

Maharajas and Their Jewels



Maharaja of Indore in the Peacock Turban.

SHOULD you ever feel inclined to verify tales of "The Thousand and One Persian Days," which usually begin with something like "Once upon a time there was a rajah who sat upon a golden throne, and slept upon a pearl carpet, and built a golden-roofed pavilion for a beautiful queen," you may journey comfortably to India, then on to Delhi and Agra, and see the empty palaces of the Mogul kings, which are very little changed save that they now reverberate mournfully to the footfall of western shod feet, and their marble walls have been mellowed to the tint of old ivory by 250 years of Indian sun. So writes Eleanor Maddock in Asia.

You may walk among the colonnades of the great Hall of Audience inlaid with flowers of lapis lazuli, jade, topaz and carnelian that seem to grow upon the walls, and burst into bloom on the very spot where rested Shah Jahan's "Peacock Throne," a glorified four poster bedstead of solid gold with a pearl-fringed canopy upon which the emperor sat daily to dispense justice, his turban ablaze with diamonds and his flowered tunic almost hidden by ropes of pearls. Behind him sapphires, rubies and emeralds glowed from the outspread tails of two peacocks and over his head hung a parrot wrought from a single emerald, holding in its beak the Koh-i-nor diamond.

You may enter the great silent harem without hindrance and pause before the lace-like marble screen which overlooks the cool scented garden, heavy with the perfume of orange and mango blossoms. A staircase leads from the garden to Queen Arjamund's golden-roofed pavilion and rose water bath—all a solid mass of exquisite inlay—and in the thickness of the marble walls are cunningly contrived apertures just large enough to admit a woman's hand, where the queen kept her jewels at night.

It is a long time since Shah Jahan's empress was laid under the swelling dome of the Taj Mahal across the River Jumna, yet her personality lingers in her boudoir of fretwork arches, where she bedecked herself with jewels more dazzling and splendid than any woman has ever worn before or since.

Pearl Carpet Really Exists.

But that such a thing as a pearl carpet could exist outside fiction would be a tax on credulity, did it not actually hang on the wall of the Nuzerbagh palace at Baroda. This relic of a past era of bizarre extravagance is described as 8x6 feet. Three large diamond flower patterns form the center; 32 smaller diamond patterns, and 1,200 rubies, 500 emeralds in flower designs form the border; the remaining portion of the carpet is composed of seed pearls, although in places along the outer edge they have been removed and replaced by glass beads. A more absurd and useless object, apart from its monetary value, would be hard to find even in India. But, if we hark back to the time before the rich gem mines, the extensive pearl fisheries on the west coast and on the island of Ceylon had been exhausted, when they were yielding their treasure by the bucketful, it takes little effort of the imagination to picture an eastern potentate, laden with jewels until he could scarcely sustain their weight, reclining on the Peacock throne before the pearl carpet.

Such treasure, being in itself indestructible, has descended through the dynasties of the Hindu kings, and later of the Mogul emperors, when laden caravans from Persia were constantly adding to their wealth. So that the jewels owned today by the rajahs and ruling princes of India, estimated not by numbers, but by meas-

ure, are no myth, but just plain fact. The Delhi Loot.

The Nawab of Bahawalpur owns a portion of what is known as the "Delhi loot," which, as a whole, once constituted the Mogul emperors' crown jewels, fished by them in turn from the Hindus and their ancient temples. So it was fitting that some should have found their way back. History records that every gem in the almost fabulous collection has been figuratively, if not literally, drenched in blood. There are ornaments for the front of turbans; caps to cover the head fashioned entirely of jewels, with just enough gold filigree to hold them in place; ropes of pearls, rubies and emeralds; numberless rings, bracelets and anklets for women. There is a wonderful diamond necklace called the "Garland of Delight," the largest stone of which measures one and one quarter inches in diameter.

The "Garland of Delight" has blazed an imperishable trail through the history of eastern romance, which is ever akin to tragedy. It was worn secretly for a brief span by Gul Saffa, the "White Rose," a beautiful dancing girl whose story bears repeating. She was the mistress of Dara, who was a brother of Emperor Aurangzeb, the last of the four great Moguls. Dara and Aurangzeb, sons of Shah Jahan, were both ambitious to sit on the Peacock throne. But Aurangzeb, nicknamed the "White Snake" because he was born with a curiously white skin, after he had removed all obstacles, including his brother, managed eventually to coil himself on the cushions of the Peacock throne. After Dara's death the emperor seized his brother's possessions, including the "Garland of Delight" and Gul Saffa. She was said to have in her veins blood of the Hindu Rajputs, the race long noted for the beauty and chastity of its women. So, when Aurangzeb demanded her, she said she belonged to Dara and asked on what grounds he claimed her. The emperor replied that her long tresses had bound him as in a net. That night a messenger brought a package to him, wherein lay coil upon coil of perfumed hair. Again the emperor sent back word that it was the moon-like beauty of her face that had enthralled him. Then the girl took a knife and slashed her face until it was hideous to look upon. She wiped the blood from it with a cloth and sent it to the emperor, as a sign that nothing was left of the beauty he had desired. He never troubled Gul Saffa again, who soon died of grief for her lover.

The native state of Baroda is close to the Runn of Cutch, and the state of Indore had easy access to it. In its quiet twisting waterways lay rich pearl oyster beds, which, in the old days, were infested with pirates. Doubtless the ancestors of the present highnesses of these states got their share of "first pickings," since the Maharaja Gaekwar of Baroda has the largest collection of pearls in India, although the handsome young Maharaja Holkar of Indore runs him a close second. I sat near this resplendent personage once at a Royal Hindu wedding, close enough to hear a pleasant little tinkling sound when he moved, for he was wearing his "pearl scarf," which he values at a crore of rupees (\$3,000,000). It is composed of nine strands of cream luster pearls as large as marrowfat peas, that hang from a thick pearl tassel over one shoulder, across his chest to his hips, scarf fashion. Eighteen great pearls, each with a carat diamond set into it, form the clasp of the neckpiece. Think of the vandalism of drilling them! Maharaja Holkar has inherited his father's peacock turban, another marvel of pearls, rubies, emeralds and diamonds.

WAR SHORN OF ITS GLAMOR

Modern Painters, Who Themselves Have Looked on Death, Depict Slaughter as It Really Is.

For the first time in history war is painted as it is. The varnish, the glory has been taken off. It stands out in all its sodden horror. The opening of the Salon des Artistes Français, filled for the most part with canvases of men who have been in the trenches, show an astonishing absence of battle scenes.

Most of the painters have sought inspiration elsewhere. Those who have found it in the war have rendered only the dull misery of life at the front.

They show no clash of armies, these painters who have been through the war, no flourish of trumpets, not even fragments of general fights. But war as it is. A soldier, limping toward the lines, exhausted, despairing, holding up to his mouth a handkerchief, dark as a clot of blood is what one sees. The face is distorted with suffering, and the uniform is of that indescribable color which comes only from continual exposure to the elements. Garry paints a blinded soldier guided towards a relief station, Michel and Pouzargues show water-flooded trenches.

If governments in the future wish more pleasant and cheerful war scenes they will have to call on artists who stayed away from the front. Those who served were too close to death to paint anything but the truth.

JUST REPETITION OF HISTORY

Fads of the Present Day Had Their Counterpart in the Fashions of Years Ago.

Nothing is new under the sun, not even the newest and most up-to-date girl striker of the present day, with bobbed hair, nor even the employer who complains of the fashion. A writer in "Blackwood" has discovered that in the time of James I, this fashion was affected by women who donned the doublet and hose, which aroused the ire of an unknown author, who in 1620 lampooned the women of the day for so dressing, and instead of keeping to "the modest attire of the comely hood, cowl or coil and handsome dress and kirchifs" betook themselves to the "cloudy, ruffianly, broad-brimmed hat and wanton feathers." Nor was this all. The extravagance of her costume, with the "French doublet" which took the place of a "cancelled straight gown" was not in the author's eye the deadliest offense; incredible though it seems, she would "out and cut her hair to the despicable fashion of the Puritan." So the bobbed hair comes as a reminiscence of the modern maiden's forebears in the Covenanters' time.

Selling Shoes Under Difficulties.

Dean B. Stover, southern salesman for a Brockton shoe concern, got an order under difficulties while out on his last trip. He made a North Carolina town and hired a taxi to take him to a township 15 miles away to which few trains ran. Arriving on the outskirts of his destination he found that the heavy floods had washed away the only bridge. Mr. Stover decided the only thing to do was to turn back until the taxi driver suggested that there might be a boat somewhere around. Mr. Stover hunted along the banks until he found a flat bottomed skiff and he rowed across. He interviewed his customer, paddled him back to the other shore, requisitioned a small wharf and laid his samples out on the roadside. And he made the sale.—Brockton Enterprise.

All Blush Now.

Playwright Eugene Walter apropos of a New York publisher's conviction for publishing a supposedly obscene novel said:

"The novel in question is harmless, and the people who brought about that poor publisher's conviction were as silly as—as well as it reminds me of a story.

"The lady principal of a famous girls' school took her older pupils to the Metropolitan museum one day. Entering the hall of sculptures, the principal said, as she looked up from her catalogue:

"Attention, young ladies! When we come to the next statue but one you will all blush."

Newlyweds to Tents.

A honeymoon colony, believed to be the first of its kind in England, has been established in a meadow near Farnham, Surrey. At the edge of a certain wood half a dozen tents may be seen. They are the homes of the four brides and their husbands who, rendered homeless by the house shortage, have begun their married life in the open air.

The colony is likely to be still further enlarged, for several other couples have applied for admission.—From the Continental Edition of the London Mail.

Immunity From Ivy Poisoning.

Persons susceptible to ivy poisoning can be rendered immune by taking a treatment described by Dr. Jay Frank Schumberg in the Journal of the American Medical association. It consists in taking after meals a preparation of tincture of poison ivy, in doses gradually increasing from one drop to a teaspoonful. The immunity conferred by this lasts for about a month. Ivy poisoning may also be cured by administering the same drug in larger doses, increasing more rapidly.

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