, with huts, bungalows, rows of bazaars, and an occasional mosque of Mohammedan architecture, with beautiful white arabesque doorways and graceful minarets spearing up into the blue. A shallow lake or so are passed, with gray storks flapping lazily away as we approach, and a muddy river with innumerable *dhobies* and *dhoba* beating wet linen upon the rocks. These washermen and women dip the clothes in the none-too-crystalline water, swing them in the air in

a circle above their heads, and slap them against the stones. They are dried by being spread upon the dusty banks. These people form a caste by themselves, and clothing is always washed in this manner throughout the land.

This river is the Moosa, and a picturesque scene it is. The water lies in pools and little branching streams among the sand strips, and in the brown waters are huge elephants wallowing and lying upon their sides, being scrubbed by their keepers, and everywhere the crouching



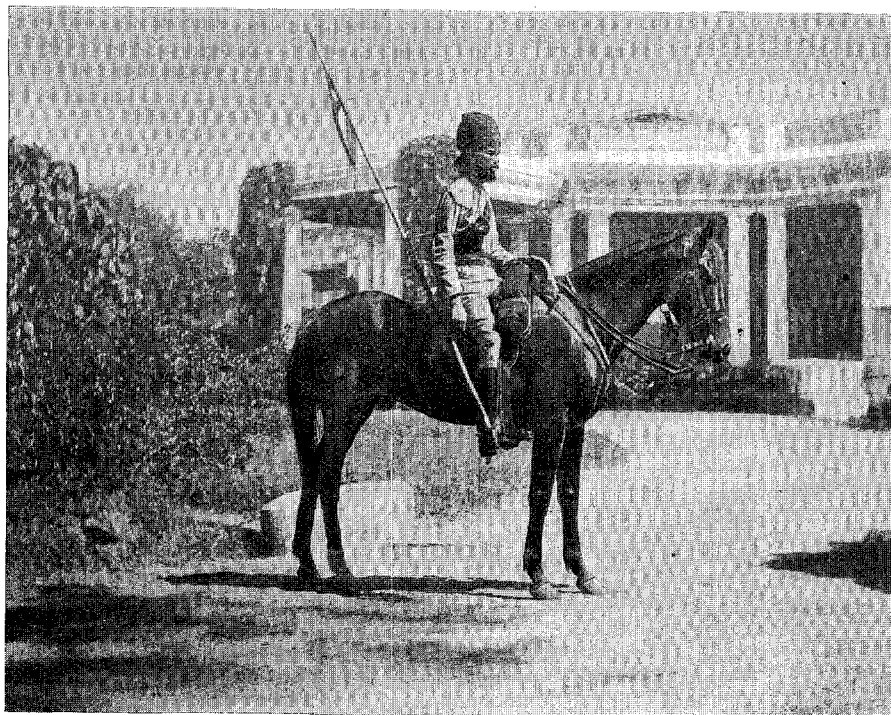
CHAR MINAR, IN THE CENTER OF THE CITY—HYDERABAD
From a Photograph by the Author

dhobies with the white linen twinkling over their heads.

A great creamy wall appears suddenly before us, and a massive gate with heavy oaken portals, studded with spikes to keep hostile elephants of war from butting their heads against them. The ponies' hoofs ring out sharply upon a stone pavement, and then—Hyderabad, hot, dusty, crowded, kaleidoscopic, and bewildering. A city without one single European element, of ever-changing scenes, and a populace representing all the races of India, fierce, wild, armed, and kept in check only by the lawless army of the Nizam, who, next to the Sultan of Turkey, is the most powerful Mohammedan ruler in the world.

The streets are straight and wide, dusty and crowded; there is none of the tangle and darkness of an Oriental city with its high buildings and narrow, sinuous alleys; this is not Oriental, it is—Hyderabad.

The main street extends before us straight away from the gate, meeting midway a similar street at right angles to it, which cuts the city, likewise, from wall to wall. At the junction of the two the great Char Minar, a lofty white tower used for storing grain in case of a famine, pins the city to earth in its very center. Upon each side of us as



A SOLDIER OF THE NIZAM
From a Photograph by the Author

we approach it are the low, two-storied, flat-roofed buildings, each with its open bazaar in front, shaded by gay canopies and awnings. In the bazaars are cotton cloths woven upon hand-looms, robes of tinsel, of dyed silk, and of cloth-of-gold. Here and there we see a bit of *kinkob* of beautiful texture, with strands of pure gold shot through it. In some bazaars are turbans, jeweled slippers, soft camel's-hairs and cheddars from Kashmir, and brocades gorgeous beyond description. Many of the arched doorways are decorated with scimitars, shields of translucent elephant's hide, daggers wrought with gold and having blades that by means of a spring in the handle separate into three parts, opening within the wound. Others have pious inscriptions from the Koran upon the handle, and a scalloped edge to the blade, so that the wound, when inflicted, will not heal. In many are stores of rice and grain, spices, sugar-cane, and flat loaves of bread. In others are golden nose-rings, circlets for the arm and the ankle, and ornaments for the nose, the ears, the fingers, and the toes.

The poorer classes wear scanty costumes. The women have strips of bright-colored cotton cloths about their waists, draped into a short skirt, and they wear short jackets. The men wear white turbans and loin-cloths. The Afghans, Khurds, Punjabi, and Persians have their distinguishing costumes, and every man carries a sashful of swords and pistols. Many carry swords, long and curved, in their hands; some have ancient, long-barreled, smooth-bore guns over their shoulders. Every one wears either the turban or the fez, and these two significant head-gears represent the keynote of much of the violence and lawlessness.

The vehicles are most peculiar. The *gharrie* is a two-wheeled, box-like affair drawn by a pony or hump-necked bullock. Under the canopy, upon the floor, squats the occupant. Country carts with solid wooden wheels and palm-thatched canopy are drawn by bullocks or hideous black buffaloes. Occasionally we meet a most remarkable chariot having a flat body over four wheels and a high canvas tent held up by four poles, the whole affair dusty, creaking, ramshackly, and un-

painted. Elephants are frequent, with red blankets and two or three riders. In front of the howdah, between the ears, crouches the *mahout*, who guides the beast with his heels and goads him with an instrument very like a short boat-hook. Palanquins are carried by four *dhoolies*, and, if women are within them, are covered with gay drapery. The *dhoolies* grunt a weird song as they shuffle along, and sometimes servants armed with spears run at each side and in front to clear a way through the throng. *Nawabs* and ministers of state ride in landaus of European make and in coaches, but they are decked out gorgeously, lined with white satin within and covered on the outside with red quilted cloths. Often a troop of eight or ten lance-carrying sepoy's ride in front on horseback, and as many more bring up the rear. Once in a while a camel passes laden with farm produce.

Now and then we make a hasty visit to a bazaar to buy a particularly fascinating old shield or a bit of old brocade, but we attract too much attention to remain long from the *tonga*,

and it is safer to keep moving. There are no interiors of great interest to the traveler, the mosques are small, and the palace of the Nizam, with its gardens and zenanas of three hundred women and seven thousand servants, is not open to inspection.

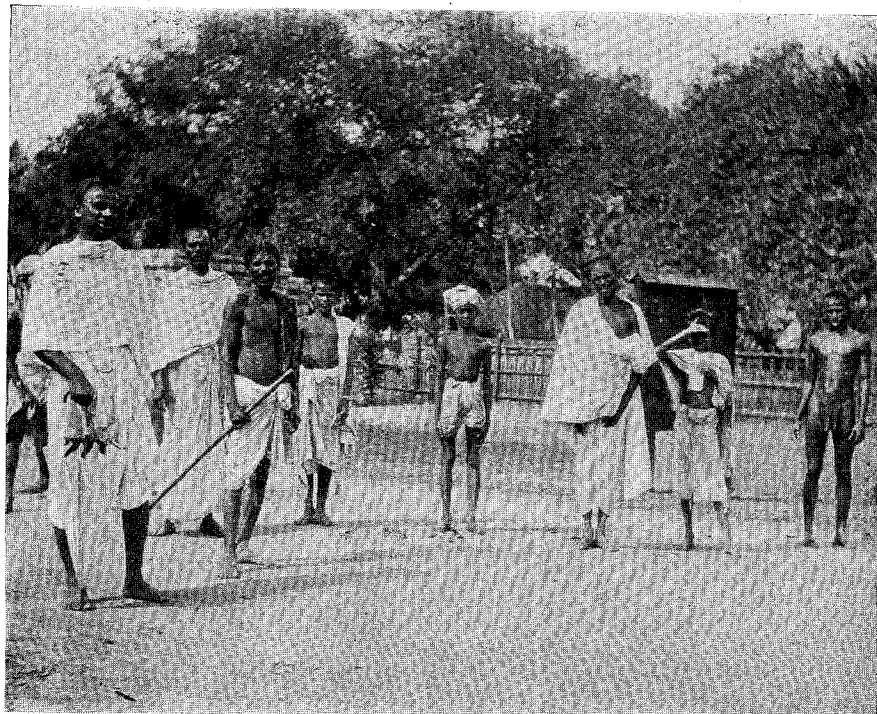
So at noon we take our tiffin in a shady grove outside the walls, and as the cool of the evening begins to be felt, we retrace our way to the little bungalow that gives us safe shelter for the night.

One morning our servant comes in and with a profound salaam inquires: "Does the sahib wish his *chotta hazree*?"

No, the sahib desires above all things just then to continue in repose. The bed is not *too* hard, the *punkah wallah* is slumberously pulling the swinging fan above the bed, suspended from the ceiling, the rats have ceased their nocturnal peregrinations, and even the cawing of the crows sounds far away.

"Does the sahib desire that the *dhobie* shall take his linen to the river?"

There is method in this insistent and slumber-dispelling



A GROUP OF NATIVES
From a Photograph by the Author

questioning. The *dhobie* himself appears at the doorway and humbly inquires:

"Molly golly poggie woggle doodle, Sahib?"—at least that is about the way it sounds. The "sweep" is pouring fresh cold water into the wooden tub in the bath cell adjoining, and there is nothing for it but to rise and allow the *punkah wallah* to enjoy the profits of his all-night's work—eight annas, or sixteen cents in our money.

There is to be a great event in the city to-day, and it behooves us to start betimes. In two hours we are again in Hyderabad. The streets have now more than ever, if that is possible, a gala appearance. People in all stations of life are coming in from the surrounding country. The bazaars and squares are thronged, and towards noon a brightly garbed stream of humanity is moving in the direction of a large park outside the wall. There is to be a great attraction here to-day, and expectation runs high.

Just as there are many Oriental customs and productions that seem fantastic and strange to us, so many things which seem commonplace to Western races are wonderful to those who live in the other hemisphere. We prize Oriental rugs and hangings and weapons as being rare and beautiful, and they, on the other hand, hold articles that are cheap enough to us in high estimation. Nothing delights an Indian *nawab* or nobleman so much as to have at least one or two rooms in his palace furnished in gaudy Brussels carpets, glaring chromos, mechanical clocks, and gilt furniture. A billiard-table there is like an Arabian horse here. And so to-day the English balloonist, who is actually to soar above the tree-tops in his wonderful vehicle, is looked upon as little less than a god.

Some of the nobles are promenading on foot. Behind each walk his retainers, one bearing upon a velvet cushion his sword, another his golden drinking-vessel, and so on. When the *nawabs* meet, each salaams effusively, and the servants of one salaam to the servants of the other. They wear brocade coats of purple, red, blue, pink, yellow, and orange, gold belts, sashes, and scimetars with jeweled hilts and enameled scabbards. Their trousers are of white

muslin, their turbans of cloth-of-gold, soft silk, or embroidery. The Parsees and Persians dress in darker colors, and their head-dresses are small and dark. Sepoys with long lances and red turbans strut about; military adventurers, bearded and with long, flowing hair; groups of servants in strange liveries, palanquins whose curtains shelter the ladies—all these help make up the throng. In one place stands a hunter with a hooded falcon upon his arm, with leash and red hood over its eyes.

The throng suddenly separates, and the chariot of the Nizam himself appears—*Oozoorbasha* he is called by his subjects. The sepoy guard clears the way, and he is seen sitting in great dignity. He has long black hair, an irregular beard, piercing eyes, and a cold, haughty countenance. He is twenty-five years old, and is considered rather a weak man. His revenues amount to ten millions a year.

And now the open field is surrounded with as gorgeous a throng as the sun ever shone upon, the balloon is inflated after many delays, the balloonist enters it, and the cords are cut. The balloon rises perhaps two hundred feet, flaps over the trees for a few minutes, and sinks to the ground. Great is the enthusiasm! The crowd is in ecstasies. Never was there so wonderful a phenomenon! And as the low sun enlarges into an immense flat red disk as it sinks into the haze, the city of Hyderabad is again thronged with its brilliant populace returning from the park.

Through the twilight we drive homeward. Here and there are lean, dark figures, naked and heavy-moving, still plodding behind the wooden plow, toiling in their sterile farms. The cool shelter of the banyan woods, or the pleasures within those shining walls behind us, are not for them. In the arid river basins the *dhobies* still are beating the linen wearily, and as we pass through the ragged, forlorn villages a few lepers solicit alms in dumb misery. The huts are of mud, with thatched roofs; and squalor, labor, ignorance, and disease are their inmates. Hyderabad, the jewel of India, with its ruby walls, still glows in the red light of sunset, but its setting is dark and the shadows are black—black and unfathomable.

KATE CARNEGIE¹

By Ian Maclaren

Author of "Beside the Bonnie Brier-Bush," "The Days of Auld Lang Syne," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XIX.—THE FEAR OF GOD

It was the way of the Free Kirk that the assisting minister at the Sacrament should sit behind the Communion Table during the sermon, and the congregation, without giving the faintest sign of observation, could estimate its effect on his face. When Doctor Dowbiggin composed himself to listen as became a Church leader of substantial build—his hands folded before him and his eyes fixed on the far window—and was so arrested by the opening passage of Cunningham's sermon on Justification by Faith that he visibly started, and afterwards sat sideways with his ears cocked, Drumtochty, while doubtful whether any Muirtown man could appreciate the subtlety of their minister, had a higher idea of the Doctor; and when the Free Kirk minister of Kildrummie—a stout man and given to agricultural pursuits—went fast asleep under a masterly discussion of the priesthood of Melchisedek, Drumtochty's opinion of the intellectual condition of Kildrummie was confirmed beyond argument.

During his ministry of more than twenty years the Rabbi had never preached at Drumtochty—being fearful that he might injure the minister who invited him, or might be so restricted in time as to lead astray by ill-balanced statements—and as the keenest curiosity would never have induced any man to go from the Glen to worship in another parish, the Free Kirk minister of Kilbogie was still unjudged in Drumtochty. They were not sorry to have the

opportunity at last, for they had suffered not a little at the hands of Kilbogie in past years, and the coming event disturbed the flow of business at Muirtown market.

"Ye're tae hae the Doctor at laist," Mains said to Netherton—letting the luck-penny on a transaction in seed-corn stand over—"an' a'm jidgin' the time's no been lost. He's plainer an' easier tae follow then he wes at the affgo. Ma word"—contemplating the exercise before the Glen—"but ye 'ill aye get eneuch here and there tae cairry hame." Which shows what a man the Rabbi was, that on the strength of his possession a parish like Kilbogie could speak after this fashion to Drumtochty.

"He 'ill hae a fair trial, Mains"—Netherton's tone was distinctly severe—"an' mony a trial he's hed in his day, they say: wes't three an' twenty kirks he preached in, afore ye took him? But mind ye, length's nae standard in Drumtochty; na, na, it's no hoo muckle wind a man hes, but what like is the stuff that comes. It's bushels doon bye, but it's wecht up bye."

Any prejudice against the Rabbi, created by the boasting of a foolish parish not worthy of him, was reduced by his venerable appearance before the pulpit, and quite dispelled by his unfeigned delight in Carmichael's conduct of the "preliminaries." Twice he nodded approval to the reading of the hundredth Psalm, and although he stood with covered face during the prayer, he emerged full of sympathy. As his boy read the 53d of Isaiah the old man was moved well-nigh to tears, and on the giving out of the text from the parable of the Prodigal Son, the Rabbi closed his

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