

tion of driving and the appearance of all is such an odd mixture of Europe and Asia, that few objects attracted my attention more.

In the crowded streets of Calcutta one is struck with seeing so few women. Only the lowest description, the oldest and the ugliest are seen abroad. The younger are generally pretty, but age very early, and before thirty look very old. The *pan* they chew discolours the teeth. Their skin wrinkles, their eyes become bloodshot and their flesh flaccid. They then are very hideous, and the more so from the ornaments with which they load their persons. The women marry young, my *ayah* has with her daughter, a widow aged thirteen. Elephantiasis is a very common complaint among the females, affecting one leg with frightful swellings but not affecting the general health.

Most of the upper class of Europeans in the Presidency have houses out of town, especially about Chowringhee, a part bordering on the river and very pretty; each house is detached and surrounded by a compound, or enclosure laid out in garden and shrubberies. The houses are upper roomed and have generally flat roofs surrounded by a balustrade and open porticos in front. I saw but little of English society in Calcutta, but some points struck me as characteristic. One was that the conversation continually turned on home. "When do you go home . . . I took my furlough and went home five years ago." And when the papers come in of a morning the first questions are "Any news from England?" . . . "When does the next ship sail for England?"

#### AMERICAN ICE

One piece of luxury at the Presidency astonished me. It was American ice. It is packed surrounded with jam in the ship's hold and arrives with wonderfully little loss. A lump of it put into a glass of wine is as great a luxury as can be tasted in this climate. Indian etiquette is in some respects different to English. "May I take a glass of wine with you?" "Thank you, I'll take beer," sounds at first very odd. Moreover, here the signal for the ladies rising from the table is given by the principal lady guest, not by the mistress of the house.

The richer natives in Calcutta are imitating European manners, equipages, and buildings. Near Cossipore is a house with

large grounds belonging to a Hindoo.<sup>10</sup> We went into the grounds one evening to look at his pet rhinoceros. There were four or five of these curious creatures, walking about tame and grazing or rather grubbing [46] in the earth for roots. Their keepers sat by, but their office was only to watch that their charge did not wander away. The animals were perfectly tame and allowed us to pat them, they followed their keepers and are quite harmless.

It is the universal feeling that in Calcutta, where the wealthier natives mix a good deal with Europeans, their Hindoo prejudices are fast giving way, not I fear to the Gospel but to English science and literature. Good however must be done by the extension of knowledge, and by a breach being made in the seven fold shield of *dustoor* (custom) which has so long defied improvement.

We were struck when reading the observations in *Saturday Evening* on the Grecianising Jews how much they applied to the Anglicised Hindoos of Calcutta. European female teachers are employed as day governesses of some rich natives and I heard a very intelligent Englishman, who had been long in the country, notice the great change when respectable native ladies were seen taking a drive in an open carriage. Some Hindoo gentlemen even eat with Europeans, and at the Hindoo College the youths are instructed in the English language and literature. Though they nominally continue Hindoos, they are in fact Deists. Government seminaries for the diffusion of education without any direct attempt at proselytising are established in all large stations. One lad who had been brought up at the college used frequently to come to Major Hutchinson. He was a fine, intelligent looking fellow, who seemed thirsty after information. He had a pretty correct idea of the outline of Christianity and spoke of the absurdities of Hindooism but seemed untouched at heart by either "the sinfulness of sin", or the beauty of holiness. This lad spoke English very well, and one day brought us a composition of his own in that language, a rambling essay on the advantages of science.

In the Indian papers and journals there are frequent contributions from the students, generally correct as to grammar, and shewing a considerable knowledge of our standard authors, but the questions are elaborately brought in and the style is

ropes, he steers and gives orders, which he delivers in a sort of loud, prolonged chant audible at a good distance.

[52] They are all a most loquacious race, and their chief pleasure seems to be smoking a "*hubble-bubble*" or pipe, a cocoa-nut shell or small hollow globe of wood which has a long tube inserted at the upper part, with a little earthen saucer on the top, where the lighted tobacco is placed. The globe is filled with water and from one side of it projects another tube, to which the mouth is applied and thus the smoke is inhaled through the water. The *hubble-bubble* is the chief refreshment of all the hard working classes, as the *hookah* is the grand re-creation of the idle.

#### NOTES

1 Honoria, wife of Henry Lawrence of Lucknow fame (Brigadier-General Sir Henry Montgomery Lawrence, K.C.G., 1806-1857) kept journals throughout her life. Honoria Marshall was born on Christmas Day, 1808, as the twelfth of the fifteen children of the Rev. George Marshall, Rector of Carndonagh, Ireland. She was brought up at Fahn, by her uncle, Admiral Heath. The Lawrences were cousins from the same corner of Ireland. Henry's father, Lieutenant-Colonel Alexander Lawrence (1763-1835) was a man of humble origin. He married Catherine Letitia Knox (1774-1846). John Lawrence, Henry's brother, became the Governor-General and Viceroy of India. Henry had five sisters and Letitia was his favourite. In 1827 Letitia was seriously ill and went to stay at Fahn. Both Letitia and Honoria became life-long friends thence. Henry met Honoria in August 1827 and fell in love with her. He proposed her through Letitia in 1836 and she agreed. Honoria reached Madras on board the *Reliance* on June 29, 1837 and Calcutta within two months. They were married very quietly on August 21, 1837. Though Honoria visited England after her marriage, she returned to India. She died at Mount Abu on 15th January 1854 and lies buried there. Sir Henry Lawrence died on 4th July 1857 at the Lucknow Residency during the Sepoy Mutiny from a shot received two days earlier.

Maud Diver's *Honoria Lawrence: A Fragment of Indian History* (London, John Murray, 1936, illustrated, 1/8th, 524 pages) is a biographical study. The quotations, purported to be taken from her Journal, have not been properly transcribed.

Pat Barr (*The Memsaibs: The Women of Victorian India*, London, 1976; Indian reprint, 1978) has also given an account of

Honoria Lawrence. He seems to have depended upon Maud Diver's biography of Honoria Lawrence.

2. Read Spence's Hotel. John Spence established his hotel at Wellesley Place in front of the Government House in 1828/1829.
3. Mhugs = Maghs—people from Chittagong. Maghs were inveterate slave dealers.
4. See Douglas Dewar's *Bygone Days in India*, London, 1922, pp. 53-57 for sola topi. Fanny Parks was the first to refer to *sola topi* in 1833.
5. Bagh Bazar.
- 5a. Burthern—possibly a copyst's mistake for burthen = burden.
6. Rut or Rath = chariot.
7. Cranchee = Karanchee—hackney coach peculiar to Bengal.
8. Read hardware.
9. Gokul Mitra's Madan Mohan temple and Govindram Mitra's Pagoda are possibly the temples referred to here.
10. The reference is perhaps to Raja Buddynath Roy's menagerie, which is still remembered by "Chiriyamore".