EDITORIAL

The War

Comment upon modern war is an occupation of singular difficulty because it demands an orientation of mind, and in war-time mental horizons are given to few. Even the bare recording of fact is an enterprise not lightly to be undertaken nowadays. In the wars of the past news was rare and dispatches enjoyed a remarkable prestige; nowadays news is everywhere and the mind is battered by an innumerable army of facts, and in addition directed or misdirected by a volume of conjecture and speculation. Comment or record therefore must perhaps yield to impression.

The first quarter of 1941 has produced events which are sufficiently astonishing. Most in the eye of the world perhaps has been the series of victories gained by British forces in Cirenaica, Libya and Abyssinia. The general story of these victories is familiar to all; the details as yet can be known only to the few. What emerges from the general picture as presented to us is that new methods of war are firmly rooted in old principles. Surprise, economy of force, offensive action, the acceptance of calculated risks—many phrases which in peace seemed so dull in the pages of military manuals, or which in preparing for war amidst peace conditions seem too obvious to demand detailed thought, take on now a life and force which should convince the dullest of their importance. Thought is everyone's business because upon thought depends intelligent and living training. For an example of the results of training no one need look further than Egypt or Abyssinia.

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Germany

We are almost too far from Europe, too much removed from opportunity of weighing the evidence to form any opinion of what may be happening there. The German attempt to invade England has not yet begun though the spokesmen of His Majesty's Government continue to place it before the public as an ever-present possibility. Germany has subdued a Balkan country and has been resisted, short of appeal to arms at the moment of writing, by Yugo-Slavia.

In her example alone Yugo-Slavia has deserved well of a battered Europe.

"Drang nach Osten" has long been a cliché of every survey of German policy during the early years of this century. It now appears possible that this cliché may become a strategic fact. If this should happen Russia's attitude is a matter for speculation. This word is used advisedly. Someone has spoken of the long winter of Russia's dark internal policy, and her foreign policy shows no summer clearness. Two speculations however may perhaps be made. The first is that Bolshevism and Nazism have nothing more in common than a superficial similarity of method. The second entails an anecdote. It was over a Black Sea question that Princess Lieven—according to Creevey—singularly failed to teach Metternich to talk Greek. It appears unlikely that Hitler, less talented than that charming lady though perhaps as loquacious, will succeed in teaching Stalin to talk German should a similar subject enter the conversation.

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Italy

The position of Italy is peculiar in the extreme. There seems to be little doubt that the morale of her people is deteriorating but it is premature to expect any general collapse as long as there is any hope that Germany can restore the situation. It is reasonable to suppose, too, that Italian morale has received or will receive a stimulant (though scarcely a tonic) from the Gestapo. Italy at the moment seems to have sunk into a position of complete subservience to Germany. Her much-boasted colonial empire now seems to await a tawdry Gibbon; her troops in Greece suffer continuous defeat; one action with the Royal Navy has resulted in bitter losses to her fleet. It seems that only considerable military successes can bolster up Italian morale to the point of becoming an effective ally to Germany. Where their successes are to be sought is probably a matter of profound importance to Mussolini and a considerable factor in German planning for the late spring and summer.

It appears now that a certain number of German armoured units have arrived in Tripolitania. It is reported that large numbers of Germans have entered French North Africa. These happenings open an interesting field for speculation. To reinforce weakness is an un-Germanic proceeding, and yet the Mediterranean and the shores around it may yet be the decisive theatre of this war. The deciding factor may yet be sea-power.

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Sea-Power

Before the outbreak of the present war there was much argument concerning sea-power. The development of air forces, some argued, had changed all that. Some pinned their faith upon capital ships and some upon light craft; disputes raged, and on the subject of cruisers alone a whole literature was written.

The course of events in the present war has somewhat confounded the prophets who foretold the passing of sea-power based upon the heavy surface ship. Yet while the heavy surface ship still remains the pre-dominant element in sea-power our views concerning that conception have broadened. Sea-power means command of the sea, and that phrase means that he who possesses command of the sea may use it as a route for his armies and his trade and deny its use to the enemy. To do this demands supremacy not only on the surface of the sea, but also under the waters and in the air above them. It is this triple aspect of the meaning of sea-power that demands careful thought and it is this which makes so complex that particular phase of naval warfare upon which the Empire entered last February, and which has been called the Battle of the Atlantic.

The Prime Minister drew attention to the vital importance of the result of this conflict. That it will be successful none can doubt. That its successful issue may be the foundation upon which future great land offensives may be built is a legitimate forecast. And finally the course and methods of this long naval campaign may furnish a future Mahan with the point of departure for a fresh book upon sea-power and its relation to history.

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The U. S. A.

The passing of the Lease and Lend Bill may have incalculable consequences. Its passing was an astonishing demonstration of the fact that in America Government, Opposition and the mass of the people have decided that the cause of the Empire and her Allies is also theirs. It means that the U.S.A. has decided to accept the risk of being drawn into war. Few things show more clearly the importance of this action by the U.S.A. than Axis reactions. These admit the enormous aid which America now offers to the Democracies; they also claim that this aid will come too late. The conclusion is that the Axis fears that American aid may be decisive. This fear may powerfully influence German strategy towards attempting all means to force a quick decision.

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Books in War

That the review pages in this issue of the Journal have shrunk to one indicates that books are now slower in reaching India and that reviewers, amidst a press of other business, have little leisure for reading. Yet the fact that new books are rarer should only set us searching again amongst the old, and the fact that leisure is rare should not encourage us to discard books altogether.

Reading indeed has a peculiar importance for those who are training for war. Training itself draws its most real vitality from the imagination, and imagination is best stimulated by experience or reading. Experience is not the portion of every one, and so military reading is of great importance. It is therefore the more unfortunate that military reading should often be so uncommonly dull.

That this is so is perhaps the fault of our approach. A desire to study the thoughts and doings of "Great Captains" so often leads to vast compilations of fact, written in many volumes, and apparently with a pen of lead. There is, however, an alternative and that is to forsake the Great Captains for a time in favour of the lesser Captains who served them, and whose knapsacks very often held surprisingly fluent pens if no Marshals' batons. The diarists of many wars are full of valuable material: descriptions of minor affrays, of administrative successes and failures, and of the atmosphere of war. They date, but they are valuable for while methods of war change, war and its chief instrument, the human being, change very little.

The diarists and novelists of the last war are familiar enough. It is perhaps in earlier wars that research pays best. The diaries and journals of Sir Harry Smith, of Kincaid of the Rifle Brigade, of Harris, and of Sergeant Bourgoyne are in most libraries. They are full of interest, and lead on to the campaigns of the Peninsular War. That campaign has nowadays a peculiar interest since the European situation at that time so strongly resembled that which confronts us to-day.

Other campaigns, which produced diarists whose works are fairly readily available, were those of Marlborough. To read of Marlborough's wars may seem to some to be unnecessary antiquarianism. Yet the methods of Marlborough have a great relevance to the situations of to-day. Strong places and flanks have re-appeared in Warfare, and Marlborough's methods of basing highly mobile manœuvre upon strong points, and of besieging or turning those of the enemy have a strangely modern application.

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The Far East

The Far Eastern crisis has for the moment died down, and tension has to some extent relaxed. It should not, however, be assumed that the Japanese have abandoned their ambitions in the Far East. The reinforcement of British land and air forces in Burma and Malaya has left no doubt as to the attitude of Great Britain. It must now be clear to the Japanese leaders that Great Britain will fight if necessary, and has the means to do so. The realisation of this fact must give them food for thought. Not even the most ardent exponent of the new order in Asia can be blind to the fact that Japan is in no position to undertake an attack on British possessions in the Far East, with the added possibility of armed American intervention. Economically Japan is in a poor condition; the China War is by no means finished. The question must also arise in Japanese minds as to how far she is allowing herself to be used by Germany. The promised invasion of England has not yet materialised and the days of the Italian Empire are numbered. Perhaps Mr. Matsuoka has gone to Berlin to discuss these questions with the senior Axis partner. In any case whatever decisions are reached, an attempt at a "lightning blitz" against Singapore would seem now to be impossible, and on the other hand a deliberately staged attack on Burma after the occupation of Thailand would require large forces, and it is questionable whether these are immediately available.

During the last three months interest in the Far East has centred round the territorial dispute between Thailand and French Indo-China. The available French forces were unable to prevent the Thais from crossing the frontiers and Japanese mediation has finally imposed a solution on both sides, which contrary to all expectations, favours Indo-China. Whether the Japanese are "keeping something up their sleeve" remains to be seen, but it is difficult to believe that there is no ulterior motive behind this arbitrary settlement of the dispute.

Plans for British and American aid to China have gone forward. Mr. Matsuoka has hinted that this may lead to Japan invoking the third clause of the Tripartite Pact, which would automatically bring her into the war. This is probably bluff, but the fact should not be disregarded that the inability of the Japanese Army and Navy to terminate the China "incident" is an extremely sore point which, if irritated might lead to a situation where the extremists would obtain control, and in their rage turn on those who are supporting their bitterest enemy.

The Articles in this Number

"PERSIAN TWILIGHT"—Verlaine wrote a poem containing the lines; "If fit entiere La Campagne I'Egypie. Austerlitz, Iéna le Virent."

John Holland, it appears, has seen Persia amidst other theatres of war. He remembers, describes, reflects and comments.

"THOSE ILL-STARRED HORNS"—Refer to the Journal for January, 1941, Page 74, and balance the arguments.

"FINANCIAL RAMBLINGS IN RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT"—Policy was described by a 19th Century English Statesman as blackmail levied by a fool upon the unforeseen. Our contributor, in terms of domestic finance, disproves this statement.

"COMMISSIONS FROM THE RANKS"—A singular illustration of the Napoleonic principle "La Carriere ouvert aux talents."

"LEARNING HINDUSTANI"—An article which should be useful to many and interest all.

"A BLIND MAN SAT DOWN"—A story which has a beginning, an ending, a moral and much acute observation.

"CAIRO CONVERSATION"—"Malbrouch S'en va-t-en guerre." First impressions.

"BURMESE DAYS"—The author says, "the country and people are among the most fascinating I have ever seen." One may well believe him.

"O'REGAN AT WAR"—Further experiences of a character with whom readers will be familiar.

"FLOATING DOWN THE INDUS"—A Suggestion for Ten Days' Leave.

PERSIAN TWILIGHT

By John Helland

The horizon boiled and trembled up in heat to the wan skies: the mirage, like a lake of purest blue water, dragged the parched traveller ever forward, forward to nothing; the scalded train gasped to uneasy rest beside the mud walls of Khaniqin. Passengers, faces grey with dust, hands grimed with soot, dropped from the train, turned their strained eyes to the hills and scanned the white road to Russia slapped down, it seemed, by the Great Provider, on the close-bitten grass of those Persian hills.

It was 1920; Persia was then a virgin field to us British for exploration. So the passengers were merchants and railway experts seeking concessions, with but one soldier, a British Captain, who stood now, on the border of Mesopotamia and Persia, gazing thoughtfully at the road, wondering how the little army fared as it dangled and swayed hither and thither about the Caspian at the end of that five hundred miles, that tenuous thread of road.

Our Captain spent a few days at Khaniqin, in tents dug four feet deep down into sandy earth, to escape the searing heat of May in Iraq, among clouds of flies and mosquitoes, and in company with snakes. He heard talk of concessions for a railway from Khaniqin, to scar across and across the faces of the mountain ranges, to dash straight along the plateaux and to drop into ancient Teheran. The speakers seemed to him callow: he wondered whether their serious purpose would outlast the climate and outface the wily, dilatory East. He pondered vaguely whether concessions depended on prestige and, if they did, then on what did prestige depend? He had an idea that money could not buy it, for he had seen a good deal of the wealth of the East to which no honour was paid. It seemed to him that with a nation, as with a man, respect was paid to honesty of aim and to the will and the power to achieve that aim.

Would these railwaymen get their concessions?

At 4-30 one morning he assembled a small band of odds and ends of British soldiers, signallers and mortar gunners, before a convoy of four lorries. He told them what to do if the Kurds descended on them to loot and kill. About all they could do was to

jump out, if they got the chance, and shoot—and, finally, be killed; but this last eventuality did not occur to them. It seldom does occur to a soldier as long as his belly is full and he has a football in his kit.

The lorries chugged slowly along the ribbon of road for a few miles over grassy downland towards the hills. The curse of day, the sun, rose and scorched the hoods and sides of the vehicles. After many halts to cool, the convoy reached the foot of the Paitak Pass. Ahead, the jagged hills rose sharply up before it.

With a loud, challenging roar the gallant old Peerless lorries charged at the newly-made, stony track, their solid tyres crashing from rock to rock. Soon, like ants on the hillside, they were seeking their way back and forth on the slow, zigzag climb up the the first giant's stride on to the first great plateau of Persia.

To the Commander of the little convoy, the whole world lay behind, and nothing before. He felt that, once over this steep scarp with the flat, glittering deserts of Arabia hidden from him, he would have no more concern with humanity than have the inhabitants of the Moon. The air-castles of a British-Indian Army stood about the Caspian: unknown and unimagined creatures were all around in the vast hills and between his four lorries and those castles.

The road was wobbly, with large boulders sticking up out of its gritty surface; the lorries clattered and jerked till his teeth nearly fell out and the constant din almost deafened him. At last the convoy stopped at the top of the pass where, in the shade, there still lay a streak of winter's snow. The men plunged their hot arms shoulder-deep into it.

Onwards they bounced and jerked into Karind, a sparse enough, solitary enough little place, but in a glorious setting.

Looking over the grassy plains from Karind through a gorge in the black hills, the soldier gazed raptly at the Koh-i-Noor, sparkling white in its cloth of snow, immense, symmetrical and immaculate. It had revealed itself suddenly and he had gasped with surprise just as he had gasped at his first sight of the Taj Mahal through its big, red archway.

As day followed day, the little party chugged steadily forward, meeting here and there with a friendly welcome from a few British and Indian soldiers in small posts on the Lines of Communication. Bumping along the hard road, they came upon Kermanshah, menaced by a great black crag of a mountain, but a cool, fresh spot: white and green poplars rustling and winking like sequins in the

breeze: yellow roses all about: little streams hung with green, grassy banks and tortoises flopping in and out of the crystal water.

"And this delightful herb whose tender green
Fledges the river's lip on which we lean. . . ."

In the bazar, the shopkeepers in their gloomy shops looked hardly earthly from the contrasted pallor of their opium-dried faces. The felt hat trade was flourishing: everywhere men were pounding the loathsome seeming mass of liquid felt into stone or wooden moulds. I do not suppose that that trade goes on now with Shah Reza Khan's new orders for the people's headdress, unless the always unruly Kurds still wear their big, top-heavy, full-bellied black felts.

He stood before the great dark rock at Bisithun where Darius commemorates for ever, to eternal shame, his devilish cruelty, by having carved thereon his own brutal effigy and, before it, the figures of twelve kings, whose eyes he had caused to be put out. Darius, in his pride, set up a memorial so that all ages might wonder at his power: to this British soldier, Darius, of whom he had known but little before, had blackened his fame as a warrior by wanton cruelty to helpless prisoners. Only that had the carving at Bisithun achieved: only that will it ever now achieve, the revenge of blinded kings.

Piercing the next high range through the Aveh Pass they ran into Ab-i-garm, place of warm waters. Then on and on to Hamadan, much like Kermanshah, but in more open country. Here the gold dust glittered in the rills and tortoises bathed in precious metal.

These Persian towns are blessed things. One strives through the heat, the glare of the road and the monotony of the hills sparsely clad with grass, rounds a corner, and there is the "strip of herbage strown" and, beyond it, leafy and refreshing, the Persian town. Those who have not known the great heat, the torment of dire thirst, the *fear* of mortal thirst, can never realise the balm and safety of clear water and of green grass.

Thence they pressed on to cosmopolitan Kasvin, at the junction of the roads to the Caspian and to Teheran; its bazars enclosed and arcaded and thick with carpet shops.

The technique of getting a carpet at a reasonable price in those lawless days was to wait till the local merchants had heard of the imminent arrival of a regiment of Persian Cossacks, who would certainly have what they wanted at their own price. Then one went to the bazar and there bargained with the distraught

carpet sellers. As the Cossacks were always several months in arrears over their pay, the prices they paid for their purchases were sacrificial.

The Persians looked on the British as rather soft, for the British paid for what they took and gave what they promised to give. They said openly that the moment the Russians appeared on the south of the Caspian, both British and Indian troops would run like scalded cats.

At Kasvin, our officer first learned of the Red Russian landing the day before at Enzeli on the Caspian; of the evacuation of the town by the British-Indian force, and of its retirement.

The less one thinks of those hours, the better. That evening, with the threat before him of bombardment of an open town full of helpless people, the British Commander had marched out, leaving behind to the invader a good store of warlike material and the rusty ships of Denikin's White Fleet. His men had marched stiffly to their front, conscious of the shame of capitulation, between the ragged ranks of Bolshevist citizen soldiers.

Do statesmen never learn their lessons? Too often they must be told that policy can seldom safely outstep the military means to enforce it.

To the north of Kasvin lay the wild Elburz Mountains confused as a storm-tossed ocean suddenly frozen, black with pines and full of brigands. To the far east stood up the great peak of Demavend, its tip nearly four miles above the sea.

He left his men at Kasvin and made out along the open plain to join the little force on the shores of the Caspian. In a Ford van he passed through villages and vineyards, through vine-arboured Kuhim, towards the deep, sunless gorge of Yous Basi Chai that cleaves the Elburz in two and lets the stream of life flow between the highlands of Persia and the lowlands of Gilan about the Caspian, and across the sea to the Volga and Russia. Places in the deep gloom of fable and legend, wild and strange, to the north: this gorge led him there as the Ginnungagap led to shadowy Niflheim.

As the Ford van sped along the open highlands he saw like a speck before him a donkey and its Persian owner in the middle of the road. Jehu hooted and hooted and went faster and faster. The van approached; the quarry got into a trot, and then into a canter and outdistanced the man of Iran.

Jehu found his brakes at last and applied them, but the car slid into the donkey and stopped dead with brother ass looking up

at the passengers, tail in air, white belly pleated and bulging towards them, neck bent under, head upside down, balanced on his panniers. Jehu got out and pushed him up straight among a cascade of eggshells and a greasy stream of the yellow yolk of eggs.

The car plunged down into the deep gorge and sped through it, on into the giant's cup of Manjil. At Manjil, driver and passengers hopped out before the mud resthouse in a tearing, raging gale with a bright sunny sky—the normal daily and all-day hurricane of Manjil: a veritable curse, wearing to the nerves and searing to the eyes, for it carries clouds of dust and grit. Thick olive trees are all bent eastwards from its incessant labours; great tar barrels are overset and rolled across the flats.

They stood and watched those that fled before the Red Horror. Streams of wagons (*fourgons*), drawn by two or four horses abreast, cluttered up with the *lares et penates* of poor White Russians and other refugees from the Bolshevist terrors, rolled creaking over the long iron bridge that spanned the tawny Safid Rud. Many people with great loads: many women and many children: a motley column of apprehension and despondency. Manjil was soon a seething press of sweating and lamenting creatures who had lost their poor all.

He found the force at Resht, his own battalion beneath shiny waterproof-sheet bivouacs, a war-worn, veteran unit, under the dull, drizzly weather, in a green, open space with the woods to the south of it, paddy fields to the left, lush water-meadows and yellow iris to the right, and, ahead, the town of Resht across a broad, deep-banked, muddy channel.

Resht is now a memory of rich greenery and soft, still drizzle: of deep reedy water-meadows full of tall yellow iris: of dripping woods like our Sussex highwoods and of snakes slithering by scores off the little paddy banks into the shallow pools before his feet.

Soon the force, suddenly quitting Resht by night, was in retreat again on its sad pilgrimage to Manjil. In that first long night-march eye-weariness nearly overcame them. It was the monotony of tramping through those dark, dripping woods, all along a road, with only the occasional dim twinkle of an oil-dip in the *chai* (tea)-shop by the roadside.

Wherever one goes in Persia there is the inevitable, poorly found *chai*-shop where gossips meet, to do as gossips do.

In Imam Zadeh Hachen, in the incessant drizzle, they bivouacked on a green space to the east of the road with the roar of the brown, rain-gorged Safid Rud beside them. South, the white

shrine of Imam Zadeh on a little hill and to the west the woods and rising hills of Gilan.

Bit by bit the force withdrew with a little bickering about Manjil and at the crossing of the Shah Rud at Loshan, into the great sunless gorge of Yous Basi Chai, through into the daylight and up on to the Kasvin plateau, to await its enemy on the open plain. As the troops came into the town the grape harvest was in full swing, and in the huts that did for messes such a pile and spread of grapes that they never saw before or since.

Summer, with its apricots and peaches and its heat and flies, wore slowly on. In early autumn the Persian Cossacks gathered in Kasvin from Teheran and their outlying posts. To the chagrin of the British, this partially-disciplined mob, with its dandies of White Russian officers, marched straight down the road and pushed the Russian rabble back to Resht, a sore blow to our *amour propre*. But before long came news of dissension and indiscipline: boots were worn out and none to replace them, pay was months in arrears; rumours came up that the officers had pouched the men's money. The mob oozed back from Resht.

Our Captain's Gurkha battalion hurried out of Kasvin for Manjil as hard as it could put foot to ground and camped over the Cossack bivouac at Windy Corner, place of all the spare winds of heaven. Colonel Philipoff, asked to come over for a drink that evening, appeared spick and span in his white gloves. The Russian Colonel had his whisky, and the British Colonel had his information as to the early start of the Cossacks for the morrow. The next morning at dawn the Persians moved off. The Gurkhas were ready to follow, except for one subaltern who yet remained in the wind-blown wreck of a tent. The Adjutant sought him and found him breechless, too modest to appear and to march in that condition. Like Ajax, he sat within his tent: but he would not come forth, like Ajax, barelegged. The wind had thieved his breeches in the night and blown them to the Cossacks. He sat, a prisoner to his modesty.

After shadowing the Cossacks to Kasvin the battalion came north again to join the force in touch with the Russians about Manjil. On the oft-trodden old road, British and Indian troops were hastening forward to get to grips with the Russians again: the Chestnut Troop trotted fast down the winding road from Kuhim, through the dark gorge of Yous Basi Chai. For three weeks of constant drizzle the force was in and about Rudbar,

staggering round in gumboots, knee-high in the ordurous mud of a Persian village.

The steep khaki hills rose to the west, bare as the palm of your hand. The village was of single-storied mud huts with *chai*-shops along the road's edge, between the houses and an olive grove that runs down to the brown waters of the broad Safid Rud. The Rudbar stream, normally a bubbling streamlet six inches deep, was now dirty and swift and swollen. Ahead lay the wooded belt of Mazanderan and Gilan, fringing the Caspian.

On a brightish morning of yellow sunlight, with cold white pillars of cloud charging each other below the blue dome of heaven, the battalion waded the Rudbar torrent moving north to its enemy. The stallions in the Persian *fourgons* fought and bit and the wagons stuck axle-deep in muck, to be heaved out by sweating, overladen soldiers.

The rain came driving down: the force bivouacked along the road and in the streaming forests, to the occasional sound of a shot from some patrol "seeing things" among the boles of ghostly trees. Day came. The advance went on: the sun came out: three enemy lay on their backs side by side on the grass by the road, smiling up to heaven, precisely where the leading armoured car had dropped them. There was little fighting: only patrols pressing on and hostile patrols withdrawing along the road and in the woods towards Resht and the Caspian.

A Persian winter came on with all its rigour. The Gurkhas went into outposts for the winter at Rustamabad. Both sides sat tight, the forward posts a mile apart with a glorious playground of wooded hills between them and the great river on the eastern flank. It was not long before the enemy dared not put one foot beyond his outpost line: the playground was ours and only our games were played. In this arena light patrols kept up the fight till April came, when the British hitched their wagons and crossed the Safid Rud at Manjil, for home.

Food was good. The "general" among the men grew sick of caviare in their ration: there was *mast* (whey) to be got from villages: great combs of wild honey came in on donkeys: Persian nougat in lumps the size of a baby, decked meltingly the mess tables. Wild pig were to be got for the shooting, their chops a particular delicacy. "Swallow and Ariel," the firm with a fairy name and the best of jams, came to be blessed by everyone.

Refugees still came in, in spite of snow five or six feet deep. One night the Adjutant sat in his hut writing by a hurricane

lamp, snow softly falling outside, when a sentry appeared before him. He looked up at the word "Memsahib," and there was a Russian girl, tow-haired and rather pale, with a small Russian boy. Her tale was one of wandering for days in the snow in the hills trying to avoid the Bolshevist posts and finally dropping down into Rustamabad, the boy nearly exhausted. The Adjutant handed over his one and only spare vest, ordnance pattern, of the same texture as the shirt of Nessus. Whoever wore it either did not feel it or disguised his or her feelings. Other officers did likewise and threw in a pair or two of what the Army call "bull-wool" socks, also of ordnance pattern.

Winter turned to early spring in the Kizil Uzun valley. Of all the beautiful sights this valley and its hills on a sunny day, with their snowy mountains, are the loveliest. Across the river that laced its tenuous way through the frosty sand-banks, stood up the white cone of the Dalfak Dagh, pine-capped, pine-girt. Among the lower, leafless woods all about, the hills showed pure white, delicately tinted with blue. Nearer by, the trees bore their burden of snow, the grass showed green, the trees budded and the primroses and violets came to bloom, a playground for the brindled pheasants that roamed these hills.

In early April there was heavy rain and the snows melted above our valley: Kizil Uzun and Shah Rud came down in spate. Manjil bridge, which both sides had often partially blown, was in a death struggle with the raging torrent. There was haste to get the column and its miles of heavy wagons away and across the Safid Rud before the stout bridge gave up the fight. The Rudbar streamlet had become a menacing flood, waistdeep everywhere, in places head-high.

The Gurkhas laboured, soaked to the skin, in and about the Rudbar stream, and cleared the transport. One of them was washed down the flood and nearly into the Safid Rud, losing his rifle, and was for no reason ashamed of himself at the loss. There are Marys and there are Marthas in this world; the Marys may possibly be of some use to creation in general, to the Army they are a curse and should go unrewarded.

A last memory of Rustamabad comes back just as the battalion left it and the rearguard commander turned to look north towards Siah Rud, to see if the enemy was on the move and to hit him one last blow. Under the dull grey, windblown sky, he saw on the stony flats above the noisy Safid Rud a small, wooden cross where one of his men so quietly slept.

Striving onward, lifting wagons out of the deep mud, unhitching horses and manhandling loads, the battalion worked its way slowly towards Manjil. A staff officer rode back to say that the bridge was going: the last wagon, overtaken by the Safid Rud, washed fast into the slit, was abandoned, its driver leading his exhausted horses towards the bridge.

The men chased their transport to the bridge and started to cross. The rear guard commander arrived and stood on the north bank watching. There was still half the battalion to come. The transport was crossing. The river was licking at the roadway of the bridge and swirling widely round the tops of the piers. He wondered if he'd have to stay on the Russian side, swim the animals over and fight it out.

The bridge sagged again and up came the rest of the battalion. They skidded and slithered across the dangerously inclined roadway while the onlookers stood with their hearts in their mouths. At last the Infantry Captain and the Sapper ran for it, feeling like Horatius cursing at the too zealous and, surely, block-headed fathers when he knew he'd have to swim.

Soon afterward, the sorely-tried bridge, writhing in the agony of death, with one thunderous shout, gave up the ghost and plunged into the torrent.

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The railwaymen had left with nothing achieved.

For us this was the twilight after sunset: for Persia the twilight before dawn. It was we who purposely made modern Iran possible, no whit less than we made modern Iraq: behind the British shield Iran was born. She has forgotten this as Italy has forgotten our aid to Garibaldi.

You must know that the soldier is an idealist and builds his hopes too high, hitches his limbers to the stars and falls mightily if fall he must. In Persia for three full years he strove and endured, believing that he built for eternity and that the end must be that at least Persia must honour his race. Utterly and hopelessly he failed, his travail bore no fruit that was not rotted by fantastic policies.

Whatever else may contribute to prestige, it is certain that nothing helps more surely than the honour paid to our unconquered armies.

The heavy tramp of the retreating force along the squat white road beat out the last spark of British prestige and left behind a Persia grinning and mocking at our disappointments, hostile and contemptuous.

"THOSE ILL-STARRED HORNS"

By R. G.

In the last issue of this Journal, the author of "Duffer in Assam" roundly condemned the employment of flankers in jungle warfare, and summed up their imperfections in the trenchant phrase "those ill-starred horns." There are, however, two sides to most stories. Consider, for example, the trespasser sprinting for the nearest hedge who, if capable of coherent thought, probably thinks that bulls would be much better animals without their horns—but, would any bull be likely to agree with him?

"Duffer in Assam" is presumably based upon personal experience in the field, and the writer's conclusions therefore merit due consideration. On the other hand, he is surely unwise to base a general tactical conclusion upon the outcome of a single skirmish. As a case in point, some may recall, for it was headline news at the time, how a column was badly ambushed some dozen years ago, in Northern Burma. The column commander, anxious to press on, and assured by "friendly" guides that there were no enemy in his vicinity, called in his flankers. Shortly afterwards the column checked, and the commander went forward to ascertain the reason. He found a tree across the path; at that moment volleys were poured into the halted advanced guard by enemy who, though invisible, were only a few yards off the path. The column commander, if he had lived, might well have sworn, in direct contradiction to the Duffer, to "see himself in blazes" before he ever again moved through jungle *without* flankers.

Jungle warfare, as British forces have often discovered somewhat late, is a highly specialized form of fighting; yet its minor tactics are largely a matter of commonsense. Flankers are simply flankguards which, in order to perform their normal protective functions, have to move very close to their parent bodies in country in which visibility is limited to yards, or even feet. Security must always be paid for, and though there are shifts and expedients for minimising the delay, flankers cutting or threading their way through jungle must always hamper mobility. A commander may, therefore, decide to dispense with flankers but, like his opposite number who, in mountain warfare, chooses to operate without route picquets, should have special reasons for doing so.

The Duffer's own reasons for operating without flankers were, we suggest, an example of these special circumstances. At the time, he was withdrawing over previously reconnoitred ground,

in face of an enemy whose characteristics, and particularly limitations, were known to him. Moreover his opposition, we are told, had got away with it time and again, and it was most desirable that they should be taught a sharp lesson. In other words, the Duffer took a carefully calculated risk in order to attain an important object, and deservedly reaped the reward.

If the Duffer had pointed this moral from his experiences we should have cordially agreed with him. We quarrel only, but most emphatically, with the conclusion he *did* arrive at—namely that flankers are useless in all circumstances.

It is not our present purpose to discuss details of jungle tactics, but it is worth remarking that a small column, such as the Duffer commanded, would seldom employ 60 flankers working, apparently, in conjunction with the advanced guard. The usual principles are to use as few men as possible on this exhausting duty, to quicken movement by changing them fairly frequently, and to throw out small flanking groups at intervals along the column, rather than trust to a few large parties, between which an enemy may more easily penetrate. Incidentally, there are several simple formations in which flankers may move besides the V-shaped horns mentioned by the Duffer. The horns may, for example, be reversed, or straightened out to move parallel with the axis of advance. The respective utility of these formations naturally depends upon such factors as the type of jungle, the habits of the enemy, and how much the route twists and turns.

A point of more general interest is the repeated suggestion in "Duffer in Assam" that night operations might have dealt effectively with the local tribes, if only the Assam Rifles of that day had not preserved "a wisdom which was untinged with imagination." That is as may be, but we suggest that the red-necked Captain who held that night work was d—d dangerous in the jungle had some justification for his views. The Duffer's contention that "Grant moved by night from Tammu to Thobal" and subsequently won a V.C., is hardly conclusive proof to the contrary.

The normal difficulties of military movements by night are well known, but in open country a commander may set against them the advantages of concealment from view and strike a favourable balance, especially when he wishes to attain surprise or save avoidable casualties. In the jungle, the potential margin of advantage which darkness may confer is whittled away by the conditions. On the one hand trees and dense undergrowth make

the maintenance of direction and preservation of silence exceptionally difficult; on the other, thick vegetation can provide almost as much concealment to troops by day as by night. Moreover, while unforeseen incidents, calculated to throw a carefully planned night operation out of gear may happen anywhere, they seem to happen oftenest in the jungle. This, at least, has been the experience of the present writer.

To give a few examples, a column under his command was charged while approaching a village in pitch darkness by a herd of semi-wild buffaloes. The tactical mules, somewhat naturally, panicked and it took till nightfall the next day to retrieve all their scattered loads. A few of the mules unfortunately met, and stayed with, tigers. On another occasion the column doctor, who was quite irreplaceable, met a tiger in the moonlight, and though he easily beat it to the nearest tree, the encounter was the final straw which finished him. Next morning he headed his own sick report, marked for "Evacuation to the Base." Another unusual incident occured when the guides for a night advance, though secured against all ordinary eventualities, were collectively attacked and bitten by forest demons. As one consequence dawn showed that the column had surrounded the wrong village.

Such incidents may be amusing in retrospect; they are not so at the time, and are only the highlights of the series of lesser and more prosaic irritations and delays which, we believe, are a normal accompaniment to such ventures. We do not for a moment suggest that night operations in the jungle should be ruled out; we do urge that no commander should undertake them without considerable previous *personal* experience of the conditions to which he may commit his men. Even a well trained shrubbery, let alone the undisciplined jungle, is very different after dark. Like dispensing with flankers, it is all a question of *knowing* when accepted principles may be judiciously set aside.

A year or so ago most readers would have regarded "Duffer in Assam" as a readable yarn (which it is) about a type of fighting they were never likely to experience. To-day the situation has altered, and some who lack personal experience of jungle warfare may have given serious consideration to the Duffer's theories.

These words of warning regarding their whole-hearted acceptance may therefore serve a useful purpose. If they provoke further, and wider, discussion on the art of fighting in forests so much, we believe, the better.

FINANCIAL RAMBLINGS IN RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT

By Rs., As., Ps., in England

Our individual financial future prospect cannot be described as a thing of joy to behold; in fact it is all so vague that it is hard to see at all, and so there is all the more reason why we should face it and at least have some plan. I shall make no attempt to view this from a national aspect but rather from the point of view of each officer's personal plan to make life financially bearable for himself and his family in the years of peace to come.

One thing is certain in this uncertain world: when we have defeated our enemies, the war will have to be paid for. You may say "But that's the job of the Chancellor of the Exchequer." To which I reply "Pardon me, it will have to be paid for by me the writer, and you the reader." Visions, therefore, of a jolly leave to come with a little car, a little flutter in town and carefully selected schools for the children need to be tempered by the cold blast of post-war finance. Our families will need new clothes and we will want mufti to replace the uniform in which we now live all day, every day and (in raids) all night. If we just dream along with a pre-war financial outlook, we shall have a rude awakening.

The writer, regretfully, can provide no positive solution, but he is one of those funny people who have, for years, including the present war-time year in England, kept an exact record of all expenditure, apportioning each item to its appropriate head. Let us therefore turn the pages of this record and ponder on the actual pre-war costs of items, such as leave, clothes on leave, education, and the war-time present cost of living in England; then let us try to visualize the problem which will face us when peace comes.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

The case taken throughout is that of an Indian Army Officer and his wife with two children, boy and girl, from prep. school to public school, with no home in England, thus involving the family in "holiday home" expenses except when the parents were on leave; in the last war-time year the boy becomes a medical student.

THE SCHOOLS

The first carefully recorded pages over nine years include all prep. and public school fees and house bills, examination fees, a good deal of clothes (but not all) and the cost of holiday homes for about half of the nine years as the mother was home for approximately 50 per cent. of the holidays. The schools were public schools of repute but in both cases reduced fees for army officers' children were admissible.

The first entry (1930): "Children's initial school outfits and trunks, £72;" is worth noting. The prep. schools started in the first year in the region of £125 each per annum (no holiday home costs), but in the second year rose to £162. There was at this time a very cheap holiday home arrangement as the usual minimum is three guineas each per week; as there are 17 weeks holidays a year, this amounts to £53-10-0 each per year. In later years it rose to £190 each per year, the grand total for the nine years for the two children amounting to £2,712, a remarkably low figure due largely to considerate treatment on the part of the schools. This is a useful figure for parents with infants now in India to bear in mind as it is hardly likely to cost so little in the years to come. An interesting point is that though the girl's fees were less than the boy's, the total cost of her nine years was a fraction more than the boy's; this is because a boy's hair, for example, costs 6*d.* to hack while your girl's school has a glamorous young woman up to the school from the local beauty parlour to shampoo and cut the hair at a very different cost. Girls too, won't be satisfied with a pair of grey flannel prep. school shorts and stockings falling (invariably) half-way down their legs in wrinkles like their brothers. Even the youngest of girls are, like their mothers, slaves to Fashion with attendant reflex on school bills!

Before leaving the cost of schools, a few facts culled from brief experience of medical students' costs are illuminating. Oxford costs, they say, a minimum of £260 a year, an apparently preposterous sum. The fees for London University students were shown at £50 a year and so this course was chosen. The addition at the end of the first year, however, of fees, instruments, examination fees and coaching, amounted to £93. Rail fares cost £22, bus fares in London 4*d.* return daily (work it out, it's quite a lot), and even there the expense did not end for there were daily lunches and teas, pocket money and games expenses and, on top of all this, of course, the run of the boy's teeth at

home—a minimum of 15/- a week or say £40 a year. Taken all in all it does not appear that the Oxford figure of £260 is very high after all and naturally life at Oxford, with its organized activities, is infinitely preferable to life in London for a boy—sorry, very young man!

LEAVE, HOME AND CLOTHES

However, we won't spend our all on education, so let us lick the thumb and flick over the pages to the much more interesting "record of expenses on leave." Take, for example, 1927, spent in cheap hotels with two very young children; nice clothes, dances, games and flutters in town, "very tasty, very sweet" as the modern radio has it.

Well, here are the costs:

April £75, May £55, June £107 (partly in town), July £76, August £90, September £130. Wife's and own clothes £190. Ah! those were the days—but I see a footnote which reads "spent on leave above my pay £310"! Average spent £90 per month *plus* £190 on clothes and no education costs in those young days.

Let's see if we had more wisdom in 1931; well, yes, a little; the average monthly expenditure had dropped to £77 a month and clothes to £158. Still, on the other hand, school fees had begun. The reason for the drop in the cost of living is clearly seen from the records for the months spent in a furnished house which were markedly less than the months spent in even a cheap hotel.

Now comes the period of short visits to the children in England; "2 months leave ex-India." Take 1934 for example when the passages were paid from the Lee Commission Account. Well,—

	£
Rail fares in India and France cost ...	30
Cash on the boat took ...	10
Living expenses and the children's clothes for 5 weeks in England amounted to ...	120
While clothes for the parents cost ...	45
Making a total for the two months of ...	205

Not so bad as it roughly equalled my pay, but of course I had not to pay cash for the passages.

Details of later years would only be wearisome, but they increased as the children grew older as one finds that they are treated by hoteliers as adults and so one is driven (fortunately)

to the infinitely preferable and cheaper furnished house. The costs of these on leave in pre-war years when great attempts at economy were not allowed to override the joys of a happy leave home, were:

		£	s.	d.	
Seaside house: average: Rent	...	3	3	0	a week.
Two Maids (sybarite!)	...	2	0	0	
Food, light, etc.	...	6	11	0	
		11	14	0	a week.
Country house: average: Rent	...	3	3	0	
Maid	...	1	5	0	
Food, light, etc.	...	5	0	0	
		9	8	0	a week.

Heigh ho! Pleasant years; may the future Indian Army officer have as good in the peace to come!

By the way, remember that Lee Commission passages are not endless; there comes a time when passages will have to be paid from one's pay.

THE POST-WAR HOME

Before the writer gives details of the current actual war-time cost of living in England he will be so bold as to give his personal views on the type of home life the majority of us will be forced by circumstances to adopt when the war is over.

I had always hoped that the days of retirement would find me in a small house, not new, matured and purchased by cash payment. From this home I looked forward to going daily to the work which there was, in pre-war days, so good a prospect of obtaining.

Well, coming home in war-time, I found it impossible to "settle" and my guess is that in the post-war years it will be still more difficult till things stabilize somewhat. We will have "to look round a bit"—perhaps even consider going to a colony abroad. To this will be added the difficulty, even if one can settle, of finding a house; there is bound to be a shortage as so many of the nicely-matured houses will be demolished or burnt out—so many only fit for demolition. There will be a shortage, too, of building materials and wood and slate and even if we can get these, it is doubtful if we will have saved in war-time the money to build.

Excepting, of course, those fortunate enough to have read my article* in the June issue of the *U. S. I. (I.) Journal.* I admit that there is the Building-Society-Hire-Purchase solution, a great boon in many ways but which has, I contend, two great disadvantages. Admittedly one is saving all the time one is paying, but the fact remains that one is paying out in hard cash each year an instalment which (including interest and "Property Tax") amounts to a good deal more than the actual cash which would be required to be paid out as rent of the house if rented. Secondly, the moment one starts hire purchase one acquires a number of sticks and stones which tend to anchor one and prevent a move one might otherwise make to better conditions.

Another factor which will make for the fleeting nature of our life in post-war years will be the difficulty of finding a job. Before the war, the army officer could find useful work comparatively easily as, say, an Area A. R. P. Organizer or Ground Officer in the R.A.F., and to-day these and manifold army and semi-army posts are available—one does not even have to seek them. But these, I fear (or perhaps I should say, pray), will cease and so we will have to move about a good deal to find work or to keep it.

The result, therefore, of these ponderings is that I feel, in the first post-war years, we will be forced, for a time, as I have been forced in war-time, to adopt a life in furnished houses while carefully keeping every blanket, knife, etc., which may be needed; property of any kind should, I feel, be husbanded. This prospect of living in furnished houses appalled me financially but, strangely enough, I find from actual figures it is not so uneconomical as one might expect. One may say, too, "I hate living in other people's houses; I like my own." I daresay, but there are many things in Europe just now and for a few years to come which are not of our choosing.

One small point which of course is only applicable in war-time is that in the furnished house we are saved from purchasing and sewing black-out curtains for every window in the house—a big expense—and get a fine air-raid shelter (in which we have already spent many hours by night during raids), which otherwise I could not have afforded to build.

Well, now for the cost: the house consists of four bedrooms, three sitting rooms beautifully furnished, and a garage. The rent is £3-13-6 a week, that is to say £180 a year. This may sound heavy, but when one considers that the house probably

* "How to Live in India on Your Pay," by Rs., As., Ps.

cost £2,500 and the furniture and fittings another £1,000, it does not compare unfavourably with either buying or renting a house. Remember, too, that there are no rates and taxes to pay and one not only avoids buying furniture but such innumerable household fittings as electric fires and lamps, gas fires and cookers, Frigidaire, Hoover, endless cleaning appliances, crockery and a vast variety of cooking requirements, lawn mower and a lot of garden tools while the cost of depreciation is not borne by me. So, taken all round, it does not appear uneconomical and has the great merit of giving greater freedom to move. Not to be the owner of a house and furniture in these days of bombs has decided advantages too.

Reverting once more to detailed costs, I do not find the cost of living very much increased yet (but the purchase tax will soon be operative). I got a very fine 16-h.p. Wolseley for £25 and petrol costs 2/- a gallon; a low-h.p. car would naturally have cost more owing to petrol restrictions. Cigarettes have gone up 50 per cent., the standard cigarette costing the equivalent of Rs. 2-8-0 for a tin of 50, while the cost of whisky makes me feel so bad that only a strong peg pulls me together. Still, in general, the cost of living is not impossibly high as will be seen from the following very exact figures for June during which every penny of housekeeping money was accounted for separately. The costs are for four adults and a daily maid:

TABLE I

	1st week	*2nd week*	*3rd week*	*4th week*	TOTAL
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	..
Rent ..	3-15-0	3-15-0	3-15-0	3-15 0	..
Maid ..	0-15-0	0-15 0	0-15 0	0-15-0	..
House keeping (see App. "A" at end)..	3-4-8	3 16 8	3-14-2	3-7-6	..
Total Cost of living (i.e., what a hotel would give. ..	7-14-8	8-6-8	8-4-2	7-17-6	32-3-0

Had we lived in a hotel at three guineas a week it would have cost a minimum of £50-8-0 for poor food, no sitting room, no garage and perhaps no garden. Should housewives be interested, fuller details are given in Appendix "A."

The above, of course, deals with household expenses and readers may be interested to know the total cost of living for all heads; these are given in Table II below.

TABLE II

	1st week	*2nd week*	*3rd week*	*4th week*	*Total.*
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Household vide Table I ..	7 14 8	8 6 8	8 4 2	7 17 6	32 3 0
Cigarettes for two adults average ..	0 16 8	0 16 8	0 16 8	0 16 8	3 6 6
Wireless ..	0 5 2	..	..	1 12 6	2 7 8
Travelling ..	1 8 0	..	2 10 0	..	3 18 0
Cash (see Appendix "B") ..	3 8 3	2 0 1	4 18 9	2 11 9	12 18 10
Totals ..	14 2 9	11 3 5	16 9 7	12 18 5	54 14 0

As the sum spent on "cash" was a large sum, £12-18-10, I give details in Appendix "B."

This month or rather four weeks of June have been selected as it so happens that in this month accounts were particularly accurately kept but it must be admitted that the figure of £54-14-0 is the lowest for some months. Moreover, this was our first month of raids, day and night, and so the sum spent on amusements was negligible. The following also were not included: education, insurance, car tax and car insurance or clothes.

At the Staff College once, a student, famous for straying from the point, after addressing us all for 20 minutes, was asked by the Director "And to what conclusion, *X*, does that lead you?" Captain *X* looked blank and was silent! Well I too am very nearly as badly stumped after rambling through the pages of my little book; still, it *does* give some ideas.

First, we must budget now during war-time to meet all the expenses I have shown.

Secondly, once we try to "settle" even in a furnished house on retirement, we'll be able to live on much less than when on leave, largely because so much less is spent on clothes and moving about.

Thirdly, when next the time comes round for leave we must go straight to one place, e.g., a furnished house, and "stay put" till the day we sail.

APPENDIX "A"

	1st week	*2nd week*	*3rd week*	*4th week*	
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	
Butcher ..	0 10 1	0 9 5	0 13 3	0 10 4	
Grocer	1 7 10	1 12 5	1 0 1	0 17 6	
Vegetables ..	0 13 0	1 1 10	0 13 3	0 18 2	
Dairy	0 7 4	0 7 0	0 6 6	0 6 2	
Laundry ..	0 4 3	0 3 2	0 4 2	..	
Baker	..	..	0 12 3	0 3 2	For three weeks.
Petty	0 2 2	0 2 10	0 8 0	0 10 4	
	3 4 8	3 16 8	3 7 6	3 14 2	

NOTE.—The standard of food was very high, each item being of the most expensive quality.

APPENDIX "B"

Detail of Cash spent in June

	£	*s.*	*d.*
Postage	0	16	9
Hairdresser (for three)	0	7	6
Car, petrol and repairs	3	7	0
Golf, green fees and teas	0	16	6
Bus fares and meals out	0	19	1
Petty Clothes	1	7	6
Chemist	0	19	0
Knitting wool	0	13	10
Books and papers	0	7	6
Drink	0	5	9
Stationery	0	8	7
Unaccounted for	2	9	10
	12	18	10

COMMISSIONED FROM THE RANKS

A CONTRAST

By Lieut.-Colonel C. C. R. Murphy

In the days when purchase was the recognized method of military advancement, the difficulties of obtaining a commission from the ranks were of an entirely different nature from those which confront the young soldier at the present time. The way in which it was done during the Napoleonic wars, when there was some resentment against the principle of granting commissions to men "who had not put their hands in their pockets to pay for them honourably," can best be shown by examples. The two here chosen will enable the reader to compare the old system with the new, and at the same time to draw his own conclusions.

The first is that of an infantryman.

It is the story of a pauper boy, who enlisted at the age of 13 and became an officer. Though he never rose above the rank of lieutenant, his military career was one of the most remarkable on record. No army has ever produced a better soldier.

The hero of these adventures was a certain John Shipp, born in Saxmundham in the year 1784. His father was a soldier; but his mother died when he was very young, leaving him and his elder brother in utter destitution in consequence of which they became inmates of the parish poorhouse. He was then apprenticed by the overseers to a farmer, a cruel taskmaster who beat him unmercifully.

Early in 1797, Shipp enlisted in the 22nd Foot. After serving in the Channel Islands and at the Cape, he found himself, in the year 1804, a young sergeant in the Grenadier Company and attached to Lord Lake's army which was fighting the Marathas.

Here was his chance, and he made the fullest use of it. He was one of the stormers at the capture of Deig at the end of 1804, and he led the forlorn hope of the storming column in three out of the four desperate but fruitless assaults on Bhurtpore in the early part of the following year, receiving severe wounds upon each occasion. He was now a marked man. His leadership and daring were the admiration of the army, and he was promptly rewarded with an ensigncy in the 65th Foot. A few weeks later, he was promoted lieutenant in the 76th Foot.

With this regiment Shipp returned home in 1807; but he soon got into debt and had to sell out. Being a man of honour, however, he paid his debts with the money he had received, and then found himself in London without a shilling.

Determined not to remain idle, he now enlisted in the 24th Light Dragoons and returned to India; and so outstanding were his qualities as a soldier that before the end of 1812 he was promoted regimental sergeant-major. In May, 1815, he was gazetted to an ensigncy in the 87th Regt. He had thus performed the unique feat of *twice winning a commission from the ranks,* and all before he was thirty-two years of age.

During the Gurkha war, Shipp again distinguished himself, notably in single combat at Makwanpore. He was on the staff of the army under the Marquess Hastings in the Pindari and Maratha wars of 1817-18, and showed high skill and courage at the capture of Hathras, where he was the first man to enter the fort. In 1821, he was promoted lieutenant for the second time.

Shortly afterwards, while stationed in Calcutta, he took up racing and this led to his downfall. Quarrels arose, in the course of which he impugned the character of his superior officer, who was also his racing partner; and in 1823 he was discharged from the army by sentence of court-martial.

Having laid down the sword, he now took up the pen and set about compiling his memoirs, which first appeared in 1829. This interesting book, written with great modesty, and in a quaint and attractive style, was so well received that it ran into several editions. For a man who, when he enlisted, was unable to sign the pay-sheet, this was remarkable achievement, and secured for him a place amongst English authors.

Two years later, he wrote a treatise on flogging in the Army. This was a powerful indictment against the use of the "cat," and a Member of Parliament thought so highly of it that he sent the author a present of £50. It was not long before the principles which Shipp had advocated were in the main adopted by the military authorities.

By this time, Shipp had caught the eye of the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Sir Charles Rowan, who had been wounded at Waterloo while serving with the 52nd Foot. Shipp's first appointment was that of Inspector, but he was soon made a Superintendent. As a police officer he was a great success and liked by everyone. In 1834, when in comparatively easy circumstances and after a life of adventure, he died in his bed, leaving

behind him a widow, some children and many friends to mourn his loss.

The next example of promotion from the ranks, which the reader is asked to consider, is that of the cavalryman, John Elley; it affords a striking contrast to the one first given.

It is not certain where or when he first saw the light of day, but he is said to have been born in London, where his father owned a prosperous eating-house. The regimental records show that Elley, who, unlike John Shipp, had received a good education, enlisted in the Oxford Blues—now the Royal Horse Guards—near the end of 1789; and that seven months later he purchased a troop quartermastership in the regiment, such warrant rank being then procurable in this way.

In 1794, he went to Flanders with four troops of the Blues, who had been ordered there to join the army of the brave old Duke of York; and he is said to have particularly distinguished himself in the cavalry action at Le Cateau in the same year.

Very soon afterwards, he was appointed acting adjutant of the detachment, having in the meantime purchased a cornetcy in the same regiment.

Returning to England in the following year, he continued to purchase his promotion step by step; and, in the spring of 1806, became a lieutenant-colonel in the regiment he had joined as a trooper less than 17 years before! His rise, especially in such a regiment as the Blues, had been rapid indeed; but if the money for all this promotion had come from a prosperous eating-house, we may be sure that it benefited not only John Elley, but the Army at large.

In 1808, as A.A.G. of cavalry, he went to the Peninsula where he remained for six years and saw much fighting. For his services in that campaign he was created a K.C.B.

When Napoleon escaped from Elba and the allied armies were assembling in Belgium, Elley was appointed to the staff of the Duke of Wellington as adjutant-general of cavalry. At Waterloo, where he was again wounded, he served with great distinction, and laid low more than one cuirassier with his own sabre in single combat. On the eve of Quatre Bras, he was one of the guests at the famous Waterloo Ball.

In 1835 he was returned to Parliament as member for Windsor, and two years later was promoted lieutenant-general. At the beginning of 1839, he died, unmarried, at his seat in Wiltshire and was buried in the Chapel Royal at Windsor.

Other days, other ways.

LEARNING HINDUSTANI

BY "KARSHISH"

It will be best to admit at once that Urdu and not Hindustani is the name officially recognised by the Board of Examiners. This is curious for the language most spoken in Government Services, and more particularly the Army, cannot by any stretch of imagination, be called Urdu. It would be far less incorrect to call it Hindi, though the use of such a word would obviously be unsatisfactory.

What is the difference between Urdu and Hindi? It is widely believed that Urdu is the language spoken by Muslims and Hindi that spoken by Hindus. This is entirely wrong for while it may be true that Hindi is only spoken by Hindus, some of the purest Urdu in Northern India is also spoken by Hindus. A better definition is that Urdu and Hindi are two versions of Sanraseni Prakrit. The basic grammars of both are the same, but while Urdu has enriched and still enriches its vocabulary from Arabic and Persian, Hindi has borrowed and continues to borrow extensively from Sanscrit.

The term Hindustani is unsatisfactory in that it implies the language of all Hindustan and this it most certainly is not. But it does usefully describe the *lingua franca* of Northern India which is spoken by Muslims and Hindus alike, and of which the vocabulary is determined by usage rather than by systematic borrowing from Arabic and Persian on the one hand or from Sanscrit on the other.

I am bound to admit that I have used the word Hindustani partly because, although I propose to write of both Urdu and Hindi (their literatures are, of course, strikingly different), I thought "Learning Urdu and Hindi" would be an awkward title and likely to be even more repugnant to my few forthright and soldierly readers than the present one.

The whole question of what should be the name of Northern India's *lingua franca* and in what character it should be written has become the object of considerable controversy in which communal feeling takes a regrettably important part. Precisely the same spoken language is often referred to by Muslims as Urdu and by Hindus as Hindi. There is, therefore, a great deal to be said for the somewhat loose expression "Hindustani" which, if it

does nothing else, does serve to emphasise the nationalist rather than the communal aspect.

This is not going to be a learned article and any scholar who tries to read it will probably be overtaken with something akin to nausea. Though I claim to be something of a polyglot I am no philologist. As in my other articles, I shall avoid learned disquisition and shall only try to draw oblique attention to the lighter side of learning Hindustani.

My grandfather spent forty years in India without learning to speak any Indian language, though he is said to have discovered a complicated Hindi expression for a corkscrew, an instrument which he sometimes used. My father told me this just before I went out to India for the first time, and to the awful revelation he added the information that he himself had endeavoured to learn "the language" but that being in the British service he had not made much progress. He advised me to make a point of learning it properly and accordingly I bought "Forbes' Hindustani Manual" and studied it on the journey out.

I extracted a good deal of information from Forbes who, however, introduces some expressions of somewhat doubtful utility such as "Pull the trigger strong with the middle finger." Like many other old language books Forbes' Manual and his Grammar display a thoroughness and scientific comprehension which is largely absent from more modern productions. It was my first essay at language study and I found it quite absorbing. It was somewhat disturbing, therefore, to realise that the men of the Gurkha Regiment, to which I was posted, scarcely spoke Hindustani at all and that in spite of all orders to the contrary, they considered it a point of honour to speak nothing but their own language.* I soon realised, however, that Gurkhali sounded much more romantic than Hindustani and determined that as soon as I had passed the obligatory colloquial examination, I would give up Hindustani altogether.

As things turned out, my first association with India and Hindustani was to be of very short duration. After three years of active service in France, the easy, humdrum life of an Indian cantonment was sheer delight not unconnected with a welcome improvement in food and other creature comforts. Three months after the Armistice, however, I suddenly realised that I was extremely bored with life in a depot and jumped at the chance of joining one of the active battalions of my regiment at that time

*I understand that this state of affairs exists no longer.

serving in the Caucasus. Little did I foresee that I was fated never to join that battalion. After a remarkable journey from India involving no less than six ships, I arrived at the Indian Base Depot, then located at Chanakkalé on the Dardanelles, and learnt with disgust that I was to remain there as adjutant. This, I was told, was due to the fact that I seemed to know a little more Hindustani than the other officers who were also going to join the Army of the Black Sea, and I there and then decided to abandon my studies and take up Turkish and Greek. I did not open a book on Hindustani for another six years.

The work at the Depot was not uninteresting and, by bringing me into touch with almost every class of man enlisted in the Indian Army, gave me experience which I have since found extremely valuable. Our administrative problems in the Depot were often acute. In those days we paid far too much attention to so-called caste prejudice and I remember that on one occasion we had no less than twenty-nine different cook-houses for some two thousand men.

There were no Indian Army officers on the Brigade Staff or at General Headquarters, and we were constantly in trouble for failing to provide Mohammedan sweepers, refusing to send Gurkhas and Jhats on pilgrimage to Mecca and other similar misdemeanours. We were not troubled with the demobilization problem which was causing grave difficulties in British units, and I was full of admiration for the calm philosophy with which Indian ranks took the interminable waits in the depot to which they were subjected. The General Base Depot for British ranks was less patient, and one night some of the wilder and younger officers went so far as to burn down their mess tent. The first that we heard of this incident was the arrival by destroyer of a highly placed and very cross General. Misled by his staff he went by mistake to the Indian Base Depot and having summoned all the officers proceeded to deliver a tonic oration on discipline, playing the game, patience and other splendid subjects. It was some moments before the mistake was discovered, and after a handsome apology, the General departed on the track of the real delinquents.

After a few months with the Depot my Turkish studies were eventually rewarded, and I spent the next five years in various intelligence appointments in Istanbul, Smyrna, Malta and Palestine. While in London, before going to Malta, I was assailed with qualms about my future and asked to go back to my regiment. I

was persuaded to stay on with the War Office for another year, and though this did me much harm in the eyes of the Indian Army authorities, I had an amusing and instructive time and learnt a great deal of Italian in Malta.

In 1925, after four months bogus "language leave" in Italy, Yugo-Slavia and Greece, I returned to Palestine and found that I was at last to rejoin my unit which was now no longer a Gurkha battalion. I immediately wrote a manly but deferential letter to the adjutant explaining how out of touch I was with regimental work, and saying that I expected them to look on me with a very jaundiced eye. Actually the situation was reversed, for immediately afterwards I got jaundice extremely badly and still had a very jaundiced eye when I eventually joined my battalion in the Punjab.

I shall always look back upon the four months that followed as one of the most remarkable and instructive periods of my whole service. I had completed ten years service, three of which had been in France with a British line battalion and seven nominally in the Indian Army but in reality mostly spent in various Intelligence appointments. I had never been to the R.M.C., knew nothing of post-war training and methods and had entirely forgotten the little I had once known of Hindustani. My battalion, which was going through one of those periods of horrified stock-taking familiar to all units, naturally looked at me askance and did their best to get rid of me. The first move was swift. The day after my arrival I was told to go and see the Brigadier in his bungalow. I had known him slightly in Turkey and, in my innocence, expected the cordial handshake and the jocular reminiscence. I found instead a formidable Star Chamber consisting of the Brigadier, the Brigade Major and my C.O. In short, sharp, telling periods the Brigadier pronounced sentence: I knew nothing and was no use to the battalion. This was what he had decided: I was to be considered as a young officer joining from the R.M.C. and was to go for a year to a British battalion. Was this clear?

It was clear enough, but surprising and annoying. After a false start or two, I said that I realised what this meant. I was not in fact a young officer just joining, but had ten years service. If the Brigadier put his threat into operation, I had only one course open to me—to resign my commission. "Very foolish" was how this decision was described by the Brigadier, but the conversation seemed to take a turn for the better. Before I left I said

I thought I would write to Simla reporting what I had been told, and asking whether there were any more Intelligence appointments for me. I was strongly advised not to do this but I did it and learnt eventually that in a year's time I was to go to Iran. Meanwhile I was to stay with my regiment.

When I reviewed the position, I saw that life in an infantry battalion was not going to be easy. The Brigadier had spoken the truth when he said that I knew nothing. My military experience had been confined to active service conditions and was of no use in peace-time; I had never done any courses; I had never passed the Retention Examination. Almost worst of all was the revelation that I, an infantry officer, actually preferred walking to riding. The only ray of hope lay in the facility which I had in learning languages, for I saw that if I could acquire a good knowledge of Hindustani, the greater part of my work could be done by Indian officers who knew more about tactics, training and administration than I could hope to acquire at this late stage. Accordingly, I took a *munshi* and, reading rapidly through the "Khwab-o-Khayal," passed the Higher Standard in two months. My duties of Quartermaster, Transport Officer and Mess Secretary gave me greater practice in speaking Hindustani, but far less in peace-time tactics. Nevertheless, I managed to pass my Retention Examination. (I had already been "retained" for ten years under a misapprehension), and on the whole I was not unhappy, for after their first black looks my brother officers treated me with great indulgence and friendliness.

Looking back on my first serious Hindustani studies, I realise the grave deficiencies of the established method of teaching this language. I cannot speak with precision on the subject, but it seems to me that until quite recently, remarkably little progress has been made in this direction. Had it not been for the outbreak of the present war, sounder methods would most probably have been introduced, but it is astonishing that in the long lifetime of the Board of Examiners no regimented method of acquiring the requisite knowledge of Hindustani should have been evolved. The root of the trouble lies in the failure correctly to assess the extent of the knowledge of Hindustani which British officers should have, and then to provide standard works to enable him to acquire that knowledge. Let us examine these problems in some detail.

British officers in the Indian Army require a thorough colloquial knowledge of simple Hindustani with a range of between

1,000 and 1,500 words. As grammatically correct but simple Hindustani is much better understood than anything else, a study of grammar will greatly facilitate matters. In addition to being able to speak and understand, officers must be able to read and write Roman-Hindustani. *There is no need for officers to read or write the Urdu or Devanagri scripts.*

To acquire this knowledge, three types of books are required: (*a*) A simple standardized Roman-Hindustani grammar with exercises; this grammar should have a range of a total of 800 words; (*b*) Graduated reading books, the first one introducing 800 words only and the last one 1,500—2,000. About seven such books would be required. They would all be provided with vocabularies and (*c*) A small Roman-Hindustani-English and English-Roman-Hindustani dictionary containing about 5,000 words with blank pages for additions.

This sounds simple enough but it is complicated by the fact that although the great majority agree about the extent to which Army officers should learn Hindustani, there is a formidable body of opinion which argues that Hindustani can best be learned through the medium of the Perso-Arabic or Devanagri characters, although these characters need never be used afterwards. I shall postpone discussion of this remarkable misapprehension until later.

After spending four months with my battalion, I was told that I had been selected to fill the post of Attaché to "Q" Branch at Command H.Q. This seemed to suggest either that I had been given up as hopeless, or that I was now considered to be up to standard as a regimental officer. My enquiries as to which of these solutions was the correct one met with a cold reception and I am still in the dark about the matter. I think it must have been decided that I was now such an efficient regimental officer that another $6\frac{1}{2}$ years away from my regiment would do no harm, for that was the period which elapsed before I again joined my battalion. I had done no military duty in the interval and the intelligent and experienced reader will be able to judge of my efficiency on this my second appearance.

Oddly enough, though I had only performed four months regimental duty in 12 years, I was this time received with hardly any misgiving. I was myself considerably perturbed for this time my station was to be Quetta with its terrible reputation for military activity of every kind. A few days after my arrival I asked for a formal interview with my C. O. and explained how diffident

I felt at appearing in this busy military centre so miserably equipped as regards training. A roguish twinkle appeared in my C. O.'s eye as he replied: "I think you are worrying yourself unnecessarily, and I should like to tell you three things. The first is that there is very little to learn, the second is that I am sure you will learn it very quickly, and the third is that if you don't it won't matter the least bit." I took this with a grain of salt as no doubt I was meant to do, but it was agreeable to know that I was going to work under a man with a sense of humour.

With only one break, I had been employed in various Intelligence appointments for nearly twelve years and was a little taken aback when the adjutant told me he had put my name down for the next Intelligence Course. This was not due to begin for two months and I suddenly conceived the idea of trying to pass my "C" Promotion Examination in the meanwhile. It was midwinter and no field training was being done. However, with one of Gale and Polden's little books and with some valuable advice from my brother officers, I managed to pass a practical examination on duties in the field entirely on theory. Flushed with this success, I "proceeded" on the Intelligence Course where I learned many strange things and that done, began to work for the Urdu Interpretership and for my "D" Promotion Examination.

The Urdu and Hindi Interpretership Examinations demand a higher standard of knowledge than that which the ordinary Indian Army officer need possess. The characters must be read and written with some fluency, and there are set text-books of considerable difficulty. On the whole, the test is a good one but certain improvements might be made. The text-books should have complete vocabularies and notes, but not translations. At present the Urdu text-books have translations and glossaries and no vocabularies, while the Hindi books have neither. Any one who has passed the Urdu Interpretership can pass the Hindi equivalent in a few months without employing a *munshi*. All he has to do is to learn the Nagri character which is easy, read the really interesting text-books and do some compositions. The reward of Rs. 1,200 is very easy money. What is really required is a *Hindustani* Interpretership in which candidates must have a knowledge of both characters and have a good range of Sanscrit as well as Arabic and Persian vocabulary. Pieces of translation would be set from both Urdu and Hindi, but composition and conversation would be in Urdu only. The same principle should

be applied to the Degree of Honour; both these examinations should aim at producing a general knowledge of the intellectual expression of Northern India, both Muslim and Hindu.

At the first attempt, I only obtained a Second Class Interpretership as I had to give up a good deal of time to Promotion Examinations, Company Training and other difficult matters. Six months later I passed First Class and found my increased knowledge of colloquial Hindustani invaluable. On Battalion and Brigade Training I found that I could explain the orders to my Indian officers in rapid detail; they usually knew by experience how they ought to be carried out, and I was thus saved from being caught out on many occasions. By concentrating on the higher form of the language, however, I partly restricted my intercourse to Indian officers and the better educated N.C.O.s, and frequently found sepoys difficult to understand. They seldom had any difficulty in understanding me for I spoke more or less grammatically.

To meet the need which I felt for conversation with civilians as opposed to soldiers I asked the advice of Mr. Beatty from whose incomparable knowledge of Hindustani I had profited on more than one occasion. With unerring skill, Mr. Beatty put me in touch with a gentleman, a Test Auditor in the C.M.A.'s office and a Kayasth who had a superb knowledge of the language. I went to his house three or four times a week and talked at length with him and his friends who included pundits. lawyers and doctors. They all knew English thoroughly, but made a point of speaking nothing but Hindustani. Apart from the language I learnt many things from these excellent people, among others that education is the only thing which can bridge the communal gulf, that the average Indian civilian is completely ignorant of conditions in the Indian Army which he believes to be a body of mercenaries groaning under a system amounting to slavery, and that almost all differences between Europeans and Indians could be settled by mutual sympathy, or what my friend simply, and somehow embarrassingly, described as "love."

In 1934 I went to command the detachment in Hindubagh. For the first few months I spent my leisure in studying Pushtu, but I found the acquisition of this virile language through the medium of artificially compiled text-books, a laborious and boring process and soon gave it up in favour of Hindi.

I have already said that although Urdu cannot be described as the language of the Muslims, Hindi can truly be called the

language of the Hindus. There is, moreover, an atmosphere about Hindi which is essentially Indian. The Devanagri character represents a perfect system of phonetics and is essentially Aryan in that it is written from left to right and uses symbols for both short and long vowels. The Arabic character, on the other hand, by virtue of its being written from right to left and of its lack of symbols for short vowels, has an atmosphere which is essentially Semitic, for these characteristics are only found in Semitic languages. When I began my Hindi studies, I became aware of a remarkable fact. During my efforts to learn Urdu none of the Muslim Indian officers or men of the battalion had taken any interest in my studies, nor did they display any interest in discussing matters of Muslim law or history. Directly I began Hindi, however, the Hindu officers and men took a lively, at times almost embarrassing, interest in my work. They were ready to discuss Hindu mythology and theology for hours on end, and sepoys constantly brought me their copies of the Ramayan and other books to look at. At one time practically every man in the detachment who could write regaled me with specimens of his caligraphy. I also found to my great surprise that my knowledge of Hindi made it much easier to talk to Punjabi Muslims for, generally speaking, the *common* words of Hindustani are Hindi.

But these gratifying revelations were accompanied by another of a more disappointing kind. I found that *"theth"* Hindi is a more or less artificial growth. It is hardly spoken at all by educated people, except in literary circles. Many Hindi newspapers make a point of never using any word which is not of pure Hindi or Sanscrit origin, and thus produce a language which is forced and takes no account of usage. A number of Arabic and Persian words have been finally accepted into Hindustani and are used by Hindus and Muslims alike. An instance of this is the word "kitab." It is merely pedantic to use the word "pustak" unless a religious book is referred to. There is, however, a growing body of opinion which regards usage as of paramount importance. It is well known that Tulsi Das used many Arabic words and so, much later, has that great writer, Prem Chand.

Generally speaking, I found Hindi incomparably more interesting than Urdu. I would even go so far as to say that it is impossible to understand Northern India without a knowledge of Hindi and of Hindu philosophy. The student of Hindi cannot fail to imbibe something of the spirit of "Bharat-varsh" which is so different from the "Hindustan" of the Moguls. If he reads

Tulsi Das' Ramayan and the Hindi version of the Mahabharata, he will begin to see that India "means intensely, and it means good." He will understand the essential beauty of Vedic India and will learn that Hinduism is something more than a jumble of superstitions about a thousand hideous gods. He will learn the meaning of Brahma and Paratma, and he will learn the virile nobility of the character of Krishna.

I well remember an interesting discussion during dinner in a very average Officers' Mess. The talk had turned to the subject of what interest was uppermost in the Rajput sepoy's mind. Some said hockey, some said his piece of land and some promotion. I ventured the notion that what really lay nearest his heart was the Ramayan of Tulsi Das. There was an awkward pause. Then someone asked if Tulsi Das was not a *bania* in the bazaar. I explained briefly who he was and one and all said that the sepoys would never have heard of him. At their own suggestion, I called in a Rajput orderly on duty at the Mess, and asked him who Tulsi Das was. When he had made sure that he had heard aright, the man's face cleared. At last he had been asked a question to which he really knew the answer. He told us who Tulsi Das was, and it took him about ten minutes.

I put the finishing touches to my Hindi in the United Provinces where I obtained the services of an Almora Brahmin who knew no English. I was, indeed, the first Englishman he had ever spoken to. Another of my *gurus* was a S.D.O. in the M.E.S., who was an able exponent of Yogi philosophy. Under his direction I learnt to "think about nothing" for about two seconds. It is extremely difficult and it had the effect of making me feel very ill.

When I had qualified as a First Class Interpreter in Hindi I began to read for the Degree of Honour in Urdu. My reasons were, I fear, largely mercenary, for the reward offered was high. I found "Taubat-i-Nasuh" interesting and "Fasáná-i-Azád" amusing, but the poetry I could not stomach. My teacher, though painstaking, had the wrong idea. He corrected my rendering "the gleaming bosom of my beloved" to "my friend's white chest." I struggled on through the middle of the hot weather and would, I think, have given it up even if a reprieve had not come in the shape of a summons to Simla. That was the end, for some years, of my Hindustani studies, but I do not, like some others who have taken up non-Indian languages, affect to despise Hindustani, and I am still convinced that in a knowledge of Hindi lies the key to the knowledge of India and her problems.

In the early part of this article I referred to the mistaken notion that Hindustani is best learnt through the medium of the Perso-Arabic or Devanagri scripts. The theory expressed is that while Latinization may be all very well for those who know the language already, it gravely complicates matters for those learning it for the first time. The reason given for this is that the student, if his own language is one written in the Latin character, will be inclined to give his own phonetic values to letters which are the same as those of his own tongue. This apparently formidable theory requires closer analysis before it can be accepted. It is generally admitted that similarities or differences among languages must be fixed rather by *sound* than by *sign*. That the French *ch* is pronounced like the English *sh*, and the German *ee*, *j* and *w* like the English *ay*, *y* and *v* are merely a few illustrations among thousands of a very common linguistic phenomenon. Another common phenomenon is that one language may contain several sounds unknown to two or three others. Ignoring the finer nuances, it may be mentioned that French has no equivalent for the English *th*, *ch* and *j*; the Modern Greek cannot pronounce without difficulty *b*, *j*, *sh* or *ch*. English itself is very weak in gutturals. There is, therefore, nothing new or exceptional in the fact that oriental languages have certain sounds which do not occur in the languages with which we are most familiar. The Turkish phonetic Latin alphabet gives 28 symbols for all the sounds used in Turkish. Of these sounds only two, the nasal *g* and the hard *i* (written in Turkish as undotted *i*), are not found in English, French, German or Italian. Of the remaining 26 sounds, 24 are found in English and the other two, ö and ü, in German, and are very easily acquired. Without addition of the Persian letters *pe*, *chim*, *zhe* and *gaf* the Arabic alphabet can only express 20 of the Turkish sounds.

In Urdu a greater number of unusual sounds can be found. The Arabic sounds of *ghain* and *qaf* (still approximately pronounced in Urdu), the hard *t*, *d* and *r*, the hard and soft *th*, *dh* and the aspirated *k*, *p*, *g*, *b*, *j* and *ch* cannot be found in the more common European languages. Nor, with the exception of the first two, can they be found in Arabic, which also lacks *p* and *ch* and adequate means of expressing *o*, *ai*, *au*, *g* and nasal *n*. Indeed, easily to express all the sounds of Urdu in any known alphabet (Devanagri excepted) is a matter of extreme difficulty, and the solution of this difficulty which seems to appeal least to the imagination is the use of a character inseparably bound up

with a system of phonetics as foreign to Urdu as it is to the great majority of the world's languages. All that can be done with the Arabic alphabet to indicate the sounds which it lacks is to add new letters by means of dots, a device which can as easily be employed in the Latin alphabet. Aspiration is unknown in Arabic phonetics, whereas it is common in Aryan languages. Finally, the Arabic method of indicating vowels and diphthongs is totally inadequate to meet the demands of Urdu. To all this must be added the collateral difficulties of the initial, medial and final forms of the Arabic characters and the fact that they are written from right to left. As in Persian, a foreigner wishing to obtain a complete knowledge of written Urdu would have to learn the Arabic character to which literature is at present confined, but those whose wish or duty it is to learn the language colloquially and to read only Romanized Urdu would, it is my belief, do much better to study the language through the medium of a suitably modified Latin alphabet.

What, it may be asked, of the Sanscrit or Devanagrí character which has existed in India for countless centuries and is still widely used by Hindus all over the country? Is it suited for the writing of Urdu? The answer is that it is admirably suited. It represents what is probably the most perfect system of phonetics ever known. Besides expressing all the Aryan sounds of Persian and Hindi, it can exactly express all the Arabic vowel sounds and all the Arabic consonants (as sounded in Urdu) except *kha, fa, ghain, qaf* and the *z* sounds, and these are all easily expressed by underdotting the Nagri aspirated *k, g* and *p* and the simple Nagri *k* and *j*.

Unfortunately, however, there are many serious objections to the universal application of the Nagri script to Urdu. The Arabic script was arbitrarily introduced during the despotic rule of the Moguls. The very suggestion that Indian Moslems should now write Urdu in Nagri would open up a whole range of problems even to visualize which is quite outside the scope of this article.

I shall not here give a list of books as I have done in previous articles. There are many grammars, dictionaries, reading books, manuals and books of idioms. The best advice available on this subject can be obtained from the Secretary to the Board of Examiners and I do not want to complicate his already difficult task by making suggestions with which he might disagree.

One word of advice on syntax. The key to Hindustani syntax is the adjectival use of the relative. When an Indian wants to say: "The letter which I wrote did not arrive," he never begins, like most Europeans: "Wuh chiṭṭhí . . . ." It is always "Jo chiṭṭhí maiṇ ne likhí thí, wuh nahíṇ áyí."

"A BLIND MAN SAT DOWN"

By "Zarif"

"Ani chhur lam tál táh kanshíh dyuthus náh."
A blind man sat down behind a pile of stones and thought that nobody had seen him.

—Kashmiri Proverb.

"He cannot be very far ahead of us now, Ram Lall."

Henderson halted at the top of the pass and sat on a rock to study the pineclad hills falling away below him. At the bottom of the valley, four thousand feet below, flowed the river Beas like a silver snake. To the left stood the gaunt line of the Chamba snows, cold, grim, forbidding; a jagged outline clear-cut against the brilliant blue of the sky. Above were a few vast fleecy clouds, immense tufts of cotton-wool dabbed on the blue blanket of Heaven. Vultures, minute specks at some immeasurable height, wheeled still-winged, keen-eyed, aloof from the earth.

"Háṇ, Huzoor!" The Dogra orderly smiled, a flash of teeth beneath a fierce black moustache. "Not so very far now. And when we find him—," he spat contemptuously, and quoted the native proverb, "he will be beheaded like the bitter end of a cucumber."

"Yes!" Henderson lit a cigarette slowly. "When we find him."

For five days Henderson and his orderly, with two coolies carrying their meagre baggage, had been travelling swiftly on the trail of Sher Ali Khan who had murdered Sir Urquhart M'Ilwraith, Inspector-General of Police. It was a dastardly outrage, as undeserved as it was cowardly. A wild figure darkening the doorway of the bungalow; a flash; a deafening report—and the fine old man had fallen forward over the polished table. Henderson, his assistant, who had been dining with him, had whipped out his revolver and fired. It was too late. The murderer had gone.

Sher Ali Khan fled to the hills from Lahore, and Henderson followed swiftly, determined to bring him to trial, and to avenge his chief. Past the Shalimar gardens at Moghalpura led the trail; down the Grand Trunk road where the Emperor Jehangir had ridden a splendidly caparisoned elephant between the ranks of

several hundred of his errant son's supporters, whom the Emperor had impaled on stakes, compelling the miserable Prince to ride beside him and tell him the names of the writhing victims. Past Amritsar, the site of whose Golden Temple was granted by Akbar to the fourth *Guru*. Up to Pathankot, the railhead at the foot of the Himalayas.

Here the trail switched right-handed into the Kangra Valley to the little village of Goler with two adjacent wells, a glass of water from one of which is said to weigh twice as much as a glass from the other. Up to Kangra Fort, "the Fort of the Ear," where the legendary Jalandhara, son of the Ganges by the Ocean, was struck prostrate by the jealous goddess Devi; he fell with his head in the Kangra Valley, his ear under the fort, his mouth at Jawalamukhi, his back at Jullundur, and his feet at Multan. On again past Jawalamukhi, where the marble temple on the hill has no idol, but enshrines a perpetual flame of iridescent gas, which, tradition says, the great Akbar tried to extinguish by building a conduit from a neighbouring spring into the temple. On and on led the trail, up the mountainside to the pass whence the track drops down to the village of Bagani.

While Henderson sat waiting for the panting coolies to reach the top of the pass, he took a police circular from his pocket. *"Sher Ali Khan, son of Gulab Khan."* The photograph showed a Muslim with a thick, black beard, a strong, evil face; but otherwise there was nothing distinctive about him. The slightest disguise would make him unrecognisable from a thousand other Muslims; but, it was stated, he had a star-shaped mole on his left shoulder. Henderson grunted. It would be easy enough to identify the man once he was arrested, but it was impossible to examine the left shoulder of every Muslim in the foothills of the Himalayas. It was unlikely that Henderson would get a glimpse of that damning blemish until he had caught his man; and Sher Ali Khan was cunning.

Frowning thoughtfully, Henderson folded away the circular, pulled out a map, and examined the landscape in front of him. "That," he observed, pointing to a tiny collection of houses some five miles off, "must be Bagani; and, two miles further on, on top of that sugar-loaf peak on the far side of the river, should be Bhambla Rest House." Ram Lall nodded his head in agreement, and gazed at the spot through puckered eyelids. Henderson stood up and began the descent, following the narrow goat-track which twisted among the rocks, dropping steeply down to the

pine forest below. It was difficult country, but they had covered a steady thirty miles a day in their pursuit. Ram Lall's eyes flickered constantly over the countryside. He knew Sher Ali Khan to be a skilled shot, and he had no wish that either he or his Sahib should be "shot like a rabbit in a ride." Down they dropped to the warmer and more cultivated regions of terraced fields of wheat and rice, with hardy little cultivators squatting amid their crops performing mysterious rites with iron tools and pieces of gaudy rag. Down to the valley-bed, where they drew aside for a moment to watch some women worshipping Vasudeva-Krishna in the form of a *pipal* tree, pouring water on its trunk, walking round it a hundred and eight times in the course of the sun, and laying at its roots a copper coin, a Brahminical cord and sweetmeats. Ram Lall volunteered the prediction that it would be a new moon that night; it was only when the new moon fell on a Monday that this rite was performed. "Presently," he said, "an old woman will recite the tale of Satyavati, whose mother was a fish, and became, by Parasara the Rishi, mother of Vyasa who compiled the Vedas. But who wants to hear that tale again? These old women are full of tales. They try to make one believe in the *bis*-cobra, whose bite is fatal even to a man's shadow. And they say that the "Did-he-do-it" bird sleeps on its back with its legs in the air lest the heavens should fall upon it during the night." So they two went on together to the village of Bagani.

Here Henderson called another halt; there might be news. He went up to the raised stone platform which surrounded the largest tree in the village, the *thaṛṛi* where all the village gossip is to be heard while one rests in the shade. From this point of vantage every passer-by could be seen and engaged in conversation.

Henderson hoisted himself up and sat on the edge of the *thaṛṛi*. He lit a cigarette and smoked for some minutes in silence. Ram Lall cuffed a small boy and told him to call the *lambardar*. A collection of curious villagers gathered, standing round Henderson to stare unblinkingly, mouths agape.

Close-by, a sleepy-looking individual sat huddled in a dirty cotton sheet, pulling rhythmically at his *huqqa,* gazing straight before him. He was an oldish man, a Hindu, with a dirty shirt, ill-fitting cotton pantaloons and a small lace cap. His forehead was deeply lined with caste-marks. He looked as though he had not moved from his position for some hours. "Ho, brother!" said Henderson, "You look very wise and observant. Hast thou

seen a Muslim, a stranger, passing through this village, perhaps six hours gone?"

The man slowly removed the mouthpiece of the *huqqa* an inch from his lips, gazed uncomprehendingly at Henderson for a moment until he seemed to realise that he was being addressed. "Háṇ-jí?" Henderson patiently repeated his question. The man smiled toothlessly, and waggled a hand, palm foremost. *"Angrezí nahíṇ jántá,* Sáhib." Henderson assured him that he could well believe that, but that he had not been addressing him in English; he had used a most fluent vernacular.

On hearing the question for the third time, and after it had been repeated to him by several of the onlookers, the man thought for some time, spat reflectively, and shook his head. "Nahíṇ, Huzoor!" "Think again, brother," said Henderson softly. The *huqqa* bubbled furiously. The man expelled a puff of acrid smoke, wiped his mouth on the back of a horny hand, and addressed himself to Ram Lall; the *Sáhib* obviously could not understand. "Nahíṇ! All day have I sat on this *thaṛṛí,* but it is too high to see anyone."

Ram Lall snorted, and looked keenly at the man's bloodshot eyes. "Oh worthless son of a noseless mother!" he mocked, "it is not the height of the *thaṛṛí* which has made thee blind, but the depth of the *thaṛṛá* (strong liquour) which thou hast drunk!" The ripple of laughter from the villagers which met this sally was interrupted by the arrival of the headman, who came bowing and scraping in an agony of apprehension. The arrival of a Police *Sáhib* in the village must surely mean trouble. Could it be that the Police had heard about his very natural confiscation of Masti Lalita's savings, or—but what was the *Sáhib* saying? A Muslim *badmásh,* passing through the village? He broke into voluble speech. "Oh, but yes! It must have been just before midday that the pig of an outcaste had passed through the village and showered curses upon us. He answered none of our enquiries.

When we offered him food and rest—not knowing who he was, of course—he spat upon us and went his way. After he had passed, I said to my wife's cousin's son "Surely that is an evil rascal." Had I but known that your Honour wanted him, I would without doubt have detained him."

"Without doubt!" agreed Henderson, heaving himself off the *thaṛṛí* to put an end to the chatter of this garrulous old man.

Calling to his coolies to follow, he strode out of the village, crossed the river by the crazy wooden pile-bridge which was swept

away every year by the spate, and began the steep ascent to the Rest House on the sugar-loaf peak. His path was cut into the face of an almost sheer cliff. Half way up the track, he noticed, lying in his path, a piece of paper wrapped about a stone. Picking it up, he smoothed out the paper. It was a copy of the very Police circular which he had in his own pocket. On it was written a message in the vernacular: "*Let not the well of courage be muddied with the stick of foolhardiness. Go back. Sher Ali Khan.*"

"Our friend seems to be finding the pace a little too hot for him," thought Henderson. This message, combined with the news which the *lambardar* of Bagani had provided, showed that the man was somewhere near. It remained now but to find him. Henderson did not mind whether he caught him dead or alive, but he was determined to have the man's body, and he would search unceasingly until he found him. He continued his climb up the steep path, and arrived at the little plateau on the top where the small Rest House had been built. The bungalow was locked, and there was no sign of life anywhere. "Go and call the *chowkidar*, Ram Lall," said Henderson, as he sat wearily down on the stone verandah, his legs dangling over the edge. He pulled out his notecase and examined a list of all the *chowkidars* of the various Rest Houses in the district.

Then he gave himself up to the contemplation of the landscape. The sun, a great crimson globe, was sinking down behind the majestic hills in a blaze of glory. The shadows of the evening had lengthened, making the green tones of the pine forest even richer than before. It was very lovely, very peaceful.

A soft step behind him brought Henderson to his feet.

There stood the *chowkidar*, a middle-aged Hindu of surly aspect. "Hullo, *chowkidar*!" said Henderson cheerfully. "Can I spend the night here? Good!" He pulled the list from his notebook and consulted it. "Let me see . . . . Bhambla Rest House. . . . I suppose you are *chowkidar* Shib Ram?" "Huzoor!" The *chowkidar* made a deep salam. "Well, Shib Ram it's a grand spot here. Open the bungalow for me, will you, and let my coolies dump my kit inside. I've got all my food with me, so I shan't want anything except a lamp. I've got to go on again early to-morrow morning, so I want to get dossed down to-night as soon as I can. By the way, I suppose you haven't seen an unpleasant-looking Muslim *badmásh* round here

to-day, have you? He's got a penchant for committing particularly foul murders." The *chowkidar* shook his head, and assured Henderson that no one had been to the Rest House for nearly three months. "Yes," thought Henderson, "and you've been asleep all day, I'll bet!" "Well, never mind," he added aloud, "Get me that lamp, will you, and get the bungalow opened up."

Henderson sat down again on the verandah, watching the last passionate glories of the sunset. There was a tall mountain ash growing beside the Rest House, a blaze of vermilion blossom which the richness of the evening glow warmed into flame. Henderson, gazing at this tree, marvelled at the beauty of it. It was perfect; almost too perfect to be real. Suddenly he cocked his head on one side and listened. There was a rushing sound, the sound which teal make coming down to the water, the sound which a shell makes as it tears through the air. The next instant a vulture alighted awkwardly in the tree and folded up its wings. It cocked an eye at Henderson, and then gazed away over the roof of the bungalow. It was very early for vultures to come down to roost, thought Henderson; and anyhow, did they come down as low as this at this time of the year? He walked out of the verandah, and stood staring up into the sky.

A fat yellow planet winked slowly at him; was it Venus, or Saturn?—he could never tell. Another vulture joined the first; then two more came, alighting directly onto the roof, and walked out into the middle of it, out of sight.

He could hear their talons scratching on the corrugated iron as they walked with that peculiar stiff-legged hopping gait. "Odd!", he thought.

He went back into the bungalow, where Ram Lall was arranging his luggage. The *chowikidar* came in, bearing a bundle of firewood and tinder which he thrust into the hearth and kindled with much puffing and blowing. The first feeble flicker soon gained courage, and presently there was a roaring blaze of sweet-smelling pine-logs, making the whole room more cheerful. "That's better," said Henderson, pulling a long cane chair nearer to the fire, and settling himself down comfortably.

'Does the Sahib want anything more?" asked the *chowkidar*.

"Nothing, thanks very much, said Henderson, giving him a wave of dismissal. The *chowkidar* salaamed and turned to go.

"Oh, Shib Ram!" said Henderson, "Sher Ali Khan..." The *chowkidar* stopped with his hand on the door and looked back.

"... Sher Ali Khan is the name of the man I was telling you about Let me know if you hear anything about him to-night. That's all. Good night!" The *chowkidar* salaamed again, and shuffled out of the room.

Presently Henderson got up, told Ram Lall to go to bed and to call him at six the next morning. Then he sat down to supper.

* * * *

Ram Lall sat down in the *chowkidar's* hut.

"Ho, *chowkidar*!" said he, in his loftiest tone. "Fetch me some wood, some water, some flour and butter instantly."

The *chowkidar* glared at him. The insufferable insolence of these underlings! The obsequious manner which he had used before the Sahib was gone. "Fill your belly with what you can, Toady! I give you nothing!"

Ram Lall stared in astonishment. Was that the way to speak to a foot-constable? He bridled. "Do as I order at once!"

The *chowkidar* walked over to Ram Lall and stood in front of him, his face close to the other's. "Understand this, policeman! I am not *your* servant to be ordered about by any dog of an un . . ." He checked himself suddenly as Ram Lall's hand closed over the butt of his pistol. "I go to get thee food," he said in a voice which was dull and toneless. "One cannot rebel against such tyranny as this." He bent his head and left the hut.

Ram Lall, very satisfied with the obvious impression his high-handed manner had made, squatted on his hunkers and lit a cigarette. Lifting his *pagri* carefully off his head, he hung it on a nail, unbuckled his belt, and prepared to enjoy himself. The *chowkidar* returned, bringing food, which he put on the floor at a little distance from the orderly.

"The price of these things is annas three, policeman. Pay me the reckoning, and I give thee the food."

Ram Lall chuckled, rose to his feet and picked up the food himself. "Let the sum be added to my Sahib's bill. He is rich." He laughed carelessly. The *chowkidar's* eyes narrowed. He retired to his corner of the hut, where he lay down on his charpoy and rolled himself up in a blanket

Ram Lall busied himself with his cooking. and in a short time he had made himself a steaming *chappatti*, which he stuffed into his mouth in great handfuls.

"Ho, brother," he said more graciously, when his stomach was filled, "from what country dost thou come?"

The chowkidar grunted. He was clearly resenting the former high-handed manner of the orderly.

"Dost thou come from Gurdaspur?" persisted the constable.

"Nahin. I have been to those parts, but the water is bad and I do not like the heat," grumbled the other at last.

"My brother's wife's father comes from Gurdaspur," prattled the policeman, lighting another cigarette from a glowing ember of wood and breathing in a strong mixture of smoke and air. "I went up there once; but it was a poor country. Where is your village?"

There was no reply. The *chowkidar* was lying on his bed, staring at nothing. "Ho brother! I asked thee where is thy village?"

"I come from Goler way," growled the man.

"Ah, I know not Goler. But I went once to the fair at Narihana in the course of my official duties, and I believe Narihana is very close to Goler."

There was a short silence.

"There is a very good temple at Narihana," continued Ram Lall presently, "a temple to Shivaji. Knowest thou the pundit there, one Pír Jaimal Nath?"

The *chowkidar* grunted. "Without doubt. It was he who invested me with the janeo (sacred thread)." He laughed shortly. "Yes, he gave me the janeo." He chuckled away to himself.

Ram Lall washed his hands ceremoniously in a pannikin of water, muttered a prayer to Shiva, and rolled himself up in his blankets. "Ah, Pír Jaimal Nath is a good man," he continued. "So he performed the upanyana for you, did he?"

The *chowkidar* grunted. "Peace to all this chatter. The night was made for sleep." He turned out the lantern.

Ram Lall rolled over in his blankets so that he faced the other man; but the hut was so dark that he could only just see his outline. He began to breathe heavily; but he did not sleep, for just then Ram Lall was thinking harder than he had ever thought before. "Now all this is very strange talk," he said to himself. "Here is a man who says that he comes from Goler. He also agrees that the Pundit of Narihana is Pír Jaimal Nath, and that this pundit had invested him with the *janeo*. But Pir Jaimal Nath is my own *parohit*, whose name I merely gave to test him. *Brahmchári* Kirroo, my wife's uncle, is Pundit of Narihana since the last forty-three years. Now how can this thing be?"

He lay there, turning this problem over in his mind.

"What was it the man said to me in his anger? What was it that he said when I very rightly ordered him to get me some food?

Surely he said, 'Understand this, policeman, I am not *your* servant to be ordered about by any dog of an un . . . !' Now what was that word he was going to say? Could it—could it have been 'Unbeliever'?"

Ram Lall's brain stretched almost to cracking point. Could it be that Shib Ram was not a Hindu at all, *but a Mohamedan*?

But this must be nonsense. He had said that he had undergone the ceremony of the *upanyana,* and no Mohamedan would know of that. But *had* he said so? No, he said that he had been invested with the *janeo,* which every Mahomedan knew about. It was he, Ram Lall, who had mentioned the *upanyana,* and the man had made no satisfactory reply.

"Policeman?"

What was that? Had the *chowkidar* whispered to him? Or was his imagination playing tricks? Where was his police training?

He must breathe, breathe, breathe regularly.

"Policeman!" There it was again. So the *man* had called!

Well, he would not answer. He would watch. And he would pretend to be asleep. He must breathe, breathe, breathe regularly.

Ram Lall strained his eyes to watch. Although his breath came with the slow rhythm of a sleeping man, his heart was pounding madly against his ribs.

A shadow slipped out of the door. The man had gone.

Quickly the orderly rose to his feet, flitted silently through the doorway, and paused outside, uncertain which way the man had gone. With every nerve strained he listened, but he could hear nothing save a lone dog barking down in the valley. The new moon, the merest slip of silver in a pitch-black sky, had already sunk very low. The night was absolutely dark save for the pale pin-points of early starlight.

There! Surely a shadow had moved! Away up towards the bungalow! What did that man want up there at this time of night? The house was in darkness. Henderson Sahib was asleep Ram Lall decided that he must go up there at once to investigate. That man was up to no good.

Keeping in the deeper shadows, pausing every few paces to listen, the orderly crept along the path. His heart was pounding

loudly; his breath coming in such snatches that his ears buzzed when he swallowed. Desperately he fought to listen.

What was that in the doorway of Henderson Sahib's room?

Was it a man? Ram Lall stared and stared. Could he see a vague suggestion of a man's outline in the doorway, or was his imagination mocking him?

And then his heart missed a beat; the back of his mouth arched and became suddenly dry. He had seen a glint, just the merest moving glint for a fraction of a second. The man *was* standing in the doorway of Henderson Sahib's room. And Henderson Sahib was asleep. The man's heavy revolver crashed in the night, shattering the silence.

Ram Lall rushed forward as the man came running swiftly away from the house. Instinctively Ram Lall put out his foot. The man tripped, and fell heavily, the revolver flying out of his hand to skid away in the bushes. The orderly flung himself on the prostrate figure, and tried to grapple with him. But the man was too strong. In a trice he had twisted out of the orderly's grasp, and was gripping him round the throat, choking him, throttling him. Ram Lall wrenched his head away, and yelled with all his might. "Sahib! Sahib!!!" And then, in an agony of despair, he remembered that his Sahib had been murdered, and that he was now all alone at the mercy of this same murderer.

A dark figure dropped down from the roof of the verandah and ran towards them. There was a click, and the man was securely handcuffed.

"Bring him into the house," said Henderson brushing the dust off his coat. Gasping, Ram Lall kicked the figure to its feet, and dragged it into the room.

"And now let's see what we've caught," said Henderson, lighting the lamp, and turning to look at his captive.

"Ah! Our friend the *chowkidar*!" Henderson strode up to him, seized the man's shirt and ripped it back from the left shoulder.

There, on the brown skin, was a livid star-shaped mole.

* * * *

"Yes, it was the vultures who began it," said Henderson, reclining in a long chair at Headquarters some days later. "I couldn't think what they were up to on that roof, so I went up to have a look. There I found the newly murdered body of the real *chowkidar,* poor old Shib Ram. He had been shot through the head, and his clothes had been taken away, leaving him a stark

corpse for the vultures to dispose of. Then I recollected that the man who had claimed to be the chowkidar had got a blotchy complexion, just such a one as a man has after he has shaved off a thick beard. And then I remembered that when I had addressed him as Shib Ram he had not seemed to hear; but when I called the name "Sher Ali Khan" he jumped as though he had been stung. It was a clever idea, murdering the *chowkidar,* taking his clothes and impersonating him. Who would expect a Muslim to impersonate a Hindu? He'd have probably got away with it if he had not been in such a hurry. And so he was like the man in the proverb, "A blind man sat down." But the vultures saw him. It was certainly lucky for me that I happened to be up on the roof when the blighter shot at my rolled up valise on the bed —drilled it clean through. He always was a fine shot. I should probably have had another long chase after him if my orderly hadn't been there to trip him up.

I still cannot quite understand how Ram Lall came to be in just the right spot at the right moment. He's pretty thick in the head as a rule, but I've put him in for a medal for this"

CAIRO CONVERSATION

By "Zamalek"

The stone-flagged terrace between the Continental Hotel and the street was dotted with chairs and small tables. Most of them were occupied by parties of officers, with some of whom there were nursing sisters in their grey uniforms. Here and there sat parties of civilians; they might have been of almost any nationality but English—and probably were. In the street below passed the usual unending crowd of Egyptian men and women. Many of the latter still wore the veil, which might have been invented by Norman Hartnell, for it hides their ugly noses and over-large mouths and lets only their eyes be seen; their eyes are sometimes pretty. In this crowd was a number of khaki-clad soldiers from all parts of the Empire, wearing serge or battle-dress. A few were sunburnt deeper than brown, and these had come in from the desert. They were fit—and more than fit, hard—because of the climate and conditions of the desert. Some were pale and looked weary; they worked in military offices which had once been flats inhabited by the professional classes. The offices did not all work in the afternoon, so at this hour they too were able to see the sun for three or four hours.

At a table in a corner five officers sat and talked. Four were burnt brown, the fifth looked like the sub-stone slugs that gardeners meet when they dig new soil. He wore an arm-band and had ink on his fingers. His trade was as apparent as those of his companions.

"I wish I was allowed to waste my youth driving a 'waddling fortress' or whatever you call your vehicle, into enemy camps." He spoke to one who held a beret on his knee. "It is a job that requires nothing but infinite patience and belief in the English manufacturer, and in both I excel."

"I realise that you're paid to reduce everything to its lowest terms, chiefly so that you can then understand it, but actually in this case you're not very far wrong."

The beret-holder thought for a moment. "We are much more skilled at the mechanics of our business than you could appreciate, but beyond that we're dependent on three things: the man who chooses our road into the enemy's camp, as you call it; the sapper who clears that road, and the infantrymen who follow

behind, or wherever they do follow. I reckon they come in about that order of importance too. The road in must be the least obstructed and the least expected, which is rather hard to spot sometimes though it is easier if they have tanks, as then they must have a road out for them, which, of course, is a road in for us if it can be found. The sappers who clear the road are the objects of my deepest veneration." One of the party bowed and smiled. "Oh, I didn't see you were here, still the others of your crowd are really quite good." He who had bowed took up the tale: "It is the worst job I know, going out before breakfast—long before too, which I hate—and behaving like a poacher surrounded by game-keepers, trying to find mines which don't hurt me personally amongst a lot of other mines which were invented solely to destroy me. In addition to all that I have to keep looking up to see that no one is stalking me through the night with a Bowie knife. I won't do it again unless I have an infantry escort, and even then I'd have to buy them some rubber shoes to keep them quiet."

"You forget that we're the Queen of the Battlefield" (the infantryman didn't look like one). "I know we are because I read it somewhere, though I can't remember where. You wouldn't expect a queen to go through the stealthy night felonies you're describing. We do our work openly and unashamed; we have to for the sake of history." He changed his tone: "As a matter of fact we're getting on, and I see signs of murderous work at night coming in quicker than it did in the last war. My C.O. even encouraged night training in peace-time and wasn't thought very "gauche" on that account. I believe that in quite a short time we could produce some quite useful guardians for you during your horrid work; but it would need a lot of training to get most of our men to work quite so gingerly at night. Also you'd probably touch off all your destructive works before we got clear, so that we'd get caught when everything opened up. But everyone regards us as an expendable store instead of the queen I read about." He sighed.

The last member of the quintet looked at the infantryman: "I don't regard you as an expendable store, in fact I've recently taken great trouble blowing a way for you into several enemy towns. Each time it was exactly like practice camp except that there were no safety precautions and I didn't have to stop as soon as I'd got on to the target. It's been a gunner's paradise so far to me and mine. In fact I've only met one man who seemed to

enjoy it more. He was an infantry soldier—shot through the hand—which hurts. He had obviously not slept, shaved or washed, for some time. He was sitting in a ditch with a certain amount of stuff going off all round him. I said, in the hope of cheering him up a bit, 'Its a pretty awful war, isn't it?' He smiled all over his face and said 'Yessir, but it's better than no war at all.' So I'd hate to think of him as expendable. But I was telling you about practice camp. . . ." The pale and ink-stained officer turned quickly to the sapper. "Your third factor —the infantry who go with you—well?" "Well, they vary," he said. "What we want is men who are devilish quick to follow and take over or help. We can't talk to them once we're on the move, and in any case they're usually too far behind, but you'd think it was pretty simple reasoning to reckon that if we stop or turn out of our course then we want something done. Now some infantry are wonderfully quick to come up and help, and others will wait till we've worked it all out for them. After all they've got carriers that can keep some sort of touch between us and their naked bodies behind. We don't expect them to go ahead of us, but if we have to change course to avoid something, we don't want to have to wait about whilst they decide to take over as far as we've gone. Then if we run into some unforeseen obstruction they can only help if they are there. It's flattering, of course, to be regarded as capable of doing everything unaided, which is what some of them do, but it's not the right view to take."

"I won't quarrel with that," said the infantryman, "but I think some of you are apt to get a wrong picture of what's going on outside your box. In fact I heard that several of your men have opened up because they thought it was all over bar the cheering, and then found that they've let in quite a little shower of bullets. There's so much British industry between you and the outside world that you're apt to become a bit detached from the facts of life."

The pale and inky officer pulled up his arm-band, a gesture that meant that he was going to say that he'd got to go back to work, but the former forestalled him.

"Back to it!" he said. The others laughed and went off—to get down to it, leisure and "coffee-housing" forgotten.

BURMESE DAYS

By Officer Cadet No. 269—J. M. Grant

From 1935 to 1939 I had the good fortune to be stationed in Burma. I call it "good fortune" advisedly, as the country and people are among the most fascinating I have ever seen. My work took me over the entire country at frequent intervals, and brought me into contact with all types; and, as the Burman is invariably happy to tell the enquiring European all about the customs of the country, I was thus enabled to gather a considerable amount of information about peoples, manners and religion.

Though geographical descriptions are apt to be tedious, I might just mention that the country—until three years ago, incidentally, not a country at all, but a province of India—is some 1,300 miles long from north to south and about 600 miles wide at its broadest part. This represents an area considerably greater than that of France —before the war of course. The frontiers of the country are Tibet and Assam in the north, Yuman and Siam in the east, Malaya in the south, and the Bay of Bengal in the west. You will readily appreciate, therefore, that a country of this considerable extent will be exceedingly diverse in character—and so it is. In Upper Burma there are great dry zones of stunted scrub, wet zones of thick jungle, cultivated plains and slopes and, in the extreme north, a wilderness of frontier hills. Lower Burma consists largely of the rich, flat valley of the Irrawaddy, heavily cultivated; with the Delta, flat as a billiard-table as far as the eye can see, and with a labyrinth of channels, which used to make me wonder how on earth the launches and steamers of the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company found their way about at all. As we go further south we find thickly wooded hills stretching Eastwards to Siam, and off the western seaboard, there are the thousand-and-one islands of the Merqui Archipelago. A leisurely sail through these in the little steamer which plies between Merqui and Rangoon is an experience one does not readily forget.

The peoples, too, are as diverse as the country, although they are all markedly Mongolian in type; and an ethnologist travelling from the Talaings in the South, through the Burmese of the middle country to the Karens, Shans, Chins, Kachins, Was, Arakanese and a dozen others, would find sufficient material for study

to last a few lifetimes. But over all this diversity there is an atmosphere which has an irresistible appeal for anyone who has ever been in Burma! An atmosphere of gaiety, of kindly tolerance, of hospitality, and, above all, of colour. For the Burmese—and by the term I now include all the races of the country—are essentially a colourful people. The imagery—I might almost say the fantasy—of their customs and legend, are reflected in their daily round, even in their dress, and nowhere will you find a more likeably colourful scene than at a Burma festival, however small and unimportant. To anyone going to Burma from India it is specially striking, for gone is the universal white of Indian clothing, to be replaced by all the colours of the spectrum. The bright yellow robes of the priests mingling with the crowd of gay loongyis (or skirts) worn by both sexes, make a constantly shifting kaleidoscope of colour which is in complete harmony with the gold of the pagodas, the intricate gilt carvings of the many-roofed buildings, and the brilliant reds and yellows of the flowering trees.

I have mentioned the imagery, the thread of fantasy which runs through Burmese life and customs, and nowhere is this better to be seen than in their religion. Although the Burman is nominally a Buddhist, there is even to-day a very strong strain of animism or spirit-worship closely interwoven with the "official" religion of the country. The number of these spirits or *Nats* as they are called is legion. There are the *Nat* brothers Shwe Byin Gyi and Shwe Byin Ngi, who are the most powerful of the spirits; there is the child *Nat* Ma Nemi who lives in the cradles of babies and makes them laugh; there is the Yin Gyi who was stolen away by nymphs because of his exquisite playing of the harp; there is Maung Tint De, the blacksmith of Tagaung: and about thirty others who are universally known and venerated all over the country. In addition, there are hundreds of lesser *Nats*, each with some particular fame in his own locality, for when anyone dies who has been celebrated during life, he generally becomes a *Nat* and his shade is venerated accordingly. There is one *Nat* to be found in the Southern Shan States, unique for the reason that he is an Englishman—or rather the departed spirit of one! This is a Mr. J. C. Greer of the I.C.S., who was so much liked and respected by the Shans during his life that on his death in 1915 they built a statue of him, and to-day he is one of the leading *Nats* in his district. I do not think his fame extends to other parts of the country, as I have only heard of him in the S.S.S.

The *Nats* I have mentioned are all of the fairly benevolent variety, but there are others which require to be very frequently propitiated if ill-luck is to be avoided. There is one in particular who is very fond of giving his victims a stomach-ache, and he must be very carefully propitiated. Indeed, the propitiation of the various unfriendly *Nats* is a daily affair with the unsophisticated villager, while his attendance at the pagoda is only a weekly one, or, rather like ourselves, even less often.

Another respect in which the imaginative nature of the Burman is apparent is in the place names of the country, many of which are very intriguing to the European. For instance, Hanthawaddy—"The district of the duck;" Shwe Nyaung Bin—"The Golden Banyan Tree Town;" Wa Sein Taung—"Green Bamboo Hill Town;" Myit-kyi na—"Near the Big River Town;" Ye-nan-gyaung—"Smelly water creeck." Ye-nan-gyaung is of course the main oil-field of the Burmah Oil Co., but long before they came on the scene the Burmese were collecting the oil by means of crude shafts dug in the ground, and even before that by skimming it off the surface of pools where it exuded from outcroppings. One could go on mentioning these names by the score, for almost every place-name in Burma has its meaning, but I shall mention only two more. First Rangoon itself, which is really a corruption of the two Burmese words "Yan-gon" meaning "the end of the war." It was christened in 1755 by King Alaung-paya, who was rather pleased with himself at having driven the Talaungs into South Burma where they are to this day. Actually, it was by no means "the end of the war" as far as Rangoon was concerned, as some seventy years later there was very bloody fighting in the first Burmese War. And the last place-name I propose to mention is one which has never failed to amuse one. This is Pyin-ma-na, a thriving town in Upper Burma. The name means "Lazy people don't stay here!" I must say that on arriving there to stir up a sub-agent of my former employers, I was rather struck by the singular inappropriateness of the name.

As well as place-names, various times of the day have been rather originally christened. There is the time just before the dawn "when there is light enough to see the veins in the hand." Although of course the ordinary times of the day are used in the towns, even to-day in the country districts an hour of the day is indicated by a phrase giving some vague approximation only; such as "monks' begging time," about six or seven in the morning; "monks' returning time," about eight. "Sky-closing time," about

six P.M.; "brothers don't know each other time," just after dark; "lads go courting time," about 9 P.M., and "heads laying down time" about 10 P.M. in the country. It seems difficult to believe that phrases of the kind are actually used to-day, but such is the case. Burma of the country districts is a country singularly untouched by what we are pleased to call the march of progress. Duration of time, too, is measured in this manner. Thus "the length of a betel-chew" denotes about ten minutes, "The boiling of a pot of rice" about twenty minutes; so that if one is told that a certain event will take place in about "two pot-boils and a betel-chew" it does not require any great effort of mental arithmetic to work out the time. Measures of distance show this picturesque phraseology. Thus the phrase "a stone's throw" is as familiar to the Burman as to the Englishman; "the sound of a shot" indicated about half a mile, and rather a complicated one is "morning meals distance," i.e., as far as a man could walk between sunrise and breakfast time, say about six miles. So when any one asks what time you get up in Belgaum, tell him "when there is light enough to see the veins in the hand." If he has ever lived in Burma, he will understand!

It is rather interesting to follow the daily round of a Burman, and we might begin by taking an imaginary character whom we will christen "Maung Sein." Let us look first at his name itself. There is no such thing as a surname in Burma, and every male Burman is "Maung" something, the feminine equivalent being "Ma." The names actually used are comparatively few, and one sees, for example, in the *Burma Gazette* that some official who is designated as Maung Sein (35) has been transferred from Mandalay to Rangoon. The "35" does not refer to his age, but means that there are 34 other officials all called Maung Sein! Thus you might quite easily have, say, the D.C., the D.S.P. and four or five of their subordinates in the same station all called Mg. Sein, which must make official correspondence a trifle difficult at times. However, let us take our mythical Mg. Sein and consider him as a typical Burmese up-country youngster of quite poor-class parentage. He is of school age, but, unlike his Indian counter-part, he really does go to school. The Buddhist monks, as part of their religious duties, act as teachers, with the result that the standard of literacy in Burma is unusually high for the East. It is, as a matter of fact, 80 per cent., in sharp contrast to India, which, I think—although I am not quite sure of my figure here—is about 30 per cent. literate. Well, our young friend re-

ceives a good solid grounding in the Buddhist scriptures, and he learns to read and write, so that by the age of eight or nine he has received quite a decent primary education. Lots of the poorer class lads stop here of course, but the art of writing, once learned, is one that is not easily forgotten and, as for his reading, there are all the innumerable books of Buddhist lore and tales of the *Nats* and the heroes of olden days at his disposal without any charge whatsoever. If he stays on in school, as he is perfectly free to do, he receives a somewhat meagre grounding in arithmetic and secular learning generally, but always the bulk of the instruction in the monastery school is, of course, religious. We will suppose, however, that he has attended school for the minimum period necessary to learn to read and write, and that he has now gone back to help his father tend whatever patch of land he has. His work in the fields will never be strenuous, for no Burman will work any harder than is necessary to feed his family and leave a little over for a new *loongyi* and something to gamble with at the next festival. It is because of this attitude of his that we find most of the paddy land owned by Indians and worked by Indian labour. The Burman takes rather a poor view of this, but is much too lazy to do very much about it! Our young friend, then, has plenty of leisure and, as he is now growing up, he begins to think of becoming one of the lads of the village and particularly of making himself attractive to young Ma Shume Chi down the road. To this end he must get himself extensively tattooed, and, although this custom is not much observed in the town nowadays, it is still carried on extensively in the districts. The Burmese tattooing is none of your simple affairs of an anchor on the forearm, but a most elaborate effort indeed. When finished, the whole body from the waist to below the knees is a mass of intricate figures, the effect being rather that of a pair of skin-tight pants. In some parts of the Shan States, the tattooing is even more extensive and I have actually seen a Shan tattooed from neck to ankle—a somewhat unusual and intriguing sight.

He will pick out the girl of his choice and the courtship will run on lines more European than Oriental, for according to the Buddhist Law there are three ways in which a marriage may be brought about: When the parents of the couple give them to one another; when they meet through the good offices of a go-between; and when they arrange the matter between themselves. So there is little excuse for incompatibility in a Burmese marriage. The three sections seem to cover all possibilities. The

actual marriage ceremony is very simple and is purely secular. In fact, the celibate priests would be scandalised if asked to take any part in it. In most cases the mere presence of the marriage parties is enough to make the union "official," though nowadays some sort of simple ceremony is generally performed by the village headman. Polygamy is recognised and permitted, but is seldom practised now. Divorce is easy, and highly practical. For instance, the wife may obtain a divorce if the husband is poor and unable to support her; if he is always ailing; if he refuses to work, or if he cannot carry out his marital duties for any reason. And a man may divorce his wife if she has no male children, if she has no love for her husband, or if she persists in some course of action of which he disapproves. One would think that with divorce so easy it would be a frequent occurrence, but actually it is remarkably infrequent. In my opinion Burmese law on divorce is a deal more sensible than our own, and certainly seems to work well.

To return to our friends, Mg. Sein and Ma Shwe Chi. Their domestic life is simple. Their little patch of paddy supplies their needs. There is seldom any occasion for either to exert themselves unduly, and never any occasion for them to worry about the future. Their greatest excitement is a jolting journey in a ramshackle bus to some pagoda festival, their greatest ambition to see the village boat successful at the Tha-din-gyut races, or the champion fighting cock defeat all comers. And so an uneventful life drifts along. Our couple will care nothing for the European assertion that they lead a lazy, aimless life. They have enough to live on, and the writings of all their philosophies say that wealth only brings new cares. Who shall say they are wrong?

I have tried to give you some slight idea of the Burmese character and probably the chief impression you have got is that it is singularly deficient in the martial qualities. At the same time, the Burmese Army before and up to the time of the British annexation of Burma had many a campaign against the Chinese, Arakanese, Shans, Talaungs, etc., and despite a marked lack of discipline and bad leadership gave many a good account of itself. What it was capable of under good leadership I shall presently try to show, but first, by way of contrast, let me quote from a contemporary account of a review of the Burmese Army at the time of King Thebaw in the 1880's. The troops mustered at an early hour between the inner and outer stockades of the Palace at Mandalay. They fell in in a vague formation of fours, and talk-

ing, smoking and chewing betel went on *ad lib*! The Commander-in-Chief and other officers meanwhile assembled in the inner court and after some three or four hours waiting the King appeared on his balcony and "inspected" his forces for about three minutes through a field glass, the forces being then in the somewhat unmilitary position of grovelling on their stomachs! This over, the officers mounted their elephants, the N.C.O.'s said "He!" and the men started off in some sort of a procession. The various officers wore whatever uniform took their fancy and all were either smoking or chewing betel. Behind the C.-in-C. came his umbrella-bearers. Then came the minor officers on ponies, each with a sunshade borne over his head and a score or two of spearmen on the flank. Mingled with the spearmen was a motley crowd of cheroot bearers, spitoon-carriers, betel-box holders and similar functionaries. At last, bringing up the rear came the actual fighting men. It was just possible to make out that they were marching in a column. They were extremely gorgeous chaps. All had red tunics with facings of yellow, green, blue, etc., but their trousers were very various. Some would be blue with a broad yellow stripe down the side—or, occasionally, for variety, down the front or back. Others blue and green, yellow and brown and so on *ad nauseam*. All had helmets with spikes but, as it is difficult to wear a helmet on the top of a "bun" of long hair, the helmets were as often as not carried on the end of their muskets. You will say—and you would be right—that such a rabble would not stand for a moment against a trained army. Nor was the Second Burmese War, which resulted in the annexation of Upper Burma, a very bloody affair. But there is, as I have mentioned, another side to the picture. In the first Burmese War, not so many years previously, the Burmese Army occasioned considerable loss to our forces and, indeed, under their leader, Bandula, isolated and immobilized the British Force around the Shwe Dagon Pagoda in Rangoon for no less than 10 months, during which time conditions became so bad for our troops that no less than 45 per cent. died of disease, the total British losses in the first Burmese War being 72 per cent. of all troops engaged.

To illustrate what the Burmese Army could do under a really capable leader, let me again quote a contemporary account of the investment of the British troops around the Shwe Dagon Pagoda at Rangoon. I quote from the actual account of Major Snodgrass, Military Secretary to the Expedition: "On the 1st of December," he says (this was in 1824), "we found ourselves completely

surrounded. . . . The line of circumvallation obviously extended a very considerable distance . . . . and as far as celerity, order and regularity are concerned, the style in which the different corps took up their stations in the line reflected much credit on the Burmese Commander. When this singular and presumptuous formation was completed, the soldiers of the left columns laying aside their spears and muskets, commenced operations with their entrenching tools with such activity and goodwill, that in the course of a couple of hours their line had wholly disappeared, and could only be traced by a parapet of new earth, gradually increasing in height. The moving masses had sunk into the ground; and by one who had not witnessed the whole scene, the existence of these subterranean legions would not have been credited—and to us who watched it seemed the work of magic and enchantment." And that is how the work of a Burmese Army impressed, not an imaginative writer, but a hard-headed soldier. Writing later, Major Snodgrass says: "The trenches were found to be a succession of holes capable of containing two men each, and excavated so as to afford shelter both from the weather and from fire: even a shell lighting in the trench could at most kill but two men. As it is not the Burmese system to relieve their troops in these approaches, each hole contained supplies of rice, water, and even fuel for its two inmates: and under the excavated bank a bed of straw or brushwood was prepared, in order that one man could sleep while his comrade watched. When one line of trench is completed, its occupiers, taking advantage of the night, push forward to where the second is to be opened, their place being immediately taken by fresh troops from the rear."

All this savours much more of 1914-18 than of 1825. The Burmese attacks continued fiercely for a week, and use was made of fire rafts two hundred feet long containing earthenware jars of petroleum and earth-oil which were floated down among the men-o'war at anchor in the river. One cruiser was severely damaged by this means. At length, however, fierce British counter-attacks were successful in breaking the Burmese line and Bandula withdrew to Donabyn on the Delta, where he had previously provided a fortified position and reinforcements. When the population of Rangoon began to filter back, he managed to introduce his own agents, who succeeded, on December 12th, in burning down half the town, the magazine only being saved by luck. (Note the 5th-column touch here.) The British forces were in no state to march against Donabyn for a further two months and they

then set out painfully, covering only about five miles a day. The bombardment of Donabyn began on April 1st and, unfortunately for the Burmese, Bandula was killed by a stray shot. His army could be induced to serve under no other General, and in the night they melted away—a complete illustration of the value of leadership in an Oriental Army.

I hope I have shown by these illustrations and quotations that the Burman could fight fiercely under a leader he knew and trusted. The same holds good to-day. A Company of Burma Sappers and Miners did well on the Tigris during the Great War and four battalions of the 70th Burma Rifles served in Egypt, Mespot and India.

When I left Burma in 1939 the Burma Rifles were in an extremely efficient state, being composed chiefly of the various indigenous tribes *plus* the low-country Burmans themselves. The low-country Burman excels in anything mechanical and makes an excellent bomber, machine-gunner or signaller. Burmese battalions will, I am sure, give a good account of themselves if called upon in the present war.

I hope I have succeeded in giving you some idea of the Burman: irresponsible, yes, but a very lovable type; cheery and of a remarkably set purpose when he is at a congenial task: not easily driven, but easily led. I have heard the Burman described as the Irishman of the East, and there would seem to be a good deal of truth in the description. He is at any rate fiercely proud of being a Burman. So we can perhaps appreciate his feelings when we hear him say with immense conviction, "Ba-ma pye' lak'pye' ma htu bu"—"There is no other country like Burma."

O'REGAN AT WAR

[Being letters from Captain Michael O'Regan of the 1st Bolton Irish (Territorials) to his brother Pat]

MY DEAR PADDY,

I'm sorry for the delay in sending you my news. But all my letters were returned by the censor because I wrote about the war. It was difficult to write about anything else, as I've been so busy knocking old Jerry.

However, I've been told that I can write anything I like now and, as everyone else seems to have written his experiences and most of them have been broadcast, I'm going to tell you what happened to me.

A few days after we'd completed our training, we suddenly got orders to pack and embark. This we did and, at once, I found a bit of our training had been omitted. You know what a bad sailor I am. Well, I hadn't been taught how to retain my dinner when the ship was heaving up and down! "Tiger" sent for me and I sent him a message back that I was "otherwise engaged." But he insisted on seeing me and so I staggered up to him and . . . . nearly ruined his best coat! "Mr. O'Regan," says he, "I was just going to tell you that I had decided to give you command of a company. But you are obviously unfit to command anything." Which seemed a bit hard, Paddy, because, after all, I had joined the Army and not the Navy.

Well, we all thought we were bound for France. But, when we sailed on and on, we realised that there was something queer happening. Eventually didn't we discover that we had got to Norway. We landed "midst the cheering mobs," so the paper said. But actually I saw nothing of them, as we landed in the dark.

Then we marched and marched and dug and dug. We were told to expect Jerry any day and so we waited for him. I'm glad he arrived on the fourth day, as Micky had lifted every penny I had by then, playing Poker.

Our position was on hills above a nice little village, in which I established my Headquarters, as I had discovered a homely family, with a very pretty daughter.

"After work, a little pleasure does us all good," was what old Tiger had taught us. So, the minute I had my company nicely dug in, I went to have a chat with my hosts.

"Parlez vous Francais," says I.

"Mais oui," says they, all in chorus.

"That's just too bad," says I, "as I can't speak a word."

Then I tried German.

"Sprechen ze Dautch?"

"Ya . . . Ya," they replied.

So of course I was stymied again.

Then it struck me they might speak English.

"I suppose you don't speak English," I suggested.

And the lovely little girl replied: "I do, but my parents do not."

"That's perfect," says I. "Shure me darlin', we can say what we like and they won't understand."

Oh, Paddy, she gave me such a wicked look. I knew I was going to like Norway.

However, I must tell you about the war.

On the fourth day, up comes Murphy, dragging a half corpse with him. Says he: "Excuse me, Master Frank, Sir. But can you tell me if this is a German?" "I caught the varmint near the rum store and, as he showed considerable resistance, I had to knock him out."

Murphy is so impetuous! I soon discovered, from my Guide Book, that he was an innocent Norwegian and I had to give him half my flask, to bring him round.

When he had recovered, he explained that he had been coming to warn us that the Germans were moving across the hill on our left. Now, this was serious, as that hill was higher than the one we were on. So I moved a platoon up there as quickly as I could and, of course, went with it myself, in case I missed any of the fun.

We had hardly arrived, when we saw the enemy approaching not two hundred yards away. They were just like flies crawling on the window pane. "Hold your fire," I whispered to Murphy, as I wanted to wait until we simply couldn't miss.

When they were about fifty yards away, I shouted "fire" and we let loose at them. They were taken completely by surprise and we got quite a good bag. They ran like blazes and I went back to Company Headquarters, as soon as it was dark.

On the way down, didn't I slip and sit down so hard that I tore a great hole in my pants.

When I got to the inn, I found supper waiting for me. However, I put business before pleasure and asked the little darling to do a little sewing for me. The awkward part was to know how to take my trousers off and give them to her, as the only room, other than bedrooms, was the dining-sitting room. However, these foreign girls don't seem to mind. "Don't be so foolish," says she. "Give me your trousers and get on with your meals."

As she hadn't finished mending them by the time I went to bed, I asked her to give them to me in the morning.

At about 5 A.M. I woke up to hear shooting all round. I leapt out of bed and . . . of course . . . no trousers. I shouted and shouted but got no answer. In rushed Murphy yelling "Come at once, the . . . Bosche is in the village!" There was nothing for it but to bolt as I was and we were soon so busy shooting that I forgot all about not having any trousers on. That went on all day. We fought a Rear Guard action and my company was Rear Party. We gave Jerry something to remember and it was only after he had stopped following us and I suddenly felt mighty cold about the middle that I had time to think about me trousers—or rather the lack of them!

By then, of course, I had no idea where the little girl or my trousers had got to. Neither of them was in the house, as Murphy and I had found every room empty before we left.

I saw some of the men looking at me and I felt so ashamed that I handed over command to Tim and retired to the rear.

I was passing Battalion Headquarters and hoping to find the Adjutant, to borrow his spare pair of trousers, when I saw "Tiger" White standing roaring laughing at me. "Since when have ye joined the Highlanders, Mr. O'Regan?" says he. "Come in here, there is someone anxious to meet you."

He then ushered me in to his room and there I found the little girl holding up my trousers and laughing. You can imagine my embarrassment. I seized them from her and went outside to put them on. Old Tiger followed me out and, with a broad wink said, "I admire your taste, Mr. O'Regan. Go in there and thank her. But don't take more than half an hour doing so, as I expect your company wants you."

Well, Paddy, that was the end of our first battle. The second engagement was a triumph for Murphy. Between casualties

and sickness I was forced to promote him and then didn't his Platoon Commander go sick? So he marched out at the head of a platoon and he knows no Tactics at all. When I asked him about the Principles of the Attack, he replied "I don't rightly know, Master Frank, Sir. But me orders to the men are . . . 'Obey me orders and follow me wherever I go *or* be heaven I'll cut the tripes out of ye!'" Now that's not the way a commander ought to talk to his men and I explained to him that he must realise his position as a Platoon Commander.

The next week one of my platoons was taken to be taught how to ski. Murphy went in command and I did not see him for a fortnight. When he came back he was just able to stand up on his skis and not much more! The first time he saluted me he fell down heavily and I could not help laughing. "Oh ye may well laugh," says he, "but these were not included in the normal equipment of a soldier when ye made me join up." Poor Murphy! I think his feelings had been quite hurt the way he went away rubbing his backside!

My company was holding two hills that formed a sharp angle and I had one platoon on one hill and another on the other. My third platoon, Murphy's, was in reserve, being nominally more mobile than the others.

Jerry attacked on the third day at dawn and it was just a matter of numbers. We shot and shot, but more and more came on. They had guns and we had none. So by 3 p.m. things were not looking too good. Then I decided it was time to hit the enemy hard. My plan was to suddenly counterattack with Murphy's platoon the next time Jerry's attack was well under way.

The slope was fairly gentle on the right and I thought most of the men would remain standing up coming down it. The slope on the left was awfully steep and ended with a cliff about fifteen feet high.

I sent for Murphy and he could not be found. He and his platoon had gone off to practise ski-ing in the early morning and had not returned. That was a sad blow. Just before Jerry attacked again I got orders to withdraw and I just didn't know what to do about Murphy. I waited until the last possible moment and by then Jerry was on the move. The company on my right had already gone and I knew that it was going to be difficult to get back at all, with Jerry following us up closely. I managed to withdraw the left platoon but the enemy then concentrated everything on wretched Tim's platoon. It was fair

hell and Tim himself had already been wounded and was carrying on with difficulty. Jerry advanced shouting "Hochs" and "Heils" and thought he had a soft thing. It was then that there was an extraordinary noise in the trees on the hill on the left. I couldn't see anything for a few seconds.

But then, in a cloud of snow, down came Murphy's platoon, travelling at about a hundred miles per hour. My heart stood still, as I knew the slope was so steep and I remembered that cliff at the bottom.

But the Germans were far more surprised than I was and they halted. From the cloud of snow there might have been thousands of men coming down. Thank heaven the hill was a small one and most of the men arrived down either on their skis or on their bottoms.

The enemy didn't wait. They beat a hasty retreat and I sent Owen's platoon back to help Murphy to collect his platoon and get it back. I went with them and there I found Murphy sitting on the top of a fat Boshe, with both his skis broken and the point of one half way through another Jerry. He was rubbing his eyes and seemed a bit dazed, so I brought him to himself by speaking roughly, "Sergeant Murphy," I said, in a stern voice, "collect your platoon at once and take it back to that hill." "Right, yer honour," says he, "but anyone can have these flaming slides. Ye can shoot me if ye like, but I'll never put them on again, not for anyone." With that, he undid his skis and pushed off to get his men back.

Later in the evening I heard the rest of the story. Apparently they were practising hard, when they heard firing. So they came towards the noise and reached the top of the hill, just in time to see Tim's predicament. They had already decided they could not possibly get down such a steep slope as they were on, safely. But Murphy saw there was no time to get back and round to the other side. So he extended the platoon, put himself at the head and said, "follow me." So that he would be there, to lead his platoon, Murphy had a man on both sides of him holding him up and that was how he got as far as the cliff. At the cliff they let go and he turned a complete summersault before he landed in the exact position I found him in. His unexpected attack saved a difficult situation and he certainly has plenty of guts, even if he is a poor skier!

I told Tiger what had happened. He sent for Murphy and told him that he was recommending him for a decoration. "That's mighty kind of ye, Sir," replied Murphy. "But ye can roast me before ye ever get me back onto them invintions of the divil."

FLOATING DOWN THE INDUS: A SUGGESTION FOR TEN DAYS' LEAVE

By P. E. M. Armesdale

To most of us in India, ten days' leave constitutes a problem, though it is often the problem of when we will get it rather than where we will go. Even so there must be many officers, both bachelors and married, who feel they would like a real change of scene and a good rest, but cannot think of anywhere to go. To them the Indus trip is offered as an ideal solution, a really lazy ten days spent floating down a big river, free from dust and noise, seeing a part of India that is probably new to them and offering enough occupation in the form of rifle-and-shotgun shooting to add that spice of excitement without which any leave is dull.

There is the choice of three trips: From Attock to Mari Indus, from Mari to Dera Ismail Khan and from D. I. K. to Dera Ghazi Khan. Any of these can easily be done in ten days, and all offer good sport and interesting scenery. The further south you go, the less attractive the country becomes, but the duck, geese and *gharial* are more plentiful and less wary. Let us assume you have chosen to start at Mari Indus.

First, you have to engage a *shikari*. The spot man for that stretch of the river is Anár Khan, who is the Station Staff Officer's gardener at Mari Indus. He has been organising shooting trips for the last fifteen years. If he can be spared you should get in touch with him a few weeks in advance, letting him know the numbers of your party and the date you propose to start. He will need an advance of forty rupees or so, which he uses to hire the boat and her crew and make everything ready on board.

Mari Indus has the advantage of being accessible to any one stationed in Northern India. A train leaves the main line at Rawalpindi every evening about nine o'clock, and gets you to your destination in time for breakfast the next morning. You are met by a small, wiry and very sunburnt man on the platform. Tremendously excited, he produces a letter of identity and is eager to be off. After eggs and bacon in the station refreshment room you spend an hour or so buying flour, vegetables and drink in the Rest Camp bazar. You next call in to see the S. S. O., who wishes you *bon voyage* and loans you a large-scale map of

the river. By half-past-nine you are on board what will be your home for the next week. While the boat is rowed across the river to collect firewood from Kalabagh, you have time to take stock of your surroundings.

The boat in which you are travelling is one normally used to take salt from Kalabagh downstream. It has a room rigged up for you in the centre, whilst Anár Khan and the four boatmen sleep below deck at the stern and your bearer lives and does your cooking in the bows. Small rowing boats, one for each gun, trail astern, ready to take you after duck, geese or *gharial.* The boat leaves Kalabagh and drifts gently downstream, controlled by one enormous oar-shaped rudder. It will not be long before Anár Khan pokes his head round the doorway and says "duck hein," the signal for you to go off in the little boat to try to get near the brutes—you'll have called them worse names than that by the time the trip is over, for they are extremely wary.

Crouched in the bottom of the *dinghy,* you drift near enough to the duck to see them rise and fly off in derision upstream where you cannot follow them. By now it is time for your morning beer, so you wait for the big boat, which comes drifting down with the four-knot current. After lunch you arrive at a village where your big boat ties up and the *shikari* asks a local whether there are any partridges. The answer to this is always "bahut" pronounced "bhoon" so you enlist the services of one or two locals, take your dog and Anár Khan and go off to shoot your next day's food. If the shooting is good, the boat stays there the night. You sleep on board and go after the birds again the next morning. This procedure can be varied by letting the big boat go on whilst you shoot along the bank and then catch up with your home in the evening by means of the *dinghy.*

By travelling from dawn to dusk D. I. K. can be reached in five days, so if you have ten days in hand when you start you will have plenty of time to try your luck wherever you like. There are *jheels* near the river at Mehan Shahwali and Germanwali Kuchchi which give you a chance of flighting the duck. If you wish to send game off by train, or even to abandon the trip owing to rain, the railway from Mari Indus to Darya Khan runs parallel to the left bank of the Indus and there are stations within six miles or so of the river.

It is best to arrange your trip so that you get to Dera Ismail Khan fairly early in the morning. There you say "Goodbye"

to your *shikari* and boatmen and go off to Darya Khan, the nearest railway station, either in tongas or by lorry. The distance is eleven miles and the road consists of a series of bunds and bridges on one of which you have to pay a toll. Thus you reach Darya Khan in time to catch the up train, which gets you back to Rawalpindi early the next morning.

The best months for the trip are December and February. I have actually been in November and more recently in February. I went alone on both occasions, but for shooting purposes a party of two or three would have been better. There are a great many duck on the river during these months, but they are very wild. Geese and *gharial* are also plentiful and I shot as many partridges each day as were required to feed the boat's complement. *Sisi* are plentiful at Kafir Kot, while quail and hare can also be found. The boat itself was extremely comfortable and would have housed two people with ease. A larger party could have taken a tent and slept on shore each night, or hired two boats. The crew were always willing to act, as beaters, and their cheerfulness was only matched by that of Anár Khan, who was excellent in every way. The villagers I met *en route*, though they spoke a weird kind of Punjabi which completely defeated me, were, on the whole, helpful and pleased with their *backsheesh*. The weather during November was perfect, but the February trip was spoilt towards the end by rain.

As regards expense, the whole trip on the first occasion cost me 270 rupees, made up as follows:

	Rs.
Rail and tonga fares from Rawalpindi to Mari Indus, and from Darya Khan back to Rawalpindi	40
Hire of boat	130
Daily expenses (beaters, eggs and milk)	25
Cartridges	30
Stores, drinks, tobacco and firewood ...	45
Total	270

The railfare item included tickets for me, my bearer, dog and my excess luggage. The hire of the boat included the pay of the boatmen and of the *shikari*. This seemed expensive until I remembered that the boatmen have to pull her back upstream to Mari Indus, which means a further ten days' hard work.

The hundred and thirty rupees, too, was quite inclusive; neither Anár Khan nor the boatmen asked for another anna and were inordinately pleased with their tips at the end of the voyage. Eggs and milk were, curiously enough, not easy to come by and I had to fall back on tinned milk. I used 250 cartridges, over 200 sevens and a few of numbers four and two shot. To sum up, for a party of three the whole trip, exclusive of railfare, could be done very comfortably for 300 rupees.

Apart from the shooting, I saw what was to me quite a new part of India. The old Kafir fort at Kafir Kot is extremely interesting and almost puts Attock Fort in the shade. And what could be a more delightfully restful way of travelling than gliding gently down a big river, away from dust and noise and knowing that one can stop when and where one likes? If I add that this trip is done on the average once a year and that the course of the main river changes every year, you can realise that there is little likelihood of the shooting becoming scarce.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

MESSES AND CLUBS

DEAR SIR,

The article on Messes and Clubs in the October 1940 number of the Journal of the U. S. I. of India is open to criticism for a number of reasons.

Before making proposals of any kind, the writer draws a picture of intolerant grousing senior officers who, by implication, regard the young entries as "bumptious young pups," etc. Is this a true picture of anything but a bad regiment or battalion? And if it is untrue or only partially true, the impression conveyed of Mess life to those unacquainted with it is misleading and unfair. There are a great many units whose messes are efficient, economical and comfortable and regarded with justifiable pride and affection by all the officers. It is safe to say a good unit never has a bad Mess any more than it has a bad Quarterguard.

There are also other objections to the article in that it is far from accurate and deals with the administrative side of the proposal made for abolishing messes in a very sketchy fashion, and by mere assertion lays claim to the achievement of a means of living more economical than a mess, without a reasonable examination of the many factors which cannot be lightly disregarded.

Before considering the question further, it is conceded that there are many modifications that can, with advantage, be introduced into mess life, particularly as regards making the mess cater for things hitherto beyond its province—for instance, it can easily provide means of entertaining private guests of members to meals and other entertainments. This is being done in some messes, just as even the most conservative of men's London Clubs have started ladies' rooms.

The writer admits he has made his proposal on the ground of expense, and goes on to say that Mess subscriptions vary according to the number of officers in the unit and their tastes.

All officers pay a "mess subscription" fixed by Regulations at Rs. 8 per month. All other subscriptions or monthly charges under various heads are fixed by the members of the mess themselves, presumably as a means of pooling expenses and of living on a communal basis. It is misleading to describe as unnecessary subscriptions the money paid for such things as furniture, books,

papers and lighting, because they are necessities and might be included in a comprehensive charge for messing. Entertainments and Band subscriptions are different. It must be assumed that enough *esprit de corps* remains to require even a unit, permeated with the democratic spirit, to give occasional entertainments, so some form of entertainment fund with a subscription is desirable in order that the cost may be spread over the year. It is doubtful if the officers of any unit in India pay as much as one per cent. of their pay into an entertainment fund, and it is worth pointing out that in the vast majority of entertainments the host as well as the guest gets some return for his money in concrete (or liquid) form.

Your correspondent deals with station messes, and falls into the mistake of calling the Frontier Force Mess at Kohat one. It is a station mess only in the sense that R.A. messes at certain stations are station messes and is reserved for the officers of one corps. He is apparently unfortunate in not having acquaintance of any well-run and tolerably comfortable station messes. His description of the objections to station messes, if exaggerated, is in reality an argument in favour of unit messes which he is out to abolish.

The proposal put forward is found at the end of the article "to abolish all but field messes and to permit unmarried officers to live in residential clubs or chummeries."

Mess "discipline," to use a wrong term, may be irksome to some, but need it be any more strict than the code of behaviour one expects of officers in their parents' homes; in other words, manners, punctuality and consideration for others, including the servants.

Mess organization is another matter. Government gives a liberal monthly grant towards a mess. Mess buildings are specially designed and provided in all new constructions—a staff is available to help in the running of the mess, in the shape of an N.C.O., etc., and everything designed to enable officers to live a communal existence as economically as possible. That the senior officer present in mess is responsible for the behaviour of those junior to him is no departure from the military code, which applies everywhere, and it can be said without fear of contradiction that of the cases where a senior officer has to intervene only the very smallest fraction arise in messes.

Those who say light-heartedly, "scrap the mess," cannot have considered what a great deal the mess does for them. A field

mess, as advocated, is presumably an affair that only comes into being on active service, on the frontier and during training. There can be no question of a Mess house or office, though presumably camp furniture would be stored somewhere.

Does the author realize how expensive it is suddenly to establish a mess and then to close it? Overhead charges and waste are alarming and the poorest of messing in discomfort costs at least double if not treble of what a regular mess can feed officers on, even on manœuvres.

It might be argued that the cooks and staffs from chummeries would be co-opted. A possible solution but not a happy team. As for chummeries within a regiment or battalion, they would either be highly inefficient or very expensive, probably both, because officers have not the time to run them, and young and inexperienced officers lack the knowledge of how to do so. Government quarters are not designed to permit of chummeries springing up so there is the expense of housing them to be shared by various cliques. How are young officers, freshly joined, to be catered for until the various Soviets decide where they are to live, and what happens when the members of a chummery are sent away or reduced to one person? To quote the example of officers of the I.C.S. or police is entirely misleading. They are looked after on first arrival by their seniors, and because they have to go out into districts and work alone, must learn to cater for themselves. They live a different life and can arrange their hours of work more or less to fit in with their domestic habits.

The assumption that Clubs will sink money in order to provide residential quarters for officers is far from the mark. The average Club charges Rs. 90 a month for a single furnished quarter; the junior officer who would occupy it draws in cash from Government Rs. 25 to Rs. 50 lodging allowance, provided no Government quarters are vacant—and during the hot weather there are generally plenty vacant. A Club cannot provide a quarter for much under Rs. 3 per day, unless it can be assured that every room will be full all the year round.

Another point that has been completely overlooked is that with the free admission of Indians into the officer cadre of the Indian Army, there is the absolute necessity for a common meeting ground in the mess. With the Chummery system you would foster racial and caste cleavages that would make mess life in a field mess (which the writer admits is necessary) an impossibility.

The writer may, perhaps, have no experience of the War, 1914-1918, in which the normal mess system was regimental or battalion headquarters and Squadron or Company messes. It was a well recognised fact that, whenever units were far enough from the Line to do so, the first essential as regards officers messes was to get back to the system of all officers messing together again. Not long ago a very fine soldier who earned a decoration as an officer in 1918, and who, on demobilization re-enlisted, and is now a Regimental Sergeant-Major, made the following remark: "You can tell the tone of a Battalion from the Officers' Mess and the Sergeants' Mess." (He might have added the Quarterguard.) Would any one be so bold as to say you can tell the tone of a battalion from a number of chummeries substituted for a mess?

G. P. B.

REVIEWS

"MEMORY HOLD-THE-DOOR"

By John Buchan

Hodder & Stoughton—12/6 *nett.*

John Buchan's last book is writing that grows upon one. The first chapters fail—not because of their matter which is singularly gracious *but* because one is conscious of a style which has begun to parody itself. It was perhaps Buchan's misfortune that his usage of words smelt of the tweed of the tailor's shop rather than of the Tweed which flows amongst the hills.

This impression, however, is brief. The change comes when Buchan describes himself as a young barrister, making his way in a metropolitan world unfamiliar to him, and later observing and living in a world no less strange—South Africa—at the close of a war. From this point his style, like his thought, deepens and broadens, and both present a picture of a life—foreign to modern ways of thinking—to be admired, and since that way of life has passed, to be regretted. It was the life of the man of affairs, and yet related in all its moments to a scholarship easily worn and an experience of life which is never overemphasized.

And so his book draws on—through the war, public life and a brief period of the full, quiet existence of a minor English country house, to a really remarkable analysis of modern America —fruits of the observation of a dual personality: that of John Buchan and Lord Tweedsmuir.

A remarkable autobiography ends with two chapters (entitled "Pilgrims Rest") of a book on fishing, projected but never completed. Here the standard of comparison is with Izaak Walton. One is left with the conclusion that the philosophy of both these masters of the contemplative life is summed up in Walton's concluding words. These are "Study to be quiet."

C. M.