THE INTEREST OF INDIA.*

Americans are beginning to do decidedly more reading about British India. The incentives range from the deeper and more definite concern with oriental world-politics that followed our acquisition of the Philippines, to the picturesqueness of the Delhi durbars, the readability of Mr. Kipling at his best, or the number of our missionaries. The only surprise is that the growth of active interest has been so slow; for it is inconceivable that anybody should fail to find something to attract and hold him, if he will ever glance at that incredible peninsula. Nor should this dangerously comprehensive statement be narrowed by limiting its application to students of art, or philosophy, or ethnology, or religion, or history, or government. It is obvious that all these must find a rich and even boundless field in India; but for other less exalted mortals the attractiveness is just as compelling. For instance, a sturdy New Zealand traveller on the Pacific said to me: "I don't care a straw about architecture or that sort of rot, but the Taj Mahal is in my heart forever." One unpretentious and thoroughly Ameri-

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*THE WEST IN THE EAST. By Price Collier. Illustrated. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

AMONG INDIAN RAJAHS AND RYOTS. By Sir Andrew Fraser, K.C.S.I. Illustrated. Philadelphia: The J. B. Lippincott Co.

JUNGLE BY-WAYS IN INDIA. By E. P. Stebbing. Illustrated. New York: John Lane Co.

BENARES. By C. Phillips Cape. Illustrated. Boston: Richard G. Badger.

can woman declared that any railway station in India was better than the best circus in the United States. Occasionally, it is true, you meet the creature who sees in Benares not the "Oxford and Mecca of Hinduism," not the most striking river front in the world, with its combination of "temples, palaces, pinnacles, shrines, towers, and minarets," but simply the dirtiest and worst-smelling city on the globe. However, such a person is rare; and if one finds no joy in Benares, there remain the villages, the plains, the Himalayas, the birds, the beasts, Agra, Udaipur, Delhi, and Amber, — a thousand sources of pleasure. Only one visitor have I ever met who felt discontent with everything; but he was an elderly American millionaire travelling in his private car, and his own charming wife smiled upon him with an infinite pity that he could not comprehend.

It has been definitely determined that King George will hold a coronation durbar at Delhi next winter; and it will be the only regal function I should decidedly care to see. Of all the splendid and picturesque pageants in the history of the world, this may be the most picturesque and splendid. The palace of the Moghul emperors in itself seemed to me worth a trip around the world; and in the old imperial surroundings East and West will meet in all the pomp and circumstance of war and peace. Here a foreigner from over the "Black Water"— the mere crossing whereof involves almost inexpiable pollution for the Hindu — will be crowned emperor of over three hundred and fifteen millions of people. In these millions will be included every stage of human development, from the most primitive, almost simian, savage to the purest blooded and most sophisticated Aryan. One must not think of India as a nation. It is no more a nation than is all Europe with half of Africa thrown in; for you find just as fundamental differences among its various peoples and tribes as between the Cossack and the Neapolitan, the cultured Parisian and the Nubian negro. India is a geographical expression, meaning a million and three-quarters of square miles of territory peopled by such divergent inhabitants as I have suggested. Over this continent, with its teeming millions, it is the task of Great Britain to rule, and her success or failure is one of the most momentous questions ever presented to students of government.

It is the question which Mr. Price Collier proposed to answer in his work entitled "The West in the East." His volume is a beautiful example of an exceedingly readable book written by an able man who knows he has no particular right to be heard. Mr. Collier spent six months in the country under the wing of government officials and maharajahs. With a brilliant journalistic instinct, he grasped a lot of essentials and proceeded to set them forth with a lot of interesting non-essentials and a number of perfectly obvious blunders. The result is one of the most provoking books a reviewer is called upon to examine. If one is at all familiar with India, one becomes irritated to a most unphilosophical degree by inaccuracies, by ill-grounded judgments, by the persistent injection of impertinent observations, and many similar defects; but just at the point of explosion one is calmed by the thought of the general usefulness of the book and the validity of its more important conclusions. For instance, with reference to the success or failure of British rule in India, Mr. Collier believes England is genuinely serving the cause of humanity and carrying out a superhuman task with superb devotion and astonishing success. "There is no land, I believe, governed by such self-sacrificing rulers, and ruling over such ignorant multitudes." Again, he gives us this spicily worded bit: "My own opinion as an observer from the outside is, that the peoples of India are no more fit for representative government than are the inmates of a menagerie, and that were the British to leave India for three months, India would resemble a circus tent in the dark, with the menagerie let loose inside." In a similar spirit he reads his fellow countrymen a pointed and pertinent lecture on their maudlin sympathy with "the so-called Indian patriots" in America.

> "But this attempt of the Brahman agitators to oust the British, or at all events to gain more offices, more authority and more power for themselves, is an effort to replace British control by the rule of the Brahman, which represents the most tyrannical, the most un-American, and the most revolting social, religious, and political autocracy the world has ever seen. How any American, whatever his ideals or his sympathies, can lend his influence in support of a movement to increase the power of the Brahman caste in India, politically or otherwise, can only be explained on two grounds: he is either maliciously mischievous, or he is ignorant."

The same high appreciation of British rule is seen in the chapter on Bunia-Pani, perhaps the best section of the book. With the general spirit of Mr. Collier's conclusion, I am in most hearty accord; and it is worth recalling that the two Frenchmen best qualified to write on India have spoken in a tone of approval almost as unqualified.

This opinion receives strong confirmation from a new book diametrically the opposite of Mr. Collier's. Sir Andrew H. G. Fraser, the author of "Among Indian Rajahs and Ryots," served the Crown for thirty years, including five years as Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. In his octavo volume of reminiscences he has made no explicit claims for the success of British rule; his aim is "to convey some idea to the ordinary British imagination of the life we live in India, and of the peoples among whom that life is spent." But before the reader closes the book he will repeat once more, "It is well that a nation is willing to give such sons to serve an alien people." In the author's aim, as quoted above, he succeeds most admirably; and one is carried from chapter to chapter with unflagging interest. We associate with European and Indian officers, as well as civilians. We are present at the complicated and bewildering operations of the law courts. We share the thrilling excitement of grain riots, or the sanguinary uprising of the Khonds. We watch the peasant in the field, and note the efforts of his rulers to save him from the money-lender. We are intro-

duced to the latest phases of the educational problem and the political unrest. We smile with the humors of administration, or are carried off at Christmastide to share in the capture of a herd of wild elephants. At every turn we have the delightful feeling that our author knows whereof he speaks. The book is more human than Lord Cromer's two volumes on Egypt, without being less authoritative. It can be recommended most cordially.

Our third book, "Jungle By-Ways in India," joins the preceding only in the paths of the jungle. I regret that my knowledge of hunting in India is limited to books and to tales of Indian acquaintances; but Mr. Stebbing's unpretentious volume seems to me a model. It is the outcome of "sixteen pleasant and interesting years in the Indian Forest Service," and has all the freshness of notes and sketches made "on the spot and at the time." The "shikari" will acknowledge a debt for the "tracks" of Indian game animals, as well as a lot of other information; but any lover of wild life and of the open air will enjoy these three hundred pages on "Antlers," "Horns," and "Pelts." The following passage from the preface reflects very accurately the spirit of the whole volume:

"It is an experience common to many true sportsmen, I believe, that they soon grow tired of the mere slaughter of the animals they go out to seek. Gradually the fascination of the jungle lays its hold upon them, and of the jungle-loving denizens. It becomes a pastime of absorbing interest to watch the life of the jungle in its daily round from early morn to dewy eve, and again in the solemn watches of the night. It becomes an ambition to learn from, and strive to emulate, the jungle man in his knowledge of all jungle lore, and to strive to pick up some of his marvelous tracking powers. Long years of close study, combined with an exceptional aptitude for absorbing jungle lore, must be passed through before one can hope to even approach the powers in this respect of the jungle man. But what a store of glorious memories do such years contain! From such a store I have endeavored to depict the fund of pleasure, interest, and knowledge, let alone that breezy spice of danger which adds zest to all sport, which await the student of jungle life in the shimmering East."

After reading these lines one is prepared for such a paragraph as this:

"Oh, the sunsets of the East! Can skill with pen or brush ever portray them in anything like their wonderful intensity? Ephemeral they, for as one strives with strained and fixed gaze to take in all their beauty, lo! they change and melt, soften and disappear, and leave us with cold greys or blues or blacks."

Nor does one need to be told how Mr. Stebbing enjoyed watching a leopard *au naturel*, and rejoiced that his gun had been left behind. I must note, too, that the author has a relieving sense of humor, seen, for example, in his very brief description of a runaway lunch-bearing elephant.

The last of the volumes in our present group raises the knotty problem of the evangelization of India. "If only Benares could be won for Christ, more than Benares would be won." The author is himself a missionary, and believes that the cross will triumph despite the modesty of its past achievements. This hopefulness is shared by Sir Andrew Fraser, who believes that the outlook of Christianity in India was never so favorable as at present, and feels that "the evangelization of its peoples is assured if the church in the West and the church in India are found alive to their responsibility and faithful to their duty." In another passage he pays a high tribute to the Methodist Episcopal Church of America. Mr. Collier, on the other hand, is openly skeptical as to the missionary movement. The missionaries, he says, "have made practically no impression upon India, and the best of them, both European and native, admit as much themselves." I have quoted these contradictory opinions because they represent exactly what I found when visiting India. For every three men who told me the missionaries were accomplishing anything worth while, there were other three to enter a flat denial; and how shall an outsider presume to judge between them? This much, however, seems to be clear: that the Hindu is by nature better adapted to carry out the turn-the-other-cheek doctrine of Christianity than the occidental nations, who never dream of doing anything of the kind; and that up to the present the converts have been practically limited to the lowest castes, or the out-castes. To me it would seem that, for the average Hindu, a Christian sect comes dangerously near to being nothing except a new caste or a substitute therefor; and it is perfectly clear that the higher caste Hindus will always hold aloof as a class. Nor do I believe that any considerable headway will be made with the Mohammedans. But I am in danger of giving the impression that Mr. Cape, in his book on Benares, treats only of the missionary problem, which would be entirely misleading; for he chats about all sorts of topics suggested by the sacred capital on the Ganges, such as "The Monkey Temple," "The Holy Man," "Caste at Work," "The Sacred Bull," or "Benares Doms." Furthermore, he gives us a lot of excellent illustrations, and includes a number of Indian sayings. Throughout the work, however, the point of view is frankly that of the missionary.

In concluding this survey, I should like to return to the central question. The greatest problem in India is poverty: not lack of land, but lack of property. The next is government. Contrary to general belief, there is plenty of land even for the three hundred and fifteen millions shown by the last census. With irrigation, with improved agriculture, and with industrial development, the country may be raised, painfully and slowly, to comparative comfort and even to comparative affluence — if one emphasizes *comparative*. But it is safe to say that any amelioration will be indefinitely postponed if this geographical expression be treated as a nation and left to its own control. One must always remember that there are many individuals of the highest type among the leading Mohammedans and Hindus; but one must never forget that these are easily lost in the countless throng, and that the history of India has been the history of war and conquest, of blood and rapine. Much water will flow between the banks of the hallowed Ganges

before India ceases to need some "strong, controlling magnetic force to hold together its innumerable atoms," and to raise them in the scale of being.

FRED B. R. HELLEMS.