

more than one occasion before the beginning of the war. Happily, however, the rally of the Rajas to the British Flag during this time of stress has left no ground for fear, no room for doubt.

The present war has rendered a great service to Britain and to Indian India by revealing the true attitude of the Rajas towards the British. Some persons may say that the loyalty of the Indian Rulers, as a body, was never doubted. That is quite true. But to most Britons the enthusiastic friendship displayed by the Rajas at this juncture has come as a surprise, and as a very pleasant surprise. I believe that, when the present operations are brought to a successful issue by our united arms, a new spirit of co-operation will pervade the British-Indian officials and the Rajas.

I, for one, confidently expect that this spirit will effect important changes in the British policy towards the Rajas.

I have already mentioned two respects in which there is need for a change. I allude to my remarks concerning the advisability of giving a much freer hand to the Rajas in the development of their military resources than they have had in the past; and to the creation of a board of arbitration to settle disputes between the British and Rajas, and Rajas and Rajas.

In another particular the British policy towards the Indian Rulers needs modification. I refer to the policy of isolating one from another. When it was first designed and enforced, it was no doubt as necessary as the policy of greatly restricting the military powers of the Rajas. At that time the British could not afford to take any chances lest the Indian Rulers might combine against them. But fortunately we live under altered conditions. Now it has been established beyond cavil that the Rajas are not desirous of breaking away from the British. On the contrary, they are eager to shed their blood to prove their devotion to the King-Emperor. I once asked an Indian Ruler who was suspected of being disloyal to the British to explain the why and where-

fore of the suspicion. He replied that the imbecility of those who manufactured scares was at the bottom of the whole trouble. On being pressed, he added that were not his political enemies utter fools they would at least give him credit for having brains enough to recognize the futility of cherishing revolutionary ideas. The disaffection of a Raja in this day and age is unthinkable. All the Indian Rulers with whom I have had the privilege of conversing, without a single exception, have impressed me as being desirous of strengthening the ties that bind them to the British. I can conceive of occasions when disputes may arise between two sets of administrators, but I cannot conceive of disloyalty to the British on the part of a Raja. The necessity that existed for completely isolating the Rajas from one another has therefore disappeared.

Modern requirements demand that this political practice, which is not necessary for the safety of British rule in India, shall be at least largely modified. All purely technical business between neighbouring States, such as that pertaining to the extradition of criminals, should be carried on without the intervention of the British Agent, thereby saving time and inconvenience. It is a libel upon the Rajas to say that they would quarrel if they dealt directly with each other. Almost without exception they are men of peace and shrewd statesmen. In cases where the British have already relaxed the policy of isolation, the direct interchange of summonses, writs, etc., has not resulted in any serious trouble.

The time has come to carry these reforms to their logical end.

The isolation of the Rajas from one another is hindering the progress of Indian India. Different Indian Rulers are making different experiments. They ought to be able to confer with one another and to compare notes, to benefit from the experience of one another, to save themselves the trouble, expense and loss of time involved in trying schemes which have failed, and in working out plans which have

already been perfected. At present such information travels about in an indirect manner, and much time and detail is lost in the process. It would be infinitely better if friendly meetings were to be held periodically at which Rajas could confer with one another on matters pertaining to the progress of their States and subjects.

There is also much need for the Rajas and high British officials to meet annually or oftener, to learn from one another how best to promote the interests of the people entrusted to their care.* Private interviews serve this purpose at present; but their limitations are fully recognized by all those who are experienced in such matters.

I would also urge upon the British nation, and upon British Colonials, the necessity of utilizing the wisdom and experience of the Rajas. Representative Indian Rulers should have a place in the Imperial Conference. To my mind, the organization that controls the destinies of the Empire from London will never be complete until Rajas are represented in it.

If Britons could only realize it, they have no stauncher friends than the Rajas. The Indian Rulers have shown every desire to co-operate with the British. They have helped the British to fight the anarchical movement which of late has taken root in British India. They have come forward with one accord to fight Britain's battles. They have surrendered and are surrendering cherished privileges so that Imperial communications and other Imperial necessities may not suffer. Such friends deserve warm gratitude, and they should be given every opportunity to develop all the resources which they possess in men and material wealth.

I have put before you a few suggestions. In the time at my disposal I could not give you statistics or essential facts appertaining to Indian India and its Rajas; these have been set forth in my work, "*The King's Indian Allies: The Rajas and their India*," shortly to be issued, to which those interested may refer. I have, however, sought

to direct your attention to points which need the most earnest, the most careful consideration of all those who have the well-being of India and of the Empire at heart. My proposals are made in no dogmatic spirit. They are suggestions which may serve to elicit interesting discussion.

DISCUSSION ON THE FOREGOING PAPER

A MEETING of the East India Association was held at Caxton Hall, Westminster, S.W., on Monday, November 15, 1915, at which a paper was read by Saint Nihal Singh, Esq., entitled "Indian India and its Rajas: Their Relations with the British." Lieut.-Col. Sir Francis Young-husband, K.C.I.E., LL.D. (Hon.), occupied the chair, and the following ladies and gentlemen, amongst others, were present: Sir Roland K. Wilson, Bart., Sir Krishna G. Gupta, K.C.S.I., Sir Richard Amphlett Lamb, K.C.S.I., C.I.E., Sir Mancherjee M. Bhownaggree, K.C.I.E., Sir Frederic Lely, K.C.I.E., C.S.I., Sir Robert Fulton, LL.D., Mr. C. E. Buckland, C.I.E., Mirza Abbas Ali Baig, C.S.I., T. H. S. Biddulph, C.I.E., Mr. J. G. Cumming, C.I.E., Mr. Alexander Porteous, C.I.E., Mr. J. B. Pennington, General F. H. Tyrrell, Colonel A. S. Roberts, Lady Grierson, Mr. and Mrs. H. C. West, Mr. G. V. Utamsing, Mrs. White, Mrs. Fitzroy Mundy, Miss Edith Bashford, Mrs. and Miss Hastings, Mrs. Garling Drury, Miss Bromhead, Mrs. Kinnier-Tarte, Mr. Massey, Mr. A. Bruce-Joy, Mr. M. Zahuruddin, Mr. Khaja Ismail, Mr. R. P. Wilder, Mrs. Hall Simpson, Mr. Sampuram Singh, The Rev. Mr. MacInnes, Miss Webster, Mr. and Mrs. James McDonald, Miss Powell, Mr. J. D. Nicholson, Mr. Colman P. Hyman, Mr. Eric Hope, Mr. J. Chalmers, Mr. G. Mansukhani, Mrs. Geering, Mr. C. E. Goument, Mr. M. T. Khaderbhoy, Mr. H. R. Cook, Mr. B. N. Bhose, Miss Hopley, Mr. G. T. Miller, Mrs. Presbury, Mr. K. H. Ramayya, Mr. D. Keith, Mr. and Mrs. N. C. Sen, Mr. D. G. Singh, Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Lupton, Mr. S. M. Dikshit, Mr. M. Hassanally, Mr. and Mrs. J. D. Westbrook, Mr. Hormusji Dubash, Captain and Mrs. Bane, Mr. W. Hawkins, Miss Parkes, Miss Ross, Mr. Syud Hossain, Mr. J. S. Cotton, Mr. E. A. Craven, Mr. F. H. Brown, Mr. E. H. Hare, Mr. C. E. Pollak, Mrs. Hewitt, Dr. Abdul Majid, Mr. J. Gordon, Mr. M. Shafi, Mr. D. M. Lala, Mr. F. H. P. Latham, Mrs. Greathed, Mrs. Collis, Mrs. Chaplin, Mrs. Little, Miss Gwynne, Mr. B. B. Varma, Miss Gearon, and Dr. John Pollen, C.I.E., Hon. Secretary.

The Chairman called upon the lecturer to read his paper, and the lecture was then read.

The CHAIRMAN: Ladies and gentlemen, I do not think there is any subject upon which it is more difficult to generalize than upon the subject

of the relations of the Ruling Chiefs of India with the British Government, because their States present such an extraordinary variety ; and it is not until you come into actual contact with them that you realize how great that variety is. There is variety in the populations of these States, which number several hundreds, although I do not now recollect the exact number. There is variety of race, and variety of religion. You have States like Hyderabad, with over 11,000,000 of people, and you have small States upon the frontier with only a few hundreds of inhabitants. You have States ruled by Hindoos with the majority of inhabitants Muhammadan, and you have States ruled by a Muhammadan with the majority of inhabitants Hindoo. So that it is exceedingly difficult to generalize, and on the very first point on which generalization was attempted in the paper, the question of the title which should be given to them, he knew of an instance where the title "Raja" was used with reference to a Chief and he very much objected to it, saying that what he liked to be called was a "Thum." That shows the difficulty ; but, on the other hand, there are some cases in which we can generalize, and one of these is that every one of these rulers owes his position as a ruler of the State to the fact that he is the legitimate successor of his predecessor, and that fact is due to the presence and authority of the British Government in India. (Hear, hear.) I will tell you how that works out in practice from my own experience with one of these lesser States now directly under the influence of the British Government, but which when I visited it was entirely independent. At that time it was ruled by a Chief—it was a little State on the very far outskirts of the Himalayas—who led a precarious existence by raiding his neighbours. He inhabited a very remote valley of the Himalayas, and he thought the Universe consisted of that valley and three other valleys, one inhabited by the Emperor of China, and the other by the Emperor of Russia, and the third by the Queen of England. That was what he considered the Universe consisted of, and of course of those four he considered himself the Chief. He had come on to the throne by murdering his mother and throwing his father over a precipice, and poisoning his two brothers ; but he had still one half-brother remaining, and when I asked the local Mr. Asquith why this brother was allowed to remain, he said the only reason was that he was such a fool. However, it so happens that the Chief of those times is now an exile, and for the last twenty-five years this "fool" of a half-brother has been ruling the State. That was my first experience of these rulers. My second experience was in another State, close by, of an old Chief who had seventeen sons, and he died rather suddenly, and within a fortnight of his death there were only four sons left. The elder son had fled to us in British territory to ask our support, and amongst others I was sent up to support him. With this he succeeded in establishing himself as ruler of that State. During the time that I was with him he one day pointed out to me one of the remaining three brothers, and asked me if I had any objection to his murdering his brother. I said : "Well, it was not exactly within my duties to give authority for the murder of brothers of Chiefs." He said : "The fact is that if I do not murder him he will murder me." And so it turned out, that brother did, in fact,

murder him, and we had to undertake that Chitral Expedition to establish the present ruler of Chitral.

I have given these few instances just to show what in many cases would be the result if there were not some over-authority to recognize and authorize the legitimate heir to succeed on the death of the predecessor; and it is one of the fundamental facts which must be taken into account in considering the relationship between the British Government and the Chiefs of India. Each Chief owes his position and his security against rivals to the over-authority of the British Government. That is, I think, one way in which we can generalize. Another way in which we can generalize is this, that in our relationship with the Chiefs of India we cannot possibly be too considerate or exercise too much courtesy. It has been my experience throughout that whenever we have shown courtesy it has been invariably responded to with the utmost cordiality. (Hear, hear.) We secure not only the respect of the Chiefs, but also very often their sincere affection.

Before I ask other speakers to take part in the discussion, I should like to say how very much we in England appreciate the enthusiastic loyalty which has been shown by the Chiefs of India in this the greatest crisis of our time. (Hear, hear, and applause.) When this great War came on there was not the slightest hesitation on their part. From the first, the Chiefs came forward and instantly gave their support to the British Government. Those who knew them were sure that this would be the case. As the lecturer has said, this was not everywhere recognized, but certainly now in England we all do see that, and we are highly grateful for what has been done by the Chiefs, who have acted up to their highest reputation. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. BIDDULPH said that he had spent many years in intimate relation with Indian States, and he thought the remarks of the lecturer should commend themselves to all who were interested in Indian States. As to the qualifications and abilities of the rulers to manage their own affairs, he could certainly bear witness in some cases to extraordinary talent for that. There was one typical instance he perhaps might quote—namely, the Maharajah of Bikaner, who was a most successful ruler; he knew of no man with a better knowledge of business, and who knew exactly what he wanted, and how things should be managed. Then there were others, of course; there was His Highness of Gwalior, and His Highness the Nizam, and His Highness of Mysore, just to select a few generally who had done great credit to the instruction and education they had received, some of them from one of the Chiefs' colleges where excellent public school manners and customs had been introduced.

Then as to the military forces, he would like to say their number was not in any way limited by the desire of the State concerned. Each was most anxious to supply all they possibly could. It was a question of means, and he personally knew of a State where, in spite of representations that the numbers of troops kept up for the purpose of Imperial service were more than the resources of the State could stand, every opposition was raised to suggestions of a reduction, and although they were spending more money

than they ought to have been doing, they preferred this to diminishing their loyal contribution or lowering the prestige (*izzat*) of the State.

Then in regard to the Chairman's reference to the question of courtesy, that was a point on which he had always laid the greatest stress. Courtesy and good manners in relation to their Indian subjects was a matter of the greatest importance—(hear, hear)—because there were no other people he knew who had such a keen appreciation of etiquette. That applied even down to the servants, who all had their little ways and manners of etiquette. It was a point which should be carefully studied by all young officers who were brought into contact with Indians of any class. The Indian treated us with all his details of courtesy and etiquette, and it behoved us to treat them in the same way, exactly as they, with their extreme etiquette, treated us, and all young officers should have that fact instilled more or less into them when they first joined the Service.

Mr. SAMPURAM SINGH said that the question referred to in the lecturer's paper was a more or less psychological one ; the term "native" was never regarded by any nation as in any way derogatory, but there were words which in course of time became degenerated from their ordinary usage, and thus had to be removed.

With regard to the question of courtesy, he was of opinion that they were accustomed to too much of it, and became in certain ways too artificial. The Englishman, on the contrary, was more inclined to be too curt, but the Englishman's curt "How do you do?" often meant a good deal more than appeared on the surface.

The lecturer had also dealt with the important subject of the question of a Commission to deal with disputes between the Rajas or the Rajas and the Government. This was a point which had been exhaustively dealt with by many thinkers, and although the suggestions were, to his mind, capable of improvement, he did not quite agree with the idea of a permanent Commission ; because, in his opinion, the relations between the Rajas and the British Government were diplomatic relations, and as such could not very easily be brought before such a Court. He thought they might have a kind of Constitution established on certain rules, by which those delicate questions might be settled. Then, again, it might happen that the Indian members of the suggested body might form a clique in opposing the British members. It had pained him very much indeed to find that that kind of impasse had already arisen in a certain instance with regard to such a body formed for the purpose of dealing with the question of Universities. There should certainly not be any suggestion of such cliques being possible where such friendly relations existed as between the Indian and British peoples.

Regarding the question of the Rajas taking part in politics, he thought that was a question which required very careful thinking out. They should beware of not falling into the old fallacy of thinking too much of themselves.

In concluding, he wished to say that on the subject of the Rajas having done what they had done in connection with the Expeditionary Forces, and the great sacrifices they had made, they ought not to forget the sub-

jects of those Rajas, who were the persons who had really enabled such great deeds to be done.

The CHAIRMAN : I will now call on Sir Krishna Gupta, who has had great administrative experience in India, and who has also sat as a member of the Secretary of State's Council here in England.

Sir KRISHNA GUPTA said he did not pretend to have any great knowledge of Indian States ; he had been to several of them, and had friends amongst the Chiefs, and he had had some official connection with a group of small Indian States, but not with any of the bigger States. The lecturer had been at some pains to try and find out a term which might be unobjectionably applied to the Chiefs of Indian States, but he did not think he had succeeded very well, as the term " Raja " would not cover a Muhamadan ruler ; for instance, the Nizam of Hyderabad would hardly like being called a Raja. Then, again, the word Raja had become a sort of title which was given to many persons who had no sort of territorial sovereignty. The expression used by the Chairman seemed to him to be the least objectionable.

With regard to the question of the relation of the British Government with the various Indian States, the discussion had been confined to a disquisition on courtesy. People in this country were so courteous to one another, that the fact that so much emphasis was put upon it showed that everything was not quite all right in India regarding the relations of Europeans and Indians. (Hear, hear.) The main question of the paper in which he was interested had reference to the appointment of a body to render assistance to the Government in regard to disputes between them and the Indian States. The question was not free from difficulty, but a proper solution of it was very necessary ; because, as things were, it was causing some irritation amongst the various Chiefs. The present procedure was open to the objection that it was more or less one-sided. The final decision must, of course, always rest with the Central Authority, but he did not think it would be amiss if it had the advice of such a body as was suggested by the lecturer, in order to enable it to arrive at a proper decision.

Finally, with regard to the value of the military services rendered by the Chiefs, he would like to say what a good thing it would be if the armies they maintained were brought to a state of efficiency so as to enable them to take part in the wars of the Empire. In some of the Indian States there existed armies that seemed to be doing nothing except eating their own heads off, as it were, with ennui. All this was good material, and could be made available for use throughout the Empire. India was determined to help the Empire in every way—(hear, hear)—and had given expression to that determination, but unfortunately the people were not able to fully put that determination into practice ; that was not their fault, and it rested with the British Government to find a suitable outlet. There was no dearth of men in India, and there was undoubtedly a great willingness on their part to do everything to help the Empire in the present great struggle. (Hear, hear.)

Sir FREDERIC LELY said he had much appreciated the paper, the excel-

lence of its tone and its evident sincerity. The lecturer gave some time to the discussion of the use and disuse of certain words, and as they all knew words carelessly used might become political forces, especially with a sensitive people like Indians. He agreed as to the word "native," because logically it was not an accurate phrase to apply; there were natives in every country, therefore it would be necessary to be more explicit. Certainly, with regard to India, the most convenient form to use would be "Indian" alone. He would object, however, to the use of the phrase "Indian State," because that carried with it an implication that the rest of India was not Indian. As a matter of fact, the Indian peoples had a greater part in legislation in British India than they had in any Native State.

As to the statement regarding the policy of the Government of India being to isolate the Chiefs from one another, he thought the very reverse was the case. One of the corner-stones of the policy of the Government of India had been the establishment of special schools and colleges for the sons of ruling Chiefs, in order to bring the young men together and make them friends with each other, and thus give them in after-life memories such as bound together English boys who had been to English public schools. What had militated against common friendship was the old traditions of the Rajas themselves. He knew of one case of two adjoining Native States where the two peoples were homogeneous, and were ruled over by two Chiefs who had reigned for nearly fifty years, each in his own State, and yet these two old gentlemen had never in all that time spoken to each other. That was the kind of thing which had existed generally throughout the last generation. It was mainly a question of etiquette, but he was glad to see it was gradually passing away—largely as a result of the policy of the Government of India.

A gentleman in the audience said he had recently attended a certain lecture at which the statement had been made that when Peers were sent out to India on important duties they were considered a greater success than members of the Civil Service, and he would like to know if the Chairman could tell him what was the reason for such a state of things.

The CHAIRMAN said he could not quite answer the question put to him as to why Peers were more popular in India than Civil servants. He did not know whether that actually was the case or not, but in any event it hardly applied to the subject before them. He would therefore now call on the lecturer to make a few observations in reply to the various criticisms which had been passed.

The LECTURER, in reply, said he was much disappointed in not having elicited much discussion on the subject, which was certainly a debatable one. He would pass over the favourable comments and deal with the few objections which had been taken. Some of the speakers said they did not agree that the term "Raja" was suitable to apply to certain Indian rulers, but if they looked again at the paper they would see he had merely used that as a generic expression, and not as a term to be applied indiscriminately to individuals. He could not agree with Sir Frederic Lely's reasoning, that the Presidencies and Provinces of British India were more Indian than the "Indian States" themselves. He thought a State ruled by an Indian

is certainly entitled to be called an Indian State. Although he was aware that in some cases they did not possess the legislative rights possessed by British Indian subjects, yet the Indian States were ruled by Indians from top to bottom. The concessions made to Indians, when analyzed, were very small ; they had no power over the public purse, and had very little power of initiating legislation, and when they tried to initiate measures of a progressive nature, such efforts were invariably blocked ; but he looked forward with hope to the political development of British India after the war.

With reference to the question of armies, raised by Sir Krishna Gupta, he found that in some of the States he visited great steps were being taken to bring those armies up to modern standards, but it must be remembered that the opportunities of the Rajas were very limited.

As to Mr. Sampuran Singh's remarks regarding disputes between Indians and British, he did not wish to set up a judicial body which declared all Bills which offended against certain monopolies as unconstitutional. He suggested the type of body referred to by Sir Krishna Gupta.

As to the question of isolation referred to by Sir Frederic Lely, he, apparently, had not understood he referred only to political isolation, and not isolation of personal relationship ; they all knew the Rajas intermarried and went about from one State to another, to participate in ceremonies and other social functions, and he was very glad to see that certain checks which had recently been devised to curtail their liberties were not now in operation.

As to the question of the Chiefs' Colleges, as an educational experiment, he was of opinion that they were more or less of a failure so far as higher education was concerned, but he hoped the scheme now on foot at Delhi, to give higher education to the Rajas, would be more successful. He felt sure that as education advanced, and the Rajas became more liberal-minded, such unfortunate instances—which were of an exceptional character—as some speakers had pointed out would become more and more things of the past. India was not the only country where discord existed, as was evidenced by the present terrible struggle in Europe. The separate States in Europe ordinarily were able to transact their own business without fighting, and he was sure similar things could be done in India without outside intervention. Indian rulers had no objection to our authority so long as it was courteously exercised. In conclusion he wished to thank them very much for the very kind reception they had accorded to him.

On the motion of Sir ROLAND WILSON a very hearty vote of thanks was accorded to the lecturer for his paper, and also to the Chairman for his admirable conduct in the chair.

The CHAIRMAN suitably replied, remarking that in his opinion their chief thanks should be to the lecturer for his very carefully prepared paper.

The proceedings then terminated.

IMPRESSIONS OF PERSIA AND MESOPOTAMIA

BY J. C. ROOME

To sit at the feet of Sadi and Hafiz and then to visit Persia is to court the great disillusionment. Persia of the poets is poles apart from the Persia of reality. My disillusionment came in 1907 when one fair morning I set sail from Bombay. The chapter of disappointment began no sooner than the Taj Mahal Hotel had faded from view.

The British India steamer *Kasara* plunged into the heart of the monsoon and there were many on board who heaved a sigh of relief, when, after four stormy days, Karachi loomed into view. The respite from bad weather was, however, temporary. Before the *Kasara* resumed its voyage, Captain Chappell, the commander of the vessel, forewarned me of a stormy voyage to Muscat, and his forecast was literally true.

The coast-line of Persia, when it became visible, gave no tantalizing glimpses into Elysian bowers. On the contrary, they seemed to suggest the Forbidden Land. For miles there was not a vestige of vegetation or sign of human habitation; the seaports conveyed the suggestion of man's effort to create trade and cities where Nature intended there should be a waste. One could not help thinking that if the dreary wilderness stretching out before

him was Persia, then the anxiety of the Persians regarding the independence of their country was emotion thrown away.

The elements conspired again when I was about to set foot on Persian soil for the first time. The rain came down in torrents, and when, after nearly three hours on a country boat, I found myself looking across a stretch of water at the port of Bushire from the quarantine island, Bushire gave no promise of a paradise of poets. On closer acquaintance, it proved a picturesque town; an old-world town of quaint one-storeyed buildings, narrow, uneven, and tortuous lanes. From a distance, the buildings inexplicably took one, in imagination, to some ancient Greek town. One of them, situated on a protuberance of the land, might have been the temple. But for the symbols of trade, the steamers lying some miles out at sea, Bushire might have been a city of the past thrown up by some seismic disturbance.

Apparently the streets were never intended for any wheeled traffic as they rose and fell with whimsical suddenness. Mules and donkeys carried both men and their chattels from one part of the town to another. To ask for the address of an hotel was to excite ridicule.

Bushire, however, was not without its picturesque spots. The bazaar was a cameo of the East. Mohamed Hosein, the piece-goods merchant and philosopher, who swindled veiled ladies with a smile, palming off cheap German prints for good English cloth, was a reliable cicerone and a keen politician to boot. One could sit for hours at his shop with legs dangling over the footpath of the bazaar and watch Persian humanity haggling over the price of cloth, or buying bread, good wholesome bread and meat, at a baker's shop next door.

It was Mohamed Hosein's suggestion, that in order to see Persia, one should see it in company with a Persian, and it proved, in my case, a valuable suggestion. The Persian who became my guide, philosopher; and friend,

proved himself a man of great resources, but he regarded me at first with suspicion. It was only when he was convinced that I had no political ambitions in Persia that he took me under his care. A foreigner in Persia was, in those days, rather closely watched by the Consulates, and my guide, a merchant who travelled about a great deal in Southern Persia, was rather a political bigot and did not relish the idea of attracting the attention of the Consuls.

Anyway, my knowledge of Persian was a recommendation as far as he was concerned and he consented, after certain preliminaries, to allow me to accompany him. He placed two mules at my disposal and we started for Shiraz. For a journey full of incidents, the journey to Shiraz was a memorable one. There were, however, no encounters with highway robbers, probably because we travelled not as merchants but as men of modest means. Not even the Tangistani tribesmen out of Bushire thought it worth their while to waylay our petty caravan. Once across the plain of the south, a new Persia stood revealed, a Persia of towering mountains and precipitous ascents. How the mules negotiated some of these steep mountainous paths was a marvel.

If Bushire was a desert, Shiraz proved to be a paradise. Nature seemed to have made generous amends at Shiraz for its niggardliness in the plains of the south. On a moon-lit night, the nightingale still trills its passionate song in the gardens of the valleys of Shiraz, as it did when Hafiz caught its mystic note. There are no taverns, but the wine of Shiraz still flows freely and tempts as it did in the days of Sadi the preacher and the heretic.

It is in Shiraz, probably more than in any other town, that one realizes how time has stood still as far as Persia is concerned. It is in Shiraz that the Persian exhibits at its best the decorum of the East. It was at a *masha-ara*, an assembly of poets, in Shiraz that I had an opportunity of gauging the popularity of the Persian poets of old. About

thirty Persians in the assembly had come to the meeting to recite their verses and there were as many critics present. One of the latter expressed surprise at hearing of the popularity of Omar Khayyam in the West. According to him, the author of the Rubaiyat was only a minor Persian poet. What was amazing was not the familiarity of the critics and the poets with the works of their old poets, but the ease with which, even men who did not concern themselves with literature, quoted verses from Sa'di, Hafiz, and other great poets of the country.

From Shiraz to Kermanshah, the journey was uneventful. The villages on the way were interesting, but more or less monotonous, in their architectural similarity, and they were all shrouded in the squalor of poverty. Kermanshah was only another Bushire with but slight differences.

If the dream of the charms of Persia is shattered by the reality, the disappointment is tempered by the vision of Shiraz, but in Mesopotamia the disillusionment is complete. The glory of Bagdad has vanished like a dream, and the greatness of Babylon exists only in crumbling ruins. To add to the traveller's cup of sorrow, the climatic conditions make life a burden. As a centre of trade, Bagdad, we found, was a city of considerable importance, but in other respects it did not come up to expectations. Even from an architectural point of view, Bagdad bore no evidence of the wealth of the Abbasid Khalifs. The buildings were not the palaces of the days of Haroun-el-Reschid that I expected to find. The bazaars were, however, still struggling against the ingress of new ideas and maintaining some of their glamour of romance. The shopkeepers also followed methods of barter and observed customs which must have existed in the days of the Khalifs. In some quarters, the hand of the town-planner had evidently been busy and there was some attempt at road-building. In other quarters, where the houses stood as they stood at the beginning of Bagdad probably, it was possible to find a setting for the tales of the Arabian

Nights. Seen from a distance, Bagdad, with its domes and minarets, still suggested a city of mystery. Even in 1907, the growing trade of the city was fast changing the mode of life of the people. The existence of what in the days of the *East India Company* were known in India as *Europe shops*, indicated the Bagdad of the future. Whether it will ever cease to be what it is—a city of pilgrims, and consequently a sanitary danger—remains to be seen. My Syrian host in Bagdad, however, expected to see the city transformed in his life-time into at least a rival of Smyrna. But he was equally optimistic of the future of the whole of Lower Mesopotamia.

The country along the banks of the Tigris and the Euphrates, as seen from the deck of a Lynch steamer, was, however, as unlike the granary of the world as possible. Howling wilderness on the 'one side,' and desolate tracts of land, with here and there date-groves, on the other, extended as far as the eye could reach. It was in the summer months that I saw Bagdad and Lower Mesopotamia, and I was told that it was in the cold weather only that Mesopotamia appeared at its best. I was, however, glad when I arrived at Basra, and shortly afterwards left for Karachi.

THE ELECTIONS OF 1915

(TRANSLATION)

TWICE in 1915 have the Hellenic people been called upon to decide whether Hellas ought, in so far as she is able, to take part in this world-wide war, or to keep out of it, so far as she is able to do it. If we consider the magnitude of the present conflict, and how continuously it is extended every day all the world over, the actual resources of Hellas—whether participating in, or keeping out of it—are such as to engage serious consideration. Participating in the war, Hellas would have to contribute to the common cause her financial, military, and moral quotas. If she is to keep aloof, she must make sure that she will always be able to do so as far as she wishes. In February, 1915, the possibilities for her participation had been diminished, whereas in the autumn of 1914 she had every possibility in her hands. From February to September abstention was a matter within her control, but *after* September all possibility of abstention began to fail her; for this war, as we have already affirmed, is a vast conflagration gaining daily in intensity and development.

Hence it is now being realized, on all sides, that it is no longer in our power to remain neutral.

This opinion is expressed in the official publication of this (the Socialist) Party, dated October 9, 1915, pointing out how "it was highly probable that we should enter into the war, willing or unwilling, and thus have to forfeit the merit of a spontaneous intervention." Such a pronounce-

ment was then a great probability. Now it has become a certainty.

The verdict of the people in the Elections of last May was so decisive as to afford striking testimony of the superfluousness of even referring it to the country, when the feeling of the people had then been so well made known to all. From September, 1914, up to May, 1915, the feeling of the people remained sound and uncorrupted, embodying as it did the nation's unerring instinct of self-preservation. But after the Elections of last May this feeling was adulterated, and the Hellenic soul forgot its ideals; it misinterpreted its vital interests, and failed to see that the present occasion was the third stage of the work which it began in 1821, which it resumed in 1912, and which it was predestined to complete by participating now in this world-war.

We Socialists do not cherish that same great regard for the polls, generally evinced by people of plutocratic proclivities. We recognize the parliamentary form of government as an incident in the history of the working classes, of which we ought to avail ourselves, or which we ought to refuse to have anything to do with, according as it adapts itself, or fails to do so, to the interests of the Labour Class Ideal. Our firm persuasion is that the working classes must some day get rid of every other parliamentary and plutocratic institution; but such emancipation must be worked out by method and upon the basis of the recognition of fitting occasions.

The Elections of last May were not a measure calling for protest on grounds either of advisability or expediency. The electors were then all animated by unmixed feeling for freedom and a desire to continue the work of liberation begun in 1821.

But the case is quite different with regard to the forthcoming December Elections. The proclamation, which heralds their advent, strikes a note that fails in high purpose as compared with the message that bore the impress of Regas Pheraios. Last May Hellas began to oscillate