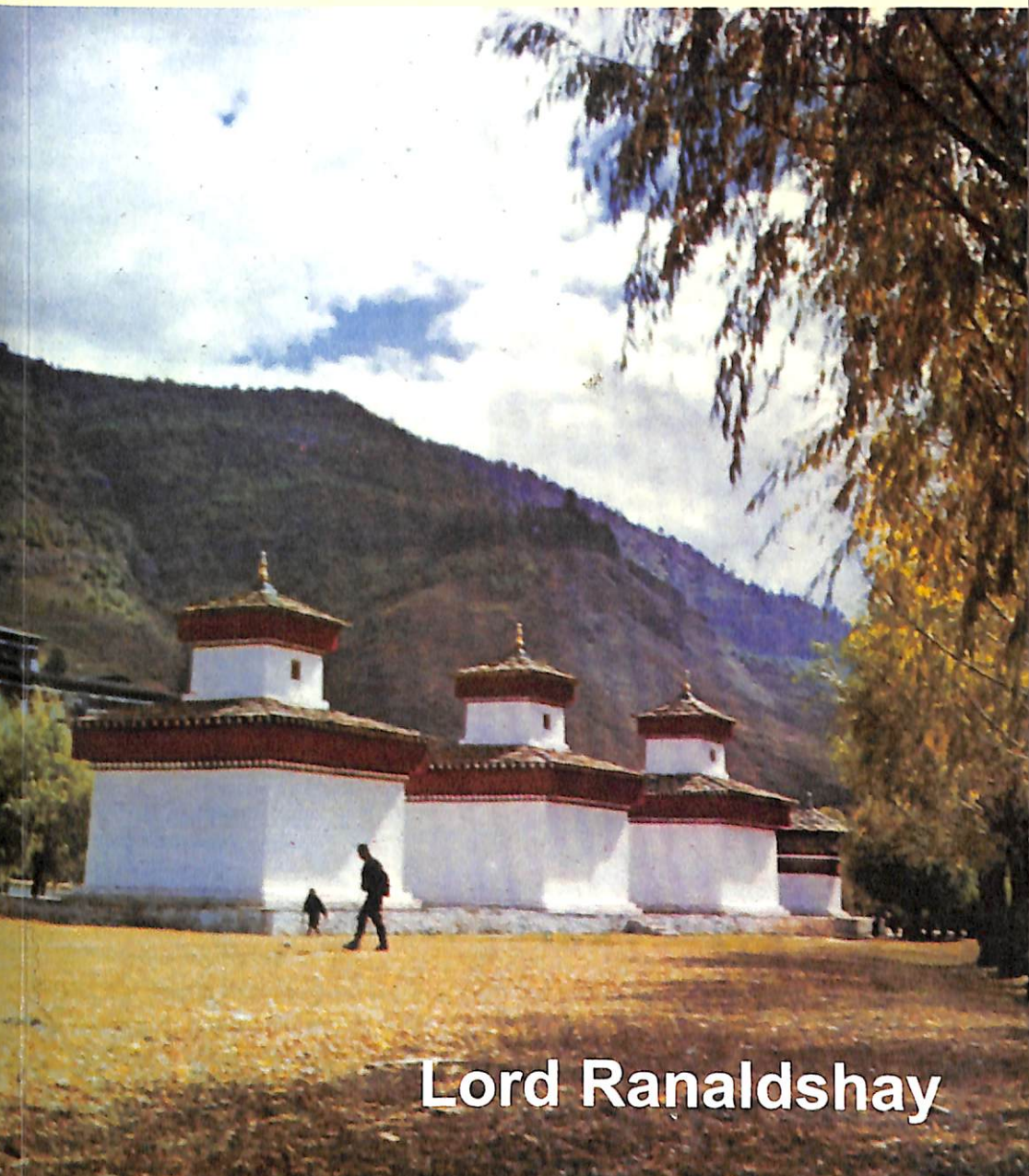


Lands of The Thunderbolt
Sikhim Chumbi &
Bhutan



Lord Ranaldshay

LANDS OF THE THUNDERBOLT

SIKHIM, CHUMBI & BHUTAN



By The
Earl of Ronaldshay
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Earl of Ronaldshay

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PREFACE TO THE NEW EDITION

“The traveller from Calcutta steams into Siliguri in the early morning, and if he is not too weary to exercise his powers of observation, he will at once find indications that he stands on the threshold of a different land.”

The Lilliputian, toy train begins its slow, meandering, often imperceptible rise to Darjeeling, a little sand thrown casually by a stocky man at the front to aid its slipping wheels on cold icy rails. That was 1923, but the scene remains little changed to this day. Its journey's end marks the base for Lord Ronaldshay's great adventures in the early twenties.

The eastern Himalayas have an immense luxuriance and variety. *“One is face to face with the enchanting forest of one's childhood dreams...”*

The author's journey is the forerunner of modern trekking in the Himalayas, a caravan of guides, cooks, helpers and porters. Moving each day to a new camp, it is a journey of anticipation, of what lies beyond the next hill or pass. The slow pace of trekking life, while observing the myriad of spectacles, still allows time for introspective thought, unbridled by normal constraints. It is perhaps no coincidence that the good humour and relaxed countenance of the hill people is linked to their great faith, a flamboyant but sometimes simplistic philosophy. For the peasant classes it is a blind belief, a direction and a path through the hardships of their environment. But this Buddhist calling is not yet unravelled for the analytical scholar.

Buddhism in India became corrupted by Tantric ideas as early as the 7th century. This was seen by some as degenerate and by others as a new doctrine, a new approach to an end of suffering. Its methods were so controversial that its influence waned, and

was overtaken; annihilated like a state of nirvana, a place of nothing.

"The devouring sword of Islam may have hastened the end..."

But Buddhism survived, propagated by Ashoka and taken across the Himalayas by Padma Sambhava, the great saint becoming Guru Rinpoche in Tibet. Our author seeks out these salient facts, posing seriously difficult questions and analysing the philosophical aspects in depth.

We follow his wanderings across Sikkim, Tibet and Bhutan in search of monasteries and mountain landscapes. The routes are stupendous, difficult and occasionally dangerous. Below Kangchenjunga, visible from any hillock, on the trail to Jongri, the difficulties cannot be underestimated. Pessimistic reports abound, but great humour too.

"We reached Jongri in mist, in mist we made our assault ... and in mist we left."

"... a giant tropical forest and a wet leech-bitten camp..."

"He exaggerated only a little," speaking of the trail to Jongri (Dzongri.)

Following in the footsteps of Bogle, Turner, Manning, Youngusband and other illustrious explorers, colonists and envoys, Ronaldshay ventures into Tibet along the Chumbi valley to Phari Dzong. His animated descriptions and likeable prose give a great insight into this place below the classic peak of Chomolhari.

"The elder learned that the meaning of the word Phari was 'the hill made glorious'. I was assured that it was merely a contraction of the word Phag-rhi, signifying 'pig hill'. It was open to us, consequently, to adopt which ever meaning appeared to us to be the more appropriate, and after picking

our way through the gutters of filth—fortunately at his time of the year frozen solid—and gazing into the grimy interiors of the dwelling places, we arrived at a unanimous conclusion upon the point.”

Crossing the Tremo La, we are taken into the mysterious land of the Bhutanese. Forewarned about the history and condition of the country, we avidly follow the explorer to the beautiful wooded valley of Paro. The book is full of perceptive prose and anecdotes of other travellers. An archery contest is underway near Paro between some unlikely characters.

“Amongst them we recognised the faces of many we had met, and in particular that of the Friar Tuck of Duggye Jong (Drukyel Dzong)...a portly and jovial figure as he strutted to and fro, making free use of a witty tongue...and Locksley had his counterpart in a skilled Bowman from Bumthang ...”

“With typical inconsequence Manning adds, without a pause, ‘I could not persuade them to give me any fish,’ “ when speaking of the natives of Paro some years earlier, thus giving us a clearer picture of the natives’ attitudes to foreign devils and vice versa indeed.

For anyone remotely interested in all things Himalayan, and those who enjoy a gripping read, this is a truly outstanding repertoire of stories, anecdotes and thought-provoking analysis.

Bob Gibbons

Siân Pritchard-Jones
Kathmandu 2004

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Ranjana

PREFACE

SOME explanation of the title which I have given to this volume is, perhaps, called for. The countries described are situated in the Eastern Himalayas on the northern borders of Bengal. They contain some of the most impressive mountain scenery in the world; and if their interest lay solely in their physical characteristics, they would be worthy of the homage of the most blasé traveller. Of Sikkim—the scene of the greater part of the excursions described in these pages—it has been said that it is probably the most mountainous country in the world; that within its small compass—it has an area of less than 3000 square miles—it rises in a tumult of ranges from 700 to 28,000 feet; that in a two hours' scramble one can descend from Alpine gentians to tropical bamboos; that the higher altitudes are ice and rock, the lower a wilderness of forest ridges and precipitous gorges, with seldom a level space and barely room for a footpath by the side of their torrent beds.¹

But the interest of these countries by no

¹ Mr. W. H. Buchan in *Blackwood's Magazine* for April 1912.

means lies solely in their scenery, magnificent though it is. They possess also an unusual human interest by reason of the curious lines on which the thought of their people has developed, and of the strange customs and practices to which that thought has given rise. The peculiar bent of their minds has been produced by the meeting of two fundamentally opposed ideas concerning the nature of things which, instead of rebounding when they met, coalesced. Those ideas were rationalism on the one hand and superstition on the other. The former was represented by the metaphysics of early Buddhism ; the latter by the demonolatry which, under the name of Bön-pa, passed for religion in primitive Tibet. It is true that the former had already undergone large changes as a result of contact with thought akin to that of the latter, before ever it penetrated the mountain regions ; but the process of coalescence was completed after it had done so, and it is only in these countries that the thought and practice which are the products of this process have survived.

The man who more than any other was responsible for this paradoxical combination of ideas was a Buddhist missionary known in India as Guru Padma Sambhava, and in Tibet as Guru Rimpoché. The story of his mission, during which were laid the foundations of the elaborately organised religion to which the term *lamaism* is

usually applied, is told hereafter. He became a power in the land, and one of the chief emblems of his might was the *vajrah*, or symbol of the thunderbolt of Indra. In Tibet the word *vajrah* became *dorjé*, and as time went on it became one of the most common of all the emblems associated with priestly power. It is almost always to be found among the objects on the altars in the temples. It is an essential object on the tables of the three priestly office-bearers whose duty it is to officiate at the temple services. The abbot or spiritual head of a monastery bears the title of Dorjé-lopon, "the wielder of the thunderbolt or sceptre." In Bhutan the title of the spiritual head of the country, known to the outside world as Dharma Raja, is Druk Gye-po, the meaning of which is the "Thunder king," that is to say, the king of the Drukpa or Thunderer sect of Buddhists; and his motto, engraved in the centre of his official seal, is *Bdag Druk Yin*, signifying "I am the Thunderer." And finally, Darjeeling, the name of the famous hill-station which was the starting-point of all the expeditions which form the subject matter of the following pages, is commonly said to be a corruption of Dorjé-ling, "the place of the thunderbolt," the name of a monastery which once stood on a well-known eminence in the modern town, now known as Observatory Hill. In the interests of historical accuracy I should, perhaps, add that I believe

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the commonly accepted explanation to be incorrect. A derivation seldom heard, but which I have the best of grounds for believing to be correct, is that which attributes the word Dorjé in the first half of Darjeeling to the name of a lama, Dorjé-rinzing, who founded the monastery which once stood on Observatory Hill. The shrine was subsequently removed to the Bhutia Basti, where it remains to this day; but the former site retained the name of "the place of Dorjé lama."

It is, however, immaterial to my present theme whether the true derivation is from "the place of the thunderbolt" or "the place of the lama named thunderbolt." Either theory bears witness to the fact that in lands in which symbols are at a premium the thunderbolt takes a prominent place. And in any flag or coat-of-arms designed for lamaism, in accordance with the traditions of heraldry, it would most assuredly appear as a conspicuous object. So much in explanation of the title.

The volume has been conceived as part of a larger whole which is designed to give some idea, not merely of the physical characteristics of the Indian empire, but of those subtler differences between East and West which are to be found in the thought and attitude towards life of its peoples. And from this point of view it is incomplete apart from its companion volumes. From a narrower point of view it may be regarded

as self-contained. That is to say, viewed simply as a narrative of travel in somewhat out-of-the-way countries of great natural charm, and among people whose strange characteristics give them an unusual interest, it is complete in itself and is intelligible without reference to either of its companion volumes.

It has become almost a convention that a preface to a volume of this kind should conclude with the author's acknowledgements to a variety of persons for various services. Where I have been indebted to others for information or for opinions, I have acknowledged my indebtedness in the text. Such acknowledgement as I feel to be appropriate to this preface I prefer to make in the form of a dedication. I dedicate this volume (without permission) to the Elder, the Cavalry Officer, and the Sardar Bahadur, the almost constant and altogether delightful companions of the rambles of which these pages are the record.

But one word more in explanation of the invocation with which this volume opens. According to an ancient legend a request went forth from the famous University of Nalanda to the great Buddhist masters throughout India, from the mountains of Kashmir to the palm groves of Ceylon, that they should compete in composing a hymn in praise of Manjusri, the god of Wisdom. Five hundred learned teachers

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CHAPTER I

THE COMING OF SUMMER

WINTER in Bengal is short-lived. It would scarcely be recognised by the denizen of a temperate clime as winter at all. The landscape is studded with green trees. A warm sun shines daily from a cloudless sky. The mean temperature varies from 65° in January, when it is at its lowest, to 86° in May and June. And by the month of February Dame Nature is busy with her annual spring-cleaning. She plies her duster and broom vigorously among the trees, brushing off dead leaves which linger on after the new foliage has appeared and scattering them broadcast over the ground. For this reason spring is the nearest approach to an English autumn of which Bengal is capable.

But Dame Nature is not content with a mere superficial dusting. Donning her spring garments she takes up her palette and brush and she proves herself a wonderful artist. Bougainvillias and bauhiniyas she paints purple and mauve. She is lavish, too, with varying shades of yellow; but her most brilliant achievements are in full-blooded tints ranging from crimson to scarlet. Early in February she is at work on the cotton tree. She

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makes a clean sweep of the leaves, and in their place covers the spreading branches with large blossoms of vivid red the brilliance of whose colouring is accentuated by the absence of foliage which she has arranged. And scarcely has she started unfolding the blossoms on the cotton tree when she turns her attention to its rival, the palash or "flame of the forest," which she causes to burst into glorious flower. To the scarlet of its great clusters of flowers she adds a touch of ruddy gold, taking her idea, one may suppose, from the success which she has achieved in blending those colours beneath the rind of the blood orange. Her work, as always, is a wonderful harmony; and if the flower of the cotton tree seems to have borrowed its hue from the burning flush of the sky at sunset, the flame of the forest seems equally to reflect the burnished gold of a resplendent dawn.

In the meanwhile other influences are at work. About the time that she starts painting the forest, the wind veers round towards the south, rapidly losing all pretence of sharpness, and by March is blowing steadily from that direction. The maximum shade temperature creeps up to 90° F., and during March and April jumps frequently to over 100° F. The mean temperature during March climbs from 76° F. to 84° F., and by the end of the month it is for only a brief period during the twenty-four hours that the mercury drops a degree or two below 75° F. If summer has not yet come, winter at least has gone.

The man from Central and Northern India

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uneasy stirring among the trees. A cloud of dust scurries across the plain, and the storm sweeps down, driven madly along on a gale of wind. For a time the whole atmosphere is in a state of wild disturbance. Inky clouds rumbling ominously, and spitting jagged darts of flame, pour forth a deluge of water and then pass on again. The wind dies away and the rain ceases. For a short time there is a wonderful clearness in the air, and a fragrant smell rises from the ground. But these things are of short duration. The air becomes rapidly warm again and heavy with moisture which it drinks up from the saturated soil, and in the morning the sun burns and smites fiercely once more as if no storm had been.

In April, as if tired of so much fiery decoration, Dame Nature is at work again sweeping the red blossoms completely from the cotton tree and replacing them with a coating of fresh green. But she is far too great an artist not to appreciate the appropriateness of such colouring to the burning heat of the season which is rapidly approaching, and before long under her deft fingers the Gold Mohur flames fiercely into flower. One has little hesitation in proclaiming this to be her masterpiece. There is nothing that can surpass it in wealth of blossom or in richness of hue. And as if conscious of having reached the zenith of her fame she casts aside her palette and brush ; and one becomes conscious that in place of the garment of spring she has almost imperceptibly changed into the hot and heavy cloak of summer.

Whatever opinion a man may hold of the agreeableness or otherwise of a Bengal spring,

there can be no two opinions of the long and burdensome days of a Bengal summer. Before the sun has climbed far on its daily path one shuts up one's house, closing doors and windows against the entrance of the hot suffocating air. One labours grimly at one's desk, curbing one's irritation as one's papers scatter beneath the stirring of the close air caused by the electric fan. As one pants and perspires one thinks longingly of the cool breezes of the distant hills. And sooner or later, if one is free to do so, one follows in the flesh the nimbler flight of one's errant thoughts.

CHAPTER II

ACROSS THE PLAINS

A FAMOUS master of dialectic once found it necessary to point out that in all discussion it was reasonable to postulate, on the part of the parties to a controversy, a knowledge of such elementary factors in the case as might be regarded as being axiomatic. "If, for example," he explained, "I describe the Fen country of the Eastern Counties of England as a flat country, I take it for granted that those to whom I address my observation, understand that the statement is subject to such qualification as is due to the fact of the earth being round."

Subject to the same qualification it may be said with perfect truth that for thousands of square miles the Bengal landscape spreads itself in flat monotony to the farthest limits of sight. A man who had lived in the deltaic tracts of Bengal all his life could not possibly know the meaning of the word mountain, except by means of what the logicians call "derivative knowledge." It is true that the plain is an inclined one, but the inclination is so slight as to be almost negligible. Calcutta, which is distant eighty-six miles from the sea, is about twenty feet above

mean sea-level, and during a journey of over three hundred miles north from the capital to Siliguri one rises less than four hundred feet.

It is difficult to discover in these three hundred miles any feature which is of assistance in painting the landscape upon one's memory. There is neither hill nor rock, nor, indeed, so much as a stone, to dispute the unchallenged ascendancy of the rich alluvial soil. During the early summer the whole land would present to the eye an unruffled expanse of burnt sienna, were it not for an abundance of semi-tropical vegetation spread in irregular patches all over the scene. Bamboos, palms, plantains, mangoes, banyans, and a host of other trees, clad sumptuously with foliage and in some cases with flowers, flourish in dense clumps—the product of a rich soil and of a languorous and vapour-laden atmosphere.

As in the case of almost all rural scenes in India, the predominant note is one of untidiness. One is left with the impression that here Nature is still rudely defiant of the efforts of man. His handiwork is apparent certainly—one sees it in the drab fields that presently will bring forth an abundance of rice, and in the picturesque collections of fragile and unambitious buildings in which he dwells. But all the time one knows that he is there on sufferance. The whole landscape is much nearer to Nature—primeval, untutored Nature—than an agricultural landscape in Europe, for example. The exuberant vitality of the great life principle of Nature lurks amongst the dense thickets, ever responsive to the creative caress of the warm moisture-laden air. The

accustomed to the stark aridity of his own country marvels at the wide diffusion of green ; and mindful of the scorching temperatures of the lands from which he hails, where it is nothing unusual for the thermometer to register 120° in the shade, is apt to scoff at the comparative mildness of Bengal. He does not appreciate the significance of an atmospheric humidity which for a brief period only at the driest time of the year—April to May—falls below an average of 80 per cent, and which even at such times at any moment may—and, in fact, frequently does—rise above 90 per cent.

It is this burden of moisture that gives to the land its wonderful viridity, with its deceptive appearance of freshness. Its woods, so attractive to look at, become the haunts of brazen-tongued birds that punctuate the heavy hours during the heat of the day with their monotonous and exasperating cries. The too-well-named copper-smith hammers away on his single metallic note, and the brain-fever bird asks an eternal question in maddening ascending crescendo. And beyond the delusive shade of the trees the sun casts a fierce glare despite the abundance of green.

During these months the wind blowing from the Bay of Bengal passes like a warm breath across the land and piles itself up against the mountains in the far north. This process is not carried on without interruption. There are moments when it seems to be hurled back on its track, causing violent storms known familiarly as nor'-westers. The drowsy stillness of the afternoon is suddenly broken. There is a rustle and

it hangs suspended horizontally some feet above the ground, embedded in the *trunk* of a pipal tree which has wrapped itself about it and now holds it aloft in an iron grip. With such examples before one's eyes one realises why it is that there are few historic buildings in Bengal.

There is undoubtedly a curious fascination attaching to these vast spaces with their chequered green surfaces. To the people inhabiting them they make an immense appeal. For the great Bengali poet of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries there is no land that can compare with them for natural beauty. These limitless level spaces fill him with an exuberant joy. He writes with a love amounting to passion of "the unobstructed sky filled to the brim, like an amethyst cup, with the descending twilight and peace of the evening," and he speaks with reverential wonder of "the golden skirt of the still, silent noonday" spreading over the whole immensity of the landscape "without let or hindrance."¹

But it is not of these lands of great spaces that I am now about to write. The chapters that follow rest upon a very different background—a crumpled world of towering mountains, the very antithesis of the unbroken surfaces of the Bengal plains. And these few sentences have been written for the reason that there is one beauty of the plains and another of the mountains, and that the beauty of the one provides just the foil required to enhance the beauty of the other.

¹ Letter from Sir Rabindranath Tagore to a friend dated September the 22nd, 1894.

CHAPTER III

A GREAT ASCENT

THE traveller from Calcutta steams into Siliguri in the early morning, and if he is not too weary to exercise his powers of observation he will at once find indications that he stands upon the threshold of a different world. The monotony of the country through which he has been passing is interrupted. It is interrupted most palpably by the appearance of a new type of humanity. Men and women with strongly marked Mongolian features and wearing more ample and more picturesque garments make their appearance upon the scene. But there are other things less pronounced, perhaps, but nevertheless perceptible, whose cumulative effect is to arouse an expectation of change. Siliguri is palpably a place of meeting. Rolling stock of two distinct types stand in rows on the railway sidings. Large sheds with corrugated iron roofs overshadow the usual mat and thatch house of the Bengali peasant, suggesting the temporary storage of produce in process of transportation from one region to another. Collections of outspanned bullock-carts add to the impression. The discovery that here the metre gauge system ends and the two-

foot gauge of the Darjeeling-Himalayan railway begins, confirms all that these things hint at.

Presently the morning haze which dims the horizon to the north assumes vague forms. It seems to be crystallising in masses of dark and blurred outline. Interest, dulled by the heat and jaded by the monotony of the past, revives. One steps into a railway carriage which might easily be mistaken for a toy, and the whimsical idea seizes hold of one that one has stumbled accidentally into Lilliput. With a noisy fuss out of all proportion to its size the engine gives a jerk—and starts. The buildings of Siliguri, iron-roofed sheds, railway workshops of brick, stacks of timber, and here and there a one-storied bungalow resting in mid-air upon an under-structure of substantial piles, straggle along on either side of the miniature track until they are brought to an abrupt standstill by the broad bed of the Mahanadi river. As one puffs along at something over ten miles an hour, the amorphous shapes in front of one take on clearer definition, and before long stand out as giant tree-clad spurs of the outer Himalaya. Cultivation merges into forest of densely packed timber trees festooned with creepers.

Six miles from Siliguri we pull up at Sukna, a small station buried in forest at the foot of a wall of mountains. We have risen a hundred and thirty feet in the six miles without noticing it; from Sukna onwards, we are climbing strenuously for forty miles, in the course of which we scale close upon seven thousand feet of rugged mountain. No special mechanical device such as

CHAPTER IV

THE RIM OF THE AMPHITHEATRE

OUR baggage packed and shouldered by the sturdy Bhutia women who obligingly undertake the duties of pack animals, nothing remained but to grasp our staves and set foot on the tortuous mountain path which we had decided to follow. An outstanding feature of the eastern Himalayas is the immense luxuriance and variety of their vegetation. Along the valley bottoms less than a thousand feet above sea-level tropical growths flourish. From this one may pass to the subtropical zone and on again through the temperate to an alpine region running up to the eternal snows themselves. The watershed of the range along which we were about to travel varies from eight to twelve thousand feet in height, and its wooded slopes, if I might believe the Elder who spoke with all the authority conferred by actual experience, would be studded with splendid specimens of different varieties of the great tree rhododendron which in April and May paints the forest scarlet, crimson, and yellow, and of the towering magnolia resplendent with its star-like blossoms of waxy white.

Throughout the first day we travelled some-

times on foot, sometimes on the stocky little ponies of the country, along the southern slopes of the range a little below the watershed, spending the night in a comfortable wooden bungalow at Jorepokri—"the two ponds"—rather more than twelve miles out from Darjeeling.

These southern slopes facing the steaming plains are clad with dense forest, the characteristics of which are peculiar; yet one finds oneself being gradually assailed with the curious sensation of having seen them before. The large timber trees throw out gnarled and many-forked branches. Trunk and branches alike are heavily festooned with clinging, beard-like moss and are much intertwined with sinuous, creeping growths. Among these sombre surroundings Nature, in so far as she expresses herself in sound at all, does so in harsh and monotonous tones. Vast numbers of tree frogs rasp out a raucous metallic buzz, while the birds pipe shrill and staccato notes. The whole effect is eerie, and with the realisation that this is so, memory suddenly flashes into consciousness. One is face to face with the enchanted forest of one's childhood's dreams—the home of sprites and witches pictured for us by the bizarre fancy of Hans Andersen and Grimm and by the skilful hands of Arthur Rackham and M. Edmund Dulac.

From Jorepokri the track runs to the populous village of Simāna-basti and then drops a thousand feet to a saddle in the range a short distance above the source of the Little Rungeet. From this point it rises steeply again for six miles to Tonglu, a bungalow prettily situated at an altitude of ten thousand feet.



Plate 3.

WOMEN OF THE HILLS.

"Sturdy Bhutia women who obligingly undertake the duties of pack animals."

CHAPTER V

HISTORY OR STORY ?

SIDDARTHA GAUTAMA, usually spoken of simply as Buddha, is unquestionably one of the outstanding figures of the world. The story of his life, depicting, as it does, a human soul awakened suddenly to the inexplicability of human existence, girding fiercely against the narrow limitations of human understanding and struggling desperately after an intelligible solution of the problems with which it is hedged around, is one which is profoundly affecting and constitutes a human document unsurpassed in interest in the annals of mankind.

Curiously enough, an attempt has been made to read into his life-history an Indian version of the ubiquitous solar myth ; to assume in place of the actual incidents of an outstanding career a skilful weaving into the life of a very ordinary person of the threads of the almost universal allegory of the Sun - God. Such a theory is, surely, absurdly far - fetched — the outcome of the desire of a certain methodical type of mind to reduce every ancient expression of the religious impulses of mankind to the dead level of a common denominator ; and I reject it utterly. For me the Buddha of story lived.

And why should he not have lived? Men with minds akin to his have existed in India in all ages and are to be found there at the present day—men who, thinking on the same lines as Buddha thought, experience the same impulses and act in very much the same way. In western lands Ramkrishna Paramahansa, the saintly ascetic who dwelt in the temple at Dakineshwar on the outskirts of Calcutta, and who died only in the year 1886, would have been as unlooked for as Siddartha Gautama. But in India such men have at all times been numerous. When a young college student, Narendra Nath Dutt, sat at the feet of Ramkrishna and in due course, discarding the garments and pursuits of a conventional career, went forth as Swami Vivekenanda in quest of truth, he excited veneration but no surprise. These things are part and parcel of the life of India. At Belur Math, the headquarters of the Ramkrishna Mission on the banks of the Hughli, I met a young man with the shaven head and in the yellow robes of the order. He had come down from the *ashram* of Mayavati, a hermitage devoted to the study and practice of Advaita (monistic) Vedanta, situated on a remote hill-top in the Himalayas, where he was living an austere life as head of the *ashram*. He was an M.A. of the Calcutta University. Examples might be multiplied indefinitely.

It is no doubt true that the story of the life of Gautama, in so far as it is recorded in the Pali and Sanskrit texts at all, is largely mythical. It is interspersed with miraculous happenings and has been fitted into a mythological framework

constructed at a later date to square with the ingenious but wholly fanciful hypotheses of the later Buddhist theologians. But to relegate the story to the realms of pure fiction on this account would be absurd. Amongst an illiterate people the most extravagant beliefs spring up like weeds around the lives of those who, for one reason or another, excite their interest and fire their imagination. I have myself witnessed such miracles in the making. The simplicity of the process is amazing and from some points of view distinctly disconcerting, for it necessarily stimulates scepticism and places a discount upon faith. It was glaringly in evidence in connection with the campaign or mission—it is difficult to decide which is the more appropriate word—inaugurated by a now famous figure, that of Mr.—known to the masses of India as Mahatma—Gandhi in the year 1920.

Regarded from one point of view his campaign, which came to be known by the title “non-violent non-coöperation,” might be looked upon simply as a political campaign against the Government. His avowed object was the obtaining of *swaraj*, a term popularly interpreted as deliverance in a political sense, *i.e.* from alien rule, but in origin a Vedic term signifying rather deliverance in the sense in which that word has at all times been so widely employed in India by her philosophers and theologians. I do not pause here to discuss the matter further from this particular point of view. It is unlikely that the illiterate masses, over whom Mr. Gandhi obtained a quite remarkable influence, asked themselves what was the precise object