ON THE BANKS OF THE HYDASPES

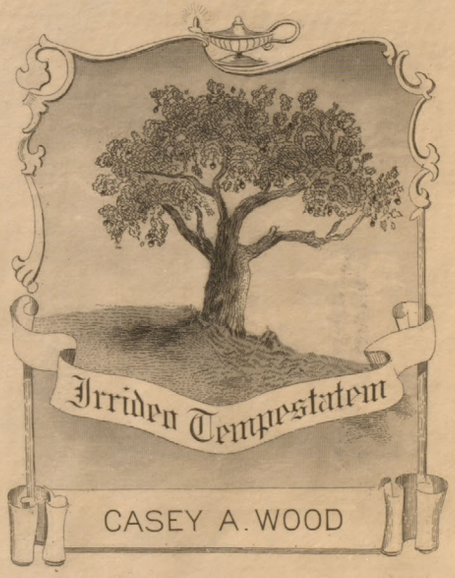
A SUMMER IN KASHMIR

BY CASEY A. WOOD

Illustrated with original photographs

BY MARJORIE FYFE

1925


Irriden Tempestatem
CASEY A. WOOD

To Tottie

with love from the two producers

Marjorie Tyfe

and

Casey A. Wood

Pasadena –
~~Xmas~~. 1934

ON THE BANKS OF THE HYDASPES
A Summer in Kashmir.
By Casey A. Wood

Illustrated
with photographs by Marjorie Fyfe.

I

The flagship of our house-boat flotilla was appropriately christened the "Bendemeer" and as we three were comfortably seated on her after deck, a discussion arose as to whether Ditta Lal and his pedlar's donga would or would not anchor alongside some time during that charming morning in early May. Certainly our surroundings favoured barter and trade. Never had the semi-oval ring of rose-tinted, snow-clad mountains that surround the lovely Vale of Kashmir appeared to better advantage. Indeed, my wife, my niece, and I congratulated ourselves that we had, after several years' sojourn in South India and Ceylon, decided to venture the journey to Srinagar much earlier than usual, despite the warnings of friends about snow-bound passes, blocked roads, and unprepared rest houses. We longed to see the opening up of the Vale in all its seasonal glories, from the melting of the snows in April until the chenar trees assumed their gorgeous colouring in the late Autumn. We did have some mild adventures during the 250 mile drive from Rawal Pindi, but they were forgotten in our enjoyment of the tonic, crisp

Houseboats Bendemeer and Kingfisher
In the Canal near the Golf Course
Srinagar, Kashmir-
May - 1926

atmosphere, the clear, brilliant sunshine that poured through interspaces in the cloudy, woolly-white sky, the landscape lighted up by budding hazels, pussy willows, and floral wreaths of pink and white apricot, wild cherry, apple and pear, that decorated the mountain slopes. On all sides variegated carpets of anemones, cuckoo flowers, and early violets joined the picture and combined with patches of fallen fruit tree petals lightly to paint the ground. Then there were flying about plenty of butterflies, white, yellowish, multicoloured; and everywhere the spring songs and notes of birds, many of them counterparts of our American species - golden orioles, wren warblers, thrushes, wagtails, tits, and bulbuls, the last-named probably the mythical "nightingale" of Moore's Lalla Rookh.

Later on, in May and the beginning of June, the valley would be still more beautiful. The maple-like chenar trees with their massive trunks and heavy clumps of foliage impervious to rain, are largely responsible for the universal greenery of the land, although the tall, graceful poplars, the willows, walnuts, mulberries, and chestnuts add their shade and colour to the scene. Among flowers were numerous temperate zone familiars, in particular irises - mauve, white, and purple - and roses, many shades, both in great profusion and of remarkable beauty. These flowers grow in profusion everywhere - in the lanes, on the roadsides, in the hedgerows, and in the cemeteries. Even the most humble peasant has a garden, where in addition to these flowers could generally be seen clematis, honeysuckle, potentillas, ferns, primulas, and a dozen other blooms. In the towns it was a common practice to plant and maintain a flower garden on the flat roofs of the houses.

As for our favourite mountains, they added to this flowery display a wealth of colour that included yellow barberry, wild roses, wild geraniums, strawberry beds, speedwell, and patches of the universal iris. I believe that an explanation of the continued floral beauty of the Kashmir landscape lies in the fact that the natives do not pluck their wild flowers except on rare

Looking up the Canal - In the small boat, some of our merchant friends.

and special occasions. Even the flower traffic with the visitor is limited to the sale of roses, most of which are gathered from cultivated alien gardens by grace of the caretaker. During our stay in Srinagar our table was supplied in this manner with beautiful La France and similar blooms at a cost of from five to ten cents a dozen.

To return to Ditta Lal, we expected him on Wednesday because he had solemnly and definitely promised to pay us a second visit on the previous Monday. As is well known in Srinagar, a Kashmiri, in keeping an engagement, is influenced by quite different motives than those that impel a European; indeed, the inhabitants differ quantitatively at least from almost any other species of native. Lal had allowed 48 hours to intervene because we had thoughtlessly, indeed stupidly, betrayed our admiration for a lovely old North Persian samovar he had for sale. Ditta, the wise one, knew that delay would whet appetite. As it happened, we had a wide knowledge of samovars and from certain indications we believed the owner of the present one did not realize what a treasure he really had, even if we had so carelessly revealed the truth about it. There it lay in the bottom of his donga mixed up with all sorts of Persian, Indian, even Tibetan and Russian brass - a well-born lady fallen among thieves. How graceful its artistically hammered outlines, its melon-shaped sides beautifully merging above in a remarkable pitcher-like top, below in a scalloped base, the whole so unlike and such an improvement on the hard lines of the common Russian hot water machine. Of hundreds of samovars we had been offered, this straggler from Teheran or Shiras was facile princeps. The restrained gleam of its gold-brown patina, neither too boldly brass nor too dully copper, completed the picture. We must have that unique Persian treasure whatever its cost. Of course we expressed no articulate interest in the samovar, but it is not to be supposed that the glances, nods, and other signs of appreciation and of our hopes of ownership, most important of all, were lost on the hard-bitten Lal. Was it for nothing that his four-eared

E.S.W & C.A.W. sunning themselves on a fine Spring morning-

shikara had patrolled the Jhelum and Dal Lake for nigh on 30 years? Had he failed during all this bargaining era to study carefully and to interpret correctly the facial expressions of his white clientele? Indeed, no; the fact was he could even evaluate the trading qualities of a Scots face and how it differs from an English, an Irish, or from that of the childlike and readily gullible American from whom he gathered his richest spoils.

After some three years in India we had a few rules of that age-old game of buying in the open market, or at least we became familiar with the opening moves, although we had long ago realized that for the subsequent and final commitments neither we nor any other Aryan can win in a petty commercial contest when the opponent is an experienced and brainy Kashmiri. If he fails to accomplish his objective, the native simply retires from the battle in good order to fight it out another day. It may be that the success that results from his poker face accomplishments and his repertoire of finished dramatic gestures springs from or is allied to the charming duplicity and lovable deceit which are among the inborn qualities of the Kashmiri. It must also be remembered that in oriental barter, just as in many occidental games, rouge et noir for example, the money prize, though it may appear to be the chief end in view, is not necessarily the whole prospect. Even the bargaining pedlar has a reputation and his self-respect to sustain, and he feels cheated of his joy in the game if the purchaser accepts without a struggle a first offer. It is a prize gained by default and hardly worth the candle.

When Ditta Lal did arrive he opened the second act of his salesmanship play by telling us that he had not come sooner because he expected a consignment from his partner (a cousin) in Persia. That Persian partner; although his favourite residence was Kashgar he sometimes had a shop in Teheran, sometimes in Shiraz, and whiles he moved to Samarkand. So we bought a few inconsequential trifles and finally got down to business; how much for that battered old samovar? Ditta Lal's smiling face clouded. He was sure we must know the value of that beautiful and very rare samovar and his heart

Our band of brigands –
Rasula, (the butler), Kuthra, his father (the cook), the Chowkadar (watchman & chief boatman). The two bhisties (one for clean water & the other ~~for~~ dirty water) –
These five, with a Syce for the pony and two boys for the Shikara, made up our retainers.

was as ice because he could not sell it, that is, not at a price we would be willing to pay, so why talk about it? And his eyes were fixed on my wife's telltale face - and then he added, "It is worth over 500 rupees." In the hope of saving the situation I burst into loud raucous laughter. "You mean 50 rupees," said I.

If ever actor assumed at the shortest possible notice the sincerest air of offended dignity it was Lal. He answered never a word, but throwing a fine goat's hair shawl over the samovar he ordered his men to cast off. "Mem-Sahib, I wish you a pleasant day, also the Mamselle Sahib," and finally, as with an effort that showed an internal struggle, "also you, Wood Sahib." Then with a gesture that meant withdrawal within himself, he repeated the order to make all speed ahead. My wife could stand the strain no longer. "O, Ditta Lal, the Sahib did not intend to hurt your feelings; he only thought you were asking too much;" at which I unfeelingly raised my bid to 100 rupees, "the last call, take it or leave it," and retired within the "Bendemeer" out of sight, but not out of earshot. It would have done any hearer's soul good to listen to the harangue that now fell from the lips of Ditta Lal. No occidental actor could have bettered the verbiage, the intonation, the rise and fall of inflection, the range from lively to severe, that regaled my ears for the next ten minutes. Finally, as a kind of peroration, he insisted that it was not the value of the samovar, great as that was, nor its extreme beauty, peerless as one could see, nor its age and rarity, expressed in every part and which his cousin Mahommed Ullah, the wisest dealer in Shiraz and Lahore, had guaranteed to be unmatchable, which was now influencing him; it was his desire, his hope, to gain and to retain our friendship and our good opinion. He would make us a present of the samovar by reducing the price to a pitiable sum and bear the loss himself. He would brave the anger of his partner in Persia - a man of quick temper - in view of the high esteem he felt for the most learned and high born Wood Sahib. He blushed to name the figure, but he would part with the tea machine gem to us, and only to us, for 175 rupees. The answer to

E.S.W. & C.A.W. in a Shikara on the Dal Lake. (Note the heart-shaped paddles)

that proposition was, of course, to offer, just to settle the dispute, a final rock-bottom 150 rupees, but before I could offer that sum, which Ditta Lal all along intended to accept, my wife said, "I'll pay the 175 rupees myself." Like a more or less wise man I said nothing. Anyway, the samovar is still with us, a joy forever.

II

Our housekeeping adventures really began with attempts, more or less successful, to reduce to some sort of order the routine of daily house-boat life. The "Bendemeer" was a good-sized, well-built boat, boasting two bedrooms with baths, saloon, and separate dining room. An upper deck had space for laundry, firewood, tools, etc. A stern gangway connected us with the cookboat; a forward passage with a smaller boat, the "Kingfisher," in which my niece lived and which held our trunks, tent, and other storage impedimenta. In the cookboat were the galley fires, fuel and stores, as well as sleeping quarters for the cook and his family. A donga housed the remaining members - eight in all - of our servant family. Tied up to the bank further downstream was another donga which I always suspected housed from three to five retainers - always at least two children - that we regarded as camp followers who were now and then called upon for auxilliary jobs and whom I had every reason to believe we fed and clothed. Altogether our boats presented quite a formidable appearance, strung along the margin of the canal-like Jhelum, at that point lined on both sides by shady chenar trees. I felt like the chief of a Highland clan.

Ashore we even tried to make a garden, in which laudable effort we were joined by our neighbor, a retired army officer. The shore opposite our house-boat array gave upon the golf course, the polo field, and the grounds of the one and only hotel that Srinagar boasted. Farther away lay the town proper. The romantic river, the most westerly of the classic "five rivers of the Punjab," with its seven bridges, divides while it joins the various wards of the ancient Venice-like town. Unfortunately its charming Greek name was

C. A. W.'s caddy on the Golf Course, Srinagar

changed for its present commonplace designation. Thousands of years ago it was known to Europeans under its Greek synonym 'Hydaspes' or 'Guardian of the Waters' and Horace, the cosmopolite, mentions it in one of his Odes, "Hydaspes, the gently flowing stream." Moreover, its current, glittering in the sunlight, presents as many twists, turns, and loops as the Meander, and these Kaleidoscopics, it is said, furnished the patterns for the famous Kashmir (and Paisley) shawls. It was on the banks of this tributary of the Indus that Alexander of Macedon conquered the Indian King Poros with whom he afterwards made an alliance offensive and defensive.

The winding stream a quarter of a mile from our tie-up forms one of the affluents of fascinating, ever-beautiful Dal Lake, dotted with islets, some of them afloat. The lake itself is bordered by magnificent gardens embellished with palaces, kiosks, and belvederes, reminiscent of dead and gone Mogul emperors and their wives who built them centuries ago.

Although Kashmir may be uncomfortably cold in the early Spring, the ever-changing views of the mountains that surround three-fourths of the valley and that retain their rosy-hued snow until well into June, are quite worth the northern journey, 250 miles from the nearest railway station. Moreover, the gradual onset of Summer, the early leafage of the willows and other deciduous silvae, the first bloom of the fruit trees, the migrating song and highly coloured birds - all the delights of a temperate springtime - are seen at their best in this fascinating Vale.

Again, as that careful reporter, Marco Polo, noticed six hundred years ago, the inhabitants are mostly of a distinguished presence, the women being especially beautiful. Even if they are gifted liars and, when they can safely pursue the occupation, expert thieves, they function in a manner that is without apparent guile, i.e., when they unfold the most improbable tales or relieve you of some of your superfluous wealth in a fashion that meets with your disapproval, it must not be forgotten that other races also "do" you as effectively, but generally with envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness in their

The Maharaja, Sir Hari Singh, making his first State entry into Kashmir on assuming the throne of Kashmir & Jammu, in May-1926-

hearts. The Kashmiri, on the other hand, practices his dishonest wiles without ill-will and is ever ready after the act to meet the injured one with a smile and more than half-way, showing plainly his wish and will to forgive and forget. As evidence of this I offer our butler, prize pupil of one of the English schools and as handsome a young villain as ever bore a soup plate or smashed one. There is every reason to believe that he held us all in affectionate regard until the day of our retirement from his sway, and yet his rule was punctuated by many acts that were, though far from praiseworthy, often amusing. For instance, he was allowed to run a grocery bill at one of the bazars, which, ingeniously fabricated by the combined efforts of himself, the cook, and the dealer, was presented for payment at the end of each month. The items of this account given in at the end of the first thirty days were quite phenomenal and represented a consumption of victuals that three ordinary persons could not have accomplished in four times the allotted time. The eggs, chickens, sugar, tea, butter, bread, canned foods, etc. eaten the first month of our sojourn would, according to this roster, have fed quite amply a healthy family of ten. Nevertheless there was a most convincing explanation of each item on the list. "But, Rasoula," said my wife, "we could not possibly have used two dozen tins of salmon; we have had fish only four times since we came." "Yes, Mem-Sahib, but twenty of the to-be-eaten fishes are still at the bazar where they await your ladyship's order." In this way about half the articles charged were disposed of, many eggs had "spoiled" while awaiting consumption in the larder, and five chickens had escaped from their coop. A convenient thief (whom they hoped to catch) had also broken into the cookboat and appropriated several loaves of bread, four pounds of sugar, and other dietetic valuables. Promptly we put the commissariat on a stated sum per month which was afterwards declared by an experienced Anglo-Indian to have been two or three times as much as the occasion required. This enforced economy apparently did not reduce our table diet nor did it interfere with certain other enterprises; we learned toward the end of the summer that Durga, our provident cook, who turned out to be the

Flotilla of boats out to greet the Maharaja upon his entrance to Srinagar.

Flotilla of boats out to greet the Maharaja upon his entrance to Srinagar.

father of Rasoula, owned and rented a second house-boat on Dal Lake whose occupants were supplied and fed almost in toto by the substantial crumbs that fell from the "Sendemeer" table and from the superfluities of our bazar bills.

Meantime we had all sorts of sage advice from experienced friends as to the conduct of our "octet," as we agreed to call them. These suggestions ran all the way from such radical treatment as calling in the police to the use of mild corporal punishment, such as throwing the culprit into the none too hygienic waters of the Jhelum. Living expenses, said they, ought not to amount all told to one-fourth the cost you tell us it figures in the States.

Two Scots ladies with a retinue nearly as large as ours managed to limit their household expenses to one-third our per capita, but we noticed that the major part of their time and energies was consumed in watching and managing instead of taking excursions to the gardens of the Shalimar or the Nashat Bagh, climbing to Solomon's Seat, watching the wonderful sunsets across the lilac-tinted snows, or in exploring in their shikara the glories of the upper Jhelum and the shores of Dal Lake, or in visiting the dozens of curio shops and other attractions that make up Srinagar's unique water fronts. Anyway, we did not take this long journey to the borders of Tibet to see how much money could be saved by spying on the shortcomings of servants. Even when the milkman tried to raise my monthly check, already larger than it ought to have been, by a clumsy attempt to alter a three into an eight, I did nothing about it; the local bank is always on the watch for that sort of thing. I merely gave him another check with the remark that if it was done again I would put him in jail. Indeed, when one (which one I never knew) of the eight made a futile attempt to force one of the locks, and succeeded only in damaging it, of the strong suitcase in which I kept my cash, I hesitated to report him to the police, although I did assemble the "octet" and told them the next time anything like that happened I would discharge everybody on board.

Perhaps the most amusing example of these childish attempts of our

The black marble pavilion of the Shalimar bagh, surrounded flowing water and playing fountains.

The Garden, laid out by Jahangir in 1619, rises in broad terraces from the edge of the Dal Lake. It is 590 yards long by 267 yards wide.

servants to increase their meagre income was the clandestine sale of our costly lamp oil. The fact that the thief did not make a straight steal of it was because nearly every morning I took the large can into the sitting room for the time-honoured purpose of firing with its aid the large green wood logs we sometimes used for the hearth. Considerable loss of weight or bulk would be noticed so the thief (who was probably the cook) added the necessary amount of water at each theft of petroleum. Now it is not easy, if one thinks of it (and a Kashmiri rarely does think effectively), to determine the combustion point of an oil and water mixture so it happened, to my astonishment, one cold morning when heat was badly needed, to find that the more oil I poured upon the heaped-up fuel in the grate the more it refused to ignite and burn. I finally emptied a lamp of its contents and soon had a hot fire. Although my wife called it a cruel thing to do, I called together the "octet" and fined them a rupee each until the culprint revealed himself in which case he would be mulcted the whole eight; but none of the virtuous ones came forward so I believe they divided the fine equally and vowed to be more careful if not more virtuous in future.

III

But let us return to the more interesting subject of our river traders. Not every pedlar was allowed to approach our dwelling unless he paid tribute - generally a trivial amount - to the <u>gholandar</u> (head boatman) or his representative. This official tribute is a custom established from time immemorial and I never interfered with it. Occasionally a pedlar attempted to evade this impost whereupon there ensued an interchange of compliments between <u>gholandar</u> and merchant that reminded one of Kipling's pages. Each verbal combatant was anxious - and he expressed his anxiety in wonderfully mixed English - that I should realize not only the utterly false statements made by that lying scoundrel his disputant, but that I should familiarize myself with his utterly depraved, indeed hopeless, social and moral status. Not only he but his ancestry were human degradations beneath the contempt of any respectable man.

Bridge built by Akbar across Jelum - ca. 1600

When the proper time came each speaker would administer the only form of punishment that would appeal to such a depraved specimen of humanity, etc., etc. The effective treatment of the situation was to seek shelter from the storm and wait a few minutes until the clouds rolled by. Then my amiable and smiling cholmdar would appear that I might thank him for defending our home (over which might Allah with all his gracious powers watch and protect) from the most arrant villain and rascal in Jumma and Kashmir, one who would at any time and without warning commit arson, murder, or both. "How much, Akbar Nath, did you demand of him for bakshesh?" "Oh, Sahib, you are the most kind, the most generous, the greatest littoral (liberal) buyer on the canal and he, that vile bird of jail, Lurgan Ali, would not give of his exceeding money more than two rupees, three annas, when, as Your Excellency well knows, it is worth at least five."

Evidently the diplomatic Ditta Lal was persona grata on our house-boat and his contributions were sufficient, as never less than three of our servants eagerly assisted him to tie up to the "Bandemeer."

If the doings of the donga pedlars, with their piles of fascinations - rugs, saddle-bags, embroideries, shawls, brassware, illuminated manuscripts, papier mache boxes, and other works of art, ancient and modern, local and foreign, including the unlisted articles that pour into Kashmir through the Khyber and other passes - if these furnish episodes in the home life of the house-boat dweller, he should not overlook the attractions of the bazars. Many and varied are the treasures that one may find in these garden-crowned shops along the town area of the river. In the early days of a visit it is the part of wisdom to buy little or nothing, especially when under the tutelage of a guide. We found it best first to look the ground over and to postpone serious buying until after a few weeks of "window shopping" by boat and donga, then to venture on one's own and to make one's own bargains. There will never be any danger of paying too little for purchases, and the visitor will have a freer, more enjoyable time, and a worthwhile run for his money. If one

Men gathering water-weeds from the Dal Lake for use as fertilizer on the floating vegetable gardens on the Lake.

must economize, make a list of desiderata and ask a white resident, if such you know, to do the bargaining - but then you will miss the fun of buying.

Of all forms of personal encounter, whether it be a mere logomachy of a rough and tumble fight, none can vie with a Kashmiri contest as a provider of entertainment. There is really nothing like it to be seen elsewhere on land or sea and there is no charge for admission. The two principals are served by one or more wives and as many sympathetic neighbors, men, women, and children, as the importance of the struggle requires.

One day when I was returning from a visit to the English Club, I heard ahead of me shouts and cries as from a large and vigorous mob. Hurrying to see the source of the disturbance I came upon a most peculiar array of men, women, and children. In the midst of a crowded ring of natives a couples of disheveled Kashmiris armed with sticks were gesticulating, shouting, and making wild dashes, thrusts, and blows at one another. It looked as if a serious breach of the peace, with bloody, broken heads or worse would shortly ensue, and I wondered why the policeman standing by did not interefere. On closer emmination, however, I noted that blows from the lathis in the hand of each combatant fell short or missed the opponent's body. It was a stage performance. The gladiatorial contest was in itself noisy and vigorous enough to suggest a serious fight, and interest in the opera bouffe was deepened by the histrionic art of the seconds, the women and grown-up children, whose exertions quite equaled the noisy efforts of the principals. Whenever one gladiator advanced too far beyond the danger line and came within range of his opponenot's lathi, from one to three screaming women sprang to the rescue and dragged him back; it seemed the function of the female element to prevent anything approaching physical injury by pushing and pulling the fighters to the safety zone when danger threatened. It was amusing to see these unknown warriors, in imitation of that other craven, false Sextus, thrice come on in fury and thrice turn back in dread. Occasionally one of the braves spurned this family intervention and

A boat load of Holiday-makers, on their way from the city to the Gardens of the Dal Lake, where they will spend their day picnicking, smoking & playing musical instruments under the big Chenar trees.

shaking off a wife or two, with a blood-curdling yell and apparently lethal intent rushed at his opponent. Then it was that the logomachous row reached fever heat and a compact mass of male and female Kashmiris hauled and dragged at one another to their hearts' content, but nothing of a serious character transpired; both parties retired for rest and refreshment.

It seemed impolite for an outsider to interfere in this private quarrel, indeed even the native policeman, who had appeared on the side lines, seemed to function not as a preserver of the peace, but as a protector of the innocent and silent bystander from possible injury. After some twenty minutes of this stage strife the family honour of both contestants appeared to be satisfied; each champion, surrounded by his escort of better halves, sponge holders, and neighborhood supporters faded away, none of the, except for lack of breath, one penny the worse.

This war of words instead of deadly weapons is perhaps even more picturesque when waged between boatmen plying on the numerous waterways of Kashmir. The local historian, Tyndale-Biscoe, well describes this quite common form of encounter. The lord and master of the family and captain of a donga has been quietly smoking, apparently thinking deep thoughts while his women are preparing the daily meal. He sees sailing by and is aroused to anger by an old enemy. Past insults are raked up and curses on female relatives are exchanged. A noisy battle of abuse begins, resolving itself into a confused babel of voices in which the women of both boats heartily join, their shrill voices heard above those of the menfolk. The preparation of the meal is entirely neglected as all parties stand erect, gesticulating with arms and clenched fists. All this sounds terrible to the newcomer, because it looks as if a battle royal now impending would soon culminate in the shedding of blood, but one boatman never succeeds in his most violent efforts to hit the other. It is when the boats are far apart that the boldest work is done and the combatants shout loudly what they will do to the other rascal if they could only come to grips. Should one boat drift so close to the other that they

Pool below the Spring of the Achibal Bagh - Young Deodars growing on the slope —

touch, each warrior turns his back expressing thereby his contempt in that he would not defile himself by striking the other even with the end of his barge pole. Perhaps should a bystander taunt one of them with cowardice he might throw his arms about his opponent while shouting to his wife, "Hold me! Hold me! or I shall commit murder." Then the wives, all screaming in concert, grasp their respective husbands who allow themselves to be torn apart.

This war of noise and make-believe often lasts until all parties are exhausted and their voices reduced to mere whispers. When this happens each party turns its basket hencoop, with which every river and lake boat is provided, upside down, the sign that truce is declared. Then, when one of the combatants is sufficiently refreshed he will reverse the hencoop and the fight is renewed, provided that in the meantime the enemy has not moved off.

One can understand from the foregoing why the regiments of the Maharajah are not recruited from these children of peace, the native Kashmiris.

IV

The pleasure of our life in Kashmir was enhanced by many charming teas given by the British Resident and his wife, Sir John and Lady Wood. These entertainments were spread in the beautiful garden attached to the Residency laid out by a friend of the writer and a former Resident, Sir Francis Younghusband. It was commonly remarked that while many semi-tropical flowers and shrubs flourish throughout the valley, the familiar plants common to all temperate climates are particularly healthy and wonderfully developed in this particular garden.

What was true of the Residency also held with the ring of larger plantations about Dal Lake. Small wonder that the Imperial court and the Mogul nobility loved to wander about the shady paths, murmuring rills and flowery dells of these sylvan retreats, spending as much of their time as the cares of state allowed in the Shalimr, the Baragha Bagh (the royal palace built for the Empress Nur-Jahan and now known as Lalla Rookh's garden), the Nishat Bagh, the Nagoon Bagh, and other delightful spots. The Nasim Bagh

was Akbar's favourite garden and the first one laid out in Kashmir. Its site was an excellent one, well raised above the lake and cooled by the breeze (hence its name) that all day long blew among its many avenues, fountains, kiosks, and tree-lined canals.

The present Maharajah of Kashmir and Jammu came to the throne while we were in Srinagar and one of the sumptuous entertainments in celebration of his succession, to which we were invited, was given in the famous Shalimar Bagh - the Abode of Love as its name indicates. These famous gardens (measuring 600 yards by 270) were in 1619 laid out by the Emperor Jahengir on either side of a stone-lined, artificial canal a mile long and 35 feet wide. Either margin is fringed by large chenar trees and the waterway, before it runs into the lake, terminates in a sort of lodge that dominates a small public garden and court. The second or Emperor's Garden contains, besides a wealth of flowers, climbing roses, and other shrubbery, the Hall of Public Audience, a large pavilion, called the Diwan-i-'Am, with a black marble throne in its centre built over a waterfall that empties into a tank below. The third division, the guarded and more retired Empress' or Ladies' Garden, is the gem of the three, showing a central pavilion of black marble built by Shah Jahan in the midst of many fountains whose greenish spray causes a glittering effect upon the polished marble that mirrors the deeper tones of the surrounding cypress trees. On all sides of this charming pavilion are series of cascades lighted at night by small lamps placed in recesses behind the transparent waterfalls - producing a fairy-like effect difficult to describe.

It was this setting (with a more distant prospect of lake and snow-topped mountain) that served the coronation feast of the new ruler, who had ordered the buildings to be further decorated. I will not attempt to picture the princely marquees that were pitched to receive the guests, the costly carpets that covered the ground, the riot of colour due to the magnificent costumes, silken turbans, and flashing jewels of the invited rulers, of their wives and attendants. The bodyguard of the Maharajah, arrayed

Doorway, Temple of Martand, near Bawan, Kashmir. Built in 725 A.D. by the Kashmir King Lalataditya

in gorgeous uniforms, kept the gate and lined the entire approach from the entrance gate to the regal pavilion. The Maharajah himself, escorted by numerous attendants all in official garb, had arrived by automobile, having been rowed part of the way from his palace on the Jhelum enthroned in his magnificent, red-lacquered, 30-oared state barge.

To the accompaniment of band music we were elaborately feasted on all sorts of oriental foods and drinks, except the alcoholic, while the officers of the court, circulating throughout the crowd of guests, did their utmost to make us welcome and to feel at home. Our party, like hundreds of others, arrived at the gardens in our own shikara, both dressed in our best. Gaily coloured bunting, ribbons, and flowers decorated both the boats and the rowers, while we sang, separately and in unison, all sorts of songs pitched in diverse tongues. And so we sailed home in the starlight over the romantic waters of Dal Lake, feeling that we had passed a day long to be remembered.

V

Kashmir since the days of Kublai Khan has been a centre for the sale and distribution of literature. Marco Polo tells us that in his day zealous Buddhist monks had established monasteries there in which they translated and transcribed and subsequently distributed many sacred books. In the bazars of Srinagar one still finds some ancient manuscripts as well as many old and new book covers, some of them good examples of Persian leather work, the latter generally of papier mache artistically lacquered. Manuscripts are generally imports from Afghanistan or Persia and occasionally one finds a codex worth the purchase, but the traffic in these attractive items, in whose collection I was greatly interested, has undergone radical changes in recent years. Original Muhammadan literary production ceased nearly a century ago - Islamic peoples despite their conservatism and their part in the "unchangeable East," have suffered a sea change in their ancient customs, practices, ideals, and in the character of their literature. It is not difficult to forecast a time when what they regard as "antiquated" books will be replaced by modern

C. A. W. with two tribal guards,
our bearer Kabira, and our chauffeur.
near the Afghan frontier of the
Khyber Pass.
August 1926

publications. Even now the old literary treasures with their fine calligraphy, charming illustrations, and fine bindings are no longer copied and are not esteemed as of particular value.

In most branches of Far Eastern trade the native merchant successfully competes with his western colleague, but this is not true of book sales, possibly because its operations are comparatively small and limited. Moreover, the oriental bookseller is an extremely inactive and self-contented creature. My experience of him both in North and South India coincides with that of my friend Wladimir Ivanov, formerly curator in the Imperial Russian Library, who assisted me in collecting Islamic books and manuscripts for an American university. The native dealer in Indian books will sit in the bazar and chat with his friends the live-long day, selling now and then a few cheap prayer or school books, but he will never trouble himself to search for a codex of real literary value about which a customer has inquired even if he knows that a good profit will result from a sale. To order anything from a native bookseller is a waste of time. I found that the best results were gained by hunting for an hanger-on of some impoverished family of substance, nearly always to be found idling away his time about the bazars, who were disposing of their family treasures, including heirlooms in the form of fine manuscripts. The next best source of supply is the curio dealer, into whose hands an occasional codex may fall to be resold by him along with necklaces, jewelry, embroideries, carpets, et genus omne. These people are mostly illiterate Hindus, Jews, Armenians, and Muhammadans. They know nothing about the value or character of their literary goods except that every book in their possession is a "rare ancient manuscript" for which their first and only price is absurdly high. Now and then among the rubbish they offer one finds a really rare and valuable book which is worth the price they demand, of course after the usual bargaining.

When a low price is asked by a curio dealer it is very likely a copy that contains seals of "waqf" or bequeathment to some mosque generally located

Our "first class" motor-car, stopped by roadside in the Khyber Pass to allow a donkey caravan to pass on its way to Kabul. Note the spare tires tied on with wisps of cord. We needed them before we got back to Peshawar where the temperature was 110° F at 10 o'clock that night.

in a distant city, or that had been the property of one that has ceased to exist. This stamp, even if the former owner cannot be traced, renders the sale of the work an illegal, or rather impious, transaction, especially if the prohibition is further strengthened by an accompanying invocation of a curse on the illegitimate sale of the book. In that case the dealer, who has probably bought it for a trifle, is willing to part with it for a nominal sum.

My personal adventures in manuscript buying were varied and to me exceedingly interesting. One of them illustrates the fortuitous character of oriental book hunting. I endeavoured while in Kashmir, but in vain, to locate and buy a good copy of that minor Arabian Nights Entertainment known to Persian literati as "The Thirty and One Tales of the Parrot." The story runs in about this fashion: A good Muhammadan makes his pilgrimage to Mecca and while he is gone his faithful wife cudgels her brain to discover how she may on his return welcome him and furnish the diversions resembling those furnished by the classic Thousand Nights and One Night. She finally decided on a series of Thirty and One Bird Stories and that the Parrot, being the wisest of the avian orders and conversant with the wild life of forest, mountain, and stream, would be the best one to furnish entertainments in the form of stories of the jungle - a very pretty and successful scheme.

One day I was wandering about the streets of Lahore when I spied a carpet store that exposed for sale a lovely old silk rug. I had no intention of buying it, but I wished to look at it and incidentally to inquire for books, manuscripts, pen boxes, miniatures, upon which I was at the time intent. In reply to my query the dealer, a well educated young man, brought out for my inspection about a dozen manuscripts, nicely bound, beautifully decorated, carefully written in Nask, and well illustrated by miniatures of artistic quality. "My father, who died a year ago," said he, "left me these as part of my inheritance. He could read them, but I know only about carpets and intend to limit my business in future to the Kabul carpet trade; but perhaps you will make me an offer for these books." I looked over the lot and did make him an

offer, for among them was an excellent copy, with many good miniatures, of my much desired Parrot's Tales.

Through the kindly offices of W. Ivanow I secured quite a few other treasures, among them a small volume written by a good calligrapher over 500 years ago somewhere in Turkestan, or in what is now Northern Afghanistan. It contains mystic-lyrical verses by two eminent Persian poets. A seal on the first page shows that this little codex belonged to the private library (probably was one of his favourite volumes) of that stern but erudite ruler of Samarkand, Ulughbeg, the grandson of Tamerlane, who was much interested in astronomy. He built a good observatory, patronized many scholars and was himself the author of well-known astronomical tables. He died in 1449. It would read like a story from the Arabian Nights if one could trace the route and adventures by the way of this dainty little volume from the royal library in Samarkand in the fifteenth century to the dusty shop of a curio seller, a Hindu of Lucknow, from whom it was purchased in 1926, and which finally found a place of rest across the seven seas in the library of a Canadian university.

McGill

"Emma Oberoshood"

In addition to the many pleasures and few pains that attended our North Indian life we acquired, I believe, some but not much illuminating information relative to Far Eastern peoples, especially about their opinions, customs, traditions, and prejudices. Not that we were able to understand these so-called alien races in the true Lucretian sense, but we came to see, at length, that autres peuples, autres moeurs must be our motto in dealing with Indians, Pathans, Afghans, Sikhs, Bengalis, Kashmiris, Tamils, Sinhalese, and a dozen other races with whom we came more or less in contact. It soon became apparent that the yardstick with which we are wont to measure the morals of our occidental brethren, however useful it may be, is perfectly useless in the measurmtion of Asiatic peoples. Indeed, time and again we found how startling, confusing, and even exasperating the whole problem is. When with an open mind, confident and unbiased, we entered the temple of knowledge and eagerly searched for ethnologic truth, we discovered as often as not that we came out by the same door we went in.