

"THE RUINS OF HUMPI" (BELLARY DISTRICT).

BY DENNIS BAZELY.

HUMPI is now only a small village where a few Indian peasants live. It was once the great and flourishing capital of the Vijianagar Kings. The ruins of the old forts are still to be seen, and Humpi must have been quite a formidable fortress, for it is built in a valley and is surrounded by hills. It is built in so strategic a manner that one cannot distinguish the city from the hills, except at a few hundred yards' distance.

On each of the surrounding hills there is a "look out" from where the approach of an enemy is quickly detected. The city is situated on the river Tungabadra, whose water in certain parts are counted sacred by the Hindus.

The Rajahs of Vijianagar extended and beautified the place by building numerous palaces and temples. These Rajahs were finally overcome by the rulers of Golconda and Bijapur.

There is not much to be seen of the royal palace which had nine gates. Among the ruins there still may be seen the Queen's Bath, where a fountain is said to have been erected. From the Bath there were two long corridors leading to a temple, where the queen used to worship with her maidens after they had finished their ablutions. The corridors are now in ruins; the roofs have fallen in but the stone pillars still remain standing in two long rows. Not far from the Queen's Bath stands another temple which consists of an outer court, probably for the worshippers, and adjoining this is a dark room, where sitting in an ugly and lazy style is a huge idol. The height of the image is approximately 18 feet.

It is the image of a man sitting down, but it has a trunk instead of a nose. While one gazes at this hideous monster, one is also struck at the marvellous skill of those by-gone sculptors, who cut this huge image out of one solid rock. There is not a crack or a mistake in the whole piece of work. Moving on from here, the visitor comes to another temple, about the most marvellous in the whole city. There are no idols in this, but the way in which the pillars were cut and set up gives one something to wonder about. In some places they are so thin and fine that it is a wonder that they have stood for so many years. The roof is flat and is made of slabs of granite on which some pretty designs are carved. In the middle there is a dome which is also cut out of one piece of stone. These large slabs were probably lifted up by elephants and placed quite accurately in their respective positions. This temple both from within and without has a fine appearance. There is also a car made completely of white stone and standing on four wheels which together with the axles are also made of stone. Three of the four wheels are immovable. The car is raised a few feet above the ground and every year at a certain festival the Hindus turn the movable wheel round. Pilgrims visit the place from far-off town, and villages at this festival for the purpose of bathing in the Tungabadra and

turning that wheel. Some of the roads made by men in those by-gone days are still to be seen. One road passes between two rocks and is covered over by a huge boulder as a sort of roof. This part is rather dark. Whether this is the work of nature or of man is not known. What I have described are the chief sights. There are numerous other temples, the ruins of the barracks, and also the King's Balance. In certain structures and temples where the pillars and walls seem rather weak, the Government of India have erected pillars and buttresses to support the old buildings. The gateways leading from one courtyard to another are very wide, probably to allow for the passage of the elephants to and fro. In many places there are statues of elephants, and it is quite remarkable that every elephant has its trunk broken off. The reason generally given for this is, that a great many years back the Mohammadans imagining the statues of the elephants to be those of pigs, tried to injure the figures and had broken off every trunk of the elephants. Walking round the place the visitor may notice three stones piled one on the other. This is what the Hindu pilgrim sets up when he makes a vow to one of his gods in the temples round about.

This once great and noisy city now lies quite silent and still, with no other noise than the sighing of the wind "through his loved groves", and at times the harsh note of the peacock and restless chatter of the monkeys. Hampi has rightly been named, by an old traveller, "The City of the Dead."

POEMS.

THE TRUST

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off."—Heb. xi. 13.

They trusted God—Unslumbering and unsleeping
He sees and sorrows for a world at war,
His ancient covenant securely keeping;
And these had seen His promise from afar,
That through the pain, the sorrow, and the sinning
That righteous Judge the issue should decide
Who ruleth over all from the beginning—
And in that faith they died.
They trusted England—Scarce the prayer was spoken
Ere they beheld what they had hungered for,
A mighty country with its ranks unbroken.
A city built in unity once more;
Freedom's best champion, girt for yet another.
And mightier enterprise for Right defied.
A land whose children live to serve their Mother—
And in that faith they died.
And us they trusted; we the task inherit.