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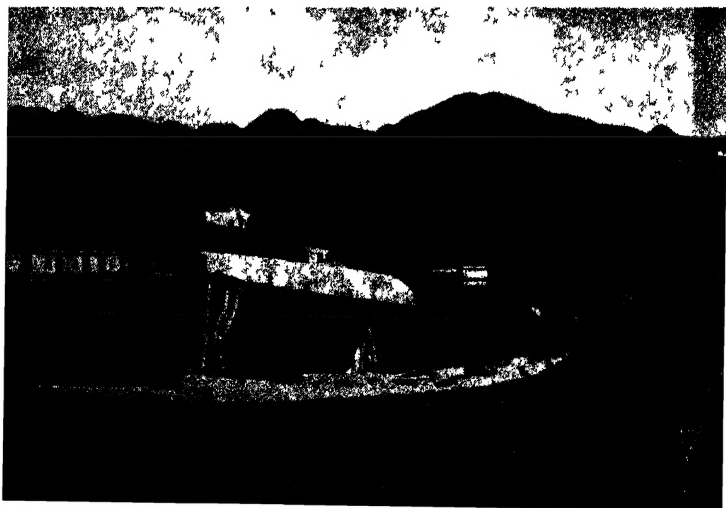


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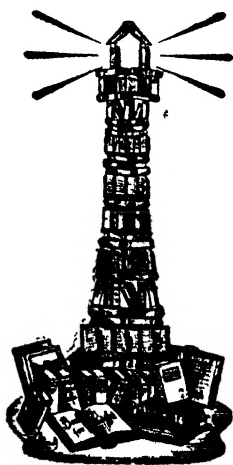


KASHMIR

EDEN OF THE EAST

With an Introductory Essay By
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

by
S. N. DHAR, M.A.



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DEDICATED
to
One who has made
me
a man

P R E F A C E

Little formal apology is needed for bringing out this book on Kashmir. With the phenomenal increase in the number of visitors to Kashmir every year, demand for descriptive Guides to Kashmir has been continually rising. That demand has been rather ill-supplied. I take it upon myself to fill the deficiency in as interesting a manner as I possibly can.

I have not rushed into print with this book. Many of my special articles on Kashmir have appeared in several well-known Indian Journals. Those on Rural Kashmir, Folk-songs of Kashmir and the Kashmiri show the less publicized side of Kashmir as seen through a Kashmiri's eyes. Other chapters are obviously informative. For its other merits the book must speak for itself.

To the intending visitor to Kashmir, this book will afford an imaginative excursion into the Happy Valley. It is specially meant to be informative and useful to visitors, while they tour and trek in the so-called Asiatic Switzerland. It is hoped that they may retain the book for its other values after they have crossed the borders of the Pir Panchal Range.

And now I must tender my grateful thanks to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru for his kind permission to incorporate his brilliant essay on Kashmir as an Introduction.

SRINAGAR,

S. N. DHAR

The 16th of July, 1945.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The Publishers tender their thanks to the Royal Photo Co., for kind permission to reproduce "Martand Ruins", "Hari Singh High Street", "First Bridge—Jhelum"; to Mahatta, Ltd., to reproduce "A Village Girl of Kashmir", and "Shikara on the Bund"; and to Dutta, Kashmir, to reproduce "Nishat Gardens" and "House Boat Life on Dal Lake." And the Publishers regret that on account of War-time conditions and the necessity to expedite the publication of the book it has not been possible to secure the best paper and letter-press.

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INTRODUCTORY ESSAY ON KASHMIR

(By Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru)

I

“Yes, in my mind these mountains rise,
Their perils dyed with evening’s rose ;
And still my ghost sits at my eyes
And thirsts for their untroubled snows.”

Nearly six years ago I quoted these lines from Walter de la Mare as I sat in prison writing the story of my life and thinking of my last visit to Kashmir. In prison or outside, Kashmir haunted me, and, though many years had passed since I had set eyes on its valleys and mountains, I carried the impress of them on the tablets of my mind. I yearned to visit them again, and struggled against this yearning. Was I to leave my work that took all my time, play truant to it, to satisfy the hunger of my eyes and the desire of my heart ?

But days passed and months and years, and life is short, and a fear gripped me with this passing of time. Age may have its advantages, and the Chinese, above all other people, have praised them. It gives, or should give, stability and equilibrium to the mind, a sense of poise, an appearance of wisdom, even a keener appreciation of beauty in all its forms. But age is stiff and crabbed and unimpressionable and reacts slowly to outside stimuli. It cannot be moulded easily ; its emotional reactions are limited. It looks to comfort and security more than to the fine frenzy of enthusiasm. While it gives its sober and reasoned appreciation to the beauty of nature and art, it does not mirror this beauty in its eyes or feel it in its heart.

It makes all the difference in the world whether one visits Italy not Fascist Italy, but the Italy of song and music and beautiful art, of Leonardo and Raphael and Michael Angelo, of Dante and Petrarch in one's youth or in later years. Besides, what can age do to a mountain except sit and gaze in silent wonder ?

So with the passing of time and the slow but irresistible coming of age over me, I began to grow afraid lest I might no longer be capable of experiencing that emotional reaction to the beauty of Kashmir when at last I went there again.

Friends in Kashmir invited me repeatedly to go there. Sheikh Abdullah pressed me again and again, and everyone who was of Kashmir reminded me that I, too, was a son of this noble land and owed a duty to it. I smiled at their insistence, for the urge within me was far greater than any that they could have placed before me. Last year I made up my mind to go and, if it was possible, to take Gandhiji with me. But at the last moment fate willed otherwise and I hurried by air to the other end of India and across the sea to Lanka, and on my return I flew to China.

Meanwhile events marched on with amazing speed. War came in Europe and began to spread its tentacles to India. New problems arose, new difficulties, and I noticed with alarm that I was being caught more and more in the clutches of these events. Would the possibility of my visiting Kashmir again recede into the far distance? My mind rebelled against this fate, and even as the future of France hung in the balance, I went to the Frontier Province and on from there to Kashmir.

I took the route *via* Abbottabad and the Jhelum Valley, a pleasant route with the panorama of the valley slowly unfolding in all its charm and beauty. But perhaps it would have been better if I had gone *via* Jammu and over the Pir Panjal. This is dull going most of the way, but as one crosses the mountain and goes through a long tunnel the sight that meets the eye is overpowering in its magic beauty. Out of the darkness one comes into the light, and there, far below, lies the vale of Kashmir, like some wonderland of our dreams, encircled by high mountains that guard it jealously from intrusion.

I did not go this way, and my approach was more sober and the change was slower. But my mind was filled with the excitement of my return, and it pleased me to be welcomed everywhere as a brother and a comrade, who, in spite of long absence, was still of Kashmir and was coming back to his old homeland. With joy I saw the reality of the pictures in my mind which I had treasured for long years. I emerged from the mountains and the narrow valley, down which the Jhelum roared and tumbled in youthful abandon, and the vale itself spread out before me. There were the famous poplars, slim and graceful sentinels, beckoning a welcome to you. There was the lordly chenar in all its majesty, with centuries of growth behind it. And there were the beautiful women and bonny children of Kashmir working in the fields.

We approached Srinagar, and there were cordial welcome and friendly faces everywhere. Up the river we went in a stately barge with numerous shikaras following, and the riverside

steps and houses filled with cheering men and women and children. I was moved, as I have seldom been, by this affection that was showered upon me, and I became tongue-tied by the emotions that surged within me as the panorama of Srinagar passed by. Hari Parvat was in the background, and Shankaracharya or Takht-e-Suleiman loomed in the distance. I was in Kashmir.

I spent twelve days in Kashmir, and during this brief period we went some way up the Amarnath Valley and also up the Liddar Valley to the Kolahoi glacier. We visited the ancient temple at Martand and sat under the venerable chenar trees of Brijbehara, which had grown and spread during four hundred years of human history. We loitered in the Moghal gardens and lived for a while in their scented past. We drank the delightful water of Chasme Shahi and swam about in the Dal Lake. We saw the lovely handiwork of the gifted artisans of Kashmir. We attended numerous public functions, delivered speeches, and met people of all kinds.

I tried to give my mind to the activity of the moment, and perhaps, in a measure, succeeded. But my mind was largely elsewhere, and I went through my engagements and the day's programme, and functioned on the public stage, like one who is absorbed in some other undertaking or is on a secret errand whose object he cannot disclose. The loveliness of the land enthralled me and cast an enchantment all about me. I wandered about like one possessed and drunk with beauty, and the intoxication of it filled my mind.

Like some supremely beautiful woman, whose beauty is almost impersonal and above human desire, such was Kashmir in all its feminine beauty of river and valley and lake and graceful trees. And then another aspect of this magic beauty would come to view, a masculine one, of hard mountains and precipices, and snow-capped peaks and glaciers, and cruel and fierce torrents rushing down to the valleys below. It had a hundred faces and innumerable aspects, ever-changing, sometimes smiling, sometimes sad and full of sorrow. The mist would creep up from the Dal Lake and, like a transparent veil, give glimpses of what was behind. The clouds would throw out their arms to embrace a mountain-top, or creep down stealthily like children at play. I watched this ever-changing spectacle, and sometimes the sheer loveliness of it was overpowering and I felt almost faint. As I gazed at it, it seemed to me dream-like and unreal, like the hopes and desires that fill us and so seldom find fulfilment. It was like the face of the beloved that one sees in a dream and that fades away on awakening.

II

When I went to China I marvelled at the artistry and exquisite craftsmanship of the Chinese people. India has long been famous for her artisans and craftsmen, but China seemed to me to be definitely superior in this respect. In Kashmir I had the feeling that here was something which could equal China. How beautiful are the articles made by the deft fingers of Kashmir's workers! To look at them was a pleasure, to handle them a delight.

Kashmir has been famous for its shawls for hundreds of years. Yet in spite of this fame the making of these fine shawls languished and shoddy articles from western factories took their place. That was the fate also of other fine hand-made articles of Kashmir. A limited tourist trade survived, but, generally speaking, the rich people of India preferred foreign goods to these things of beauty and artistic worth that Kashmir produced.

The National Movement in India, which took a new turn twenty years ago, had far-reaching results in many fields. Our insistence on hand-made products gave a new life to these products, and many a dying industry was revived. Kashmir was affected by this renaissance also, and gradually a new market for Kashmir goods sprang up in India. The All-India Spinners' Association played a leading part in this, and their Kashmir branch became the supplier of hundreds of sale-depots all over India. Yet the pace has been slow and might well have been quicker. This growth of handicrafts has brought work to many of the skilled unemployed and points the way to prosperity.

But wages are low, and the contrast between the loveliness of the work done and the wages paid for this skill shames one. Kashmir, even more than the rest of India, is a land of contrasts. In this land, overladen with natural beauty and rich nature's gifts, stark poverty reigns and humanity is continually struggling for the barest of subsistences. The men and women of Kashmir are good to look at and pleasant to talk to. They are intelligent and clever with their hands. They have a

rich and lovely country to live in. Why, then should they be so terribly poor ?

Again and again, as I was wrapped in pleasurable contemplation of Kashmir's beauty, I came back to hard earth with a shock when I saw this appalling poverty. Why should these people remain so miserably poor, I wondered, when nature had so abundantly endowed them ? I do not know what the mineral or other natural resources of Kashmir are. I should imagine that the country is rich in them, and in any event a very full survey is one of the first steps that should be taken.

But even if no additional wealth was disclosed, the existing resources are enough to raise the standard of living considerably. Provided, of course, that they are properly co-ordinated and utilized on a planned and ordered basis. Cheap power is available and many small and big industries can be started. The field for the development of cottage industries and handicrafts is enormous. Then there is the tourist traffic, for which Kashmir is an ideal country. It can well become the playground, not only of India, but of Asia.

I do not personally fancy a country depending largely on tourist traffic. Such dependence is not good, and external causes may put a sudden end to it. But there is no reason why tourist traffic should not be developed as a part of a general scheme of all-round development. There is at present a Tourist Department, but its activities appear to be strictly limited and of the flat, official variety. I could not even obtain simple guide-books of Kashmir. Some of the descriptive accounts of the routes to and

in Kashmir were so badly got up and printed that it was painful to refer to them. Even now, possibly the only decent guides are those written a generation or more ago. The first job that the Tourist Department should take up is to produce cheap and simple guides and folders with full information about the various routes up or across valleys.

Kashmir is an ideal place for youth hostels such as have grown up all over Europe and America. The whole country should be dotted with these hostels, and young people, boys and girls, should be encouraged to tramp over the hills and valleys and thus gain an intimate knowledge of the country.

I have mentioned cheap power. On my way up the Jhelum Valley, I visited again the hydro-electric power works. More than twenty years had made no difference to them or increased their utility ; much of the power produced was being wasted, and much that could be produced was not produced at all. These works symbolized for me the static condition of Kashmir.

For Kashmir has been singularly static. Srinagar city may have grown and there are more houses on the out-skirts. New boulevards skirt the Dal Lake, and the Maharaja likes to build palaces. His new palace, a vast affair, looked chaste and attractive, unlike the usual palaces of ruling chiefs in florid and exuberant styles. But a few boulevards and palaces do not make much difference to a city or a country, and, apart from these minor changes, the aspect of Srinagar was not greatly changed.

I wish that some great architect would take charge of the planning and rebuilding of

Srinagar. The river fronts should be attacked first of all, the slums and dilapidated houses should be removed and airy dwellings and avenues take their place, a proper drainage system introduced, and so much else done to convert Srinagar into a fairy city of dream-like beauty, through which runs the Vitastha and the many canals sluggishly wind their way with the shikaras plying on them and the houseboats clinging to the banks. This is no fancy picture, for fairyland lies all round it; the magic is there already, but unfortunately human hands and human folly have tried to cover it here and there. Still it peeps out through slum and dirt.

But if this planning is to be resorted to, the building of palaces for a few rich must be held up and the resources of the State applied to this great work. There can be no planning with great vested interests consuming a great part of the wealth of the State and obstructing public progress. Nor can there be any such real planning when the standard of the people is very low, and poverty consumes them, and evil customs bar the way. We shall have to think differently and act rapidly if we are to achieve substantial results in our generation.

While Kashmir appeared so static and unchanging, one change pleased me greatly. This was the introduction of Basic Education in the State schools. I visited some of these schools and saw the happy children with bright and intelligent faces at work and at play. It is for this generation that we struggle and build, and it is well that some at least among them are learning rightly the business of life

and developing in their early years an integrated personality and adaptable minds and hands. I hope that Basic Education will spread throughout Kashmir and bring into its fold every little boy and little girl.

I have written that Kashmir had a static appearance. Yet there was one major and fundamental change, which I sensed as soon as I set foot on its soil. I had heard of political awakening there, of the growth of a big organization, often of troubles and conflicts, of good happenings and bad. I had taken interest in all this and read about it, and sometimes discussed it with those most concerned. So I expected to see this change.

I have enough experience of mass movements, some sense of the crowd, a way of judging rapidly and almost intuitively the strength and depth of popular movements. A big crowd may welcome me, and yet to me it might convey no sense of power or of feelings deeply stirred; it might even have an air of artificiality, of groups of sightseers out on a holiday, to have a glimpse of a well-known personality. A much smaller crowd might produce a deeper impression on me and give me a glimpse of strange currents and powerful forces beneath the surface of the life of the people.

I try to be receptive, to tune myself to the inner mood of the mass, so that I can understand it and react to it. That understanding and reaction are necessary before I can try to impose my thought and will on them. So my mental temperature varies with the environment, and for a while I allow it full rein, before I pull myself up lest I go astray. Sometimes a contrary

reaction is produced in me by some untoward event, which affects me far more than because of my receptive mood.

With this experience behind me, I set myself out to understand the inner significance of the popular movement in Kashmir. People came to me to speak in praise of it or to criticize it, and I listened to them patiently and sometimes learned something from them. But my rod of measurement cared little for the incidents that seem to excite some people. I was not out to measure individuals, though to some extent that also had to be done, but to grasp what the mass of the people felt, what moved them, what they aimed at, though vaguely and semi-consciously, what strength they had developed, what capacity for united action.

I sensed that Kashmir was astir and the masses were on the move. That had been a common experience to me in many parts of India during the past twenty years. But it was an uncommon experience on that scale in an Indian State. There could be no doubt of the widespread awakening among the people, and of a growing feeling of self-reliance and strength. In this respect, in some ways, Kashmir seemed to be in advance. It was difficult to judge of the discipline and self-imposed restraint that accompanied this new-found strength. I think there was a measure of discipline also, though perhaps not so much as in the more politically developed parts of India. Perhaps, also, that idealism, which has been so marked a feature of the Indian Nationalist Movement, was not present to the same degree. The political awakening had not yet brought in its train that 'hard ex-

perience and close thinking which we had had elsewhere. That was natural, for the Kashmir movement was comparatively young, though even in its few years of life it had gone through many an experience which had moulded it and given it shape.

Considering the brief life of this movement, I was surprised to find how vital and widespread it was, although I saw it during a period of quiescence. It had changed the face of Kashmir during these few years, and, if properly led and controlled, it held promise of great good for the country.

In its leadership it was fortunate, for Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was a real leader of the people, beloved of them, and with vision which looked ahead and did not lose itself in the petty conflicts of the moment. He was the founder and initiator of the movement. At first it began on communal lines and became entangled in many unfortunate occurrences. But Sheikh Abdullah pulled it out of these ruts and had the courage and statesmanship to steer it out of the narrow waters of communalism into the broad sea of nationalism. Dangers and difficulties still remain—which one of us is free from them?—and he will have to steer carefully and to overcome them.

It was a remarkable feat for any person to have brought about this political awakening among the poverty-stricken and helpless people of Kashmir. It was still more remarkable to check it from overflowing into wrong channels, and to guide it with a strong hand along the right path. The difficulties were increased during the past three

years by the growth of the communal spirit all over India, which inevitably had some effect on Kashmir also. Sheikh Abdullah performed these remarkable feats and rightly earned the title of "Sher-e-Kashmir," by which he is popularly known. He did not, and he could not, get rid of all the ills—communal or other—that a popular movement suffers from. But the measure of his considerable success is obvious enough in Kashmir today.

This movement has so far affected Kashmir proper far more than Jammu Province, which is partly allied to and affected by Punjab politics. In a sense Kashmir is a definite historical, cultural, and linguistic unit, and it was natural for a popular movement to spread there first without producing the same effect on Jammu. Kashmir proper has an overwhelmingly big proportion of Muslims in the population; there are about 95 per cent of them. If Jammu Province is included, the Muslim proportion is reduced to about 75 per cent, which is substantial enough.

The Hindus of Kashmir proper, chiefly Kashmiri Pandits, though only about 5 per cent, are an essential and integral part of the country, and many of their families have played a prominent part in Kashmir's history for a thousand years or more. Even today they play a significant part in the State Services and administration. Essentially these Kashmiri Pandits are the middle-class intelligentsia. Intellectually they compare very favourably with any similar group in India. They do well in examinations and in the professions. A handful of them, who migrated south to other parts of Northern India

during the last two hundred years or so, have played an important part in public life and in the professions and services in India, out of all proportion to their small numbers.

A popular mass movement, especially in Kashmir proper with its 95 per cent Muslim population, was bound to be predominantly Muslim. Otherwise it would not be popular and would not affect the masses. It was also natural that the Hindu minority of 5 per cent should not view it with favour, both from the communal and the middle-class point of view. Certain unfortunate occurrences and communal riots in 1931 added to these fears and suspicions. The Kashmiri Pandits, though small in number, impelled by a desire for self-protection, started organizing themselves as a communal group. Since then the situation has certainly improved, and, though fear and suspicion remain to some extent, the feeling of hostility is much less. This has been brought about by a keener appreciation of the realities of the situation as well as by Sheikh Abdullah's consistent policy to give the popular movement a national basis. A number of Kashmiri Pandits, especially some bright young men, have definitely joined the National Conference. The great majority, however, hold formally aloof, though in no hostile sense, and a definite attempt to establish friendly relations is visible. I am leaving out of consideration the activities or reactions of individuals, who do not make much difference when considering the various currents and group forces at play.

IV

I imagine, though I have no definite data for this, that the development of the Congress

movement and of the Khudai Khidmatgars* in the North-West Frontier Province had considerable influence on Kashmir during the last ten years. The two are adjoining territories and have many contacts, and yet the Afghans and the Kashmiris differ from each other markedly. It is surprising that such close neighbours, who have lived next to each other for nearly a thousand years, should differ so much physically, intellectually, culturally, and emotionally. But in spite of these differences there is much in common, and the political upheaval in the Frontier Province was bound to produce its reactions in Kashmir.

I was exceedingly fortunate, therefore, in having as my companion during the Kashmir visit Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, who has been the cause of this political awakening in the Frontier and who symbolizes it so much in his own person. It was obvious that he was a favourite of the Kashmiris, as he has become of people in all parts of India. "Fakhr-e-Afghan," or Badshah Khan, as he is popularly and affectionately known, was a delightful companion, though a hard taskmaster occasionally. Both the Frontier Province and Kashmir adjoin the Punjab. And they complain that it is the communal spirit of the Punjab that creeps in and creates friction and trouble, otherwise there would be communal harmony. This complaint is especially bitter against certain sections of the Punjab press, both Muslim and Hindu owned, which spread out into these adjoining territories, which have no proper newspapers of their own. As a reaction

*This is the Congress Volunteer Organization in the N.-W. F. P.

against this Press invasion from the Punjab, there is a tendency for Kashmir and the Frontier Province to hold together. These contacts are likely to grow, and I think they should grow, to the mutual advantage of both.

I addressed many great gatherings in Srinagar and out-side, but I had gone to Kashmir more to learn and to understand than to teach. Two of the Srinagar meetings I addressed were held under the auspices of the National Conference, whose guest I was. Two others in Srinagar were held under the auspices of the Yuvak Sabha, the organization of the Kashmiri Pandits, and one of these meetings, held at my particular request, was specially meant for the Pandit-anis.

I spoke at some length on the minority problem at the Yuvak Sabha meeting. I need not repeat what I said then, for it has been said often enough, but I warned them not to fall into the trap into which minorities so easily fell. I spoke frankly and freely, for, having been born in a Kashmiri Pandit family, I could take liberties with my own people.

While every individual and group deserved equal protection and help from the State, the idea of special safe-guards for a minority group was full of peril for that group. For such safe-guards led to dependence on extraneous help and weakened the group's spirit of self-reliance ; the special privileges amounted, in effect, to little, but they created walls of prejudice which injured the group, and barriers which prevented growth.

Above all, they led to a narrowness of outlook and to isolation from national activities and

the life-giving currents which moved the masses. At any time such safe-guards' and special protection were dangerous gifts to ask for or to receive. In the dynamic world of today, with vast revolutionary changes taking place before our eyes, it was folly of the first order to imagine that such safeguards or privileges could hold and protect. Only strength of mind and purpose and unity of action could give some protection.

Safeguards and special protection might, perhaps, be needed by a group which was very backward educationally and economically. They were in the nature of crutches for the lame and the halt. Why should those who were keen of mind and swift of foot require them? No one had ever accused the Kashmiri Pandits of lack of intelligence or of ability to adapt themselves to a changing environment. All that they should demand was a free and open field for talent and ability.

I pointed out to them what an outstanding part Kashmiris, both Hindu and Muslim, had played in the whole of India, although they were small in numbers. In public life, professions, services in the States, in cultural activities, they had done remarkably well, without the least help or protection from anybody. Many of the Muslim Kashmiris are not known as Kashmiris, and so people do not appreciate this fact. But, as a matter of fact, Muslim Kashmiris are prominent in many walks of life in India. One famous name stands out above all others—that of the poet, Sir Mohammad Iqbal, who was a Sapru.

Kashmiri Pandits are more recognized in India as Kashmiris. They have done astonishing-

ly well, although in numbers they are probably under five thousand outside Kashmir. I told my audience with becoming modesty, that during the fifty-five years of the life of the Indian National Congress, for seven years Kashmiri Pandits had been presidents—a remarkable record for a handful of people who had migrated from Kashmir to the plains below.

The whole question of minorities and majorities in India is tied up with foreign and third-party rule. Eliminate that rule, and the basic aspect of this question changes. That process of elimination is going on now.

So I spoke and said much else, laying especial stress on the need for every group, if it was to count in the future, to throw its weight on the side of the masses, to join the national movement and draw strength and sustenance from it. No group or community which was continually shouting about itself, and demanding this and that special privilege or protection, would make much difference to the future that was being shaped. That future would be shaped without it.

The women's meeting was an extraordinary sight. It rained heavily throughout, and the meeting was held in the open. I had imagined that the meeting would be abandoned. But for hours before the time of the meeting thousands of women gathered and stood in the pouring rain, and when Badshah Khan and I got there these girls and young women and old women were standing in ankle-deep mud and water. I am partial to the women of Kashmir. They are beautiful and full of charm, and there was many a bright and intelligent face there in that eager

audience. I spoke to them of women's problems, of what women had done and were doing in our national movement, of what their own kith and kin had done. And I urged them to rid themselves of the barriers of purdah, where such existed, and evil custom. The old orthodoxy must go, and the women of Kashmir, who were so eminently fitted in many ways, must play their part in the new India which we were all building together.

Wherever I went these women of Kashmir came to welcome me and to treat me as a brother or a son. It was a joy to meet them and to see the affection in their eyes. At Mattan, old Kashmiri ladies came to bless me and kiss me on the forehead, as a mother does to her son.

V

We spent three and a half days in Srinagar and then sought a week's respite in the higher valleys. The vale itself and the gardens and country round about Srinagar could have held me indefinitely, but I hungered for the mountains and the narrow paths over precipices and the glaciers. I wanted to crowd as much of experience and sensations as I could during these few days, to fill the storehouse of my memory with a picture gallery which I could visit at leisure when I chose to. Srinagar was also, inevitably, too full of engagements and interviews and meetings; it repeated too much the old pattern of any life.

We went to Vernag and Achhbal, Anantnag or Islamabad, and Mattan or Martand. The weather was unkind and the rain pursued us but this did not prevent crowds gathering to welcome

us, and often I had to say a few words to them in the pouring rain. I was tired and soaked to the skin when we reached Pahalgam in the evening. Pahalgam had grown since I had seen it last many years ago, and was something much more now than a mere camping-ground.

The next day we went, again to the accompaniment of rain, to Chandanwari on the Amarnath road. We went on horseback and on foot. Some of our party did not like this trip because of the rain, and returned tired, bored, and exhausted. But I felt exhilarated by the beating of the rain on my face, and I loved to watch the rushing mountain torrent, whose winding course we followed. Leaving the party at Chandanwari, I went on some miles farther up with a friend. To my great regret, we could not go, for lack of time, to the lovely mountain lake of Shishnag, which was the next stage on the journey to the cave of Amarnath.

We came back from Chandanwari to Pahalgam the same day, and early the next morning our caravan proceeded to Liddarwat, following the course of the Liddar River. There was a mid-day halt at Aru, a lovely camping-ground, and then to Liddarwat and a well-earned rest. The weather had cleared and we scanned the skies hopefully and anxiously, for the next day we were to go to the Kolahoi glacier.

It turned out to be a fine, clear day, and it was well that it was so, for the going was bad, over rocks and boulders and across several small mountain streams. We reached the glacier at last and had our mid-day meal at its base. We then climbed up it for some distance, avoiding the pits and crevasses. We could not

go far or stay long, as we had to hurry back to Liddarwat. But even that brief visit to the glacier was exhilarating and satisfied an old craving of mine.

The return journey was very tiring, and we reached our camp late in the evening. Badshah Khan was particularly exhausted, partly because he insisted on walking more than the others, who struck to their hill ponies as much as they could. But whether he was tired or not, the pace of his walk did not slacken, his stride was no shorter, and those of us who tried to keep step with him panted in despair and were gradually left behind. To see his six feet-two of Pathan manhood striding along those mountain-paths was a sight which impressed itself very forcibly on me, and this is the picture of Khan Sahab that comes most often to my mind.

During this trip to the Kolahoi glacier there were a number of small accidents, and almost every member of our party had a fall from horseback or on the boulders, or on the glacier itself. I was one of the fortunate few who escaped.

The next day we decided to rest at Liddarwat; not quite, for we went on a tramp on the path which leads across the mountains to the Sind Valley. I wanted to go this way to visit Sonamarg on the other side, for the valley where Sonamarg is situated is a miracle of beauty. But in order to get there we had to go over a high pass which was not an easy matter at that time of the year. Our party was too big and the time at our disposal limited. This pass has the expressive name of Yamther—the ladder

of death, or the ladder of Yama, the god of death. It is covered with slippery ice, which no doubt facilitates the passage to the other world.

So we gave up the idea of crossing over to the Sind Valley, but nevertheless we went a small part of the way and visited a number of Gujar encampments. These Gujars, semi-nomads, come up to these higher valleys during the summer with their cattle, in search of grazing-grounds. They build temporary shelters for themselves which could neither keep out the rain nor the cold wind. Sometimes they live under some overhanging rocks.

The Gujars were followed a little later in the summer by another tribe, the Bherwalas, who came with thousands of sheep and pushed the Gujars and their cattle away to higher regions. Then armies of sheep covered the whole valley and the hillside, and ultimately the Gujars had to take refuge almost at the foot of the glaciers, till they came down to the lower valley at the end of the summer. As we were returning from Liddarwat the next day we passed these armies of sheep on the march, going up and up in search of pasture.

We visited many of these Gujar shelters, and, to my surprise, we were welcomed everywhere. Ordinarily these people do not take kindly to strangers, for the stranger and city dweller is to them a person who comes to exploit them. He buys their milk products cheap and sells city goods dear, and they are ever in his clutches because of debt. They are simple folk, not knowing reading or writing or arithmetic. They cannot keep accounts or check what the

dealer from the city says to them. They are continually being cheated and exploited and live in extreme poverty.

But we were received in all friendship, probably because Sheikh Abdullah was with us and they had heard his name, possibly also because a good reputation had preceded us. In one of these shelters—about 30 feet by 20 feet—we enquired how many people lived there. No one knew; they could not count thus far, and, anyway, they had never bothered themselves about it. Then we proceeded on another line of enquiry. How many families lived there? There were six or seven families. We enquired from the head of each family about his wife and children. And so we arrived at a total figure of fifty-three or fifty-four for that one shelter. This was an unusually large shelter; the others we visited were smaller.

We talked to these people and they spoke to us in a mixture of Hindustani and Punjabi. They were not Kashmiris and could hardly speak the Kashmiri language. They told us of their misery and poverty and of all their other difficulties. They invited us to break bread with them, and it was, perhaps, the best bread I have ever eaten. It was *Makki-ki-roti*, and there was some kind of green *sag*, or vegetable, with it.

I do not know where the Gujars come from, to what racial stock they belong. But they were a fine-looking people, and their women-folk had striking, clean-cut features. Their children were attractive, and Badshah Khan used to gather them and play with them, for there is nothing he likes better than to have the little children of the poor about him. I remembered

seeing him on many an occasion in the Frontier Province with a group of Pathan children clustering around him. His face was lighted up with affection for them, and the little ones looked with adoration on this Badshah Khan, who was their great big friend and leader.

The women of these Gujars looked one straight in the face, and there was little shyness or self-consciousness about them. In one shelter I was a little surprised when one of the ladies of the house came forward and, taking my hand, bade me welcome. She invited us to come inside and share their meal of bread and vegetable, which she had been cooking. That gesture of hers and her manner were so full of grace and self-assurance that I could well have imagined that some great lady was inviting me to her noble mansion.

VI

Our visit to the Gujar shelters led to a minor crisis in our camp. Badshah Khan had a habit of filling his pockets with sweets and fruits to distribute to the poor children we met on the road. His stock soon gave out when we met scores of children in the shelters. So he invited them to come to our camp.

On our return he sent for our camp cook and demanded that he produce all the foodstuffs he had, especially rice and flour and sugar. The cook was not very enthusiastic about this, and he returned with a small supply. Badshah Khan was not to be taken in, and he insisted on more. The cook pointed out that he had to feed a large party for another two days and he could not empty his limited stock. Our hosts also did not

fancy the idea of having next to nothing left with us. But Badshah Khan insisted and said that anyway our party ate too much, which was perfectly true, and it would do us all a lot of good to have to put up with limited rations or even to starve for a day. There was no denying him, and the cook had to produce much more.

The next day we returned from Liddarwat to Pahalgam. For four or five days we had been completely cut off from news of the outside world, just when mighty decisions were being made on the battlefields of Northern France. We got some belated news at Pahalgam and found how very grave the situation was.

After spending the night at Pahalgam, we motored to Srinagar. On the way we visited the ancient temple of Martand, and inside those massive and eloquent ruins local friends had made arrangements for sumptuous refreshments. Then to Anantnag or Islamabad, and a big meeting, or rather two. Another gathering at Brijbehara under the spacious chenar trees. The platform where I stood was erected round the most ancient and majestic of these noble trees, with a girth of 55 feet at the base. It was about four hundred years old, we were told, and the course of this long span of history passed rapidly before me as I stood under its cool shelter. What strange happenings and revolutions and human follies it had witnessed during the centuries! While men had come and gone, living their brief lives of joy and sorrow, and generation had followed generation, this king of trees had stood, surveying the human scene, unmoved and unperturbed.

Back to Srinagar. Packing and leave-taking, a party at the Amar Singh Club, where I met

many old friends, and a final public meeting to bid good-bye to the people of Srinagar.

The next morning we left Srinagar and sped towards Jammu. The road left the valley and mounted up the Pir Panjal. As we went higher, the panorama spread out before us and broader vistas came into view. We stood near the mouth of the tunnel and had a last look at the valley below. There lay the Vale of Kashmir, so famous in song and history, in its incomparable loveliness. A thin mist covered part of it, and a soft light toned down the hard edges of the picture. Above the clouds rose snow-capped peaks, and down from the valley below came the faint and distant sound of running water. We bade a silent farewell, and, turning away with regret, entered the dark tunnel which took us to less favoured lands.

The night we spent at Kud on the Jammu road and met some friends there. The next morning to Jammu and the heat of the plains. Jammu gave us a great reception and an exhausting one, for the sun was hot in the daytime. Processions, interviews, engagements, and finally a great meeting at night. This meeting was held in an old dried-up tank with steps all round, and this amphitheatre made a perfect setting for a big gathering. I was particularly pleased to see thousands of women at this meeting. Badshah Khan left us that evening for Peshawar, but Sheikh Abdullah and some other friends from Kashmir accompanied us up to Lahore, but there was business still on the way. At Sialkot there was a huge gathering, also in an old dried-up tank as in Jammu, and at Wazirabad another big public meeting.

And so to Lahore and new problems and difficulties. Here I left Sheikh Abdullah and other Kashmir friends who had been such close companions during the past fourteen days. They had overwhelmed us with their hospitality, and this companionship and comradeship had made us know and understand each other a little better.

Twelve days in Kashmir, twelve days after three-and-twenty years. Yet one vital moment is worth more than years of stagnation and vegetation, and to spend twelve days in Kashmir was good fortune indeed. But Kashmir calls back, its pull is stronger than ever, it whispers its fairy magic to the ears, and its memory disturbs the mind. How can they who have fallen under its spell release themselves from this enchantment ?

1940.

I

THE ROAD TO KASHMIR

Natural beauties of the Vale of Kashmir have deservedly won high and even extravagant praise from visitors, ever since ancient times. The sparkling streams, the happy murmuring of myriad brooks, limpidity of its sheety lakes, the sublime splendour of snow-covered sunny summits, the idyllic picturesqueness of mountain hamlets, the thick woods pleasantly laden with fragrance and ozone, gorgeous tints of fruit blossoms, of wild flowers and of the chinars, one and all, combine to make Kashmir a veritable dream of loveliness—a most delightful dream that affords one communion with nature. Very justifiably did the Moghullover of Kashmir, Jahangir, call it "Paradise on earth!"

The climate of Kashmir is not only temperate but bracing and invigorating—rendering it a popular and loved haven from the oppressive heat of the plains in India. It was spoken of by Elphinstone as "delicious climate." The unique and attractive feature of the climate is a large amount of sunshine combined with a low temperature. The New Year finds the Valley mantled with a few inches of snow in the midst of sleet and storm. February continues to be snowy. By the middle of March spring sets in with its pleasantly surprising suddenness. Willow trees are tinged with green. Wild flowers bloom and adorn whole hill-sides. Daffodils venture a first splash of colour against the fresh sward. April showers do not ruffle the almond blossoms which decorate orchards

in the outskirts of Srinagar. Other fruit blossoms follow. May is not very warm. The chinars, arrayed in their dense foliage, provide excellent camping sites. River and lake banks, flanked with graceful willows, majestic chinars and tall poplars, are lined with gay and colourful rows of roored house-boats. The golden oriole, the flycatcher, the bulbul and other beautiful birds of Kashmir, provide nature sweet symphony. June, July and August find the hill stations, margs-upland meadows and mountain lakes thronged with campers, trekkers and other tourists. Swimmers occasionally visit the Dal and other Valley lakes for bathing. September, heralds the autumn and visitors flock back to Srinagar, where September and October are very pleasant. From October to Christmas Kashmir has fine but cold weather. Then the winter, grim and severe, full of thrills only to those interested in skiing, sets in.

So the visitor to Kashmir sees nature in all her moods, gentle and beautiful as well as stern and sublime. The gorgeous loveliness of beautiful spring, the mountain attractions of flowery summer, the variegated tints of sunny autumn and the stern grandeur of snowy winter, bewitch the newcomer to the valley. He may be an artist and he can use his brush at every turn. If he is a botanist or a florist, the margs and hill sides will keep him delightfully busy. Amateur and professional photographers shoot artistic scenes. In the Valley and its environs, the sportsmen find excellent game. Anglers make full use of their rods. Invalids regain lost health. Clubs, golf, etc. at Srinagar and Gulmarg retain the precious links

of sophisticated visitors with civilization. Herdsmen and other nomadic tribes feed their flocks on the rich pasturage of the margs. The archæologists study the many interesting and impressive ruins of Kashmir. The geologists continue their researches with valuable results. So does the linguist, thanks to the many languages and dialects prevalent in the Valley and the bordering districts. Others just give themselves to rest and amusement like so many lotus eaters, benefitting by the pleasant climate and lovely surroundings.

Two fine motorable roads lead to Kashmir from the railway terminuses of Rawalpindi and Jammu Tawi, called Jhelum Valley Road and Banihal Cart Road, respectively.

Jhelum Valley Road, so called as it runs along the river Jhelum, is a wonderful triumph of modern engineering. It is remarkable for its curious zigzag bends, small tunnels and the picturesqueness of its surroundings. It enters State territory from Kohala. The bigger stages from Kohala onwards, which have post and telegraph offices and dak bungalows,* are Domel; Garhi, Chinari, Uri, Rampur and Baramulla.

The Abbotabad Road, which runs *via* Muzaffarabad, meets Jhelum Valley Road at Domel—the customs and toll bar station of this route. Apart from Abbotabad, this road has post and telegraph offices and dak bungalows at Mansehra and Garhi Habib Ullah.

*For rules of these staging bungalows and other tourist huts and Forest rest houses in Kashmir, see "Notes for Visitors to Kashmir, issued by the Visitors' Bureau, Kashmir.

Banihall Cart Road runs throughout in the State territory. Formerly it used to be His Highness' private route. Udhampur, Kud, Batote, Ramban, Upper Munda, Qazi Gund and Khannabal are the bigger stages which have dak bungalows. The road crosses the Banihall Pass tunnel at an elevation of 9,500 feet from the sea level. On the side of the Valley the Pass commands a panoramic view of the Valley.

There is a mountain route to Kashmir which crosses the Pir Panchal range over a height of 11,000 feet from the sea level. For grandeur and magnificence of scenery, this route is matchless, but only sturdy climbers, who are prepared to rough it, may take this route. It is closed from mid October to beginning of May. Moghul Emperors, Afghans and Sikhs used this route. There are some interesting ruins to be found. There is also a route *via* Poonch, which meets Jhelum Valley Road at Uri.

The road to Kashmir, on either of the bigger routes, permits easy and pleasant journey. Not only motor cars but lorries too travel from Rawalpindi or Jammu to Srinagar, in one day, during summer. Exquisite picturesqueness of these routes leaves a lasting impression on the visitor about the Eden of the East.

II

WHAT TO SEE IN KASHMIR

1. *Ganderbal*. 13 miles from Srinagar. Height : 5,220 feet. A pretty, small village on the bank of the Sind Stream—a thronged mooring place for visitors' houseboats. Base for treks to Ladakh and Baltistan. Visitors' Bureau Branch—to give assistance and information to visitors.

2. *Sonamarg*. 51 miles from Srinagar. Height : 8,750 feet. Excellent camping sites on crescent swardy terraces. Grass meadows, *margs*, spangled with alpine flowers—a speciality. Starting place for treks to Gangabal, Haramoukh, Ladakh etc. Camping season : mid-June to mid-September. A tourist hut at Thajiwas. Stores and provisions insufficiently available on spot.

3. *Gangabal*. 41 miles from Srinagar. Height : 11,720 feet. One of the most beautiful and largest lakes at the foot of Mt. Haramoukh towering 5,000 feet above its level.

Destination of a Hindu pilgrimage in August. A fair weather path leads to it. Trekkers' favourite resort. Fishing in the lake is prohibited.

4. *Gulmarg*. 28 miles from Srinagar. Height : 8,700 feet., *i. e.* 3,000 feet above the valley level. Most accessible of all hill stations in Kashmir. Golf links, polo-ground, hotels, well furnished "huts", church, club : Europeanised special attractions. Centre of skiing and other winter sports. Season : June to September.

Big bazar, cinema, P. O., T. O., Dispensary, Banks, Provision stores, Visitors' Bureau open for the season etc. modern specialities available. Commands excellent views of the Nanga Parbat and of the Valley, in the opposite direction.

5. *Pahulgam*. 58 miles from Srinagar. Height: 7,000 ft. Popular camping site in the Liddar Valley at the confluence of the two streams, the Liddar and the Tanin. Camping season: July to September. Amenities available: P. O., T. O., Indian Club, Hotels, Church, Visitors' Bureau Branch, Provision stores and regular transport service.

An important stage in the all-India Hindu Pilgrimage to the cave of Sri Amar Nath (12,729 ft.) during August. Base for treks to Chandanwari, Aru, Shishanag, Mt. Kolohai, the Tar Sar lake, etc.

6. *Verinag*. 50 miles from Srinagar. Height: 6,100 ft. Bluewater spring, 50 yards across, enclosed within octagonal stone paved walk—the source of the river Jhelum. Fishing prohibited. An excellent camping ground.

7. *Achabal*. 39 miles from Srinagar. Moghul garden with usual watercourse, cascade and fountains. Rest House with catering arrangements.

8. *Kokarnag*. 48 miles from Srinagar. Reputed for ice-cold and very digestive water that gushes out from a line of springs near the foot of a ridge of mountains.

Attractions. Trout fishing, camping ground, accommodation available for anglers and tourists and base for short trips and treks.

III

A GLIMPSE OF THE PAST OF KASHMIR

Kashmir has had a chequered history in spite of the natural barriers of ranges of Himalayan mountains that enclose the valley of Kashmir. Much earlier than the Christian era it was ruled by Hindus. Then it was ruled by the Buddhists and then, later, by Hindus and by mountain depredatory rulers, alternately. Chaks, Moghuls and Pathans held sway over Kashmir. Sikhs followed in their wake. Then came the Dogras, headed by Maharaja Ghulab Singh, whose worthy scion, Maharaja Hari Singh now rules the so-called sweet-heart of the world.

The ancient history of Kashmir is "wrapped up in mystery." An interesting legend, however, persists. According to it the Valley of Kashmir was once a vast lake *Satisar*, "the lake of Sati", named after Parvati, the divine consort of God Siva, who used to sail on it with her permanent abode at its shore near the peak of Haramouk. Lake demons infested the *Satisar*. At their head was Jalodbhava. They killed and devoured human beings who were saved by the timely visit of Kashyapa, who, being a grandson of Brahma, was a great sage. To remedy the sufferings of the people of *Satisar*, he offered penance for a period of one thousand years. His prayer was granted. Goddess Sharika appeared before him as a *Hari*, a myna, with a pebble in her mouth. This she deftly dropped

over the demon Jalodhbhava. It assumed the dimensions of a hillock the present fort-clad Hari Parbat and thus gave the terrible pest of a demon a most decent burial. His follower-demons were soon frightened away. Water of the lake was drained off at a depression at Baramulla. Kashmir, thus peopled by Kashyapa, was fitly named after him, "Kashyapa Mir", which has by now degenerated into "Kashmir".

That Kashmir was a vast lake in accordance with the spirit, if not the substance, of this tradition, is confirmed by scientific testimonies.

"Even at a height of over 12,000 feet above sea level, I have found fossiliferous limestone, crowded with small corals, crinoid stems and other marine form ;"* so writes Dr. Neve, who travelled in Kashmir extensively and who, from this evidence, supposes that even "lofty peaks may have formed chains of island" in pre-historic times. He adds that Satisar came into existence after an immense period of time when this sea receded towards the plain and the evidence, in his words, is : "For at a height of some hundreds of feet above the present level the black shells of the Singhara water chestnut are found in the clay together with many varieties of land and fresh-water shells, all apparently of living forms."

The records of native chroniclers about ancient Kashmir seem to be authentic from about seventh century B. C. till about 2000 B. C. there was no recognized form of Government.

**Things seen in Kashmir* by Ernest F. Neve, (London, Seeley & Co., Ltd.), page 69.

In 2180 Raja Daya Karan was the first monarch. In 3007 B. C. Raja Ramdev built the temple at Mattan. Raja Pravarsen founded the city of Srinagar, calling it Pravarpura.

Asoka, the great Buddhist monarch, conquered Kashmir in 250 B. C. Himself a convert to Buddhism, he made Buddhism, the national religion. Even Brahmins became Buddhist Missionaries.

He was succeeded by Jalaka in 200 B. C. The stone temple over Shankaracharya is attributed to him. For about two centuries before Christian era, Tartar chiefs invaded Kashmir. After them came the Indo-Scythian monarch, Kanishka, who convened the historical Third Council of the Buddhist Church in Kashmir. Buddhism gradually declined in Kashmir though it disappeared only as late as first quarter of the seventh century when the raids of the white Huns reached their apex in point of devastation and tyranny. Mihiragula was the worst of these invaders. His oppression of Buddhism left few monasteries in Kashmir about the end of seventh century, as is testified by the itinerary of Hieun Tsiang, the well-known Chinese traveller. Such of the Buddhists as escaped oppression fled to take shelter in Tibet, where they still flourish. Ruins of beautifully tiled monasteries, recently excavated at Harwan, evince feats of Buddhist engineering art.

Then a line of Hindu monarchs ruled over Kashmir for eighth and ninth centuries among whom Lalitaditya (715-753 A.D.) and Avantivarnam (855-883 A. D.) stand out as great rulers, who built big stone temples, constructed roads and drainage systems, dug canals through-

out the Valley and brought peace and prosperity to the land. The stone temple at Martand, whose ruins claim admiration from travellers all over the world, was built by Lalitaditya. He was an ambitious monarch. He conquered whole of Northern India and subjected Turkey and even part of Central Asia. Alberuni, the Muslim historian, says that Kashmiris, in his time, celebrated an annual festival in honour of his far-flung conquests. Suyya, the greatest engineer of mediæval Kashmir, lived during the time of Avantivarnam. He drained the Jhelum at "Suyyapore"—a town named after him, now called "Sopore" to save the valley from inundations of the Jhelum and the lakes. Indeed sculpture and engineering flourished in Kashmir during this period as they did at no other time.

From tenth to about fourteenth century, Hindu monarchs ruled over Kashmir, but they could ill confront the incursions of mountain hordes like *Damaras*, *Tantriyas*, etc. whose continual depredations rendered the functioning of a central authority an impossibility. The great poet-historian of Kashmir, Kalhana, describes these hordes from sad, personal experience and ironically says, "They are well skilled only in burning, plundering and fighting."

"Kalhana wrote *Rajatarangini*, the famous Saga of the Kings of Kashmir, between the years 1148-1149 A. D. The story covers thousands of years from earliest times down to his own day...Kalhana is pre-eminently a Kavi, a seer-poet. He looked upon himself as a poet first and chronicler afterwards. The late R. S.

Pandit compared him to Aeschylus and Homer as 'a poet of veracity'. Kalhana acquaints us with many ancient superstitions, customs and traditions, some of which have persisted to the present day...The cult of Saivism, then prevalent in Kashmir, influenced him strongly...Kalhana ranks among the first-rate Indian Sanskrit historians of the Middle Ages. He has saved the history and ancient culture of Kashmir from oblivion."*

Kalhana's interesting and informative chronicle was continued by several chroniclers up to the fifteenth century but their treatment lacks his masterly narration. A complete picture of the people is presented by Kalhana. Their life was simple. They excelled in many branches of learning, notably literature, poetics, astrology, theology, etc. Kashmiri Hindus evolved Saivism, the so-called *Trika* philosophy, of absolute monism which strikes a bold parallel with the Vedanta philosophy and which is more progressive in tincturing its idealism with realism in a synthetic manner.

The Tartar warrior, Zulfi Kadir Khan, spread havoc with fire and sword in Kashmir in 1322 A. D. and carried 50,000 Brahmins with him as slaves but "General Winter" defeated him on his retreat as it did Napoleon and Hitler in Russia: he and his entire predatory forces perished in the snow storm that overtook them. Mohammad Ghaznvi invaded Kashmir when Didda Rani, one of the great Hindu queens of

*Quoted from the writer's article entitled "*Kalhana—the poet-historian of Kashmir*" in the *Indian Review*, November, 1944.

Kashmir, ruled over Kashmir, but his attempt failed. In 1341 A. D., another Hindu queen, Kuta Rani,* who ruled over Kashmir even after her husband had fled to Tibet, as a result of a Tartar invasion, died a heroic death. Her minister, Shah Mirza, usurped the throne and wanted to marry her but she committed suicide rather than submit her honour to her erstwhile subordinate.

Many Sultans succeeded Shah Mirza, out of whom the reign of Sikander the Iconoclast (1394—1416 A. D.) stands out prominently as one of terror and vandalism. He out-Neroed Nero in his tyranny. As a result of his idol-breaking zeal, many of the finest ancient temples were razed to the ground, out of which the ruins six at Martand, Pandrethan, Ganeshbal and Bijbehara remain to tell the sad tale.

An honourable exception to vandalistic Muslim Sultans of Kashmir is provided by Zainul-Abdin (1423-1474), the successor of Sultan Sikandar, who is remembered to this day as "Badshah"—Great Monarch—by the masses in Kashmir in their folk-songs that accompany their many occupations.

He introduced paper-making, sericulture, shawl-making and many fruit trees in Kashmir. The Mar Canal, which drains out the famous Dal Lake, preserves his memory. He loved his Hindu subjects so much as to go to the extent of repairing some of their dilapidated temples. Kalhana's work on history of Kashmir

*Kashmir has had many Hindu queens. Mohamad-ud-din "Fauq" has described 18 of them in a booklet entitled "*Kashmir-ki-Raniyan—Queens of Kashmir.*"

was brought up to date in his time by Jona Raja in Sanskrit and by Mulla Ahmad in Persian. Hindus occupied high posts in his service. His tomb near Zaina Kadal in Srinagar is kept in fine condition by the Archæological Department of the State.

Zain-ul-Abdin's successors could not resist the invasions of the Chaks, a turbulent Shiah sect from the country of the Dards, as he had done successfully. Ghazi Khan, the first Chak ruler, exercised his Shiah proselytising zeal to a great degree. Seven kings followed him. There was nothing remarkable in their rule except horrors of persecution and of oppression suffered by the Kashmiris who were relieved from them when Akbar's invading forces swept through Rajouri and defeated Chaks. Babar and Humayun had failed in their attempts to annex Kashmir to their kingdom but Akbar's generals always won him victories.

Moghul rule brought peace to the unhappy valley. The condition of the masses improved considerably. Akbar rebuilt the fort of Hari Parbat and built a wall round it. Jahangir was a great lover of Kashmir. He laid excellent terraced gardens at Verinag, Achibal, Nasseem, Shalimar and had chinars planted throughout the valley. His wife, Nur Jehan, built Pathar Masjid, the stone mosque, in Srinagar, which now occupies the head-quarters of the National Conference. The royal, romantic couple spent a delightful time in their pleasure spots in Kashmir. In 1627 Jahangir died on his way out of Kashmir, saying "Only Kashmir," in reply to what he wanted. Shah Jahan added to Moghul Gardens in Kashmir and, like his

predecessors, he also stimulated revival and spread of arts and industries of Kashmir.

A harsh change came when the Puritan Moghul monarch, Aurangzeb, succeeded Shah Jahan in 1653. Francois Bernier, who visited Kashmir during his time, left his records about the shawl-making and other industries of Kashmir which were thriving then. But an era of fanatic persecution of Hindus was once again revived. Special taxes were levied upon Hindus. Aurangzeb visited Kashmir only once. Moghul viceroys in Kashmir turned to be cruel oppressors when internecine rivalry at the Moghul court after the death of Aurangzeb gave them a free hand.

Profiting by these disorderly conditions, Afghans successfully attacked Kashmir under Ahmad Shah Durrani in 1750 A. D. Thereupon ensued a flagrant tyrannical rule of devastation and rapine that lasted over sixty years. As usual Hindus were the victims of a ruthless religious persecution but other Kashmiris were not spared the horrors of brutal oppression. Refusal to conversion culminated in hideous death to the Hindus who were brutally maltreated, tortured and pressed into mat sacks and thrown alive in the Dal Lake at a point named after these atrocities as "Bat-Mazar"—the graveyard of Hindus. Most Hindus heroically preferred death to giving up their faith.

George Forster visited Kashmir in 1783. His account of the rule of Afghan governors in Kashmir in his Letters from Kashmir is illuminating. He says that as against the revenue of three and a half lakh of rupees collected in the reign of Aurangzeb, the

Afghan governor "extracted no less than twenty lakhs" from the poverty-stricken peasantry of Kashmir. The governor "was allowed to execute with impunity every act of violence" provided he punctually paid the annual tribute to the Kabul Durbar. Forster adds, "This extreme rigour has sensibly affected the deportment and manners of the Kashmirians who shrink with dread from the Afghan oppressions and are fearful of making any display of opulence."

Very justifiably therefore, does Sir Walter Lawrence characterise this period as "a time of brutal tyranny unrelieved by gold works, chivalry or honour". Yet Hindus like Pandit Zairam Bhan and Pandit Nath Ram Tikoo found favour at the Afghan Court in lieu of their intellectual superiority. Kashmiris longed for a less despotic rule and hopefully looked towards the new warrior sect of the Punjab, the Sikhs, under the eminent leadership of Ranjit Singh. Pandit Birbal Dhar, a diplomatic courtier, went to Lahore and invited Ranjit Singh to put an end to the oppressions of Jabbar Khan, the last Afghan governor. Consequently in 1819, Ranjit Singh's forces, headed by the then Raja Ghulab Singh, entered Kashmir over the Pir Panchal Pass and fought off the Afghans.

Moorecraft travelled in Kashmir in 1824. From his accounts it appears that Sikh rule was no less despotic than that of the Afghans or the Chaks. Only Muslim fanatic vandalism was at an end. Moorecraft bears out how Ranjit Singh would not hesitate to stop the sale of crops in order to realize revenue arrears,

which led to "the gradual depopulation of the country." What he also found was: "Every where the people are in the most abject conditions, exorbitantly taxed by the Sikh government and subjected to every kind of extortion and oppression by its officers".* Nature too expressed her ill-timed wrath against the Kashmiris through subjecting them to earthquake, cholera, famine and flood during the Sikh rule. To this day the phrase "the Sikh face" persists among the Kashmiris signifying extreme rudeness. Indeed the Sikhs "looked upon the Kashmirians as little better than cattle". Merely small fines would be charged from a Sikh for the murder of a native. The infamous institution of Begar, unpaid forced labour, was re-organised on a slave hunting basis.

Ranjit Singh died in 1839. Anarchy prevailed in the Punjab for a number of years. The British were victorious over the Sikhs at Sabraon in 1846 and under well-known circumstances Kashmir State was transferred to Ghulab Singh, the erstwhile Dogra petty ruler, who, by dint of extraordinary military merit, coupled with astute statesmanship, had risen to occupy a high position in the Lahore Court. He had already conquered Baltistan and Western Tibet during 1840-42. In establishing peace and order in Kashmir, he evinced qualities of a great administrator. In spite of all his ruthlessness which was complemented by his crafty diplomacy, Tyler, Sir Walter Lawrence, Captain Cunningham, Major Smythe recorded from

*Victor Jacquement, Baron Hugel and G. T. Vigne, who visited Kashmir during this time, amply corroborate this information.

personal knowledge of him that he was "just and reasonable", "affable in manner", "an able and moderate man" and "anything but strong-headed and hot-headed". He possessed a brilliant sense of humour. Once a Sikh warrior approached him with a complaint that a Muslim shepherd's shouts disturbed his prayers in the Gurdwara. "Then, you tend his sheep", was the prompt, silencing reply from the Maharaja. He re-organised the shawl-industry of Kashmir.

In the words of K. M. Panikkar,*

"Ghulab Singh was one of the most remarkable men that India produced in the nineteenth-century ... He is the only ruler in India's long history who could be said to have extended the geographical boundaries of India...The present Jammu and Kashmir State is his monument".

Ghulab Singh died in 1857 after formally abdicating the throne to his only surviving son, Ranbir Singh. Maharaja Ranbir Singh was a great administrator and gave Kashmir a systematic administration. He was a great patron of learning and made many attempts to raise the cultural level of his people. He introduced many new staples in Kashmir.

Maharaja Pratap Singh, who succeeded his father in 1885, brought about many reforms. Public Works Department was set up. Colleges, schools, hospitals and municipalities were established. Sir Walter Lawrence, the author of an excellent book on Kashmir, completed the Land Settlement, as a result of which many cultiva-

*Ghulab Singh by K. M. Panikkar [Martin Hopkinson, Ltd.]

tors returned to their deserted holdings. The Maharaja abolished *begar* in Gilgit, thus removing the last vestige of this infamous legacy of Muslim rule in Kashmir.

His Highness Maharaja Hari Singh, nephew of the late Maharaja, who had already assisted him as the Senior Member of the Council, ascended the throne in 1925. His Highness got the State Subject legally defined and strictly enforced. Education has been steadily expanding in the State under a planned policy of educational re-organisation. Many hospitals have been set up. Agriculturists' rights have been protected through many acts. Rural Uplift is sponsored by the State. A Praja Sabha was established in 1934. Last year two of its popular members were elected to occupy ministerial posts.

IV

VALLEYS OF KASHMIR

‘A Vale of purple glens and snow-cold streams,
Broad meadows lush with verdure, flower and
fruit,
The broad-leafed maple towering in his pride,
The temple’s noble ruin, on the height ;
The poplar lines that mark the homestead
there,
Calm lakes that bear the lotus on their breast.’
—C. R. Tollemache.

The mountain barrier of Pir Panchal range, extending over 120 miles in three chief divisions, separates the Valley of Kashmir from the plains of Northern India. The range bears summits of great beauty which command magnificent views of the Valley, whose size is 84 miles long and 20 to 25 miles broad. The beautiful Valliy is indeed “an emerald of verdure enclosed in a radiant amphitheatre of virgin snow”. The Jhelum intersects the Valley in the middle through green alluvial plain, studded with orchards, gardens, rice and other fields, intersected by streams and brooks. Though mountainous and full of plateaux, called *Karewas*, for the most part, the entire Valley gives the total effect of an immense oval amphitheatre, justifiably characterised as Sub-Alpine Region of Asiatic Italy. Spring embellishes it with a riot of colour. The summer clothes hill and dale in green. The autumn finds it pleasantly sunny. The winter spreads a mantle of snow over its entire area. Actually there are many smaller valleys in Kashmir, opening out into the big

Valley, formed by alluvial deposits around the Jhelum. The more prominent among them are : Liddar, Sind and Lolab.

The Liddar Valley is one of the finest valleys in the Himalayas though it is less picturesque than the Sind Valley. Yet it is noted for the flowery spring, cool summer and autumnal foliage. It is drained by the Liddar and a few smaller streams, which originate from large glaciers and have a lot of swardy margs on their banks. Many cataracts also cut through rocky ridges and pine forests and widen into the beautiful valley below Pahalgam and Eishmukam, the latter affording one of the most beautiful and spacious views of the Liddar Valley.

Two streams meet at Pahalgam, where the Valley bifurcates towards the mountains, the north-eastern part containing the route to Amar Nath and the north-western route leads towards Lidderwat and Kolohai. Pahalgam is the most popular hill station of the Liddar Valley. It is not so wet as Gulmarg or Sonamarg. A short hike takes the tourist to the margs of Baiserran and Khanmoo. An interesting ruin exists at Mamal. Pony rides in Pahalgam form a nice diversion. Evenings are delightfully spent in the Club, situated on the bank of the roaring Liddar stream.

Pahalgam is an excellent base, easily the best in Kashmir, for treks to the wilder scenery of Sona Sar, Tar Sar, Mar Sar, Shisha Nag and other mountain lakes and to Amar Nath Cave, Lidderwat, the Kolohai glaciers etc. From Pahalgam, trekkers can cross over to the small

Tral Valley or the smaller Wardwan Valley from over the snow-bridge at Chandanwari.

The Sind Valley is the largest tributary of the Valley of Kashmir, being more than 60 miles long. The diversified scenery of its fertile fields, green pastures, luxuriant herbage, magnificent forests, and snow-capped peaks, constitutes its special attraction. Especially the Upper Part of the Valley, drained by the Sind river, flowing in a torrent, delights the visitor with "one of the finest and most magnificent pieces of scenery in the world". Through it runs the chief trade-route between Kashmir and Central Asia. At its head, Zoji La Pass leads the route to Ladakh, the popular rendezvous of sportsmen.

The starting-place for treks to this Valley is at Ganderbal, situated at the mouth of the Valley and 12 miles by road from Srinagar and also reached either through the Mar Canal and the Anchar Lake or over the Jhelum. From Ganderbal to Baltal, a staging place at the foot of Zoji La Pass, four marches are to be covered. The route passes through the pretty little village of Kangan and the glacier Valley of Sonamarg—the crowded summer camping station. Sonamarg has a bracing climate. It is closely fringed with forests and many crescent meadows lie in beautiful terraces, affording excellent camp sites.

Small glens of the Sind Valley lend themselves to fine photographic and other studies. The Gangabal Lake is reached from here being further off at a distance of 15 miles. Overhead hang the craggy peaks of Haramouk. The tourist is delighted with a close view of the

glaciers and of the Matterhorn-like peak of Kolohai.

In fact an interesting though difficult trek can be had from the Sind or Liddar Valley to reach the other through Lidderwat. There are two routes which connect the two valleys. The company of a local guide is absolutely essential. The weather and the passes must be favourable.

At the lower end of the Sind Valley lies the small pretty lake, Manasbal, flanked by well-shaded terraces and noted for the crystal limpidity of its water as well as its lotus blossom during August. The Wular Lake fringes the Valley on the southern side. It is best to camp near the Lake in spring months of April and May. Storms from Haramouk, coming down the Sind Valley, usually sweep over the Lake in the afternoon. Behind the range of mountains that overlook the Wular Lake, there is the Lolab Valley, reputed for its "sylvan charms".

The Lolab Valley is a rich and picturesque expanse of level plain, attaining a length of 11 miles and breadth between 3 and 4 miles. Park-like sheets of meadows, dotted with dense clusters of walnut groves, afford excellent camping sites. The blossom of fruit trees in the orchards is worth seeing. Sportsmen put up in good forest rest-houses and go bear-hunting in the cedar forests nearby. This Valley is situated at a height of 3,000 feet above the Valley level and has, therefore, a very bracing climate.

There are actually many more smaller valleys in Kashmir, but they are not as easily accessible and as picturesque and broad as those

mentioned above. Those described already provide the best camping sites and bases for trekkers and other visitors. They are, indeed, so many emeralds set in the pearls of snow-capped shining peaks of Kashmir.

SRINAGAR, THE VENICE OF THE EAST

"Srinagar owns a large population of sacred cows and bulls that wander vaguely through the streets", says Aldous Huxley in *Jesting Pilate*. It is an absolute lie, as there are no sacred cows and bulls in Srinagar at all. To remove such misrepresentations from the minds of intending visitors to the Golden Valley of Kashmir, this chapter is dispassionately written on Srinagar, "the City of Sri" the goddess of Fortune which is justifiably merited as the Asiatic Venice.

Srinagar is an ancient city. It has been the political and cultural centre of Kashmir for thirteen centuries and has thus reflected the chequered history of Kashmir. The majestic river of the Valley, the serpentine Jhelum, "born from Olympian heights and cradled in a valley of velvet", flows through it, spanned by seven bridges. It is flanked by two hills, Shankaracharya, bearing a magnificent temple and Hari Parbat, on which stands a fortress. Its population is two lakhs. Trade flourishes in Srinagar. Trade routes lead to Gilgit and Ladakh, whose passes open out to Central Asia. Its height from the sea level is 5,192 ft.

To catch a riverside view of the city, with its picturesque balconies, busy ghats, mosques, temples and boats, the visitor goes down the river Jhelum, the central highway of the city, in a Shikara—the gay, swift gondola of the

Venice of the East. He sees the Secretariat with its impressive river side facade, built on the site of the palace of the late Maharaja. Reaching the heart of the city, he catches glimpses of Pathar Masjid, the stone mosque with the domed roof, built by Noor Jehan, the massive timber mosque in memory of the Muslim saint, Shah Hamdan, the tomb of Zain-ul-Abdin "Badshah", the Emperor, and riverside temples. He observes boats of all sizes and shapes on either side of the Jhelum.

The pointed nose of the Shikara touches the ghat near the third bridge, where the visitor can purchase art products of the city. The Hanji—Kashmiri boatman—sturdy, cheerful and greedy—beckons the Sahib to go up to do his shopping. The Sahib and his family find themselves confronted with shops with catching signboards such as "Sunshine Alley", "Simple, Simon", "Ganymede" and so on. He and his party enter picturesque show-rooms, displaying products of papier-mache, walnut wood-carving, delicate silver work, Kashmir furs, and exotic curios. They forget themselves in the gorgeous setting of the decoration of the show-rooms. Bargaining in the right, oriental style is interestingly carried on for hours. The Hanji groans at the Sahib's delay, but not much. The Sahib has to pay him on an hourly basis. So he complacently takes out his Kangri Kashmiri earthenware firepot and lights his Hookah. He guesses, rightly enough, how his Sahib is lost in fingering a shawl of gossamer fineness or in judging silver work of a gaudy vase and that his lady is excited over stone ornaments, selecting among those of a gate, blood-

stone or jade. Perhaps they are watching the stone-cutter, the embroiderer or the papier mache craftsman at his work. After all the Sahib returns to the boat. The party is grotesquely loaded with presents, mementoes and miscellaneous bric-a-brac.

Presently the Sahib directs the Hanji to row across to the Carpet Factory. Walking through narrow streets and dirty alleys, the party reach the Factory—wooden barracks, where weavers work sitting in front of hand looms, on which the rug is being made. The visitor is astonished at the sight of the leader-weaver, who quickly dictates, "Two yellow, five white, six blue, ten red, twelve yellow" and so on. The dictation is sonorously delivered, which relieves its monotony to some extent. The weavers, listening intently like so many stenographers, swiftly and skilfully ply the indicated colours.

The visitor is also interested to see the modest compositor in a quiet room, where he translates Persian, Kashmiri and other designs of carpets into directions for the leader-weaver.

Let me give you a glimpse of the well-known Silk Factory of Srinagar. You secure a pass and find yourself within the largest silk filature in India, which is producing a lot of parachute silk these days. Silk worms are bred in villages by peasants on mulberry leaves. Loaded with big bags containing silk cocoons, they come to Srinagar in lorries, cheerfully singing Kashmiri chorus songs. You attentively watch how silken cobwebs are extricated from the cocoons, how silk is carded, spun and woven. The visitor, who stays in Srinagar during delightful



Harisingh High Street, Srinagar

Photo by Royal Photo Co.

First Bridge (Jhelum flows under)

Photo by Royal Photo Co.



autumn, can see a working model of the Silk Factory in the State Exhibition.

The State Exhibition is one of the best autumn attractions of Srinagar, when the visitors come down to Srinagar from popular hill stations like Pahalgam, Gulmarg, Sonamarg, etc. All the famous arts and crafts of Kashmir are exhibited here in a beautiful setting of luxurious green turf and flowers and modern amusements and recreations. It has contributed largely towards the timely revival of arts and crafts of Kashmir, some of which, like shawl-making and Gubba-making, had almost entered a decadent phase. But the discerning eye of the lover of art deplores the fact that arts of Kashmir are getting much too commercialised. Cheap dyes are getting to be current in papier-mâché work of an inferior type, whose demand is on an increase. Silver work is more gaudy than lasting. Only the connoisseur's expert eye can appraise good work.

Srinagar offers so many attractions to the visitor. The Museum, one furlong from Amira Kadal, 'the bridge of the nobility', the arched first bridge, is full of interesting specimens of Kashmir art and relics of art and history. In the heart of the city he can visit the recently excavated tomb of Sultan Ala-ud-din, Narpi-ristan, an archæological edifice, and Jami Masjid, the greatest mosque of Kashmir. The Weir of the Jhelum below Safa Kadali, 'the last bridge,' attracts many anglers. The Mar and other canals are strongly reminiscent of Venice to the travelled visitor.

The famous Moghul gardens are situated at a couple of miles from Srinagar. The visitor

takes a tonga or a bus from the terminus of the lake Boulevardes. Rows upon rows of house-boats, moored among soft, overhanging willows, greet his delighted eyes. Or, better still, he takes a Shikara and a group of Hanjis row it along at a thrilling speed, amidst stretches of lotus, past the so-called Golden and Silvern islands, under the 'camel-arched' bridges connecting the road across the Dal lake, constructed by the Great Moghuls.

Srinagar is a very dense city. There are at least 30,000 houses in the area of the city proper which does not exceed six square miles. The city proper has been characterised as dirty by many visitors. Their sanitary sense is shocked at the sight of overpopulated slums in many quarters of the city where open, deep gutters run on either side of the alleys. The insanitary living habits of Kashmiris living in Srinagar contribute much to filthiness and disease which is rampant in the city. The sun never reaches many dingy, one-roomed tenements which shelter whole families. In the face of the ill-organised and sporadic efforts of the Municipality, no doctor can hazard a guess when T. B. and other fell diseases will be extinct in Srinagar. One doctor, however, gave a characteristic reply to me. "I have a plan," he said, "a drastic plan, to exterminate T. B. from the city. A great fire of the city must be organised on the lines of Stalin's scorched earth policy."

Yet the whole of Srinagar is not like that. The civil lines around and beyond first bridge, on either side of the Jhelum, flanked by the Bunds, constitutes a very healthy area. Visitors sea-

sonally hire bungalows or live in hotels or house-boats in this part of Srinagar.

Every visitor climbs the Shankaracharya, the pyramidal hill near the terminus of the Gagribal Lake, to secure, the very best introduction to the landscape of Srinagar and its environs : the sheety lakes enclosed in a mountain amphitheatre, majestic and meandering Jhelum flowing through and past it, the distant mountain-ranges, containing the famous peaks of Nanga Parbat, Hara Moukh, Katwa etc., receding farther from the lush rice-fields.

Shankaracharya is about 1,000 ft. high. The climb takes about half an hour. It is capped by a fine, stone temple, of great archæological and historical interest, built about 200 B. C. and believed to be the oldest temple of Kashmir. No mortar was used in the construction of its lofty plinth, the grand parapet and even the beautiful arch over the broad stone staircase of the temple. It is interesting that the peculiar curve of the winding Jhelum, as observed from the temple, has furnished the popular pattern for embroidery work on Kashmir shawls. In fact the vast gorgeous scene of the valley all around cannot be taken in at a glance. Bright pinnacles of temples and spires of mosques stand out amidst the hazy forest of houses in the city. You see the picturesque galleries and spires of the famous Makdum Sahib shrine, situated at the foot of rival hill, Hari Parbat and spacious almond orchards enclosed within the bastioned stone wall around the hill, built by Akbar. Beyond them, over the beautiful side of the Dal Lake, which roughly measures five miles by two, lie the far-famed, ingenious "float-

ing gardens"—looking like so many carved pieces of green carpet, partially covered by pendant willows and tall poplars.

One also snatches a fine view of Ghulab Bhawan, the Maharaja's palace, situated on the southern side of the Gagribal, revealing high æsthetic sense coupled with engineering skill, in the selection of the excellent site, the laying out of lawns and terrace and the grandeur of the huge structure of the Palace that commands a majestic view of the lakes and the distant snow-capped mountains. Beyond the Palace, you see the Peri Mahal, the deserted "fairy Palace"—a picturesque pile of ruins which served as monastery to Jahangir's son's tutor, Mulla Shah. The Cantonment of Srinagar, one of the most beautiful hill cantonments of the world, presents a dignified look from the top of the hill.

Srinagar, the celebrated centre of the Himalayan Valley, has had glory and greatness in the past. It goes to the credit of the present regime, ably headed by Maharaja Hari Singh, that the historical city has been steadily reviving and adding to its charm, renown and importance.

VI

MOGHUL GARDENS IN KASHMIR

Kashmir, the "land of splendours", is very much indebted to the Moghuls who, apart from giving peace and prosperity to the land, laid out the many Gardens—the far-famed beauty spots of Kashmir—which are indeed among of its splendours. Most of these gardens are flanked by the Dal Lake—one of the great attractions to visitors—a smooth sheet of water, surrounded by a mountain amphitheatre, intersected by canals, beautified by the lotus and well-known for its house-boat mooring places and the so-called floating gardens.

1. *Chashma Shahi* (King's Spring). Shah Jahan's garden— $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Srinagar.

The gushing, copious spring is enclosed in a carved stone, framework, which regulates its flow, its pure, ice-cold water is reputed for its digestive properties. In the middle of the terraces, a small stream, fed by the spring, flows and feeds the fountains in small tanks. The watercourse is led through a Moghul building, whose cedar pillars, carved stone work and frescoed walls are remarkable.

Already small, Chashma Shahi looks smaller due to high walls that enclose it within a nook of the upland foot of the Zebanwan Mountain (8,000 ft.). Treks to Zebanwan Mountain and short trips to Peri Mahal can be based at Chashma Shahi: previous permission must be secured from the Game Warden.

A much-frequented summer rendezvous of holiday-makers

2. *Nishat Bagh* (Pleasure Garden). Laid out by Asaf Khan, Moghul Governor in Kashmir— $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Srinagar; $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Chashma Shahi; the biggest Moghul Garden in Kashmir; also, the most popular because of its easy accessibility by road and by water.

Against the fact of a bare mountain, it is laid out in 10 terraces. Water falls in slanting cascades between the terraces over square stone-lined tanks set with numerous fountains. Topmost stone-bordered terrace and the lower most terrace, which bears a lovely pavilion, command a fine view of the Dal Lake, the Hari Parbat hillock and the snow-covered Pir Panchal range in the background, zinnias, geraniums, balsams, petunias, varieties of roses and daisies, bespangling the velvety turf under the chinars and the graceful cypresses, add to the charm of the garden.

On Sundays, when, as in other Moghul Gardens, fountains play here, it is thronged by visitors and people of Kashmir.

3. *Shallimar* (Abode of Love). Laid out by Jahangir in 1619—2 miles further from Nishat Bagh.

This beauty spot is situated in north-eastern corner of the lake at the foot of Mount Mahadev (9,000 ft.) and like Nishat and Nassim Bagh, it is accessible by the Dal Lake.

The arrangement is much the same as that of Nishat Bagh but it is smaller as it has only 4 terraces. Many tourist-æsthetes, however, place it as the prettier of the two. The central water course starts from a black marble pavilion

on the uppermost terrace, which was reserved for ladies of Jahangir's court.

On Sundays fountains of the lowermost terrace play as late as the midnight, when they are electrically illuminated and, in the words of Keats, then, "the air is cooling and so very still". Popular picnic and banquet resort.

4. *Nasim Bagh* (Garden of Bliss). Akbar's garden*—Fountains, cascades and watercourses of Moghul time are extinct now, but their absence has caused little loss to its beauty. Raised forty feet above the western side of the Dal Lake, its smooth sward is dotted with thick chinars, as grave in their age as they are full of dense foliage.

Many house-boats moor along its shore.

One of the best camping grounds near Srinagar, being only 6 miles from the city by both road and water.

5. *Achibal*. 40 miles from Srinagar and 5½ miles from Anantnag. It is noted for its ice-cold copious spring—one of the largest in Kashmir—gushing out at the base of a northern ridge. Trained in a watercourse, rippling between an avenue of Moghul chinars, the water falls in cascades over tanks wherein fountains play.

*For a fuller study of these Moghul gardens, the ideas of their originators, the difficulties that their engineers had to face, and their interesting history, that will lead the interested connoisseur to a greater appreciation of their beauties, read Mrs. C. M. Villiers Stuart's pamphlet, "The Gardens of the Great Moghuls."

A Moghul building, called Jahangir's *Hamam*—Bath—adds to the beauty of its mountain-girt surroundings. Nearby is a big Government Trout Hatchery where live fish are sold to visitors.

OTHER MOGHUL GARDENS

The ruins of Peri Mahal (Fairy's Palace) are found on an eminence near Chashma Shahi over a height of 500 feet from the level of the lake. It is a terraced Moghul Garden. It commands an excellent view of the Dal Lake. Pleasant reflections of its might-have-been's occupy the mind of the wistful visitor.

Harawan, about 2 miles from Shalimar and 11 miles from Srinagar, is a beautiful mountain reservoir which feeds Srinagar with water. In its vicinity there is a hatchery for trout culture. About a mile farther off, on the north-western slope of the mountain, there are the recently excavated ruins of a Buddhist monastery which are of great archæological interest.

On the borders of the Manasbal Lake there are, still extant, the ruins of yet another Moghul garden.

The spring of Verinag, the favourite residence of Jahangir and his consort, Nur Jahan, was enclosed by him in a stone octagon. Its dark blue water is spanned by an old picturesque Moghul building. Terraces of the garden are still preserved.

IMPORTANT NOTE FOR VISITORS TO MOGHUL GARDENS

His Highness' Government take precautions to preserve the beauty of the Moghul Gardens

and have, therefore, promulgated rules for their upkeep and order.

Cycles and dogs are not to be taken inside any of them. No tents can be pitched. Their lawns, flowerbeds, grass borders must not be damaged in any way. In the interests of public morals, drinking is prohibited within the precincts of the Gardens.

VII

EVE IN ASIATIC EDEN

The long-fabled beauty of women of Kashmir has been acclaimed by both Eastern and Western poets and other observant visitors who have placed her as the best type of oriental womanhood due to her suppleness, attractiveness and charm.

EVE OF EDEN

“The eyes of a beautiful Kashmiri woman have such an urgency mingled with pathos, that you look into them as you would look into spring waters, wondering.”* Thus does James Milne wax eloquent over the expressive eyes of a Kashmiri woman, whom he calls “a primal creature of her Garden of Eden”. Indeed she is one of the beautiful specimens of the delicate femininity of India. Generally large, lustrous and almond-shaped, the eyes of the Eve of Eden of Asia gather great charm, when her eyelashes are bathed with collyrium and antimony and stone and other trinkets and silver ear-rings heighten the effect.

FEATURES AND COMPLEXION

Sir Francis Younghusband assures the visitor that “he will often see strikingly handsome women, with clear-cut features, large dark eyes, with marked eye-brows and general Jewish appearance”. Their Jewish features belie the

* *The Road to Kashmir* by James Milne, (Hodder and Stoughton London), page 121.

theories of Kashmiris being the descendants of the Lost Tribe of Israel.

Kashmiri women have "an English rosiness of complexion behind the Eastern tan". *This original blend of the East and the West in the person of "Eve in a Kashmir Eden" has fitly won poetical tribute from many an observant traveller, who marks the Greek profile of the face and reflectively remembers that Alexander and his victorious armies passed through the Eden of Asia and left many of his soldiers to settle in the land of beauties, natural and human. George Forster, who visited Kashmir in 1783, matched Kashmiri women with "brunettes in the South of France" in their complexion and beauty. Col. Dow found them "enchantingly beautiful".

The majority of women in Kashmir, the peasant women, due to their hard occupation in farm and field, have a sunburnt complexion that has quite lost the attractive rosy hue which adorns it in early youth. Her complexion presents a strong contrast to that of the white complexion of the co-called Kashmiri Panditani and the Muslim woman of the middle class. But her fine white teeth, her graceful form and her delicate features, more than make up the loss in her complexion.

"Hindu women often have refined faces and gentle manners and they are fairer than the Mohammedan", † so writes Dr. Neve about Kashmiri Panditains. That is so because they

*Ibid, page 123.

†*Beyond the Pir Panchal* by Dr. Ernest F. Neve, (T. Fisher Unwin, London), page 240.

lead indoor lives but their health level is very much lower than that of their Muslim sisters.

BOATWOMAN OF THE JHELUM

Hanjis, the boat-folk of Kashmir, are Muslim but their life and manners are strangely different from their community. Maybe they have gypsy streaks in their blood, or that they have Noah as their ancestor, on the pattern of whose legendary Ark their boats are designed. Boatmen and their women possess distinctive characteristics.

James Milne has also remarked the "handsome appearance and the picturesque air," of the boatwoman who ferries you across the Jhelum and into the lovely Dal Lake, bordered by the well-known Moghul Gardens. Her smart, easy movements and alert mien, when she sits at the helm of the *Doonga* or house-boat, attracts the notice of visitors who admire her excellent physique. She is also smart in her wordy, harmless and noisy battle with other boatwomen. These high-pitched conversational feats, wherein powers of high flown abusive language are very well demonstrated, last for hours and are sometimes adjourned from day to day. Of course, like every Kashmiri woman, she is a great gossip—a hobby that trains her tongue in fluency and sharpness.

The boatwoman's head dress of red cloth, overhanging with a pinscarf, covering the plaits on the back, does not fail to command notice. It offers a sharp contrast to her white complexion—obviously the gift of an open-air life in the boat wherein the sun does not tan her complexion and the cool breeze heightens the ruddy colour of her cheeks.

OTHER OCCUPATIONS

Besides being farmers and boatwomen, the women of Kashmir carry on many other occupations. They are the milkwomen, fair-complexioned, erect and healthy, wearing stone and silver necklaces. It delights you to see her balancing her big earthen milk pots or spacious baskets, containing cowdung, on her head. Women help their husbands in raising vegetables. Early morning they come to the city and town, skilfully balancing big baskets of vegetables on their heads.

Gujars, the migratory herdsmen of Kashmir, are a race by themselves. They are tall, fair and have Aryan features. Their women are very beautiful, graceful and smart. The nomadic, active life that they lead gives them a ruddy complexion. Black or blue overalls, large silver ear-rings and stone or bead necklaces become them very well. They are experts at handling their huge flocks of sheep and cattle. It is interesting to watch them settling up and managing their modest encampments on high altitudes. Their gypsy life is picturesque.

It is also interesting to watch village women pounding paddy in spacious wooden mortars with big pestles. One woman straightens herself and lifts the pestle high to bring it down with a crash in the mortar which contains paddy. Then she lifts it up, while the other woman facing her, throws her pestle in the mortar similarly. This occupation gives them healthy exercise. She does the fetching of water from the nearby source of water.

At most of their occupations, Kashmiri women

sing chorus folksongs. But the drudgery of these occupations, to which they are per necessity driven from very early childhood, coupled with early childbearing, damages their looks prematurely.

DRESS

Formerly both Hindu and Muslim ladies of the middle class used to live in purdah. Now Hindu ladies in Kashmir proper have completely dropped the use of purdah. Some of their sisters in Jammu, however, still use it. Kashmiri Muslim ladies of the middle class mostly still live in purdah, so that they lead cloistered lives.

The Kashmiri Panditain wears the gaudy *pheran*, the ample Kashmiri gown, hemmed with a border and hanging in awkward folds. She has, as an offshoot of Hindu Reform movements, taken to the Indian type of dress in order to align herself with the progressive women of her country. The picturesque *pheran* is not going out of use with the Muslim women. These *pherans* are, as Mrs. Freda Bedi remarked last year in the presence of the writer, "just devices invented by the exploiting and jealous male to disguise the beauty of the Kashmiri woman". They serve—as the writer commented in the December 1944 issue of the Northern India Observer—that unæsthetic purpose eminently well!

The head-dress that the Muslim women wear is peculiar. The *kasaba*, as it is called, is a turban-like, red head-dress, held tight with pins to which is fastened a bonnet of cotton print or

embroidered cloth, that covers the pendant tresses. It is worn by Muslim women after marriage. Such of the Panditains, who still wear the picturesque *pheran*, continue the head-dress, *taranga*, that goes with it. Unlike, the *kasaba*, it is white and only a few pins are used to keep it in place. The pendant bonnet used over it falls to the heels.

Unmarried girls wear skull caps, which are sometimes worked with lace. Peasant girls and women have their hair spread over the forehead and sides in a large number of skilfully woven plaits, which are tied into a knot and covered by a course tassel on the back. Large silver or metal ear-rings and necklaces besmear their skin near the ears. Silver bracelets and glassy bangles make a jingling sound when she scours the utensils by the riverside or carries water from there. Home-made grass shoes are much in use. She wears leather sandals, if she can afford them.

HER FUTURE

Mrs. Bruce strikes the nail on the head when she says, "The women are great homekeepers and are devoted to their husbands and large families. The wife is, by no means, a drudge or chattel, but the equal of her husband".*

Kashmiri women are not clean in their personal habits. They know and observe ever so little of sanitation and hygienic living habits. Perhaps the climate is partly responsible for that. Her deplorable ignorance and appalling

*"Kashmir" by Hon. Mrs. C. G. Bruce, (A. and C. Black Ltd., London), page 36.

illiteracy are responsible for the faulty upbringing of her children who soon lose their "winsome looks". A great change is afoot already. Women in Kashmir are learning to be hygienic and progressive. The spread of female education is steadily evolving the enlightened type of woman, who rallies under such organisations as Women's Welfare Trust and local branch of All-India Women's Conference, presided over by Mrs. Rameshwari Nehru, who tries her best to better the lot of her less fortunate sisters.

VIII

TREKKING IN KASHMIR

The mountain-girt valley of Kashmir is a popular trekking resort of India. Its romantic, upland beauty spots, with the picturesque meadows spangled with wild, alpine flowers, crystalline streams, beautiful tarns, lovely mountain lakes and majestic snow-capped peaks, offer abundant opportunities for trekking. Pre-eminent places for sightseeing and camping like the Moghul Gardens, Harwan, Achabal, Kekarnag, Verinag, Pahalgam, Ganderbal, Sonamarg and Gulmarg attract visitors by the thousand. Anglers enjoy their hobby at the trout streams near Sumbal, Gurais, Achabal, Kekarnag, Khrew etc. Big and small game hunters tour the length and breadth of the Valley and the outlying frontier districts of Ladakh, Kargil, Astereete, which are reached through the picturesque route over Zoji-La pass. Treks are usually based at the camping grounds of Pahalgam, Sonamarg, Kekarnag, Achabal, Gulmarg, Harwan or start also straight from Srinagar.

CAMPING OUTFIT

Camper's kit includes tents, camp furniture-camp beds, easy chairs, small tables, bath tubs, basins and cooking sets, ropes, hiking sticks etc. Smaller tents save transport expenses and are easier to manage at high altitudes. Folding tables are usually preferred. Water proofs to cover the bedding and mackintoshes are indispensable. Sundries of toilet, clothing, bedding and other camping outfit should be minimised as much as possible to reduce trekking luggage.

To guard against extremes of temperature at high altitudes, both warm and thin clothing should be taken. Each member of the trekking party should carry a cotton quilt along with two or three warm blankets. Kashmiri puttoo hats, sold at Srinagar, Pahalgam and Gulmarg prove to be very serviceable. Boots should be well nailed.

All the needed kit is available at Srinagar at well-known agencies like Cockburn's Agency, Matthew's Agency, House Boat Owners' Association, etc., who entertain booking in advance. Guide books, published by the Visitors' Bureau, and those written by Dr. Neve, Col. Kinloch, Col. Ward and others are available at many bookshops at Srinagar, and are useful to tourists.

PAHALGAM, SONAMARG AND GULMARG

Pahalgam, the famous hill station in the basin of the Liddar Valley, fifty-nine miles from Srinagar, is the popular camping ground of Indian and European tourists. From Pahalgam treks are based to the holy Amarnath Cave (17,300 ft. high), Chandanwari, Aru, the lakes Shisha Nag and Tar Sar and Mount Kolohai, which is close on 18,000 feet in height. Inded it is Mount Kolohai, the twinpeaked giant of Kashmir, which lures climbers to glacier-topped heights of the Liddar Valley. Seeing the slopy, shining, awful glaciers, covering an entire mountainside and walking over snow bridges, that ford fierce streams, are delightful experiences.

Sonamarg, situated on a mountain plateau in the Sind Valley, is another beauty spot of the Valley and is a well-known base for treks to the Ganga Bal Lake, at the foot of glacier-

surrounded Haramukh, whose craggy top rises to about 17,000 feet. An interesting variant is to trek to the Amarnath Cave or towards Kolehail from Sonamarg in mid-summer. Climbing up towards the Ganga Bal Lake, the so-called Ganges of Kashmir and the destination of annual pilgrimage by Kashmiri Hindus, you see the lakelets, Vishnu Sar and Gad Sar on your route. Vishnu Sar is about three quarters of a mile long and is fenced with awesome, precipitous mountains. Gad Sar sits smooth on an exquisite rocky basin. The Ganga Bal Lake, situated at a level of over 13,000 ft., has a beautiful, blue colour which changes into all shades of green. Redstarts, wagtails, and Kashmir skylarks hover over it. Icy patches, broken off from avalanches, float over it, looking formidable under the low, cloudy sky.

Gulmarg is healthfully situated in the Pir Panchal Range at an elevation of 8,500 feet. It is a favourite centre of golf players as most of the grassy plateaux are natural golf links. In winter a well-known skiing club has its headquarters here. From this marg* trekking parties set out towards the Tos Maidan plateau, over 14,000 feet, which once formed the summer route from Kashmir to the Punjab and to Khelan and Ailpathar, the mountain lake, overcast with clouds even in the middle of summer.

TREKS WITH MY STUDENTS

Last year, with a party of S. P. College students, I had a three-day's trek to Mount Mahadev, about 9,000 ft. high. We started from Harwan, the high water-reservoir, situated

**Marg* stands for an upland grazing meadow where shepherds graze their livestock in summer.

at a distance of 11 miles from Srinagar. As we carried most of our luggage ourselves and did the cooking ourselves, the trek cost us only about Rs. 10 per head.

The green, meadow-covered top of Mahadev commands an excellent view of the Kashmir Valley which is spread out like a map: Srinagar with its suburban hills of Hari Parbat and Shankaracharya, the smooth, sheety lakes, the green fields dotting the banks of the serpentine Jhelum, the snow-capped mountains of Pir Panchal Range in the background. Upland hamlets by the meandering brooks afforded us camp sites amidst gorgeous scenery of the pine forests, where it is delightful to lie on fragrant carpets of pine-needles.

Another party of the college students was led by me to Ahrabal Waterfalls—the highest falls in Kashmir, falling from a maximum height of 60 feet. Shopian, at a distance of 35 miles from Srinagar, reached by bus, afforded us a very comfortable lodging in the Forest Rest House. The trek that took four days in all cost us only about Rs. 15 per head, because, again, we economised many of the expenses. Had the weather been better—it was late autumn—we should have trekked on to Konsar Nag, a mountain lake. All along the route from Shopian to Konsar Nag there are excellent Forest Rest Houses, which can be easily booked in advance at Shopian or at Srinagar.

Initial and final journey expenses to Kashmir being excluded, trekking in Kashmir is cheap. The State Government has controlled the rates of most of the commodities needed by tourists. Indeed trekking in Kashmir is as cheap as it is thoroughly enjoyable.

IX

THE KASHMIRI

The golden valley of Kashmir is one of the loveliest spots of the world. Most of her people claim descent from the primitive Indo-Aryan stock but Kashmir is actually inhabited by diverse and different races separated one from the other by high mountain passes. The scope of this chapter will not permit a discussion of the different races; only the characteristics of the people of the valley proper will be treated at length.

CHARACTER

The Kashmiri may have many faults and foibles. He has his virtues and excellences all the same. He is non-aggressive. Quarrelsomeness is foreign to his mild and temperate nature. Even his dog only barks and does not bite. Perhaps centuries of earlier tyrannical misrule are responsible for this ease of character. He is lazy to the point of indolence. He shirks opportunities to stir out of his land. His "Good Earth" is too strong for him. His stick-in-the-grove traditionalism has left him almost stranded in the march of civilisation. In his individualism he evinces Jewish traits. This characteristic is especially pronounced in Kashmiri Pandits whose individualism is tinged with conceit and egoism.

The Kashmiri Pandit is parsimonious to a fault. His life and habits are simple and frugal.

He is loath to go away from his home. His adaptability to his social and political environment is admirable. But he is lethargic. On the other hand, the Kashmiri Muslim is active, energetic and dynamic. It is he who is the unrivalled craftsman in wood, metal, papier machie etc. It is he who cultivates the soil, rears the sheep and works in the cottage industries of Kashmir, thus forming the proletariat of Kashmir. It is good that his standard of life is perceptibly increasing. He is not now so intellectually inferior to the sister community as he used to be.

KASHMIRI WOMEN

Kashmiri women are among the best feminine types of India and compare favourably with the Pathans in appearance and complexion. They are mostly somewhat fair-complexioned and of slightly Jewish features. Kashmiri Panditains, who lead indoor lives are fairer than their Muslim sisters but their health level is very much lower. Much of the beauty and grace of Kashmiri Muslim women is prematurely spoiled by the hard work in field and farm or deplorably early child bearing.

Interesting wordy, harmless and noisy battles of Kashmiri boatwomen are well-known. Kashmiri women wear *pherans*, which are long sleeved gowns, hanging in awkward folds. These *pherans* are as Mrs. Freda Bedi, remarked last year, in the presence of the writer. "just devices invented by the exploiting and jealous male to disguise the beauty of the Kashmiri women". They serve that unæsthetic purpose eminently well! Kashmiri women are not clean in their personal habits. They

know and observe ever so little of sanitation. Perhaps the climate is partly responsible for that. Still Kashmiri women are learning to be hygienic and progressive.

SUPERSTITIONS IN KASHMIR

Lack of scientific knowledge, fosters and preserves superstitions. Civilisation has not quite dispelled superstition in the West. Few Englishmen, for instance, walk under a ladder which is leaning against a wall.

The Kashmiris are very superstitious. A glimpse of some of them is interesting. If some one sneezes in a room or a house, while some one else is going out or is about to start some work, he pauses for some time, to 'liquidate' the effect of the bad omen. The Kashmiri has a superstitious belief in the many wandering faqirs. He supposes that a mere word from one of them can even cure chronic disease and that their 'favour' is productive of success and prosperity. No wonder then that many unscrupulous, itinerant and other faqirs put on sage airs and freely exploit even educated Kashmiris, not to speak of the very credulous illiterate ones.

The Kashmiri Pandit is, strangely enough, much more superstitious than the Kashmiri Muslim. When he leaves his home he is anxious to see whom he leaves first on the right side; the first passer-by on the right side should not be a woman, a priest or a cow, as they are ominous. If it is a sweeper with his full set of broom, basket etc., it is so very good! Over-enthusiastic though irrational belief in the pseudo-science of astrology is but natural with the Kash-

miri Pandit. No wonder that many reputed and famed astrologers, dogged by hosts of seekers of luck, employment, wealth, promotion, family happiness and so on, earn fat incomes. The Kashmiri Pandit makes extensive consultations with his astrologer before undertaking a journey, to decide upon the auspicious day and calculates the time of start to the exact minute. One of the bases for the marriage of a boy and girl, is the general agreement of their horoscopic tendencies, which decision is, of course, arrived at by the astrologer so that these farces of marriages are not only the ill-famed anachronisms of 'parent marriages', but they actually are also, what we may call, 'astrologer marriages'.

The Kashmiri Muslim is strangely enough, less superstitious than his Hindu compatriot. Perhaps the reason is that he is more impulsive, less thoughtful and busier in his work than his Hindu compatriot. He does not mind sneezes. But he has a traditional, superstitious fear of graveyards and even some old cremation grounds. He, if he lives in a village, has surely a belief in the will-o'-the-wisp, whom he calls *Rah-Chowk*. Many Muslim villagers are supposed to have actually had encounters with *Rah-Chowk*—the 'devil' whose two eyes glow in the dark night and who carries a pot of fire, with its tongues of flame leaping up in the air, on his head and who leads the nocturnal pedestrian astray to a stream or towards a marshy swamp where he drowns the unfortunate wretch. No one, not even the educated people or the social services try to remove this cramping, soul-debasing fear, through boiling down the so-called

devil down to the phenomenon of phosphorescence.

In the villages many ailing children are duly produced before the holy presence of some village 'saint', Pir or Pandit, who solemnly mutters lots of holy verses over the child and then writes some hieroglyphic letters over a piece of paper. The paper is folded and sewn in black cloth and then the charm is tied round the neck of the child. These amulets are usually worn round good-looking and healthy children, women and cattle so as to ward off the evil eye. No doubt "amulet sellers" are carrying on a busy rural trade. No reformer dares to speak against them lest the feared cry of 'religion in danger' be raised against him.

One thing is certain. Superstitions in Kashmir, as elsewhere in India, are dying out, slowly and steadily. It is not uncommon to see progressive, sceptic youth scoffing at the pet superstitions of their elders. This tendency is bound to get accelerated with the march of time. Maybe a day will come, when Kashmir will be free from the sway of superstitions.

MYSTICAL AND POETICAL

The Kashmiri lives in a land where beauties of nature are abundant and universal—the gushing mountain springs, the mysterious, awe-inspiring high mountain lakes, clad in solitary and sublime grandeur, the beautiful, glacier valleys, the innumerable meadows and glens dotting the beautiful valley, the swift silvery steams, the Moghul and other famous Gardens, the Dal and other lakes and so many other beauty spots of Kashmir, these one and all, combine to excite

the imagination of the Kashmiri so much that he not unoften soars to poetic and mystic heights. Kashmiris have been great mystics. Kashmir has produced great poets and poetesses whom we shall have occasion to deal with later on.

Suffice it to say here, that not only have the poets and mystics of note been influenced by the grandeur, the beauty and the sublimity of the natural surroundings of Kashmir, but even the folklore, the so-called literature of the people, evinces signs of the response of the folk of Kashmir to their environment.

. CULTURE

Kashmiris are the heirs of an ancient culture. They have bravely withstood cultural onslaughts by Chaks, Pathans, Moghuls and Sikhs, who successively ruled over Kashmir. At the same time, Kashmiris have always evinced a curious faculty for absorbing foreign elements, a faculty that will indeed help them in dynamic times to come.

The Kashmiri Pandit continues his "more than Spanish objection to manual labour" and has therefore more access to cultural activities than the Kashmiri Muslims, though the educated Muslims are gradually coming to hold their own in this regard.

The artist-craftsman flourishes in Kashmir as nowhere else in the world. His products of embroidery, papier-mache, silver work, wood carving and stone work fetch admiration everywhere. He is the unparalleled furrier, collector, and taxidermist. Yet it is interesting

to observe that the art-sense is conspicuous in the Kashmiris as a whole by its absence. Homes of the lower classes and even the upper middle classes are not at all beautifully decorated. In the drawing rooms of the upper classes of Kashmir, which are a curious mixture of a sitting-room and living room, you will hardly see a papier-mache vase or a walnut table. The fact is that the æsthetic sense of the Kashmiri never receives any proper training, whether at home or at school. The Kashmiri houses, on the old style, with their picturesque balconies, latticed windows, carved gateways and ceilings and painted walls have gone out of use and have been replaced by the present-day houses, a blend of old Kashmiri and modern styles, meaningless and even shabby. It appears that the art-sense in the Kashmiri has entered a decadent phase.

HEALTH

Most of the Kashmiris are fair-complexioned. The peasantry and the working classes, forming the vast Muslim majority, are well-built. Their health should have been still better but for their dirty living habits which render their homes full of stench and filth. The town and city people have been manifesting appreciable deterioration in health level which is an ironic and deplorable anomaly considering that Kashmir is a great reservoir of natural foods and that its climate is so healthy. The Kashmiri Pandits are not so good physically as the Muslims are but their features are more Aryan. They generally take to tame clerical and other 'intellectual' occupations, which also conduce to their lack of good health.

The staple food of Kashmir is rice. Rice is mill-husked in both cities and villages and also, being over-cooked, it affords but little nutrition. Milk, fruit, and eggs, so abundant in the valley are not very much used by the Kashmiris. Yet another sad commentary on the mentality of the people. Consequently T. B. has been plaguing the city of Srinagar, towns and even the villages. Cholera epidemics used to take heavy toll of the lives of the Kashmiris but now they occur less frequently. On the whole, thanks to the consistent efforts of the State Medical Department, Kashmiris are increasingly becoming health-minded, though slowly so.

GENIUS FOR FILTHINESS

Aldous Huxley, the great writer, has said in his characteristic, piquant and provoking way, in *Jesting Pilate*; "Kashmiri has a genius for filthiness". To a fanatic lover of Kashmir this remark would sound disparaging, haughty and even cynical. But every thoughtful Kashmiri, or one who knows Kashmir and Kashmiris very well, readily recognises a lot of truth in this otherwise disconcerting critical remark. One who has humorously enough, observed hilly Kashmiris basking in the sun in groups with their clothes off, picking lice from them, will bear ready testimony to the caustic remark of Aldous Huxley. I have seen these poor, ignorant Kashmiris, who migrate to the plains during winter in search of labour, actually doing so on street pavements in Lahore and Amritsar, quite unconscious of and deaf to the ridicule and criticism of passers-by. Then I thought that Aldous Huxley spoke no more than the truth—the shameful truth.

Why is it so? Why has the Kashmiri the 'genius for filthiness' and not the genius for cleanliness? So many factors have contributed to this traditional, unhygienic way of life. The Kashmir winter, bitter and severe as it is, is the main cause of filthiness and dirty habits of the Kashmiri. The masses in Kashmir cannot afford the amenities of home that can preserve habits of cleanliness during the severe winter. But the deplorable fact is that dirty habits, engendered in winter, are continued during summer, when every Kashmiri could easily keep clean and smart. Why it is again so is easily understood when we consider that the masses in Kashmir are yet steeped in ignorance and illiteracy. Of course Rural Uplift Movement, sponsored by the Government has done much to improve the sanitary conditions of many villages, but on the whole, the Kashmiri has not yet given up his filthiness.

Accosting a bright-looking village boy one day, last year, in a town, Shopian, where I had gone on a trip with a party of college students, I looked at the rather dirty boy from top to toe and gently lifting his chin towards me, I said to him, "Do you take a bath daily?"

"Why, no!" was his surprised, brief reply, clothed in an uncouth tone.

"Don't you feel you should keep your body clean"? Padam Nath, one of the college students, said to him.

"Why"? he gaped at us. And, then after a thoughtful pause, he continued, "I bathe in summer when it gets very hot. I bathe in this stream"—pointing to a nearby stream—"this stream is very fierce then. Now, in autumn, it

is pretty cold. Of course, we never bathe in winter."

"What do your parents tell you? I am sure they want you to take baths regularly throughout the year"?

"Our parents are so stubborn. They do not want us to bathe even in summer, when we very much like to bathe. They put ink impressions upon our thighs in summer. That is done in the morning to ensure that we do not bathe during the day. Every night the mark is examined. If it is effaced in the least, we are belaboured mercilessly. 'I have, of course'—his eyes lit up as he started speaking about himself—"picked up a trick from a city student as to how to deceive my parents' vigilance."

So that is that. Rural Kashmir, young and old, continue the traditional habits of apathy to clean and sanitary life, the advantages of which are rarely known by the village folk. That reminds me of the remark of senior Rev. Biscoe, who used to say in his inimitable, humorous way, that Srinagar, the great Capital of the State—not to speak of the villages of Kashmir—used to be so filthy and full of stench, that he could smell its peculiar smell two miles away!

X

NINE LAKES OF KASHMIR

Kashmir is a land of lakes like Italy or Switzerland. No smoky European steamboats disfigure their smooth expanse. Picturesque shikaras—canoe-like gondolas of the East—comfortable doongas and well furnished and tastefully decorated houseboats, carry the visitor from the Jhelum to the Dal Lake and thence to the Anchar, the Manasbal and the Wular lakes. The shores of the Kashmir lakes are not steep and rocky but soft and marshy, so that they are reclaimed for cultivation purposes or for planting lines of willows and poplars.

1. *The Dal Lake.* Conveniently situated at the door of Srinagar, the lake is enclosed within the Dal Gate. Its length is about 5 miles with an area of 10 sq. miles. A network of canals, bearing hamlets and the unique floating gardens on their sides, as also, a Moghul causeway across it, intersect it. Its smooth waters reflect a ring of mountains which rise three to four thousand feet above its level.

Aquatic plants and picturesque birds abound. Two islets, Sona Lank (Golden isle), Rupa Lank (Silver isle) dot it beautifully.

2. *The Anchar Lake.* This shallow lake starts from the northern boundary of Srinagar and is reached from the Dal Lake through the Mar Canal—the gift of Zain-ul-Abdin. It provides a delightful alternative water route to Ganderbal. In summer it measures three miles in length. In winter it is a place for duck

shooting. Lilies abound in mid-summer, July-August.

3. *The Wular Lake.* At the west end of the valley, it is the largest fresh-water lake in India. Indeed it is one of the most beautiful sheets of water in India being 14 miles broad in summer. Full of weeds, it is also full of fish, especially mahasheer, which travels up from the sea through the Indus and the Jhelum. Surrounded by high mountains of the Pir Panchal range, it is prone to changeful moods. Sudden storms occur in the afternoon. Though it can be crossed in a house-boat or doonga, generally, however, shikaras are used and the crossing is done in the morning.

4. *The Manasbal Lake.* Situated at a distance of 18 miles by road, via Sumbal from Srinagar, this small circular lake lies near Ganderbal. About 2 miles long its deep bed shelves steep from the bare ridges surrounding it. Interesting remains of a Moghul Garden exist on its northern side. It is reputed for the transparency of its water and its lotus blossoms which cover miles together in August.

5. *The Gangabal Lake.* Situated at a height of 11,714 ft., this mountain lake impressively nestles close to the rocky foot of Mt. Haramoukh. It is about 5 miles in circumference and a quarter of a mile in diameter. The water is of turquoise blue colour in which the reddish-blue steep crags of Haramoukh, below the snow line, are beautifully reflected.

6. *The Shishanag.* 15 miles from Pahalgam, through upland, flowery valleys of Pisa. One of the most beautiful lakes of Kashmir. 11,730 feet above sea level, it is enclosed within a

mountain amphitheatre of steep and snow-capped high mountains, whose glaciers feed it from the eastern side and whose jagged peaks produce fantastic reflections in the water of the lake.

7. *The Tar Sar and Mar Sar Lakes.* The Tar Sar is a beautiful mountain lake in the Kolohai Valley at a height of 12,500 ft., 10 miles from Lidderwat and 24 miles from Pahalgam. At some distance, on its eastern side, lies the Mar Sar Lake. Sona Sar, Chanda Sar, Hoka Sar, Dudh Sar and other mountain tarns are also found in the Liddar Valley, when trekking to Mt. Kolohai (18,000 ft.)

8. *Konsarnag.* At a height of about 12,000 ft., this fig-shaped, mountain lake is surrounded by a ring of Pir Panchal range summits. It is three-quarters of a mile broad and its greatest length is about 3 miles. The depth is as much as 150 feet. Icebergs may be seen floating in it in June. During autumn its water is clear and sapphire blue.

The lake is reached from Shopian—a town at a distance of 34 miles from Srinagar. On the bridle path from Shopian to Konsarnag, the tourist comes across Ahrabal waterfalls, which reach a height of about 200 feet. Forest Rest Houses are provided at Kungawattan and at Ahrabal.

9. *The Pangong Lake.* This is a salt lake in the frontier district of Ladakh, about 8 miles long. But it is bottle-necked, varying in breadth from half a mile to two miles. The greater part of the lake stretches towards the plateaux of Tibet.

NOTE FOR VISITORS TO THE LAKES

The Valley lakes are best visited during spring months of April and May or during late autumn in October. To see the lotus in blossom, visit them in August.

During mid-summer it is delightful to trek up to the mountain lakes.

The Dal Lake is crowded with bathers in summer. They should use only the recognised bathing places where the bathing house-boats are moored. At other places the lake is weedy and there is the danger that a diver may get seriously entangled among the weeds.

To safeguard against cholera and other tropical diseases, the water of the valley lakes should not be used for drinking or cooking purposes.

XI

FOLK-SONGS OF KASHMIR

Kashmiri, the vernacular of Kashmir, has descended from Sanskrit. Actually Kashmiri is a very old language. During Muslim rule, it was enriched by Persian diction, and later on, in the modern period, Urdu and Hindi have been influencing it considerably. Kashmiri has had a rich literature. It yet lives in its songs, the folk-songs, which form a veritable "literature of the people" of Kashmir. In the Golden Valley, with its abundant beauties of nature and man, it was but natural for some unknown hoary folk-bard to have started the immortal vogue of folk-songs.

Folk-songs in Kashmir preserve the myths, customs, traditions and legends of bygone days. Thanks to Sir George Grierson, Sir Aurel Stein, Rev. J. Hinton Knowles, and Prof. Devendra Satyarthi, Kashmiri folklore has been revived. The songs are current in every rural home in Kashmir. Rural itinerant minstrels usually carry a *Dah-ra*, an iron rod with loose iron rings on it, and when they sing folk-songs, they shake the rings skilfully up and down so as to produce a pleasing jingle. These minstrels have mostly passed on the folk-songs by word of mouth down through the ages.

Kashmiri folk-songs present considerable variety in theme, content and form. They can be broadly classified into opera and dancing songs,

pastoral lore, romantic ballads, play-songs, semi-mystical songs etc. Then there are other songs sung during particular seasons or in accompaniment to certain occupations. Boatmen, labourers, seed-sowers, harvesters, embroiderers, papier-mache makers, milk-men, saffron-reapers, shepherds, village belles fetching water, grinding, stacking or weeding paddy, sing their different melodious folk-songs in chorus. Yet others are sung as lullabies or cradle-songs, or at the birth and the naming of a child or at its circumcision or sacred thread ceremonies. Then there are wedding songs sung in chorus by women at and before marriage ceremonies. Dirges, popularly known as *Van*, are sung in chorus by the women after the death of old persons in the family.

The predominant theme of folk-songs is a woman's touching plaint about her strayed lover who has deserted her. Here is a typical love song :

“O, you must tell me
Where my boy has gone.
Is he a fountain in life's garden,
Or, a well of nectar, sweet and delicious ?”

The last two lines evince the power of exquisite imagery of the unknown folk-bard. These love songs are chaste, simple and pathetic. The lovesick maiden consoles herself in these words :

“My love is out to tend his goats,
And he must be weaving a garland there ;
A garland of fresh, dewy, *sosan* flowers,
For me, ye maidens.”

The serpentine and calmly flowing river of the Valley, the Jhelum, forms the just theme of folk-songs :

“O thou slow-motioned Jhelum !
 For thee, let me devote my all, O Jhelum !
 How great is thy stateliness !
 For thee, let me devote my all, O Jhelum !”

Kashmiri peasant women sing praises of the majestic and beautiful tree of Kashmir—the chinar. The beauty of its leaf is thus sung :

“To me, O chinar leaf, my love has sent thee,
 My all, O cupid, shall I sacrifice for thee.
 Thou art, O chinar leaf, a prince of beauty,
 My all, O Cupid shall I sacrifice for thee.”

Saffron is one of the most beautiful products of Kashmir. Saffron fields of Pampur, at a distance of 8 miles from Srinagar, are famous. Peasants, both men and women, sing exquisite folk-songs while picking saffron flowers. A part of a love song is :

“Towards Pampur went away my darling,
 Saffron flowers caught him in fragrant embrace,
 ‘O, he is there and ah me ! I’m here
 When, where, O God, would I see his face ?”

A village girl may sing a conceit in sweet tones :

“Proud of thyself art thou,
 O saffron flower !
 Far lovelier than thee am I.
 O saffron flower !”

The labouring folk hardly enjoy the loved product of their labour or its usufruct, which goes

to the contractor's store and they feel the poignant separation of the enchanting flower, as they express in :

“How pink is saffron's colour !

Collecting it into heaps we are bathed in sweat,

Soon, too soon, it will be hurried to the city.

Enjoy its glorious view, O Samad,

How pink is saffron's colour !”

The touching refrain of the song is reminiscent of the wonderful view of the saffron blossom which is especially charming in full moon or at sunrise or sunset.

Saffron-pilferers, actual or aspirant, lustily shout the humorous doggerel :

“At Pampore are the saffron fields,

Bare-footed I shall steal saffron ;

My *Pir* lives at Vijibrar,

Why should I run there ?”

Though the poor Kashmiri peasants may not afford to use the shawl, Kashmir's world-famous product of art, but they spin its wool and love its beauty. The bride happily sings :

“Shawl-wool shall I spin with my own hands,

And shall get it-dyed in saffron colour.”

In a wedding-song* the bridegroom's mother leads the chorus :

“You pretty damsels, stay here to-night,
Oh ! do sing in honour of the Sultan of India.

His wife's people claim him as their own,
And I shall decorate his bed with mica.”

*Collected by Mr. Mohammad Yosuf Farooqi, S. P. College Student.

The marriage ceremony is preceded by the so-called "Henna Night", when the hands and feet of the bride and bridegroom are dyed in henna, while women sing chorus songs* far into the night :

"We congratulate you on your 'Henna night',
You have been blessed with God's mercy.
May you be safe from danger and accidents,
May God remove your difficulties."

The beauty of the bride is fitly sung by the rustic muse in such songs* :

"Our belle is robed in muslin,
Oh maid ! who has dressed you ?
Your teeth are so many pearls,
Who has delved them from the sea " ?

The bride's mother and her relatives sing :

"Live long, O groom, live long,
O come up by our stairs.
I will adorn thy sword with the lotus,
O come up by our stairs."

The rose is the emblem of the bridegroom in another wedding prayer :

"May this rose blossom forth, O God !
And may this streamlet of blessing run
on, O God !"

Spring is the season when fruit trees look resplendent in their variegated blossoms and the shepherd girl addresses, the *Marg*, a meadow :

*Collected by Mr. Mohammad Yosuf Farooqi, S. P. College Student.

“Far-off forests have all blossomed forth,
 Hast not thou heard of me, my Love?
 Mountain lakes like Tar Sar are all full
 of flowers,
 Hast not thou heard of me, my Love ?”

Not unoften do rural women work at the spinning-wheel. To the accompaniment of this simple occupation, they sweetly hum songs, such as :

“On my mat in my home is perched my
 spinning-wheel,
 I wheel it and weave threads out of it.”

The imagination of the folk rises to poetic heights in the cradle songs. The peasant mother, comparing her darling to her ear-ring, her loved ornament, sings :

“I rock thee, my ear-ring, I rock thee,
 Thou art the God of Love at evening,
 And the sun at early morning,
 I rock thee, my ear-ring, I rock thee.”

All these kinds of folk-lore contain the essentials of folksongs in that they have been verbally communicated from one generation of rustic and pastoral bards, minstrels and the peasantry in general, to the other generation, and that they are sung at labour, dance, play or traditional ceremonies or craft-occupations. The unique characteristic of intricate vowel sounds coupled with liquid consonants of the Kashmiri language is reflected in its folk-songs, rendering them sweet in tone and alliterative in form. The simplicity of theme and content of folk-songs is matched by their imaginative, poetic fervour. No definite verse-forms have hampered the poetic inspirations of the rustic Muse. The ex-

quisite singing quality of the folk-songs is appreciated by even the ear of the foreigner.

Romantic ballads, originally sung by the peasantry, and passed on verbally, have had and continue to have universal appeal among the Kashmiri folk. Many a line from folk-tales are on the lips of villagers. They sing the highly contemplative lines from *Shirin Khusroo* :

“Maddened by bewitching Shirin,
Khusroo went to batter the mountain.
To whom did this world prove faithful ?
Alas, who killed you, you lost one ?”

In a wedding-song, the new couple may be compared to the legendary lovers, Himal and Nagrai, thus :

“Nagrai will take his seat on the golden
carpet
And shall take away Himal in the pearly
palanquin !”

Dirges are sung by women in chorus after the death of fairly old persons in the family. Their poignant humour is touching as in :

“The *Hakim* came and came, the patient
(seemingly) improved,
The pyre will be made of sandal wood.”

Ruph or Dance Songs are delightful to hear when groups of girls or women stand in lines, interlocking their arms round each other's waist and heave forwards and backwards, giving themselves a wavy motion. They will sing only a couplet in chorus, for instance :

“Awake, awake, O sweet hyacinth,
Come on, let us dance, O sweet hyacinth.”

This couplet is melodiously repeated over and over again—producing an excellent effect of rhythm.

The present-day folk-lore has not substantially added to the past, rich folk-lore of Kashmir. Like most folk-lore it is not high in point of prosody, but, what matters is, that it is spontaneous and through it vibrates the very life of the masses of Kashmir, whose simple habits, bygone customs, loved traditions and past and present agrarian life are fitly mirrored in it. It throws open vast fields of activity for sustained research, so that it may be preserved, revived and rendered dynamic.

XII

GLIMPSES OF RURAL KASHMIR

Kashmir, like the rest of India, is mainly rural. Ninety per cent of the population of Kashmir lives in villages, which are scattered all round the Valley on the higher ground, running up to the mountains and on the alluvial plains. Rural Kashmir is mainly Muslim as fifty per cent of Kashmiri Hindus—called Kashmiri Pandits—live in the city of Srinagar and the rest, amounting to a bare fraction of the population of Kashmir, are sparsely scattered through the villages.

CHARACTER TRAITS OF THE KASHMIRI PEASANT

The Kashmiri peasant is harmless—an unconscious but true votary of the creed of non-violence. Centuries of poverty, hard work and exploitation have bent his back and rendered him incapable of bouts of violence or revolt. Even his dog does not bite though he may bark much and assume fierce looks. Rivers, streams and lakes that plentifully irrigate his rice fields, bear no dangerous reptiles and the nearby forest denizens do not molest him much, beyond the occasional ravages of maize fields by the malicious bear, the only terror of his peaceful land.

The rains come. The snow-fed streams never run dry. Nature rarely sends him into paroxysms of despair. So he takes an easy, complacent view of life—sings his folksongs, while working in the fields or enjoying the moon-lit

scene of his fields from his watch-lofts, repeats his ancient ballads and passes on the rustic lore and lost in the mystical influences of nature around him, forgets his penury, is unconscious of his ignorance and resigns himself to the monotonous round of his hard, farming life, year in and year out.

That is not to say that the Kashmiri peasant is very conservative. At least the younger generation is not so. The peasant has begun to interest himself in matters of politics. He knows the leader of the National Conference—Sheikh Mohammad Abdulla—which is the biggest political organisation in the State. He has heard the Shaikh's speech in the nearby town. The Patwari, the Tehsildar and other revenue officials are no longer sources of horror to him. Nor is he now afraid of the mere sight of the police-man's turban, as he used to be !

“In Kashmir one so quickly realises what an arrant coward the Kashmiri is at heart, in spite of his fine physique,” so writes Margaret Cotter Morrison in her *A Lonely Summer in Kashmir*. That is an uncharitable dictum of the nature of a Kashmiri by a lonely, fair-skinned lady who spent an unprotected summer in Kashmir and whose life and chastity were, as she is good enough to admit, saved by her peasant guide during her treks in Kashmir. The Kashmiri is not so much of a coward as his effeminate, gown, the *Pheran*, leads the specious visitor to suppose. He is more harmless than timid. Dr. Ernest F. Neve calls the villager “a wonderful person when he admires his athletic body, his good humour and cheerfulness and the deftness of his hands.

SATARA AND HIS COTTAGE

Satara, a Kashmiri villager, is a typical peasant. He is the head of a large family, consisting of his wife, his three sons and their wives and children, over which he is the undisputed patriarch. Let us have a look at his cottage, its interior and environs.

As you step into the yard, a sturdy bull—the apple of Satara's eye—faces you. Seeing you, an alien to the place he pulls at the tether and sniffs at you. An offensive and filthy smell pervades the courtyard. It is slopy on all sides and forms a depression on one side of the cottage, wherein rain water and melted ice get logged up. Several dogs, lean and lanky, drowsily bark at you. They are as gentle as the soil. Your stick quite scares them away. Almost the whole of the compound is strewn with dried hay and drying cow-dung. On one side, under a walnut tree, a close nook is reserved for pounding paddy. Several willows, standing on the side of the nearby stream in no order at all, blow a fresh breeze. They form a picturesque foreground to the surrounding conspicuous landscape : crystalline tributaries of rippling channels divided among green fields, dotted with mulberry and other fruit trees, lofty poplars and majestic chinars, grassy meadows and beautiful uplands at the foot of the distant snow-capped mountains. The courtyard is half fenced by a dilapidated mud wall.

A cackling hen soon engages your attention. Walking in a matronly gait, she is followed by a brood of chickens and small geese, her foster-children. The vain, strutting cock looks askance at you. In a corner you espy a piebald she-goat

and a lovely kid by her side. The restless, hungry kid cannot get at the full udders, as Sula, one of Satara's grand-children, has wrapped them tight within a *Puttoo* bag. The goat, at the sight of Rahman, Sula's father, carrying grass, gets loose. The kid bleats appealingly after the retreating figure.

Satara's cottage is worth seeing. It contains two rooms and a walled-in corridor. The whole structure, made of local mud bricks, is heavily roofed with thatch. The dark, big room has no ventilator, unless some chinks serve the purpose of airing it.

On one side of the corridor, there is the fireplace, in which more of cowdung than fire-wood is wastefully consumed as fuel. Cooking is done in rustic clay pots. The smoke proceeding from the hearth thickens the gloomy darkness of the big room, which comprises drawing-room, sleeping-room, dining-room and indeed all-purposes-common-room sort of thing for the whole family. The floor is strewn with grass and a mat made by Ahmdoo, Satara's own mat covers one corner of the room. On it sleep the ill-clad babies during the day.

Dusty clothes hang on swinging ropes. Tattered quilts, old blankets, worn clothings are all, in a heap, hung on a pole, which swings on ropes parallel to the roof-beams. A dirty blanket covers the whole stuff obviously to ward off curious or jealous eyes.

The exterior of the cottage is neatly plastered with clay mixed with cow-dung by the woman. The sides are brightly festooned with red chillies and split vegetables.

Ahmdoo told me confidentially about the big room. "In winter this room is very comfortably hot, as if ten of your city stoves were heating it. Our cattle do the work of the stoves." He added that the ceiling was low for that very purpose.

"But why is there no window?"

"Oh, sir, foolishly enough we opened a window, when we built the cottage. Damn the Patwari's city-bred son who then made us to do so. And then, what happened? A thief broke in and stole away all our precious property—my father's saddle, my son's mother's trinkets and our only *degcha*."

After I realized the "son's mother" was Ahmdoo's wife (!) I pitied his ignorance which complements and largely proceeds from his poverty.

Quite justifiably Sir Francis Younghusband remarks about the villager: "Like his house he is dirty, untidy, and slip-shod". He also criticizes his untidy, unbecoming clothing, the *Pheran*, which lacks all grace.

DIET AND HEALTH

To return to Satara, his diet is extremely simple. He is, on the whole, a vegetarian. He tastes of meat on several proud occasions in the year—the Id, the marriage, circumcision and other ceremonies. If he has some fowls, he or his family hardly, if ever, touch them or their eggs, which are carefully stored and stowed away to be sold in lump sum. Sula was (reluctantly) doled out one egg per week, when his eyes were sore for three months and the city doctor, who, Satara told me, kept him waiting for three hours outside the hospital consultation room, prescribed one egg a day.

In his sage manner, Satara said to me, "You see, sir, I had to consider the doctor's prescription. After all I am the local Hakim. I have so much experience. I knew one egg a day would be too heating for Sula's eyes. So I altered it to a weekly egg". Hypocritically enough I applauded his wisdom, because I knew how difficult it would be to change his set views. :

When I first came into the dingy living-room of Satara, I discerned a heap under a blanket on the rough mat,

"What is that there ?" I asked Satara.

"Sir, he is my grandson, Rahman. He has been ill these seven days. I have put him to *Sharbat*."

Satara, the Grand Old Man of the village, was its quack-Hakim. He told me that he had prescribed the *Sharbat* water boiled in certain herbs.

"Rahman, give me your right hand", I said to the patient.

"Why, Sir ?"

I detested their habit of using "Sir" to me, but the habit went back to centuries of lives of serfdom and exploitation and they used it in spite of my protestations.

"I want to feel your pulse", I said to Rahman.

"Pulse, what is that, sir ?" Then, after some thinking, the starving lips opened and the bashful boy spoke, "I have none, sir".

Suppressing a chuckle, I explained 'pulse' to him and felt the dirty wrist which painfully stuck out of the dirtier *Pheran*.

I deplored how Satara and his people were largely unconscious of the deficiencies of their

diet. His staple diet, which his sons take even four times a day during long summer days, is rice. To it is added some cheap vegetable in season. Milk or milk products are a luxury rarely indulged in. Some fortunate babies get sips of cow's milk off and on.

On the other hand, let me recall my experiences as a guest in a Kashmiri Pandit family in a village. The climate and water of the village suited me well, but not the diet and the 'dishes', for the preparation of which the sister-in-law of my friend, Shambu, took incredible pains. The meat was overladen with salt. *Sag*, the one universal vegetable, which is taken morning and evening, throughout the year, had too much chilli. Chilli seeds stuck in my throat. As I learnt later, the culinary standard of villages consisted mainly in the quantity of spices, salt and chilli, added to the preparation.

Satara and his family live an open-air life in late spring, summer and early autumn, but for late autumn, winter and early spring, he and his family are shut up in dingy rooms along with their live-stock.

I am sure Satara must be an octogenarian. I asked him his age once.

"Well, I don't know, sir".

"Why?" was my surprised query.

"We maintain no record of our age. My mother used to tell me, sir, that I was born during the Great Famine. I remember having seen Maharaja Ranbir Singh....."

After he had finished his fond reminiscences, I explained to him what date of birth was and how it is maintained, but he interrupted me with, "But I don't need any such records for

myself or for my family. We are not to go to the Darbar (government office) like you”.

Satara is gaunt, wiry and straight. He carries his age lightly. So do his sons. The secret of his health, apart from heredity and open air life, is work. Now that he is unfit for the rigours of farming, he tends the cattle in the village lawn and at home, he spins yarn for the blankets that are woven by his sons in winter. He belongs to the last of the Grand Old Peasants.

Sula and other bright-looking children look rather pale. But they have great resistance. Their bright eyes give them “winsome” looks. The women, tanned from work in the farm, have excellent health. Pounding paddy also gives them fine exercise.

Many Kashmiri Pandits lived in the village, Vachi, where I lived as the guest of Shambu. I had expected hygienic living habits from them but I was soon disillusioned.

It was early morning. There was no stir in the village. I plucked a *Dattan*—a twig to brush my teeth with—from a willow tree and sat by the Ghat on a stone enjoying a fine scene of the crystalline stream flowing amidst beautiful, overhanging willows. The eastern sky over the snow-capped mountains was lit up with gorgeous colours, shedding a rosy hue on the snow peaks of the western mountain ranges.

Two figures approached the Ghat towards me. Could they be housebreakers posing a decent appearance? Presently I discovered them to be two village boys, Shamlal, my recent acquaintance, and a stranger Muslim. Shamlal represented the educated gentry of

the village. He had passed the primary standard examination, the highest academic distinction that the village school afforded. They had the village habit of getting up early. Sheer commonsense makes them leave their beds earlier than they would because none of them possesses a private latrine. They all rush to the public one, the open ground near the Ghat, under the cover of twilight. Otherwise when the sun makes his disconcerting appearance, the villager has to trot off to an uncomfortable distance to ease himself.

Shamlal did not introduce me to his friend. The civilising introduction habit has not yet penetrated the iron folds of village conventionalism. I introduced myself to the Muslim boy, who gaped at me in wonder when Shamlal told him my educational qualifications.

In for a chat, Shamlal began, "what are you doing here?"

"I am chewing a *Dattan*, as you see," I said, rather brusquely.

"It is so cold today, and yet you chew a *Dattan*?"

"Nothing strange". I told him how teeth must be kept clean and must be cleaned several times a day.

Shamlal put forward the old argument of a villager's poverty for not cleaning the teeth daily. I brought home to him that willows were abundant in every Kashmiri village.

"Just see, Dhar Sahib, my teeth are clean though. I've not cleaned them more than a score of times...." He went on in that vein. I found his teeth, on close examination, like every other

villager's teeth that appear clean from a distance—like women with small pox scars on their unhappy faces, but the gums were overladen with rotting scum.

LIVING HABITS

A visit to a typical village in Kashmir is an unforgettable experience. Against the background of lush fields, forest-clad mountains, network of crystalline streams and babbling brooks, the village looks picturesque. But a closer scrutiny lays bare the dark and ugly spots.

Filth and dirt—the natural outcome of dirty living habits of the villagers—meet the visitor's eye everywhere in all such villages, whereto the campaign of the Rural Uplift Department has not penetrated. The lanes are abnoxiously dirty. The drains in the bigger villages, if they exist at all, are rarely swept. They are logged with mud and rubbish. They are just apologies for drains, just ruts by, or, even between the wayside, more natural than artificial!

Satara's wife and daughters-in-law sweep the house and throw that and other refuse just behind the cottage, where it goes on accumulating into a wall of rubbish. So does every other village woman by force of habit, as it were, in spite of epidemics of small pox, cholera and typhus, which take a heavy toll whenever they spread.

VILLAGE OCCUPATIONS

Rice is the biggest and staple crop of Kashmir. Rice cultivation is the chief occupation of the peasant of Kashmir. It entails enormous labour in the formation of terraces and watering

them, before and after transplantation of rice plants from nurseries, weeding the adventitious plants, the harvesting and storing in the granaries. Rice is in every sense a product of the sweat, blood and tears of the peasantry. The soil of Kashmir with its extensive irrigation under the tributary system introduced by the Moghuls, yields a single but fertile crop of rice. Maize is grown in the uplands as far up as the wooded mountain slopes.

Autumn is the harvest season, *Harud*, of Kashmir, when rice, maize, millet, sesame and amaranth are harvested and stored. Listening to harvest songs sung by peasants in field and farmyard is delightful. The willows are pollarded. Dry leaves are collected from under the chinar, which looks reddish brown owing to radical change of colour of its leaves. To protect the maize crop from the depredations of the bear, the terror of the forests of Kashmir, who steals down from the mountain side during the night, peasants erect roofed platform-like lofts, ten or more feet above the ground level and yell and scream and make all possible noises with their whistles, beating old kerosene tins filled with pebbles or drums or trumpets, or in the exquisite moonlight, when their eye commands a pretty good distance, they lustily sing melodious folksongs in chorus.

One of the peasant's leisure-time occupations is the rearing of cocoons on mulberry leaves during summer. The ready cocoons are carried to the Silk Factory at Srinagar in huge bags. During winter he and his family may work on rustic looms and weave woollen blankets which fetch a good price. During recent times many

peasants have taken to bee-farming by modern methods, dropping the traditional coarse way of collection of honey. He is clever at poultry-farming and eggs and fowls fetch him good money.

A peasant may be the village barber in his leisure, using very coarse and rough razors very dexterously. Or, he may know basket work and may know how to make *Kangris*—earthen-ware fire-pots used all over Kashmir. Appreciating that the Kashmiri peasant can turn his hands to anything, Sir Francis Younghusband says: "A Kashmiri can weave good woollen cloth, make first-rate baskets, build himself a house, make his own sandals, his own ropes and a good bargain".

The peasant woman is an expert at the spinning wheel. She hums sweet tunes to kill the monotony of the job. She skilfully makes slippers, mats, etc. out of the grass ropes that she weaves. She pounds paddy into rice at the rustic mortar and that also keeps her fit.

Village handicrafts of Kashmir were not deliberately destroyed like those of the rest of India, but they met a setback owing to certain economic and other trends. For instance, shawl-making lost its thriving market when Franco-Prussian War broke out in the last century in Europe. Thanks to the progressive policy of His Highness' Government and the impetus provided to the cottage industries of Kashmir by the annual Exhibition held at Srinagar in September, village handicrafts have largely revived.

There is an imperative need to properly guide, encourage and foster the artistic tendency in the

village youth, so that their energies can be harnessed towards their social security which can be guaranteed when they turn their attention to more cottage industries than they do now. Indeed cottage industry in Kashmir, if properly guided, has a great future before it.

THE MIGRATORY PEASANT

Summer birds, actual or human, visit the "sweetheart of the world" over the mountain passes in spring, enjoy the summer of the valley in its cool high altitudes, on grassy meadows, by the side of mountain lakes, where wild flowers abound and where the turf is covered with the sweet-smelling pine-needles, and then, at the first hint of autumn and cold, they flock back to the plains of India. But Kashmir has its indigenous migratory bird in the poor Kashmiri landless peasant.

Many of these peasants flock down to the plains during late autumn in search of labour. They are contemptuously termed *Hato* in the Punjab and N.-W. F. Province, where their cheap labour renders them cheap in the eyes of their employers.

When these peasants migrate to the plains, they form groups. Like typical Kashmiris they are cheerful even under the strain of the journey on either of the long mountain routes, that of Jhelum Valley or the one over Banihal Pass. Stopping by the roadside to pass the night, they throw down their miserable freight of earthen pots and cups, torn quilts, and faggots to light the fire with. When the fire is lit and the rice merrily steams in the dirty pots of baked clay, they cluster round the humble fires and sing

happy chorus songs, forgetting their cares and their precarious future for the time being. Most of them, thanks to the climate of Kashmir which more than compensates their lack of nutrition, their tanned, weather-beaten, furrowed checks are yet aglow with ruddy health. Hard labour in the plains will soon damage their fine physique.

I have met many parties of these migratory peasants on their journey when they encamped by the roadside near the Banihal Pass or somewhere over the Jhelum Valley Road. Their tale of woe will melt even a callous heart. Living in one-roomed tenements and subsisting on the barest necessities of food, clothing, etc. they fall easy victims to malaria in the plains.

Sitting by a fireplace in their scattered, open air camp, my bourgeois appearance caused an agreeable surprise to the group. I conversed with one young, communicable sort of peasant, whose pale, haggard face showed recent devastation of malaria.

"I once had an attack of cholera", he told me in his rustic Kashmiri manner, with the peculiar accent of his *Tehsil*, "but I stood it. I got this fever-disease while I was working in a mill at Amritsar. The wayside quack robbed me of much of my hard-saved money. This shivering fever has almost crippled me. My cousin, a fine young man, by the name of Allah, went to paradise as a result of this disease. Here is his quilt" showing me a clumsy apology for one—"that I shall return to his mother."

"Did you save some money?" I asked him sympathetically.

"Yes, I brought some things", he said, wistfully, showing me his proud freight "a quilt for my mother, trinkets for my wife, a rug for my father, salt and tea for the family. Before the month of *Ramzan* I saved ten rupees which I sent home as land revenue was to be paid for the small holding that we have."

"Have others saved like you?"

"No, I am young and I was quite stout when I left Kashmir I could work even in the fever." "There is", he added, beckoning another miserable camp-mate "Fata coming back to his home with no money or things for the home. We have contributed for his journey expenses and he is thankful that he is after all returning to his mother Kashmir. He says he will never step beyond the borders of his village even if he starves."

Many of these migratory peasants who have not saved sufficient money to finance their meagre necessities at home and the journey back to Kashmir, have had perforce to remain in the plains, to be reduced to skeletons by the ravages of malaria in the oppressive summer heat to which their physical make-up is least suited. Observant and compassionate, I have looked at scores of these parties on their return journey. Wearing tattered dirty clothes and skull caps, clumsily patched up at manifold places, bare-footed, ill-shapen, swollen toes protruding out of scratched and rugged feet, that are large and square, they present a pathetic sight to the sympathetic on-looker.

Is this what man has made of man? Should the supposedly fortunate dwellers of the fertile land, the vale of beauties, the paradise of earth,

be thus constrained by force of stern economic circumstances to migrate to mills and markets of the plains, where their labour is thanklessly and contemptuously exploited ?

. SOCIAL CUSTOMS AND SUPERSTITIONS

In rural Kashmir, due to the force of superstition and of religion, social customs, both local and provincial, have almost attained the force of law.

Hindus and Muslims living in villages have many customs in common. One is their reverence for sacred places. Both are so-called *Pir-Parast*—reverential to Pirs, the holy men, be they Hindus or Muslims.

There are many shrines of these holy men of the past which are sacred to both. Their dress is very similar—especially in the remote villages where the civilising influences of the modern type of Indian dress have not yet penetrated.

There are minor differences in dress, however. The *Pheran* of the Panditain is more gaudy than that of her Muslim sister. Her head-dress, *Taranga*, is more picturesque than the *Kasoba*, the headdress of the Muslim woman. Before marriage it is customary for girls of both communities to wear skull caps which are sometimes worked with lace. *Taranga* or *Kasaba* is covered by a cloth, which is pinned at its top and which hangs back to cover the pendant tresses whose plaits are woven into coarse, rustic tassels.

Many of the common customs of villagers spring from religion. There are, however, for the Hindu, definite rites connected with birth,

marriage and death. But both Hindu and Muslim women sing almost the same Kashmiri folksongs at these occasions.

Every household in the village has its wooden or stone mortar, wherein, with long and heavy wooden pestles, women, singing or humming folk-tunes, pound paddy. Women generally lead a free and equal life among the Muslims. No village woman uses the *Purdah* except the brides, called *Maharanis* for the nuptial day, for some time, as a token of maidenly modesty and of course, as a custom.

There is actually an elaborate code of local social customs but it is needless to go into so many of them. What is more relevant and also, more interesting, is superstition, which is universal in the villages of Kashmir and is linked up with religion on the one hand and with custom, on the other, thus holding an undisputed traditional sway over the credulous mind of the villager moved as he by inherited and primitive emotions. In an atmosphere of appalling illiteracy and helpless ignorance, it is but natural that superstition should powerfully affect the lives of the villagers.

The itinerant *Pirs*, *Faqirs* and other so-called holy men put on spiritual airs and sell charms to the believing villagers to protect their children, women and cattle from the evil eye. The Pir or Pandit writes some Qoranic or Sanskrit verse on a piece of paper or inscribes a few hieroglyphic, magic-square letters upon a copper plate and passing a sacred breath over it, after a fit of assumed meditation, hands it over to the taken-in peasant. It is then sewn up in black cloth and tied round the neck. No reformer

raises his voice against this "amulet selling" trade—lest the feared cry of 'religion in danger' should rise against him as the reaction. These amulet-sellers are even believed to cure chronic diseases and they prescribe accordingly.

The Kashmiri Pandit villager is much more superstitious than the Muslim. He attaches ominous significance to sneezes, to night hooting of the owl on the roof of his house, to the sage oracles of his astrologer—Pandit and so on.

The Muslim villager does not mind sneezes, but he has a traditional fear of grave-yards. He believes in *Rah-Chowk*, his Will-o'-the-wisp. Once, in a starry summer night, I was listening to folk-songs sung by Satara and some of his family. We were seated in a small lawn flanking the cool Sind tributary. When, after several songs, there was, as usual, a pause and some attempt at lively conversation, Ahmdoo related an adventure that he had with *Rah-Chowk*.

"Believe me, I actually saw a *Rah-Chowk* when I was returning from Shadipora, late in the night, last year. It was summer. My horse saw the bridle path in the light of the stars. At a corner of the path, where this stream curves into the Jhelum, I saw the damned devil, who kills by treachery by dragging one into a marsh or a river. His two eyes glowed in the dark. The flames of the pot of fire on his head danced up. His devilish presence lit the Jhelum which appeared like a big road.

"Naturally I forgot my direction and I was about to steer my horse that way. But—thank Allah—the horse has his iron shoes. He under-

stands the devil. He did not take my direction but, pricking up his ears, he galloped on the dark, bridle path and brought me safe home."

The still, dark night, the silent audience and Ahmdoo's simple but dramatic utterance produced a suspension of disbelief even in me for the moment. Presently I explained to them the phenomenon of phosphorescence in as many Kashmiri words as I could, but that left them unconvinced and of the same opinion still.

ON VILLAGE MARRIAGES

As mentioned at the outset, rural Kashmir is predominantly populated by Muslims. Hindus are sparsely scattered in decimal proportions. One of the reasons of the dense population of Muslims in Kashmir, apart from historical factors, is their system of marriages. Kashmiri Muslims allow consanguine marriages. In fact many kinds of secular marriages are in vogue. The right to divorce is free to either party though divorces are not very common.

"Is this boy your son?" I asked Qadir, the head peasant of the land whose idle and absentee landlord I happen to be. I made out that the boy bore little family resemblance to Qadir but still I ventured the question just to break the monotony of our conversation about the produce of my land, a dull subject to me, as year after year, I have to hear the same story of damages by rats, spoilation of the crop by too much rainfall, thefts during harvest, and so on.

"No", said Qadir—the traditional 'sir' is dropped in this village as 'light' has come—"but he is my son now."

"How, what do you mean by that?" The object of the question—the boy—bashfully looked away from us towards the kitchen.

"I have one daughter", pointing towards the kitchen, wherefrom the girl gave me a bold glance, "she is the only hope that I have. She—may God give you long life—has been married to a boy who could be spared by his family. He—may *Allah* help you—is the sixth son of his parents. And now he is," he added blinking, "both my son and son-in-law".

A peasant marriage is a picturesque occasion. The women, wearing red and blue *Pherans*—Kashmiri gowns—sing marriage folk-songs for the *Manzrath*, the night when henna is rubbed on the hands and feet of the bride and the groom, the day of marriage, when the bride leaves her father's house and when the groom takes her away.

The marriage procession is a sight to see. Village bands, the musicians playing on ancient wooden pipes and rough drums, lead the small picturesque procession. The bridegroom, dressed in his best, is seated on an ambling pony, whose saddle is covered with gay clothes which are reserved for the occasion. Uneasily saddled, he tries his very best to look important.

The bridegroom's father can be easily made out from his busy, flustering gestures. Peasant women, brightly dressed and wearing happy smiles, with interlocked hands and catching each other's waist, form the rear of the procession. They sing folk-songs that suit the occasion comparing the bridegroom to *Majnun*, or *Rustum*, or *Khusro*, and the bride to *Laila* or *Shirin* or a hyacinth. Their recitation

is free as it is full-throated. They are not shy because they live in social environments which make them the equal of man in every respect. The combined sound of the rustic music and the marriage songs form a strange choir.

Against this happy marital atmosphere, let us pause and have a look at the lot of Kashmiri Pandit Hindus who live as a small part of the population in some villages.

I can't resist the temptation of going back to Shambu of Vachi. When I first went to his house and saw a small, rather dirtily-clad woman with dishevelled hair and graceful ankles, I naturally but hastily took her to be the wife of Shambu.

"Is she your *Mem Sahib*?" I said in my usual, gay manner to Shambu, after she had poured Kashmiri tea in my cup from a big *Samovar*, the Kashmiri tea kettle which is a miniature of the Russian *Samovar*.

"Oh, no, she is his wife," replied Shambu, pointing to the near-by room, where his brother sat, conversing with some peasants who were partly clearing debt arrears.

"Oh! but isn't he your f..., I mean your uncle?" I said, as I had taken the old gentleman to be Shambu's father.

"He is my brother. He is the eldest. We are four brothers. We had a sister, who was married to a Patwari, whose sister was my brother's first wife. The present one is his third wife..."

Shambu talked on but I heard no more as I was lost in a pensive reflectiveness on the fate of the small young lady married to a senile hag,

who could conveniently manage to launch on matrimony for the third time, while his three brothers led unhappy, single lives. According to the Bible (in spite of the example of Jesus and his disciples !) "it is not good form to live alone", but here it is the accepted form for most Hindu youngmen to live as forced bachelors.

During my stay in the village I learnt that only one of the village Hindu daughters was married to a village boy—the son of a middle class landlord—while all the others were packed off to the distant city of Srinagar, where they were married mostly as second or third wives to old moneybags of Kashmiri Pandits. Only a few fortunate young village Pandits are married. All the rest are unmarried. Girls are not to be seen anywhere. Of course, the widows, returned from the city, are there. The kind of social morale arising in such surroundings can better be imagined than exposed with a crusader's zeal.

What has happened to the ancient Hindu law of Manu? What has not vicious customs and hide-bound usage done to corrupt it?

FUTURE

Social customs of the villagers will undergo a sea change as superstitions and anachronisms of custom will die a natural death with the spread of literacy and education in the villages. That done, an era of change will be heralded. That era will surely and steadily precede the making of a better and an uplifted rural Kashmir.

Kashmiri villagers to be progressive need to be something more than "excellent cultivators"; they should not be flattered with that imperialist

epithet used by Sir Walter Lawrence, as they have yet to learn how to lead hygienic, sanitary and clean lives. Their leisure, during the long winter of Kashmir, is not fully utilised to their individual and national good. There is very great scope for rural reform. Village Uplift Movement, as sponsored by the Government, should march with the progress of the time and should, co-opting public bodies and organisations, spread its nation-building activities to the cornermost foot-hill hamlet in Kashmir to carve out a great future for Rural Kashmir, when the Kashmiri villager will lead a better, more prosperous and a higher type of life.

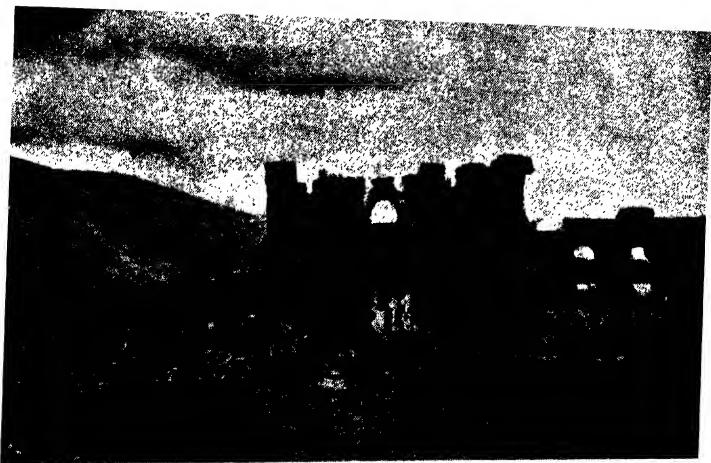
XIX

ANCIENT MONUMENTS*

The "Paradise of the Indies" is full of archæological interest. Throughout the length and breadth of the Valley, a net-work of ancient monuments is spread. Most of them are in ruins. The pathetic sight of broken columns, fallen pillars and dilapidated arches of temples and shrines, dating back to hundreds of years, is touching as well as charged with a romantic beauty. Buddhist Gandhara art influenced the early architecture of Kashmir. Many Buddhist edifices and stupas survive to this day. Later on, strong Greek influences, which persisted for centuries even after the mediæval period, are evinced in colonnades, porches and pediments of the Hindu temples.

Kashmiri Hindus had a wonderful gift of choosing fine and high sites for their temples and shrines, so as to command spacious views of the valley as also to ensure safety from the ravages of floods and denudation. The characteristic features of the architecture of Kashmir are : lofty pyramidal roofs—safeguard against snow and rain—trefoiled doorways, covered by pyramidal pediments and great width of individual columns in colonnades of imposing dimensions. It is quite distinct from the Hindu architecture of the rest of India.

*For a detailed and interesting study of the history, architecture and archæology of Kashmir, read, "Ancient Monuments of Kashmir" by Mr. (now Rai Bahadur Hon'ble) Ram Chandra Kak, (The India Society, London).



Martand Ruins, Srinagar

Photo by Royal Photo Co.

Nishat Bagh, Srinagar

Photo by Datta



The larger temples have rectangular courtyards walled in by massive masonry and their enclosed spaces served as so many forts in times of siege.

1. MONUMENTS IN AND NEAR SRINAGAR

(i) *Shankaracharya*

A mediæval massive stone temple on a hillock in Srinagar. Its high octagonal plinth, the stone staircase of massive slabs with arched gateway, wherein no mortar was used, the low parapet wall with niches round it and a stone tank nearby, are worth seeing.

An excellent view of Srinagar, the lakes, and the mountain-girt valley, are obtained from the temple : it is indeed one of the finest sights of the world.

(ii) *Shah Hamdan*

On the riverside in the city, it is a rectangular mosque, built chiefly of wood, on the site of an old temple dedicated to Kalishwari whose shrine still exists on the bank. Wood carving on windows and doors and the panelled wood-work of the rooms are remarkable.

(iii) *Pathar Masjid*—(Stone Mosque)

On the river bank, opposite to Shah Hamdan. It was built by Nur Jahan. The plinth is underground. Its stone facade, due to the compactness of massive blocks and the stone arches, is imposing.

(iv) *Tomb of Zain-Ul-Abdin's Mother*

Between fourth and fifth bridge, on the riverside. It is wholly made of brick. The brick masonry of the five domes, ornamentally decorated with blue bricks, is interesting. A

wall, made from massive, sculptured stones of some temple, surrounds it.

(v) *Jama Masjid*

The biggest mosque in Kashmir—half a mile from the Fourth Bridge. Its chequered past epitomises the history of Muslim rule in Kashmir. The four tall minars have pyramidal roofs. Its many halls have a large array of lofty pillars, 378 in number, which support the roof. Remains of an ancient temple are found in its outer compound.

(vi) *Peri Mahal* (Fairy Palace)

It is situated on the spur of mountain slopes to the west of Chashma Shahi. It occupied a school of astrology built by the ill-fated Dara Shikoh—killed by his brother, Aurangzeb, in the prime of his life—for his tutor, Mulla Shah.

An ill-preserved terraced Moghul Garden, a water reservoir in ruins, arched retaining walls of sidestairs, running through big rooms having domed ceilings, form its attractions. It commands an excellent view of the Dal Lake and is well worth a visit.

(vii) *Harwan*

11 miles from Srinagar. Here there are the very interesting excavations of a Buddhist monastery, whose tiles, frescoes and ancient masonry are worth seeing.

(viii) *Pandrethan*

4 miles from Srinagar, on the site of the former capital of Kashmir. It is a well-preserved mediæval temple. The ceiling of the domed roof, showing classic sculpture of the early 10th century A. D., is worth seeing. The temple

is 17' 6" square with projecting stone portico on either side and a string-course of elephants runs round it.

2. AVANTIPUR

13 miles above Srinagar, on the right bank of the Jhelum. Height: 5,225 ft. It was the site of the capital of a famous King of Kashmir, Avanti Varman, who built two magnificent temples, Avant Swami and Avant Sura, which have been excavated by the Government.

(i) *Avant Swami*

This temple, dedicated to Vishnu, was built by Avanti Varman, in his youth, before his accession to the throne. The stone gateway, profusely sculptured, is very impressive. The spacious quadrangle is enclosed by a colonnade of great architectural beauty. It is one of the gems of architecture in Kashmir.

(ii) *Avant Sura*

This temple comes first on the left side of the road from Srinagar to Anantnag. Avant Varman built it after his accession to the throne and dedicated it to Siva. It is less ornate in sculpture and less preserved than the other temple.

3. MARTAND

The reputed Temple of the Sun, 3 miles from Anantnag.

The far-famed temple of Martand, situated on a unique, commanding sight over an upland plateau, has been styled as "the architectural lion of Kashmir". This most finished of the temples of Kashmir has very imposing dimensions, the total length of the temple being 63 feet; the dimensions of the flute-pillared quadrangle are 220 by 142 feet. A graceful colon-

nade of 84 columns, most of which lie prostrate with intervening trefoil-arched recesses, flank the temple on either side. Carving on the pediments, arches and on walls, is fine and delicate.

4. BAMUZU

Situated one mile to the north of the sacred springs of Bhawan, there is an interesting group of excavated caves, cut into the lime-stone along the foot of the hills. These form the only important group of artificial caves in Kashmir. The passage of one of these caves with the ornate doorway, is about 200 feet long and leads to a small temple in the interior, flanked by two arched recesses.

5. PAYECH

18 miles from Srinagar. This small, pyramid-roofed temple, set in a picturesque setting, is the most beautiful of ancient shrines. In its design it is like Pandrethan temple but it is more solid, being built out of only 10 stones. The central chamber is 8' square. It is rightly termed an "architectural gem".

6. ACHADAL

39 miles from Srinagar. There are the ruins of a Moghul pavilion. The underground earthen pipes that fed the royal hammam of Jehangir with water from the spring, are remarkable.

7. VERINAG

50 miles from Srinagar. The water of the spring was enclosed by Jehangir in an octagonal basin. 24 arches were raised by Shah Jahan who completed the work of his father.

8. MAMAL

This small masonry temple in Pahalgam is

well worth a visit. There is a string of pure water at its base and a rubble—stone wall round it.

9. MANASBAL

18 miles from Srinagar. There are ruins of a Moghul Garden laid out by Nur Jahan. An old Hindu temple, made of stone and partially submerged in water, is another monument.

10. PATTAN

17 miles from Srinagar. The ruins of two temples, built by Shanker Varman and his consort, Suganda, are found here. Its architecture is after the style of Martand, but much less ornate, though its carving is in a better state of preservation. The gateway and trefoiled niches are remarkable.

11. PARIHASPURA

14 miles from Srinagar. The ruins mark the site of the capital of Lalitaditya. There are the Buddhist edifices of stupa and a monastery. Some of the most massive blocks of grey limestone used in Kashmir, can be seen here.

12. WANGAT

Approached from Kangan—on the road to Sonamarg. There are ruins of two group of mediæval Naran Nag temples which stand on a height at the mouth of a gorge in the Wangat Nala. These cloisters were the far-famed abode of Sanskrit learning of yore in Kashmir. They formed the sacred gateway to the holy Gangabal Lake, 5,000 feet further up from Wangat.

13. BUNIYAR

Near Rampur, on the Jhelum Valley Road. It is the best preserved of the larger stone temples of Kashmir. The gateway is impressive.

XIV

SNOW IN KASHMIR

"Look at the dark, grey sky. It is really a 'snow wind'," points out Shambu, the city grocer to his customer.

"A severe 'snow wind' indeed".

"I am shivering in this open shop. I wish the snow may fall. The wind and the sky say we will have a snowfall".

"Of course, we will soon have snow. Then there will be much less cold."

Kashmiris have a subtle instinct for predicting a snowfall. They tell it from the extraordinary cold wind, known as 'snow wind', dark, grey, low sky and an unnatural stillness in the air.

What a pleasant surprise one has when one opens the bedroom window in the morning and sees the hitherto bare scene wrapped with the virgin snow. The trees, the electric lamp posts and wires, the turf and walls and roads are all mantled with the beautiful snow. Why not enjoy a broader view of the snow-laden city from the tower of the house? The temptation is irresistible. I go up. The part of the city of Srinagar that I can see is all roofs, white and hazy, against the thick snowflakes covering the whole sky. I lose myself in contemplation of the beautiful sight of the snowfall, its soft, virginal chastity, its unobtrusive but universal nature.

Old memories stir in my excited brain. The look of the dense forest of houses of Srinagar,

wrapped in snow, was memorable when Brij and I were plucky enough to ascend the hill of Shankaracharya six years back. Yes, the slippery ascent over the muddy path was very difficult. The descent was not only slippery but dangerous and was accomplished with the aid of well-nailed boots and hiking sticks. The Srinagar city looked superb in the snow. White roofs everywhere, silvery clumps of trees, white snow-covered fort-topped Hari Parbat and the snow-covered mountains girding the silvery valley all around, indeed every environ of Srinagar looked bathed in moonlight, as it were, but for the sheety, dark lakes and the blue, meandering Jhelum.

The Chinar, the famous tree of the Valley, majestic in summer and picturesque in autumn, when its green leaves turn red and brown, loses its grandeur with the advent of the harsh winter that shears it of its beautiful clothing. In winter, prior to a snowfall, the ageless tree which is a factor in making the Valley "the sweetheart of the world," looks bleak, an unduly huge skeleton with no beauty or meaning. But when the snow clothes it in white, its look undergoes a sharp, pleasant change. It looks more grand than in any other season, robed in milky white all around, snow-laden branches opening out into the low sky.

What spectacle do other trees present in the snow in the park or your garden? The cypress, shorn of its summer grace, is overladen with snow, which has formed into clumsy terraces upon the unwilling shoulders of the tree. The willow is wholly lost in the snow. It reminds you of a bashful maiden clad in *Burqa*, walking

uncertain, tottering steps, clutching the *Burqa* with lest it should fall. The lank, straight branches of the poplar are bent with the soft, weighty snow into graceful curves. All the flower-plants are smothered by the snow in your garden.

Sometimes a snowy night ends in a frosty morning. On going to bed, when you peeped out of the window for a while, you saw the thick, dark snowflakes in the electric light. But soon a change comes over it all. The quaint, snowy night grows strangely quieter. You hear no longer the soft, monotonous tapping of the water dripping from the eaves of the roof. The water is dripping still from the roof but not falling as it is being silently formed into icicles, whose cold, glassy sight greets your eyes in the morning.

"Oh! it is frosty now", you are informed by your wife or mother or son.

"Yes, that is all right".

"But, please, take care when you walk on your (wooden) sandal in the courtyard. It is very slippery there. I just escaped a fall".

Yesterday's snow is to-day's frost in the compound, roads, streets and everywhere. It is freezing cold. The water in the tin-can freezes at the surface. You break the crust and use as little of the benumbing water as is consistent with cleanliness! The temperature is below zero. Or what?

"This is damned cold", complains the Sahib in his office, drawing-room, dining-room, bedroom, or wherever he may be. "The stove and the heater can't put this cursed cold out of my rooms. I do not even dare to take a bath lest

I should have an exposure. Snowy days were better than this killing frost". The Sahib, the summer bird of Kashmir, has had to stay in Kashmir. His office did not move this year to Jammu, the winter capital of the State. His business delayed him at Srinagar. Or, maybe, he, though he is so big a Sahib, could not make it up on the financial side. Or, is he a European evacuee in Srinagar, who wanted reminiscences of European the winter in Kashmir and now deploras his choice ?

The Sahib fumes and frets at the intolerable cold. Does he know the lot of those miserable, poor slum-dwellers of Kashmir, who, not to speak of heating their one-roomed tenements by stoves and heaters, have not enough charcoal or other fuel with which to feed their (Kangris) --the earthenware firepots, being the very useful invention of some blessed Kashmiri but for whose use poor people would die of cold and exposure even as birds do. With a single cotton Pheran (loose Kashmiri gown) on their shivering persons the poor children and women miraculously fight the cold. Having no footwear at all, they tread the frosted or slush streets, barefooted. The beautiful feet of Kashmiri women and children look pitifully red and swollen. The freezing cold mercifully benumbs them into partial insensibility of the pain. I feel a sense of shame, not unmixed with a sharp consciousness of social guilt, at their sight when I contrast their bare feet with my double-socked feet cosily thrust into warm boots.

Finding your window open, mynas, swallows and crows twitter outside. They are starving, they complain. You feed them and they pounce upon the rice. The familiar bulbul comes very

near to you. He is the aristocratic bird. You place some dry fruits or sugar-candy for it on the window sill, where the shy myna will not interfere with its feast. Shivering pariah dogs gather at the door for a cold morsel.

Sometimes the sun peers from behind the grey sky. The clouds race away, revealing a cheery, blue sky. Sunlight brightens the snow-covered roads and roofs. The rays of the sun, obliquely falling on the chinar, add to its grandeur. The amphitheatre of surrounding mountains, so long obscured by clouds, is now dazzlingly bared. They look clothed in a sublime grandeur. They remind me of Milton's Grand Style! The dingy slums and rustic hovels disgorge themselves of their miserable human freight. The old men, women and children, ill-clad, shaking and dirty, come into the sun by the roadside or in the courtyard but they forget that it is the treacherous winter sun. The sun is already frowning on them as clouds impatiently cover it. Soon, too soon, the sun is wholly enveloped by the jealous clouds.

Another severe 'snow wind' sweeps over the valley. Old Kashmiris are instinctively thankful that snowfall is again coming.

WINTER AND OTHER SPORTS*

The Switzerland of India is justly famous for big and small game its fishing and bathing resorts and ski-ing—the latest attraction to sportsmen. Globe-trotters, anglers and other sportsmen flock to Kashmir in all seasons.

BIG GAME

Thanks to game laws, and—what really matters—their strict enforcement, numbers of all species of big game are widely distributed in the forests of the Valley and, especially, in outlying Frontier districts. Black bear, pig, Kashmir stag (Barasingh), serow and leopard are fairly numerous in the Valley. Other species are found in other parts of Kashmir.

The black bear is rarely found above the tree line. As it does not hibernate completely, it can be tracked down in winter also. It is most sporting to stalk it when it is feeding in an orchard or a maize-field. The leopard is often hunted when sitting up over a live bait. Serow, because of its retiring nature, is not an easy find. Stalking it, as ever, is an art. Musk deer is found over eight thousand feet where it usually haunts birch forests. The Kashmir stag, fine, beautiful and powerful, offers one of the best sports of Kashmir. Erin Nullah, the Sind and Liddar Valleys, from September to March.

*KASHMIR, the SWITZERLAND OF INDIA, by Dermot Norris, (E. Newman & Co., Ltd., Calcutta), is the best sportsman's descriptive Guide to Kashmir.

Ladakh, the picturesque frontier district of Kashmir, is one of the most popular of Himalayan hunting grounds. Sportsmen have to be prepared against extremes of temperature. The big game available is : ibex, Tibetan antelope, burrhel, sharpu, etc. Further on, in Baltistan (Kargil and Skardu Tehsils) ibex, markhor, red bear, snow leopard and sharpu are found. Other shooting grounds in Kashmir are : Astore, Guraiz, Kajinag, Kisht-war etc.

SMALL GAME

In the many swamps and lakes, dotting the western end of the Valley, there are large varieties of game birds. Snipe is found in large numbers at Anchar Lake. Duck shooting, one of the best winter sports of Kashmir, commences in September. Large bags can be made at the small lake of Haigam. In winter flocks of all varieties of geese are found in the Wular Lake, where a few sunny days of winter can be most delightfully spent by sportsmen.

Wood-cock is not numerous in the Valley. Pintails and teals are found after autumn. Chukor shooting season starts in October. Other game birds are : quail, blue rock-pigeons and peasants of many varieties.

SKI-ING

This is the latest addition to the attractions of Kashmir. It commences early in winter and continued through spring to as late as early summer.

In 1926 the Ski Club of India was established, with its headquarters at Gulmarg. Ever since more and more ski-ground has been opened out every year and the membership of the Club has increased.

In winter, only short skiing expeditions are taken out as the days are short. Spring skating lacks the feel of untracked powdery snow of winter, but there is little to be feared from the snow-storms and freezing winds of winter. As the spring advances, hill-sides are scarred almost to their summits and snow accumulates in sheltered nullahs where skiing is continued till early summer. Late spring skiing is pleasant but too easy. It is particularly delightful over snow-covered Tos Maidan, Jamianwalli Gali etc., owing to the surrounding scenery and the views of the Valley. Summer skiers, sometimes, run between the Liddar and Sind Valleys, somewhere over Sonamarg, but they have to be wary on account of crevasses in glaciers and snow-laden gorges. Experts alone can safely avoid avalanches. They are not frequent, but, as a rule, steep slopes, of less than thirty degrees, should be avoided.

Skiing has been extended to Gilgit where it forms the chief winter sport of the garrison. The Kashmiri has not yet taken to this sport, which could have been useful too.

FISHING*

The Vale of Kashmir, dotted with lakes, streams and rivers, is, naturally enough, a popular fishing resort. The fish of Kashmir offer the angler excellent and varied sport. The indigenous fish, like the choosh, the chirco, and the so-called 'snow-trout', etc. are not at all sportive. But the masheer, the summer visitor from the sea to the western waters of Kashmir and

*For useful information on trout waters in the Valley, read Colonel Wilson's "Trout Fishing in Kashmir".

the naturalized brown and rainbow trout, due to their prized fighting qualities, offer exciting sport.

The trout, introduced in Kashmir in 1900, has taken very much to the climate of Kashmir. There is a fine trout hatchery at Harwar, 11 miles from Srinagar, which is well worth a visit from the Moghul gardens, as it is only 2 miles from Shalimar. There is another well-known trout Hatchery at Achibal. Trout is sold to visitors at both these hatcheries. Booking of trout waters is done on application to the Game Warden—preferably in advance.

NOTE

Applications for Licence should be addressed to the Game Warden, whose office can supply lists of approved Shikaris and other useful information. For current rates of all kinds of licence, consult "Notes for Visitors to Kashmir", issued by Visitors' Bureau. The note also gives a detailed list of trout waters in Kashmir, wages of Shikaris and other hunting charges, list of Forest Rest Houses and other handy information.

Clothes worn should be warm and loose-fitting and of some inconspicuous colour, so as not to hinder stalking of the game. Good field glasses and telescope are, of course, indispensable.

A special licence of Rs. 50 is to be obtained to shoot the musk deer. Shooting by night is prohibited.

In order to enter the following reserved Shikargahs, previous permission is to be obtained from the State Departments of the Hon'ble Minister-in-Waiting: Upper Dachigam, Khonmoo,

Khrew, Aripal, Khull, Trall, Khirran ; the duck shooting reserves of Hokra and Mirgud ; and the trout streams of Thrickar, Nambal and the specified portions of Liddar.

To guard against small pox, enteric fever and typhus, sometimes endemic in the Valley and its borders, special vaccinations or inoculations should be taken beforehand.

XVI

ROUTE TO AMAR NATH

Pilgrims from all parts of India visit Sri Amar Nath Cave in the month of Sawan (August). Thousands of pilgrims, men and women, and sadhus by the hundred, start from Srinagar in lorries, tongas or on foot.

The sacred cave is situated up a narrow gorge at the farthest end of the Liddar Valley, in a trough of the mountains, picturesquely surrounded by pinnacles of limestone rocks, which are remarkable for their reddish-yellow colour.

1. ANANTNAG

34 Miles from Srinagar. Height: 5240 ft. Sacred sulphur springs are enclosed within a holy shrine. Wooden toys and articles of use, embroidered bed covers and Gabbas, are manufactured and sold here.

Starting place for visits to Martand, Bamuzu and Achabal.

2. AISSH MUKAM

12 Miles. Height: 6,070 ft. An old Muslim monastery, resting on beautiful mountain slopes with magnificent cliffs above, having picturesque turrets and a sacred Muslim cave nearby, are worth-seeing. The place commands a spacious view of the lower reaches of the Liddar Valley.

A prominent stage of the pilgrimage.

3. PAHALGAM

12 Miles. Height : 7,000 ft. Excellent camp sites over the picturesque plateaux. Pilgrimage supply and transport available. 4 sheds for use of pilgrims at the staging place for sadhus. The route here follows the right bank of the Liddar stream.

4. CHANDANWARI

8 Miles, Height : 9,500 ft. A tourist hut and 5 sheds for use of pilgrims and tourists. A broad grassy meadow, surrounded by fir trees, provides a good camp site.

5. SHISHA NAG

8 Miles. Height : 11,730 ft. This large beautiful sheet of a mountain lake is reached after a stony ascent over the pass of Pant Sal Galli, 13,840 ft.

6. PANCHTARNI

11 Miles. Height : 12,003 ft. A short but difficult and steep path leads to Bhairo Ghat pass (14,350 ft.) which descends to Amar Nath Cave.

7. AMAR NATH CAVE

5 Miles. Height : 12,729 ft. Below the Cave flows Amarvati stream. Near the Cave are frozen, SIVA springs. The mouth of the Cave is very impressive, being 150 feet in height, width and depth.

No sheds are available because no halt is made here at the consummation of the pilgrimage. Wild pigeons—supposed to be sacred—are found living in fissures nearby.

NOTE FOR PILGRIMS TO AMAR NATH

To guard against untimely fall of snow at or near the Cave, quite heavy clothing should be taken as a precautionary measure.

Pilgrimage supplies can be had, with equal facility, at Srinagar or at Pahalgam the chief stage of pilgrimage.

APPENDIX A

HEIGHT ABOVE SEA LEVEL OF PROMINENT PLACES AND PEAKS OF KASHMIR

1.	Amar Nath	...	...	12,729 ft.
2.	Banihal pass	...	...	9,200 "
3.	Ganderbal	...	...	11,714 "
4.	Gangabal	...	...	11,714 "
5.	Gilgit	...	...	4,890 "
6.	Gulmarg	...	...	8,700 "
7.	Haramoukh	...	...	16,872 "
8.	Jammu	...	...	1,000 "
9.	Khillanmarg	...	...	9,500 "
10.	Kishtwar	...	...	3,000 "
11.	Kolohai	...	...	15,000 "
12.	Konsarnag	...	...	12,000 "
13.	Leh (Ladakh)	...	...	11,300 "
14.	Mt. Godwin Austin (K 2)	...	...	28,200 "
15.	Nanga Parbat	...	...	26,696 "
16.	Pahalgam	...	...	7,000 "
17.	Shishanag	...	...	11,730 "
18.	Sonamarg	...	...	8,750 "
19.	Srinagar	5,214 "
20.	Tatakutti	15,524 "
21.	Tragabal Pass	12,000 "
22.	Verinag	6,100 "

APPENDIX B

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9. Camp-outfit.
10. House-boat charges.
11. Routes to Srinagar :
 - (a) Route no. 1
 - (b) Route no. 2
 - (c) Route no. 3 and
Petrol Pumps,
12. Accommodation Available :
where to stay in :
 - (a) Srinagar,
 - (b) Gulmarg, .
 - (c) Pahalgam.
13. General information: Srinagar :
 - (a) Amusements,
 - (b) Churches, temples and mosques,
 - (c) Banks,
 - (d) Small gardens,
 - (e) Prominent factories,
 - (f) Prominent hospitals,
 - (g) Educational institutions,
 - (h) Dentists.

14. Fares :
 - (a) Cars and Lorries,
 - (b) Tongas in Srinagar,
 - (c) Motor and Lorry Supplying Companies and
 - (d) Motor Repairers and Stockists.
15. Radio Engineers, Srinagar.
16. Watch-makers, Srinagar.
17. Dry Cleaners, Srinagar.
18. Miscellaneous General Information :
 - (a) Fruits of Kashmir,
 - (b) Vegetables of Kashmir,
 - (c) Seed-Farms and
 - (d) Arts and Crafts of Kashmir.
19. Salients in the History of Kashmir.
20. Bibliography.

NOTE FOR VISITORS

THE CLIMATE

Visitors intending to stay in Kashmir for a period of 5 or 6 months will find the month of May the best period for the up journey—more convenient on Rawalpindi Route.

From April to November the climate of Kashmir is pleasant and invigorating. In the Valley proper, the spring months of April and May and the autumn months of October and November are delightful.

The climate of Manasbal, Pahalgam, Tangmarg—a sanatorium at the foot of Gulmarg—is eminently suitable for patients suffering from lung troubles. The autumn is most pleasant of all seasons in Srinagar. It has the added attraction of the annual State Exhibition and other amusements.

Valley lakes are best visited in April, May and October. Lotuses are in full bloom during August.

SPRING WATERS

Water of Chashma Shahi is reputed for its efficacy as a cure for digestive ailments.

The water of Kokarnag spring is considered to aid the cure of pleurisy and asthma.

The water of Achabal spring is useful for bladder, kidney and stomach diseases.

Bihuma spring, situated in the neighbourhood of Ganderbal, is proving useful to tuberculosis patients.

Baths in the sulphur springs of Anantnag, Khrew, Ajas and Woyin aid the cure of skin diseases.

VISITORS' BUREAU

Information regarding transport, coolies, boats, carriage and "black list" of dealers etc., may be got from Visitors' Bureau, Srinagar, or at the branches of the Bureau, scattered throughout the State at all the important hill and other stations.

Complaints against anybody should be made at the office of the Director, Visitors' Bureau, Srinagar, where unregistered servants should be got registered.

In fact, the visitors should bear in mind that the Visitors' Bureau is a Department maintained by His Highness' Government to secure every possible assistance to the visitors throughout the State territories.

WHAT THE VISITORS MUST BEWARE OF

1. From middle of June to middle of September, the Valley of Kashmir and Srinagar are rather hot, the maximum temperature ranging between 85° and 100° F. There is much humidity in the atmosphere too owing to the vicinity of lakes and submerged rice fields. This is the proper time to trek up to and camp in one of well known hill stations of Kashmir, so as to be more than three thousand feet above the level of the Valley.

2. Motorists must beware of unmetalled roads in Kashmir, which must not be used just after rains as they become very slippery and risky, nor should they increase their speed above 20 miles per hour over such roads in fair weather.

3. The terms on which cars and houseboats etc. are taken on hire should always be specified in writing. Return passages in cars and buses should be arranged with only reliable companies.

4. Visitors importing guns, rifles and revolvers must produce British Indian Licence for the same at the State Customs Post or the weapons will be detained.

5. Visitors are advised not to use water of the river or any Valley Lake for drinking purposes. Water should be first boiled and then used. Milk should be boiled in all cases. Butter should be purchased from reliable dairies in Srinagar, Pahalgam etc.

6. Before engaging houseboats or placing orders with merchants, visitors should consult the "Black List" of tradesmen etc. in the office of the Visitors' Bureau, Srinagar. Visitors are advised in their own interests to engage a licensed House Boat. They should insist on receipts in lieu of all payments to owners of houseboats or bus services or dealers in arts and crafts, etc. The payments had best be made personally.

7. Visitors renting houseboats should have the total crew medically examined to safeguard themselves against diseases.

EQUIPMENT NECESSARY

Visitors must get mackintoshes and canvas bed sheets to safeguard against uncertain weather of the hill stations. Mosquito nets are necessary for those who moor in house-boats. Warm clothing is essential ; a *Puttoo* suit can be made at Srinagar. Hikers to the mountains must carry tinted spectacles and blue veil.

When trekking over slippery snow, grass sandals, made in Kashmir, will be found to be very useful. Chappals and boots should be well-nailed.

LIST OF AGENCIES IN SRINAGAR DEALING
IN CAMP KIT, ETC.

1. Cockburns' Agency.
2. Mathews' Agency (also furriers).
3. Kashmir General Agency.
4. Army Agency.
5. Himalayan Agency.
6. Kashmir Tourist Agency.
7. Kashmir Visitors' Agency.
8. Mohd. Baba & Sons.
9. Gaffara & Sons.
10. Charming Agency.

HOUSE BOAT AGENCIES

1. House Boat Owners' Association.
2. Boats' Syndicate.
3. Kashmir Boat Owners Agency.
4. Kashmir Holiday Homes.
5. The Hill Homes.

MOORING SITE RULES :

1. The average length of a site is 50 to 60 yards.
2. Boundary of sites is marked by posts and is numbered.
3. Rent will be charged at the rate of -/8/- per day or part thereof for each site.
4. With 3 days' clear notice a site temporarily vacated can be kept served, provided further fees are paid in advance. Rent is always

payable in advance to the Director, Visitors' Bureau, Srinagar.

5. Within limits of the same locality sites can be exchanged.

6. If a site is required for Government purposes, it will have to be vacated with proper refund.

7. If any vacant site is occupied, the Visitors' Bureau should be informed at once.

MOORING SITES IN SRINAGAR

A Class Site—Rs. 12 per month. From Pestonjee's Shop to Ram Munshi Bagh, but for the right bank of the Jhelum between Sonwar Bagh Sluice to Miss O'Connor's Boarding house.

B Class Site—Rs. 8 per month. (a) From High Court Ghat to Pestonjee's Shop (Right Bank), (b) Lal Mundi Ghats (Left Bank), (c) Upper Corner of the Lal Mundi wood depot to a point opposite the Sonawar Bagh bridge, (d) Club Nullah (both banks), (e) Chinar Bagh on Golf Link's side.

CAMPING SITE RULES

1. All sites are marked and numbered on a map, maintained in the office of Director, Visitors' Bureau, Srinagar.

2. The sites are usually marked by posts and numbered.

3. Tents should be pitched on the camping ground set aside for the purpose.

4. For sites outside Srinagar, one should apply to the Director, Visitors' Bureau, Srinagar or their representatives at the spot and for sites in Srinagar Municipality, one should apply to

the President, Municipality, Srinagar, stating, the probable period of occupation of the site.

5. Rent shall be charged at the rate of -/8/- per day or part thereof for each camp site for Pahalgam, Ganderbal, Gulmarg, Achabal, Kulkarnag, Nasim Bagh, Shadipur and Sonamarg.

6. Camping sites cannot be reserved in advance. Allotment of sites will be made according to the priority of application.

7. The tenant should keep the site clean.

8. The camping site is generally 110' x 75'.

9. Pilgrims going to Visit Sri Amar Nath Cave are exempt from the provisions of these rules.

10. Camping site rent will be paid by occupants of a site whether the tents are occupied or not.

CAMP-OUTFIT

Folding chairs, tables and beds, bath room furniture, cooking pots and other crockery may be hired from the above-mentioned agencies. Light trunks are to be preferred for camp use. Whatever is used in the camp must be quite watertight and a good number of canvas sheets should be carried along.

HOUSE-BOAT CHARGES

There are no fixed rates. They fluctuate according to the number of visitors. As against pre-War rate of Rs. 3 per head per day in a first class houseboat, now the rate is Rs. 10 per head. No estimate can be made of post-War rates in these circumstances. The Government are, however, contemplating to control the rates of houseboats—so as to remove this standing inconvenience to visitors to Kashmir.

APPENDIX C

ROUTES TO SRINAGAR

Route No. 1. (RAWALPINDI TO SRINAGAR via MURREE-KOHALA)

This is the most convenient route and is well-known as one of the longest hill roads of the world, very remarkable for its hill scenery. The river Jhelum flows alongside most of the route : hence it is called Jhelum Valley Road. Beyond Baramulla, up to Srinagar, the road is enclosed in a beautiful poplar avenue.

Name of stage	Distance	Height above sea-level	Remarks
Rawalpindi ...	0 mile	1,670 ft.	Railway Terminus P. O., T. O., Hospitals, Banks, Motor Agencies, Big Market, Kashmir Visitors' Bureau Branch.
1. Bharakao ...	13 miles	1,940 "	P. O., Bazar.
2. Tret ...	25 "	3,300 "	P.O.; T.O., D.B., Radiators are renewed.
3. Sunny Bank Murree	37 "	6,500 "	P.O., T.O., Hotel.
4. Dewal ...	9 "	4,350 "	P.O.

5. Kohala	...	64 miles	1,800	ft.	P.O., T.O., D.B., Customs Toll Post to Kashmir Territory.
6. Domel	...	85 "	2,230	"	P.O., T.O., D.B., with 5 sets and Inspection Bungalow, Dispensary, Customs House: Toll is again paid.
7. Garhi	...	99 "	2,630	"	Hindu kitchen with 2 rooms.
8. Hatian	...	110 "	3,000	"	P.O., T.O., D.B. with 8 sets. R.H. with 7 sets.
9. Chinari	...	115 "	3,800	"	...
10. Chakothi	...	120 "	3,780	"	P.O., T.O., D.B., with 5 sets. Archaeological ruin in the neighbourhood.
11. Uri	...	133 "	4,450	"	P.O., R.H., with 2 sets.
12. Rampur	...	146½ "	4,840	"	P.O., T.O., A good D.B. with 6 sets, Dispensary, Hindu kitchen with 5 rooms. Further on is the Kashmir Electric Power Station at Mahora.
13. Baramulla...	...	162 "	5,200	"	P.O., D.B. with 4 sets, R.H. with 6 rooms. An old stone temple—the best preserved shrine in Kashmir is worth-seeing.
					P.O., T.O., Dispensary. Biggest town in Kashmir. Fruit exporting market.

Name of stage	Distance	Height above sea-level	Remarks.
14. Pattan ...	179 miles	5,210 ft.	P.O., T.O., nearby are interesting ruins.
15. Srinagar ...	196 "	5,214 "	Summer capital of Kashmir, P.O., T.O., Hotels, Hospitals, Banks etc.,

NOTE :
P.O. = Post office
D.B. = Dak bungalow
Route No. 2.—(JAMMU TO SRINAGAR VIA BANIHAL).
Like Route No. 1 this hill road is also a marvel of modern engineering. It is the more picturesque of the two.

Name of stage	Distance	Height above sea-level	Remarks
Jammu ...	0 mile	1,000 ft.	Winter capital of the State, P.O., T.O., D.B. with 7 rooms, Hindu and Muslim kitchens, two branches of Visitors' Bureau.

1. Nagrota ...	7½ miles	1,165	"	Small village and Bazaar.
2. Jhajjar ...	20½ "	1,630	"	P.O., R.H. with 4 rooms.
3. Tikri ...	27½ "	2,455	"	Inspection shelter, no catering arrangement, partly furnished.
4. Udhampur...	40½ "	2,348	"	Large Town, P.O., T.O., D.B. with 6 rooms, R.H. with 2 rooms, Dispensary.
5. Dramthal ...	53½ "	3,500	"	P.O., Inspection shelter like No. 3.
6. Kud ...	65 "	5,700	"	D.B. with 3 rooms, R.H. with 2 rooms, Hindu and Muslim kitchens with rooms. An excellent halting place comparable to Sunny Bank in its scenery.
7. Batote ...	77½ "	5,116	"	D.B. with 5 rooms, P.O., T.O., Dispensary, Hindu and Muslim kitchens, sanatorium for Tuberculosis patients.
8. Ramban ...	94½ "	2,250	"	D.B., P.O., T.O., Dispensary.
9. Banihal ...	118½ "	5,330	"	P.O., T.O., R.H. with 2 rooms, Hindu and Muslim kitchens.

Name of stage	Distance	Height above sea-level	Remarks
10. Ramsu ...	108 miles	3,799 ft.	From Banihal the Route ascends to the Banihal Pass and crosses a tunnel 640 feet long, height 8,985 feet. The Pass commands a spacious view of the upper stretches of the Happy Valley.
11. Upper Munda.	147½ "	7,224 "	Bazaar and shops.
12. Qazi Gund	157½ "	5,667 "	D.B., with 3 rooms. Between Upper and Lower Munda a road leads to the spring of Verinag—2 miles away.
13. Khannabal	170 "	5,236 "	D.B., P.O., T.O., Fruit Exporting Market.
14. Avantipura	185 "	5,325 "	D.B., P.O., T.O., a mile to the east is Anantnag.
			P.O., reputed for ruins of ancient temples. Further on are the famous saffron fields of Kashmir.

15. Srinagar ... 203 miles | 5,214 ft. | See Route No. 1.

NOTES :

1. P.O.—Post Office, T.O.,—Telegraph office, D.B.—Dak bungalow, R.H. rest house.
2. At Digdole, Peerah, Jhajjar, there are Inspection Shelters—partly furnished, but with no catering arrangements.

Route No. 3—(RAWALPINDI TO SRINAGAR VIA ABBOTABAD).

This short route from Havelian *via* Abbotabad joins Route No. 1 at Domel, after a distance of 58 miles.

Name of stage	Distance	Height above sea-level	Remarks
1. Havelian ...	0 mile		
2. Abbotabad ...	9 miles	4,010 ft.	D.B., P.O., T.O., Hospital, Bank, Military Cantonment.
3. Mansehra ...	25 "	3,550 "	D.B., P.O., T.O., Hospital.
4. Garhi Habibullah.	44 "	2,655 "	D.B., P.O., Town and Bazaar half a mile from the Road.
5. Domel ...	58 "	2,230 "	D.B., P.O., T.O., Hospital and Customs House.

NOTE : Domel to Srinagar : See Route No. 1.

Abbreviations, the same as in other Routes.

PETROL PUMPS

ROUTE NO. 1.	ROUTE NO. 2.	ROUTE NO 3.
1. Rawalpindi	1. Jammu	1. Abbotabad
2. Murree	2. Udhampur	2. Mansehra
3. Kohala	3. Batote	etc.
4. Domel	4. Banihal	
5. Uri	5. Bijbehara	
6. Baramulla	6. Srinagar	
7. Srinagar		

APPENDIX D

ACCOMMODATION AVAILABLE

Different types of accommodation are available in Kashmir : comfortable and cheap hotels at Srinagar, Gulmarg and Pahalgam ; commodious house-boats on the Jhelum and the Valley lakes and spacious camping grounds at Pahalgam, Gulmarg, Sonamarg, Ganderbal etc. ; dak bungalows and rest houses, wherever they are located.

SRINAGAR

WHERE TO STAY AT SRINAGAR

1. *Hotels with European catering and other Arrangements :*

Nedou's Hotel, Hotel Token, Regina Hotel, Lake View Hotel, Park Hotel, Kashmir View Hotel, Hotel Savoy, Madan's Hotel, Standard Restaurant, Mount View Hotel, Callaw House.

2. *Hotels for Indians :*

Khalsa Hotel, Kashmir Hindu Hotel, Indian Muslim Hotel, Majestic Hotel, Bombay Guest House, Regal Hotel, Frontier Hotel.

3. *Boarding Houses run by :*

Mrs. Davis, Mrs. Amesbury, Mrs. Gatmall, Miss E. O'Conner, Mrs. Keays Byrne.

WHERE TO STAY AT NAGIN BAGH and NASIM BAGH

Hotels for Europeans :

1. Norfolk Hotel

2. King's Ley (Hotel and House Boats)
3. Tents at Nasim Bagh

GULMARG

WHERE TO STAY AT GULMARG

1. *Hotels with European catering Arrangements :*

Nedou's Hotel, Paradise Hotel, Tourist Hotel, Mount View Hotel, Regina Hotel, Park Hotel.

2. *Hotels for Indians :*

Khalsa Hotel, Imperial Hotel, Tourist Hotel.

3. *Boarding Houses run by :*

Miss E. O'Conner, Mrs. Gatmall, Mrs. Amesbury, Mrs. Flynn, Mrs. Baldwins, Mrs. Keays Byrne.

4. "Huts" and Tents*

PAHALGAM

WHERE TO STAY AT PAHALGAM

1. *Hotel with European arrangements :*

Plaza Hotel.

2. *Hotels for Indians :*

Pahalgam Hotel, Wazir Hotel, Khalsa Hotel.

3. *Houses and Tents :*

(Tents can be hired from one of the many agencies in Pahalgam. In fact visitors mostly prefer to reside in tents. There are five extensive camping grounds.)

*(NOTE : "Huts"—wooden bungalows—can be hired through the Divisional Engineer, Kashmir Division, Srinagar or through agencies in Gulmarg of Srinagar. Their rent varies according to the standard of equipment, from about Rs. 200 to Rs. 1,000 for the season.)

APPENDIX E

GENERAL INFORMATION

AMUSEMENTS IN SRINAGAR

1. *Srinagar Club*. With an Annexe at Nagin Bagh. Located on the bank of the Jhelum, near the Residency; caters chiefly for Europeans. Open throughout the year. Provided with assembly hall, six tennis courts etc.

2. *Amarsingh Club*. Located near Munshi Bagh. Patronised by His Highness. Very popular with Indian visitors and residents.

3. *Harrison Club*. Located behind Nedou's Hotel; open throughout the year.

4. *Cinemas*. Regal, Amrish and Palladium.

5. *Golf Courses*. Attached to Srinagar Club and Nedou's Hotel.

6. *Swimming and Lake trips*. At Gagribal and Nagin Bagh.

7. *The State Exhibition*. Held annually by the State during September.

Arts and crafts products of Kashmir displayed and sold. Very popular for its amusements.

CHURCHES, TEMPLES, MOSQUES IN SRINAGAR

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Protestant Church | } For Christians |
| 2. Roman Catholic Church | |

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---|-------------|
| 3. *Hari Parbat | } | For Hindus |
| 4. Shankaracharya | | |
| 5. Rugh Nath Temple | | |
| 6. Durga Temple | | |
| 7. Kali Asthapan | } | For Muslims |
| 8. Jumma Masjid | | |
| 9. Shah Hamdan Ziarat | | |
| 10. Mukdum Sahib's Ziarat | } | For Muslims |
| 11. Hazratbal Ziarat | | |
| 12. Gurdwaras | } | For Sikhs |
| 13. Chatti Badshahi | | |

BANKS IN SRINAGAR

1. Lloyds Bank Ltd. (Cox and Kings' Shipping Agency)
2. The Imperial Bank of India Ltd.
3. The Punjab National Bank Ltd.
4. The Punjab and Kashmir Bank Ltd.
5. Trader's Bank Ltd.
6. Federal Bank of India Ltd.
7. The Jammu and Kashmir Bank Ltd.

SMALL GARDENS IN SRINAGAR

1. *Munshi Bagh*. A chinar garden near Sonawar Bagh about a mile from 1st Bridge. The well-known All Saints' Church is located in this garden.

2. *Chinar Bagh*. Contains chinar-shaded encampment round which house-boats are moored on its banks. It is located near Dal Gate and extends far behind the Nedou's Hotel.

3. *Sheikh Bagh* Contains a small cemetery and Preparatory School.

*Permission for visiting the Hari Parbat Fort may be obtained from the Director, Visitors' Bureau, Srinagar.

4. *Kothi Bagh*. This old garden is almost replaced by nice agencies and provision stores over the Bund.

5. *Sonawar Bagh*. Now a reserved garden of His Highness.

6. *Partap Park*. A park near the 1st Bridge in front of Regal and Amrish cinemas.

7. *Harisingh Zenana Park*. A well kept Park near the site of the State Exhibition ; reserved for the use of women.

8. *Lal Mundi Garden*. Very well kept Park attached to the Museum, under the Agricultural Department.

PROMINENT FACTORIES IN SRINAGAR

1. Hadow's Carpet Factory.
2. Mitchell's Carpet Factory (the Oriental Carpet Factory).
3. Kailas Carpet Factory.
4. The Indo-Kashmir Carpet Factory.
5. Silk Weaving Factory.*
6. Shri Karan Singh Woollen Mills.
7. Kashmir Carpet Factory.

*Any person desiring to visit the Silk Factory must apply in writing to the Director of Sericulture for a pass, at least three days in advance of the intended visit, giving at the same time full name, permanent address, and address in Kashmir clearly written. The management of the Factory, on deciding whether the visit can be arranged, will inform the applicant, fixing a date and time for the visit.

Visiting hours are from 12 to 1 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays, excluding holidays.

PROMINENT HOSPITALS IN SRINAGAR

1. *Government Civil Hospital.* Biggest hospital in Srinagar, situated above First Bridge, on the bank of the Jhelum. Equipped with highly qualified staff, an X-ray apparatus and an antirabic centre.

2. *C. M. S. Hospital.* At the foot of Shankaracharya ; founded in 1865 by Dr. E. F. Neve. ²

3. *Kashmir Narsingh Home.* On Pratap Avenue, Civil Lines. For the benefit of European visitors, commissioned officers and their families.

4. *Diamond Jubilee Zenana Hospital.* Situated on the bank of the Jhelum below 6th Bridge, approached both by road and by water. Run by the Government, under the efficient supervision of a Lady Doctor.

5. *Civil Veterinary Hospital.* Located on the Exchange Road. Run by the Government, under highly qualified staff. Here animals are treated free of charge.

6. *National Hospital.* Founded by Sir N. Gopalaswami Aiyanger in 1939. Run by efficient staff.

7. *Tuberculosis Dispensary.* Situated below 3rd Bridge. Equipped with X-ray apparatus and run by qualified staff, under the Government.

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN SRINAGAR

1. *Colleges.* Sri Pratap Intermediate College, Amar Singh Degree College, D. A. V. College, Hindu College.

2. *Government Schools.* 3 High Schools, 2 Teachers' Training Schools for teachers of both sexes, and Basic and other schools.

3. C. M. S., Islamia, Hindu, National and other aided Schools.

4. Government Amar Singh Technical Institute.

5. *Day and Boarding Institutions.* Presentation Convent College, Burn Hall, Preparatory School.

Dentists

1. Dr. M. R. Soni.
2. Dr. Indu Bhusan.
3. Dr. P. Chandra.

FARES : CARS AND LORRIES

	I	II	III
Srinagar to Rawalpindi (Lorry Seat) and vice versa	14/8	13/-	12/-
Srinagar to Jammu etc. ...	"	"	"
Srinagar to Rawalpindi (Super bus seat) and vice versa	35/-	27/-	12/-
Srinagar to Jammu etc. ...	"	"	"
Srinagar to Rawalpindi (6 Seater Station Wag- gon Seat) and vice versa	40/- (front)	30/- (back)	...
Srinagar to Jammu, etc.	"	"	"
Srinagar to Rawalpindi or Jammu (4 Seater car seat) and vice versa ...	50/- (front)	40/- (back)	...

1. Luggage and goods on either route are charged at Rs. 6 per maund.

2. Car fares are exclusive of road toll in State territory which shall be paid by the passenger but lorry and special upper class buses' fares include road toll which shall be paid by the owner.

3. Each passenger in a lorry must be allowed 20 seers free, and in a car, 1 maund free.

TONGAS WITHIN SRINAGAR MUNICIPALITY

	I	II	III
Full Day of 9 hrs. ...	5/-	3/8	2/8
Half Day of 5 hrs. ...	3/-	2/-	1/8
To 4 Moghul Gardens and back ...	6/-	5/-	...
First Hour ...	-/14/-	-/11/-	-/8/-
Subsequent Hours ...	-/8/-	-/6/-	-/6/-
One-half Hour ...	-/8/-	-/6/-	...

MOTOR AND LORRY SUPPLYING COMPANIES
IN SRINAGAR

1. Government Motor Mail Service.
2. N. W. Railway Out Agency.
3. Lahore Kashmir Transport Company, Ltd.
4. Allied Charagh Din and Sons, Ltd.
5. Messrs. Sohan Lal and Sons.
6. Punjab Motor Company.
7. Imperial Motor Service.
8. Popular Motor Service.
9. Public Motor Service.
10. Victoria Motor Service.
11. Allied Bus Service.
12. United Motor Service.
13. Jubilee Motor Service.
14. Diamond Motor Service.
15. Durbar Bus Service Ltd.
16. Royal Durbar Motor Company.
17. Murree and Kashmir Carriers.

18. Express Motor Service.
19. Karan Bus Service, Ltd.

MOTOR REPAIRERS AND STOCKISTS OF MOTOR ACCESSORIES IN SRINAGAR

1. Popular Motor Works.
2. Northern Motor Works.
3. Bengal Motor Works.
4. Modern Workshop.
5. Standard Service Garage.

RADIO ENGINEERS IN SRINAGAR

1. Lyra India Company.
2. London Radio House.
3. Sparton Radio House.
4. Nanda Engineering Corporation.
5. Resco Radio House.

NOTE—Radio sets are hired at Rs. 2 per day.

WATCH-MAKERS IN SRINAGAR

1. Mohmud Yusuf, the Bund.
2. The Watch Hospital, I Bridge.
3. Ghulam Mohammad Kabuli, I Bridge.

DRY CLEANERS IN SRINAGAR

1. Nuway & Co, opposite Regal Cinema.
2. Vir & Co., I Bridge.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

KASHMIR FRUITS & VEGETABLES

<i>Fruits</i>	<i>When Available</i>
Cherries, Strawberries, Mulberries	May
Apricots, Green Almonds	June
Apricots, Pears, Peaches, Plums, } Apples (early), Green Almonds }	July

Pears, Peaches, Apples, Grapes (wine and table), Pomegr- nates, Green Walnuts and Dry Almonds	} August
Pears, Apples, Grapes, Pomegra- nates	} September
Apples and Pears	} November
<i>Vegetables</i>	<i>When Available</i>
Artichoke Asparagus Bhindi Beet Bhaji Carrot Brinjal Karam Celery Cabbage Ostahak Lettuce Knol-khol Radish Peas Leek Spinach Rhubarb Onion Tomato Potato Parsnip Melons Etc. Turnip Beans Etc.	} May to November

PROMINENT SEED FARMS

1. Government Model Farm, Shalimar Bagh.
2. Prakash Seed Farm, Shoru.
3. Dal View Seed Farm, Boulevard.

ARTS AND CRAFTS OF KASHMIR

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Embroidery. | 7. Gubba-making. |
| 2. Papier-machie. | 8. Paper-making. |
| 3. Carpets. | 9. Match-industry. |
| 4. Wood-carving. | 10. Copper work. |
| 5. Jewellery. | 11. Stone work. |
| 6. Silver-work. | 12. Curios etc., etc. |

SALIENTS IN THE HISTORY OF KASHMIR

<i>King</i>	<i>Approximate Date</i>
Asoka	... .. 250 B. C.
Kanishka	... .. A. D. 100
Mihirigula	... .. A. D. 500
Pravarsena	... .. A. D. 600

Lalitudiya	...	...	A. D.	750
Rainchan Shah	...	...	A. D.	1300
Sikandar	A. D.	1400
Zain-ul-Abdin	A. D.	1450
Akbar	A. D.	1600
Azim Khan	A. D.	1800
Ghulab Singh	A. D.	1850

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| Bellow, H. W. | ... | Kashmir and Kashgar. |
| Brinkman, H. | ... | Rifle in Kashmir. |
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