

SOME OF MY HOLIDAYS IN INDIA FROM 1905—1915.

BY MISS C. B. ALLINSON.

WILL you come and spend your first holiday with us ? So wrote a missionary friend who was, with her husband, living on the border of the Kalat State.

I immediately answered "Yes" because I love to get off the beaten track for holidays. We had a long drive across the plain from Sibi, Sindh, ere we reached what I immediately called "Our deserted village." Government had given permission for the missionaries to use one of the houses that stand "Ready for occupation" by our Army men in case of need. It had been a busy centre once, in our border wars, for the little graveyard bore testimony to lives laid down for the defence of the right. The graves were nameless, but kept very tidy, each had a bordering of round stones which are kept whitewashed and numbered. The houses are simply furnished, and all in excellent repair in case of need. Here I had my first camel ride, we went itinerating in the villages around and sometimes I attended the little hospital, which perched on a cliff edge could be seen for miles—a visible sign of the love of Christ and the obedience of His followers who had gone forth to preach the Gospel and to heal the sick.

One day on our journeying, we found the ruins of an ancient city—it was a marvellous sight—some sickness or panic must have seized the people, to our minds it suggested an earthquake, which had to all appearance cut the city right in two, the houses that remained standing being so near the edge of a deep ravine that building there would have been impossible. Our camel man said "The curse of God had suddenly come on the place and those living had fled." The Mosque remained standing in a fair state of preservation and many houses too, nothing showing that a battle had taken place. Picking up a piece of blue tiling inside the Mosque, I remarked on its peculiar colouring—it was neither green nor blue but had a most uncommon tint. Later on, sending some fragments to a connoisseur, we were told that for over one hundred years, the formula for obtaining this precise shade has been lost.

My next holiday I spent in Multan, and visited a Mosque still used by Mohammedans, though it bears inside a marble tablet over the spot where two officers were killed during the Mutiny period, outside is also an obelisk erected to their memory. A visit to the famous Multan potteries is most interesting and many things in the bazaar are well worth seeing, the mixture of races being particularly noticeable. From there I visited Amritsar and saw the Golden Temple, unfortunately it was a very wet day so we did not see it at its best. The carpet-making industry here well repays a visit. Not very long after I took the long journey from Quetta to Thandiana. Here I had my first experience of "Dandies"—at first I assured my companions I could never sit in one of those "coffin-like boxes," but later on I was only too glad to be carried.

Oh, the grandeur of the first glimpse of Nature in her lofty splendour! I can never forget those paths, so narrow, as our coolies swung around corners or jumped over small streams rushing, foaming down the mountain side; the lovely ferns, maiden-hair, wild violets, and lillies; and in the distance, the everlasting snows. How wonderful it all was, and how insignificant man! Truly the Psalmist's words are full of deep meaning when he says:—"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help." My next holiday was to quite a different spot. I left the snows of Quetta for Bengal. *En route* I saw Delhi, where the S. P. G. Doctor and Sisters gave me a very happy day. It was the 31st of December. After a rest they took me round the city in their phaeton and I was able to get some very good snapshots. After dinner, I returned to the station to await the midnight train, hoping to get an hour's sleep I lay down in the waiting room, and immediately fell asleep. The sights of the day had filled my thoughts with meeting sorrows and I was suddenly roused midst a dream of "Storming the Cashmeri Gate" by the boom of cannon and the shrill cry of the Ayah who was kneeling in a pitiful state of fright at my side. Boom—went the gun, and the Ayah screamed! Then I suddenly remembered it is the "Fort Guns" signalling the "coming in of the New Year" so I comforted the Ayah and gathered my goods together to catch the mail. My destination was Krishnagar—while there I went to see the famous "Battle field of Plassey." The place is marked by a statue erected by Lord Curzon. Near by is a Hindu shrine, around which are scattered hundreds of clay figures roughly shaped as horses. I am told that they are yearly offered in sacrifice. The god worshipped at the shrine demands a yearly offering of twelve horses. In olden times horses were sacrificed, but now the people, being poor, have substituted clay figures! Is it not strange to think that their god is such a one that they can easily deceive? What reliance can they place on a god like this in trouble? We had the pleasure of seeing the working of a silk factory here. The men and women were busily spinning out the cocoons, working with their hands in a constant stream of running water at boiling heat, the skin of their hands being much hardened, and shrivelled. It made me think of all these workers and the work when next I bought "a yard of silk."

Spending the week end in Calcutta, we visited the Museum and were much interested in seeing the models of many Indian races, but were disappointed in finding no models of the "Brahms" whom I had known so well in Quetta. They are an agricultural race inhabiting Beloochistan. Their work is sheep breeding and exchanging the same for Australian sheep. I learnt after that the wool is greatly used by the Dhariwal Woollen Mill Co.

On my return journey I visited Cawnpore. Entering the Church I was shown by the sentry on duty the original sketches taken at the Relief of Cawnpur. The beautiful memorial well, gives no hint of the horrors of the Mutiny, there seems to be a solemn hush over all. But the sketches—they show what our people passed through.

My Lucknow holiday came next, and as I spent four weeks there I was able to visit the Residency many times. No one who walks around the ground

of the Residency can come away feeling quite the same. Lucknow well repays a careful visit. Our men and women fought for righteousness sake and proved the Power of God to help them through. When next my holiday came, I thought of a sea voyage being an excellent sailor and loving the sea, I started from Bombay in February going by a French S. S. to Colombo. Here I spent a very happy fortnight, the Missionary Rest House, on the Colpetty Road is a delightful place to stay in. From there I went to Kandy and saw the famous Tooth Temple, also the old Court House. The inhuman cruelties to be practised on the prisoners are all faithfully depicted on the walls of the Temple, giving the prisoners as they passed from the Temple to the Court a foretaste of what would follow their sentence. The door of the Temple is particularly fine, having many gems and precious stones imbedded therein. The Railway up from Colombo is also a wonderful piece of engineering skill, the curves around corners being at such an angle that it was quite easy to photograph the engine on hind part of the train from the carriage window.

I left Colombo for Calcutta by a slow coasting steamer this enabling me to see Galle, Pondicherry, Madras, etc., *en route*. This is a very restful holiday and most interesting and I recommend it strongly to anyone fond of the sea. Last year I spent some months in Almora. Here again we have the glorious mountains, with the line of snows in view on clear days, and most wonderful sunsets. I had the joy of seeing a sunrise there; just at first a tiny white line in the blackest of clouds, then as I watched, it slowly broadened out until "The Heavens were filled with the glory of God and the earth shewed forth HIS handiwork."