A PASSAGE TO INDIA

PART I: MOSQUE

CHAPTER I

Except for the Marabar Caves—and they are twenty miles off—the city of Chandrapore presents

nothing extraordinary. Edged rather than washed by the river Ganges, it trails for a couple of miles along the bank, scarcely distinguishable from the rubbish it deposits so freely. There are no bathing-steps on the river front, as the Ganges happens not to be holy here; indeed there is no river front, and bazaars shut out the wide and shifting panorama of the stream. The

streets are mean, the temples ineffective, and though a few fine houses exist they are hidden

away in gardens or down alleys whose filth deters all but the invited guest. Chandrapore was never large or beautiful, but two hundred years ago it lay on the road between Upper India , then imperial, and the sea, and the fine houses date from that period. The zest for decoration

stopped in the eighteenth century, nor was it ever democratic. There is no painting and scarcely

any carving in the bazaars. The very wood seems made of mud, the inhabitants of mud moving .

So abased, so monotonous is everything that meets the eye, that when the Ganges comes down it might be expected to wash the excrescence back into the soil. Houses do fall, people are drowned and left rotting, but the general outline of the town persists, swelling here, shrinking

there, like some low but indestructible form of life.

Inland, the prospect alters. There is an oval Maidan, and a long sallow hospital. Houses belonging

to Furasians stand on the high ground by the railway station. Beyond the railway—which

runs parallel to the river— the land sinks, then rises again rather steeply. On the second rise is

laid out the little civil station, and viewed hence Chandrapore appears to be a totally different

place. It is a city of gardens. It is no city, but a forest sparsely scattered with huts. It is a tropical

pleasaunce washed by a noble river. The toddy palms and neem trees and mangoes and pepul

that were hidden behind the bazaars now become visible and in their turn hide the bazaars .

They rise from the gardens where ancient tanks nourish them, they burst out of stifling purlieus

and unconsidered temples. Seeking light and air, and endowed with more strength than man or

his works, they soar above the lower deposit to greet one another with branches and beckoning

leaves, and to build a city for the birds. Especially after the rains do they screen what passes below, but at all times, even when scorched or leafiess, they glorify the city to the English people

who inhabit the rise, so that new-comers cannot believe it to be as meagre as it is described, and have to be driven down to acquire disillusionment. As for the civil station itself, it provokes no emotion. It charms not; neither does it repel. It is sensibly planned, with a redbrick

club on its brow, and farther back a grocer's and a cemetery, and the bungalows are disposed

along roads that intersect at right angles. It has nothing hideous in it, and only the view is beautiful; it shares nothing with the city except the overarching sky.

The sky too has its changes, but they are less marked than those of the vegetation and the river. Clouds map it tip at times, but it is normally a dome of blending tints, and the main tint blue. By day the blue will pale down into white where it touches the white of the land, after sunset it has a new circumference— orange, melting upwards into tenderest purple. But the core

of blue persists, and so it is by night. Then the stars hang like lamps from the immense vault .

The distance between the vault and them is as nothing to the distance behind them, and that

farther distance, though beyond colour, last freed itself from blue .

The sky settles everything— not only climates and seasons but when the earth shall be beautiful.

By herself she can do little— only feeble outbursts of flowers. But when the sky chooses ,

glory can rain into the Chandrapore bazaars or a benediction pass from horizon to horizon. The

sky can do this because it is so strong and so enormous. Strength comes from the sun, infused

in it daily; size from the prostrate earth. No mountains infringe on the curve. League after league the earth lies fiat, heaves a little, is fiat again. Only in the south, where a group of fists

and fingers are thrust up through the soil, is the endless expanse interrupted. These fists and fingers are the Marabar Hills, containing the extraordinary caves .

CHAPTER II

Abandoning his bicycle, which fell before a servant could catch it, the young man sprang up

on to the verandah. He was all animation. "Hamidullah, Hamidullah! am I late?" he cried .

"Do not apologize," said his host. "You are always late ".

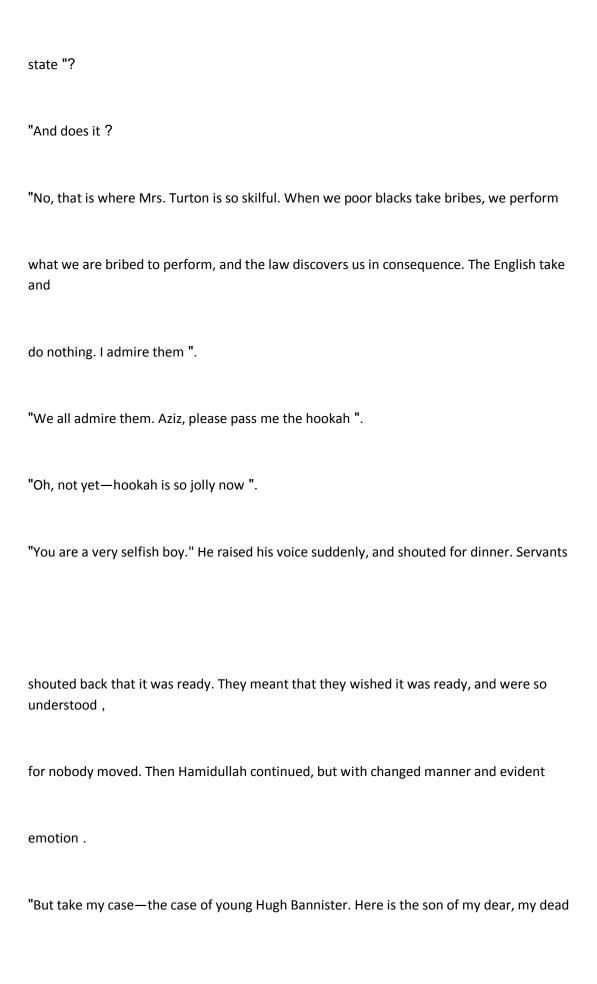
"Kindly answer my question. Am I late? Has Mahmoud Ali eaten all the food? If so I go

elsewhere. Mr. Mahmoud Ali, how are you "?









friends, the Reverend and Mrs. Bannister, whose goodness to me in England I shall never forget or describe. They were father and mother to me, I talked to them as I do now. In the vacations their Rectory became my home. They entrusted all their children to me~I often carried little Hugh about[~]I took him up to the Funeral of Queen Victoria, and held him in my arms above the crowd ". "Queen Victoria was different," murmured Mahmoud Ali . "I learn now that this boy is in business as a leather merchant at Cawnpore. Imagine how I long to see him and to pay his fare that this house may be his home. But it is useless. The other Anglo-Indians will have got hold of him long ago. He will probably think that I want something, and I cannot face that from the son of my old friends. Oh, what in this country has gone wrong with everything. Vakil Sahib? I ask you ".

Aziz joined in. "Why talk about the English? Brrrr . . . ! Why be either friends with the fellows

or not friends? Let us shut them out and be jolly. Queen Victoria and Mrs. Bannister were the only exceptions, and they're dead ". "No, no, I do not admit that, I have met others ". "So have I," said Mahmoud Ali, unexpectedly veering. "All ladies are far from alike." Their mood was changed, and they recalled little kindnesses and courtesies. "She said 'Thank you so much' in the most natural way." "She offered me a lozenge when the dust irritated my throat ". Hamidullah could remember more important examples of angelic ministration, but the other, who only knew Anglo-India, had to ransack his memory for scraps, and it was not surprising that he should return to "But of course all this is exceptional. The exception does not prove the rule. The average woman is like Mrs. Turton, and, Aziz, you know what she is." Aziz did not know, but said he did. He too generalized from his disappointments—it is difficult for members of a subject race to do otherwise. Granted the exceptions, he agreed that all Englishwomen are

haughty and venal. The gleam passed from the conversation, whose wintry surface unrolled and
expanded interminably .
A servant announced dinner. They ignored him. The elder men had reached their eternal
politics, Aziz drifted into the garden. The trees smelt sweet— green-blossomed champak— and
scraps of Persian poetry came into his head. Dinner, dinner, dinner but when he returned to
the house for it, Mahmoud Ali had drifted away in his turn, to speak to his sais. "Come and see
my wife a little then," said Hamidullah, and they spent twenty minutes behind the purdah .
Hamidullah
Begum was a distant aunt of Aziz, and the only female relative he had in Chandrapore ,
and she had much to say to him on this occasion about a family circumcision that had been
celebrated with imperfect pomp. It was difficult to get away, because until they had had their
dinner she would not begin hers, and consequently prolonged her remarks in case they should

suppose she was impatient. Having censured the circumcision, she bethought her of kindred
topics, and asked Aziz when he was going to be married .
Respectful but irritated, he answered, "Once is enough ".
"Yes, he has done his duty," said Hamidullah. "Do not tease him so. He carries on his family ,
two boys and their sister ".
"Aunt, they live most comfortably with my wife's mother, where she was living when she
died. I can see them whenever I like. They are such very, very small children ".
"And he sends them the whole of his salary and lives like a low-grade clerk, and tells no one
the reason. What more do you require him to do "?
But this was not Hamidullah Begum's point, and having courteously changed the conversation
for a few moments she returned and made it. She said, "What is to become of all our
daughters if men refuse to marry? They will marry beneath them, or" And she began the ofttold
tale of a lady of Imperial descent who could find no husband in the narrow circle where her

pride permitted her to mate, and had lived on unwed, her age now thirty, and would die unwed ,

for no one would have her now. While the tale was in progress, it convinced the two men, the

tragedy seemed a slur on the whole community; better polygamy almost, than that a woman

should die without the joys God has intended her to receive. Wedlock, motherhood, power in

the house—for what else is she born, and how can the man who has denied them to her stand

up to face her creator and his own at the last day? Aziz took his leave saying "Perhaps . . but

later . . . "--his invariable reply to such an appeal .

"You mustn't put off what you think right," said Hamidullah. "That is why India is in such a

plight, because we put off things." But seeing that his young relative looked worried, he added

a few soothing words, and thus wiped out any impression that his wife might have made .

During their absence, Mahmoud All had gone off in his carriage leaving a message that he

should be back in five minutes, but they were on no account to wait. They sat down to meat

with a distant cousin of the house, Mohammed Latif, who lived on Hamidullah's bounty and who

occupied the position neither of a servant nor of an equal. He did not speak unless spoken to ,

and since no one spoke kept unoffended silence. Now and then he belched, in compliment to

the richness of the food. A gentle, happy and dishonest old man; all his life he had never done

a stroke of work. So long as some one of his relatives had a house he was sure of a home, and

it was unlikely that so large a family would all go bankrupt. His wife led a similar existence some

hundreds of miles away —he did not visit her, owing to the expense of the railway ticket. Presently

Aziz chaffed him, also the servants, and then began quoting poetry, Persian, Urdu, a little

Arabic. His memory was good, and for so young a man he had read largely; the themes he preferred

were the decay of Islam and the brevity of Love. They listened delighted, for they took

the public view of poetry, not the private which obtains in England. It never bored them to hear



better clean your teeth after pan "?

"If my teeth are to be cleaned, I don't go at all. I am an Indian, it is an Indian habit to take

pan. The Civil Surgeon must put up with it. Mohammed Latif, my bike, please ".

The poor relation got up. Slightly immersed in the realms of matter, he laid his hand on the

bicycle's saddle, while a servant did the actual wheeling. Between them they took it over a tintack .

Aziz held his hands under the ewer, dried them, fitted on his green felt hat, and then with

unexpected energy whizzed out of Hamidullah's compound.

"Aziz, Aziz, imprudent boy. ..." But he was far down the bazaar, riding furiously. He had

neither light nor bell nor had he a brake, but what use are such adjuncts in a land where the

cyclist's only hope is to coast from face to face, and just before he collides with each it vanishes?

And the city was fairly empty at this hour. When his tyre went fiat, he leapt off and

shouted for a tonga.

He did not at first find one, and he had also to dispose of his bicycle at a friend's house. He

dallied furthermore to clean his teeth. But at last he was rattling towards the civil lines, with a
vivid sense of speed. As he entered their arid tidiness, depression suddenly seized him. The
roads, named after victorious generals and intersecting at right angles, were symbolic of the net
Great Britain had thrown over India. He felt caught in their meshes. When he turned into Major
Callendar's compound he could with difficulty restrain himself from getting down from the tonga
and approaching the bungalow on foot, and this not because his soul was servile but because
his feelings—the sensitive edges of him— feared a gross snub. There had been a "case" last
year—an Indian gentleman had driven up to an official's house and been turned back by the
servants and been told to approach more suitably— only one case among thousands of visits to
hundreds of officials, but its fame spread wide. The young man shrank from a repetition of it .
He compromised, and stopped the driver just outside the fiood of light that fell across the verandah .

The Civil Surgeon was out. "But the sahib has left me some message "? The servant returned an indifferent "No." Aziz was in despair. It was a servant whom he had forgotten to tip, and he could do nothing now because there were people in the hall. He was convinced that there was a message, and that the man was withholding it out of revenge. While they argued, the people came out. Both were ladies. Aziz lifted his hat. The first, who was in evening dress, glanced at the Indian and turned instinctively away . "Mrs. Lesley, it _is_ a tonga," she cried . "Ours?" enquired the second, also seeing Aziz, and doing likewise. "Take the gifts the gods provide, anyhow," she screeched, and both jumped in. "O Tonga wallah, club, club. Why doesn't the fool go "? "Go, I will pay you to-morrow," said Aziz to the driver, and as they went off he called courteously,

"You are most welcome, ladies." They did not reply, being full of their own affairs.

So it had come, the usual thing— just as Mahmoud Ali said. The inevitable snub— his bow ignored ,

his carriage taken. It might have been worse, for it comforted him somehow that Mesdames

Callendar and Lesley should both be fat and weigh the tonga down behind. Beautiful

women would have pained him. He turned to the servant, gave him a couple of rupees, and

asked again whether there was a message. The man, now very civil, returned the same answer .

Major Callendar had driven away half an hour before .

"Saying nothing "?

He had as a matter of fact said, "Damn Aziz"— words that the servant understood, but was

too polite to repeat. One can tip too much as well as too little, indeed the coin that buys the

exact truth has not yet been minted .

"Then I will write him a letter ".

He was offered the use of the house, but was too dignified to enter it. Paper and ink were

brought on to the verandah. He began: "Dear Sir,— At your express command I have hastened

as a subordinate should—" and then stopped. "Tell him I have called, that is sufficient," he said, tearing the protest up. "Here is my card. Call me a tonga". "Huzoor, all are at the club ". "Then telephone for one down to the railway station." And since the man hastened to do this he said, "Enough, enough, I prefer to walk." He commandeered a match and lit a cigarette. These attentions, though purchased, soothed him. They would last as long as he had rupees, which is something. But to shake the dust of Anglo-India off his feet! To escape from the net and be back among manners and gestures that he knew! He began a walk, an unwonted exercise. He was an athletic little man, daintily put together, but really very strong. Nevertheless walking fatigued him, as it fatigues everyone in India except the new-corner. There is something hostile in that soil. It either yields, and the foot sinks into a depression, or else it is unexpectedly rigid and sharp, pressing stones or crystals against the tread. A series of these little surprises

exhausts; and he was wearing pumps, a poor preparation for any country. At the edge of

the civil station he turned into a mosque to rest. He had always liked this mosque. It was gracious, and the arrangement pleased him. The courtyard— entered through a ruined gate— contained an ablution tank of fresh clear water. which was always in motion, being indeed part of a conduit that supplied the city. The courtyard was paved with broken slabs. The covered part of the mosque was deeper than is usual; its effect was that of an English parish church whose side has been taken out. Where he sat, he looked into three arcades whose darkness was illuminated by a small hanging lamp and by the moon. The front—in full moonlight—had the appearance of marble, and the ninety-nine names of God on the frieze stood out black, as the frieze stood out white against the sky. The contest between this dualism and the contention of shadows within pleased Aziz, and he tried to symbolize the whole into some truth of religion or love. A mosque by winning his approval let loose

his imagination. The temple of another creed, Hindu, Christian, or Greek, would have bored him

and failed to awaken his sense of beauty. Here was Islam, his own country, more than a Faith ,

more than a battle-cry, more, much more . . . Islam, an attitude towards life both exquisite and

durable, where his body and his thoughts found their home .

His seat was the low wall that bounded the courtyard on the left. The ground fell away beneath

him towards the city, visible as a blur of trees, and in the stillness he heard many small

sounds. On the right, over in the club, the English community contributed an amateur orchestra .

Elsewhere some Hindus were drumming— he knew they were Hindus, because the rhythm

was uncongenial to him,— and others were bewailing a corpse— he knew whose, having certified

it in the afternoon. There were owls, the Punjab mail . . . and flowers smelt deliciously in the

station-master's garden. But the mosque— that alone signified, and he returned to it from the

complex appeal of the night, and decked it with meanings the builder had never intended .

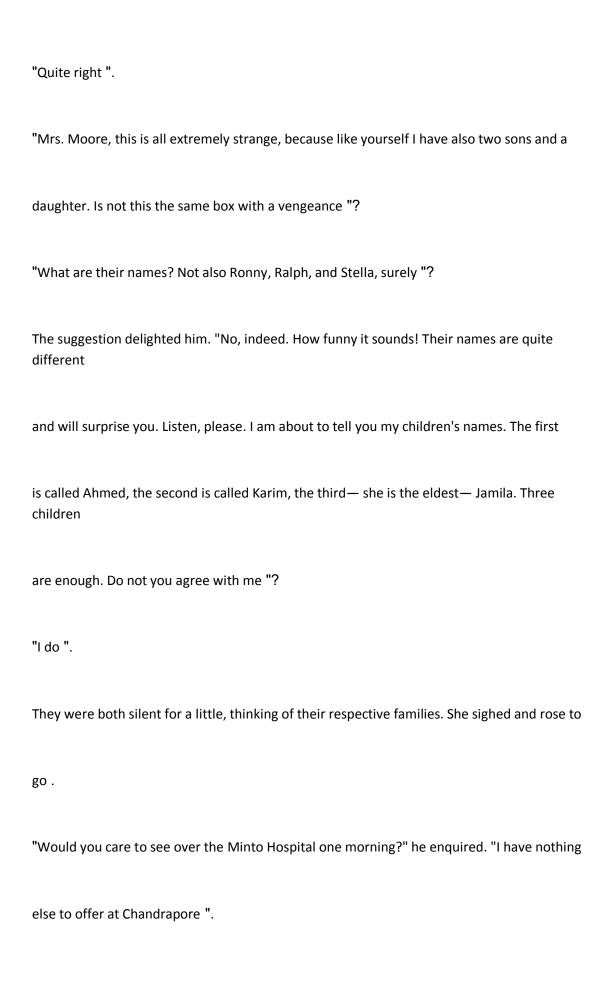
Some day he too would build a mosque, smaller than this but in perfect taste, so that all who
passed by should experience the happiness he felt now. And near it, under a low dome, should
be his tomb, with a Persian inscription:
Alas, without me for thousands of years
The Rose will blossom and the Spring will bloom .
But those who have secretly understood my heart —
They will approach and visit the grave where I lie .
He had seen the quatrain on the tomb of a Deccan king, and regarded it as profound
philosophy— he always held pathos to be profound. The secret understanding of the heart! He
repeated the phrase with tears in his eyes, and as he did so one of the pillars of the mosque
seemed to quiver. It swayed in the gloom and detached itself Belief in ghosts ran in his blood ,
but he sat firm. Another pillar moved, a third, and then an Englishwoman stepped out into the

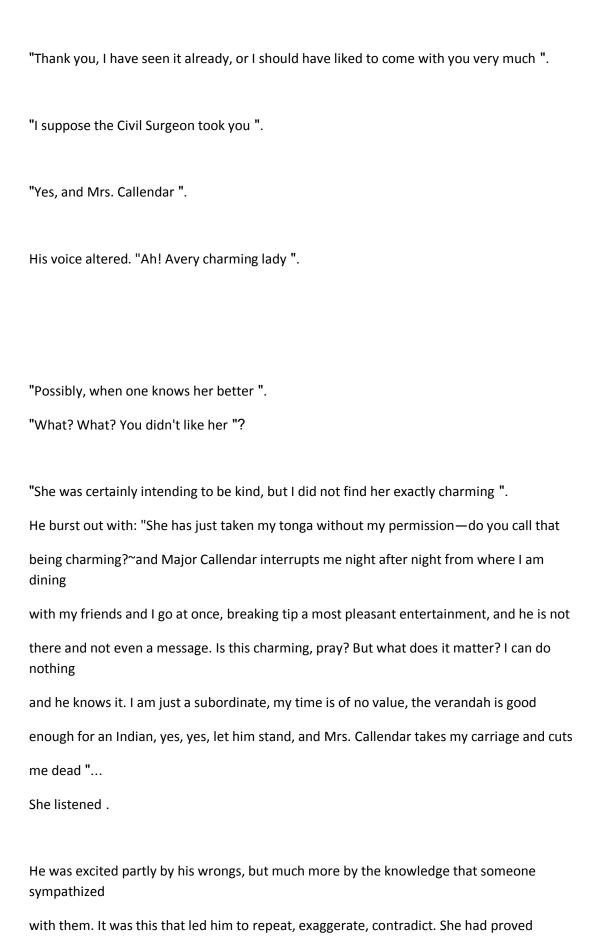












her sympathy by criticizing her fell owcountry woman to him, but even earlier he had known. The

flame that not even beauty can nourish was springing up, and though his words were querulous

his heart began to glow secretly. Presently it burst into speech.

"You understand me, you know what others feel. Oh, if others resembled you "!

Rather surprised, she replied: "I don't think 1 understand people very well. I only know whether I like or dislike them ".

"Then you are an Oriental ".

She accepted his escort back to the club, and said at the gate that she wished she was a member, so that she could have asked him in .

"Indians are not allowed into the Chandrapore Club even as guests," he said simply. He did not expatiate on his wrongs now, being happy. As he strolled downhill beneath the lovely moon,

and again saw the lovely mosque, he seemed to own the land as much as anyone owned it .

What did it matter if a few flabby Hindus had preceded him there, and a few chilly English succeeded?

CHAPTER III

The third act of Cousin Kate_ was well advanced by the time Mrs. Moore re-entered the club. Windows were barred, lest the servants should see their mem-sahibs acting, and the heat

was consequently immense. One electric fan revolved like a wounded bird, another was out of

order. Disinclined to return to tile audience, she went into the billiard room, where she was greeted by "I want to see the _real_ India," and her appropriate life came back with a rush .

This was Adela Quested, the queer, cautious girl whom Ronny had commissioned her to bring

from England, and Ronny was her son, also cautious, whom Miss Quested would probably though not certainly marry, and she herself was an elderly lady.

"I want to see it too, and I only wish we could. Apparently the Turtons will arrange something

for next Tuesday ".

"It'll end in an elephant ride, it always does. Look at this evening. Cousin Kate!_ Imagine ,
Cousin Kate!_ But where have you been off to? Did you succeed in catching the moon in the
Ganges "?

The two ladies had happened, the night before, to see the moon's reflection in a distant channel of the stream. The water had drawn it out, so that it had seemed larger than the real

moon, and brighter, which had pleased them .

"I went to the mosque, but I did not catch the moon ".

"The angle would have altered—she rises later ".

"Later and later," yawned Mrs. Moore, who was tired after her walk. "Let me think— we don't

see the other side of the moon out here, no ".

"Come, India's not as bad as all that," said a pleasant voice. "Other side of the earth, if you like, but we stick to the same old moon." Neither of them knew the speaker nor did they ever

see him again. He passed with his friendly word through red-brick pillars into the darkness.

"We aren't even seeing the other side of the world; that's our complaint," said Adela. Mrs .

Moore agreed; she too was disappointed at the dullness of their new life. They had made such a romantic voyage across the Mediterranean and through the sands of Egypt to the harbour of Bombay, to find only a gridiron of bungalows at the end of it. But she did not take the disappointment as seriously as Miss Quested, for the reason that she was forty years older, and had learnt that Life never gives us what we want at the moment that we consider appropriate . Adventures do occur, but not punctually. She said again that she hoped that something interesting would be arranged for next Tuesday. "Have a drink," said another pleasant voice. "Mrs. Moore—Miss Quested—have a drink, have two drinks." They knew who it was this time— the Collector, Mr. Turton, with whom they had dined. Like themselves, he had found the atmosphere of Cousin Kate_too hot. Ronny, he told

them, was stage-managing in place of Major Callendar, whom some native subordinate or other had let down, and doing it very well; then he turned to Ronny's other merits, and in quiet, decisive tones said much that was fiattering. It wasn't that the young man was particularly good at the games or the lingo, or that he had much notion of the Law, but—apparently a large but — Ronny was dignified. Mrs. Moore was surprised to learn this, dignity not being a quality with which any mother credits her son. Miss Quested learnt it with anxiety, for she had not decided whether she liked dignified men. She tried indeed to discuss this point with Mr. Turton, but he silenced her with a good-humoured motion of his hand, and continued what he had come to say. "The long and the short of it is Heaslop's a sahib; he's the type we want, he's one of us," and another civilian who was leaning over the billiard table said, "Hear, hear! "The matter was thus placed beyond

doubt, and the Collector passed on, for other duties called him .

Meanwhile the performance ended, and the amateur orchestra played the National Anthem .

Conversation and billiards stopped, faces stiffened. It was the Anthem of the Army of Occupation .

it reminded every member of the club that he or she was British and in exile. It produced a

little sentiment and a useful accession of willpower. The meagre tune, the curt series of demands

on Jehovah, fused into a prayer unknown in England, and though they perceived neither

Royalty nor Deity they did perceive something, they were strengthened to resist another day .

Then they poured out, offering one another drinks.

"Adela, have a drink; mother, a drink ".

They refused— they were weary of drinks— and Miss Quested, who always said exactly what

was in her mind, announced anew that she was desirous of seeing the real India .

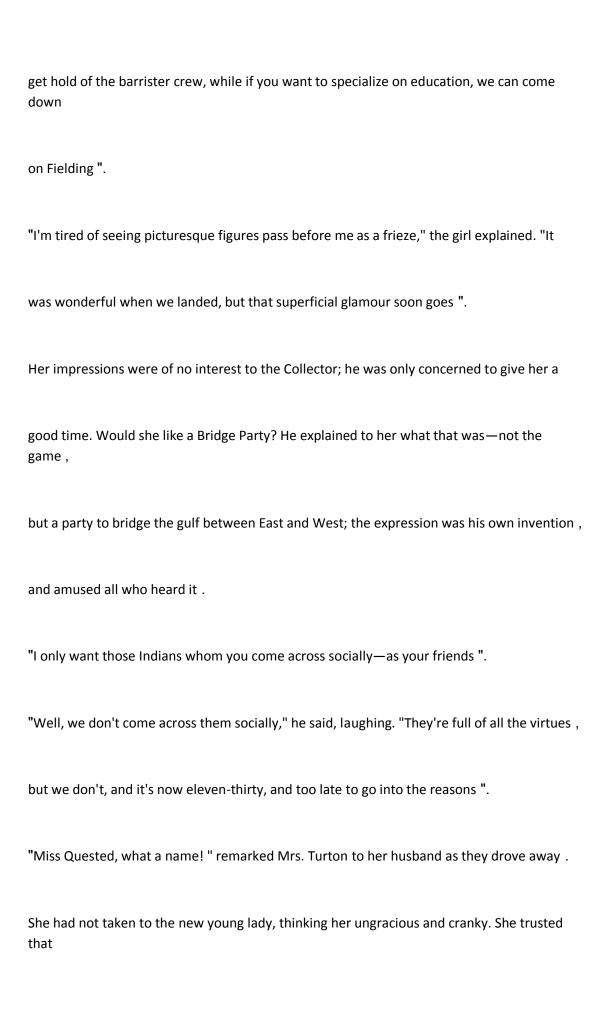
Ronny was in high spirits. The request struck him as comic, and he called out to another

passer-by: "Fielding! how's one to see the real India "?

"Try seeing Indians," the man answered, and vanished.







she hadn't been brought out to marry nice little Heaslop, though it looked like it. Her husband

agreed with her in his heart, but he never spoke against an Englishwoman if he could avoid doing

so, and he only said that Miss Quested naturally made mistakes. He added: "India does

wonders for the judgment, especially during the hot weather; it has even done wonders for

Fielding." Mrs. Turton closed her eyes at this name and remarked that Mr. Fielding wasn't

pukka, and had better marry Miss Quested, for she wasn't pukka. Then they reached their bungalow ,

low and enormous, the oldest and most uncomfortable bungalow in the civil station, with

a sunk soup plate of a lawn, and they had one drink more, this time of barley water, and went

to bed. Their withdrawal from the club had broken up the evening, which, like all gatherings,

had an official tinge. A community that bows the knee to a Viceroy and believes that the divinity

that hedges a king can be transplanted, must feel some reverence for any viceregal substitute .

At Chandrapore the Turtons were little gods; soon they would retire to some suburban villa, and

die exiled from glory. "It's decent of the Burra Sahib," chattered Ronny, much gratified at the civility that had been shown to his guests. "Do you know he's never given a Bridge Party before? Coming on top of the dinner too! I wish I could have arranged something myself, but when you know the natives better you'll realize it's easier for the Burra Sahib than for me. They know him— they know be can't be fooled— I'm still fresh comparatively. No one can even begin to think of knowing this country until he has been in it twehty years.— Hullo, the mater! Here's your cloak.— Well: for an example of the mistakes one makes. Soon after I came out I asked one of the Pleaders to have a smoke with me-only a cigarette, mind. I found afterwards that he had sent touts all over the bazaar to announce the fact—told all the litigants, 'Oh, you'd better come to my Vakil Mahmoud Ali— he's in with the City Magistrate.' Ever since then I've dropped on him in Court as hard as I

could. It's taught me a lesson, and I hope him ".
"Isn't the lesson that you should invite all the Pleaders to have a smoke with you "?
"Perhaps, but time's limited and the flesh weak. I prefer my smoke at the club amongst my
own sort, I'm afraid ".
"Why not ask the Pleaders to the club?" Miss Quested persisted .
"Not allowed." He was pleasant and patient, and evidently understood why she did not understand.
He implied that he had once been as she, though not for long. Going to the verandah ,
he called firmly to the moon. His sais answered, and without lowering his head, he ordered his
trap to be brought round .
Mrs. Moore, whom the club had stupefied, woke up outside. She watched the moon, whose
radiance stained with primrose the purple of the surrounding sky. In England the moon had
seemed dead and alien; here she was caught in the shawl of night together with earth and all







"So he called to you over your shoes. Then it was impudence. It's an old trick. I wish you
had had them on ".
"I think it was impudence, but I don't know about a trick," said Mrs. Moore. "His nerves
were all on edge— I could tell from his voice. As soon as I answered he altered ".
"You oughtn't to have answered ".
"Now look here," said the logical girl, "wouldn't you expect a Mohammedan to answer if you
asked him to take off his hat in church "?
"It's different, it's different; you don't understand ".
"I know I don't, and I want to. What is the difference, please "?
He wished she wouldn't interfere. His mother did not signify—she was just a globe-trotter, a
temporary escort, who could retire to England with what impressions she chose. But Adela, who
meditated spending her life in the country, was a more serious matter; it would be tiresome if

she started crooked over the native question. Pulling up the mare, he said, "There's your
Ganges ".
Their attention was diverted. Below them a radiance had suddenly appeared. It belonged
neither to water nor moonlight, but stood like a luminous sheaf upon the fields of darkness. He
told them that it was where the new sand-bank was forming, and that the dark ravelled bit at
the top was the sand, and that the dead bodies floated down that way from Benares, or would
if the crocodiles let them. "It's not much of a dead body that gets down to Chandrapore ".
"Crocodiles down in it too, how terrible!" his mother murmured. The young people glanced
at each other and smiled; it amused them when the old lady got these gentle creeps, and harmony
was restored between them consequently. She continued: "What a terrible river! what a
wonderful river! "and sighed. The radiance was already altering, whether through shifting of the
moon or of the sand; soon the bright sheaf would be gone, and a circlet, itself to alter, be burnished

upon the streaming void. The women discussed whether they would wait for the change or not, while the silence broke into patches of unquietness and the mare shivered. On her account they did not wait, but drove on to the City Magistrate's bungalow, where Miss Quested went to bed, and Mrs. Moore had a short interview with her son . He wanted to enquire about the Mohammedan doctor in the mosque. It was his duty to report suspicious characters and conceivably it was some disreputable hakirn who had prowled up from the bazaar. When she told him that it was someone connected with the Minto Hospital, he was relieved, and said that the fellow's name must be Aziz, and that he was quite all right, nothing against him at all . "Aziz! what a charming name "! "So you and he had a talk. Did you gather he was well disposed "? Ignorant of the force of this question, she replied, "Yes, quite, after the first moment". "I meant, generally. Did he seem to tolerate us~the brutal conqueror, the sundried bureaucrat,



"I don't know what you mean, dear ".
"It's the educated native's latest dodge. They used to cringe, but the younger generation
believe in a show of manly independence. They think it will pay better with the itinerant $\mbox{\rm M.P}$.
But whether the native swaggers or cringes, there's always something behind every remark he
makes, always something, and if nothing else he's trying to increase his izzat~in plain knglo -
Saxon, to score. Of course there are exceptions ".
"You never used to judge people like this at home ".
"India isn't home," he retorted, rather rudely, but in order to silence her he had been using
phrases and arguments that he had picked up from older officials, and he did not feel quite sure
of himself When he said "of course there are exceptions" he was quoting Mr. Turton, while "
increasing the izzat" was Major Callendar's own. The phrases worked and were in current use at



you decided. She is very, very fair-minded ". "I know," he said dejectedly. The note of anxiety in his voice made her feel that he was still a little boy, who must have what he liked, so she promised to do as he wished, and they kissed good night. He had not forbidden her to think about Aziz, however, and she did this when she retired to her room. In the light of her son's comment she reconsidered the scene at the mosque, to see whose impression was correct. Yes, it could be worked into quite an unpleasant scene. The doctor had begun by bullying her, had said Mrs. Callendar was nice, and then—finding the ground safe—had changed; he had alternately whined over his grievances and patronized her, had run a dozen ways in a single sentence, had been unreliable, inquisitive, vain. Yes, it was all true, but how false as a summary of the man; the essential life of him had been slain. Going to hang up her cloak, she found that the tip of the peg was occupied by a small wasp. She had known this wasp or his relatives by day; they were not as English wasps, but had long

yellow legs which hung down behind when they flew. Perhaps he mistook the peg for a

branch— no Indian animal has any sense of an interior. Bats, rats, birds, insects will as soon nest

inside a house as out; it is to them a normal growth of the eternal jungle, which alternately

produces houses trees, houses trees. There he clung, asleep, while jackals in the plain bayed

their desires and mingled with the percussion of drums .

"Pretty dear," said Mrs. Moore to the wasp. He did not wake, but her voice floated out, to

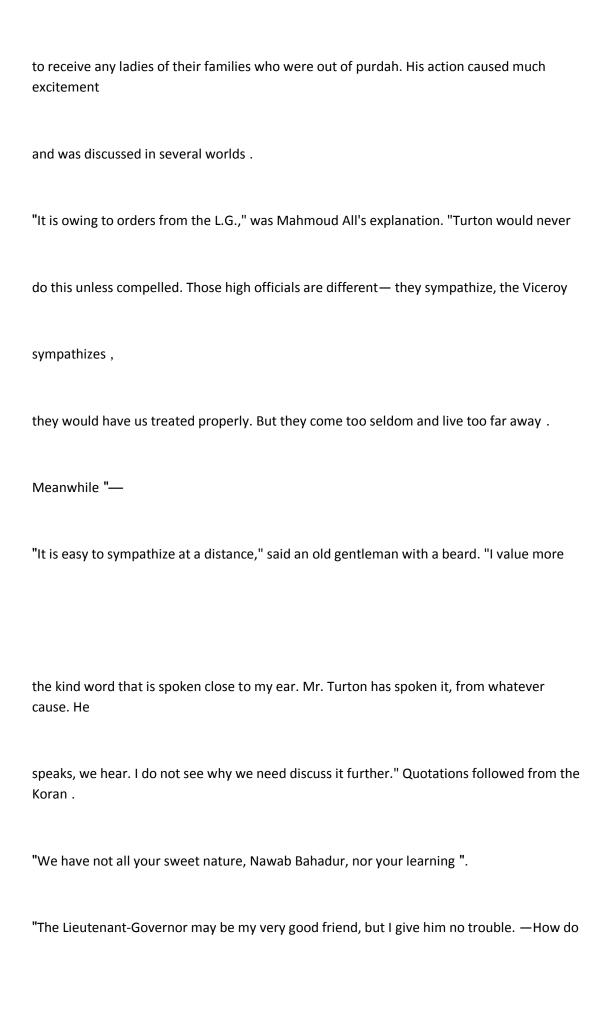
swell the night's uneasiness.

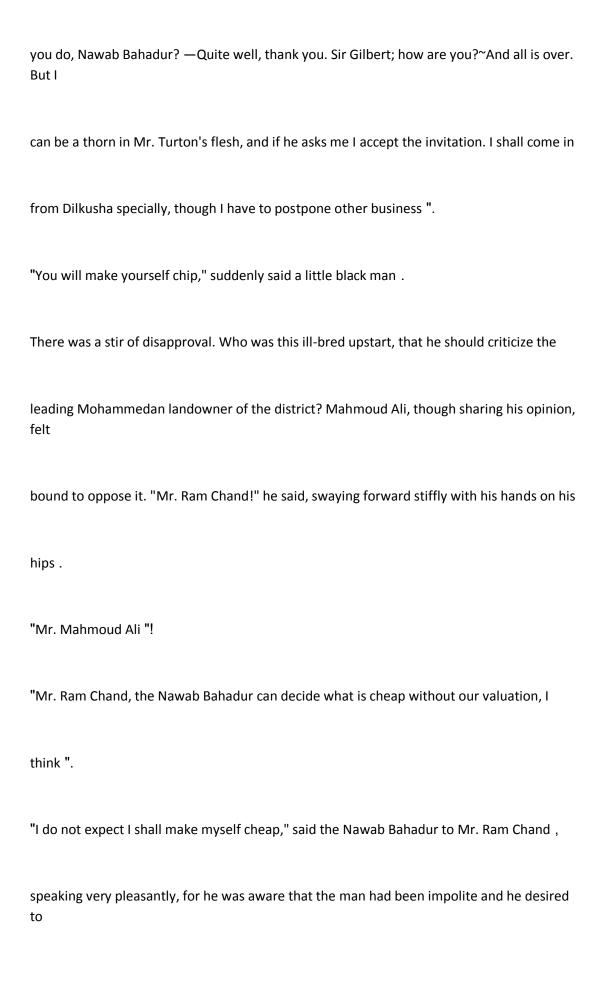
CHAPTER IV

The Collector kept his word. Next day he issued invitation cards to numerous Indian gentlemen

in the neighbourhood, stating that he would be at home in the garden of the club between

the hours of five and seven on the following Tuesday, also that Mrs. Turton would be glad





shield him from the consequences. It had passed through his mind to reply, "I expect I shall make myself cheap," but he rejected this as the less courteous alternative. "I do not see why we should make ourselves cheap. I do not see why we should. The invitation is worded very graciously." Feeling that he could not further decrease the social gulf between himself and his auditors, he sent his elegant grandson, who was in attendance on him, to fetch his car. When it came, he repeated all that he had said before, though at greater length, ending up with "Till Tuesday, then, gentlemen all, when I hope we may meet in the flower gardens of the club ". This opinion carried great weight. The Nawab Bahadur was a big proprietor and a philanthropist,

a man of benevolence and decision. His character among all the communities in the

province stood high. He was a straightforward enemy and a staunch friend, and his hospitality

was proverbial. "Give, do not lend; after death who will thank you?" was his favourite remark .

He held it a disgrace to die rich. When such a man was prepared to motor twenty-five miles to

shake the Collector's hand, the entertainment took another aspect. For he was not like some eminent men, who give out that they will come, and then fail at the last moment, leaving the small fry floundering. If he said he would come, he would come, he would never deceive his supporters. The gentlemen whom he had lectured now urged one another to attend the party, although convinced at heart that his advice was unsound. He had spoken in the little room near the Courts where the pleaders waited for clients; clients, waiting for pleaders, sat in the dust outside. These had not received a card from Mr. Turton. And there were circles even beyond these—people who wore nothing but a loincloth, people who wore not even that, and spent their lives in knocking two sticks together before a scarlet doll — humanity grading and drifting beyond the educated vision, until no earthly invitation

All invitations must proceed from heaven perhaps; perhaps it is futile for men to initiate

their own unity, they do but widen the gulfs between them by the attempt. So at all events

can embrace it .

thought old Mr. Graysford and young Mr. Sorley, the devoted missionaries who lived out beyond the slaughterhouses, always travelled third on the railways, and never came up to the club. In our Father's house are many mansions, they taught, and there alone will the incompatible multitudes of mankind be welcomed and soothed. Not one shall be turned away by the servants on that verandah, be he black or white, not one shall be kept standing who approaches with a loving heart. And why should the divine hospitality cease here? Consider, with all reverence, the monkeys. May there not be a mansion for the monkeys also? Old Mr. Graysford said No, but young Mr. Sorley, who was advanced, said Yes; he saw no reason why monkeys should not have their collateral share of bliss, and he had sympathetic discussions about them with his Hindu friends. And the jackals? Jackals were indeed less to Mr. Sorley's mind, but he admitted that the

mercy of God, being infinite, may well embrace all mammals. And the wasps? He became

uneasy

during the descent to wasps, and was apt to change the conversation. And oranges, cactuses $\ ,$

crystals and mud? and the bacteria inside Mr. Sorley? No, no, this is going too far. We

must exclude someone from our gathering, or we shall be left with nothing .

CHAPTER V

The Bridge Party was not a success—at least it was not what Mrs. Moore and Miss Quested

were accustomed to consider a successful party. They arrived early, since it was given in their

honour, but most of the Indian guests had arrived even earlier, and stood massed at the farther

side of the tennis lawns, doing nothing.

"It is only just five," said Mrs. Turton. "My husband will be up from his office in a moment

and start the thing. I have no idea what we have to do. It's the first time we've ever given a

party like this at the club. Mr. Heaslop, when I'm dead and gone will you give parties like this?

It's enough to make the old type of Burra Sahib turn in his grave ".

Ronny laughed deferentially. "You wanted something not picturesque and we've provided it ", he remarked to Miss Quested. "What do you think of the Aryan Brother in a topi and spats "? Neither she nor his mother answered. They were gazing rather sadly over the tennis lawn . No, it was not picturesque; the East, abandoning its secular magnificence, was descending into a valley whose farther side no man can see . "The great point to remember is that no one who's here matters; those who matter don't come. Isn't that so, Mrs. Turton "? "Absolutely true," said the great lady, leaning back. She was "saving herself up," as she called it—not for anything that would happen that afternoon or even that week, but for some vague future occasion when a high official might come along and tax her social strength. Most of her public appearances were marked by this air of reserve. Assured of her approbation, Ronny continued: "The educated Indians will be no good to us if there's a row, it's simply not worth while conciliating them, that's why they don't matter. Most

of the people you see are seditious at heart, and the rest 'ld run squealing. The cultivator he's another story. The Pathan— he's a man if you like. But these people— don't imagine they're India ". He pointed to the dusky line beyond the court, and here and there it flashed a pince-nez or shuffled a shoe, as if aware that he was despising it. European costume had lighted like a leprosy. Few had yielded entirely, but none were untouched. There was a silence when he had finished speaking, on both sides of the court; at least, more ladies joined the English group, but their words seemed to die as soon as uttered. Some kites hovered overhead, impartial, over the kites passed the mass of a vulture, and with an impartiality exceeding all, the sky, not deeply coloured but translucent, poured light from its whole circumference. It seemed unlikely that the series stopped here. Beyond the sky must not there be something that overarches all the skies, more impartial even than they? Beyond which again . . . They spoke of Cousin Kate .__

They had tried to reproduce their own attitude to life upon the stage, and to dress up as the

middle-class English people they actually were. Next year they would do Quality Street_ or

The Yeomen of the Guard_. Save for this annual incursion, they left literature alone. The men

had no time for it, the women did nothing that they could not share with the men. Their ignorance

of the Arts was notable, and they lost no opportunity of proclaiming it to one another; it was the Public School attitude; flourishing more vigorously than it can yet hope to do in England .

If Indians were shop, the Arts were bad form, and Ronny had repressed his mother when she enquired after his viola; a viola was almost a demerit, and certainly not the sort of instrument

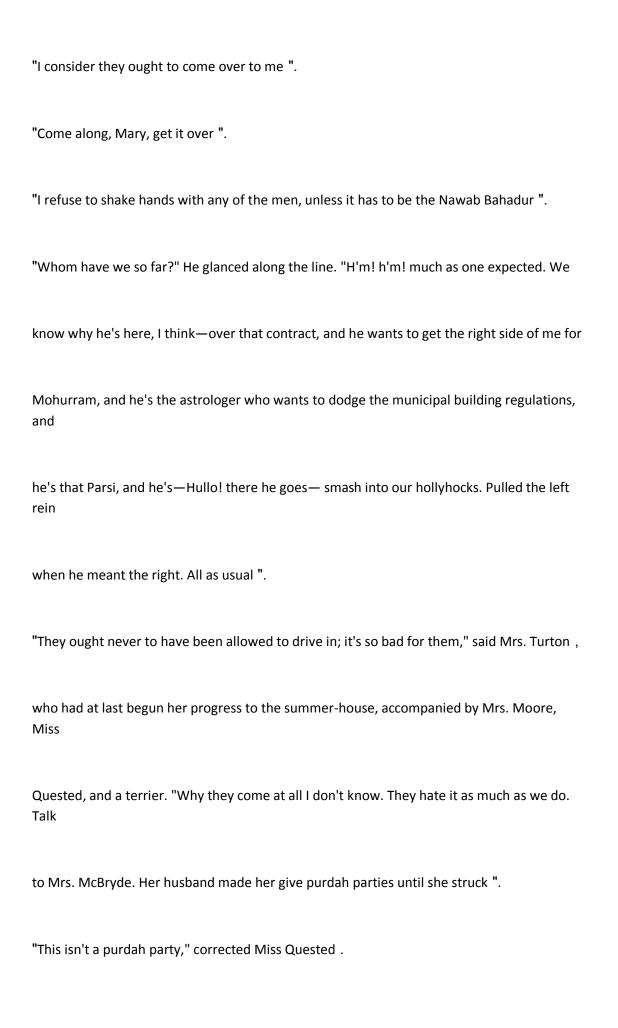
one mentioned in public. She noticed now how tolerant and conventional his judgments had become; when they had seen Cousin Kate_ in London together in the past, he had scorned it; now he pretended that it was a good play, in order to hurt nobody's feelings. An "unkind notice" had appeared in the local paper, "the sort of thing no white man could have written," as Mrs. Lesley said. The play was praised, to be sure, and so were the stage management

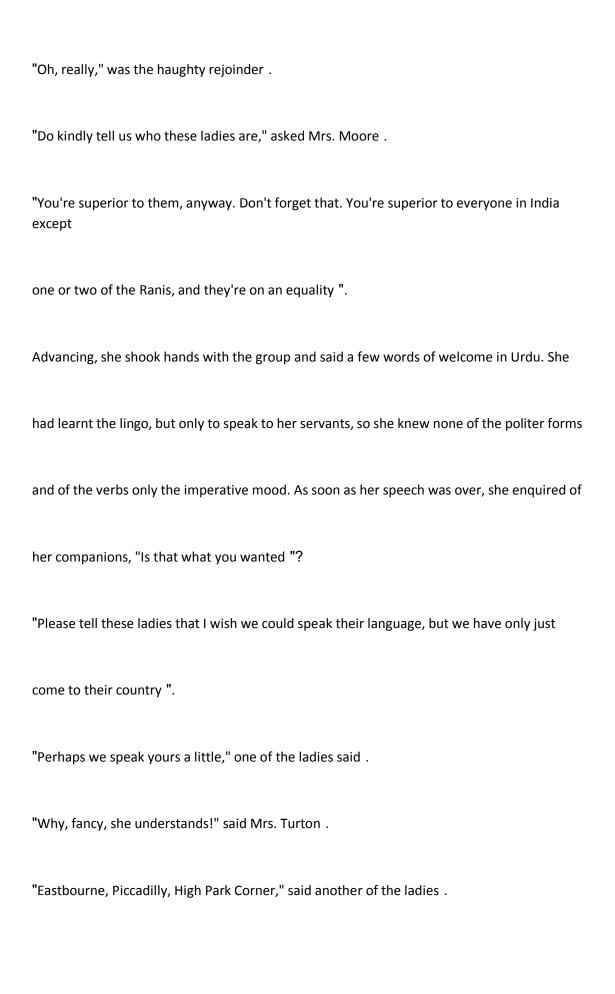
and the performance as a whole, but the notice contained the following sentence: "Miss

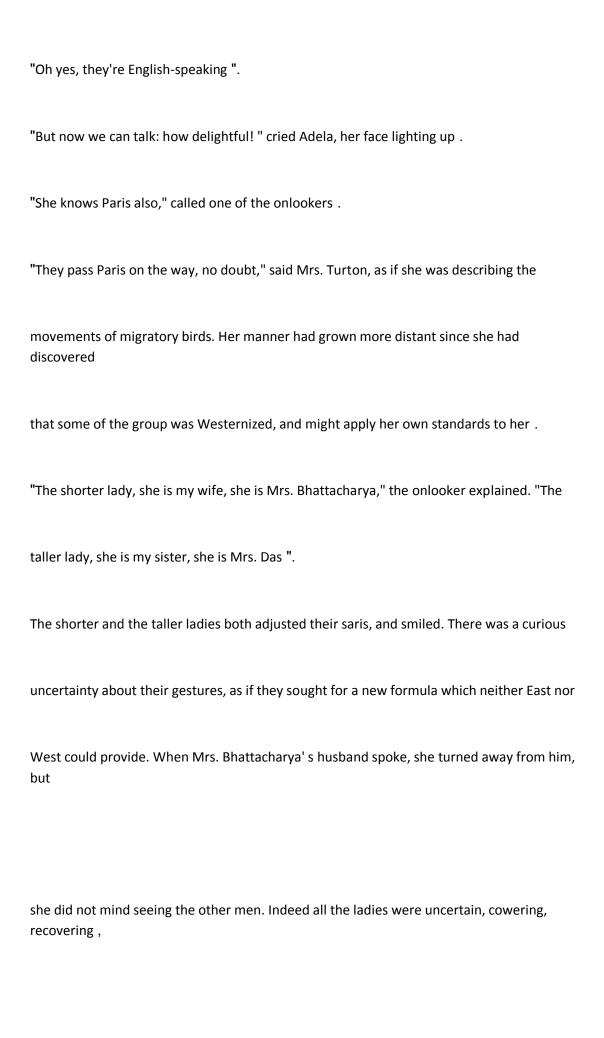
Derek, though she charmingly looked her part, lacked the necessary experience, and occasionally

forgot her words." This tiny breath of genuine criticism had given deep offence, not indeed

to Miss Derek, who was as hard as nails, but to her friends. Miss Derek did not belong to Chandrapore. She was stopping for a fortnight with the McBrydes, the police people, and she had been so good as to fill up a gap in the cast at the last moment. A nice impression of local hospitality she would carry away with here "To work, Mary, to work," cried the Collector, touching his wife on the shoulder with a switch. Mrs. Turton got up awkwardly. "What do you want me to do? Oh, those purdah women! I never thought any would come. Oh dear "! A little group of Indian ladies had been gathering in a third quarter of the grounds, near a rustic summer-house in which the more timid of them had already taken refuge. The rest stood with their backs to the company and their faces pressed into a bank of shrubs. At a little distance stood their male relatives, watching the venture. The sight was significant: an island bared by the turning tide, and bound to grow .







giggling, making tiny gestures of atonement or despair at all that was said, and alternately fondling the terrier or shrinking from him. Miss Quested now had her desired opportunity; friendly Indians were before her, and she tried to make them talk, but she failed, she strove vain against the echoing walls of their civility. Whatever she said produced a murmur of deprecation, varying into a murmur of concern when she dropped her pocket-handkerchief She tried doing nothing, to see what that produced, and they too did nothing. Mrs. Moore was equally unsuccessful. Mrs. Turton waited for them with a detached expression; she had known what nonsense it all was from the first. When they took their leave, Mrs. Moore had an impulse, and said to Mrs. Bhattacharya, whose face she liked, "I wonder whether you would allow us to call on you some day ". "When?" she replied, inclining charmingly. "Whenever is convenient ". "All days are convenient ".





point out the way. Did he know where they lived? Yes, of course he knew, he knew everything; and he laughed again. They left among a flutter of compliments and smiles, and three ladies, who had hitherto taken no part in the reception, suddenly shot out of the summer-house like exquisitely coloured swallows, and salaamed them . Meanwhile the Collector had been going his rounds. He made pleasant remarks and a few jokes, which were applauded lustily, but he knew something to the discredit of nearly every one of his guests, and was consequently perfunctory. When they had not cheated, it was bhang, women, or worse, and even the desirables wanted to get something out of him. He believed that a "Bridge Party" did good rather than harm, or he would not have given one, but he was under no illusions, and at the proper moment he retired to the English side of the lawn. The impressions he left behind him were various. Many of the guests, especially the humbler and less Anglicized, were genuinely grateful. To be addressed by so high an official was a

permanent

asset. They did not mind how long they stood, or how little happened, and when seven o'clock

struck, they had to be turned out. Others were grateful with more intelligence. The Nawab Bahadur ,

indifferent for himself and for the distinction with which he was greeted, was moved by

the mere kindness that must have prompted the invitation. He knew the difficulties. Hamidullah

also thought that the Collector had played up well. But others, such as Mahmoud Ali, were cynical;

they were firmly convinced that Turton had been made to give the party by his official superiors

and was all the time consumed with impotent rage, and they infected some who were

inclined to a healthier view. Yet even Mahmoud Ali was glad he had come. Shrines are fascinating,

especially when rarely opened, and it amused him to note the ritual of the English club, and

to caricature it afterwards to his friends .

After Mr. Turton, the official who did his duty best was Mr. Fielding, the Principal of the little

Government College. He knew little of the district and less against the inhabitants, so he was in

a less cynical state of mind. Athletic and cheerful, he romped about, making numerous mistakes

which the parents of his pupils tried to cover up, for he was popular among them. When the

moment for refreshments came, he did not move back to the English side, but burnt his mouth

with gram. He talked to anyone and he ate anything. Amid much that was alien, he learnt that

the two new ladies from England had been a great success, and that their politeness in wishing

to be Mrs. Bhattacharya's guests had pleased not only her but all Indians who heard of it. It

pleased Mr. Fielding also. He scarcely knew the two new ladies, still he decided to tell them

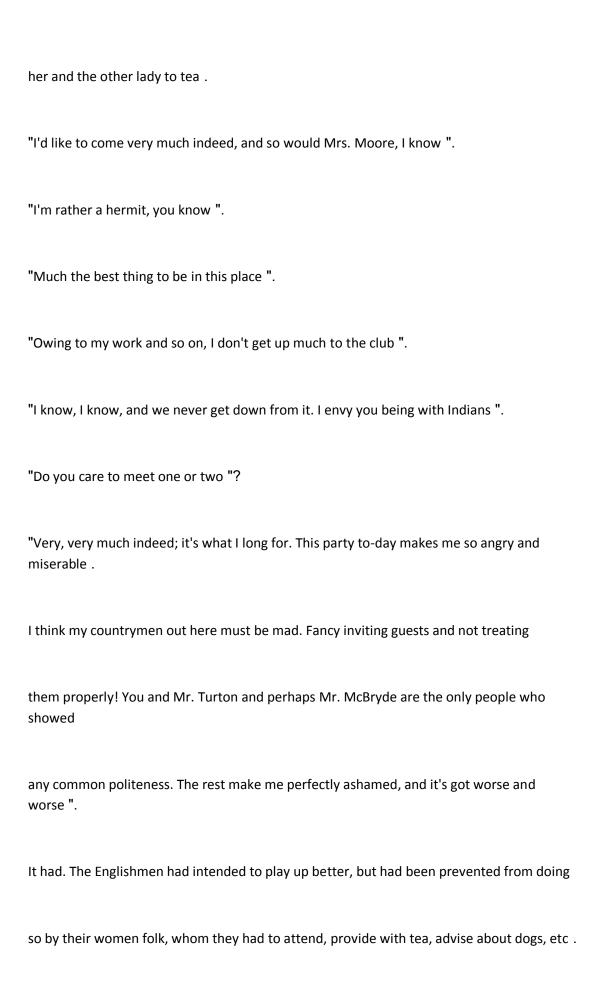
what pleasure they had given by their friendliness.

He found the younger of them alone. She was looking through a nick in the cactus hedge at

the distant Marabar Hills, which had crept near, as was their custom at sunset; if the sunset had

lasted long enough, they would have reached the town, but it was swift, being tropical. He gave

her his information, and she was so much pleased and thanked him so heartily that he asked





suddenly were! But she couldn't touch them. In front, like a shutter, fell a vision of her married
life. She and Ronny would look into the club like this every evening, then drive home to dress;
they would see the Lesleys and the Callendars and the Turtons and the Burtons, and invite
them and be invited by them, while the true India slid by unnoticed. Colour would remain—the
pageant of birds in the early morning, brown bodies, white turbans, idols whose flesh was scarlet
or blue—and movement would remain as long as there were crowds in the bazaar and bathers
in the tanks. Perched up on the seat of a dogcart, she would see them. But the force that
lies behind colour and movement would escape her even more effectually than it did now. She
would see India always as a frieze, never as a spirit, and she assumed that it was a spirit o'f
which Mrs. Moore had had a glimpse .
And sure enough they did drive away from the club in a few minutes, and they did dress,

and to dinner came Miss Derek and the McBrydes, and the menu was: Julienne soup full of bullety

bottled peas, pseudo-cottage bread, fish full of branching bones, pretending to be plaice,

more bottled peas with the cutlets, trifle, sardines on toast: the menu of Anglo-India. A dish

might be added or subtracted as one rose or fell in the official scale, the peas might rattle less

or more, the sardines and the vermouth be imported by a different firm, but the tradition remained ;

the food of exiles, cooked by servants who did not understand it. Adela thought of the

young men and women who had come out before her, P. & O. full after P. & O. full, and had

been set down to the same food and the same ideas, and been snubbed in the same goodhumoured

way until they kept to the accredited themes and began to snub others. "I should

never get like that," she thought, for she was young herself; all the same she knew that she

had come up against something that was both insidious and tough, and against which she

needed allies. She must gather around her at Chandrapore a few people who felt as she did,

and she was glad to have met Mr. Fielding and the Indian lady with the unpronounceable name .

Here at all events was a nucleus; she should know much better where she stood in the course of the next two days . Miss Derek — she companioned a Maharani in a remote Native State. She was genial and gay and made them all laugh about her leave, which she had taken because she felt she deserved it, not because the Maharani said she might go. Now she wanted to take the Maharajah's motor-car as well; it had gone to a Chiefs' Conference at Delhi, and she had a great scheme for burgling it at the junction as it came back in the train. She was also very funny about the Bridge Party — indeed she regarded the entire peninsula as a comic opera. "If one couldn't see the laughable side of these people one 'Id be done for," said Miss Derek. Mrs. McBryde— it was she who had been the nurse—ceased not to exclaim, "Oh, Nancy, how topping! Oh, Nancy, how killing! I wish I could look at things like that." Mr. McBryde did not speak much; he seemed nice. When the guests had gone, and Adela gone to bed, there was another interview between







and Adela want me to do? Go against my class, against all the people I respect and admire out
here? Lose such power as I have for doing good in this country because my behaviour isn't
pleasant? You neither of you understand what work is, or you 'Id never talk such eyewash. I
hate talking like this, but one must occasionally. It's morbidly sensitive to go on as Adela and
you do. I noticed you both at the club to-day—after the Burra Sahib had been at all that trouble
to amuse you. I am out here to work, mind, to hold this wretched country by force. I'm not a
missionary or a Labour Member or a vague sentimental sympathetic literary man. I'm just a
servant of the Government; it's the profession you wanted me to choose myself, and that's that .
We're not pleasant in India, and we don't intend to be pleasant. We've something more important
to do ".
He spoke sincerely. Every day he worked hard in the court trying to decide which of two untrue
accounts was the less untrue, trying to dispense justice fearlessly, to protect the weak

against the less weak, the incoherent against the plausible, surrounded by lies and flattery. That morning he had convicted a railway clerk of overcharging pilgrims for their tickets, and a Pathan of attempted rape. He expected no gratitude, no recognition for this, and both clerk and Pathan might appeal, bribe their witnesses more effectually in the interval, and get their sentences reversed. It was his duty. But he did expect sympathy from his own people, and except from newcomers he obtained it. He did think he ought not to be worried about "Bridge Parties" when the day's work was over and he wanted to play tennis with his equals or rest his legs upon a long chair. He spoke sincerely, but she could have wished with less gusto. How Ronny revelled in the drawbacks of his situation! How he did rub it in that he was not in India to behave pleasantly, and derived positive satisfaction therefrom! He reminded her of his public-schooldays. The traces of young-man humanitarianism had sloughed off, and he talked like an intelligent and embittered boy. His words without his voice might have impressed her, but when she heard the

self-satisfied lilt of them, when she saw the mouth moving so complacently and competently

beneath the little red nose, she felt, quite illogically, that this was not the last word on India .

One touch of regret—not the canny substitute but the true regret from the heart— would have

made him a different man, and the British Empire a different institution .

"I'm going to argue, and indeed dictate," she said, clinking her rings. "The English are out

here to be pleasant ".

"How do you make that out, mother?" he asked, speaking gently again, for he was ashamed of his irritability .

"Because India is part of the earth. And God has put us on the earth in order to be pleasant to each other. God . . . is . . . love." She hesitated, seeing how much he disliked the argument ,

hut something made her go on. "God has put us on earth to love our neighbours and to show

it, and He is omnipresent, even in India, to see how we are succeeding ".

He looked gloomy, and a little anxious. He knew this religious strain in her, and that it was a symptom of bad health; there had been much of it when his stepfather died. He thought, "She

is certainly ageing, and I ought not to be vexed with anything she says ".

"The desire to behave pleasantly satisfies God . . . The sincere if impotent desire wips His blessing. I think everyone fails, but there are so many kinds of failure. Good will and more good

will and more good will. Though I speak with the tongues of ". . .

He waited until she had done, and then said gently, "I quite see that. I suppose I ought to get off to my files now, and you'll be going to bed ".

"I suppose so, I suppose so." They did not part for a few minutes, but the conversation had become unreal since Christianity had entered it. Ronny approved of religion as long as it endorsed

the National Anthem, but he objected when it attempted to influence his life. Then he would say in respectful yet decided tones, "I don't think it does to talk about these things, every

fellow has to work out his own religion," and any fellow who heard him muttered, "Hear "!

Mrs. Moore felt that she had made a mistake in mentioning God, but she found him increasingly

difficult to avoid as she grew older, and he had been constantly in her thoughts since she entered India, though oddly enough he satisfied her less. She must needs pronounce his name

frequently, as the greatest she knew, yet she had never found it less efficacious. Outside the arch there seemed always an arch, beyond the remotest echo a silence. And she regretted afterwards

that she had not kept to the real serious subject that had caused her to visit India — namely, the relationship between Ronny and Adela. Would they, or would they not, succeed in

becoming engaged to be married?

CHAPTER VI

!Aziz had not gone to the Bridge Party. Immediately after his meeting with Mrs. Moore he

was diverted to other matters. Several surgical cases came in, and kept him busy. He ceased to

be either outcaste or poet, and became the medical student, very gay, and full of details of operations

which he poured into the shrinking ears of his friends. His profession fascinated him at times, but he required it to be exciting, and it was his hand, not his mind, that was scientific. The knife he loved and used skilfully, and he also liked pumping in the latest serums. But the boredom of rEgime and hygiene repelled him, and after inoculating a man for enteric, he would

go away and drink unfiltered water himself "What can you expect from the fellow?" said dour

Major Callendar. "No grits, no guts." But in his heart he knew that if Aziz and not he had operated

last year on Mrs. Graysford's appendix, the old lady would probably have lived. And this did not dispose him any better towards his subordinate .

There was a row the morning after the mosque—they were always having rows. The Major , who had been up half the night, wanted damn well to know why Aziz had not come promptly

when summoned.

"Sir, excuse me, I did. I mounted my bike, and it bust in front of the Cow Hospital. So I had to find a tonga ".

"Bust in front of the Cow Hospital, did it? And how did you come to be there "?
"I beg your pardon "?

"Oh Lord, oh Lord! When I live here "--he kicked the gravel--" and you live there—not ten minutes from me— and the Cow Hospital is right ever so far away the other side of you —

there— then how did you come to be passing the Cow Hospital on the way to me? Now do some work for a change ".

He strode away in a temper, without waiting for the excuse, which as far as it went was a sound one: the Cow Hospital was in a straight line between Hamidullah's house and his own, so

Aziz had naturally passed it. He never realized that the educated Indians visited one another constantly, and were weaving, however painfully, a new social fabric. Caste "or something of the sort" would prevent them. He only knew that no one ever told him the truth, although he

had been in the country for twenty years .

Aziz watched him go with amusement. When his spirits were up he felt that the English are a comic institution, and he enjoyed being misunderstood by them. But it was an amusement of

the emotions and nerves, which an accident or the passage of time might destroy; it was apart

from the fundamental gaiety that he reached when he was with those whom he trusted. A disobliging

simile involving Mrs. Callendar occurred to his fancy. "I must tell that to Mahmoud Ali , it'll make him laugh," he thought. Then he got to work. He was competent and indispensable ,

and he knew it. The simile passed from his mind while he exercised his professional skill. During these pleasant and busy days, he heard vaguely that the Collector was giving a party, and that the Nawab Bahadur said everyone ought to go to it. His fellowassistant. Doctor

Panna Lai, was in ecstasies at the prospect, and was urgent that they should attend it together

in his newtum-tum. The arrangement suited them both. Aziz was spared the indignity of a bicycle

or the expense of hiring, while Dr. Panna Lai, who was timid and elderly, secured someone who could manage his horse. He could manage it himself, but only just, and he was afraid of the motors and of the unknown turn into the club grounds. "Disaster may come," he said politely,

"but we shall at all events get there safe, even if we do not get back." And with more logic: "It will, I think, create a good impression should two doctors arrive at the same time". But when the time came, Aziz was seized with a revulsion, and determined not to go. For one thing his spell of work, lately concluded, left him independent and healthy. For another, the

day chanced to fall on the anniversary of his wife's death. She had died soon after he had fallen

in love with her; he had not loved her at first. Touched by Western feeling, he disliked union with a woman whom he had never seen; moreover, when he did see her, she disappointed him ,

and he begat his first child in mere animality. The change began after its birth. He was won by

her love for him, by a loyalty that implied something more than submission, and by her efforts

to educate herself against that lifting of the purdah that would come in the next generation if

not in theirs. She was intelligent, yet had old-fashioned grace. Gradually he lost the feeling that

his relatives had chosen wrongly for him. Sensuous enjoyment— well, even if he had had it, it

would have dulled in a year, and he had gained something instead, which seemed to increase

the longer they lived together. She became the mother of a son . . . and in giving him a second

son she died. Then he realized what he had lost, and that no woman could ever take her place ;

a friend would come nearer to her than another woman. She had gone, there was no one like

her, and what is that uniqueness but love? He amused himself, he forgot her at times: but at other times he felt that she had sent all the beauty and joy of the world into Paradise, and he

meditated suicide. Would he meet her beyond the tomb? Is there such a meetingplace? Though

orthodox, he did not know. God's unity was indubitable and indubitably announced, but on all

other points he wavered like the average Christian; his belief in the life to come would pale to a

hope, vanish, reappear, all in a single sentence or a dozen heart-beats, so that the corpuscles of

his blood rather than he seemed to decide which opinion he should hold, and for how long. It

was so with all his opinions. Nothing stayed, nothing passed that did not return; the circulation

was ceaseless and kept him young, and he mourned his wife the more sincerely because he mourned her seldom .

It would have been simpler to tell Dr. Lai that he had changed his mind about the party, but until the last minute he did not know that he had changed it; indeed, he didn't change it, it changed itself Unconquerable aversion welled. Mrs. Callendar, Mrs. Lesley—no, he couldn't stand them in his sorrow: they would guess it— for he dowered the British matron with strange

insight— and would delight in torturing him, they would mock him to their husbands. When he

should have been ready, he stood at the Post Office, writing a telegram to his children, and

found on his return that Dr. Lai had called for him, and gone on. Well, let him go on, as befitted

the coarseness of his nature. For his own part, he would commune with the dead .

And unlocking a drawer, he took out his wife's photograph. He gazed at it, and tears

spouted from his eyes. He thought, "How unhappy I am! " But because he really was unhappy ,

another emotion soon mingled with his self-pity: he desired to remember his wife and could

not. Why could he remember people whom he did not love? They were always so vivid to him ,

whereas the more he looked at this photograph, the less he saw. She had eluded him thus, ever

since they had carried her to her tomb. He had known that she would pass from his hands and

eyes, but had thought she could live in his mind, not realizing that the very fact that we have

loved the dead increases their unreality, and that the more passionately we invoke them the

further they recede. A piece of brown cardboard and three children—that was all that was left of

his wife. It was unbearable, and he thought again, "How unhappy I am!" and became happier .

He had breathed for an instant the mortal air that surrounds Orientals and all men, and he drew

back from it with a gasp, for he was young. "Never, never shall I get over this," he told himself

"Most certainly my career is a failure, and my sons will be badly brought up." Since it was certain,

he strove to avert it, and looked at some notes he had made on a case at the hospital .

Perhaps some day a rich person might require this particular operation, and he gain a large

sum. The notes interesting him on their own account, he locked the photograph up again. Its

moment was over, and he did not think about his wife any more.

After tea his spirits improved, and he went round to see Hamidullah. Hamidullah had gone

to the party, but his pony had not, so Aziz borrowed it, also his friend's riding breeches and polo

mallet. He repaired to the Maidan. It was deserted except at its rim, where some bazaar youths

were training. Training for what? They would have found it hard to say, but the word had got

into the air. Round they ran, weedy and knock-kneed—the local physique was wretched—with an

expression on their faces not so much of determination as of a deterinination to be determined .

"Maharajah, salaam," he called for a joke. The youths stopped and laughed. He advised them

not to exert themselves. They promised they would not, and ran on .

Riding into the middle, he began to knock the ball about. He could not play, but his pony

could, and he set himself to learn, free from all human tension. He forgot the whole damned

business of living as he scurried over the brown platter of the Maidan, with the evening wind on

his forehead, and the encircling trees soothing his eyes. The ball shot away towards a stray

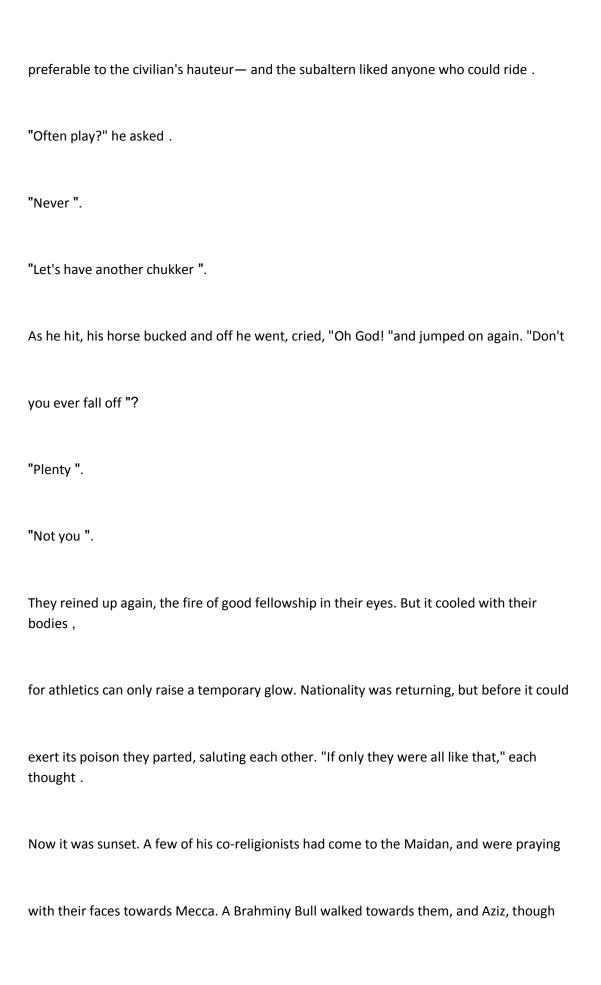
subaltern who was also practising; he hit it back to Aziz and called, "Send it along again ".

"All right ".

The new-comer had some notion of what to do, but his horse had none, and forces were

equal. Concentrated on the ball, they somehow became fond of one another, and smiled when

they drew rein to rest. Aziz liked soldiers— they either accepted you or swore at you, which was



disinclined
to pray himself, did not see why they should be bothered with the clumsy and idolatrous
animal. He gave it a tap with his polo mallet. As he did so, a voice from the road hailed him: it
was Dr. Panna Lai, returning in high distress from the Collector's party .
"Dr. Aziz, Dr. Aziz, where you been? I waited ten full minutes' time at your house, then I
went " .
"I am so awfully sorry ~I was compelled to go to the Post Office ".
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"But, Dr. Lai, consider. How could I send my servant when you were coming: you come, we go, my house is left alone, my servant comes back perhaps, and all my portable property has been carried away by bad characters in the meantime. Would you have that? The cook is deaf —

I can never count on my cook—and the boy is only a little boy. Never, never do I and Hassan

eave the house at the same time together. It is my fixed rule." He said all this and much more

out of civility, to save Dr. Lai's face. It was not offered as truth and should not have been criticized

as such. But the other demolished it—an easy and ignoble task. "Even if this so, what prevents

leaving a chit saying where you go?" and so on. Aziz detested ill breeding, and made his

pony caper. "Farther away, or mine will start out of sympathy," he wailed, revealing the true

source of his irritation. "It has been so rough and wild this afternoon. It spoiled some most

valuable blossoms in the club garden, and had to be dragged back by four men. English ladies

and gentlemen looking on, and the Collector Sahib himself taking a note. But, Dr. Aziz, I'll not

take up your valuable time. This will not interest you, who have so many engagements and telegrams. I am just a poor old doctor who thought right to pay my respects when I was asked and where I was asked. Your absence, I may remark, drew commentaries ". "They can damn well comment ". "It is fine to be young. Damn well! Oh, very fine. Damn whom "? "I go or not as I please". "Yet you promise me, and then fabricate this tale of a telegram. Go forward. Dapple". They went, and Aziz had a wild desire to make an enemy for life. He could do it so easily by galloping near them. He did it. Dapple bolted. He thundered back on to the Maidan. The glory of his play with the subaltern remained for a little, he galloped and swooped till he poured with sweat, and until he returned the pony to Hamidullah's stable he felt the equal of any man. Once on his feet, he had creeping fears. Was he in bad odour with the powers that be? Had he offended the Collector by absenting himself? Dr. Panna La! was a person of no importance, yet

was it wise to have quarrelled even with him? The complexion of his mind turned from human

to political. He thought no longer, "Can I get on with people?" but "Are they stronger than I "?

breathing the prevalent miasma .

At his home a chit was awaiting him, bearing the Government stamp. It lay on his table like

a high explosive, which at a touch might blow his flimsy bungalow to bits. He was going to be

cashiered because he had not turned up at the party. When he opened the note, it proved to be

quite different; an invitation from Mr. Fielding, the Principal of Government College, asking him

to come to tea the day after to-morrow. His spirits revived with violence. They would have revived

in any case, for he possessed a soul that could suffer but not stifle, and led a steady life

beneath his mutability. But this invitation gave him particular joy, because Fielding had asked

him to tea a month ago, and he had forgotten about it-never answered, never gone, just forgotten .

And here came a second invitation, without a rebuke or even an allusion to his slip. Here

was true courtesy— the civil deed that shows the good heart— and snatching up his pen he wrote
an affectionate reply, and hurried back for news to Hamidullah's. For he had never met the
Principal, and believed that the one serious gap in his life was going to be filled. He longed to
know everything about the splendid fellow— his salary, preferences, antecedents, how best one
might please him. But Hamidullah was still out, and Mahmoud Ali, who was in, would only make
silly rude jokes about the party .
CHAPTER VII
This Mr. Fielding had been caught by India late. He was over forty when he entered that
oddest portal, the Victoria Terminus at Bombay, and—having bribed a European ticket
inspector—took his luggage into the compartment of his first tropical train. The journey remained
in his mind as significant. Of his two carriage companions one was a youth, fresh to the

East like himself, the other a seasoned Anglo-Indian of his own age. A gulf divided him from either; he had seen too many cities and men to be the first or to become the second. New impressions crowded on him, but they were not the orthodox new impressions; the past conditioned them, and so it was with his mistakes. To regard an Indian as if he were an Italian is not, for instance, a common error, nor perhaps a fatal one, and Fielding often attempted analogies between this peninsula and that other, smaller and more exquisitely shaped, that stretches into the classic waters of the Mediterranean . His career, though scholastic, was varied, and had included going to the bad and repenting thereafter. By now he was a hard-bitten, good-tempered, intelligent fellow on the verge of middle age, with a belief in education. He did not mind whom he taught; public schoolboys, mental

Through the influence of friends, he was nominated Principal of the little college at Chandrapore ,

defectives and policemen, had all come his way, and he had no objection to adding Indians.

liked it, and assumed he was a success. He did succeed with his pupils, but the gulf between himself and his countrymen, which he had noticed in the train, widened distressingly. He could not at first see what was wrong. He was not unpatriotic, he always got on with Englishmen in England, all his best friends were English, so why was it not the same out here? Outwardly of the large shaggy type, with sprawling limbs and blue eyes, he appeared to inspire confidence until he spoke. Then something in his manner puzzled people and failed to allay the distrust which his profession naturally inspired. There needs must be this evil of brains in India, but woe to him through whom they are increased! The feeling grew that Mr. Fielding was a disruptive force, and rightly, for ideas are fatal to caste, and he used ideas by that most potent method— interchange. Neither a missionary nor a student, he was happiest in the give-andtake of a private conversation. The world, he believed, is a globe of men who are trying to reach one

another and can best do so by the help of good will plus culture and intelligence— a creed ill suited to Chandrapore, but he had come out too late to lose it. He had no racial feeling not because he was superior to his brother civilians, but because he had matured in a different atmosphere, where the herdinstinct does not flourish. The remark that did him most harm at the club was a silly aside to the effect that the socalled white races are really pinko-grey. He only said this to be cheery, he did not realize that "white" has no more to do with a colour than "God save the King" with a god, and that it is the height of impropriety to consider what it does connote. The pinko-grey male whom he addressed was subtly scandalized; his sense of insecurity was awoken, and he communicated it to the rest of the herd . Still, the men tolerated him for the sake of his good heart and strong body; it was their

and this, which would have passed without comment in feminist England, did him harm in a

wives who decided that he was not a sahib really. They disliked him. He took no notice of

them,

community where the male is expected to be lively and helpful. Mr. Fielding never advised one
about dogs or horses, or dined, or paid his midday calls, or decorated trees for one's children at
Christmas, and though he came to the club, it was only to get his tennis or billiards, and to go .
This was true. He had discovered that it is possible to keep in with Indians and Englishmen, but
that he who would also keep in with Englishwomen must drop the Indians. The two wouldn't
combine. Useless to blame either party, useless to blame them for blaming one another. It just
was so, and one had to choose. Most Englishmen preferred their own kinswomen, who, coming
out in increasing numbers, made life on the home pattern yearly more possible. He had found it
convenient and pleasant to associate with Indians and he must pay the price. As a rule no
Englishwoman
entered the College except for official functions, and if he invited Mrs. Moore and

Miss Quested to tea, it was because they were new-comers who would view everything with an equal if superficial eye, and would not turn on a special voice when speaking to his other guests .

included an ancient garden and a garden-house, and here he lived for much of the year. He was

The College itself had been slapped down by the Public Works Department, but its grounds

dressing after a bath when Dr. Aziz was announced. Lifting up his voice, he shouted from the

bedroom, "Please make yourself at home." The remark was unpremeditated, like most of his

actions; it was what he felt inclined to say .

Ιt

To Aziz it had a very definite meaning. "May I really, Mr. Fielding? It's very good of you," he called back; "I like unconventional behaviour so extremely." His spirits flared up, he glanced

round the living-room. Some luxury in it, but no order —nothing to intimidate poor Indians.

was also a very beautiful room, opening into the garden through three high arches of wood.

"The fact is I have long wanted to meet you," he continued. "I have heard so much about your warm heart from the Nawab Bahadur. But where is one to meet in a wretched hole like Chandrapore?" He came close up to the door. "When I was greener here, I'll tell you what. I used to wish you to fall ill so that we could meet that way." They laughed, and encouraged by his success he began to improvise. "I said to myself. How does Mr. Fielding look this morning? Perhaps pale. And the Civil Surgeon is pale too, he will not be able to attend upon him when the shivering commences. I should have been sent for instead. Then we would have had jolly talks, for you are a celebrated student of Persian poetry ". You know me by sight, then ". Of course, of course. You know me "? I know you very well by name ". I have been here such a short time, and always in the bazaar. No wonder you have never seen me, and I wonder you know my name. I say, Mr. Fielding "?

Guess what I look like before you come out. That will be a kind of game ". You're five feet nine inches high," said Fielding, surmising this much through the ground glass of the bedroom door. Jolly good. What next? Have I not a venerable white beard "? Blast! Anything wrong "? I've stamped on my last collar stud ". Take mine, take mine ". Have you a spare one "? Yes, yes, one minute ". Not if you're wearing it yourself " No, no, one in my pocket." Stepping aside, so that his outline might vanish, he wrenched off his collar, and pulled out of his shirt the back stud, a gold stud, which was part of a set that his brother-in-law had brought him from Europe. "Here it is," he cried. "Come in with it if you don't mind the unconventionality ".

"One minute again." Replacing his collar, he prayed that it would not spring up at the back during tea. Fielding's bearer, who was helping him to dress, opened the door for him. "Many thanks." They shook hands smiling. He began to look round, as he would have with any old friend. Fielding was not surprised at the rapidity of their intimacy. With so emotional people it was apt to come at once or never, and he and Aziz, having heard only good of each other, could afford to dispense with preliminaries . "But I always thought that Englishmen kept their rooms so tidy. It seems that this is not so. I need not be so ashamed." He sat down gaily on the bed; then, forgetting himself entirely, drew up his legs and folded them under him. "Everything ranged coldly on shelves was what _I_ thought.—I say, Mr. Fielding, is the stud going to go in "? "Ihae madoots ". "What's that last sentence, please? Will you teach me some new words and so improve my English "?

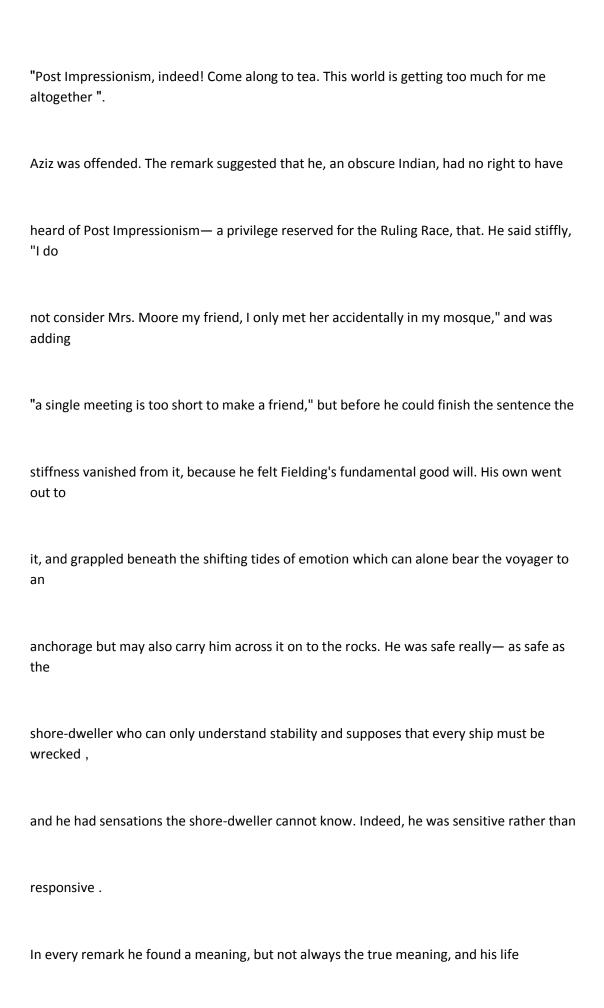
often struck with the liveliness with which the younger generation handled a foreign tongue .

They altered the idiom, but they could say whatever they wanted to say quickly; there were

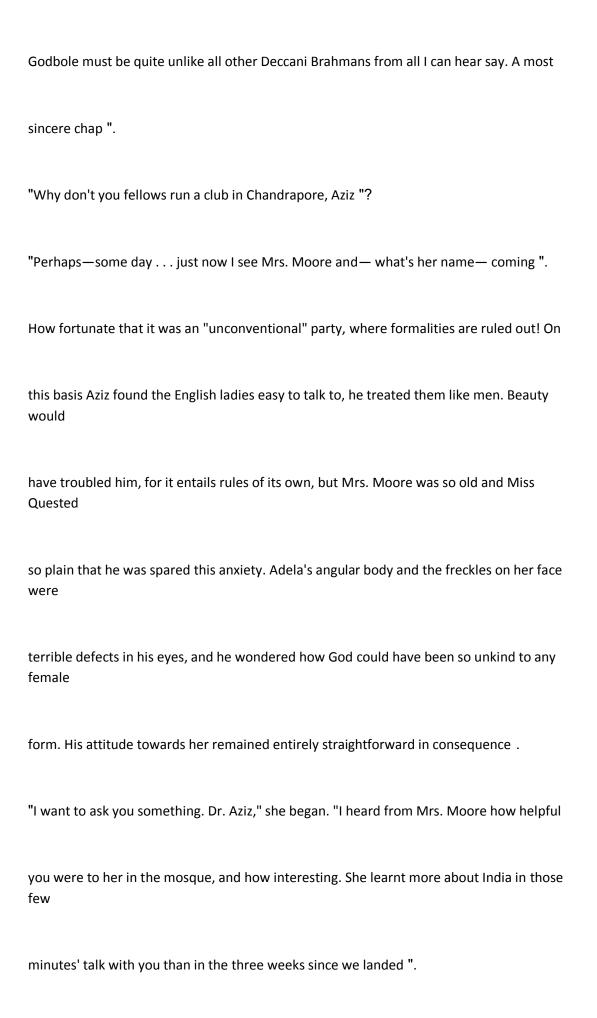
Fielding doubted whether "everything ranged coldly on shelves" could be improved. He was







though vivid was largely a dream. Fielding, for instance, had not meant that Indians are obscure ,
but that Post Impressionism is; a gulf divided his remark from Mrs. Turton's "Why, they
speak English," but to Aziz the two sounded alike. Fielding saw that something had gone wrong ,
and equally that it had come right, but he didn't fidget, being an optimist where personal relations
were concerned, and their talk rattled on as before .
"Besides the ladies I am expecting one of my assistants—Narayan Godbole ".
"Oho, the Deccani Brahman "!
"He wants the past back too, but not precisely Alamgir ".
"I should think not. Do you know what Deccani Brahmans say? That England conquered India
from them—from them, mind, and not from the Moguls. Is not that like their cheek? They
have even bribed it to appear in text-books, for they are so subtle and immensely rich. Professor









There was practically only one room in it, and that infested with small black flies. "Oh, but we

will talk of something else now," he exclaimed. "I wish I lived here. See this beautiful room! Let

us admire it together for a little. See those curves at the bottom of the arches. What delicacy! It

is the architecture of Question and Answer. Mrs. Moore, you are in India; I am not joking." The

room inspired him. It was an audience hall built in the eighteenth century for some high official ,

and though of wood had reminded Fielding of the Loggia de' Lanzi at Florence. Little rooms,

now Europeanized, clung to it on either side, but the central hall was unpapered and unglassed ,

and the air of the garden poured in freely. One sat in public—on exhibition, as it were—in full

view of the gardeners who were screaming at the birds and of the man who rented the tank for

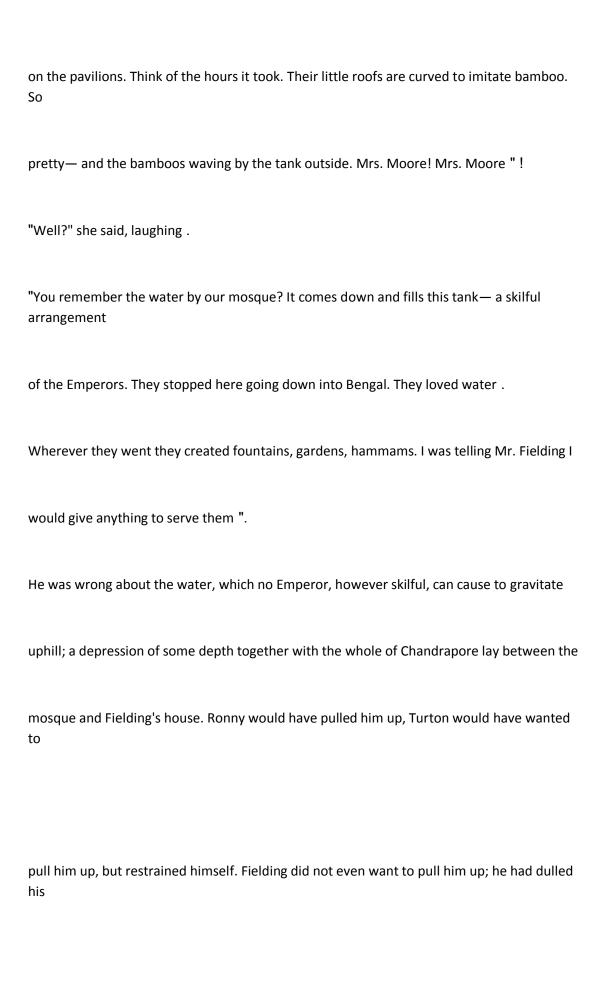
the cultivation of water chestnut. Fielding let the mango trees too— there was no knowing who

might not come in— and his servants sat on his steps night and day to discourage thieves. Beautiful



"Poor criminal, give him another chance. It only makes a man worse to go to prison and be corrupted." His face grew very tender—the tenderness of one incapable of administration, and unable to grasp that if the poor criminal is let off he will again rob the poor widow. He was tender to everyone except a few family enemies whom he did not consider human: on these he desired revenge. He was even tender to the English; he knew at the bottom of his heart that they could not help being so cold and odd and circulating like an ice stream through his land . "We punish no one, no one," he repeated, "and in the evening we will give a great banquet with a nautch and lovely girls shall shine on every side of the tank with fireworks in their hands, and all shall be feasting and happiness until the next day, when there shall be justice as before fifty rupees, a hundred, a thousand—till peace comes. Ah, why didn't we live in that time?— But are you admiring Mr. Fielding's house? Do look how the pillars are painted blue, and the verandah's pavilions— what do you call them ?— that are above us inside are blue also. Look at the

carving



craving for verbal truth and cared chiefly for truth of mood. As for Miss Quested, she accepted

everything Aziz said as true verbally. In her ignorance, she regarded him as "India," and never

surmised that his outlook was limited and his method inaccurate, and that no one is India.

He was now much excited, chattering away hard, and even saying damn when he got mixed

up in his sentences. He told them of his profession, and of the operations he had witnessed and

performed, and he went into details that scared Mrs. Moore, though Miss Quested mistook them

for proofs of his broad-mindedness; she had heard such talk at home in advanced academic

circles, deliberately free. She supposed him to be emancipated as well as reliable, and placed

him on a pinnacle which he could not retain. He was high enough for the moment, to be sure ,

but not on any pinnacle. Wings bore him up, and flagging would deposit him.

The arrival of Professor Godbole quieted him somewhat, but it remained his afternoon. The

Brahman, polite and enigmatic, did not impede his eloquence, and even applauded it. He took

his tea at a little distance from the outcasts, from a low table placed slightly behind him, to

which he stretched back, and as it were encountered food by accident; all feigned indifference

to Professor Godbole's tea. He was elderly and wizen with a grey moustache and grey-blue

eyes, and his complexion was as fair as a European's. He wore a turban that looked like pale

purple macaroni, coat, waistcoat, dhoti, socks with clocks. The clocks matched the turban, and

his whole appearance suggested harmony—as if he had reconciled the products of East and

West, mental as well as physical, and could never be discomposed. The ladies were interested

in him, and hoped that he would supplement Dr. Aziz by saying something about religion. But

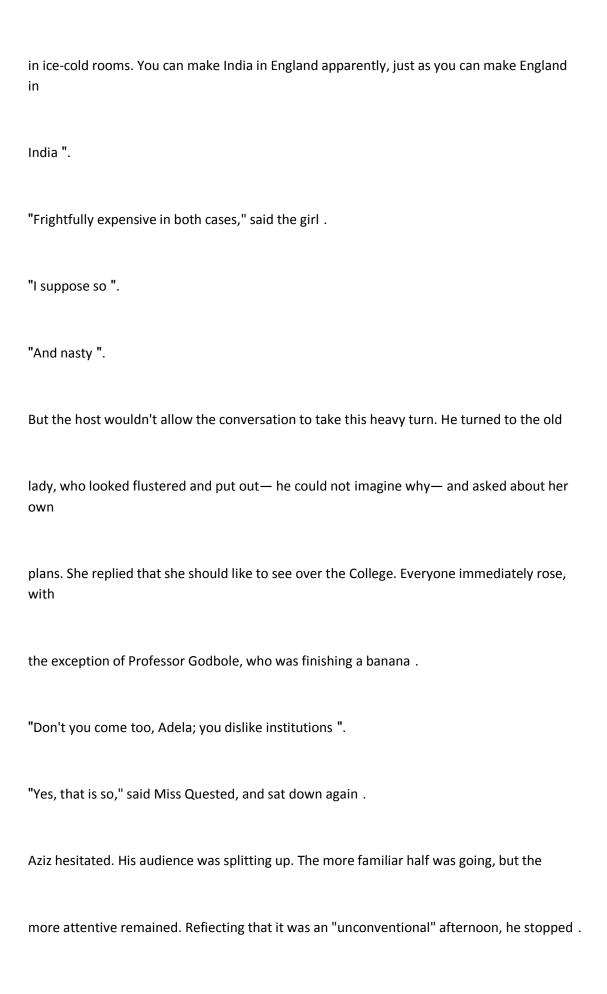
he only ate—ate and ate, smiling, never letting his eyes catch sight of his hand.

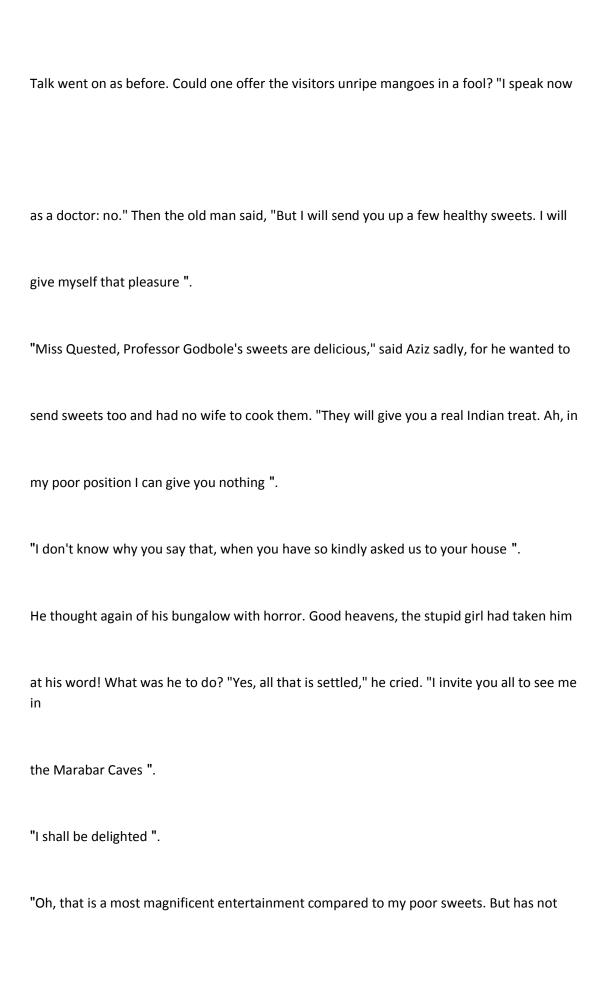
Leaving the Mogul Emperors, Aziz turned to topics that could distress no one. He described

the ripening of the mangoes, and how in his boyhood he used to run out in the Rains to a big

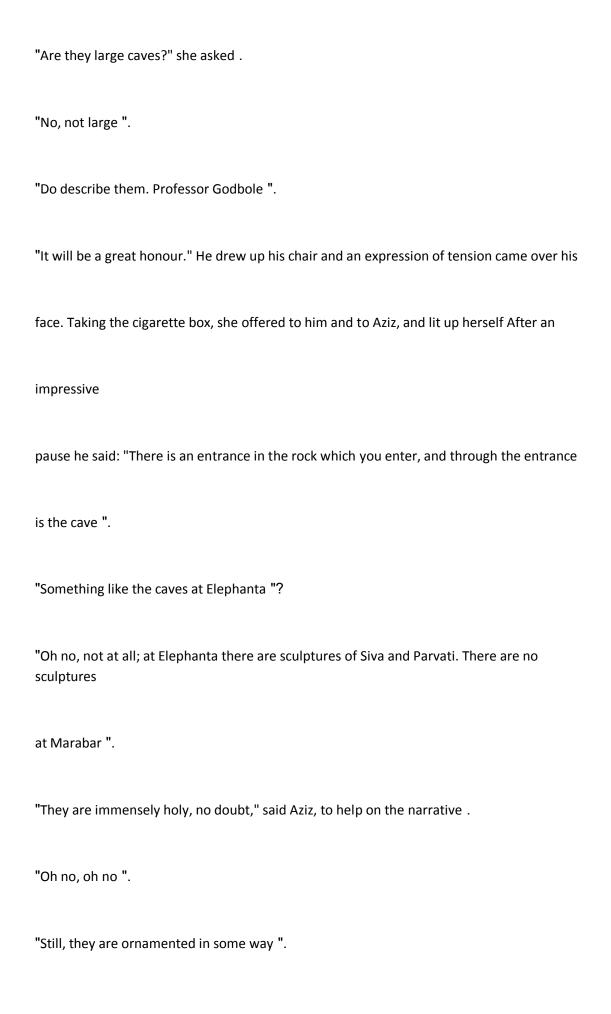
mango grove belonging to an uncle and gorge there. "Then back with water streaming over you





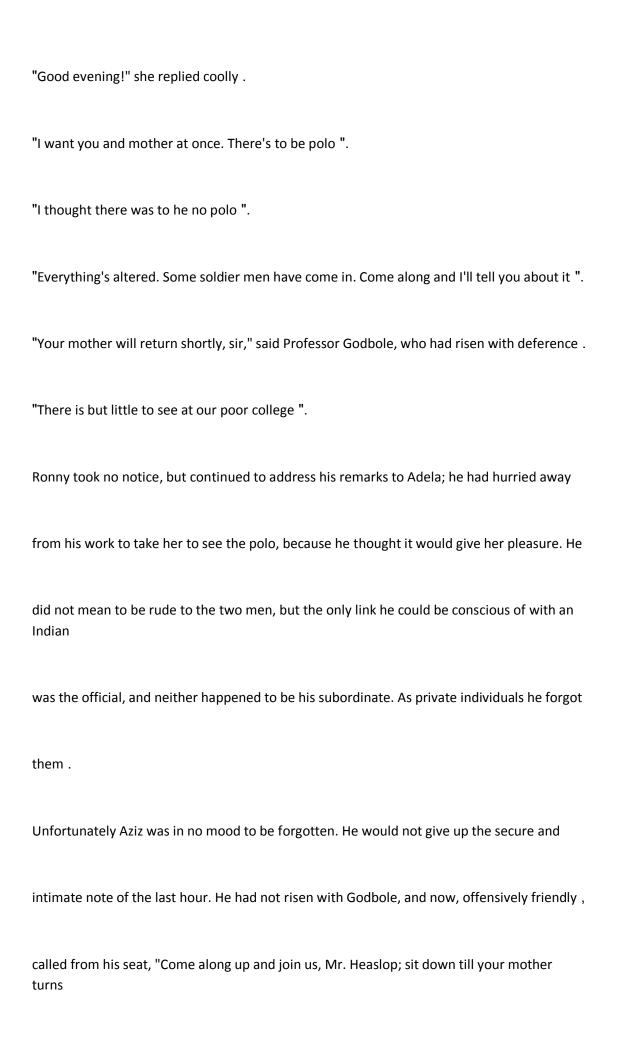


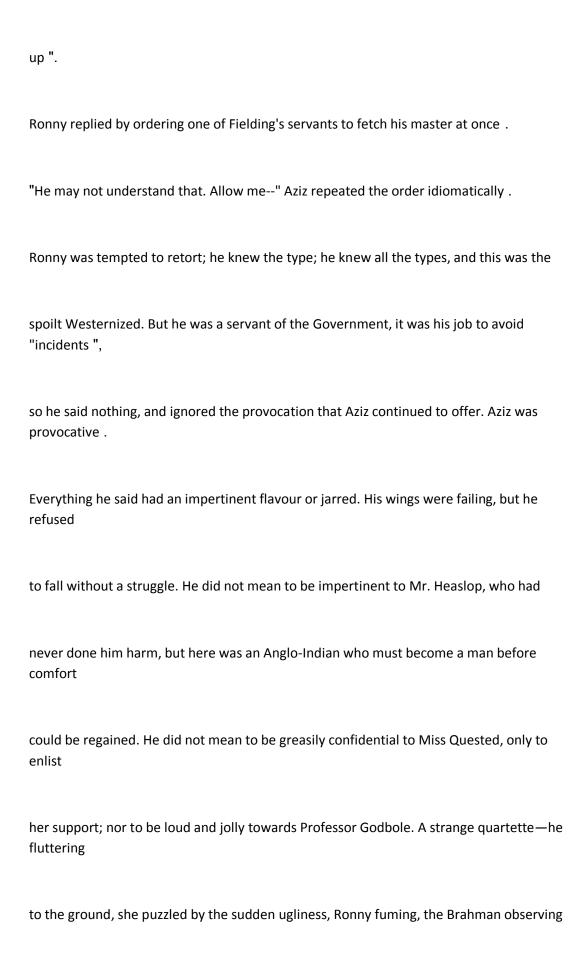




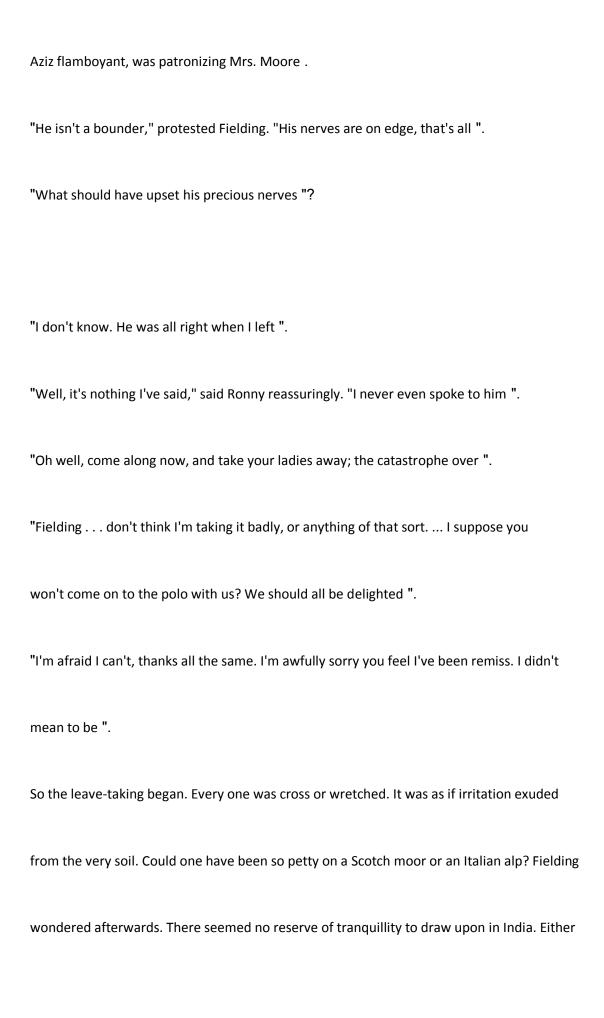


Marabar Caves were—full of stalactites, perhaps; Aziz led up to this, but they weren't .
The dialogue remained light and friendly, and Adela had no conception of its underdrift. She
did not know that the comparatively simple mind of the Mohammedan was encountering Ancient
Night. Aziz played a thrilling game. He was handling a human toy that refused to work—he
knew that much. If it worked, neither he nor Professor Godbole would be the least advantaged ,
but the attempt enthralled him and was akin to abstract thought. On he chattered, defeated at
every move by an opponent who would nof even admit that a move had been made, and further
than ever from discovering what, if anything, was extraordinary about the Marabar Caves .
Into this Ronny dropped .
With an annoyance he took no trouble to conceal, he called from the garden: "What's happened
to Fielding? Where's my mother "?

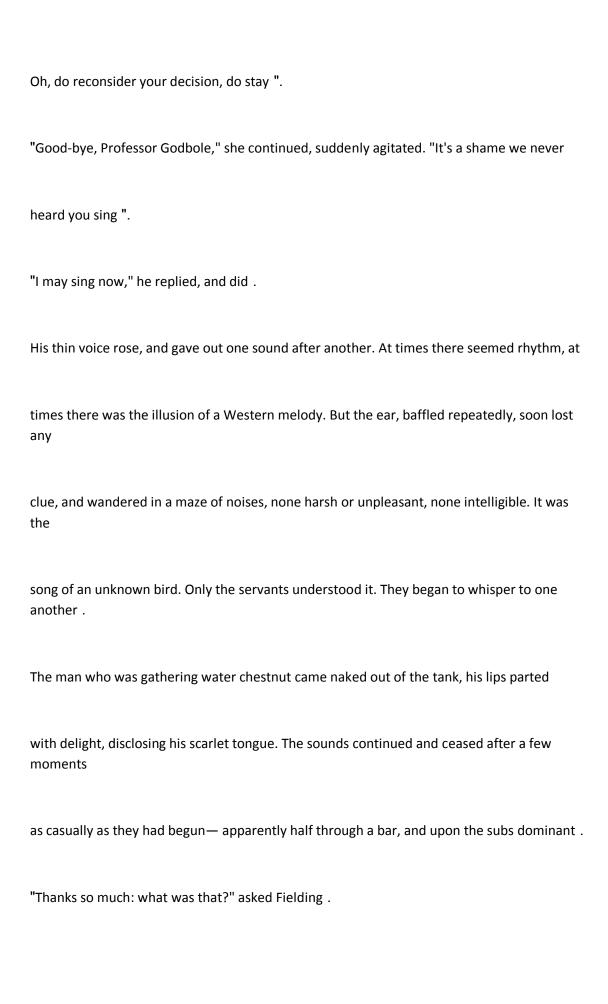


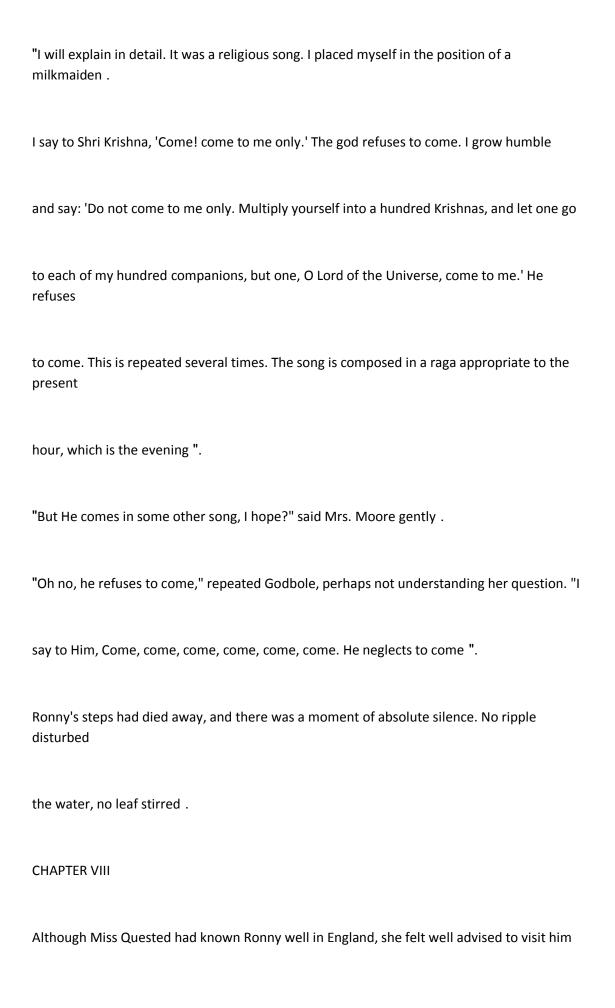












before deciding to be his wife. India had developed sides of his character that she had never admired. His self-complacency, his censoriousness, his lack of subtlety, all grew vivid beneath a tropic sky; he seemed more indifferent than of old to what was passing in the minds of his fellows. more certain that he was right about them or that if he was wrong it didn't matter. When proved wrong, he was particularly exasperating; he always managed to suggest that she needn't have bothered to prove it. The point she made was never the relevant point, her arguments conclusive but barren, she was reminded that he had expert knowledge and she none, and that experience would not help her because she could not interpret it. A Public School, London University, a year at a crammer's, a particular sequence of posts in a particular province, a fall from a horse and a touch of fever were presented to her as the only training by which Indians and all who reside in their country can be understood; the only training she could

comprehend, that is to say, for of course above Ronny there stretched the higher realms of knowledge, inhabited by Callendars and Turtons, who had been not one year in the country but twenty and whose instincts were superhuman. For himself he made no extravagant claims; she wished he would. It was the qualified bray of the callow official, the "I am not perfect, but "-that got on her nerves . How gross he had been at Mr. Fielding's—spoiling the talk and walking off in the middle of the haunting song! As he drove them away in the turn-turn, her irritation became unbearable, and she did not realize that much of it was directed against herself She longed for an opportunity to fly out at him, and since he felt cross too, and they were both in India, an opportunity soon occurred. They had scarcely left the College grounds before she heard him say to his mother, who was with him on the front seat, "What was that about caves?" and she promptly opened fire. "Mrs. Moore, your delightful doctor has decided on a picnic, instead of a party in his house;





The young people were ashamed. They dropped her at the bungalow and drove on together to the polo, feeling it was the least they could do. Their crackling bad humour left them, but the heaviness of their spirit remained; thunderstorms seldom clear the air. Miss Quested was thinking over her own behaviour, and didn't like it at all. Instead of weighing Ronny and herself, and coming to a reasoned conclusion about marriage, she had incidentally, in the course of a talk about mangoes, remarked to mixed company that she didn't mean to stop in India. Which meant that she wouldn't marry Ronny: but what a way to announce it, what a way for a civilized girl to behave! She owed him an explanation, but unfortunately there was nothing to explain. The "thorough talk" so dear to her principles and temperament had been postponed until too late. There seemed no point in being disagreeable to him and formulating her complaints

against his character at this hour of the day, which was the evening. . . . The polo took place

on

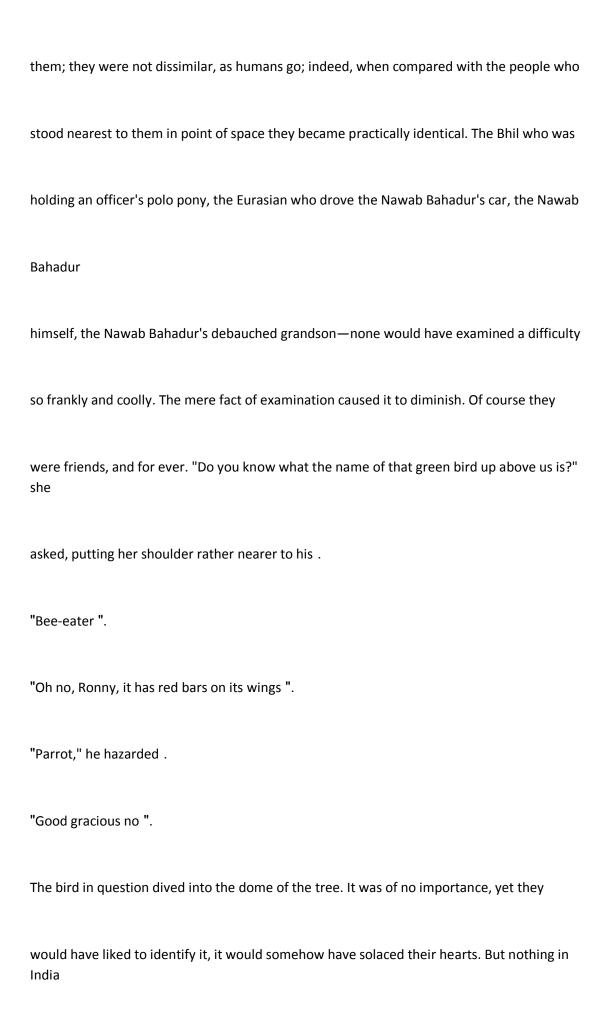
the Maidan near the entrance of Chandrapore city. The sun was already declining and each of the trees held a premonition of night. They walked away from the governing group to a distant seat, and there, feeling that it was his due and her own, she forced out of herself the undigested remark: "We must have a thorough talk, Ronny, I'm afraid ". "My temper's rotten, I must apologize," was his reply. "I didn't mean to order you and mother about, but of course the way those Bengalis let you down this morning annoyed me, and I don't want that sort of thing to keep happening ". "It's nothing to do with them that I ". . . "No, but Aziz would make some similar muddle over the caves. He meant nothing by the invitation, I could tell by his voice; it's just their way of being pleasant ". "It's something very different, nothing to do with caves, that I wanted to talk, over with you." She gazed at the colourless grass. "I've finally decided we are not going to be married , my dear boy ".

The news hurt Ronny very much. He had heard Aziz announce that she would not return to the country, but had paid no attention to the remark, for he never dreamt that an Indian could be a channel of communication between two English people. He controlled himself and said gently, "You never said we should marry, my dear girl; you never bound either yourself or me ~ don't let this upset you ". She felt ashamed. How decent he was! He might force his opinions down her throat, but did not press her to an "engagement," because he believed, like herself, in the sanctity of personal relationships: it was this that had drawn them together at their first meeting, which had occurred among the grand scenery of the English Lakes. Her ordeal was over, but she felt it should have been more painful and longer. Adela will not marry Ronny. It seemed slipping away like a dream. She said, "But let us discuss things; it's all so frightfully important, we mustn't

make false steps. I want next to hear your point of view about me~it might help us both ".

His manner was unhappy and reserved. "I don't much believe in this discussing—besides, I'm so dead with all this extra work Mohurram's bringing, if you'll excuse me ". "I only want everything to be absolutely clear between us, and to answer any questions you care to put to me on my conduct ". "But I haven't got any questions. You've acted within your rights, you were quite right to come out and have a look at me doing my work, it was an excellent plan, and anyhow it's no use talking further~we should only get up steam." He felt angry and bruised; he was too proud to tempt her back, but he did not consider that she had behaved badly, because where his compatriots were concerned he had a generous mind . "I suppose that there is nothing else; it's unpardonable of me to have given you and your mother all this bother," said Miss Quested heavily, and frowned up at the tree beneath which they were sitting. A little green bird was observing her, so brilliant and neat that it might have hopped straight out of a shop. On catching her eye it closed its own, gave a small skip and prepared

to go to bed. Some Indian wild bird. "Yes, nothing else," she repeated, feeling that a profound
and passionate speech ought to have been delivered by one or both of them. "We've
been awfully British over it, but I suppose that's all right ".
"As we are British, I suppose it is ".
"Anyhow we've not quarrelled, Ronny ".
"Oh, that would have been too absurd. Why should we quarrel "?
"I think we shall keep friends ".
"I know we shall ".
"Quite so ".
As soon as they had exchanged this admission, a wave of relief passed through them both ,
and then transformed itself into a wave of tenderness, and passed back. They were softened by
their own honesty, and began to feel lonely and unwise. Experiences, not character, divided







"That's as you like, but there's no hurry, is there "?
"Let me take you to the bungalow, and first the little spin," cried the old man, and hastened
to the car .
"He may show you some aspect of the country I can't, and he's a real loyalist. I thought you
might care for a bit of a change ".
Determined to give him no more trouble, she agreed, but her desire to see India had suddenly
decreased. There had been a factitious element in it .
How should they seat themselves in the car? The elegant grandson had to be left behind .
The Nawab Bahadur got up in front, for he had no intention of neighbouring an English girl .
"Despite my advanced years, I am learning to drive," he said. "Man can learn everything if he
will but try." And foreseeing a further difficulty, he added, "I do not do the actual steering. I sit
and ask my chauffeur questions, and thus learn the reason for everything that is done before I

do it myself By this method serious and I may say ludicrous accidents, such as befell one of my compatriots during that delightful reception at the English Club, are avoided. Our good Panna Lai! I hope, sahib, that great damage was not done to your flowers. Let us have our little spin down the Gangavati road. Half one league onwards!" He fell asleep. !Ronny instructed the chauffeur to take the Marabar road rather than the Gangavati, since the latter was under repair, and settled himself down beside the lady he had lost. The car made a burring noise and rushed along a chaussEe that ran upon an embankment above melancholy fields. Trees of a poor quality bordered, the road, indeed the whole scene was inferior, and suggested that the countryside was too vast to admit of excellence. In vain did each item in it call

out, "Come, come." There was not enough god to go round. The two young people conversed

feebly and felt unimportant. When the darkness began, it seemed to well out of the meagre vegetation, entirely covering the fields each side of them before it brimmed over the road .

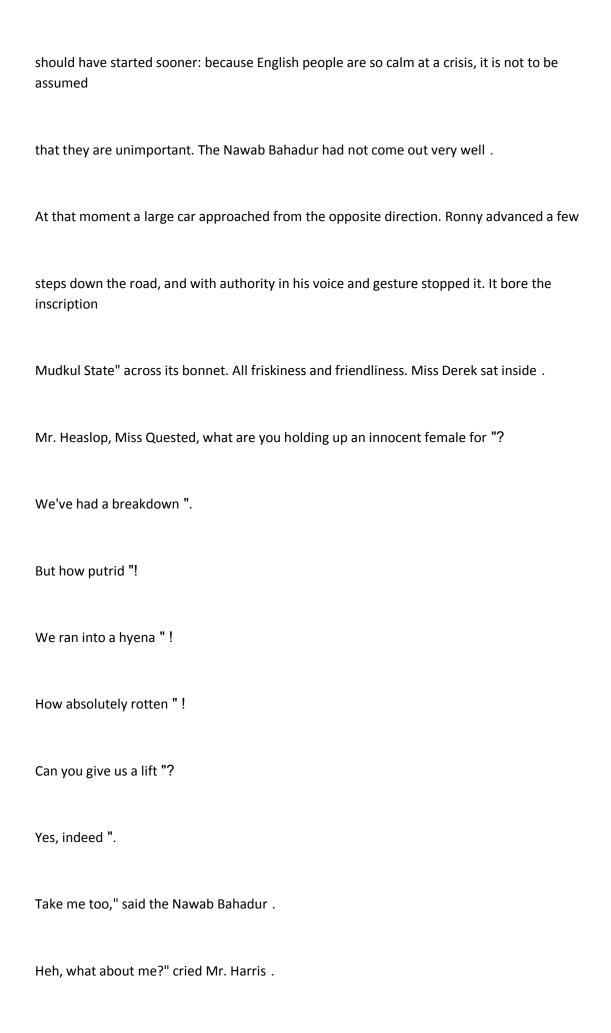
Ronny's face grew dim—an event that always increased her esteem for his character. Her hand touched his, owing to a jolt, and one of the thrills so frequent in the animal kingdom passed between them, and announced that all their difficulties were only a lovers' quarrel. Each was too proud to increase the pressure, but neither withdrew it, and a spurious unity descended on them, as local and temporary as the gleam that inhabits a firefly. It would vanish in a moment, perhaps to reappear, but the darkness is alone durable. And the night that encircled them, absolute as it seemed, was itself only a spurious unity, being modified by the gleams of day that leaked up round the edges of the earth, and by the stars. They gripped . . . bump, jump, a swerve, two wheels lifted in the air, brakes on, bump with tree at edge of embankment, standstill. An accident. A slight one. Nobody hurt. The Nawab Bahadur awoke. He cried out in Arabic, and violently tugged his beard.





their youth and upbringing, they were not upset by the accident. They traced back the writhing
of the tyres to the source of their disturbance. It was just after the exit from a bridge; the animal
had probably come up out of the nullah. Steady and smooth ran the marks of the car, ribbons
neatly nicked with lozenges, then all went mad. Certainly some external force had impinged ,
but the road had been used by too many objects for any one track to be legible, and
the torch created such high lights and black shadows that they could not interpret what it revealed .
Moreover, Adela in her excitement knelt and swept her skirts about, until it was she if
anyone who appeared to have attacked the car. The incident was a great relief to them both .
They forgot their abortive personal relationship, and felt adventurous as they muddied about in
the dust .
"I believe it was a buffalo," she called to their host, who had not accompanied them .
"Exactly ".





Now what's all this? I'm not an omnibus," said Miss Derek with decision. "I've a harmonium and two dogs in here with me as it is. I'll take three of you if one'! ! sit in front and nurse a pug .

No more ".

"I will sit in front," said the Nawab Bahadur .

"Then hop in: I've no notion who you are ".

"Heh no, what about my dinner? I can't be left alone all the night." Trying to look and feel like a European, the chauffeur interposed aggressively. He still wore a topi, despite the darkness,

and his face, to which the Ruling Race had contributed little beyond bad teeth, peered out of it pathetically, and seemed to say, "What's it all about? Don't worry me so, you blacks and

whites. Here I am, stuck in dam India same as you, and you got to fit me in better than this ".

"Nussu will bring you out some suitable dinner upon a bicycle," said the Nawab Bahadur,

who had regained his usual dignity. "I shall despatch him with all possible speed. Meanwhile,

repair my car ".

They sped ofi[^], and Mr. Harris, after a reproachfial glance, squatted down upon his hams.

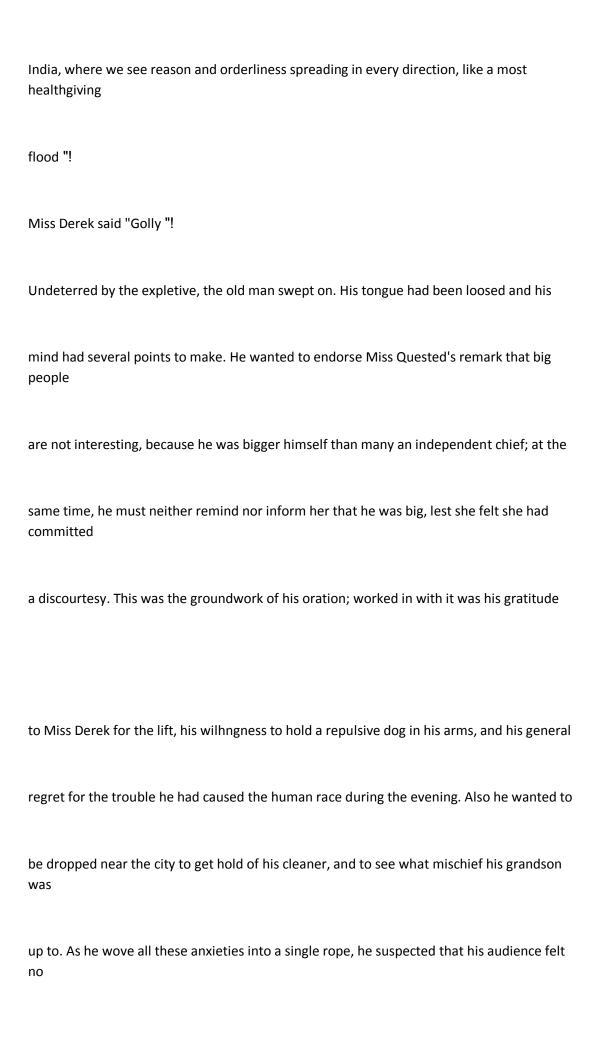
When English and Indians were both present, he grew self-conscious, because he did not know

to whom he belonged. For a little he was vexed by opposite currents in his blood, then they blended, and he belonged to no one but himself But Miss Derek was in tearing spirits. She had succeeded in stealing the Mudkul car. Her Maharajah would be awfully sick, but she didn't mind, he could sack her if he liked. "I don't believe in these people letting you down," she said. "If I didn't snatch like the devil, I should be nowhere. He doesn't want the car, silly fool! Surely it's to the credit of his State I should be seen about in it at Chandrapore during my leave. He ought to look at it that way. Anyhow he's got to look at it that way. My Maharani's different—my Maharani's a dear. That's her fox terrier, poor little devil. I fished them out both with the driver. Imagine taking dogs to a Chiefs ' Conference! As sensible as taking Chiefs, perhaps." She shrieked with laughter. "The harmonium—the harmonium's my little mistake, I own. They rather had me over the harmonium. I meant it to

stop on the train. Oh lor "!'

Ronny laughed with restraint. He did not approve of English people taking service under the
Native States, where they obtain a certain amount of influence, but at the expense of the general
prestige. The humorous triumphs of a free lance are of no assistance to an administrator,
and he told the young lady that she would outdo Indians at their own game if she went on
much longer .
"They always sack me before that happens, and then I get another job. The whole of India
seethes with Maharanis and Ranis and Begums who clamour for such as me ".
"Really. I had no idea ".
"How could you have any idea, Mr. Heaslop? What should he know about Maharanis, Miss
Quested? Nothing. At least I should hope not ".
"I understand those big people are not particularly interesting," said Adela, quietly, disliking
the young woman's tone. Her hand touched Ronny's again in the darkness, and to the animal
thrill there was now added a coincidence of opinion .

"Ah, there you're wrong. They're priceless ".
"I would scarcely call her wrong," broke out the Nawab Bahadur, from his isolation on the
front seat, whither they had relegated him. "A Native State, a Hindu State, the wife of a ruler of
a Hindu State, may beyond doubt be a most excellent lady, and let it not be for a moment supposed
that I suggest anything against the character of Her Highness the Maharani of Mudkul .
But I fear she will be uneducated, I fear she will be superstitious. Indeed, how could she be
otherwise? What opportunity of education has such a lady had? Oh, superstition is terrible, terrible!
oh, it is the great defect in our Indian character! "—and as if to point his criticism, the
lights of the civil station appeared on a rise to the right. He grew more and more voluble. $eq:control_contro$
it is the duty of each and every citizen to shake superstition off, and though I have little experience
of Hindu States, and none of this particular one, namely Mudkul (the Ruler, I fancy, has a
salute of but eleven guns)— yet I cannot imagine that they have been as successful as British

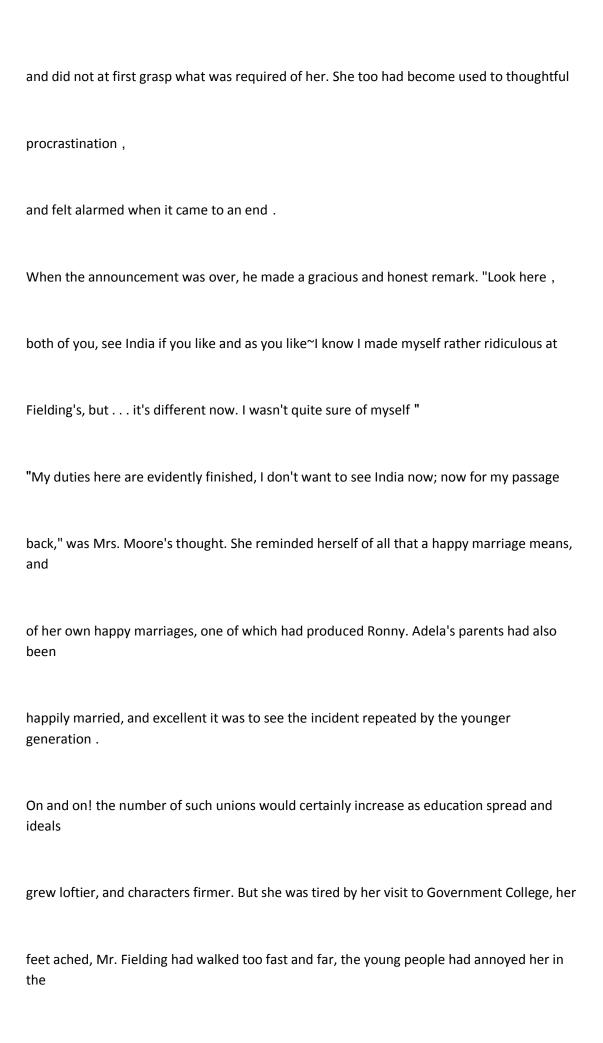


interest, and that the City Magistrate fondled either maiden behind the cover of the harnionium, but good breeding compelled him to continue; it was nothing to him if they were bored, because he did not know what boredom is, and it was nothing to him if they were licentious, because God has created all races to be different. The accident was over, and his life, equably useful, distinguished, happy, ran on as before and expressed itself in streams of well-chosen words. When this old geyser left them, Ronny made no comment, but talked lightly about polo; Turton had taught him that it is sounder not to discuss a man at once, and he reserved what he had to say on the Nawab's character until later in the evening. His hand, which he had removed to say good-bye, touched Adela's again; she caressed it definitely, he responded, and their firm

and mutual pressure surely meant something. They looked at each other when they reached

the bungalow, for Mrs. Moore was inside it. It was for Miss Quested to speak, and she said

nervously, "Ronny, I should like to take back what I said on the Maidan." He assented, and they became engaged to be married in consequence . Neither had foreseen such a consequence. She had meant to revert to her former condition of important and cultivated uncertainty, but it had passed out of her reach at its appropriate hour. Unlike the green bird or the hairy animal, she was labelled now. She felt humiliated again, for she deprecated labels, and she felt too that there should have been another scene between her lover and herself at this point, something dramatic and lengthy. He was pleased instead of distressed, he was surprised, but he had really nothing to say. What indeed is there to say? To be or not to be married, that was the question, and they had decided it in the affirmative . "Come along and let's tell the mater all this "--opening the perforated zinc door that protected the bungalow from the swarms of winged creatures. The noise woke the mater up. She had been dreaming of the absent children who were so seldom mentioned, Ralph and Stella,



turn-turn, and given her to suppose they were breaking with each other, and though it was all

right now she could not speak as enthusiastically of wedlock or of anything as she should have

done. Ronny was suited, now she must go home and help the others, if they wished. She was

past marrying herself, even unhappily; her function was to help others, her reward to be informed

that she was sympathetic. Elderly ladies must not expect more than this .

They dined alone. There was much pleasant and affectionate talk about the future. Later on

they spoke of passing events, and Ronny reviewed and recounted the day from his own point of

view. It was a different day from the women's because while they had enjoyed themselves or

thought, he had worked. Mohurram was approaching, and as usual the Chandrapore Mohammedans

were building paper towers of a size too large to pass under the branches of a certain

pepul tree. One knew what happened next; the tower stuck, a Mohammedan climbed up the

pepul and cut the branch off, the Hindus protested, there was a religious riot, and Heaven knew

what, with perhaps the troops sent for. There had been deputations and conciliation committees

under the auspices of Turton, and all the normal work of Chandrapore had been hung up .

Should the procession take another route, or should the towers be shorter? The Mohammedans

offered the former, the Hindus insisted on the latter. The Collector had favoured the Hindus, until

he suspected that they had artificially bent the tree nearer the ground. They said it sagged

naturally. Measurements, plans, an official visit to the spot. But Ronny had not disliked his day ,

for it proved that the British were necessary to India; there would certainly have been bloodshed

without them. His voice grew complacent again; he was here not to be pleasant but to

keep the peace, and now that Adela had promised to be his wife, she was sure to understand .

"What does our old gentleman of the car think?" she asked, and her negligent tone was exactly

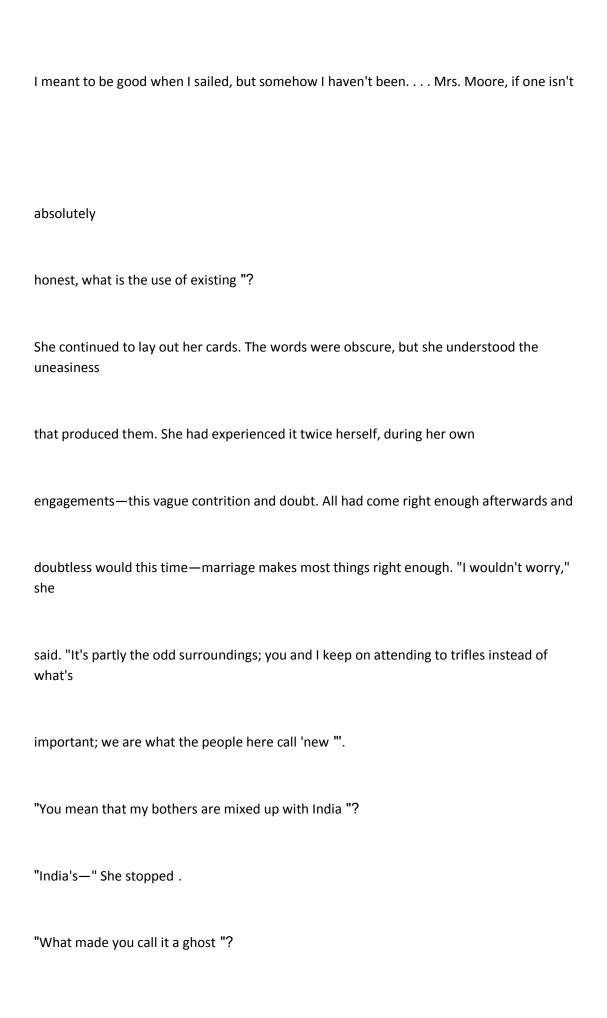


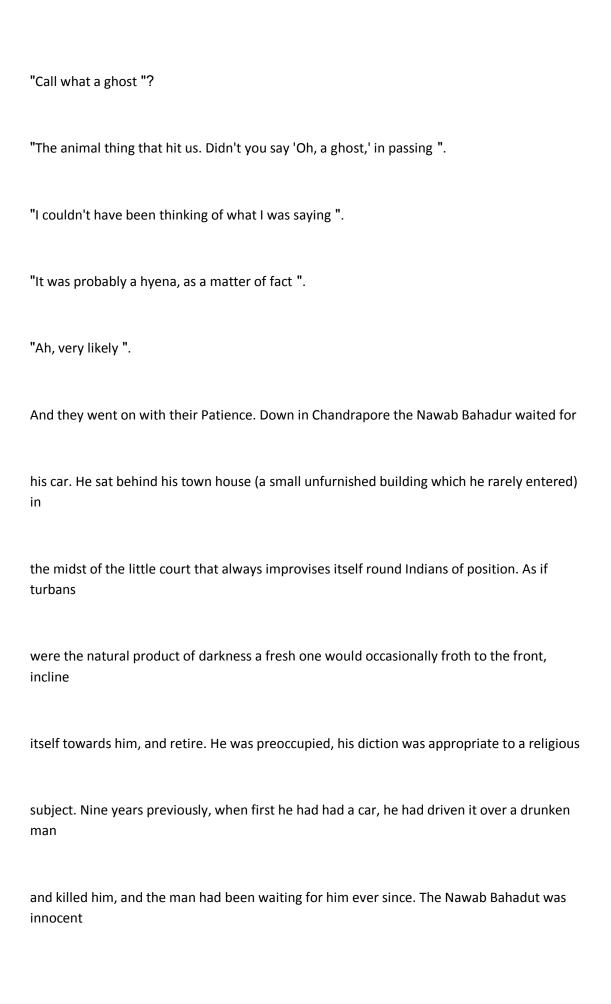
"An accident?" she cried . "Nothing; no one hurt. Our excellent host awoke much rattled from his dreams, appeared to think it was our fault, and chanted exactly, exactly ". Mrs. Moore shivered, "A ghost!" But the idea of a ghost scarcely passed her lips. The young people did not take it up, being occupied with their own outlooks, and deprived of support it perished, or was reabsorbed into the part of the mind that seldom speaks . "Yes, nothing criminal," Ronny summed up, "but there's the native, and there's one of the reasons why we don't admit him to our clubs, and how a decent girl like Miss Derek can take service under natives puzzles me. . . . But I must get on with my work. Krishna!" Krishna was the peon who should have brought the files from his office. He had not turned up, and a terrific row ensued. Ronny stormed, shouted, howled, and only the experienced observer could tell that he was not angry, did not much want the files, and only made a row because it was the custom.

Servants, quite understanding, ran slowly in circles, carrying hurricane lamps. Krishna the

earth,







before God and the Law, he had paid double the compensation necessary; but it was no use, the man continued to wait in an unspeakable form, close to the scene of his death. None of the English people knew of this, nor did the chauffeur; it was a racial secret communicable more by blood than speech. He spoke now in horror of the particular circumstances; he had led others into danger, he had risked the lives of two innocent and honoured guests. He repeated, "If I had been killed, what matter? it must happen sometime; but they who trusted me—" The company shuddered and invoked the mercy of God. Only Aziz held aloof, because a personal experience restrained him: was it not by despising ghosts that he had come to know Mrs . Moore? "You know, Nureddin," he whispered to the grandson— an effeminate youth whom he seldom met, always liked, and invariably forgot—" you know, my dear fellow, we Moslems simply must get rid of these superstitions, or India will never advance. How long must I hear of the

savage pig upon the Marabar Road?" Nureddin looked down. Aziz continued: "Your

grandfather

belongs to another generation, and I respect and love the old gentleman, as you know. I say

nothing against him, only that it is wrong for us, because we are young. I want you to promise

me— Nureddin, are you listening?— not to believe in Evil Spirits, and if I die (for my health grows

very weak) to bring up my three children to disbelieve in them too." Nureddin smiled, and a

suitable answer rose to his pretty lips, but before he could make it the car arrived, and his

grandfather took him away.

The game of Patience up in the civil lines went on longer than this. Mrs. Moore continued to

murmur "Red ten on a black knave," Miss Quested to assist her, and to intersperse among the

intricacies of the play details about the hyena, the engagement, the Maharani of Mudkul, the

Bhattacharyas, and the day generally, whose rough desiccated surface acquired as it receded a

definite outline, as India itself might, could it be viewed from the moon. Presently the players

went to bed, but not before other people had woken up elsewhere, people whose emotions

they could not share, and whose existence they ignored. Never tranquil, never perfectly dark, the night wore itself away, distinguished from other nights by two or three blasts of wind, which seemed to fall perpendicularly out of the sky and to bounce back into it, hard and compact, leaving no freshness behind them: the hot weather was approaching. **CHAPTER IX** Aziz fell ill as he foretold—slightly ill. Three days later he lay abed in his bungalow, pretending to be very ill. It was a touch of fever, which he would have neglected if there was anything important at the hospital. Now and then he groaned and thought he should die, but did not think so for long, and a very little diverted him. It was Sunday, always an equivocal day in the East, and an excuse for slacking. He could hear church bells as he drowsed, both from the civil

station and from the missionaries out beyond the slaughter house—different bells and rung

with

different intent, for one set was calling firmly to Anglo-India, and the other feebly to mankind .

He did not object to the first set; the other he ignored, knowing their inefficiency. Old Mr.

Graysford

and young Mr. Sorley made converts during a famine, because they distributed food; but

when times improved they were naturally left alone again, and though surprised and aggrieved

each time this happened, they never learnt wisdom. "No Englishman understands us except ${\sf Mr}$.

Fielding," he thought; "but how shall I see him again? If he entered this room the disgrace of it

would kill me." He called to Hassan to clear up, but Hassan, who was testing his wages by ringing

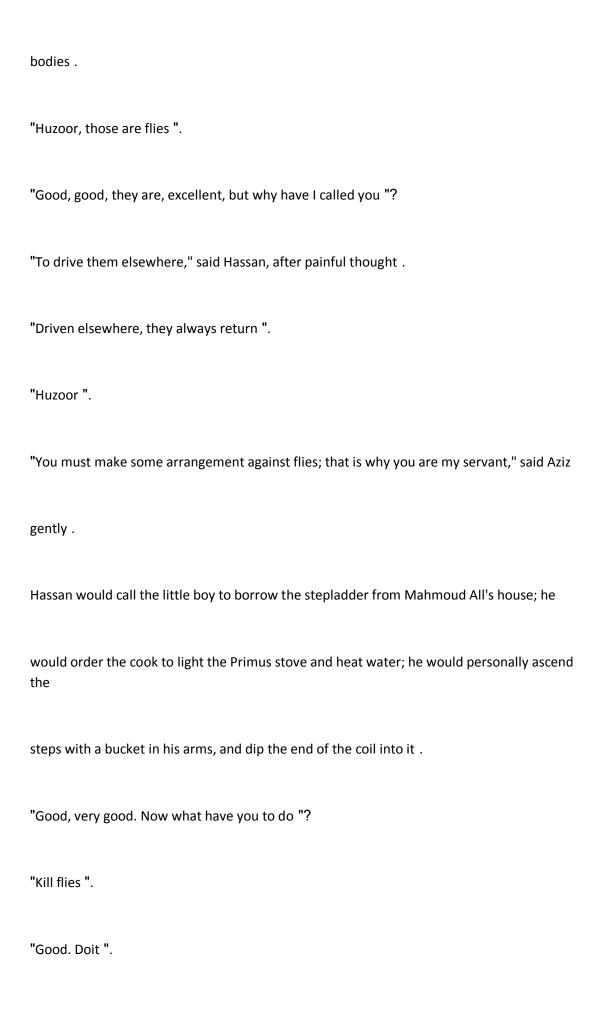
them on the step of the verandah, found it possible not to hear him; heard and didn't hear,

just as Aziz had called and hadn't called. "That's India all over . . . how like us . . . there we are

"...He dozed again, and his thoughts wandered over the varied surface of life .

Gradually they steadied upon a certain spot—the Bottomless Pit according to missionaries,

but he had never regarded it as more than a dimple. Yes, he did want to spend an evening with
some girls, singing and all that, the vague jollity that would culminate in voluptuousness. Yes ,
that was what he did want. How could it be managed? If Major Callendar had been an Indian ,
he would have remembered what young men are, and granted two or three days' leave to Calcutta
without asking questions. But the Major assumed either that his subordinates were made
of ice, or that they repaired to the Chandrapore bazaars— disgusting ideas both. It was only $\mbox{\rm Mr}$.
Fielding who
"Hassan!
The servant came running .
"Look at those flies, brother;" and he pointed to the horrible mass that hung from the ceiling .
The nucleus was a wire which had been inserted as a homage to electricity. Electricity had
paid no attention, and a colony of eye-flies had come instead and blackened the coils with their



Hassan withdrew, the plan almost lodged in his head, and began to look for the little boy .
Not finding him, his steps grew slower, and he stole back to his post on the verandah, but did
not go on testing his rupees, in case his master heard them clink. On twittered the Sunday
bells; the East had returned to the East via the suburbs of England, and had become ridiculous
during the detour .
Aziz continued to think about beautiful women .
His mind here was hard and direct, though not brutal. He had learnt all he needed concerning
his own constitution many years ago, thanks to the social order into which he had been
born, and when he came to study medicine he was repelled by the pedantry and fuss with
which Europe tabulates the facts of sex. Science seemed to discuss everything from the wrong
end. It didn't interpret his experiences when he found them in a German manual, because by

being there they ceased to be his experiences. What he had been told by his father or mother or had picked up from servants—it was information of that sort that he found useful, and handed on as occasion offered to others. But he must not bring any disgrace on his children by some silly escapade. Imagine if it got about that he was not respectable! His professional position too must be considered, whatever Major Callendar thought. Aziz upheld the proprieties, though he did not invest them with any moral halo, and it was here that he chiefly differed from an Englishman. His conventions were social. There is no harm in deceiving society as long as she does not find you out, because it is only when she finds you out that you have harmed her; she is not like a friend or God, who are injured by the mere existence of unfaithfulness. Quite clear about this, he meditated what type of lie he should tell to get away to Calcutta, and had thought of a man there who could be trusted to send him a wire and a letter that he could show to Major Callendar, when the noise of



in authoritative tones, quenching them . "Humbug, most certainly," echoed the others, ashamed of themselves. The wicked schoolboy, having failed to start a scandal, lost confidence and stood up with his back to the wall . "Is Professor Godbole ill?" enquired Aziz, penetrated by the news. "I am sincerely sorry ". Intelligent and compassionate, his face peeped out of the bright crimson folds of the quilt . "How do you do, Mr. Syed Mohammed, Mr. Haq? How very kind of you to enquire after my health! How do you do, Hamidullah? But you bring me bad news. What is wrong with him, the excellent fellow "? "Why don't you answer, Rafi? You're the great authority," said his uncle. "Yes, Rafi's the great man," said Hamidullah, rubbing it in. "Rafi is the Sherlock Holmes of Chandrapore. Speak up, Rafi ". Less than the dust, the schoolboy murmured the word "Diarrhcra," but took courage as

soon as it had been uttered, for it improved his position. Flames of suspicion shot up again in



Allahabad

and at Ujjain, and described them with biting scorn. At Allahabad there was flowing water,

which carried impurities away, but at Ujjain the little river Sipra was banked up, and thousands

of bathers deposited their germs in the pool. He spoke with disgust of the hot sun, the cowdung

and marigold flowers, and the encampment of saddhus, some of whom strode stark naked

through the streets. Asked what was the name of the chief idol at Ujjain, he replied that he

did not know, he had disdained to enquire, he really could not waste his time over such trivialities .

His outburst took some time, and in his excitement he fell into Punjabi (he came from that

side) and was unintelligible.

Aziz liked to hear his religion praised. It soothed the surface of his mind, and allowed beautiful

images to form beneath. When the engineer's noisy tirade was finished, he said, "That is

exactly my own view." He held up his hand, palm outward, his eyes began to glow, his heart to

fill with tenderness. Issuing still farther from his quilt, he recited a poem by Ghalib. It had no

connection with anything that had gone before, but it came from his heart and spoke to theirs .

They were overwhelmed by its pathos; pathos, they agreed, is the highest quality in art; a

poem should touch the hearer with a sense of his own weakness, and should institute some

comparison between mankind and flowers. The squalid bedroom grew quiet; the silly intrigues ,

the gossip, the shallow discontent were stilled, while words accepted as immortal filled the

indifferent

air. Not as a call to battle, but as a calm assurance came the feeling that India was

one; Moslem; always had been; an assurance that lasted until they looked out of the door.

Whatever Ghalib had felt, he had anyhow lived in India, and this consolidated it for them: he

had gone with his own tulips and roses, but tulips and roses do not go. And the sister kingdoms

of the north— Arabia, Persia, Ferghana, Turkestan— stretched out their hands as he sang, sadly ,

because all beauty is sad, and greeted ridiculous Chandrapore, where every street and house

was divided against itself, and told her that she was a continent and a unity.

Of the company, only Hamidullah had any comprehension of poetry. The minds of the others

were inferior and rough. Yet they listened with pleasure, because literature had not been divorced

from their civilization. The police inspector, for instance, did not feel that Aziz had degraded

himself by reciting, nor break into the cheery guffaw with which an Englishman averts

the infection of beauty. He just sat with his mind empty, and when his thoughts, which were

mainly ignoble, flowed back into it they had a pleasant freshness. The poem had done no

"good" to anyone, but it was a passing reminder, a breath from the divine lips of beauty, a

nightingale between two worlds of dust. Less explicit than the call to Krishna, it voiced our

Ioneliness

nevertheless, our isolation, our need for the Friend who never comes yet is not entirely

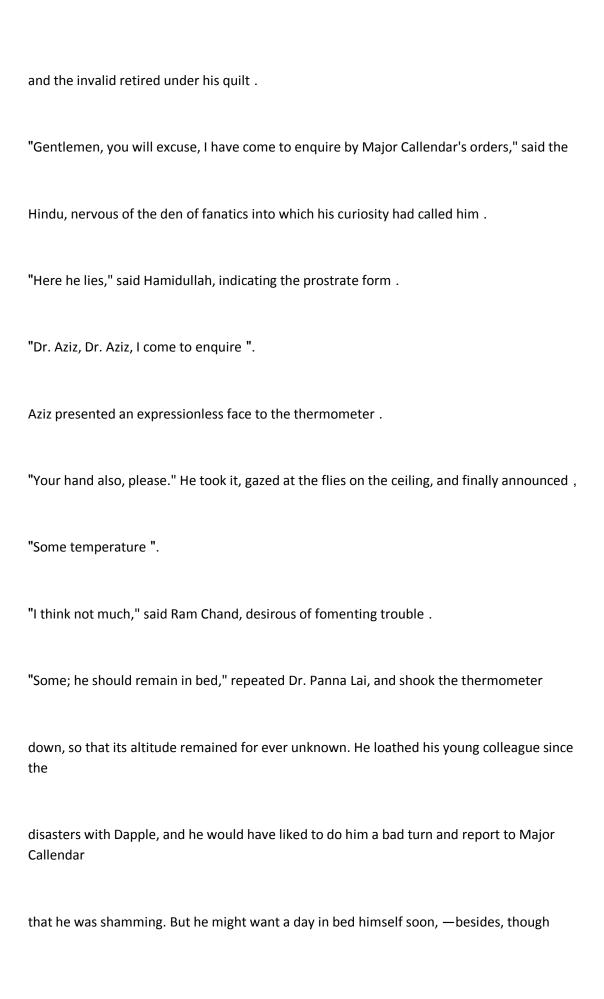
disproved. Aziz it left thinking about women again, but in a different way: less definite, more

intense. Sometimes poetry had this effect on him, sometimes it only increased his local desires ,

and he never knew beforehand which effect would ensue: he could discover no rule for this or for anything else in life. Hamidullah had called in on his way to a worrying committee of notables, nationalist in tendency, where Hindus, Moslems, two Sikhs, two Parsis, a Jam, and a Native Christian tried to like one another more than came natural to them. As long as someone abused the English, all went well, but nothing constructive had been achieved, and if the English were to leave India, the committee would vanish also. He was glad that Aziz, whom he loved and whose family was connected with his own, took no interest in politics, which ruin the character and career, yet nothing can be achieved without them. He thought of Cambridge— sadly, as of another poem that had ended. How happy he had been there, twenty years ago! Politics had not mattered in Mr. and Mrs. Bannister's rectory. There, games, work, and pleasant society had interwoven, and

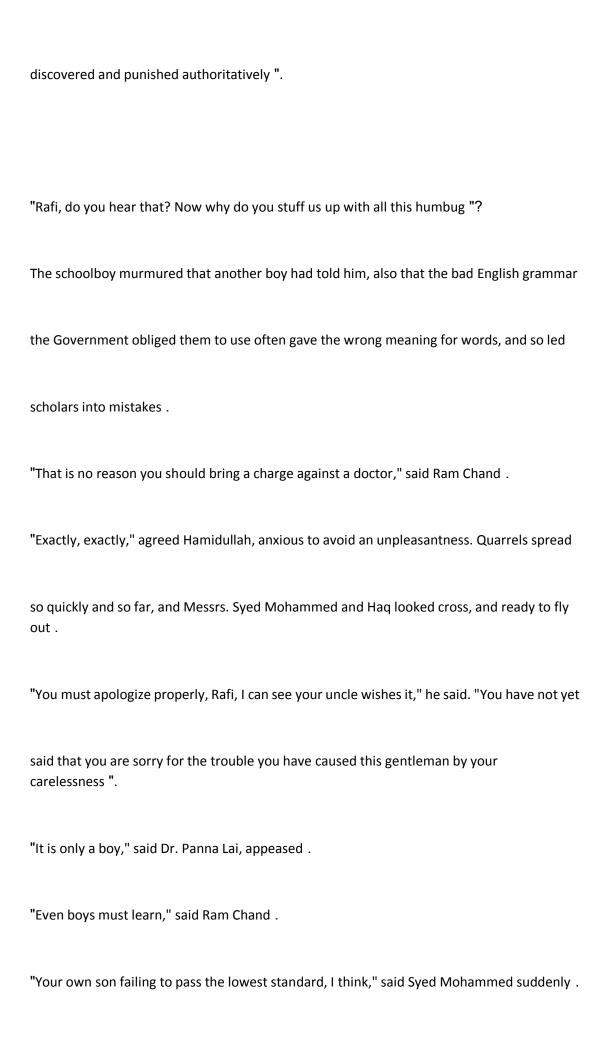
appeared to be sufficient substructure for a national life. Here all was wire-pulling and fear .

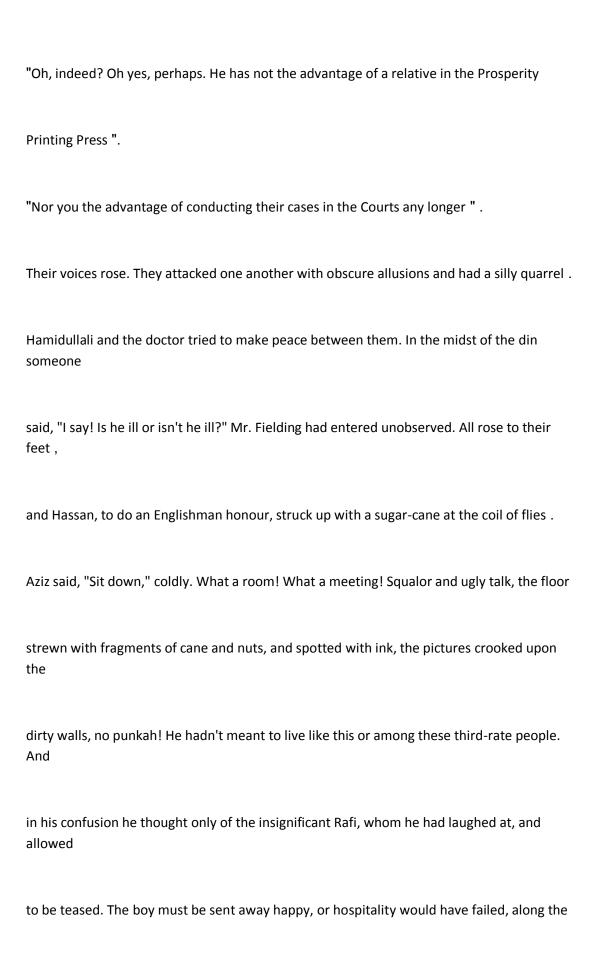


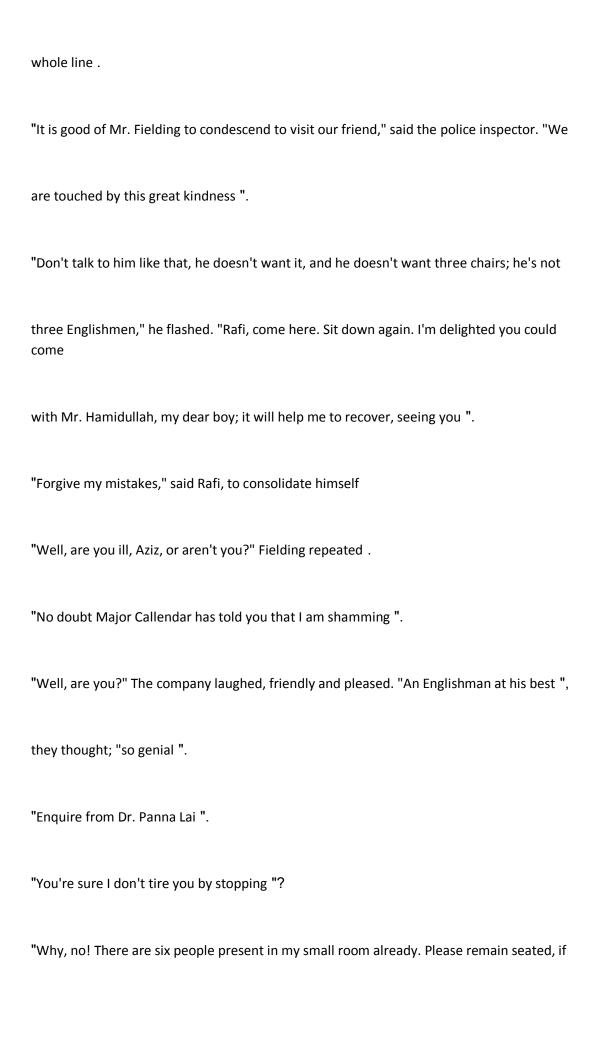


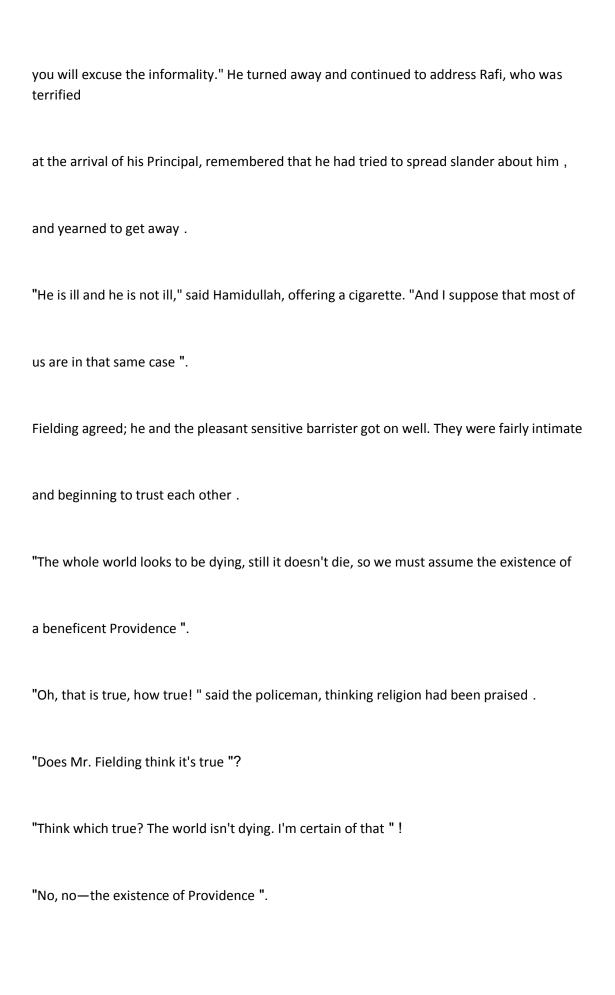
Major Callendar always believed the worst of natives, he never believed them when they carried
tales about one another. Sympathy seemed the safer course. "How is stomach?" he enquired ,
"how head?" And catching sight of the empty cup, he recommended a milk diet .
"This is a great relief to us, it is very good of you to call. Doctor Sahib," said Hamidullah ,
buttering him up a bit .
"It is only my duty ".
"We know how busy you are ".
"Yes, that is true ".
"And how much illness there is in the city ".
The doctor suspected a trap in this remark; if he admitted that there was or was not illness,
either statement might be used against him. "There is always illness," he replied, "and I am always
busy—it is a doctor's nature ".
"He has not a minute, he is due double sharp at Government College now," said Ram

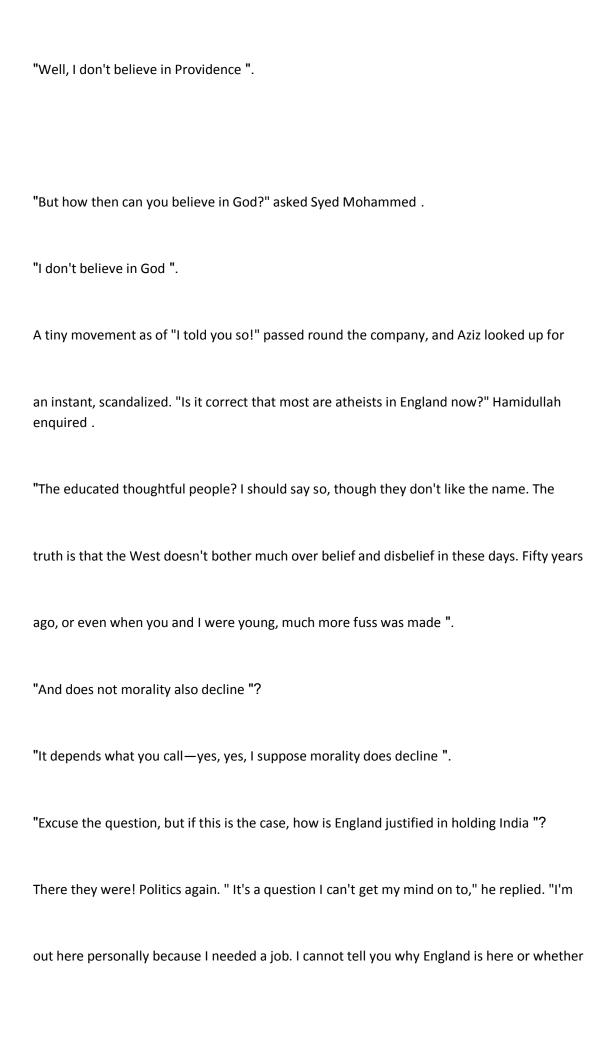






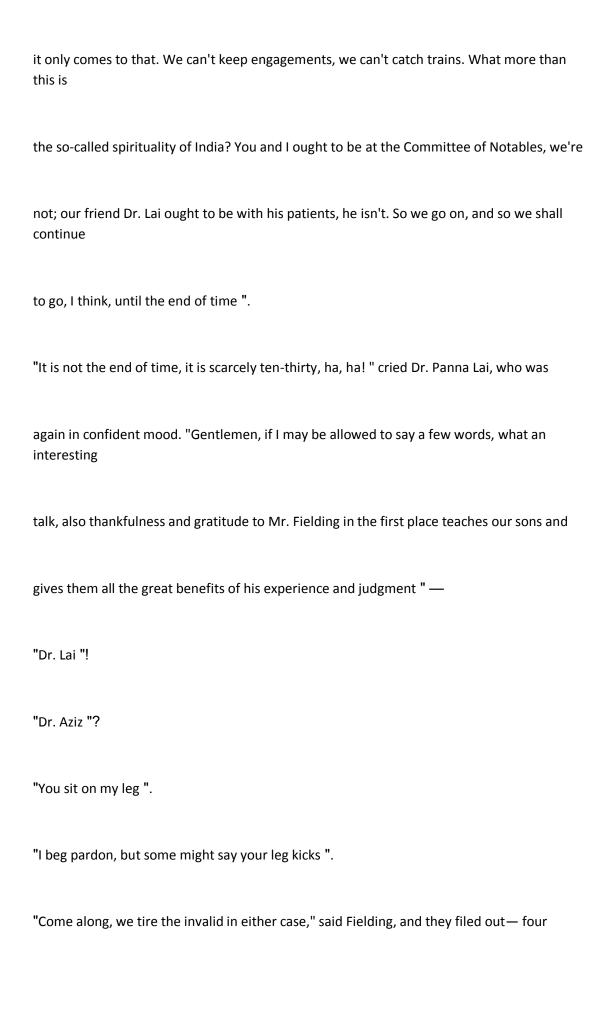






she ought to be here. It's beyond me ". "Well-qualified Indians also need jobs in the educational ". "I guess they do; I got in first," said Fielding, smiling. "Then excuse me again—is it fair an Englishman should occupy one when Indians are available? Of course I mean nothing personally. Personally we are delighted you should be here, and we benefit greatly by this frank talk ". There is only one answer to a conversation of this type: "England holds India for her good". Yet Fielding was disinclined to give it. The zeal for honesty had eaten him up. He said, "I'm delighted to be here too— that's my answer, there's my only excuse. I can't tell you anything about fairness. It mayn't have been fair I should have been bom. I take up some other fellow's air, don't I, whenever I breathe? Still, I'm glad it's happened, and I'm glad I'm out here. However big a badmash one is— if one's happy in consequence, that is some justification ".

The Indians were bewildered. The line of thought was not alien to them, but the words were too definite and bleak. Unless a sentence paid a few compliments to Justice and Morality in passing, its grammar wounded their ears and paralysed their minds. What they said and what they felt were (except in the case of affection) seldom the same. They had numerous mental conventions and when these were flouted they found it very difficult to function. Hamidullah bore up best. "And those Englishmen who are not delighted to be in India— have they no excuse "? he asked. "None. Chuck 'em out ". "It may be difficult to separate them from the rest," he laughed . "Worse than difficult, wrong," said Mr. Ram Chaiid. "No Indian gentleman approves chucking out as a proper thing. Here we differ from those other nations. We are so spiritual ". "Oh, that is true, how true!" said the police inspector. "Is it true, Mr. Haq? I don't consider us spiritual. We can't co-ordinate, we can't co-ordinate,



Mohammedans ,
two Hindus and the Englishman. They stood on the verandah while their conveyances
were summoned out of various patches of shade .
"Aziz has a high opinion of you, he only did not speak because of his illness ".
"I quite understand," said Fielding, who was rather disappointed with his call. The Club
comment, "making himself cheap as usual," passed through his mind. He couldn't even get his
horse brought up. He had liked Aziz so much at their first meeting, and had hoped for
developments .
CHAPTER X
The heat had leapt forward in the last hour, the street was deserted as if a catastrophe had
cleaned off humanity during the inconclusive talk. Opposite Aziz' bungalow stood a large
unfinished
house belonging to two brothers, astrologers, and a squirrel hung head-downwards on it ,

pressing its belly against burning scaffolding and twitching a mangy tail. It seemed the only occupant of the house, and the squeals it gave were in tune with the infinite, no doubt, but not attractive except to other squirrels. More noises came from a dusty tree, where brown birds creaked and fioundered about looking for insects; another bird, the invisible coppersmith, had started his "ponk ponk." It matters so little to the majority of living beings what the minority, that calls itself human, desires or decides. Most of the inhabitants of India do not mind how India is governed. Nor are the lower animals of England concerned about England, but in the tropics the indifference is more prominent, the inarticulate world is closer at hand and readier to resume control as soon as men are. tired. When the seven gentlemen who had held such various opinions inside the bungalow came out of it, they were aware of a common burden, a vague threat which they called "the bad weather coming." They felt that they could not do their

work, or would not be paid enough for doing it. The space between them and their carriages, instead of being empty, was clogged with a medium that pressed against their fiesh, the carriage cushions scalded their trousers, their eyes pricked, domes of hot water accumulated under their head-gear and poured down their cheeks. Salaaming feebly, they dispersed for the interior of other bungalows, to recover their self-esteem and the qualities that distinguished them from each other. All over the city and over much of India the same retreat on the part of humanity was beginning, into cellars, up hills, under trees. April, herald of horrors, is at hand. The sun was returning to his kingdom with power but without beauty—that was the sinister feature. If only there had been beauty! His cruelty would have been tolerable then. Through excess of light, he failed to triumph, he also; in his yellowy- white overflow not only matter, but brightness itself lay drowned. He was not the unattainable friend, either of men or birds or other suns, he was not

the eternal promise, the never-withdrawn suggestion that haunts our consciousness; he was merely a creature, like the rest, and so debarred from glory .

CHAPTER XI

Although the Indians had driven off, and Fielding could see his horse standing in a small shed in the comer of the compound, no one troubled to bring it to him. He started to get it himself, but was stopped by a call from the house. Aziz was sitting up in bed, looking dishevelled

East. Look at the flies. Look at the chunam coming off the walls. Isn't it jolly? Now I suppose you want to be off, having seen an Oriental interior ".

and sad. "Here's your home," he said sardonically. "Here's the celebrated hospitality of the

"Anyhow, you want to rest ".

"I can rest the whole day, thanks to worthy Dr. Lai. Major Callendar's spy, I suppose you

know, but this time it didn't work. I am allowed to have a slight temperature ".

"Callendar doesn't trust anyone, English or Indian: that's his character, and I wish you



You would have seen her, so why should you not see her photograph "? "You would have allowed me to see her "? "Why not? I believe in the purdah, but I should have told her you were my brother, and she would have seen you. Hamidullah saw her, and several others ". "Did she think they were your brothers "? "Of course not, but the word exists and is convenient. All men are my brothers, and as soon as one behaves as such he may see my wife ". "And when the whole world behaves as such, there will be no more purdah "? "It is because you can say and feel such a remark as that, that I show you the photograph", said Aziz gravely. "It is beyond the power of most men. It is because you behave well while I behave badly that I show it you. I never expected you to come back just now when I called you. I thought, 'He has certainly done with me; I have insulted him.' Mr. Fielding, no one can ever realize how much kindness we Indians need, we do not even realize it ourselves. But we know when it has been given. We do not forget, though we may seem to. Kindness, more kindness ,

and even after that more kindness. I assure you it is the only hope." His voice seemed to

arise from a dream. Altering it, yet still deep below his normal surface, he said, "We can't build

up India except on what we feel. What is the use of all these reforms, and Conciliation Committees

for Mohurram, and shall we cut the tazia short or shall we carry it another route, and

Councils of Notables and official parties where the English sneer at our skins "?

"It's beginning at the wrong end, isn't it? I know, but institutions and the governments

don't." He looked again at the photograph. The lady faced the world at her husband's wish and

her own, but how bewildering she found it, the echoing contradictory world!

"Put her away, she is of no importance, she is dead," said Aziz gently. "I showed her to you

because I have nothing else to show. You may look round the whole of my bungalow now, and

empty everything. I have no other secrets, my three children live away with their grandmamma ,

and that is all ". Fielding sat down by the bed, flattered at the trust reposed in him, yet rather sad. He felt old. He wished that he too could be carried away on waves of emotion. The next time they met, Aziz might be cautious and standoffish. He realized this, and it made him sad that he should realize it. Kindness, kindness, and more kindness—yes, that he might supply, but was that really all that the queer nation needed? Did it not also demand an occasional intoxication of the blood? What had he done to deserve this outburst of confidence, and what hostage could he give in exchange? He looked back at his own life. What a poor crop of secrets it had produced! There were things in it that he had shown to no one, but they were so uninteresting, it wasn't worth while lifting a purdah on their account. He'd been in love, engaged to be married, lady broke it off, memories of her and thoughts about her had kept him from other women for a time; then indulgence, followed by repentance and equilibrium. Meagre really except the

equilibrium,





Then your name will entirely die out ". It must ". Well." He shook his head. "This indifference is what the Oriental will never understand ". I don't care for children ". Caring has nothing to do with it," he said impatiently . I don't feel their absence, I don't want them weeping around my death-bed and being polite about me afterwards, which I believe is the general notion. I'd far rather leave a thought behind me than a child. Other people can have children. No obligation, with England getting so chock-a-block and overrunning India for jobs ". "Why don't you marry Miss Quested "? "Good God! why, the girl's a prig ". "Prig, prig? Kindly explain. Isn't that a bad word "? "Oh, I don't know her, but she struck me as one of the more pathetic products of Western education. She depresses me ". "But prig, Mr. Fielding? How's that "? "She goes on and on as if she's at a lecture—trying ever so hard to understand India and life, and occasionally taking a note ". "I thought her so nice and sincere ".

"So she probably is," said Fielding, ashamed of his roughness: any suggestion that he should marry always does produce overstatements on the part of the bachelor, and a mental

breeze. "But I can't marry her if I wanted to, for she has just become engaged to the City Magistrate".

"Has she indeed? I am so glad!" he exclaimed with relief, for this exempted him from the Marabar expedition: he would scarcely be expected to entertain regular Anglo-Indians.

"It's the old mother's doing. She was afraid her dear boy would choose for himself, so she brought out the girl on purpose, and flung them together until it happened."

"Mrs. Moore did not mention that to me among her plans ".

"I may have got it wrong—I'm out of club gossip. But anyhow they're engaged to be married ".

"Yes, you're out of it, my poor chap," he smiled. "No Miss Quested for Mr. Fielding. However,

she was not beautiful. She has practically no breasts, if you come to think of it ".

He smiled too, but found a touch of bad taste in the reference to a lady's breasts .

"For the City Magistrate they shall be sufficient perhaps, and he for her. For you I shall arrange

a lady with breasts like mangoes "....

"No, you won't ".

"I will not really, and besides your position makes it dangerous for you." His mind had
slipped from matrimony to Calcutta. His face grew grave. Fancy if he had persuaded the Principal
to accompany him there, and then got him into trouble! And abruptly he took up a new attitude
towards his friend, the attitude of the protector who knows the dangers of India and is
admonitory. "You can't be too careful in every way, Mr. Fielding; whatever you say or do in this
damned country there is always some envious fellow on the lookout. Youmay be surprised to
know that there were at least three spies sitting here when you came to enquire. I was really a
good deal upset that you talked in that fashion about God. They will certainly report it ".
"To whom "?
"That's all very well, but you spoke against morality also, and you said you had come to
take other people's jobs. All that was very unwise. This is an awful place for scandal. Why, actually
one of your own pupils was listening ".



why Mr. Fielding and a few others were so fearless! They had nothing to lose. But he himself
was rooted in society and Islam. He belonged to a tradition which bound him, and he had
brought children into the world, the society of the future. Though he lived so vaguely in this
flimsy bungalow, nevertheless he was placed, placed .
"I can't be sacked from my job, because my job's Education. I believe in teaching people to
be individuals, and to understand other individuals. It's the only thing I do believe in. At
Government
College, I mix it up with trigonometry, and so on. When I'm a saddhu, I shall mix it up
with something else ".
He concluded his manifesto, and both were silent. The eye-flies became worse than ever
and danced close up to their pupils, or crawled into their ears. Fielding hit about wildly. The
exercise
made him hot, and he got up to go .

"You might tell your servant to bring my horse. He doesn't seem to appreciate my Urdu ".



But they were friends, brothers. That part was settled, their compact had been subscribed by the photograph, they trusted one another, affection had triumphed for once in a way. He dropped off to sleep amid the happier memories of the last two hours—poetry of Ghalib, female

grace, good old Hamidullah, good Fielding, his honoured wife and dear boys. He passed into a region where these joys had no enemies but bloomed harmoniously in an eternal garden, or ran down watershoots of ribbed marble, or rose into domes whereunder were inscribed, black

PART II: CAVES

against white, the ninety-nine attributes of God .

CHAPTER XII

The Ganges, though flowing from the foot of Vishnu and through Siva's hair, is not an ancient

stream. Geology, looking further than religion, knows of a time when neither the river nor

the Himalayas that nourished it existed, and an ocean flowed over the holy places of Hindustan .

The mountains rose, their debris silted up the ocean, the gods took their seats on them and contrived the river, and the India we call immemorial came into being. But India is really far older. In the days of the prehistoric ocean the southern part of the peninsula already existed,

side the sinking of a continent that joined them to Africa, and on the other the upheaval of the

Himalayas from a sea. They are older than anything in the world. No water has ever covered

them, and the sun who has watched them for countless aeons may still discern in their outlines

forms that were his before our globe was torn from his bosom. If flesh of the sun's flesh is to

be touched anywhere, it is here, among the incredible antiquity of these hills .

Yet even they are altering. As Himalayan India rose, this India, the primal, has been depressed ,

and is slowly re-entering the curve of the earth. It may be that in aeons to come an

ocean will flow here too, and cover the sun-born rocks with slime. Meanwhile the plain of the

Ganges encroaches on them with something of the sea's action. They are sinking beneath the

newer lands. Their main mass is untouched, but at the edge their outposts have been cut off

and stand knee-deep, throat-deep, in the advancing soil. There is something unspeakable in

these outposts. They are like nothing else in the world, and a glimpse of them makes the

breath catch. They rise abruptly, insanely, without the proportion that is kept by the wildest hills

elsewhere, they bear no relation to anything dreamt or seen. To call them "uncanny" suggests

ghosts, and they are older than all spirit. Hinduism has scratched and plastered a few rocks, but

the shrines are unfrequented, as if pilgrims, who generally seek the extraordinary, had here

found too much of it. Some saddhus did once settle in a cave, but they were smoked out, and

even Buddha, who must have passed this way down to the Bo Tree of Gya, shunned a renunciation

more complete than his own, and has left no legend of struggle or victory in the Marabar .

The caves are readily described. A tunnel eight feet long, five feet high, three feet wide,

leads to a circular chamber about twenty feet in diameter. This arrangement occurs again and again throughout the group of hills, and this is all, this is a Marabar Cave. Having seen one such cave, having seen two, having seen three, four, fourteen, twenty -four, the visitor returns to Chandrapore uncertain whether he has had an interesting experience or a dull one or any experience at all. He fmds it difficult to discuss the caves, or to keep them apart in his mind, for the pattern never varies, and no carving, not even a bees'-nest or a bat distinguishes one from another. Nothing, nothing attaches to them, and their reputation—for they have one— does not depend upon human speech. It is as if the surrounding plain or the passing birds have taken upon themselves to exclaim "extraordinary," and the word has taken root in the air, and been inhaled by mankind. They are dark caves. Even when they open towards the sun, very little light penetrates

down the entrance tunnel into the circular chamber. There is little to see, and no eye to see it ,

until the visitor arrives for his five minutes, and strikes a match. Immediately another flame rises in the depths of the rock and moves towards the surface like an imprisoned spirit: the walls of the circular chamber have been most marvellously polished. The two flames approach

and strive to unite, but cannot, because one of them breathes air, the other stone. A mirror inlaid

with lovely colours divides the lovers, delicate stars of pink and grey interpose, exquisite nebulae, shadings fainter than the tail of a comet or the midday moon, all the evanescent life of

the granite, only here visible. Fists and fingers thrust above the advancing soil—here at last is

their skin, finer than any covering acquired by the animals, smoother than windless water, more

voluptuous than love. The radiance increases, the flames touch one another, kiss, expire. The

cave is dark again, like all the caves .

Only the wall of the circular chamber has been polished thus. The sides of the tunnel are left rough, they impinge as an afterthought upon the internal perfection. An entrance was necessary,

so mankind made one. But elsewhere, deeper in the granite, are there certain chambers that have no entrances? Chambers never unsealed since the arrival of the gods. Local report declares that these exceed in number those that can be visited, as the dead exceed the living -

four hundred of them, four thousand or million. Nothing is inside them, they were sealed up before the creation of pestilence or treasure; if mankind grew curious and excavated, nothing ,

nothing would be added to the sum of good or evil. One of them is rumoured within the boulder

that swings on the summit of the highest of the hills; a bubble-shaped cave that has neither

ceiling nor floor, and mirrors its own darkness in every direction inflnitely. If the boulder falls and smashes, the cave will smash too— empty as an Easter egg. The boulder because of its hollowness

sways in the wind, and even moves when a crow perches upon it: hence its name and the name of its stupendous pedestal: the Kawa Dol .

CHAPTER XIII

These hills look romantic in certain lights and at suitable distances, and seen of an evening from the upper verandah of the club they caused Miss Quested to say conversationally to Miss

Derek that she should like to have gone, that Dr. Aziz at Mr. Fielding's had said he would arrange

something, and that Indians seem rather forgetful. She was overheard by the servant who offered them vermouths. This servant understood English. And he was not exactly a spy ,

but he kept his ears open, and Mahmoud Ali did not exactly bribe him, but did encourage him to

come and squat with his own servants, and would happen to stroll their way when he was there. As the story travelled, it accreted emotion and Aziz learnt with horror that the ladies were

deeply offended with him, and had expected an invitation daily. He thought his facile remark had been forgotten. Endowed with two memories, a temporary and a permanent, he had hitherto

relegated the caves to the former. Now he transferred them once for all, and pushed the matter through. They were to be a stupendous replica of the tea party. He began by securing Fielding and old Godbole, and then commissioned Fielding to approach Mrs.. Moore and Miss

Quested when they were alone— by this device Ronny, their official protector, could be circum

vented. Fielding didn't like the job much; he was busy, caves bored him, he foresaw friction and

expense, but he would not refuse the first favour his friend had asked from him, and did as required .

The ladies accepted. It was a little inconvenient in the present press of their engagements, still, they hoped to manage it after consulting Mr. Heaslop. Consulted, Ronny raised no objection, provided Fielding undertook full responsibility for their comfort. He was not enthusiastic

about the picnic, but, then, no more were the ladies— no one was enthusiastic, yet it took place .

Aziz was terribly worried. It was not a long expedition— a train left Chandrapore just before dawn, another would bring them back for tiffin— but he was only a little official still, and feared

to acquit himself dishonourably. He had to ask Major Callendar for half a day's leave, and be refused because of his recent malingering; despair; renewed approach of Major Callendar through Fielding, and contemptuous snarling permission. He had to borrow cutlery from Mahmoud

Ali without inviting him. Then there was the question of alcohol; Mr. Fielding, and perhaps

the ladies, were drinkers, so must he provide whisky-sodas and ports? There was the problem

of transport from the wayside station of Marabar to the caves. There was the problem of Professor

Godbole and his food, and of Professor Godbole and other people's food—two problems,

not one problem. The Professor was not a very strict Hindu—he would take tea, fruit, sodawater and sweets, whoever cooked them, and vegetables and rice if cooked by a Brahman; but not meat, not cakes lest they contained eggs, and he would not allow anyone else to eat beef: a slice of beef upon a distant plate would wreck his happiness. Other people might eat mutton, they might eat ham. But over ham Aziz' own religion raised its voice: he did not fancy other people eating ham. Trouble after trouble encountered him, because he had challenged the spirit of the Indian earth, which tries to keep men in compartments. At last the moment arrived . His friends thought him most unwise to mix himself up with English ladies, and warned him to take every precaution against unpunctuality. Consequently he spent the previous night at the station. The servants were huddled on the platform, enjoined not to stray. He himself walked up and down with old Mohammed Latif, who was to act as major-domo. He felt insecure and

also

unreal. A car drove up, and he hoped Fielding would get out of it, to lend him solidity. But it contained Mrs. Moore, Miss Quested, and their Goanese servant. He rushed to meet them,

happy. "But you've come, after all. Oh, how very very kind of you!" he cried. "This is the happiest moment in all my life ".

The ladies were civil. It was not the happiest moment in their lives, still, they looked forward to enjoying themselves as soon as the bother of the early start was over. They had not seen him since the expedition was arranged, and they thanked him adequately .

branch line; it is its peculiarity. You come to the carriage and rest till Mr. Fielding joins us. Did

"You don't require tickets— please stop your servant. There are no tickets on the Marabar

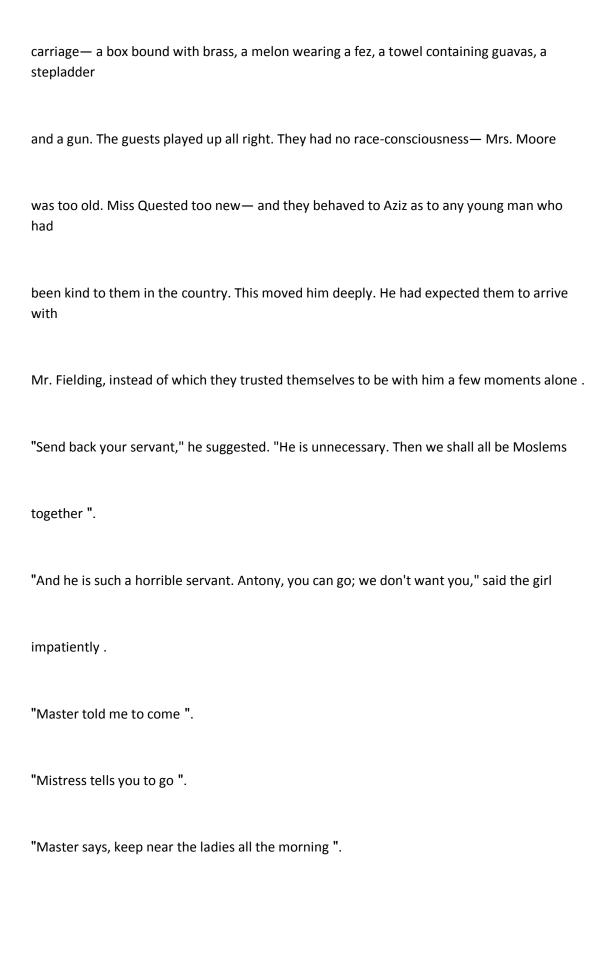
you know you are to travel purdah? Will you like that "?

suddenly

from

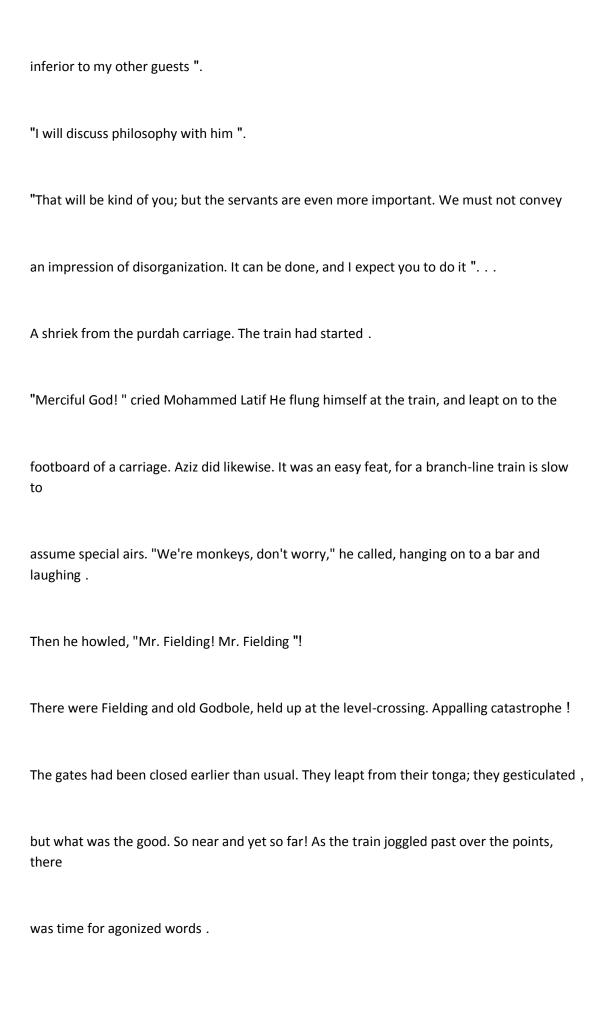
They replied that they should like it. The train had come in, and a crowd of dependents were swarming over the seats of the carriage like monkeys. Aziz had borrowed servants

his friends, as well as bringing his own three, and quarrels over precedence were resulting. The
ladies' servant stood apart, with a sneering expression on his face. They had hired him while
they were still globe-trotters, at Bombay. In a hotel or among smart people he was excellent ,
but as soon as they consorted with anyone whom he thought second-rate he left them to their
disgrace .
The night was still dark, but had acquired the temporary look that indicates its end. Perched
on the roof of a shed, the station-master's hens began to dream of kites instead of owls. Lamps
were put out, in order to save the trouble of putting them out later; the smell of tobacco and
the sound of spitting arose from third-class passengers in dark corners; heads were unshrouded ,
teeth cleaned on the twigs of a tree. So convinced was a junior official that another
sun would rise, that he rang a bell with enthusiasm. This upset the servants. They shrieked that
the train was starting, and ran to both ends of it to intercede. Much had still to enter the purdah

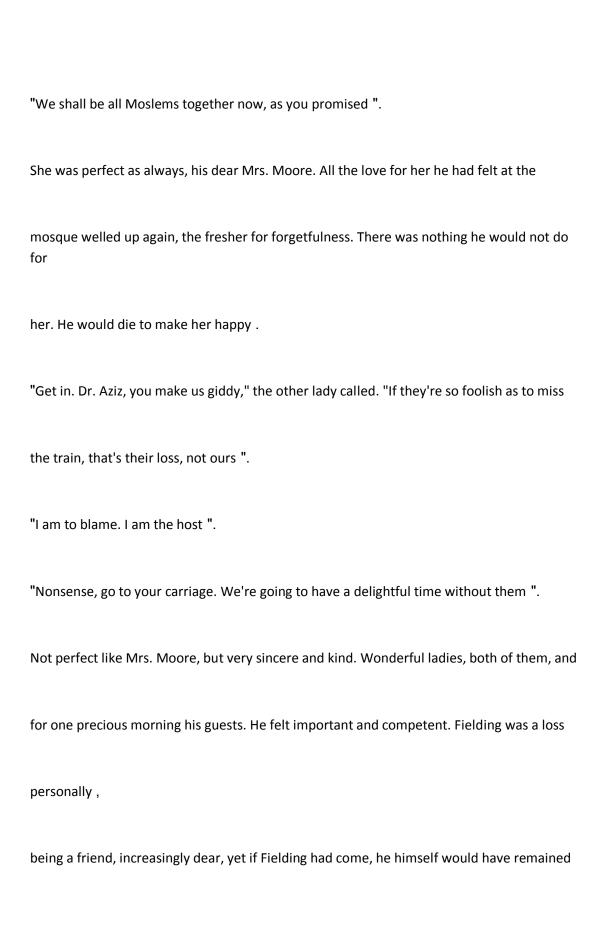


"Well, your ladies won't have you." She turned to the host. "Do get rid of him, Dr. Aziz "! "Mohammed Latif!" he called. The poor relative exchanged fezzes with the melon, and peeped out of the window of the railway carriage, whose confusion he was superintending. "Here is my cousin, Mr. Mohammed Latif Oh no, don't shake hands. He is an Indian of the old-fashioned sort, he prefers to salaam. There, I told you so. Mohammed Latif, how beautifully you salaam. See, he hasn't understood; he knows no English ". "You spick lie," said the old man gently. "I spick a lie! Oh, jolly good. Isn't he a funny old man? We will have great jokes with him later. He does all sorts of little things. He is not nearly as stupid as you think, and awfully poor. It's lucky ours is a large family." He flung an arm round the grubby neck. "But you get inside, make yourselves at home; yes, you lie down." The celebrated Oriental confusion appeared at last to be at an end. "Excuse me, now I must meet our other two guests"!

He was getting nervous again, for it was ten minutes to the time. Still, Fielding was an Englishman, and they never do miss trains, and Godbole was a Hindu and did not count, and, soothed by this logic, he grew calmer as the hour of departure approached. Mohammed Latif had bribed Antony not to come. They walked up and down the platform, talking usefully. They agreed that they had overdone the servants, and must leave two or three behind at Marabar station. And Aziz explained that he might be playing one or two practical jokes at the caves not out of unkindness, but to make the guests laugh. The old man assented with slight sideway motions of the head: he was always willing to be ridiculed, and he bade Aziz not spare him . Elated by his importance, he began an indecent anecdote. "Tell me another time, brother, when I have more leisure, for now, as I have already explained, we have to give pleasure to non-Moslems. Three will be Europeans, one a Hindu, which must not be forgotten. Every attention must be paid to Professor Godbole, lest he feel that he is







in leading-strings. "Indians are incapable of responsibility," said the officials, and Hamidullah sometimes said so too. He would show those pessimists that they were wrong. Smiling proudly, he glanced outward at the country, which was still invisible except as a dark movement in the darkness; then upwards at the sky, where the stars of the sprawling Scorpion had begun to pale. Then he dived through a window into a Secondclass carriage. "Mohammed Latif, by the way, what is in these caves, brother? Why are we all going to see them "? Such a question was beyond the poor relative's scope. He could only reply that God and the local villagers knew, and that the latter would gladly act as guides . **CHAPTER XIV** Most of life is so dull that there is nothing to be said about it, and the books and talk that

would describe it as interesting are obliged to exaggerate, in the hope of justifying their own existence. Inside its cocoon of work or social obligation, the human spirit slumbers for the most

part, registering the distinction between pleasure and pain, but not nearly as alert as we pretend .

There are periods in the most thrilling day during which nothing happens, and though we continue to exclaim, "I do enjoy myself," or, " I am horrified," we are insincere. " As far as I feel

anything, it is enjoyment, horror "--it's no more than that really, and a perfectly adjusted organism

would be silent.

It so happened that Mrs. Moore and Miss Quested had felt nothing acutely for a fortnight .

Ever since Professor Godbole had sung his queer little song, they had lived more or less inside

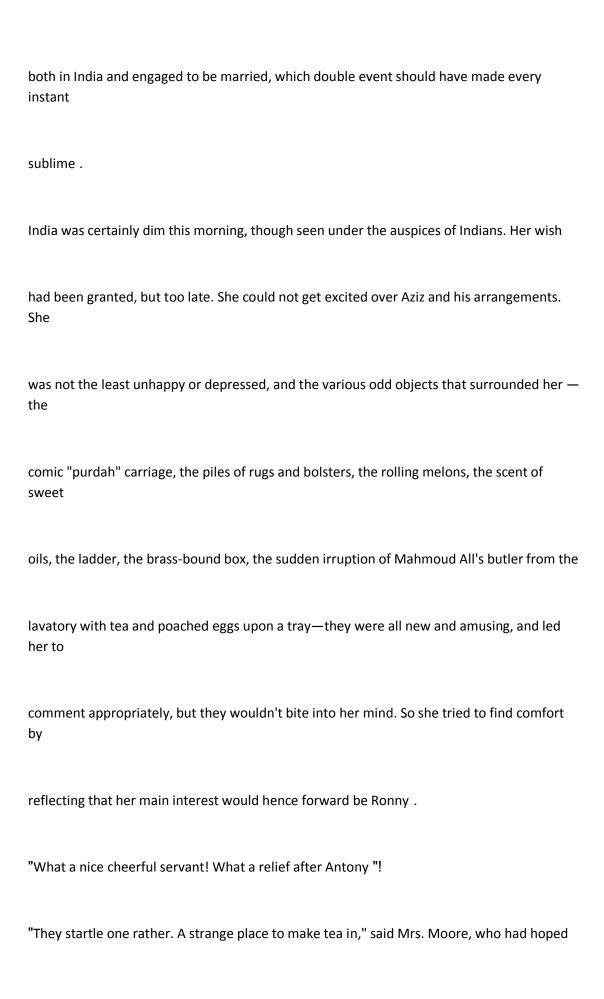
cocoons, and the difference between them was that the elder lady accepted her own apathy ,

while the younger resented hers. It was Adela's faith that the whole stream of events is important

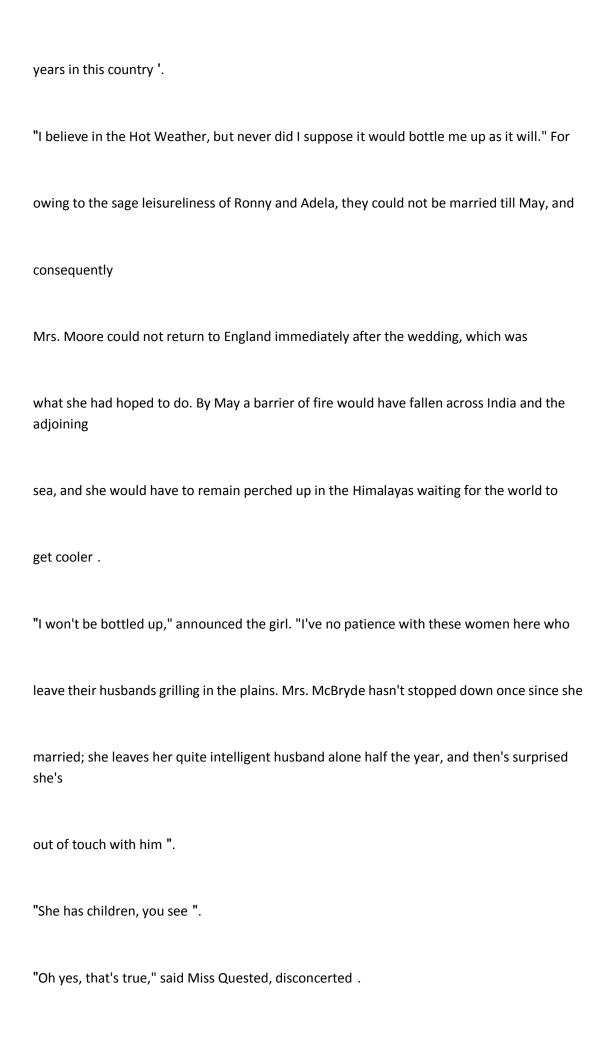
and interesting, and if she grew bored she blamed herself severely and compelled her lips

to utter enthusiasms. This was the only insincerity in a character otherwise sincere, and it was

indeed the intellectual protest of her youth. She was particularly vexed now because she was







"It is the children who are the first consideration. Until they are grown up, and married off
When that happens one has again the right to live for oneself—in the plains or the hills, as
suits ".
"Oh yes, you're perfectly right. I never thought it out ".
"If one has not become too stupid and old." She handed her empty cup to the servant .
"My idea now is that my cousins shall find me a servant in Simla, at all events to see me
through the wedding, after which Ronny means to reorganize his staff entirely. He does it very
well for a bachelor; still, when he is married no doubt various changes will have to be made— his
old servants won't want to take their orders from me, and I don't blame them ".
Mrs. Moore pushed up the shutters and looked out. She had brought Ronny and Adela together
by their mutual wish, but really she could not advise them further. She felt increasingly
)vision or nightmare?) that, though people are important, the relations between them are not , $$

and that in particular too much fuss has been made over marriage; centuries of carnal embracement, yet man is no nearer to understanding man. And to-day she felt this with such force that it seemed itself a relationship, itself a person who was trying to take hold of her hand . "Anything to be seen of the hills "? "Only various shades of the dark ". "We can't be far from the place where my hyena was." She peered into the timeless twilight. The train crossed a nullah. "Pomper, pomper, pomper," was the sound that the wheels made as they trundled over the bridge, moving very slowly. A hundred yards on came a second nullah, then a third, suggesting the neighbourhood of higher ground. "Perhaps this is mine; anyhow, the road runs parallel with the railway." Her accident was a pleasant memory; she felt in her dry, honest way that it had given her a good shake up, and taught her Ronny's true worth. Then she went back to her plans; plans had been a passion with her from girlhood. Now and

then she paid tribute to the present, said how friendly and intelligent Aziz was, ate a guava,

couldn't eat a fried sweet, practised her Urdu on the servant; but her thoughts ever veered to the manageable future, and to the Anglolndian life she had decided to endure. And as she appraised it with its adjuncts of Turtons and Burtons, the train accompanied her sentences, "pomper, pomper," the train half asleep, going nowhere in particular and with no passenger of importance in any of its carriages, the branch-line train, lost on a low embankment between dull fields. Its message—for it had one—avoided her wellequipped mind. Far away behind her, with a shriek that meant business, rushed the Mail, connecting up important towns such as Calcutta and Lahore, where interesting events occur and personalities are developed. She understood that. Unfortunately, India has few important towns. India is the country, fields, fields, then hills, jungle, hills, and more fields. The branch line stops, the road is only practicable for cars to a point, the bullockcarts lumber down the side tracks, paths fray out into the cultivation, and

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near a splash of red paint. How can the mind take hold of such a country? Generations

of invaders have tried, but they remain in exile. The important towns they build are only retreats ,

their quarrels the malaise of men who cannot find their way home. India knows of their

trouble. She knows of the whole world's trouble, to its uttermost depth. She calls "Come "

through her hundred mouths, through objects ridiculous and august. But come to what? She

has never defined. She is not a promise, only an appeal.

"I will fetch you from Simla when it's cool enough. I will unbottle you in fact," continued the

reliable girl. "We then see some of the Mogul stuff— how appalling if we let you miss the Taj

—!and then I will see you off at Bombay. Your last glimpse of this country really shall be

interesting ".

But Mrs. Moore had fallen asleep, exhausted by the early start. She was in rather low

health, and ought not to have attempted the expedition, but had pulled herself together in case

the pleasure of the others should suffer. Her dreams were of the same texture, but there it was her other children who were wanting something, Stella and Ralph, and she was explaining to them that she could not be in two families at once. When she awoke, Adela had ceased to plan, and leant out of a window, saying, "They're rather wonderful". Astonishing even from the rise of the civil station, here the Marabar were gods to whom earth is a ghost. Kawa Do! was nearest. It shot up in a single slab, on whose summit one rock was poised— if a mass so great can be called one rock. Behind it, recumbent, were the hills that contained the other caves, isolated each from his neighbour by broad channels of the plain. The assemblage, ten in all, shifted a little as the train crept past them, as if observing its arrival. "I'ld not have missed this for anything," said the girl, exaggerating her enthusiasm. "Look, the sun's rising—this'll be absolutely magnificent—come quickly—look. I wouldn't have missed this for anything. We should never have seen it if we'd stuck to the Turtons and their eternal elephants ".

As she spoke, the sky to the left turned angry orange. Colour throbbed and mounted behind a pattern of trees, grew in intensity, was yet brighter, incredibly brighter, strained from without

against the globe of the air. They awaited the miracle. But at the supreme moment, when night

should have died and day lived, nothing occurred. It was as if virtue had failed in the celestial fount. The hues in the east decayed, the hills seemed dimmer though in fact better lit, and a profound disappointment entered with the morning breeze. Why, when the chamber was prepared,

did the bridegroom not enter with trumpets and shawms, as humanity expects? The sun

 $rose\ without\ splendour.\ He\ was\ presently\ observed\ trailing\ yellowish\ behind\ the\ trees,\ or$

against insipid sky, and touching the bodies already at work in the fields.

"Ah, that must be the false dawn— isn't it caused by dust in the upper layers of the atmosphere

that couldn't fall down during the night? I think Mr. McBryde said so. Well, I must admit

that England has it as regards sunrises. Do you remember Grasmere "?



forehead at the mom! "Oh, what a surprise!" called the ladies politely. Aziz said nothing, but he

nearly burst with pride and relief The elephant was the one grand feature of the picnic, and

God alone knew what he had gone through to obtain her. Semi-official, she was best approached

through the Nawab Bahadur, who was best approached through Nureddin, but he

never answered letters, but his mother had great influence with him and was a friend of Hamidulhah

Begum's, who had been excessively kind and had promised to call on her provided the

broken shutter of the purdah carriage came back soon enough from Calcutta. That an elephant

should depend from so long and so slender a string filled Aziz with content, and with humorous

appreciation of the East, where the friends of friends are a reality, where everything gets done

sometime, and sooner or later every one gets his share of happiness. And Mohammed Latif was

likewise content, because two of the guests had missed the train, and consequently he could

ride on the howdah instead of following in a cart, and the servants were content because an

elephant increased their self-esteem, and they tumbled out the luggage into the dust with shouts and bangs, issuing orders to one another, and convulsed with goodwill. "It takes an hour to get there, an hour to get back, and two hours for the caves, which we will call three," said Aziz, smiling charmingly. There was suddenly something regal about him . "The train back is at eleventhirty, and you will be sitting down to your tiffin in Chandrapore with Mr. Heaslop at exactly your usual hour, namely, one-fifteen. I know everything about you. Four hours—quite a small expedition— and an hour extra for misfortunes, which occur somewhat frequently among my people. My idea is to plan everything without consulting you; but you, Mrs . Moore, or Miss Quested, you are at any moment to make alterations if you wish, even if it means giving up the caves. Do you agree? Then mount this wild animal ". The elephant had knelt, grey and isolated, like another hill. They climbed up the ladder, and

he mounted shikar fashion, treading first on the sharp edge of the heel and then into the

looped-up tail. When Mohammed Latif followed him, the servant who held the end of the tail let

go of it according to previous instructions, so that the poor relative slipped and had to cling to

the netting over the buttocks. It was a little piece of Court buffoonery, and distressed only the

ladies, whom it was intended to divert. Both of them disliked practical jokes. Then the beast

rose in two shattering movements, and poised them ten feet above the plain. Immediately below

was the scurf of life that an elephant always collects round its feet—villagers, naked babies.

The servants flung crockery into tongas. Hassan annexed the stallion intended for Aziz, and defied

Mahmoud All's man from its altitude. The Brahman who had been hired to cook for Professor

Godbole was planted under an acacia tree, to await their return. The train, also hoping to

retum, wobbled away through the fields, turning its head this way and that like a centipede .

And the only other movement to be seen was a movement as of antennae, really the counterpoises

of the wells which rose and fell on their pivots of mud all over the plain and dispersed a

feeble flow of water. The scene was agreeable rather than not in the mild morning air, but there
was little colour in it, and no vitality .
As the elephant moved towards the hills (the pale sun had by this time saluted them to the
base, and pencilled shadows down their creases) a new quality occurred, a spiritual silence
which invaded more senses than the ear. Life went on as usual, but had no consequences, that
is to say, sounds did not echo or thoughts develop. Everything seemed cut off at its root, and
therefore infected with illusion. For instance, there were some mounds by the edge of the track ,
low, serrated, and touched with whitewash. What were these mounds— graves, breasts of the
goddess Parvati? The villagers beneath gave both replies. Again, there was a confusion about a
snake which was never cleared up. Miss Quested saw a thin, dark object reared on end at the
farther side of a watercourse, and said, "A snake!" The villagers agreed, and Aziz explained:

yes, a black cobra, very venomous, who had reared himself up to watch the passing of the elephant .

But when she looked through Ronny's fieldglasses, she found it wasn't a snake, but the

withered and twisted stump of a toddy-palm. So she said, "It isn't a snake." The villagers

contradicted

her. She had put the word into their minds, and they refused to abandon it. Aziz admitted

that it looked like a tree through the glasses, but insisted that it was a black cobra really,

and improvised some rubbish about protective mimicry. Nothing was explained, and yet there

was no romance. Films of heat, radiated from the Kawa Dol precipices, increased the confusion .

They came at irregular intervals and moved capriciously. A patch of field would jump as if it was

being fried, and then lie quiet. As they drew closer the radiation stopped.

The elephant walked straight at the Kawa Dol as if she would knock for admission with her

forehead, then swerved, and followed a path round its base. The stones plunged straight into

the earth, like cliffs into the sea, and while Miss Quested was remarking on this, and saying that

it was striking, the plain quietly disappeared, peeled off, so to speak, and nothing was to be seen on either side but the granite, very dead and quiet. The sky dominated as usual, but seemed unhealthily near, adhering like a ceiling to the summits of the precipices. It was as if the contents of the corridor had never been changed. Occupied by his own munificence, Aziz noticed nothing. His guests noticed a little. They did not feel that it was an attractive place or quite worth visiting, and wished it could have turned into some Mohammedan object, such as a

mosque, which their host would have appreciated and explained. His ignorance became evident ,

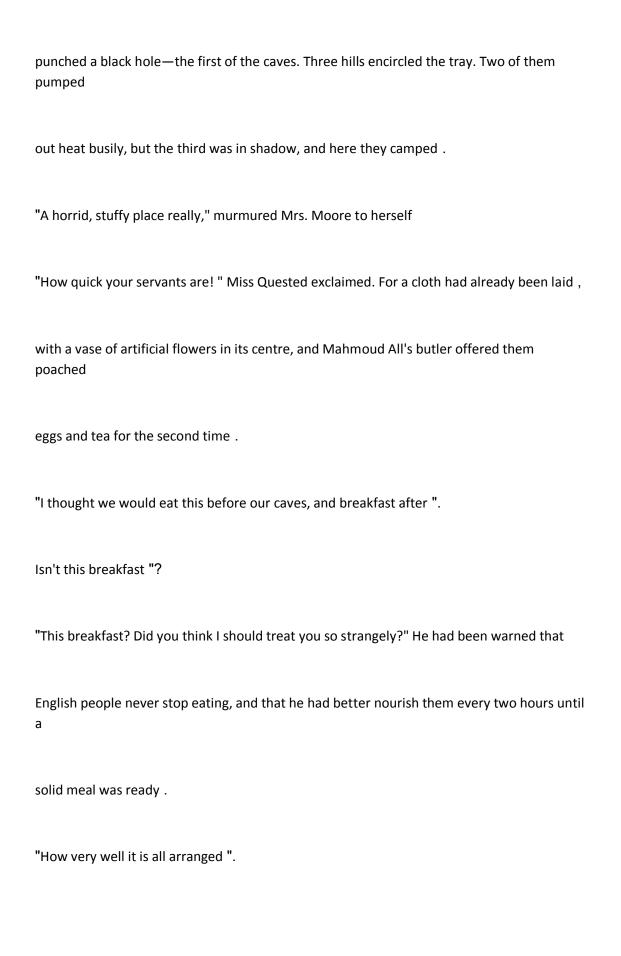
and was really rather a drawback. In spite of his gay, confident talk, he had no notion

how to treat this particular aspect of India; he was lost in it without Professor Godbole, like

themselves .

The corridor narrowed, then widened into a sort of tray. Here, more or less, was their goal.

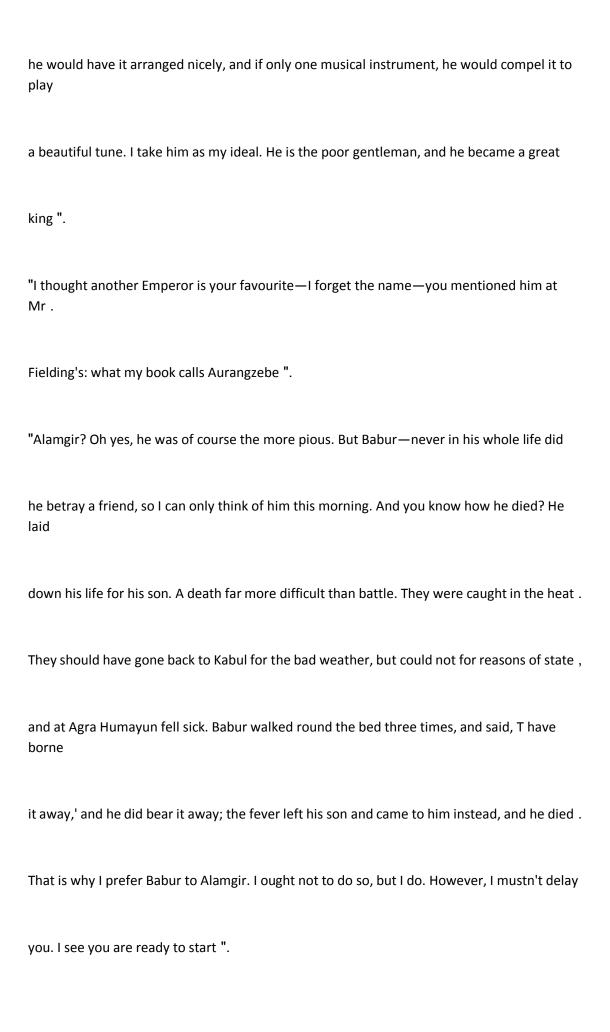
A ruined tank held a little water which would do for the animals, and close above the mud was



"That you shall tell me when I return to Chandrapore. Whatever disgraces I bring upon myself, you remain my guests." He spoke gravely now. They were dependent on him for a few hours, and he felt grateful to them for placing themselves in such a position. All was well so far; the elephant held a fresh cut bough to her lips, the tonga shafts stuck up into the air, the kitchen-boy peeled potatoes, Hassan shouted, and Mohammed Latif stood as he ought, with peeled switch in his hand. The expedition was a success, and it was Indian; an obscure young man had been allowed to show courtesy to visitors from another country, which is what all **Indians** long to do— even cynics like Mahmoud Ali~but they never have the chance. Hospitality had been achieved, they were "his" guests; his honour was involved in their happiness, and any discomfort they endured would tear his own soul. Like most Orientals, Aziz overrated hospitality, mistaking it for intimacy, and not seeing that it is tainted with the sense of possession. It was only when Mrs. Moore or Fielding was near him

that he saw further, and knew that it is more blessed to receive than to give. These two had
strange and beautiful effects on him-they were his friends, his for ever, and he theirs for ever;
he loved them so much that giving and receiving became one. He loved them even better than
the Hamidullah's because he had surmounted obstacles to meet them, and this stimulates a
generous mind. Their images remained somewhere in his soul up to his dying day, permanent
additions. He looked at her now as she sat on a deckchair, sipping his tea, and had for a moment
a joy that held the seeds of its own decay, for it would lead him to think, "Oh, what more
can I do for her?" and so back to the dull round of hospitality. The black bullets of his eyes filled
with soft expressive light, and he said, "Do you ever remember our mosque, Mrs. Moore "?
"I do. I do," she said, suddenly vital and young .
"And how rough and rude I was, and how good you were ".

"And how happy we both were ".
"Friendships last longest that begin like that, I think. Shall I ever entertain your other children "?
"Do you know about the others? She will never talk about them to me," said Miss Quested ,
unintentionally breaking a spell .
"Ralph and Stella, yes, I know everything about them. But we must not forget to visit our
caves. One of the dreams of my life is accomplished in having you both here as my guests. You
cannot imagine how you have honoured me. I feel like the Emperor Babur ".
"Why like him?" she enquired, rising .
"Because my ancestors came down with him from Afghanistan. They joined him at Herat .
He also had often no more elephants than one, none sometimes, but he never ceased showing
hospitality. When he fought or hunted or ran away, he would always stop for a time among hills ,
just like us; he would never let go of hospitality and pleasure, and if there was only a little food , $ \\$



"Not at all," she said, sitting down by Mrs. Moore again. "We enjoy talk like this very much ". For at last he was talking about what he knew and felt, talking as he had in Fielding's gardenhouse; he was again the Oriental guide whom they appreciated . "I always enjoy conversing about the Moguls. It is the chief pleasure I know. You see, those first six emperors were all most wonderful men, and as soon as one of them is mentioned, no matter which, I forget everything else in the world except the other five. You could not find six such kings in all the countries of the earth, not, I mean, coming one after the other —father, son ". "Tell us something about Akbar ". "Ah, you have heard the name of Akbar. Good. Hamidullah— whom you shall meet— will tell you that Akbar is the greatest of all. I say, 'Yes, Akbar is very wonderful, but half a Hindu; he was not a true Moslem,' which makes Hamidullah cry, 'No more was Babur, he drank wine.' But

Babur always repented afterwards, which makes the entire difference, and Akbar never repented

of the new religion he invented instead of the Holy Koran ".

"But wasn't Akbar's new religion very fine? It was to embrace the whole of India".

"Miss Quested, fine but foolish. You keep your religion, I mine. That is the best. Nothing

embraces the whole of India, nothing, nothing, and that was Akbar's mistake ".

"Oh, do you feel that, Dr. Aziz?" she said thoughtfully. "I hope you're not right. There will have to be something universal in this country—I don't say religion, for I'm not religious, hut something, or how else are barriers to be broken down "?

She was only recommending the universal brotherhood he sometimes dreamed of, but as soon as it was put into prose it became untrue.

"Take my own case," she continued—it was indeed her own case that had animated her. " I don't know whether you happen to have heard, but I'm going to marry Mr. Heaslop ".

"On which my heartiest congratulations ".

"Mrs. Moore, may I put our difficulty to Dr. Aziz~I mean our Anglo-Indian one "?
"It is your difficulty, not mine, my dear ".

"Ab, that's true. Well, by marrying Mr. Heaslop, I shall become what is known as an Anglo -

Indian ".

He held up his hand in protest. "Impossible. Take back such a terrible remark ".

"But I shall! it's inevitable. I can't avoid the label. What I do hope to avoid is the mentality.

Women like--" She stopped, not quite liking to mention names; she would boldly have said

"Mrs. Turton and Mrs. Callendar" a fortnight ago. "Some women are so—well, ungenerous and

snobby about Indians, and 1 should feel too ashamed for words if I turned like them, but—and

here's my difficulty— there's nothing special about me, nothing specially good or strong, which

will help me to resist my environment and avoid becoming like them. I've most lamentable defects .

That's why I want Akbar's 'universal religion' or the equivalent to keep me decent and sensible. Do you see what I mean "?

Her remarks pleased him, but his mind shut up tight because she had alluded to her marriage .

He was not going to be mixed up in that side of things. "You are certain to be happy with any relative of Mrs. Moore's," he said with a formal bow .

"Oh, my happiness— that's quite another problem. I want to consult you about this Anglo - Indian difficulty. Can you give me any advice "?

"You are absolutely unlike the others, I assure you. You will never be rude to my people ".

"I am told we all get rude after a year ".

"Then you are told a lie," he fiashed, for she had spoken the truth and it touched him on the raw; it was itself an insult in these particular circumstances. He recovered himself at once and laughed, but her error broke up their conversation— their civilization it had almost been —

which scattered like the petals of a desert flower, and left them in the middle of the hills. "Come

along," he said, holding out a hand to each. They got up a little reluctantly, and addressed themselves to sightseeing .

The first cave was tolerably convenient. They skirted the puddle of water, and then climbed up over some unattractive stones, the sun crashing on their backs. Bending their heads, they disappeared one by one into the interior of the hills. The small black hole gaped where their varied forms and colours had momentarily functioned. They were sucked in like water down a

drain. Bland and bald rose the precipices; bland and glutinous the sky that connected the precipices;

solid and white, a Brahminy kite flapped between the rocks with a clumsiness that seemed intentional. Before man, with his itch for the seemly, had been bom, the planet must

have looked thus. The kite flapped away. . . . Before birds, perhaps. . . . And then the hole belched and humanity returned .

A Marabar cave had been horrid as far as Mrs Moore was concerned, for she had nearly fainted in it, and had some difficulty in preventing herself from saying so as soon as she got into the air again. It was natural enough: she had always suffered from faintness, and the cave

had become too full, because all their retinue followed them. Crammed with villagers and servants ,

the circular chamber began to smell. She lost Aziz and Adela in the dark, didn't know who touched her, couldn't breathe, and some vile naked thing struck her face and settled on her

mouth like a pad. She tried to regain the entrance tunnel, but an influx of villagers swept her

back. She hit her head. For an instant she went mad, hitting and gasping like a fanatic. For not

only did the crush and stench alarm her; there was also a terrifying echo .

Professor Godbole had never mentioned an echo; it never impressed him, perhaps. There

are some exquisite echoes in India; there is the whisper round the dome at Bijapur; there are

the long, solid sentences that voyage through the air at Mandu, and return unbroken to their

creator. The echo in a Marabar cave is not like these, it is entirely devoid of distinction. Whatever

is said, the same monotonous noise replies, and quivers up and down the walls until it is

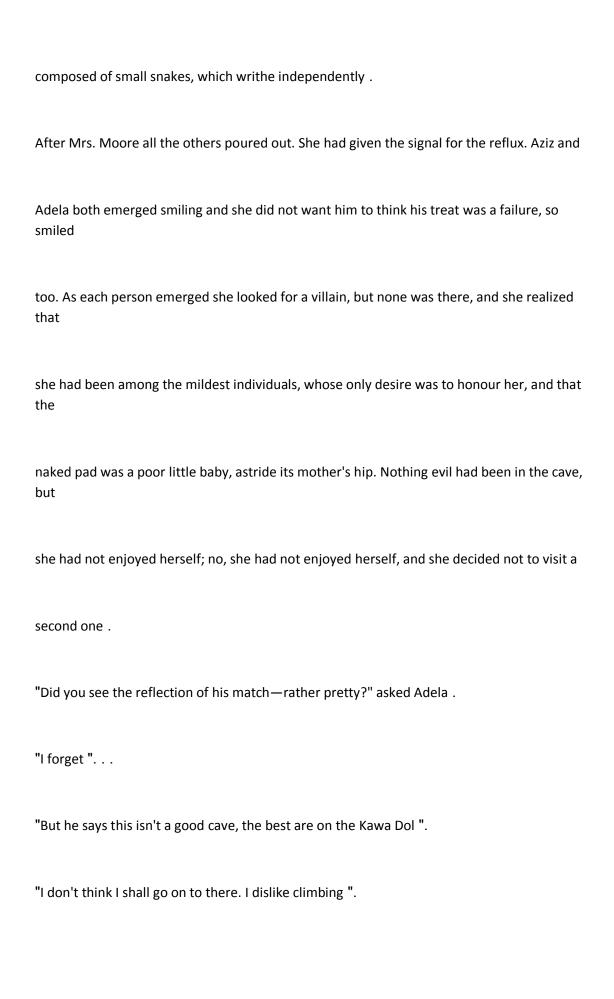
absorbed into the roof "Bourn" is the sound as far as the human alphabet can express it, or

"bou-ourn," or "ou-boum,"~utterly dull. Hope, politeness, the blowing of a nose, the squeak of

a boot, all produce "bourn." Even the striking of a match starts a little worm coiling, which is

too small to complete a circle but is eternally watchful. And if several people talk at once, an

overlapping howling noise begins, echoes generate echoes, and the cave is stuffed with a snake





"Yes, I am your friend," she said, laying her hand on his sleeve, and thinking, despite her fatigue, how very charming, how very good, he was, and how deeply she desired his happiness. "So may I make another suggestion? Don't let so many people come with you this time. I think you may find it more convenient ". "Exactly, exactly," he cried, and, rushing to the other extreme, forbade all except one guide to accompany Miss Quested and him to the Kawa Dol. "Is that all right?" he enquired . "Quite right, now enjoy yourselves, and when you come back tell me all about it." And she sank into the deck-chair. If they reached the big pocket of caves, they would be away nearly an hour. She took out her writing-pad, and began, "Dear Stella, Dear Ralph," then stopped, and looked at the queer valley and their feeble invasion of it. Even the elephant had become a nobody. Her eye rose from it to the entrance tunnel. No, she did not wish to repeat that experience. The more she

thought over it, the more disagreeable and frightening it became. She minded it much more

now than at the time. The crush and the smells she could forget, but the echo began in some

indescribable way to undermine her hold on life. Coming at a moment when she chanced to be

fatigued, it had managed to murmur, "Pathos, piety, courage—they exist, but are identical, and

so is filth. Everything exists, nothing has value." If one had spoken vileness in that place, or quoted lofty poetry, the comment would have been the same--" ou-bourn." If one had spoken

with the tongues of angels and pleaded for all the unhappiness and misunderstanding in the world, past, present, and to come, for all the misery men must undergo whatever their opinion

and position, and however much they dodge or bluff—it would amount to the same, the serpent

would descend and return to the ceiling. Devils are of the North, and poems can be written about them, but no one could romanticize the Marabar because it robbed infinity and eternity of

their vastness, the only quality that accommodates them to mankind .

She tried to go on with her letter, reminding herself that she was only an elderly woman who had got up too early in the morning and journeyed too far, that the despair creeping over

her was merely her despair, her personal weakness, and that even if she got a sunstroke and went mad the rest of the world would go on. But suddenly, at the edge of her mind. Religion appeared, poor little talkative Christianity, and she knew that all its divine words from "Let there

be Light" to "It is finished" only amounted to "bourn." Then she was terrified over an area

larger than usual; the universe, never comprehensible to her intellect, offered no repose to her

soul, the mood of the last two months took definite form at last, and she realized that she didn't

want to write to her children, didn't want to communicate with anyone, not even with God. She

sat motionless with horror, and, when old Mohammed Latif came up to her, thought he would

notice a difference. For a time she thought, "I am going to be ill," to comfort herself, then she

surrendered to the vision. She lost all interest, even in Aziz, and the affectionate and sincere words that she had spoken to him seemed no longer hers but the air's .

CHAPTER XV

Miss Quested and Aziz and a guide continued the slightly tedious expedition. They did not talk much, for the sun was getting high. The air felt like a warm bath into which hotter water is

trickling constantly, the temperature rose and rose, the boulders said, "I am alive," the small stones answered, "I am almost alive." Between the chinks lay the ashes of little plants. They meant to climb to the rocking-stone on the summit, but it was too far, and they contented themselves with the big group of caves. En route_ for these, they encountered several isolated

caves, which the guide persuaded them to visit, but really there was nothing to see; they lit a match, admired its reflection in the polish, tested the echo and came out again. Aziz was "pretty

sure they should come on some interesting old carvings soon," but only meant he wished there

were some carvings. His deeper thoughts were about the breakfast. Symptoms of disorganization

had appeared as he left the camp. He ran over the menu: an English breakfast, porridge and mutton chops, but some Indian dishes to cause conversation, and pan afterwards. He had

never liked Miss Quested as much as Mrs. Moore, and had little to say to her, less than ever now that she would marry a British official .

Nor had Adela much to say to him. If his mind was with the breakfast, hers was mainly with her marriage. Simla next week, get rid of Antony, a view of Thibet, tiresome wedding bells, Agra in October, see Mrs. Moore comfortably off from Bombay—the procession passed before

her again, blurred by the heat, and then she turned to the more serious business of her life at

Chandrapore. There were real difficulties here—Ronny's limitations and her own—but she enjoyed

facing difficulties, and decided that if she could control her peevishness (always her weak point), and neither rail against Anglo-India nor succumb to it, their married life ought to be happy and profitable. She mustn't be too theoretical; she would deal with each problem as it came up, and trust to Ronny's common sense and her own. Luckily, each had abundance of common sense and good will .

But as she toiled over a rock that resembled an inverted saucer, she thought, "What about love?" The rock was nicked by a double row of footholds, and somehow the question was suggested

by them. Where had she seen footholds before? Oh yes, they were the pattern traced in the dust by the wheels of the Nawab Bahadur's car. She and Ronny— no, they did not love each

other .

"Do I take you too fast?" enquired Aziz, for she had paused, a doubtful expression on her

face. The discovery had come so suddenly that she felt like a mountaineer whose rope had broken .

Not to love the man one's going to marry! Not to find it out till this moment! Not even to have asked oneself the question until now! Something else to think out. Vexed rather than appalled, she stood still, her eyes on the sparkling rock. There was esteem and animal contact at dusk, but the emotion that links them was absent. Ought she to break her engagement off? She was inclined to think not—it would cause so much trouble to others; besides, she wasn't convinced that love is necessary to a successful union. If love is everything, few marriages would survive the honeymoon. "No, I'm all right, thanks," she said, and, her emotions well under control, resumed the climb, though she felt a bit dashed. Aziz held her hand, the guide adhered to the surface like a lizard and scampered about as if governed by a personal centre of gravity. "Are you married. Dr. Aziz?" she asked, stopping again, and frowning. "Yes, indeed, do come and see my wife "--for he felt it more artistic to have his wife alive for a moment.



to Mrs. Turton. And having no one else to speak to on that eternal rock, she gave rein to the subject of marriage and said in her honest, decent, inquisitive way: "Have you one wife or more than one "? The question shocked the young man very much. It challenged a new conviction of his community, and new convictions are more sensitive than old. If she had said, "Do you worship one god or several?" he would not have objected. But to ask an educated Indian Moslem how many wives he has—appalling, hideous! He was in trouble how to conceal his confusion. "One, one in my own particular case," he sputtered, and let go of her hand. Quite a number of caves were at the top of the track, and thinking, "Damn the English even at their best," he plunged into one of them to recover his balance. She followed at her leisure, quite unconscious that she had said the wrong thing, and not seeing him, she also went into a cave, thinking with half her mind "sight-seeing bores me," and wondering with the other half about marriage .

CHAPTER XVI

He waited in his cave a minute, and lit a cigarette, so that he could remark on rejoining her, "I bolted in to get out of the draught," or something of the sort. When he returned, he found the guide, alone, with his head on one side. He had heard a noise, he said, and then Aziz heard it too: the noise of a motor-car. They were now on the outer shoulder of the Kawa Dol, and by scrambling twenty yards they got a glimpse of the plain. A car was coming towards the hills down the Chandrapore road. But they could not get a good view of it, because the precipitous bastion curved at the top, so that the base was not easily seen and the car disappeared as it came nearer. No doubt it would stop almost exactly beneath them, at the place where the pukka road degenerated into a path, and the elephant had turned to sidle into the hills . He ran back to tell the strange news to his guest. The guide explained that she had gone into a cave.

"Which cave "?

He indicated the group vaguely.

"You should have kept her in sight, it was your duty," said Aziz severely. "Here are twelve caves at least. How am I to know which contains my guest? Which is the cave I was in myself?

The same vague gesture. And Aziz, looking again, could not even be sure he had returned to the same group. Caves appeared in every direction—it seemed their original spawning place —

and the orifices were always the same size. He thought, "Merciful Heavens, Miss Quested is lost," then pulled himself together, and began to look for her calmly.

"Shout!" he commanded .

When they had done this for awhile, the guide explained that to shout is useless, because a Marabar cave can hear no sound but its own. Aziz wiped his head, and sweat began to stream

inside his clothes. The place was so confusing; it was partly a terrace, partly a zigzag, and full of grooves that led this way and that like snaketracks. He tried to go into every one, but he never knew where he had started. Caves got behind caves or confabulated in pairs, and some

were at the entrance of a gully.

"Come here!" he called gently, and when the guide was in reach, he struck him in the face for a punishment. The man fled, and he was left alone. He thought, "This is the end of my career,

my guest is lost." And then he discovered the simple and sufficient explanation of the mystery .

Miss Quested wasn't lost. She had joined the people in the car—friends of hers, no doubt,

Mr. Heaslop perhaps. He had a sudden glimpse of her, far down the gully— only a glimpse, but

there she was quite plain, framed between rocks, and speaking to another lady. He was so relieved

that he did not think her conduct odd. Accustomed to sudden changes of plan, he supposed that she had run down the Kawa Do! impulsively, in the hope of a little drive. He started back alone towards his camp, and almost at once caught sight of something which would have

disquieted him very much a moment before: Miss Quested's field glasses. They were lying at the verge of a cave, half-way down an entrance tunnel. He tried to hang them over his shoulder,

but the leather strap had broken, so he put them into his pocket instead. When he had gone a few steps, he thought she might have dropped something else, so he went back to look.

But the previous difficulty recurred: he couldn't identify the cave. Down in the plain he heard

the car starting; however, he couldn't catch a second glimpse of that. So he scrambled down the valley-face of the hill towards Mrs. Moore, and here he was more successful: the colour and

confusion of his little camp soon appeared, and in the midst of it he saw an Englishman's topi ,

and beneath it— oh, joy !— smiled not Mr. Heaslop, but Fieldlug .

"Fielding! Oh, I have so wanted you!" he cried, dropping the "Mr." for the first time.

And his friend ran to meet him, all so pleasant and jolly, no dignity, shouting explanations and apologies about the train. Fielding had come in the newly arrived car— Miss Derek's ear -

that other lady was Miss Derek. Chatter, chatter, all the servants leaving their cooking to listen .

Excellent Miss Derek! She had met Fielding by chance at the post office, said, "Why haven't you

gone to the Marabar?" heard how he missed the train, offered to run him there and then. Another

nice English lady. Where was she? Left with car and chauffeur while Fielding found camp.

Car couldn't get up— no, of course not— hundreds of people must go down to escort Miss Derek

and show her the way. The elephant in person

"Aziz, can I have a drink "?

"Certainly not." He flew to get one.

"Mr. Fielding! " called Mrs. Moore, from her patch of shade; they had not spoken yet, because

his arrival had coincided with the torrent from the hill .

"Good morning again!" he cried, relieved to find all well .

"Mr. Fielding, have you seen Miss Quested "?

"But I've only just arrived. Where is she "?

"I do not know ".

"Aziz! Where have you put Miss Quested to "?

Aziz, who was returning with a drink in his hand, had to think for a moment. His heart was full of new happiness. The picnic, after a nasty shock or two, had developed into something beyond

his dreams, for Fielding had not only come, but brought an uninvited guest. "Oh, she's all

right," he said; "she went down to see Miss Derek. Well, here's luck! Chin-chin "!

"Here's luck, but chin-chin I do refuse," laughed Fielding, who detested the phrase. "Here's





They knew one another very little, and felt rather awkward at being drawn together by an Indian. The racial problem can take subtle forms. In their case it had induced a sort of jealousy, a mutual suspicion. He tried to goad her enthusiasm; she scarcely spoke. Aziz fetched them to breakfast. "It is quite natural about Miss Quested," he remarked, for he had been working the incident a little in his mind, to get rid of its roughnesses. "We were having an interesting talk with our guide, then the car was seen, so she decided to go down to her friend." Incurably inaccurate, he already thought that this was what had occurred. He was inaccurate because he was sensitive. He did not like to remember Miss Quested's remark about polygamy, because it was unworthy of a guest, so he put it from his mind, and with it the knowledge that he had bolted into a cave to get away from her. He was inaccurate because he desired to honour her, and facts being entangled— he had to arrange them in her vicinity, as one tidies the ground after extracting

a weed. Before breakfast was over, he had told a good many lies. "She ran to her friend, I
to mine," he went on, smiling. "And now I am with my friends and they are with me and each
other, which is happiness ".
Loving them both, he expected them to love each other. They didn't want to. Fielding
thought with hostility, "I knew these women would make trouble," and Mrs. Moore thought,
"This man, having missed the train, tries to blame us"; but her thoughts were feeble; since her
faintness in the cave she was sunk in apathy and cynicism. The wonderful India of her opening
weeks, with its cool nights and acceptable hints of infinity, had vanished .
Fielding ran up to see one cave. He wasn't impressed. Then they got on the elephant and
the picnic began to unwind out of the corridor and escaped under the precipice towards the
railway station, pursued by stabs of hot air. They came to the place where he had quitted the



"I hope she wasn't ill," pursued the Englishman. The crease continued as a nullah across the
plain, the water draining off this way towards the Ganges .
"She would have wanted me, if she was ill, to attend her ".
"Yes, that sounds sense ".
"I see you're worrying, let's talk of other things," he said kindly. "Miss Quested was always
to do what she wished, it was our arrangement. I see you are worrying on my account, but
really I don't mind, I never notice trifles ".
"I do worry on your account. I consider they have been impolite! " said Fielding, lowering his
voice. "She had no right to dash away from your party, and Miss Derek had no right to abet
her ".
So touchy as a rule, Aziz was unassailable. The wings that uplifted him did not falter, because
he was a Mogul emperor who had done his duty. Perched on his elephant, he watched
the Marabar Hills recede, and saw again, as provinces of his kingdom, the grim untidy plain, the

frantic and feeble movements of the buckets, the white shrines, the shallow graves, the suave
sky, the snake that looked like a tree. He had given his guests as good a time as he could, and
if they came late or left early that was not his affair. Mrs. Moore slept, swaying against the rods
of the howdah, Mohammed Latif embraced her with efficiency and respect, and by his own side
sat Fielding, whom he began to think of as "Cyril ".
"Aziz, have you figured out what this picnic will cost you "?
"Sh! my dear chap, don't mention that part. Hundreds and hundreds of rupees. The completed
account will be too awful; my friends' servants have robbed me right and left, and as for
an elephant, she apparently eats gold. I can trust you not to repeat this. And M.L.~ please employ
initials, he listens—is far the worst of all ".
"I told you he's no good ".
"He is plenty of good for himself; his dishonesty will ruin me ".



So the cavalcade ended, partly pleasant, partly not; the Brahman cook was picked up, the train arrived, pushing its burning throat over the plain, and the twentieth century took over from the sixteenth. Mrs. Moore entered her carriage, the three men went to theirs, adjusted the shutters, turned on the electric fan and tried to get some sleep. In the twilight, all resembled corpses, and the train itself seemed dead though it moved—a coffin from the scientific north which troubled the scenery four times a day. As it left the Marabars, their nasty little cosmos disappeared, and gave place to the Marabars seen from a distance, finite and rather

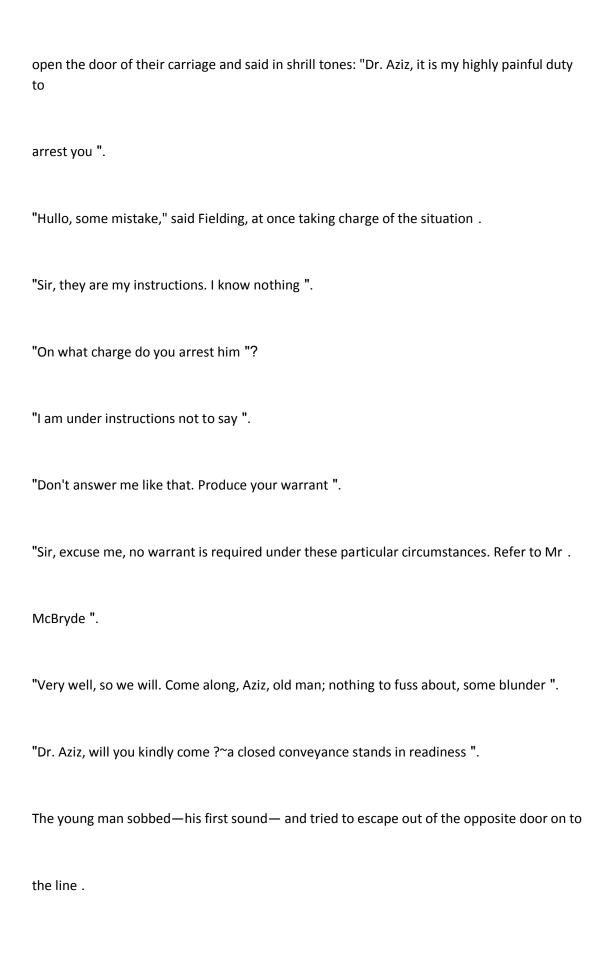
The train halted once under a pump, to drench the stock of coal in its tender. Then it caught sight of the main line in the distance, took courage, and bumped forward, rounded the civil station ,

surmounted the level-crossing (the rails were scorching now), and clanked to a standstill .

Chandrapore, Chandrapore! The expedition was over .

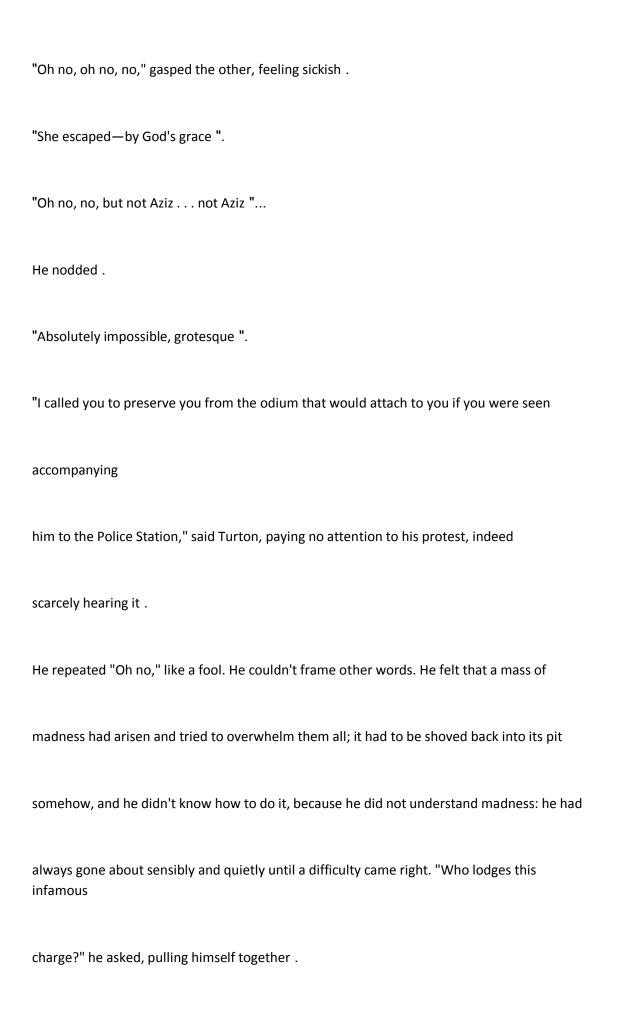
romantic.

And as it ended, as they sat up in the gloom and prepared to enter ordinary life, suddenly the long drawn strangeness of the morning snapped. Mr. Haq, the Inspector of Police, flung

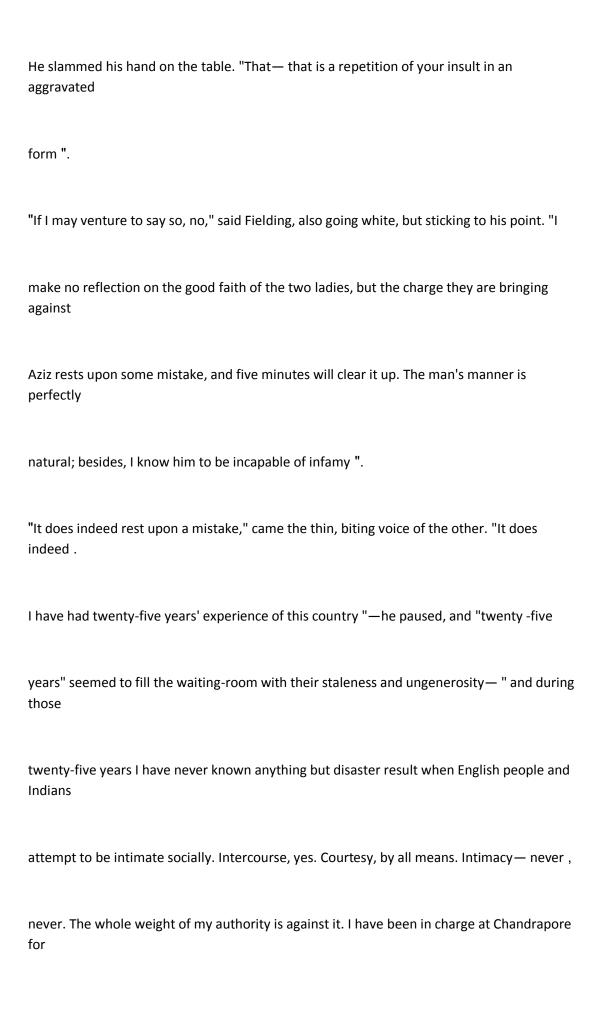


"That will compel me to use force," Mr. Haq wailed . "Oh, for God's sake—" cried Fielding, his own nerves breaking under the contagion, and pulled him back before a scandal started, and shook him like a baby. A second later, and he would have been out, whistles blowing, a man-hunt. . . . "Dear fellow, we're coming to McBryde together, and enquire what's gone wrong—he's a decent fellow, it's all unintentional . . . he'll apologize. Never, never act the criminal ". "My children and my name!" he gasped, his wings broken . "Nothing of the sort. Put your hat straight and take my arm. I'll see you through ". "Ah, thank God, he comes," the Inspector exclaimed . They emerged into the midday heat, arm in arm. The station was seething. Passengers and porters rushed out of every recess, many Government servants, more police. Ronny escorted Mrs. Moore. Mohammed Latif began wailing. And before they could make their way through the chaos. Fielding was called off by the authoritative tones of Mr. Turton, and Aziz went on to

prison alone .
CHAPTER XVII
The Collector had watched the arrest from the interior of the waiting-room, and throwing
open its perforated doors of zinc, he was now revealed like a god in a shrine. When Fielding
entered the doors clapped to, and were guarded by a servant, while a punkah, to mark the
importance
of the moment, flapped dirty petticoats over their heads. The Collector could not
speak at first. His face was white, fanatical, and rather beautiful— the expression that all English
faces were to wear at Chandrapore for many days. Always brave and unselfish, he was now
fused by some white and generous heat; he would have killed himself, obviously, if he had
thought it right to do so. He spoke at last. "The worst thing in my whole career has happened ",
he said. "Miss Quested has been insulted in one of the Marabar caves ".







six years, and if everything has gone smoothly, if there has been mutual respect and esteem, it

is because both peoples kept to this simple rule. New-comers set our traditions aside, and in an

instant what you see happens, the work of years is undone and the good name of my District

ruined for a generation. I— I — can't see the end of this day's work, Mr. Fielding. You, who are

imbued with modern ideas— no doubt you can. I wish I had never lived to see its beginning, I

know that. It is the end of me. That a lady, that a young lady engaged to my most valued

subordinate— that she— an English girl fresh from England— that I should have lived "—

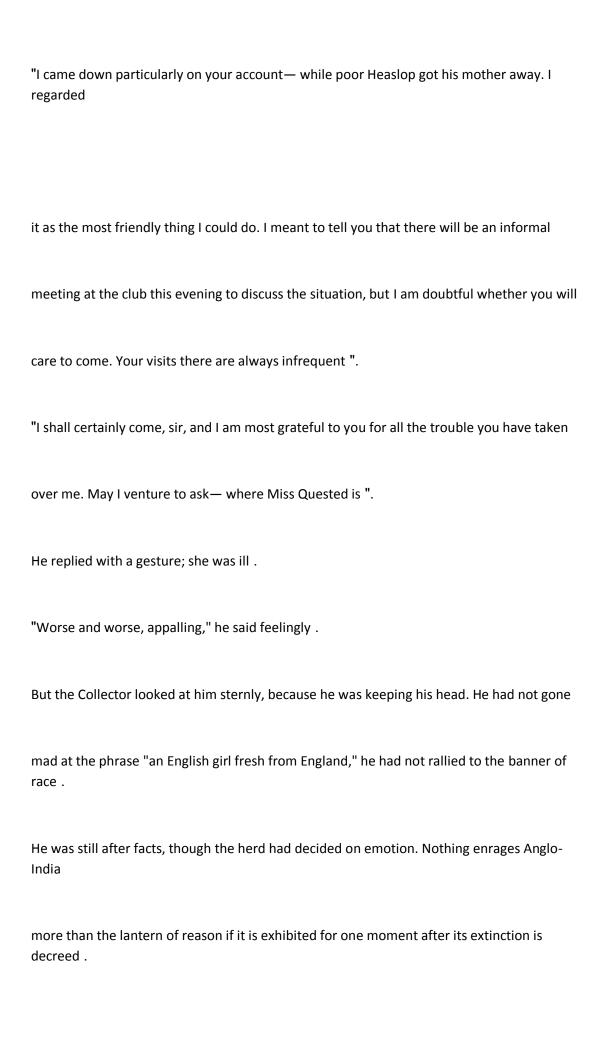
Involved in his own emotions, he broke down. What he had said was both dignified and pathetic ,

but had it anything to do with Aziz? Nothing at all, if Fielding was right. It is impossible

to regard a tragedy from two points of view, and whereas Turton had decided to avenge the

girl, he hoped to save the man. He wanted to get away and talk to McBryde, who had always

been friendly to him, was on the whole sensible, and could, anyhow, be trusted to keep cool .



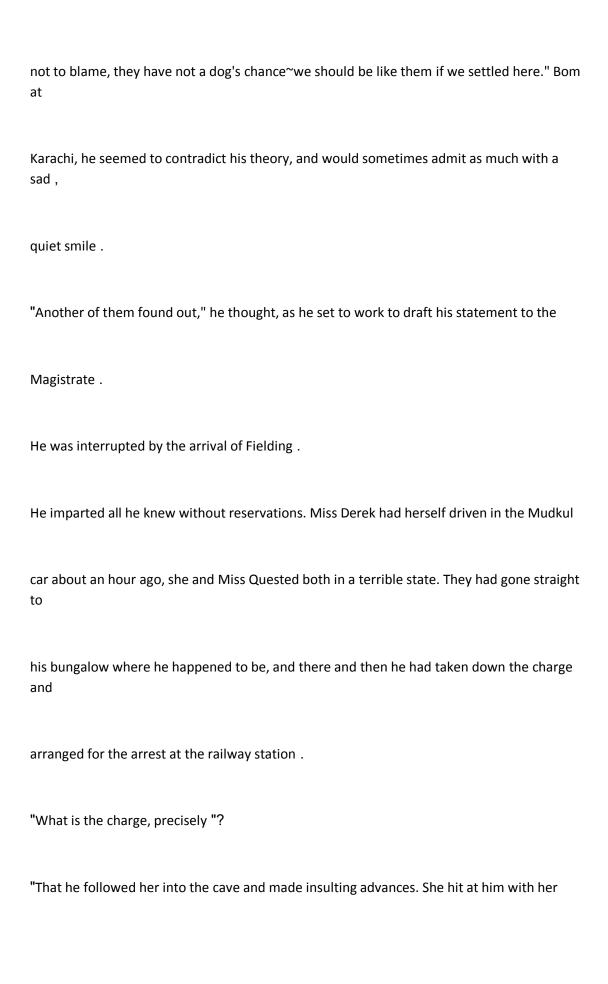
All over Chandrapore that day the Europeans were putting aside their normal personalities and sinking themselves in their community. Pity, wrath, heroism, filled them, but the power of putting two and two together was annihilated . Terminating the interview, the Collector walked on to the platform. The confusion there was revolting. A chuprassi of Ronny's had been told to bring up some trifles belonging to the ladies, and was appropriating for himself various articles to which he had no right; he was a camp follower of the angry English. Mohammed Latif made no attempt to resist him. Hassan flung off his turban, and wept. All the comforts that had been provided so liberally were rolled about and wasted in the sun. The Collector took in the situation at a glance, and his sense of justice functioned though he was insane with rage. He spoke the necessary word, and the looting stopped. Then he drove off to his bungalow and gave rein to his passions again. When he saw the coolies

asleep in the ditches or the shopkeepers rising to salute him on their little platforms, he said

to himself: "I know what you're like at last; you shall pay for this, you shall squeal ". **CHAPTER XVIII** Mr. McBryde, the District Superintendent of Police, was the most reflective and best educated of the Chandrapore officials. He had read and thought a good deal, and, owing to a somewhat unhappy marriage, had evolved a complete philosophy of life. There was much of the cynic about him, but nothing of the bully; he never lost his temper or grew rough, and he received Aziz with courtesy, was almost reassuring. "I have to detain you until you get bail," he said, "but no doubt your friends will be applying for it, and of course they will be allowed to visit you, under regulations. I am given certain information, and have to act on it—I'm not your judge." Aziz was led off weeping. Mr. McBryde was shocked at his downfall, but no Indian ever surprised him, because he had a theory about climatic zones. The theory ran: "All unfortunate

natives are criminals at heart, for the simple reason that they live south of latitude 30. They

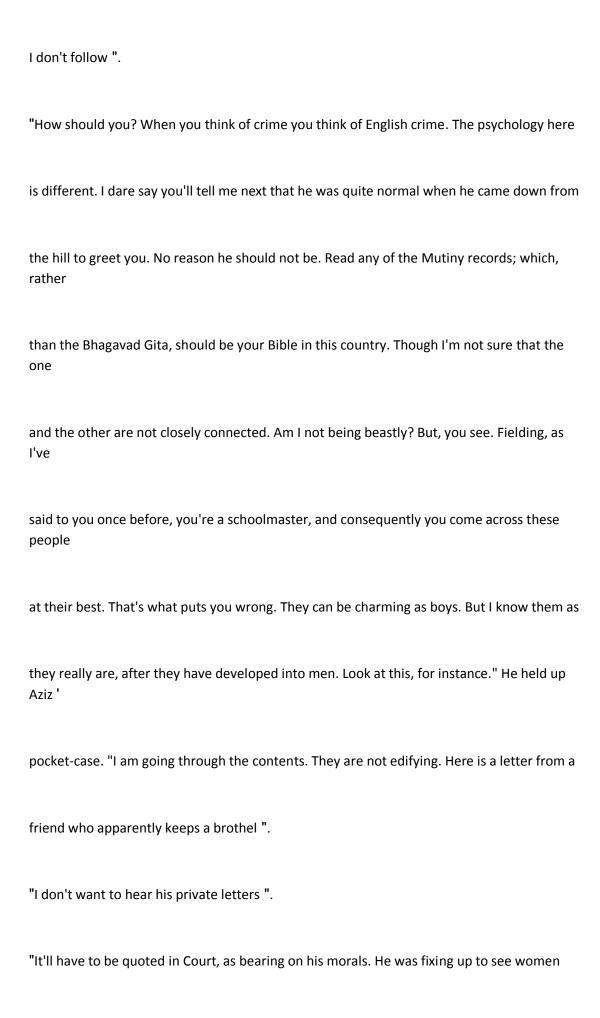
are





brought; Vakil Mahmoud Ali, legal adviser to the prisoner, asked to be allowed to see him . McBryde signed, gave permission, and continued: "I heard some more from Miss Derek she is an old friend of us both and talks freely; well— her account is that you went off to locate the camp, and almost at once she heard stones falling on the Kawa Dol and saw Miss Quested running straight down the face of a precipice. Well. She climbed up a sort of gully to her, and found her practically done for —her helmet off "--"Was a guide not with her?" interrupted Fielding. "No. She had got among some cactuses. Miss Derek saved her life coming just then—she was beginning to fling herself about. She helped her down to the car. Miss Quested couldn't stand the Indian driver, cried, 'Keep him away '—and it was that that put our friend on the track of what had happened. They made straight for our bungalow, and are there now. That's the story as far as I know it yet. She sent the driver to join you. I think she behaved with great sense ".



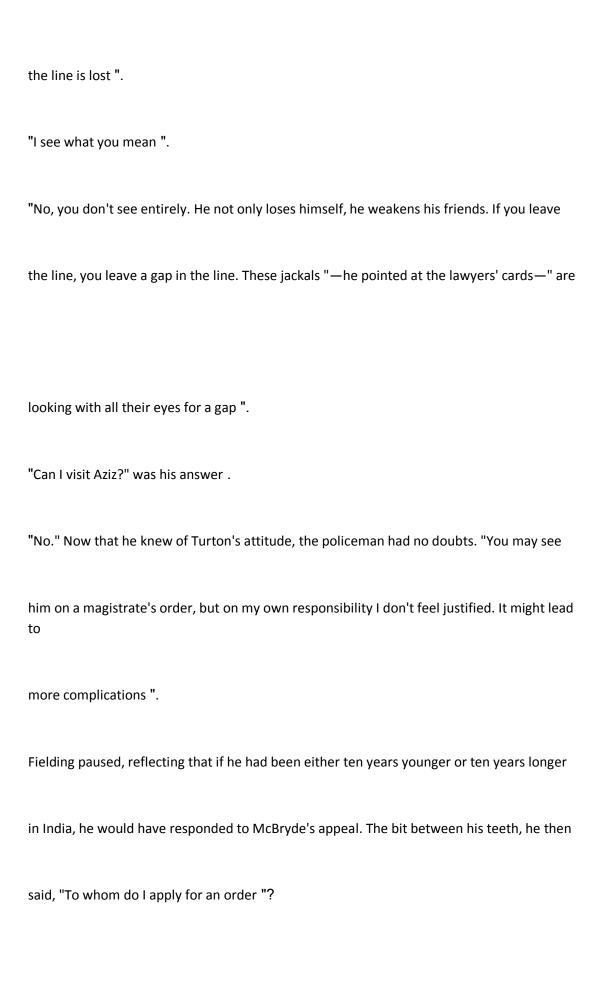














Hamidullah was the next stage. He was waiting outside the Superintendent's office, and sprang up respectfully when he saw Fielding. To the Englishman's passionate "It's all a mistake ", he answered, "Ah, ah, has some evidence come "? "It will come," said Fielding, holding his hand. "Ah, yes, Mr. Fielding; but when once an Indian has been arrested, we do not know where it will stop." His manner was deferential. "You are very good to greet me in this public fashion, appreciate it; but, Mr. Fielding, nothing convinces a magistrate except evidence. Did Mr. McBryde make any remark when my card came in? Do you think my application annoyed him, will prejudice him against my friend at all? If so, I will gladly retire ". "He's not annoyed, and if he was, what does it matter "? "Ah, it's all very well for you to speak like that, but we have to live in this country ". The leading barrister of Chandrapore, with the dignified manner and Cambridge degree, had been rattled. He too loved Aziz, and knew he was calumniated; but faith did not rule his heart,

and he prated of "policy" and "evidence" in a way that saddened the Englishman. Fielding, too ,

had his anxieties—he didn't like the fieldglasses or the discrepancy over the guide— but he relegated

them to the edge of his mind, and forbade them to infect its core. Aziz was innocent, and

all action must be based on that, and the people who said he was guilty were wrong, and it was

hopeless to try to propitiate them. At the moment when he was throwing in his lot with Indians ,

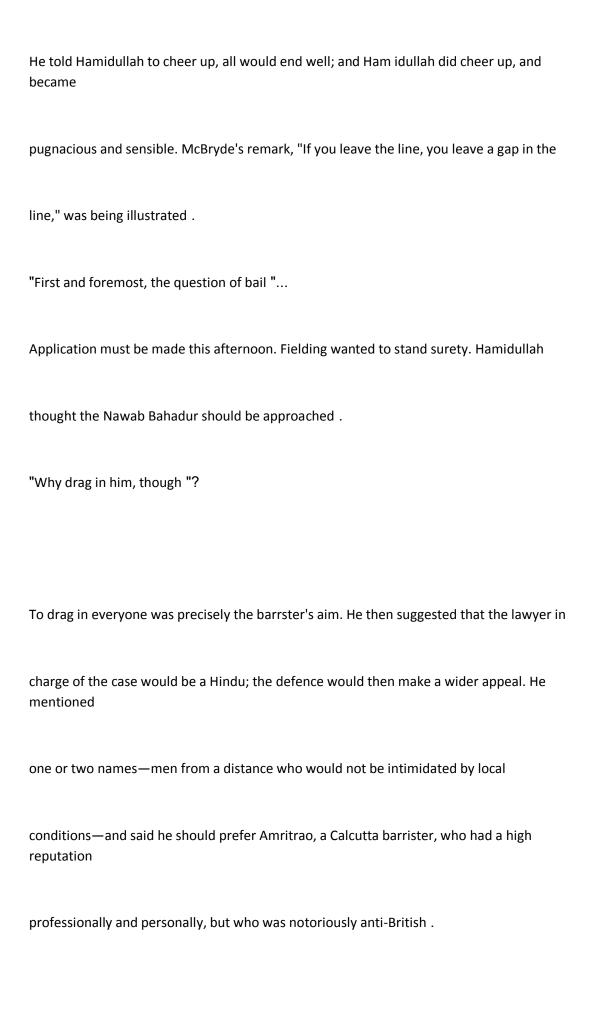
he realized the profundity of the gulf that divided him from them. They always do something

disappointing. Aziz had tried to run away from the police, Mohammed Latif had not checked the

pilfering. And now Hamidullah!— instead of raging and denouncing, he temporized. Are Indians

cowards? No, but they are bad starters and occasionally jib. Fear is everywhere; the British Raj

rests on it; the respect and courtesy Fielding himself enjoyed were unconscious acts of propitiation .



Fielding demurred; this seemed to him going to the other extreme. Aziz must be cleared, but with a minimum of racial hatred. Amritrao was loathed at the club. His retention would be regarded as a political challenge. "Oh no, we must hit with all our strength. When I saw my friend's private papers carried in just now in tile arms of a dirty policeman, I said to myself, 'Amritrao is the man to clear up this ". There was a lugubrious pause. Tile temple bell continued to jangle harshly. The interminable and disastrous day had scarcely reached its afternoon. Continuing their work, the wheels of Dominion now pro— pelled a messenger on a horse from the Superintendent to the Magistrate with an official report of arrest. "Don't complicate, let the cards play themselves," entreated Fielding, as he watched the man disappear into dust. "We're bound to win, there's nothing else

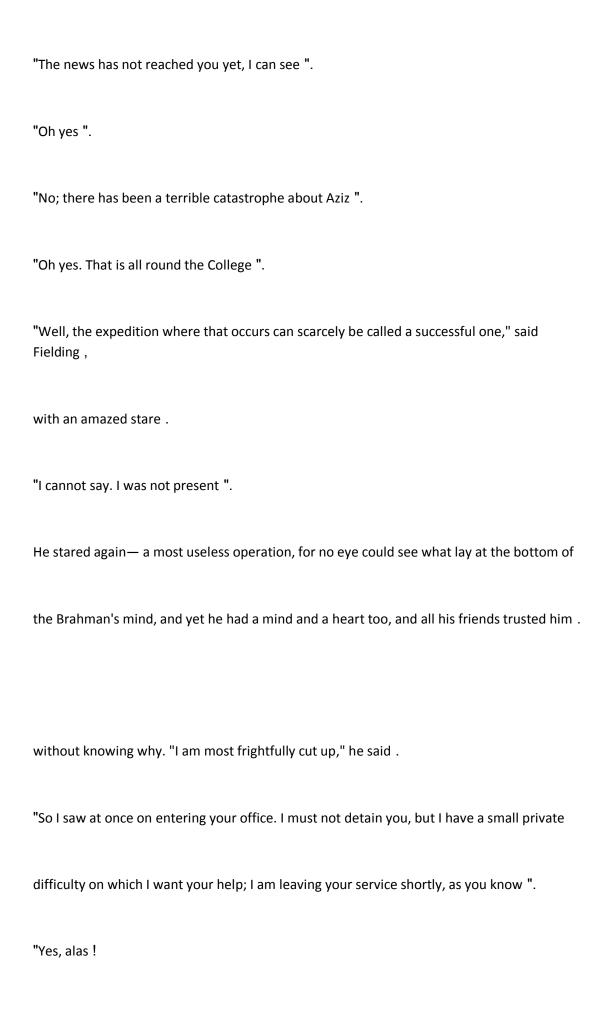
This comforted Hamidullah, who remarked with complete sincerity, "At a crisis, the English

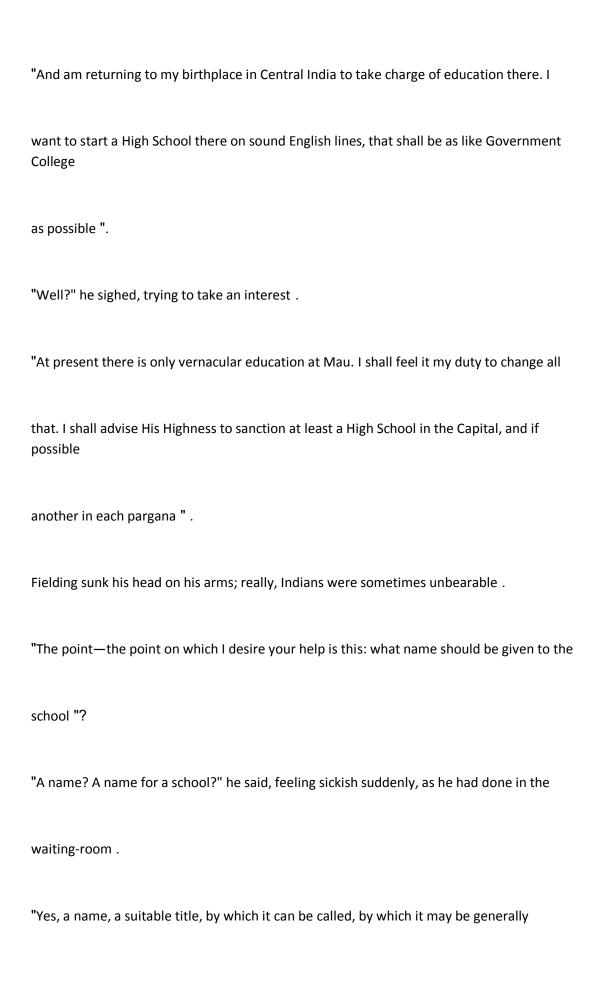
we can do. She will never be able to substantiate the charge ".

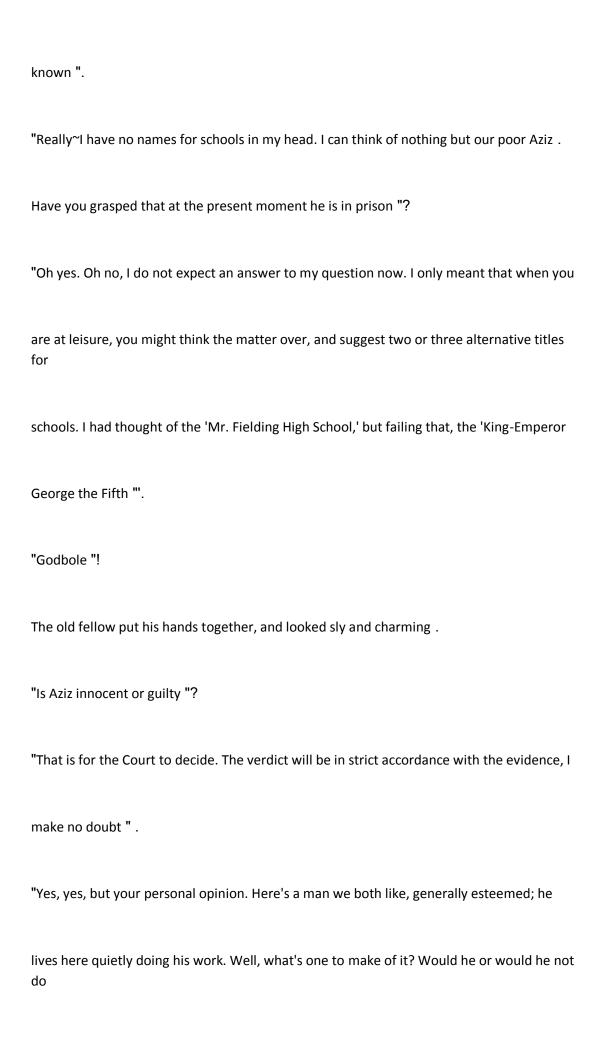
are really unequalled ". "Good-bye, then, my dear Hamidullah (we must drop the 'Mr.' now). Give Aziz my love when you see him, and tell him to keep calm, calm, calm. I shall go back to the College now. If you want me, ring me up; if you don't, don't, for I shall be very busy ". "Good-bye, my dear Fielding, and you actually are on our side against your own people"? "Yes. Definitely". He regretted taking sides. To slink through India unlabelled was his aim. Henceforward he would be called "anti -British," "seditious "—terms that bored him, and diminished his utility. He foresaw that besides being a tragedy, there would be a muddle; already he saw several tiresome little knots, and each time his eye returned to them, they were larger. Born in freedom, he was not afraid of the muddle, but he recognized its existence. This section of the day concluded in a queer vague talk with Professor Godbole. The interminable

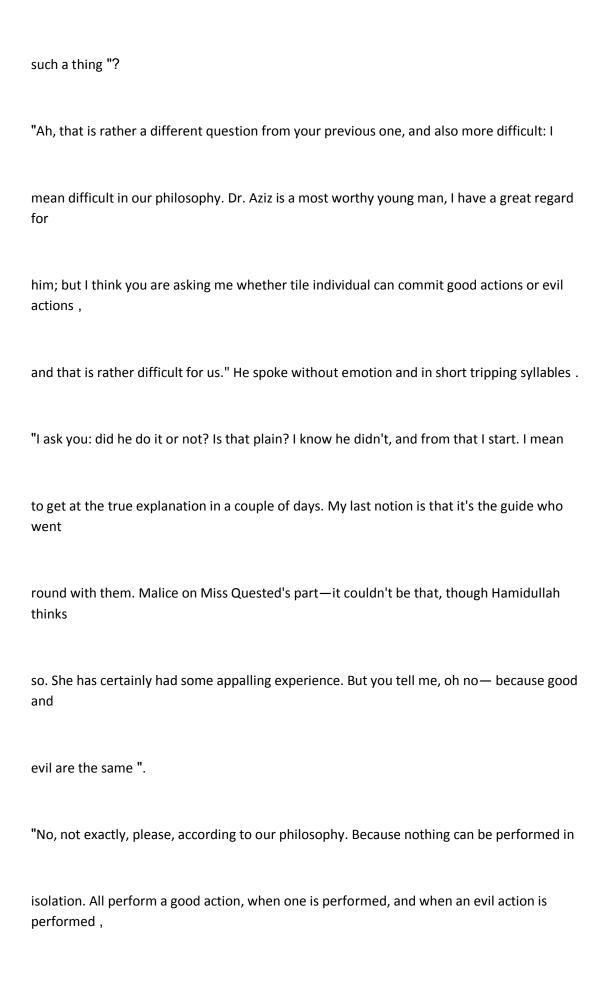
affair of the Russell's Viper was again in question. Some weeks before, one of the masters

at the College, an unpopular Parsi, had found a Russell's Viper nosing round his classroom. Perhaps it had crawled in of itself, but perhaps it had not, and the staff still continued to interview their Principal about it, and to take up his time with their theories. The reptile is so poisonous that he did not like to cut them short, and this they knew. Thus when his mind was bursting with other troubles and he was debating whether he should compose a letter of appeal to Miss Quested, he was obliged to listen to a speech which lacked both basis and conclusion, and floated through air. At the end of it Godbole said, "May I now take my leave?" — always an indication that he had not come to his point yet. "Now I take my leave, I must tell you how glad I am to hear that after all you succeeded in reaching the Marabar. I feared my unpunctuality had prevented you, but you went (a far pleasanter method) in Miss Derek's car. I hope the expedition was a successful one ".









all perform it. To illustrate my meaning, let me take the case in point as an example .
"I am informed that an evil action was performed in the Marabar Hills, and that a highly esteemed
English lady is now seriously ill in consequence. My answer to that is this: that action
was performed by Dr. Aziz." He stopped and sucked in his thin cheeks. "It was performed by the
guide." He stopped again. "It was performed by you." Now he had an air of daring and of coyness .
"It was performed by me." He looked shyly down the sleeve of his own coat. "And by my
students. It was even performed by the lady herself When evil occurs, it expresses the whole of
the universe. Similarly when good occurs ".
"And similarly when suffering occurs, and so on and so forth, and everything is anything and
nothing something," he muttered in his irritation, for he needed the solid ground .
"Excuse me, you are now again changing the basis of our discussion. We were discussing

good and evil. Suffering is merely a matter for the individual. If a young lady has sunstroke, that is a matter of no significance to the universe. Oh no, not at all. Oh no, not the least. It is an isolated matter, it only concerns herself If she thought her head did not ache, she would not be ill, and that would end it. But it is far otherwise in the case of good and evil. They are not what we think them, they are what they are, and each of us has contributed to both ". "You're preaching that evil and good are the same ". "Oh no, excuse me once again. Good and evil are different, as their names imply. But, in my own humble opinion, they are both of them aspects of my Lord. He is present in the one, absent in the other, and the difference between presence and absence is great, as great as my feeble mind can grasp. Yet absence implies presence, absence is not non-existence, and we are therefore entitled to repeat, 'Come, come, come, come.'" And in the same breath, as if to cancel any beauty his words might have contained, he added, "But did you have time to visit any of

the interesting Marabar antiquities "?



misery. "You deserted me," was the only coherent remark. He went away to write his letter to

Miss Quested. Even if it reached her, it would do no good, and probably the McBrydes would

withhold it. Miss Quested did pull him up short. She was such a dry, sensible girl, and quite

without malice: the last person in Chandrapore wrongfully to accuse an Indian .

CHAPTER XX

Although Miss Quested had not made herself popular with the English, she brought out all

that was fine in their character. For a few hours an exalted emotion gushed forth, which the

women felt even more keenly than the men, if not for so long. "What can we do for our sister "?

was the only thought of Mesdames Callendar and Lesley, as they drove through the pelting heat

to enquire. Mrs. Turton was the only visitor admitted to the sick-room. She came out ennobled

by an unselfish sorrow. "She is my own darling girl," were the words she spoke, and then,

remembering

that she had called her "not pukka" and resented her engagement to young

Heaslop, she began to cry. No one had ever seen the Collector's wife cry. Capable of tears yes, but always reserving them for some adequate occasion, and now it had come. Ah, why had they not all been kinder to the stranger, more patient, given her not only hospitality but their hearts? The tender core of the heart that is so seldom used—they employed it for a little, under the stimulus of remorse. If all is over (as Major Callendar implied), well, all is over, and nothing can be done, but they retained some responsibility in her grievous wrong that they couldn't define . If she wasn't one of them, they ought to have made her one, and they could never do that now, she had passed beyond their invitation. "Why don't one think more of other people"? sighed pleasure-loving Miss Derek. These regrets only lasted in their pure form for a few hours .

with our first sight of any suffering) had begun to wear away .

connected

People drove into the club with studious calm— the jog-trot of country gentlefolk between

Before sunset, other considerations adulterated them, and the sense of guilt (so strangely

green hedgerows, for the natives must not suspect that they were agitated. They exchanged the usual drinks, but everything tasted different, and then they looked out at the palisade of cactuses stabbing the purple throat of the sky; they realized that they were thousands of miles from any scenery that they understood. The club was fuller than usual, and several parents had brought their children into the rooms reserved for adults, which gave the air of the Residency at Lucknow. One young mother—a brainless but most beautiful girl—sat on a low ottoman in the smokingroom with her baby in her arms; her husband was away in the district, and she dared not return to her bungalow in case the "niggers attacked." The wife of a small railway official, she was generally snubbed; but this evening, with her abundant figure and masses of corngold hair, she symbolized all that is worth fighting and dying for; more permanent a symbol, perhaps,

than poor Adela. "Don't worry, Mrs. Blakiston, those drums are only Mohurram," the men

would tell her. "Then they've started," she moaned, clasping the infant and rather wishing he

would not blow bubbles down his chin at such a moment as this. "No, of course not, and anyhow , $\,$

they're not coming to the club." "And they're not coming to the Burra Sahib's bungalow

either, my dear, and that's where you and your baby'll sleep to-night," answered Mrs. Turton ,

towering by her side like Pallas Athene, and determining in the future not to be such a snob.

!The Collector clapped his hands for silence. He was much calmer than when he had flown

out at Fielding. He was indeed always calmer when he addressed several people than in a tltea -

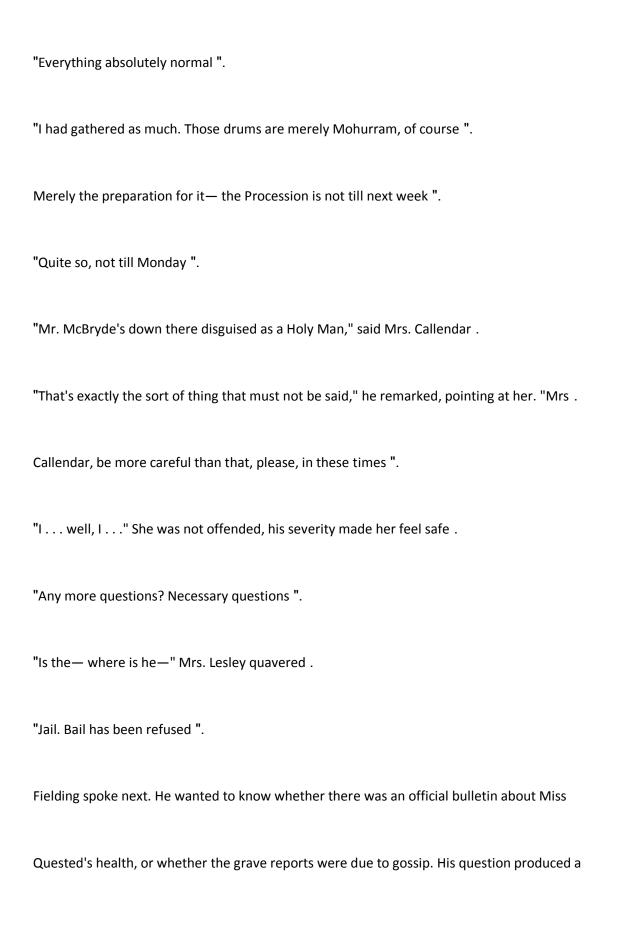
tlte_. "I want to talk specially to the ladies," he said. " Not the least cause for alarm. Keep

cool, keep cool. Don't go out more than you can help, don't go into the city, don't talk before

your servants. That's all ".

"Harry, is there any news from the city?" asked his wife, standing at some distance from

him, and also assuming her public safety voice. The rest were silent during the august colloquy .





comforter .
When the smoking-room was clear, the Collector sat on the edge of a table, so that he could
dominate without formality. His mind whirled with contradictory impulses. He wanted to avenge
Miss Quested and punish Fielding, while remaining scmpulously fair. He wanted to flog every
native that he saw, but to do nothing that would lead to a riot or to the necessity for military
intervention. The dread of having to call in the troops was vivid to him; soldiers put one thing
straight, but leave a dozen others crooked, and they love to humiliate the civilian administration .
One soldier was in the room this evening—a stray subaltern from a Gurkha regiment; he
was a little drunk, and regarded his presence as providential. The Collector sighed. There
seemed nothing for it but the old weary business of compromise and moderation. He longed for
the good old days when an Englishman could satisfy his own honour and no questions asked
afterwards. Poor young Heaslop had taken a step in this direction, by refusing bail, but the Collector

couldn't feel this was wise of poor young Heaslop. Not only would the Nawab Bahadur and others be angry, but the Government of India itself also watches—and behind it is that caucus of cranks and cravens, the British Parliament. He had constantly to remind himself that, in the eyes of tile law, Aziz was not yet guilty, and the effort fatigued him. The others, less responsible, could behave naturally. They had started speaking of "women and children "— that phrase that exempts the male from sanity when it has been repeated a few times. Each felt that all he loved best in tile world was at stake, demanded revenge, and was filled with a not unpleasing glow, in which the chilly and half-known features of Miss Quested vanished, and were replaced by all that is sweetest and warmest in the private life. "But it's the

women and children," they repeated, and the Collector knew he ought to stop them intoxicating

themselves, but he hadn't the heart. "They ought to be compelled to give hostages," etc. Many

of the said women and children were leaving for the Hill Station in a few days, and the suggestion



Get the womenfolk off to the hills, but do it quietly, and for Heaven's sake no more talk of special

trains. Never mind what you think or feel. Possibly I have feelings too. One isolated Indian

has attempted— is charged with an attempted crime." He fiipped his forehead hard with his

finger-nail, and they all realized that he felt as deeply as they did, and they loved him, and

determined

not to increase his difficulties. "Act upon that fact until there are more facts," he concluded .

"Assume every Indian is an angel ".

They murmured, "Right you are, Burra Sahib. . . Angels. . . . Exactly. ... "From the subaltern:

"Exactly what I said. The native's all right if you get him alone. Lesley! Lesley! You remember

the one I had a knock with on your Maidan last month. Well, he was all right. Any native

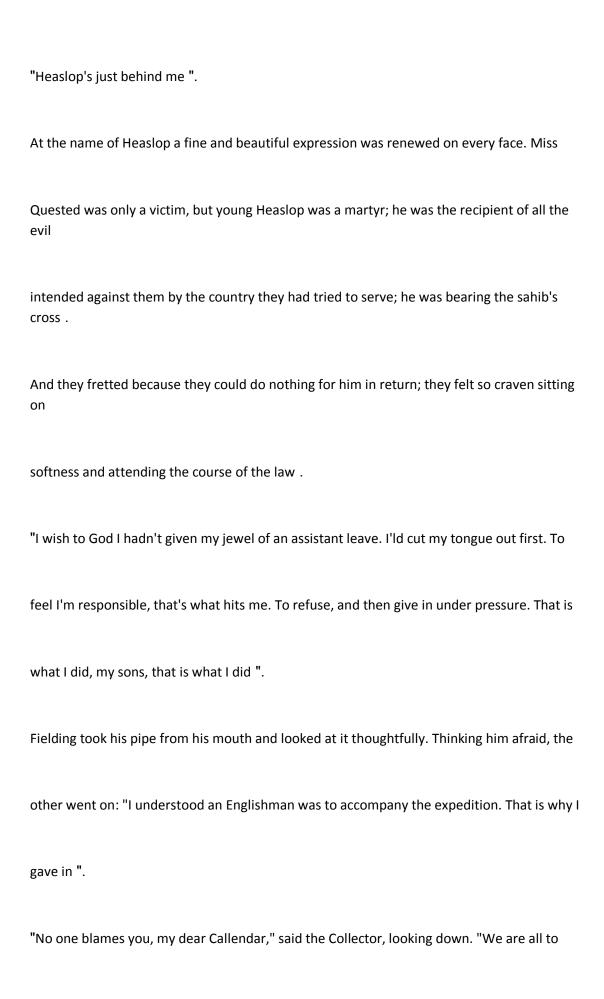
who plays polo is all right. What you've got to stamp on is these educated classes, and,

mind, I do know what I'm talking about this time ".

The smoking-room door opened, and let in a feminine buzz. Mrs. Turton called out, "She's

better," and from both sections of the community a sigh of joy and relief rose. The Civil Surgeon ,

who had brought the good news, came in. His cumbrous, pasty face looked illtempered .
He surveyed the company, saw Fielding crouched below him on an ottoman, and said, "H'm "!
Everyone began pressing him for details. "No one's out of danger in this country as long as they
have a temperature," was his answer. He appeared to resent his patient's recovery, and no one
who knew the old Major and his ways was surprised at this .
"Squat down, Callendar; tell us all about it ".
"Take me some time to do that ".
"How's the old lady "?
"Temperature ".
"My wife heard she was sinking ".
"So she may be. I guarantee nothing. I really can't be plagued with questions, Lesley ".
"Sorry, old man ".



blame in the sense that we ought to have seen the expedition was insufficiently guaranteed, and stopped it. I knew about it myself; we lent our car this morning to take the ladies to the station. We are all implicated in that sense, but not an atom of blame attaches to you personally ".

"I don't feel that. I wish I could. Responsibility is a very awful thing, and I've no use for the man who shirks it." His eyes were directed on Fielding. Those who knew that Fielding had

undertaken

to accompany and missed the early train were sorry for him; it was what is to be expected

when a man mixes himself up with natives; always ends in some indignity. The Collector,

who knew more, kept silent, for the official in him still hoped that Fielding would toe the line .

The conversation turned to women and children again, and under its cover Major Callendar got

hold of the subaltern, and set him on to bait the schoolmaster. Pretending to be more drunk

than he really was, he began to make semioffensive remarks.

"Heard about Miss Quested's servant?" reinforced the Major .



"That's ridiculous . . . " He sat down again, trembling with rage; person after person was being dragged into the mud . Having shot this bolt, the Major prepared the next. "Heaslop also found out something from his mother. Aziz paid a herd of natives to suffocate her in a cave. That was the end of her, or would have been only she got out. Nicely planned, wasn't it? Neat. Then he could go on with the girl. He and she and a guide, provided by the same Mohammed Latif. Guide now can't be found. Pretty." His voice broke into a roar. "It's not the time for sitting down. It's the time for action. Call in the troops and clear the bazaars ". The Major's outbursts were always discounted, but he made everyone uneasy on this occasion. The crime was even worse than they had supposed—the unspeakable limit of cynicism,

untouched since 1857. Fielding forgot his anger on poor old Godbole's behalf, and became

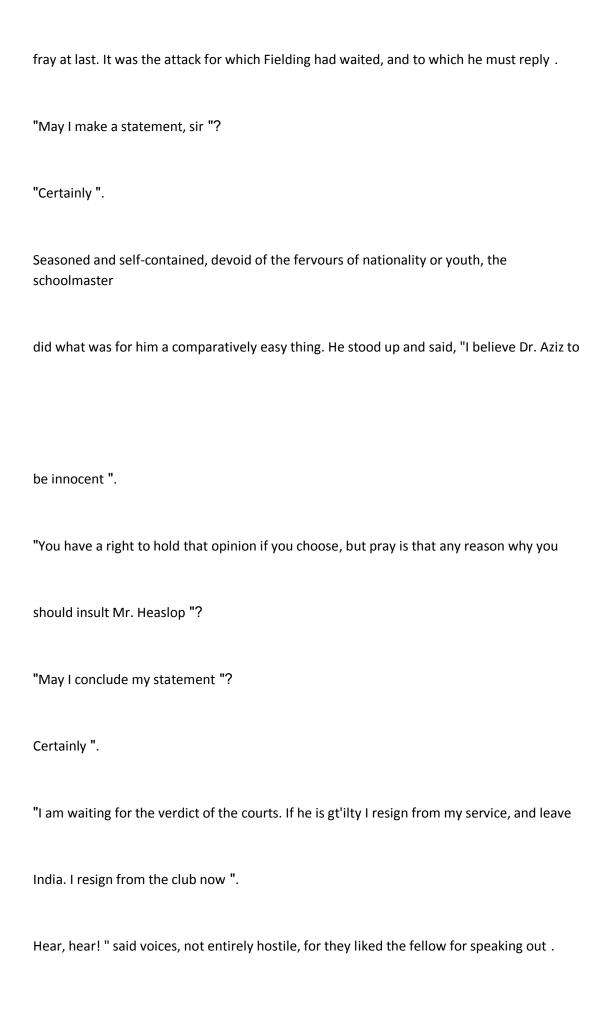
thoughtful; the evil was propagating in every direction, it seemed to have an existence of its



The young man looked exhausted and tragic, also gentler than usual. He always showed deference to his superiors, but now it came straight from his heart. He seemed to appeal for their protection in the insult that had befallen him, and they, in instinctive homage, rose to their feet. But every human act in the East is tainted with officialism, and while honouring him they condemned Aziz and India. Fielding realized this, and he remained seated. It was an ungracious, a caddish thing to do, perhaps an unsound thing to do, but he felt he had been passive long enough, and that he might be drawn into the wrong current if he did not make a stand. Ronny, who had not seen him, said in husky tones, "Oh, please— please all sit down, I only want to listen what has been decided ". "Heaslop, I'm telling them I'm against any show of force," said the Collector apologetically. "I don't know whether you will feel as I do, but that is how I am situated. When the verdict is obtained, it will be another nrttter ".

"You are sure to know best; I have no experience, Burra Sahib".









Marabar Hills. At this distance and hour they leapt into beauty; they were Monsalvat, Walhalla ,

the towers of a cathedral, peopled with saints and heroes, and covered with flowers. What miscreant

lurked in them, presently to be detected by the activities of the law? Who was the guide,

and had he been found yet? What was the "echo" of which the girl complained? He did not

know, but presently he would know. Great is information, and she shall prevail. It was the last

moment of the light, and as he gazed at the Marabar Hills they seemed to move graciously towards

him like a queen, and their charm became the sky's. At the moment they vanished they

were everywhere, the cool benediction of the night descended, the stars sparkled, and the

whole universe was a hill. Lovely, exquisite moment—but passing the Englishman with averted

face and on swift wings. He experienced nothing himself; it was as if someone had told him

there was such a moment, and he was obliged to believe. And he felt dubious and discontented

suddenly, and wondered whether he was really and truly successful as a human being. After

forty years' experience, he had learnt to manage his life and make the best of it on advanced
European lines, had developed his personality, explored his limitations, controlled his passions —
and he had done it all without becoming either pedantic or worldly. A creditable achievement ,
but as the moment passed, he felt he ought to have been working at something else the whole
time, —he didn't know at what, never would know, never could know, and that was why he felt
sad .
CHAPTER XXI
Dismissing his regrets, as Inappropriate to the matter in hand, he accomplished the last section
of the day by riding off to his new allies. He was glad that he had broken with the club, for
he would have picked up scraps of gossip there, and reported them down in the city, and he
was glad to be denied this opportunity. He would miss his billiards, and occasional tennis, and

cracks with McBryde, but really that was all, so light did he travel. At the entrance of the bazaars, a tiger made his horse shy~a youth dressed up as a tiger, the body striped brown and yellow, a mask over the face. Mohurram was working up. The city beat a good many drums, but seemed good-tempered. He was invited to inspect a small tazia~a flimsy and frivolous erection, more like a crinoline than the tomb of the grandson of the Prophet, done to death at Kerbela. Excited children were pasting coloured paper over its ribs. The rest of the evening he spent with the Nawab Bahadur, Hamidullah, Mahmoud Ali, and others of the confederacy. The campaign was also working up. A telegram had been sent to the famous Amritrao, and his acceptance received. Application for bail was to be renewed—it could not well be withheld now that Miss Quested was out of danger. The conference was serious and sensible, but marred by a group of itinerant musicians, who were allowed to play in the compound. Each held a large earthenware

jar, containing pebbles, and jerked it up and down in time to a doleful chant. Distracted by the
noise, he suggested their dismissal, but the Nawab Bahadur vetoed it; he said that musicians ,
who had walked many miles, might bring good luck .
Late at night, he had an inclination to tell Professor Godbole of the tactical and moral error
he had made in being rude to Heaslop, and to hear what he would say. But the old fellow had
gone to bed and slipped off unmolested to his new job in a day or two: he always did possess
the knack of slipping off
CHAPTER XXII
Adela lay for several days in the McBrydes' bungalow. She had been touched by the sun $$
also hundreds of cactus spines had to be picked out of her flesh. Hour after hour Miss Derek
and Mrs. McBryde examined her through magnifying glasses, always coming on fresh colonies,
tiny hairs that might snap off and be drawn into the blood if they were neglected. She lay passive

beneath their fingers, which developed the shock that had begun in the cave. Hitherto she

had not much minded whether she was touched or not: her senses were abnormally inert and

the only contact she anticipated was that of mind. Everything now was transferred to the surface

of her body, which began to avenge itself, and feed unhealthily. People seemed very much

alike, except that some would come close while others kept away. "In space things touch, in

time things part," she repeated to herself while the thorns were being extracted—her brain so

weak that she could not decide whether the phrase was a philosophy or a pun.

They were kind to her, indeed over-kind, the men too respectful, the women too sympathetic;

whereas Mrs. Moore, the only visitor she wanted, kept away. No one understood her

trouble, or knew why she vibrated between hard commonsense and hysteria. She would begin a

speech as if nothing particular had happened. "I went into this detestable cave," she would say

dryly, "and I remember scratching the wall with my finger-nail, to start the usual echo, and then

as I was saying there was this shadow, or sort of shadow, down the entrance tunnel, bottling me up. It seemed like an age, but I suppose the whole thing can't have lasted thirty seconds really. I hit at him with the glasses, he pulled me round the cave by the strap, it broke, I escaped,

that's all. He never actually touched me once. It all seems such nonsense." Then her

eyes would fill with tears. "Naturally I'm upset, but I shall get over it." And then she would

break down entirely, and the women would feel she was one of themselves and cry too, and

men in the next room murmur: "Good God, good God! " No one realized that she thought tears

vile, a degradation more subtle than anything endured in the Marabar, a negation of her advanced

outlook and the natural honesty of her mind. Adela was always trying to "think the incident

out," always reminding herself that no harm had been done. There was "the shock," but

what is that? For a time her own logic would convince her, then she would hear the echo again ,

weep, declare she was unworthy of Ronny, and hope her assailant would get the maximum

penalty. After one of these bouts, she longed to go out into the bazaars and ask pardon from everyone she met, for she felt in some vague way that she was leaving the world worse than she found it. She felt that it was her crime, until the intellect, reawakening, pointed out to her that she was inaccurate here, and set her again upon her sterile round. If only she could have seen Mrs. Moore! The old lady had not been well either, and was disinclined to come out, Ronny reported. And consequently the echo flourished, raging up and down like a nerve in the faculty of her hearing, and the noise in the cave, so unimportant intellectually, was prolonged over the surface of her life. She had struck the polished wall—for no reason—and before the comment had died away, he followed her, and the climax was the falling of her field-glasses. The sound had spouted after her when she escaped, and was going on still

like a river that gradually floods the plain. Only Mrs. Moore could drive it back to its source

and

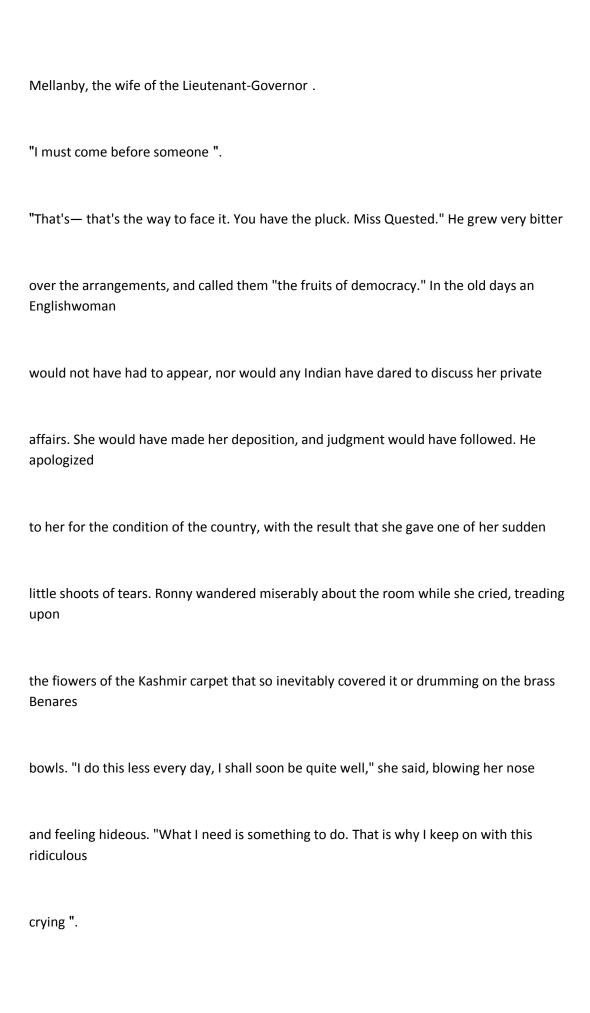
seal the broken reservoir. Evil was loose . . . she could even hear it entering the lives of others And Adela spent days in this atmosphere of grief and depression. Her friends kept up their spirits by demanding holocausts of natives, but she was too worried and weak to do that . !When the cactus thorns had all been extracted, and her temperature fallen to normal, Ronny came to fetch her away. He was worn with indignation and suffering, and she wished she could comfort him; but intimacy seemed to caricature itself, and the more they spoke the more wretched and self-conscious they became. Practical talk was the least painful, and he and McBryde now told her one or two things which they had concealed from her during the crisis, by the doctor's orders. She learnt for the first time of the Mohurram troubles. There had nearly been a riot. The last day of the festival, the great procession left its official route, and tried

enter the civil station, and a telephone had been cut because it interrupted the advance of

to

one

of the larger paper towers. McBryde and his police had pulled the thing straight— a fine piece of work. They passed on to another and very pain full subject: the trial. She would have to appear in court, identify the prisoner, and submit to cross-examination by an Indian lawyer. "Can Mrs. Moore be with me?" was all she said . "Certainly, and I shall be there myself," Ronny replied. "The case won't come before me; they've objected to me on personal grounds. It will be at Chandrapore— we thought at one time it would be transferred elsewhere ". "Miss Quested realizes what all that means, though," said McBryde sadly. "The case will come before Das ". Das was Ronny's assistant — own brother to the Mrs. Bhattacharya whose carriage had played them false last month. He was courteous and intelligent, and with the evidence before him could only come to one conclusion; but that he should be judge over an English girl had convulsed the station with wrath, and some of the women had sent a telegram about it to Lady



"It's not ridiculous, we think you wonderful," said the policeman very sincerely. ' It only
bothers us that we can't help you more. Your stopping here— at such a time— is the greatest
honour this house—" He too was overcome with emotion. "By the way, a letter came here for
you while you were ill," he continued. " I opened it, which is a strange confession to make. Will
you forgive me? The circumstances are peculiar. It is from Fielding ".
"Why should he write to me "?
"A most lamentable thing has happened. The defence got hold of him ".
"He's a crank, a crank," said Ronny lightly .
"That's your way of putting it, but a man can be a crank without being a cad. Miss Quested
had better know how he behaved to you. If you don't tell her, somebody else will." He told her .
"He is now the mainstay of the defence, I needn't add. He is the one righteous Englishman in a
horde of tyrants. He receives deputations from the bazaar, and they all chew betel nut and

swear one another's hands with scent. It is not easy to enter into the mind of such a man. His students are on strike—out of enthusiasm for him they won't learn their lessons. If it weren't for Fielding one would never have had the Mohurram trouble. He has done a very grave disservice to the whole community. The letter lay here a day or two, waiting till you were well enough, then the situation got so grave that I decided to open it in case it was useful to us ". "Is it?" she said feebly. "Not at all. He only has the impertinence to suggest you have made a mistake ". "Would that I had! " She glanced through the letter, which was careful and formal in its wording. "Dr. Aziz is innocent," she read. Then her voice began to tremble again. "But think of his behaviour to you, Ronny. When you had already to bear so much for my sake! It was shocking of him. My dear, how can I repay you? Flow can one repay when one has nothing to give? What is the use of personal relationships when everyone brings less and less to them? I feel

we

ought all to go back into the desert for centuries and try and get good. I want to begin at the

beginning. All the things I thought I'd learnt are just a hindrance, they're not knowledge at all .

I'm not fit for personal relationships. Well, let's go, let's go. Of course Mr. Fielding's letter

doesn't count; he can think and write what he likes, only he shouldn't have been rude to you

when you had so much to bear. That's what matters. ... I don't want your arm, I'm a magnificent

walker, so don't touch me, please ".

Mrs. McBryde wished her an affectionate good-bye—a woman with whom she had nothing in

common and whose intimacy oppressed her. They would have to meet now, year after year, until

one of their husbands was superannuated. Truly Anglo-India had caught her with a vengeance

and perhaps it served her right for having tried to take up a line of her own. Humbled yet

repelled, she gave thanks. "Oh, we must help one another, we must take the rough with the

smooth," said Mrs. McBryde. Miss Derek was there too, still making jokes about her comic

Maharajah
and Rani. Required as a witness at the trial, she had refused to send back the Mudkul
car; they would be frightfully sick. Both Mrs. McBryde and Miss Derek kissed her, and called her
by her Christian name. Then Ronny drove her back. It was early in the morning, for the day, as
the hot weather advanced, swelled like a monster at both ends, and left less and less room for
the movements of mortals .
As they neared his bungalow, he said: "Mother's looking forward to seeing you, but of
course she's old, one mustn't forget that. Old people never take things as one expects, in my
opinion." He seemed warning her against approaching disappointment, but she took no notice .
Her friendship with Mrs. Moore was so deep and real that she felt sure it would last, whatever
else happened. "What can I do to make things easier for you? It's you who matter," she

sighed .

"Dear old girl to say so ".





at the arrest, asked scarcely any questions, and had refused to leave her bed on the awful last night of Mohurram, when an attack was expected on the bungalow. "I know it's all nothing; I must be sensible, I do try--" Adela continued, working again towards tears. "I shouldn't mind if it had happened anywhere else; at least I really don't know where it did happen ". Ronny supposed that he understood what she meant: she could not identify or describe the particular cave, indeed almost refused to have her mind cleared up about it, and it was recognized that the defence would try to make capital out of this during the trial. He reassured her: the Marabar caves were notoriously like one another; indeed, in the future they were to be numbered in sequence with white paint . "Yes, I mean that, at least not exactly; but there is this echo that I keep on hearing ". "Oh, what of the echo?" asked Mrs. Moore, paying attention to her for the first time. I can't get rid of it ". "I don't suppose you ever will ".





you'd been well enough to keep on too nothing would have happened. He planned it, I know. Still, you fell into his trap just like Fielding and Antony before you. . . . Forgive me for speaking so plainly, but you've no right to take up this high and mighty attitude about law courts. If you're ill, that's different; but you say you're all right and you seem so, in which case I thought you'ld want to take your part, I did really ". "I'll not have you worry her whether she's well or ill," said Adela, leaving the sofa and taking his arm; then dropped it with a sigh and sat down again. But he was pleased she had rallied to him and surveyed his mother patronizingly. He had never felt easy with her. She was by no means the dear old lady outsiders supposed, aiid India had brought her into the open . "I shall attend your marriage, but not your trial," she informed them, tapping her knee; she had become very restless, and rather ungraceful. "Then I shall go to England". "You can't go to England in May, as you agreed ".

"I have changed my mind ". "Well, we'd better end this unexpected wrangle," said the young man, striding about. "You appear to want to be left out of everything, and that's enough ". "My body, my miserable body," she sighed. "Why isn't it strong? Oh, why can't I walk away and be gone? Why can't I finish my duties and be gone? Why do I get headaches and puff when I walk? And all the time this to do and that to do and this to do in your way and that to do in her way, and everything sympathy and confusion and bearing one another's burdens. Why can't this be done and that be done in my way and they be done and I at peace? Why has anything to be done, I cannot see. Why all this marriage, marriage? . . . The human race would have become a single person centuries ago if marriage was any use. And all this rubbish about love, love in a church, love in a cave, as if there is the least difference, and I held up from my business over such trifles "! "What do you want?" he said, exasperated. "Can you state it in simple language? If so, do ".





had been drowned by the cries of the faithful, and it was quite a time before they were rescued

by the police. Nureddin was taken to the Minto Hospital, Aziz restored to prison, with an additional charge against him of disturbing the public peace. "Half a minute," he remarked when the anecdote was over, and went to the telephone to ask Callendar to look in as soon as

he found it convenient, because she hadn't borne the journey well .

When he returned, she was in a nervous crisis, but it took a different form—she clung to him, and sobbed, "Help me to do what I ought. Aziz is good. You heard your mother say so ". "Heard what "?

"He's good; I've been so wrong to accuse him ".

"Mother never said so ".

"Didn't she?" she asked, quite reasonable, open to every suggestion anyway.

"She never mentioned that name once ".

"But, Ronny, I heard her ".

"Pure illusion. You can't be quite well, can you, to make up a thing like that ".

"I suppose I can't. How amazing of me "!

"I was listening to all she said, as far as it could be listened to; she gets very incoherent ".

"When her voice dropped she said it— towards the end, when she talked above love—love—I

couldn't follow, but just then she said: 'Doctor Aziz never did it "'.

"Those words "?

"The idea more than the words ".

"Never, never, my dear girl. Complete illusion. His name was not mentioned by anyone. Look here— you are confusing this with Fielding's letter ".

"That's it, that's it," she cried, greatly relieved. "I knew I'd heard his name somewhere. I am so grateful to you for clearing this up— it's the sort of mistake that worries me, and proves

I'm neurotic ".

"So you won't go saying he's innocent again, will you? for every servant I've got is a spy ".

He went to the window. The mali had gone, or rather had turned into two small children impossible they should know English, but he sent them packing. "They all hate us," he
explained.

"It'll be all right after the verdict, for I will say this for them, they do accept the accomplished fact; but at present they're pouring out money like water to catch us tripping, and a remark like yours is the very thing they look out for. It would enable them to say it was a put-up job on the part of us officials. You see what I mean ".

Mrs. Moore came back, with the same air of ill-temper, and sat down with a flump by the card-table. To clear the confusion up, Ronny asked her point-blank whether she had mentioned

the prisoner. She could not understand the question and the reason of it had to be explained .

She replied: "I never said his name," and began to play patience.

"I thought you said, 'Aziz is an innocent man,' but it was in Mr. Fielding's letter ".

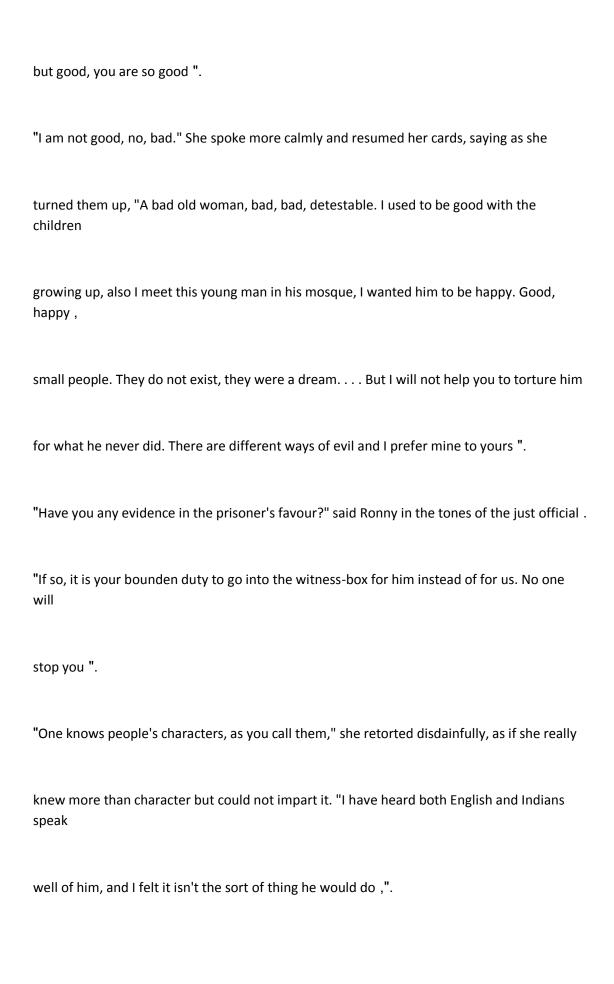
"Of course he is innocent," she answered indifferently: it was the first time she had expressed

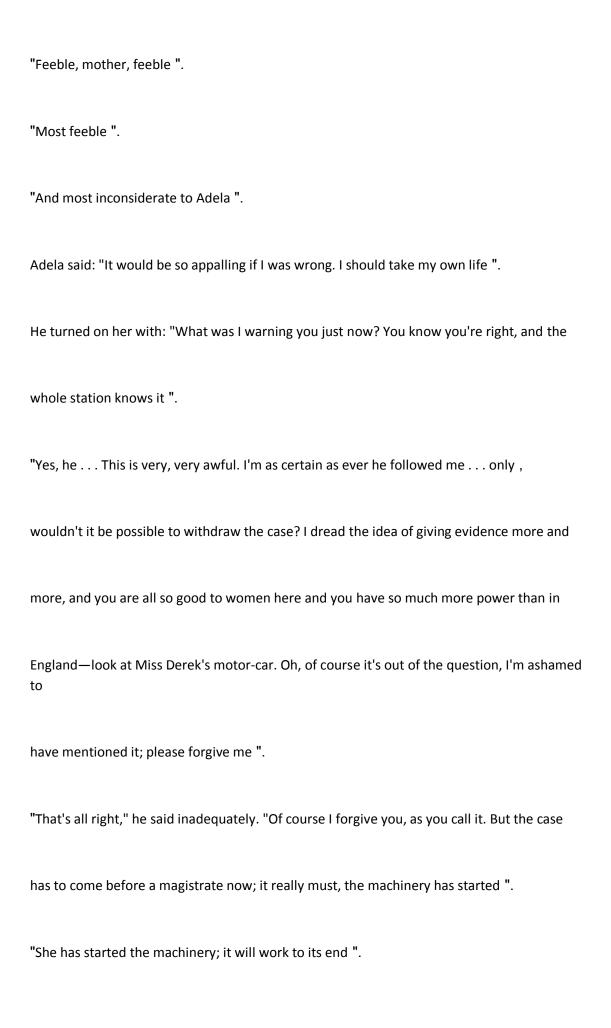
an opinion on the point .

"You see, Ronny, I was right," said the girl .

"You were not right, she never said it ".







Adela inclined towards tears in consequence of this unkind remark, and Ronny picked up the

list of steamship sailings with an excellent notion in his head. His mother ought to leave India at

once: she was doing no good to herself or to anyone else there .

CHAPTER XXIII

Lady Mellanby, wife to the Lieutenant-Governor of the Province, had been gratified by the

appeal addressed to her by the ladies of Chandrapore. She could not do anything—besides, she

was sailing for England; but she desired to be informed if she could show sympathy in any

other way. Mrs. Turton replied that Mr. Heaslop's mother was trying to get a passage, but had

delayed too long, and all the boats were full; could Lady Mellanby use her influence? Not even

Lady Mellanby could expand the dimensions of a P. and O., but she was a very, very nice

woman, and she actually wired offering the unknown and obscure old lady accommodation in

her own reserved cabin. It was like a gift from heaven; humble and grateful, Ronny could not

but reflect that there are compensations for every woe. His name was familiar at Government
House owing to poor Adela, and now Mrs. Moore would stamp it on Lady Mellanby's imagination ,
as they journeyed across the Indian Ocean and up the Red Sea. He had a return of tenderness
for his mother—as we do for our relatives when they receive conspicuous and unexpected
honour. She was not negligible, she could still arrest the attention of a high official's
wife .
So Mrs. Moore had all she wished; she escaped the trial, the marriage, and the hot weather;
she would return to England in comfort and distinction, and see her other children. At her son's
suggestion, and by her own desire, she departed. But she accepted her good luck without
enthusiasm .
She had come to that state where the horror of the universe and its smallness are
both visible at the same time—the twilight of the double vision in which so many elderly people

are involved. If this world is not to our taste, well, at all events there is Heaven, Hell,

Annihilation-one or other of those large things, that huge scenic background of stars, fires, blue

or black air. All heroic endeavour, and all that is known as art, assumes that there is such a

background, just as all practical endeavour, when the world is to our taste, assumes that the

world is all. But in the twilight of the double vision, a spiritual muddledom is set up for which no

high-sounding words can be found; we can neither act nor refrain from action, we can neither

ignore nor respect Infinity. Mrs. Moore had always inclined to resignation. As soon as she

landed in India it seemed to her good, and when she saw the water flowing through the

mosque-tank, or the Ganges, or the moon, caught in the shawl of night with all the other stars ,

it seemed a beautiful goal and an easy one. To be one with the universe! So dignified and simple .

But there was always some little duty to be performed first, some new card to be turned up

from the diminishing pack and placed, and while she was pottering about, the Marabar struck

its gong .
What had spoken to her in that scoured-out cavity of the granite? What dwelt in the first of
the caves? Something very old and very small. Before time, it was before space also. Something
snub-nosed, incapable of generosity— the undying worm itself Since hearing its voice, she had
not entertained one large thought, she was actually envious of Adela. All this fuss over a frightened
girl! Nothing had happened, "and if it had," she found herself thinking with the cynicism of
a withered priestess, " if it had, there are worse evils than love." The unspeakable attempt presented
itself to her as love: in a cave, in a church— Bourn, it amounts to the same. Visions are
supposed to entail profundity, but— Wait till you get one, dear reader! The abyss also may be
petty, the serpent of eternity made of maggots; her constant thought was: "Less attention
should be paid to my future daughter-in-law and more to me, there is no sorrow like my sorrow ",
although when the attention was paid she rejected it irritably .

Her son couldn't escort her to Bombay, for the local situation continued acute, and all officials

had to remain at their posts. Antony couldn't come either, in case he never returned to

give his evidence. So she travelled with no one who could remind her of the past. This was a

relief The heat had drawn back a little before its next advance, and the journey was not unpleasant .

As she left Chandrapore the moon, full again, shone over the Ganges and touched the

shrinking channels into threads of silver, then veered and looked into her window. The swift and

comfortable mail-train slid with her through the night, and all the next day she was rushing

through Central India, through landscapes that were baked and bleached but had not the hopeless

melancholy of the plain. She watched the indestructible life of man and his changing faces,

and the houses he has built for himself and God, and they appeared to her not in terms of her

own trouble but as things to see. There was, for instance, a place called Asirgarh which she

passed at sunset and identified on a map— an enormous fortress among wooded hills. No one

had ever mentioned Asirgarh to her, but it had huge and noble bastions and to the right of

them was a mosque. She forgot it. Ten minutes later, Asirgarh reappeared. The mosque was to

the left of the bastions now. The train in its descent through the Vindyas had described a semicircle

round Asirgarh. 'What could she connect it with except its own name? Nothing; she knew

no one who lived there. But it had looked at her twice and seemed to say: "I do not vanish ".

She woke in the middle of the night with a start, for the train was falling over the western cliff

Moonlit pinnacles rushed up at her like the fringes of a sea; then a brief episode of plain, the

real sea, and the soupy dawn of Bombay. "I have not seen the right places," she thought, as she saw embayed in the platforms of the Victoria Terminus the end of the rails that had carried

her over a continent and could never carry her back. She would never visit Asirgarh or the other

untouched places; neither Delhi nor Agra nor the Rajputana cities nor Kashmir, nor the obscurer

marvels that had sometimes shone through men's speech: the bilingual rock of Gimar, the statue of Shri Belgola, the ruins of Mandu and Hampi, temples of Khajraha, gardens of Shalimar.

As she drove through the huge city which the West has built and abandoned with a gesture of

despair, she longed to stop, though it was only Bombay, and disentangle the hundred Indias that passed each other in its streets. The feet of the horses moved her on, and presently the boat sailed and thousands of coconut palms appeared all round the anchorage and climbed the

hills to wave her farewell. "So you thought an echo was India; you took the Marabar caves as final?" they laughed. "What have we in common with them, or they with Asirgarh? Goodbye"!

Then the steamer rounded Colaba, the continent swung about, the cliff of the Ghats melted into

the haze of a tropic sea. Lady Mellanby turned up and advised her not to stand in the heat: "We

are safely out of the frying-pan," said Lady Mellanby, "it will never do to fall into the fire ".

CHAPTER XXIV

Making sudden changes of gear, the heat accelerated its advance after Mrs. Moore's departure

until existence had to be endured and crime punished with the thermometer at a hundred and twelve. Electric fans hummed and spat, water splashed on to screens, ice clinked, and outside

these defences, between a greyish sky and a yellowish earth, clouds of dust moved hesitatingly .

In Europe life retreats out of the cold, and exquisite fireside myths have resulted—Balder ,

Persephone—but here the retreat is from the source of life, the treacherous sun, and no poetry

adorns it because disillusionment cannot be beautiful. Men yearn for poetry though they may

not confess it; they desire that joy shall be graceful and sorrow august and infinity have a form .

and India fails to accommodate them. The annual helter-skelter of April, when irritability and

lust spread like a canker, is one of her comments on the orderly hopes of humanity. Fish manage

better; fish, as the tanks dry, wriggle into the mud and wait for the rains to uncake them .

But men try to be harmonious all the year round, and the results are occasionally disastrous .

The triumphant machine of civilization may suddenly hitch and be immobilized into a car of stone, and at such moments the destiny of the English seems to resemble their predecessors,'

who also entered the country with intent to refashion it, but were in the end worked into its pattern and covered with its dust .

Adela, after years of intellectualism, had resumed her morning kneel to Christianity. There seemed no harm in it, it was the shortest and easiest cut to the unseen, and she could tack her

troubles on to it. Just as the Hindu clerks asked Lakshmi for an increase in pay, so did she implore

Jehovah for a favourable verdict. God who saves the King will surely support the police $\,$

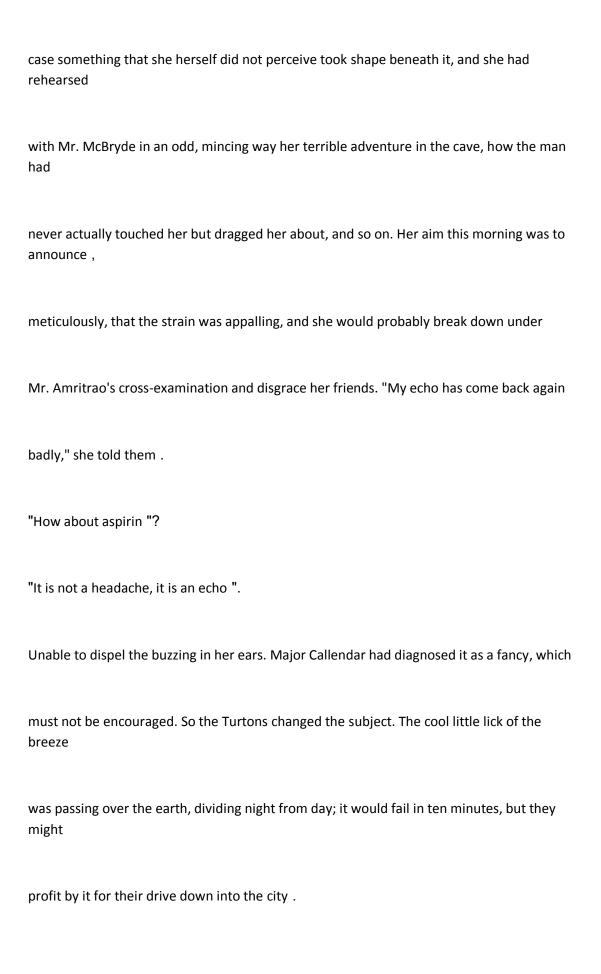
Her deity returned a consoling reply, but the touch of her hands on her face started prickly heat, and she seemed to swallow and expectorate the same insipid clot of air that had weighed

on her lungs all the night. Also the voice of Mrs. Turton disturbed her. "Are you ready, young lady?" it pealed from the next room .

"Haifa minute," she murmured. The Turtons had received her after Mrs. Moore left. Their kindness was incredible, but it was her position not her character that moved them; she was the English girl who had had the terrible experience, and for whom too much could not be done. No one, except Ronny, had any idea of what passed in her mind, and he only dimly, for where there is officialism every human relationship suffers. In her sadness she said to him, "I bring you nothing but trouble; I was right on the Maidan, we had better just be friends," but he

protested, for the more she suffered the more highly he valued her. Did she love him? This

question was somehow draggled up with the Marabar, it had been in her mind as she entered the fatal cave. Was she capable of loving anyone? "Miss Quested, Adela, what d'ye call yourself, it's half-past seven; we ought to think of starting for that Court when you feel inclined ". "She's saying her prayers," came the Collector's voice. "Sorry, my dear; take your time. . . . Was your chota hazri all right "? "I can't eat; might I have a little brandy?" she asked, deserting Jehovah. When it was brought, she shuddered, and said she was ready to go . "Drink it up; not a bad notion, a peg ". "I don't think it'll really help me, Burra Sahib ". "You sent brandy down to the Court, didn't you, Mary "? "I should think I did, champagne too ". "I'll thank you this evening, I'm all to pieces now," said the girl, forming each syllable carefully as if her trouble would diminish if it were accurately defined. She was afraid of reticence, in





there was a tap of silly anger on its paint—a pebble thrown by a child. Some larger

stones were dropped near the mosque. In the Maidan, a squad of native police on motor cycles

waited to escort them through the bazaars. The Collector was irritated and muttered,

"McBryde's an old woman"; but Mrs. Turton said, "Really, after Mohurram a show of force will

do no harm; it's ridiculous to pretend they don't hate us; do give up that farce." He replied in an

odd, sad voice, "I don't hate them, I don't know why," and he didn't hate them; for if he did, he

would have had to condemn his own career as a bad investment. He retained a contemptuous

affection for the pawns he had moved about for so many years, they must be worth his pains .

"After all, it's our women who make everything more difficult out here," was his inmost thought,

as he caught sight of some obscenities upon a long blank wall, and beneath his chivalry to Miss

Quested resentment lurked, waiting its day—perhaps there is a grain of resentment in all chivalry .

Some students had gathered in front of the City Magistrate's Court— hysterical boys whom
he would have faced if alone, but he told the driver to work round to the rear of the building .
The students jeered, and Rafi (hiding behind a comrade that he might not be identified) called
out the English were cowards .
They gained Ronny's private room, where a group of their own sort had collected. None
were cowardly, all nervy, for queer reports kept coming in. The Sweepers had just struck, and
half the commodes of Chandrapore remained desolate in consequence-only half, and Sweepers
from the District, who felt less strongly about the innocence of Dr. Aziz, would arrive in the
afternoon ,
and break the strike, but why should the grotesque incident occur? And a number of
Mohammedan ladies had sworn to take no food until the prisoner was acquitted; their death

would make little difference, indeed, being invisible, they seemed dead already, nevertheless it

was disquieting. A new spirit seemed abroad, a rearrangement, which no one in the stem little

band of whites could explain. There was a tendency to see Fielding at the back of it: the idea

that he was weak and cranky had been dropped. They abused Fielding vigorously: he had been

seen driving up with the two counsels, Amritrao and Mahmoud Ali; he encouraged the Boy

Scout movement for seditious reasons; he received letters with foreign stamps on them, and

was probably a Japanese spy. This morning's verdict would break the renegade, but he had

done his country and the Empire incalculable disservice. While they denounced him. Miss

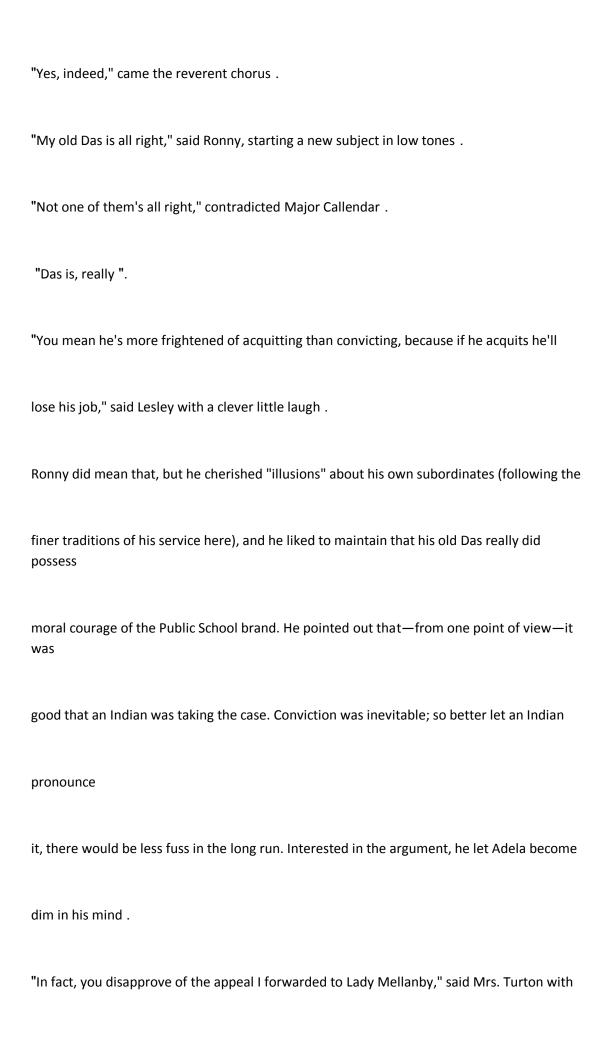
Quested lay back with her hands on the arms of her chair and her eyes closed, reserving her

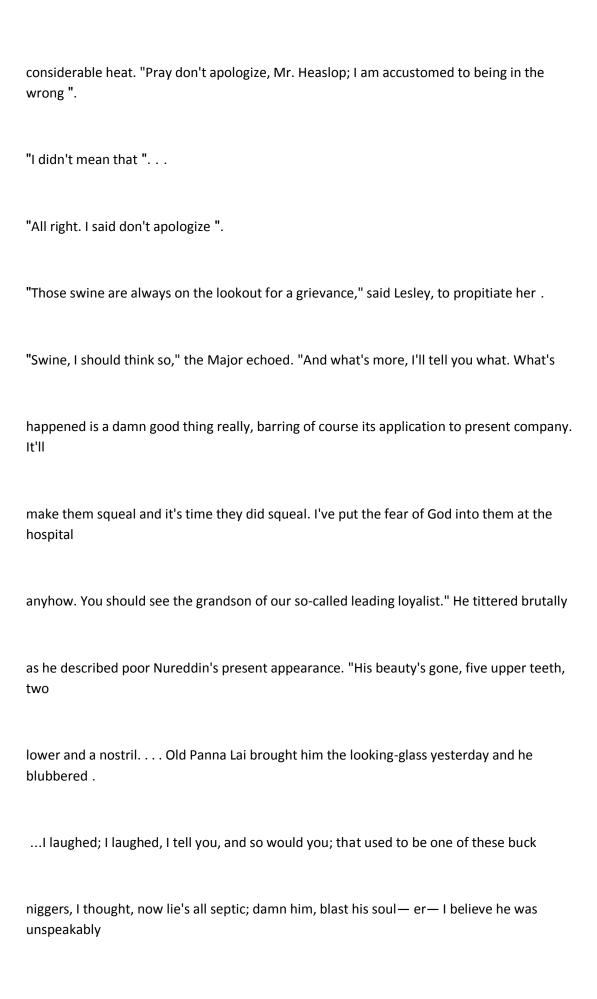
strength. They noticed her after a time, and felt ashamed of making so much noise.

"Can we do nothing for you?" Miss Derek said .

"I don't think so, Nancy, and I seem able to do nothing for myself"

"But you're strictly forbidden to talk like that; you're wonderful ".





immoral— er—" He subsided, nudged in the ribs, but added, "I wish I'd had the cutting up of
my late assistant too; nothing's too bad for these people ".
"At last some sense is being talked," Mrs. Turton cried, much to her husband's discomfort .
"That's what I say; I say there's not such a thing as cruelty after a thing like this ".
"Exactly, and remember it afterwards, you men. You're weak, weak, weak. Why, they ought
to crawl from here to the caves on their hands and kilees whenever an Englishwoman's in sight ,
they oughtn't to be spoken to, they ought to be spat at, they ought to be ground into the dust , $ \\$
we've been far too kind with our Bridge Parties and the rest ".
She paused. Profiting by her wrath, the heat had invaded her. She subsided into a lemon
squash, and continued between the sips to murmur, "Weak, weak." And the process was repeated .
The issues Miss Quested had raised were so much more important than she was herself
that people inevitably forgot her .

Presently the case was called .

Their chairs preceded them into the Court, for it was important that they should look dignified .

And when the chuprassies had made all ready, they filed into the ramshackly room with a

condescending air, as if it was a booth at a fair. The Collector made a small officia' joke as he

sat down, at which his entourage smiled, and the Indians, who could not hear what he said, felt

that some new cruelty was afoot, otherwise the sahibs would not chuckle .

The Court was crowded and of course very hot, and the first person Adela noticed in it was

the humblest of all who were present, a person who had no bearing officially upon the trial: the

man who pulled the punkah. Almost naked, and splendidly formed, he sat on a raised platform

near the back, in the middle of the central gangway, and he caught her attention as she came

in, and he seemed to control the proceedings. Fie had the strength and beauty that sometimes

come to flower in Indians of low birth. 'When that strange race nears the dust and is condemned

as untouchable, then nature remembers the physical perfection that she accomplished elsewhere, and throws out a god—not many, but one here and there, to prove to society how little its categories impress her. This man would have been notable anywhere: among the thinhammed, flat-chested mediocrities of Chandrapore he stood out as divine, yet lie was of the city, its garbage had nourished him, he would end on its rubbish heaps. Pulling the rope towards him, relaxing it rhythmically, sending swirls of air over others, receiving none himself, he seemed apart from human destinies, a male fate, a winnower of souls. Opposite him, also on а platform, sat the little assistant magistrate, cultivated, self-conscious, and conscientious. The punkah, wallah was none of these things: he scarcely knew that he existed and did not understand why the Court was fuller than usual, indeed he did not know that it was fuller than usual, didn't even know he worked a fan, though he thought he pulled a rope. Something in his aloofness

impressed the girl from middle-class England, and rebuked the narrowness of her sufferings. In virtue of what had she collected this roomful of people together? Her particular brand of opinions, and the suburban Jehovah who sanctified them~by what right did they claim so much importance in the world, and assume the title of civilization? Mrs. Moore—she looked round, but Mrs. Moore was far away on the sea; it was the kind of question they might have discussed on the voyage out before the old lady had turned disagreeable and queer . While thinking of Mrs. Moore she heard sounds, which gradually grew more distinct. The epoch-making trial had started, and the Superintendent of Police was opening the case for the prosecution. Mr. McBryde was not at pains to be an interesting speaker; he left eloquence to the

Mr. McBryde was not at pains to be an interesting speaker; he left eloquence to the defence ,

who would require it. His attitude was, "Everyone knows the man's guilty, and I am obliged to

say so in public before he goes to the Andamans." He made no moral or emotional appeal, and

it was only by degrees that the studied negligence of his manner made itself felt, and lashed

"Even when the lady is so uglier than the gentleman "? The comment fell from nowhere, from the ceiling perhaps. It was the first interruption, and the Magistrate felt bound to censure it. "Turn that man out," he said. One of the native policemen took hold of a man who had said nothing, and turned him out roughly. Mr. McBryde resumed his spectacles and proceeded. But the comment had upset Miss Quested. Her body resented being called ugly, and trembled. "Do you feel faint, Adela?" asked Miss Derek, who tended her with loving indignation. "I never feel anything else, Nancy. I shall get through, but it's awful, awful ". This led to the first of a series of scenes. Her friends began to fuss around her, and the Major called out, "I must have better arrangements than this made for my patient; why isn't she given a seat on the platform? She gets no air ".

chair up here in view of the particular circumstances of her health." The chuprassies passed up

Mr. Das looked annoyed and said: "I shall be happy to accommodate Miss Quested with a



it would scorch her eyes. She observed to left and right of the punkah man many a halfknown face. Beneath her were gathered all the wreckage of her silly attempt to see India — the people she had met at the Bridge Party, the man and his wife who hadn't sent their carriage, the old man who would lend his car, various servants, villagers, officials, and the prisoner himself There lie sat— strong, neat little Indian with very black hair, and pliant bands. She viewed him without special emotion. Since they last met, she had elevated him into a principle of evil, but now he seemed to be what he had always been - a slight acquaintance. He was negligible, devoid of significance, dry like a bone, and though he was "guilty" no atmosphere of sin surrounded him . "I suppose he is guilty. Can I possibly have made a mistake?" she thought. For this question still occurred to her intellect, though since Mrs. Moore's departure it had ceased to trouble her conscience. Pleader Mahmoud Ali now arose, and asked with ponderous and ill-judged irony whether his client could be accommodated on the platform too: eveii Indians felt unwell sometimes, though naturally Major Callendar did not think so, being in charge of a Government Hospital. "Another example of their exquisite sense of humour," sang Miss Derek. Ronny looked at Mr. Das to see how lie would handle the difficulty, and Mr. Das became agitated, and snubbed Pleader Mahmoud Ali severely. "Excuse me—" It was the turn of the eminent barrister from Calcutta. He was a fine-looking man, large and bony, with grey closely cropped hair. "We object to the presence of so niany European ladies and gentlemen upon the platform," lie said in an Oxford voice. "They will have the effect of intimidating our witnesses. Their place is with the rest of the public in the body of the hall. We have no objection to Miss Quested remaining on the platform, since she has beeii unwell; we shall extend every courtesy to her throughout, despite the scientific truths revealed to us by the District Superintendent of Police; but we do object to the others ".

"Oh, cut the cackle and let's have the verdict," the Major growled .
The distinguished visitor gazed at the Magistrate respectfully .
"I agree to that," said Mr. Das, hiding his face desperately in some papers. " It was only to
Miss Quested that I gave permission to sit up here. Her friends should be so excessively kind as
to climb down ".
"Well done, Das, quite sound," said Ronny with devastating honesty .
"Climb down, indeed, what incredible impertinence!" Mrs. Turton cried .
"Do come quietly, Mary," murmured her husband .
"Hi! my patient can't be left unattended ".
"Do you object to the Civil Surgeon remaining, Mr. Amritrao "?
"I should object. A platform confers authority ".
"Even when it's one foot high; so come along all," said the Collector, trying to laugh .

"Thank you very much, sir," said Mr. Das, greatly relieved. "Thank you, Mr. Heaslop; thank
you, ladies all ".
And the party, including Miss Quested, descended from its rash eminence. The news of their
humiliation spread quickly, and people jeered outside. Their special chairs followed them .
Mahmoud
Ali (who was quite silly and useless with hatred) objected even to these; by whose
authority had special chairs been introduced, why had the Nawab Bahadur not been given one ?
etc. People began to talk all over the room, about chairs ordinary and special, strips of carpet,
platforms one foot high .
But the little excursion had a good effect on Miss Quested's nerves. She felt easier now that
she had seen all the people who were in the room. It was like knowing the worst. She was sure
now that she should come through "all right "that is to say, without spiritual disgrace, and she
passed the good news on to Ronny and Mrs. Turton. They were too much agitated with the defeat

to British prestige to be interested. From where she sat, she could see the renegade Mr.

Fielding. She had had a better view of him from the platform, and knew that an Indian child

perched on his knee. He was watching the proceedings, watching her. When their eyes met, he

turned his away, as if direct intercourse was of no interest to him.

The Magistrate was also happier. He had won the battle of the platform, and gained confidence .

Intelligent and impartial, he continued to listen to the evidence, and tried to forget that

later on he should have to pronounce a verdict in accordance with it. The Superintendent trundled

steadily forward: he had expected these outbursts of insolence—they are the natural gestures

of an inferior race, and he betrayed no hatred of Aziz, merely an abysmal contempt .

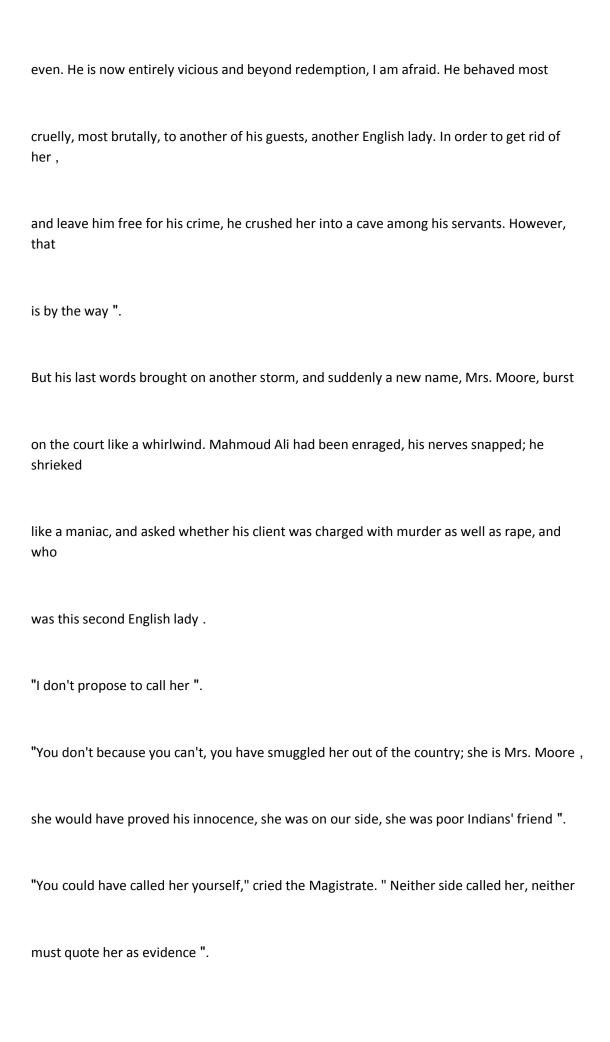
The speech dealt at length with the "prisoner's dupes," as they were called—Fielding, the

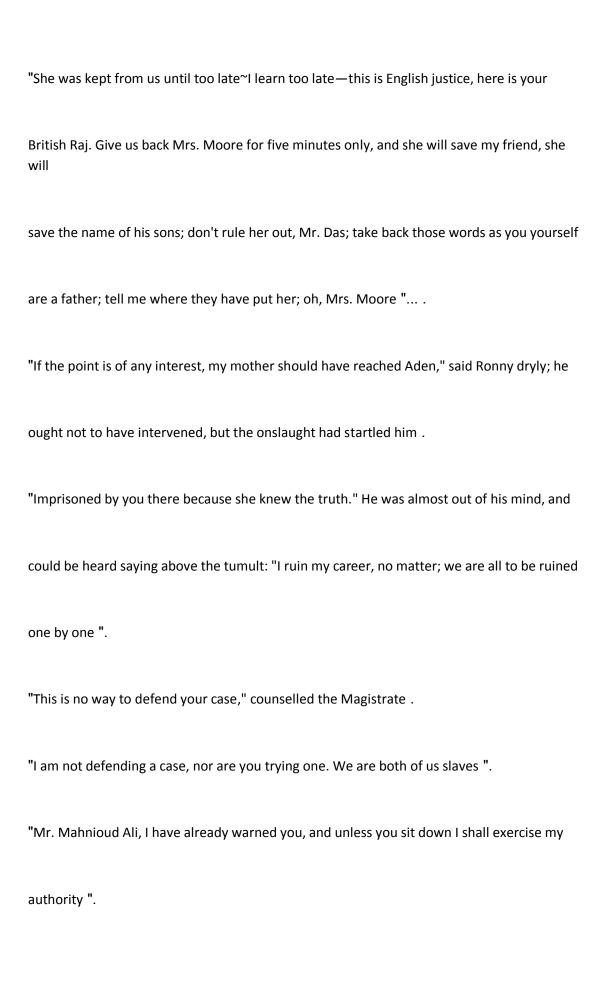
servant Antony, the Nawab Bahadur. This aspect of the case had always seemed dubious to

Miss Quested, and she had asked the police not to develop it. But they were playing for a heavy



the Kawa Dol and paced and measured all one moonlit night. "Mr. Lesley says they're Buddhist , $ \\$
and he ought to know if anyone does. But may I call attention to the shape?" And he described
what had occurred there. Then he spoke of Miss Derek's arrival, of the scramble down the gully , $ \frac{1}{2} \left(\frac{1}{2} \right) = \frac{1}{2} \left(\frac{1}{2} \right) \left(\frac{1}{2}$
of the return of the two ladies to Chandrapore, and of the document Miss Quested signed on
her arrival, in which mention was made of the field glasses. And then came the culminating
evidence :
the discovery of the field-glasses on the prisoner. "I have nothing to add at present," he
concluded, removing his spectacles. "I will now call my witnesses. The facts will speak for
themselves. The prisoner is one of those individuals who have led a double life. I dare say his
degeneracy gained upon him gradually. He has been very cunning at concealing, as is usual
with the type, and pretending to be a respectable member of society, getting a Government position





"Do so; this trial is a farce, I am going." And he handed his papers to Amritrao and left, calling
from the door histrionically yet with intense passion, "Aziz, Aziz—farewell for ever." The tumult
increased, the invocation of Mrs. Moore continued, and people who did not know what the
syllables meant repeated them like a charm. They became Indianized into Esmiss Esmoor, they
were taken up in the street outside. In vain the Magistrate threatened and expelled. Until the
magic exhausted itself, he was powerless .
"Unexpected," remarked Mr. Turton .
Ronny furnished the explanation. Before she sailed, his mother had taken to talk about the
Marabar in her sleep, especially in the afternoon when servants were on the veraiida, and her
disjointed remarks on Aziz had doubtless been sold to Mahmoud Ali for a few annas: that kind
of thing never ceases in the East .
"I thought they'd try something of the sort. Ingenious." He looked into their wide-open





this unhinged Mr. Mahmoud Ali~coming as it does upon an attempt to intimidate our only other European witness, Mr. Fielding. Mr. Mahmoud Ali would have said nothing had not Mrs. Moore been claimed as a witness by the police." He sat down. "An extraneous element is being introduced into the case," said the Magistrate. "I must repeat that as a witness Mrs. Moore does not exist. Neither you, Mr. Amritrao, nor, Mr. McBryde, you, have any right to surmise what that lady would have said. She is not here, and consequently she can say nothing ". "Well, I withdraw my reference," said the Superintendent wearily. "I would have done so fifteen minutes ago if I had been given the chance. She is not of the least importance to me ". "I have already withdrawn it for the defence." He added with forensic humour: "Perhaps you can persuade the gentlemen outside to withdraw it too," for the refrain in the street continued.

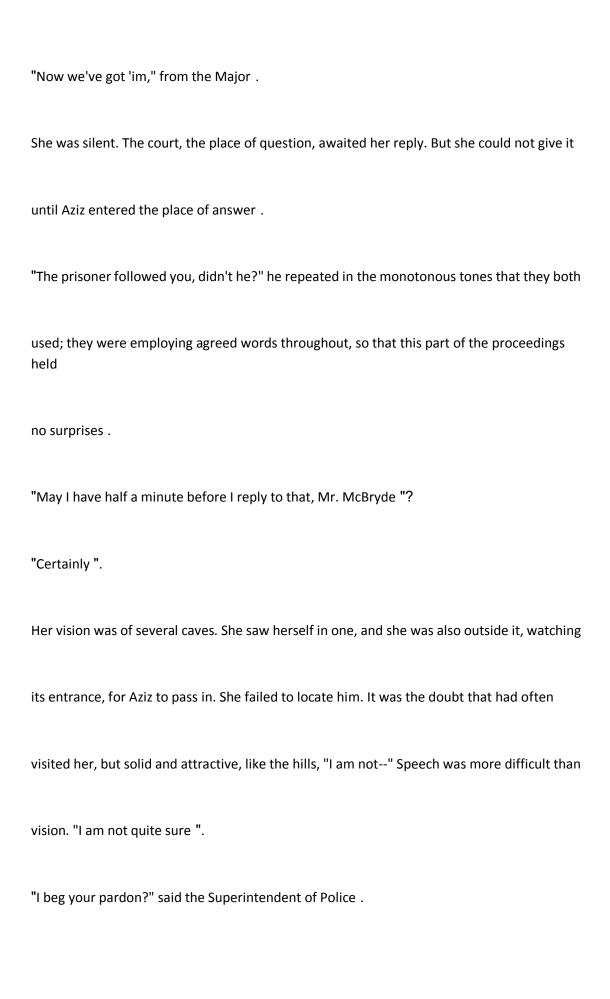
"I am afraid my powers do not extend so far," said Das, smiling.

So peace was restored, and when Adela came to give her evidence the atmosphere was quieter than it had been since the beginning of the trial. Experts were not surprised. There is no stay in your native. He blazes up over a minor point, and has nothing left for the crisis. What be seeks is a grievance, and this he had found in the supposed abduction of an old lady. He would now be less aggrieved when Aziz was deported. But the crisis was still to come . Adela had always meant to tell the truth and nothing but the truth, and she had rehearsed this as a difficult task—difficult, because her disaster in the cave was connected, though by a thread, with another part of her life, her engagement to Ronny. She had thought of love just before she went in, and had innocently asked Aziz what marriage was like, and she supposed that her question had roused evil in him. To recount this would have been incredibly painful, it was the one point she wanted to keep obscure; she was willing to give details that would have

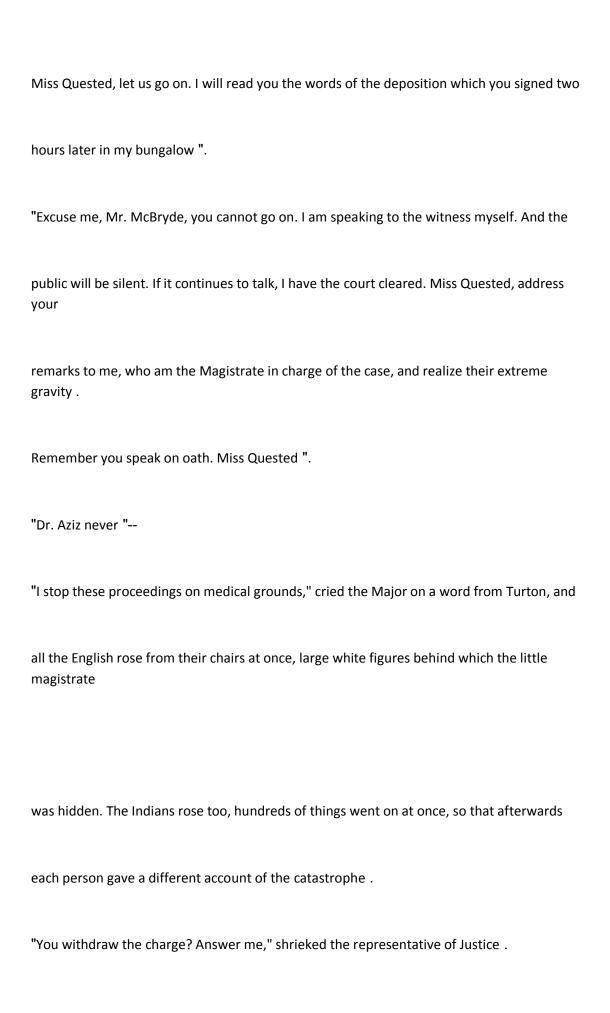
distressed other girls, but this story of her private failure she dared not allude to, and she

dreaded being examined in public in case something came out. But as soon as she rose to reply, and heard the sound of her own voice, she feared not even that. A new and unknown sensation protected her, like magnificent armour. She didn't think what had happened or even remember in the ordinary way of memory, but she returned to the Marabar Hills, and spoke from them across a sort of darkness to Mr. McBryde. The fatal day recurred, in every detail, but now she was of it and not of it at the same time, and this double relation gave it indescribable splendour. Why had she thought the expedition "dull "? Now the sun rose again, the elephant waited, the pale masses of the rock flowed round her and presented the first cave; she entered, and a match was reflected in the polished walls—all beautiful and significant, though she had been blind to it at the time. Questions were asked, aiid to each she found the exact reply; yes, she had noticed the "Tank of the Dagger," but not known its name; yes, Mrs. Moore had been tired











screamed insults at Adela.

The Superintendent moved to the support of his friends, saying nonchalantly to the Magistrate

as he did so, "Right, I withdraw".

Mr. Das rose, nearly dead with the strain. He had controlled the case, just controlled it. He

had shown that an Indian can preside. To those who could hear him he said, "The prisoner is

released without one stain on his character; the question of costs will be decided elsewhere ".

And then the flimsy framework of the court broke up, the shouts of derision and rage culminated ,

people screamed and cursed, kissed one another, wept passionately. Here were the English,

whom their servants protected, there Aziz fainted in Hamidullah's arms. Victory on this

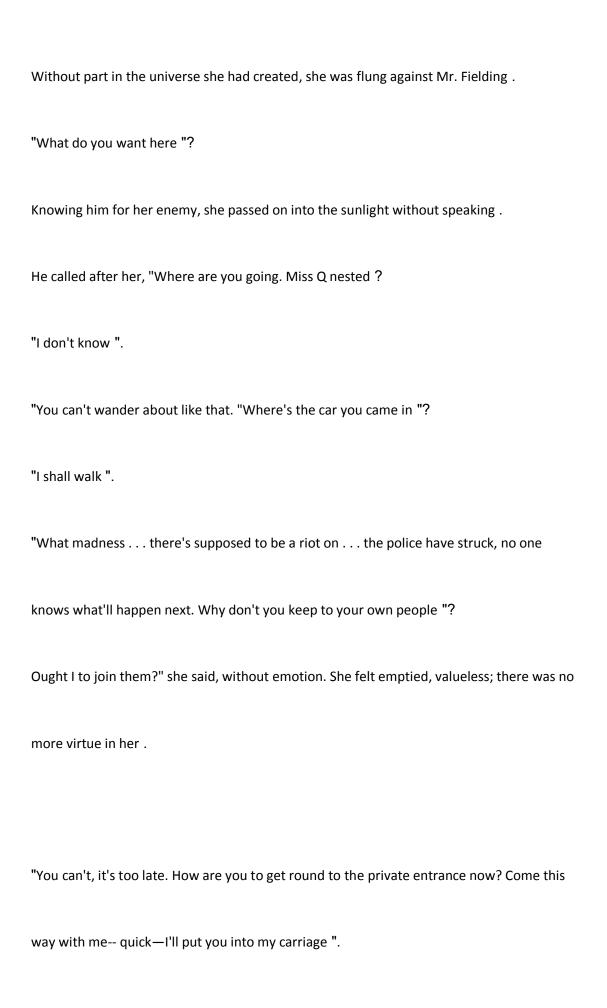
side, defeat on that - complete for one moment was the antithesis. Then life returned to its

complexities, person after person struggled out of the room to their various purposes, and before

long no one remained on the scene of the fantasy but the beautiful naked god. Unaware

that anything unusual had occurred, he continued to pull the cord of his punkah, to gaze at the





"Cyril, Cyril, don't leave me," called the shattered voice of Aziz .
"I'm coming back This way, and don't argue." He gripped her arm. "Excuse manners,
but I don't know anyone's position. Send my carriage back any time to-morrow, if you please ".
"But where am Ito go in it "?
"Where you like. How should I know your arrangements ?
The victoria was safe in a quiet side lane, but there were no horses, for the sais, not expecting
the trial would end so abruptly, had led them away to visit a friend. She got into it obediently .
The man could not leave her, for the confusion increased, and spots of it sounded fanatical $. $
The main road through the bazaars was blocked, and the English were gaining the civil station
by by-ways; they were caught like caterpillars, and could have been killed off easily .
"What—what have you been doing?" he cried suddenly. "Playing a game, studying life, or
what "?



jerked into the main bazaar, where it created some sensation. Miss Quested was so loathed in

Chandrapore that her recantation was discredited, and the rumour ran that she had been

stricken by the Deity in the middle of her lies. But they cheered when they saw her sitting by

the heroic Principal (some addressed her as Mrs. Moore!), and they garlanded her to match

him. Half gods, half guys, with sausages of flowers round their necks, the pair were dragged in

the wake of Aziz' victorious landau. In the applause that greeted them some derision mingled .

The English always stick together! That was the criticism. Nor was it unjust. Fielding shared it

himself, and knew that if some misunderstanding occurred, and an attack was made on the girl

by his allies, he would be obliged to die in her defence. He didn't want to die for her, lie wanted

to be rejoicing with Aziz .

Where was the procession going? To friends, to enemies, to Aziz' bungalow, to the Collector's

bungalow, to the Minto Hospital where the Civil Surgeon would eat dust and the patients

)confused with prisoners) be released, to Delhi, Simla. The students thought it was going to

Government College. When they reached a turning, they twisted the victoria to the right, ran it

by side lanes down a hill and through a garden gate into the mango plantation, and, as far as

Fielding and Miss Quested were concerned, all was peace and quiet. The trees were full of

glossy foliage and slim green fruit, the tank slumbered; and beyond it rose the exquisite blue

arches of the garden-house. "Sir, we fetch the others; sir, it is a somewhat heavy load for our

arms," were heard. Fielding took the refugee to his office, and tried to telephone to McBryde .

But this he could not do; the wires had been cut. All his servants had decamped. Once more he

was unable to desert her. He assigned her a couple of rooms, provided her with ice and drinks

and biscuits, advised her to lie down, and lay down himself— there was nothing else to do. He

felt restless and thwarted as he listened to the retreating sounds of the procession, and his joy

was rather spoilt by bewilderment. It was a victory, but such a queer one .

At that moment Aziz was crying, "Cyril, Cyril" Crammed into a carriage with the Nawab
Bahadur, Hamidullah, Mahmoud Ali, his own little boys, and a heap of flowers, he was not content ;
he wanted to be surrounded by all who loved him. Victory gave no pleasure, he had suffered
too much. From the moment of his arrest he was done for, he had dropped like a
wounded animal; he had despaired, not through cowardice, but because he knew that an
Englishwoman's
word would always outweigh his own. "It is fate," he said; and, "It is fate," when
he was imprisoned anew after Mohurram. All that existed, in that terrible time, was affection ,
and affection was all that he felt in the first painful moments of his freedom. "Why isn't Cyril
following? Let us turn back." But the procession could not turn back. Like a snake in a drain, it
advanced down the narrow bazaar towards the basin of the Maidan, where it would turn about
itself, and decide on its prey .



the old man protested. "They are. Callendar boasted so before the trial. I heard through the tatties; he said, 'I have tortured that nigger ". "Oh, my God, my God. ... He called him a nigger, did he "? "They put pepper instead of antiseptic on the wounds ' "Mr. Mahmoud Ali, impossible; a little roughness will not hurt the boy, he needs discipline ". "Pepper. Civil Surgeon said so. They hope to destroy us one by one; they shall fail ". The new injury lashed the crowd to fury. It had been aimless hitherto, and had lacked a grievance. When they reached the Maidan and saw the sallow arcades of the Minto they shambled towards it howling. It was near midday. The earth and sky were insanely ugly, the spirit of evil again strode abroad. The Nawab Bahadur alone struggled against it, and told himself that the rumour must be untrue. He had seen his grandson in the ward only last week. But he too was carried forward over the new precipice. To rescue, to maltreat Major Callendar in revenge,

and then was to come the turn of the civil station generally . But disaster was averted, and averted by Dr. Panna Lai. Dr. Panna Lai had offered to give witness for the prosecution in the hope of pleasing the English, also because he hated Aziz. When the case broke down, he was in a very painful position. He saw the crash coming sooner than most people, slipped from the court before Mr. Das had finished, and drove Dapple off through the bazaars, in flight from the wrath to come. In the hospital he should be safe, for Major Callendar would protect him. But the Major had not come, and now things were worse than ever, for here was a mob, entirely desirous of his blood, and the orderlies were mutinous and would not hell) him over the back wall, or rather hoisted him and let him drop back, to the satisfaction of the patients. In agony lie cried, "Man can but die the once," and waddled across the compound to meet the invasion, salaaming with one hand and holding up a pale yellow umbrella in the other. "Oh, forgive me," he whined as he

approached

the victorious landau. "Oh, Dr. Aziz, forgive the wicked lies I told." Aziz was silent, the others thickened their throats and threw up their chins in token of scorn. "I was afraid, I was mislaid," the suppliant continued. "I was mislaid here, there, and everywhere as regards your

character. Oh, forgive the poor old hakim who gave you milk when ill! Oh, Nawab Bahadur,

whoever merciful, is it my poor little dispensary you require? Take every cursed bottle." Agitated ,

but alert, he saw them smile at his indifferent English, and suddenly he started playing

the buffoon, flung down his umbrella, trod through it, and struck himself upon the nose. He

knew what he was doing, and so did they. There was nothing pathetic or eternal in the degradation

of such a man. Of ignoble origin. Dr. Panna Lai possessed nothing that could be disgraced,

and lie wisely decided to make the other Indians feel like kings, because it would put

them into better tempers. When he found they wanted Nureddin, he skipped like a goat, he

scuttled like a hen to do their bidding, the hospital was saved, arid to the end of his life he

could not understand why lie had not obtained promotion on the morning's work. "Promptness, sir, promptness similar to you," was the argument he employed to Major Callendar when claiming it . When Nureddin emerged, his face all bandaged, there was a roar of relief as though the Bastilhe had fallen. It was the crisis of the march, and the Nawab Bahadur managed to get the situation into hand. Embracing the young man publicly, he began a speech about Justice, Courage, Liberty, and Prudence, ranged under heads, which cooled the passion of the crowd. He further announced that he should give up his British-conferred title, and live as a private gentleman, plain Mr. Zulfiqar, for which reason he was instantly proceeding to his country seat. The landau turned, the crowd accompanied it, the crisis was over. The Marabar caves had been a terrible strain on the local administration; they altered a good many lives and wrecked several careers, but they did not break up a continent or even dislocate a district .

"We will have rejoicings to-night," the old man said. "Mr. Hamidullah, I depute you to bring out our friends Fielding and Amritrao, and to discover whether the latter will require special food. The others will keep with me. We shall not go out to Dilkusha until the cool of the evening,

of course. I do not know the feelings of other gentlemen; for my own part, I have a slight

headache, and I wish I had thought to ask our good Panna Lai for aspirin ".

For the heat was claiming its own. Unable to madden, it stupefied, and before long most of

the Chandrapore combatants were asleep. Those in the civil station kept watch a little, fearing

an attack, but presently they too entered the world of dreams—that world in which a third of

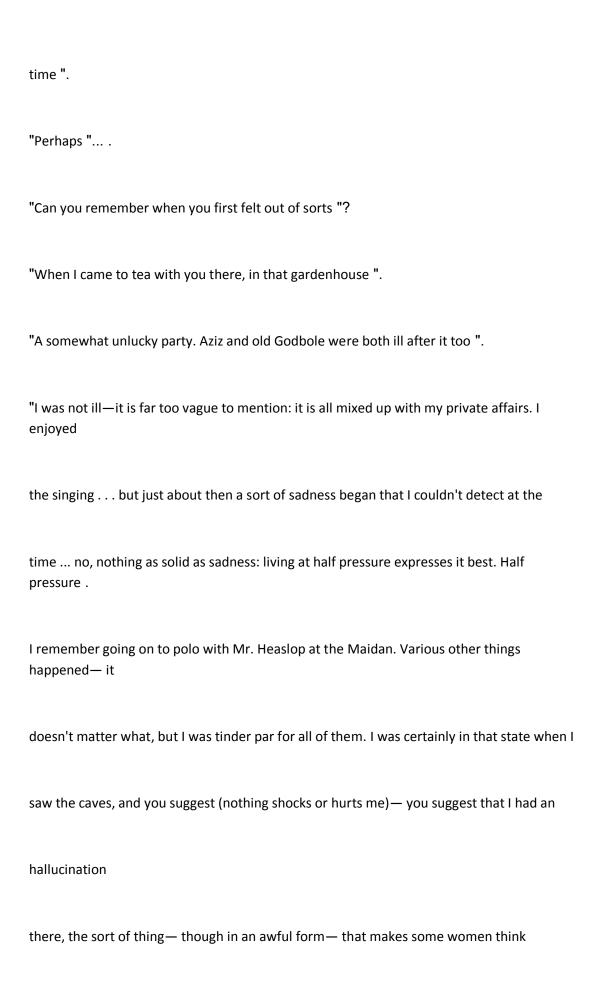
each man's life is spent, and which is thought by some pessimists to be a premonition of eternity .

CHAPTER XXVI

Evening approached by the time Fielding and Miss Quested met and had the first of their numerous curious conversations. He had hoped, when he woke up, to find someone had fetched her away, but the College remained isolated from the rest of the universe. She asked



unwell ever since that expedition to the caves, and possibly before it ".
The remark interested him rather; it was what he had sometimes suspected himself "What
kind of illness?" be enquired .
She touched her head at the side, then shook it .
"That was my first thought, the day of the arrest: hallucination ".
"Do you think that would be so?" she asked with great humility. "What should have given
me an hallucination "?
"One of three things certainly happened in the Marabar," he said, getting drawn into a discussion
against his will. "One of four things. Either Aziz is guilty, which is what your friends
think; or you invented the charge out of malice, which is what my friends think; or you have
had an hallucination. I'm very much inclined "~ getting up and striding about" now that you
tell me that you felt unwell before the expedition—it's an important piece of evidence—I believe
that you yourself broke the strap of the field-glasses; you were alone in that cave the whole













should be some way of transporting this lady back to the civil lines. The resources of civilization are numerous." He spoke without looking at Miss Quested, and he ignored the slight movement she made towards him with her hand . Fielding, who thought the meeting might as well be friendly, said, "Miss Quested has been explaining a little about her conduct of this morning ". "Perhaps the age of miracles has returned. One must be prepared for everything, our philosophers say ". "It must have seemed a miracle to the onlookers," said Adela, addressing him nervously. "The fact is that I realized before it was too late that I had made a mistake, and had just enough presence of mind to say so. That is all my extraordinary conduct amounts to ". "All it amounts to, indeed," he retorted, quivering with rage but keeping himself in hand, for he felt she might be setting another trap. "Speaking as a private individual, in a purely informal conversation, I admired your conduct, and I was delighted when our warmhearted students

garlanded you. But, like Mr. Fielding, I am surprised; indeed, surprise is too weak a word. I see you drag my best friend into the dirt, damage his health and ruin his prospects in a way you cannot conceive owing to your ignorance of our society and religion, and then suddenly you get up in the witness-box: 'Oh no, Mr. McBryde, after all I am not quite sure, you may as well let him go.' Am I mad? I keep asking myself Is it a dream, and if so, when did it start? And without doubt it is a dream that has not yet finished. For I gather you have not done with us yet, and it is now the turn of the poor old guide who conducted you round the caves ". "Not at all, we were only discussing possibilities," interposed Fielding. "An interesting pastime, but a lengthy one. There are one hundred and seventy million **Indians** in this notable peninsula, and of course one or other of them entered the cave. Of course some Indian is the culprit, we must never doubt that. And since, my dear Fielding, these

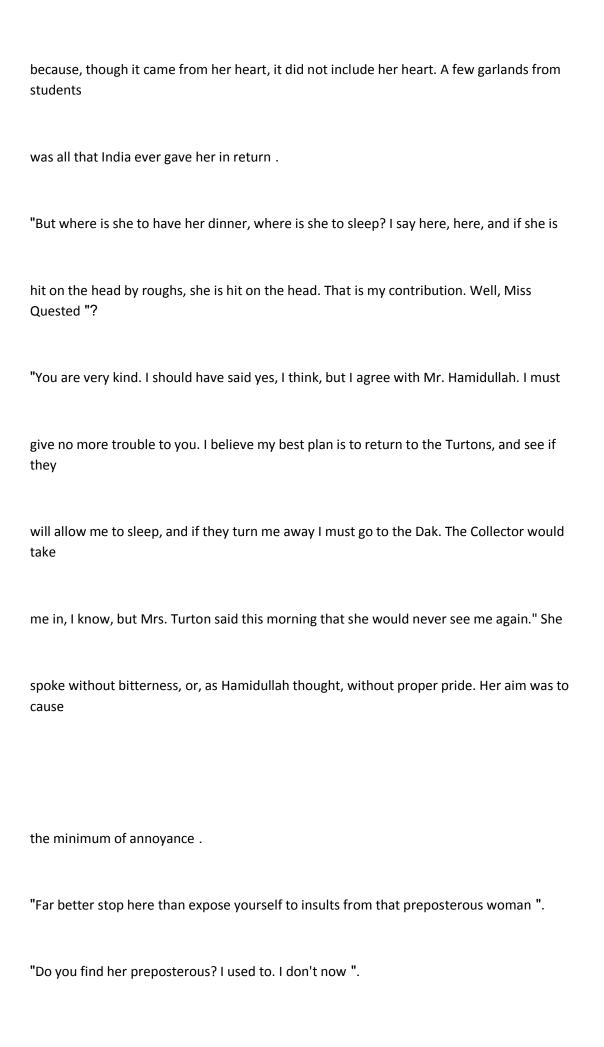
possibilities
will take you some time "here he put his arm over the Englishman's shoulder and
swayed him to and fro gently" don't you think you had better come out to the Nawab
Bahadur's—or I should say to Mr. Zulfiqar's, for that is the name he now requires us to call him
by ".
"Gladly, in a minute "
"I have just settled my movements," said Miss Quested. "I shall go to the Dak Bungalow ".
"Not the Turtons'?" said Hamidullah, goggle-eyed. "I thought you were their guest".
The Dak Bungalow of Chandrapore was below the average, and certainly servantless. Fielding , $ \\$
though he continued to sway with Hamidullah, was thinking on independent lines, and said
in a moment: "I have a better idea than that. Miss Quested. You must stop here at the College .
I shall be away at least two days, and you can have the place entirely to yourself, and make
your plans at your convenience ".

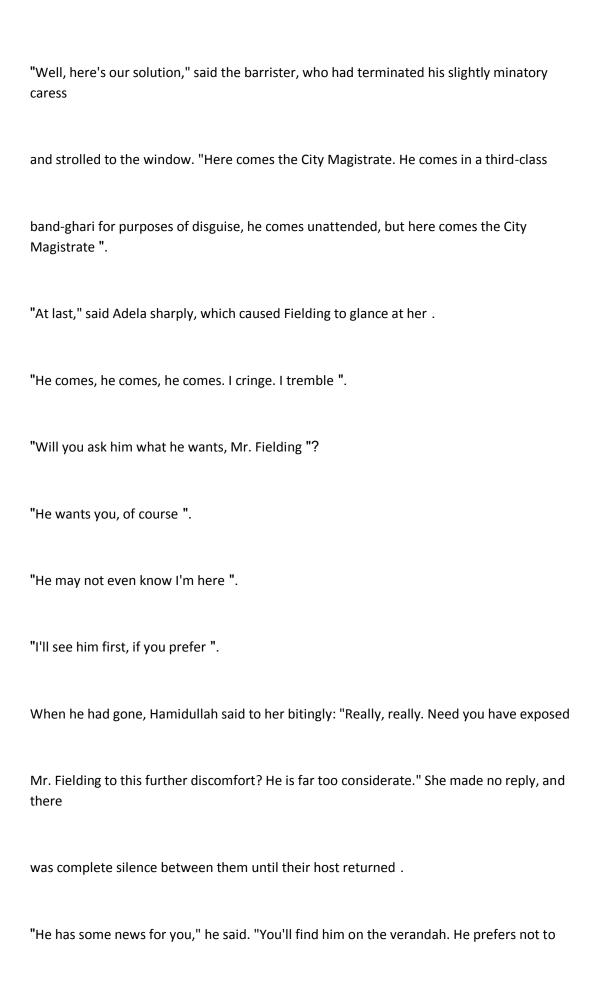
"I don't agree at all," said Hamidullah, with every symptom of dismay. "The idea is a thoroughly bad one. There may quite well be another demonstration to-night, and suppose an attack is made on the College. You would be held responsible for this lady's safety, my dear fellow ". "They might equally attack the Dak Bungalow ". "Exactly, but the responsibility there ceases to be yours ". "Quite so. I have given trouble enough ". "Do you hear? The lady admits it herself It's not an attack from our people I fear—you should see their orderly conduct at the hospital; what we must guard against is an attack secretly arranged by the police for the purpose of discrediting you. McBryde keeps plenty of roughs for this purpose, and this would be the very opportunity for him ". "Never mind. She is not going to the Dak Bungalow," said Fielding. He had a natural sympathy for the down-trodden— that was partly why he rallied from Aziz— and had become determined not to leave the poor girl in the lurch. Also, he had a new-born respect for her, consequent

on their talk. Although her hard schoolmistressy manner remained, she was no longer examining life, but being examined by it; she had become a real person. "Then where is she to go? We shall never have done with her!" For Miss Quested had not appealed to Hamidullah. If she had shown emotion in court, broke down, beat her breast, and invoked the name of God, she would have summoned forth his imagination and generosity-he had plenty of both. But while relieving the Oriental mind, she had chilled it, with the result that lie could scarcely believe she was sincere, and indeed from his standpoint she was not. For her behaviour rested on cold justice and honesty; she had felt, while she recanted, no passion of love for those whom she had wronged. Truth is not truth in that exacting land unless there go with it kindness and more kindness and kindness again, unless the Word that was with God also

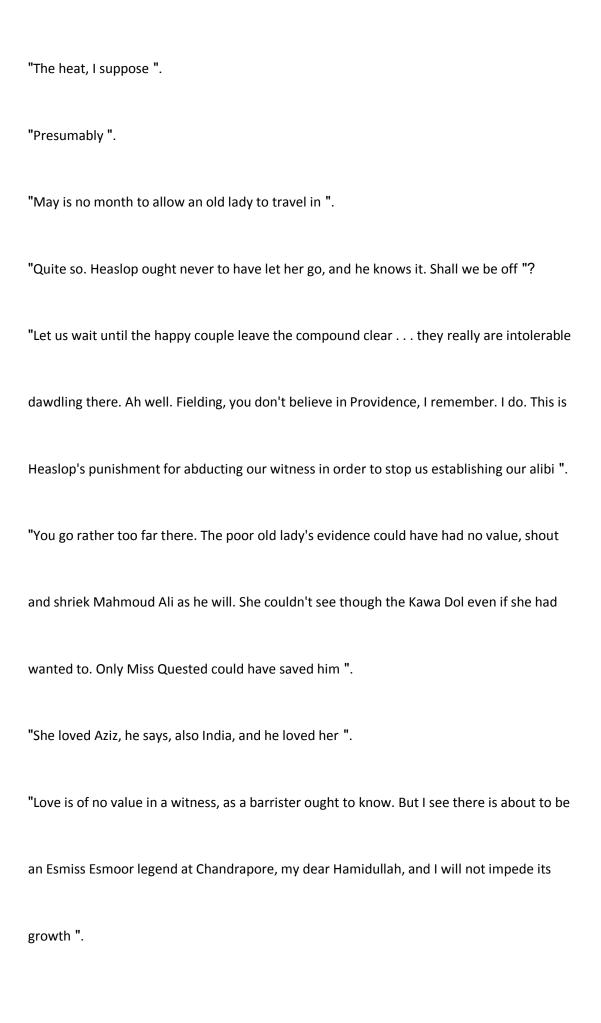
is God. And the girl's sacrifice—so creditable according to Western notions—was rightly

rejected,









The other smiled, and looked at his watch. They both regretted the death, but they were
middle-aged men, who had invested their emotions elsewhere, and outbursts of grief could not
be expected from them over a slight acquaintance. It's only one's own dead who matter. If for a
moment the sense of communion in sorrow came to them, it passed. How indeed is it possible
for one human being to be sorry for all the sadness that meets him on the face of the earth, for
the pain that is endured not only by men, but by animals and plants, and perhaps by the
stones? The soul is tired in a moment, and in fear of losing the little she does understand, she
retreats to the permanent lines which habit or chance have dictated, and suffers there. Fielding
had met the dead woman only two or three times, Hamidullah had seen her in the distance
once, and they were far more occupied with the coming gathering at Dilkusha, the "victory "
dinner, for which they would be most victoriously late. They agreed not to tell Aziz about Mrs .





"But she died on leaving Bombay," broke in Adela. "She was dead when they called her name this morning. She must have been buried at sea ". Somehow this stopped Hamidullah, and he desisted from his brutality, which had shocked Fielding more than anyone else. He remained silent while the details of Miss Qnested's occupation of the College were arranged, merely remarking to Ronny, "It is clearly to be understood, sir, that neither Mr. Fielding nor any of us are responsible for this lady's safety at Government College," to which Ronny agreed. After that, he watched the semichivalrous behavings of the three English with quiet amusement; he thought Fielding had been incredibly silly and weak, and he was amazed by the younger people's want of proper pride. When they were driving out to Dilkusha, hours late, he said to Amritrao, who accompanied them: "Mr. Amritrao, have you considered what sum Miss Quested ought to pay as compensation "? "Twenty thousand rupees ".

No more was then said, but the remark horrified Fielding. He couldn't bear to think of the
queer honest girl losing her money and possibly her young man too. She advanced into his
consciousness
suddenly. And, fatigued by the merciless and enormous day, he lost his usual sane
view of human intercourse, and felt that we exist not in ourselves, but in terms of each others '
\mbox{minds} a notion for which logic offers no support and which had attacked him only once before ,
the evening after the catastrophe, when from the verandah of the club he saw the fists and fingers
of the Marabar swell until they included the whole night sky .
CHAPTER XXVII
"Aziz, are you awake "?
"No, so let us have a talk; let us dream plans for the future ".
"I am useless at dreaming ".

"Good night then, dear fellow ".
The Victory Banquet was over, and the revellers lay on the roof of plain Mr. Zulfiqar's mansion ,
asleep, or gazing through mosquito nets at the stars. Exactly above their heads hung the
constellation of the Lion, the disc of Regulus so large and bright that it resembled a tunnel, and
when this fancy was accepted all the other stars seemed tunnels too .
"Are you content with our day's work, Cyril?" the voice on his left continued .
"Are you "?
"Except that I ate too much. 'How is stomach, how head? 'I say. Fauna Lai and Callendar'll
get the sack " .
"There'll be a general move at Chandrapore ".
"And you'll get promotion ".
"They can't well move me down, whatever their feelings ".
"In any case we spend our holidays together, and visit Kashmir, possibly Persia, for I shall

have plenty of money. Paid to me on account of the injury sustained by my character," he explained
with cynical calm. "While with me you shall never spend a single pie. This is what I have
always wished, and as the result of my misfortunes it has come ".
"You have won a great victory" began Fielding .
"I know, my dear chap, I know; your voice need not become so solemn and anxious. I know
what you are going to say next: Let, oh let Miss Quested off paying, so that the English may
say, 'Here is a native who has actually behaved like a gentleman; if it was not for his black face
we would almost allow him to join our club.' The approval of your compatriots no longer interests
me, I have become anti-British, and ought to have done so sooner, it would have saved me
numerous misfortunes ".
"Including knowing me ".
"I say, shall we go and pour wafer on to Mohammed Latif s face? He is so funny when this is
done to him asleep ".

The remark was not a question but a full-stop. Fielding accepted it as such and there was a pause, pleasantly filled by a little wind which managed to brush the top of the house. The banquet, though riotous, had been agreeable, and now the blessings of leisure—unknown to the West, which either works or idles—descended on the motley company. Civilization strays about like a ghost here, revisiting the ruins of empire, and is to be found not in great works of art mighty deeds, but in the gestures well-bred Indians make when they sit or lie down. Fielding, who had dressed up in native costume, learnt from his excessive awkwardness in it that all his motions were makeshifts, whereas when the Nawab Bahadur stretched out his hand for food or Nureddin applauded a song, something beautiful had been accomplished which needed no development. This restfulness of gesture— it is the Peace that passeth Understanding, after all, it is the social equivalent of Yoga. When the whirring of action ceases, it becomes visible, and reveals

a civilization which the West can disturb but will never acquire. The hand stretches out for ever, the lifted knee has the eternity though not the sadness of the grave. Aziz was full of civilization this evening, complete, dignified, rather hard, and it was with diffidence that the other said: "Yes, certainly you must let off Miss Quested easily. She must pay all your costs, that is only fair, but do not treat her like a conquered enemy ". "Is she wealthy! I depute you to find out ". "The sums mentioned at dinner when you all got so excited— they would ruin her, they are perfectly preposterous. Look here "... "I am looking, though it gets a bit dark. I see Cyril Fielding to be a very nice chap indeed and my best friend, but in some ways a fool. You think that by letting Miss Quested off easily shall make a better reputation for myself and Indians generally. No, no. It will be put down to

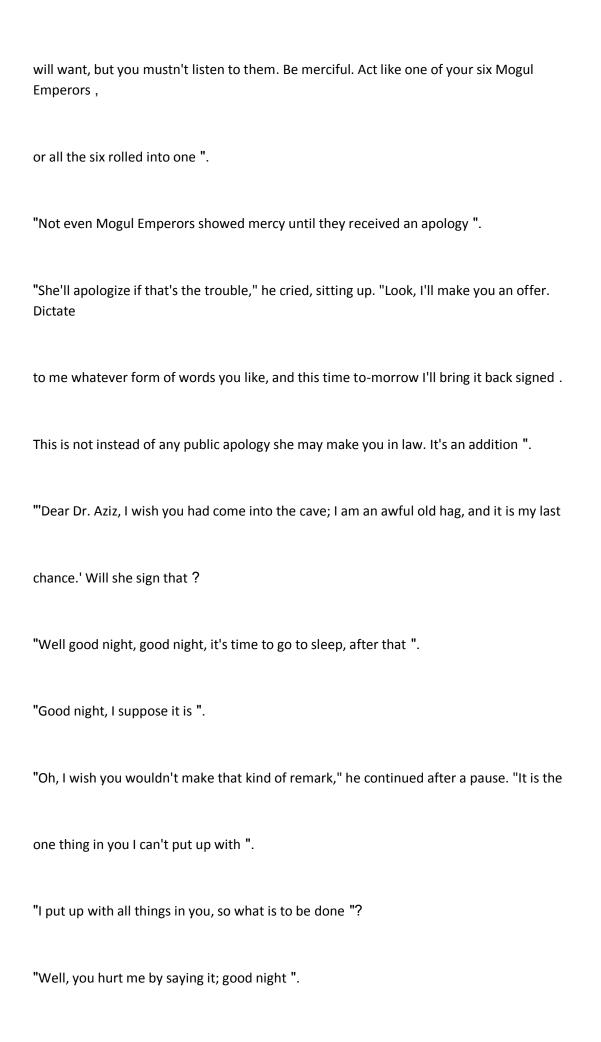
weakness and the attempt to gain promotion officially. I have decided to have nothing more

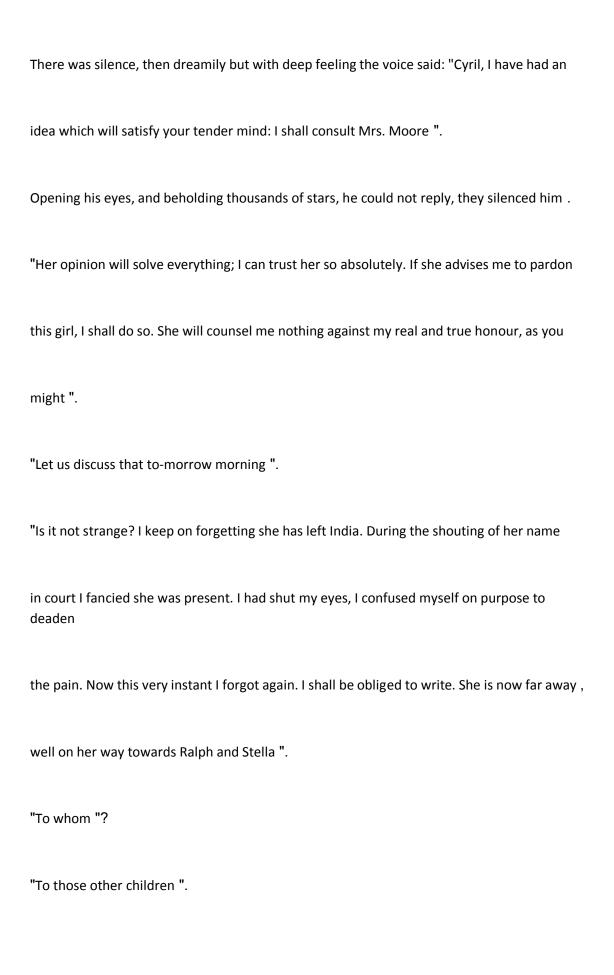
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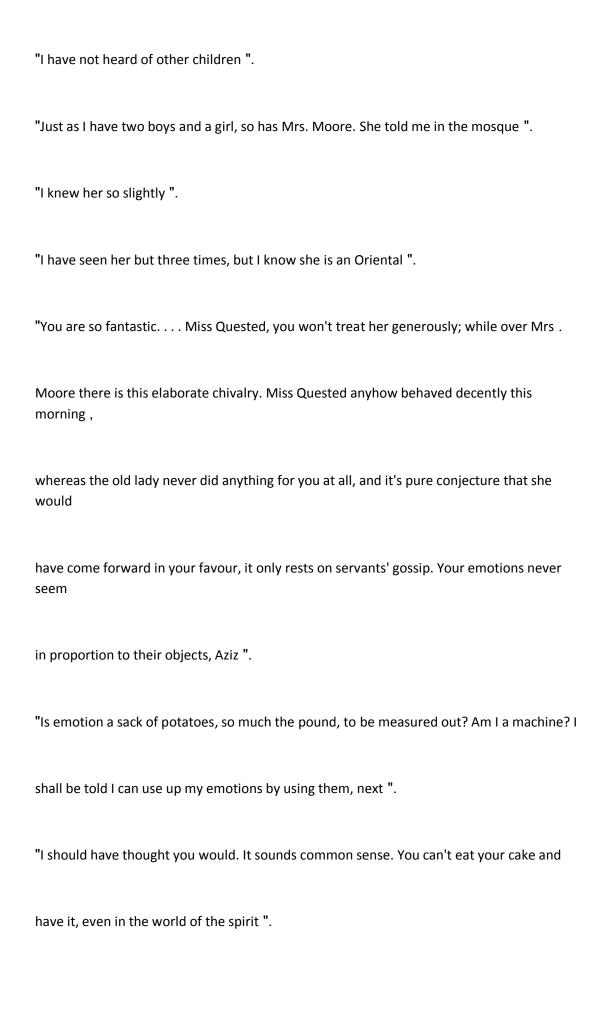
do with British India, as a matter of fact. I shall seek service in some Moslem State, such as Hyderabad, Bhopal, where Englishmen cannot insult me any more. Don't counsel me otherwise ". "In the course of a long talk with Miss Quested "... "I don't want to hear your long talks ". "Be quiet. In the course of a long talk with Miss Quested I have begun to understand her character. It's not an easy one, she being a prig. But she is perfectly genuine and very brave. When she saw she was wrong, she pulled herself up with a jerk and said so. I want you to realize what that means. All her friends around her, the entire British Raj pushing her forward. She stops, sends the whole thing to smithereens. In her place I should have funked it. But she stopped, and almost did she become a national heroine, but my students ran us down a side

street before the crowd caught flame. Do treat her considerately. She really mustn't get the

worst of both worlds. I know what all these "--he indicated the shrouded forms on the roof--









But Hamidullah, who had been listening to all their talk, and did not want the festive evening spoilt, cried from the adjoining bed: "Aziz, he is trying to pull your leg; don't believe him, the villain ". "I do not believe him," said Aziz; he was inured to practical jokes, even of this type. Fielding said no more. Facts are facts, and everyone would learn of Mrs. Moore's death in the morning. But it struck him that people are not really dead until they are felt to be dead. As long as there is some misunderstanding about them, they possess a sort of immortality. An experience of his own confirmed this. Many years ago he had lost a great friend, a woman, who

believed in the Christian heaven and assured him that after the changes and chances of this mortal life they would meet in it again. Fielding was a blank, frank atheist, but he respected every opinion his friend held: to do this is essential in friendship. And it seemed to him for a time that the dead awaited him, and when the illusion faded it left behind it an emptiness that

was almost guilt: "This really is the end," he thought, "and I gave her the final blow." He had tried to kill Mrs. Moore this evening, on the roof of the Nawab Bahadur's house; but she still eluded him, and the atmosphere remained tranquil. Presently the moon rose—the exhausted

crescent that precedes the sun—and shortly after men and oxen began their interminable labour ,

and the gracious interlude, which he had tried to curtail, came to its natural conclusion .

CHAPTER XXVIII

Dead she was— committed to the deep while still on the southward track, for the boats from

Bombay cannot point towards Europe until Arabia has been rounded; she was further in the

tropics than ever achieved while on shore, when the sun touched her for the last time and her

body was lowered into yet another India— the Indian Ocean. She left behind her sore discomfort ,

for a death gives a ship a bad name. Who was this Mrs. Moore? When Aden was reached .

Lady Mellanby cabled, wrote, did all that was kind, but the wife of a Lieutenant-Governor does

not bargain for such an experience; and she repeated: "I had only seen the poor creature for a

few hours when she was taken ill; really this has been needlessly distressing, it spoils one's

home-coming." A ghost followed the ship up the Red .Sea, but failed to enter the Mediterranean .

Somewhere about Suez there is always a social change: the arrangements of Asia

weaken and those of Europe begin to be felt, and during the, transition Mrs. Moore was shaken

off At Port Said the grey blustery north began. The weather was so cold and bracing that the

passengers felt it must have broken in the land they had left, but it became hotter steadily

there in accordance with its usual law .

The death took subtler and more lasting shapes in Chandrapore. A legend sprang up that an

Englishman had killed his mother for trying to save an Indian's life— and there was just enough

truth in this to cause annoyance to the authorities. Sometimes it was a cow that had been

killed— or a crocodile with the tusks of a boar had crawled out of the Ganges. Nonsense of this

type is more difficult to combat than a solid lie. It hides in rubbish heaps and moves when no

one is looking. At one period two distinct tombs containing Esmiss Esnioor's remains were
reported:
one by the tannery, the other up near the goods station. Mr. McBryde visited them both
and saw signs of the beginning of a cult—earthenware saucers and so on. Being an experienced
official, he did nothing to irritate it, and after a week or so, the rash died down. "There's propaganda
behind all this," he said, forgetting that a hundred years ago, when Europeans still made
their home in the country-side and appealed to its imagination, they occasionally became local
demons after de4m [~] not a whole god, perhaps, but part of one, adding an epithet or gesture
to what already existed, just as the gods contribute to the great gods, and they to the philosophic
Brahm .
Ronny reminded himself that his mother had left India at her own wish, but his conscience

was not clear. He had behaved badly to her, and he had either to repent (which involved a mental

overturn), or to persist in unkindness towards her. He chose the latter course. How tiresome

she had been with her patronage of Aziz! What a bad influence upon Adela! And now she still

gave trouble with ridiculous "tombs," mixing herself up with natives. She could not help it, of

course, but she had attempted similar exasperating expeditions in her lifetime, and he reckoned

it against her. The young man had much to worry him—the heat, the local tension, the approaching

visit of the Lieutenant-Governor, the problems of Adela — and threading them all together

into a grotesque garland were these Indianizations of Mrs. Moore. What does happen to

one's mother when she dies? Presumably she goes to heaven, anyhow she clears out. Ronny's

religion was of the sterilized Public School brand, which never goes bad, even in the tropics.

Wherever he entered, mosque, cave, or temple, he retained the spiritual outlook of the Fifth

Form, and condemned as "weakening" any attempt to understand them. Pulling himself together,

he dismissed the matter from his mind. In due time he and his half-brother and sister would put up a tablet to her in the Northamptonshire church where she had worshipped, recording the dates of her birth and death and the fact that she had been buried at sea. This would be sufficient. And Adela— she would have to depart too; he hoped she would have made the suggestion herself ere now. He really could not marry her— it would mean the end of his career. Poor lamentable Adela. . . . She remained at Government College, by Fielding's courtesy— unsuitable and humiliating, but no one would receive her at the civil station. He postponed all private talk until the award against her was decided. Aziz was suing her for damages in the sub-judge's court. Then he would ask her to release him. She had killed his love, and it had never been very robust; they would never have achieved betrothal but for the accident to the Nawab Bahadur's car. She belonged to the callow academic period of his life which he had outgrown— Grasmere,

serious talks and walks, that sort of thing . **CHAPTER XXIX** The visit of the Lieutenant-Governor of the Province formed the next stage in the decomposition of the Marabar. Sir Gilbert, though not an enlightened man, held enlightened opinions . Exempted by a long career in the Secretariate from personal contact with the peoples of India, he was able to speak of them urbanely, and to deplore racial prejudice. He applauded the outcome of the trial, and congratulated Fielding on having taken "the broad, the sensible, the only possible charitable view from the first. Speaking confidentially ... "he proceeded. Fielding deprecated confidences, but Sir Gilbert insisted on imparting them; the affair had been "mishandled by certain of our friends up the hill" who did not realize that "the hands of the clock move forward,

not back," etc., etc. One thing he could guarantee: the Principal would receive a most

cordial invitation to rejoin the club, and he begged, nay commanded him, to accept. He returned

to his Himalayan altitudes well satisfied; the amount of money Miss Quested would have

to pay, the precise nature of what had happened in the caves— these were local details, and did

not concern him .

Fielding found himself drawn more and more into Miss Quested's affairs. The College remained

closed and he ate and slept at Hamidullah's, so there was no reason she should not

stop on if she wished. In her place he would have cleared out, sooner than submit to Ronny's half-hearted and distracted civilities, but she was waiting for the hour-glass of her sojourn to run through. A house to live in, a garden to walk in during the brief moment of the cool — that

was all she asked, and he was able to provide them. Disaster had shown her her limitations, and he realized now what a fine loyal character she was. Her humility was touching. She never

repined at getting the worst of both worlds; she regarded it as the due punishment of her stupidity .

When he hinted to her that a personal apology to Aziz might be seemly, she said sadly:

"Of course. I ought to have thought of it myself, my instincts never help me. Why didn't I rush

up to him after the trial? Yes, of course I will write him an apology, but please will you dictate

it?" Between them they concocted a letter, sincere, and full of moving phrases, but it was not

moving as a letter. "Shall I write another?" she enquired. "Nothing matters if I can undo the

harm I have caused. I can do this right, and that right; but when the two are put together they

come wrong. That's the defect of my character. I have never realized it until now. I thought that

if I was just and asked questions I would come through every difficulty." He replied: "Our letter

is a failure for a simple reason which we had better face: you have no real affection for Aziz, or

Indians generally." She assented. "The first time I saw you, you were wanting to see India, not

Indians, and it occurred to me: Ah, that won't take us far. Indians know whether they are liked

or not—they cannot be fooled here. Justice never satisfies them, and that is why the British Empire

rests on sand." Then she said: "Do I like anyone, though?" Presumably she liked Heaslop, and he changed the subject, for this side of her life did not concern him.

His Indian friends were, on the other hand, a bit above themselves. Victory, which would have made the English sanctimonious, made them aggressive. They wanted to develop an offensive,

and tried to do so by discovering new grievances and wrongs, many of which had no existence. They suffered from the usual disillusion that attends warfare. The aims of battle and

the fruits of conquest are never the same; the latter have their value and only the saint rejects

them, but their hint of immortality vanishes as soon as they are held in the hand. Although Sir

Gilbert had been courteous, almost obsequious, the fabric he represented had in no wise bowed

its head. British officialism remained, as allpervading and as unpleasant as the sun; and what

was next to be done against it was not very obvious, even to Mahmoud Ali. Loud talk and trivial

lawlessness were attempted, and behind them continued a genuine but vague desire for education .

"Mr. Fielding, we must all be educated promptly ".

Aziz was friendly and domineering. He wanted Fielding to "give in to the East," as he called it, and live in a condition of affectionate dependence upon it. "You can trust me, Cyril." No question of that, and Fielding had no roots among his own people. Yet he really couldn't become

a sort of Mohammed Latif When they argued about it something racial intruded—not bitterly ,

but inevitably, like the colour of their skins: coffee-colour versus pinko-grey. And Aziz would conclude: "Can't you see that I'm grateful to you for your help and want to reward you "?

And the other would retort: "If you want to reward me, let Miss Quested off paying ".

The insensitiveness about Adela displeased him. It would, from every point of view, be right to treat her generously, and one day he had the notion of appealing to the memory of Mrs.

Moore. Aziz had this high and fantastic estimate of Mrs. Moore. Her death had been a real grief

to his warm heart; he wept like a child and ordered his three children to weep also. There was

no doubt that he respected and loved her. Fielding's first attempt was a failure. The reply was :

"I see your trick. I want revenge on them. Why should I be insulted and suffer the contents of

my pockets read and my wife's photograph taken to the police station? Also I want the money —

to educate my little boys, as I explained to her." But he began to weaken, and Fielding was not

ashamed to practise a little necromancy. Whenever the question of compensation came up, he

introduced the dead woman's name. Just as other propagandists invented her a tomb, so did he

raise a questionable image of her in the heart of Aziz, saying nothing that he believed to be untrue ,

but producing something that was probably far from the truth. Aziz yielded suddenly. He

felt it was Mrs. Moore's wish that he should spare the woman who was about to marry her son ,

that it was the only honour he could pay her, and he renounced with a passionate and beautiful

outburst the whole of the compensation money, claiming only costs. It was fine of him, and, as

he foresaw, it won him no credit with the English. They still believed he was guilty, they believed

it to the end of their careers, and retired Anglo-Indians in Tunbridge Wells or Cheltenham

still murmur to each other: "That Marabar case which broke down because the poor girl couldn't

face giving her evidence—that was another bad case ".

When the affair was thus officially ended, Ronny, who was about to be transferred to another

part of the Province, approached Fielding with his usual constraint and said: "I wish to

thank you for the help you have given Miss Quested. She will not of course trespass on your

hospitality further; she has as a matter of fact decided to return to England. I have just arranged about her passage for her. I understand she would like to see you ,,. "I shall go round at once ". On reaching the College, he found her in some upset. He learnt that the engagement had been broken by Ronny. "Far wiser of him," she said pathetically. "I ought to have spoken myself, but I drifted on wondering what would happen. I would willingly have gone oc spoiling his life through inertia—one has nothing to do, one belongs nowhere and becomes a public nuisance without realizing it." In order to reassure him, she added: "I speak only of India. I am not astray in England. I fit in there — no, don't think I shall do harm in England. When I am forced back there, I shall settle down to some career. I have sufficient money left to start myself, and heaps of friends of my own type. I shall be quite all right." Then sighing: "But oh, the trouble I've brought on everyone here. ... I can never get over it. My carefulness as to whether we

should marry or not . and in the end Ronny and I part and aren't even sorry. We ought never to

have thought of marriage. Weren't you amazed when our engagement was originally announced "?

"Not much. At my age one's seldom amazed," he said, smiling. "Marriage is too absurd in

any case. It begins and continues for such very slight reasons. The social business props it up

on one side, and the theological business on the other, but neither of them are marriage, are

they? I've friends who can't remember why they married, no more can their wives. I suspect

that it mostly happens haphazard, though afterwards various noble reasons are invented. About

marriage I am cynical ".

"I am not. This false start has been all my own fault. I was bringing to Ronny nothing that

ought to be brought, that was why he rejected me really. I entered that cave thinking: Am I

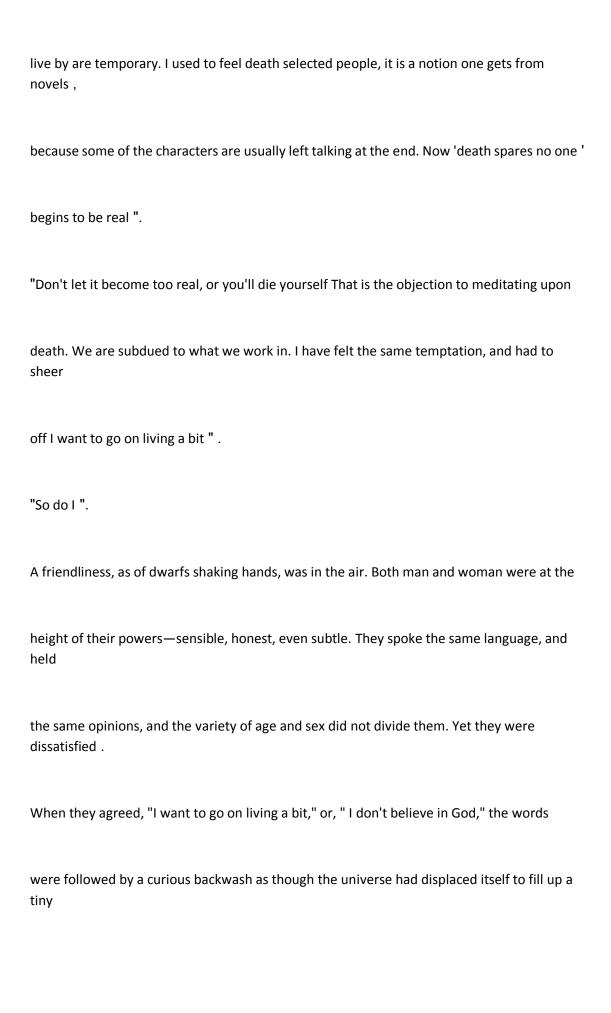
fond of him? I have not yet told you that, Mr. Fielding. I didn't feel justified. Tenderness, iespect ,

personal intercourse— I tried to make them take the place— of "—

"I no longer want love," he said, supplying the word.

"No more do I. My experiences here have cured me. But I want others to want it ".
"But to go back to our first talk (for I suppose this is our last one)— when you entered that
cave, who did follow you, or did no one follow you? Can you now say? I don't like it left in air ".
"Let us call it the guide," she said indifferently. "It will never be known. It's as if I ran my
finger along that polished wall in the dark, and cannot get further. I am up against something ,
and so are you. Mrs. Moore— she did know ".
"How could she have known what we don't "?
"Telepathy, possibly ".
The pert, meagre word fell to the ground. Telepathy? What an explanation! Better withdraw
it, and Adela did so. She was at the end of her spiritual tether, and so was he. Were there
worlds beyond which they could never touch, or did all that is possible enter their consciousness?
They could not tell. They only realized that their outlook was more or less similar, and





void, or as though they had seen their own gestures from an immense height—dwarfs talking ,
shaking hands and assuring each other that they stood on the same footing of insight. They did
not think they were wrong, because as soon as honest people think they are wrong instability
sets up. Not for them was an infinite goal behind the stars, and they never sought it. But wistfulness
descended on them now, as on other occasions; the shadow of the shadow of a dream
fell over their clear-cut interests, and objects never seen again seemed messages from another
world .
"And I do like you so very much, if I may say so," he affirmed .
"I'm glad, for I like you. Let's meet again ".
"We will, in England, if I ever take home leave ".
"But I suppose you're not likely to do that yet ".
"Quite a chance. I have a scheme on now as a matter of fact ".
"Oh, that would be very nice ".

So it petered out. Ten days later Adela went off, by the same route as her dead friend. The final beat up before the monsoon had come. The country was stricken and blurred. Its houses, trees and fields were all modelled out of the same brown paste, and the sea at Bombay slid about like broth against the quays. Her last Indian adventure was with Antony, who followed her on to the boat and tried to blackmail her. She had been Mr. Fielding's mistress, Antony said. Perhaps Antony was discontented with his tip. She rang the cabin bell and had him turned out, but his statement created rather a scandal, and people did not speak to her much during the first part of the voyage. Through the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea she was left to herself, and to the dregs of Chandrapore . With Egypt the atmosphere altered. The clean sands, heaped on each side of the canal, seemed to wipe off everything that was difficult and equivocal, and even Port Said looked pure

and charming in the light of a rose-grey morning. She went on shore there with an American

missionary, they walked out to the Lesseps statue, they drank the tonic air of the Levant. "To what duties. Miss Quested, are you returning in your own country after your taste of the tropics?

"the missionary asked. "Observe, I don't say to what do you turn, but to what do you return.

Every life ought to contain both a turn and a return. This celebrated pioneer (he pointed)

to the statue) will make my question clear. He turns to the East, he returns to the West. You

can see it from the cute position of his hands, one of which holds a string of sausages." The $\,$

missionary looked at her humorously, in order to cover the emptiness of his mind. He had no

idea what he meant by "turn" and "return," but he often used words in pairs, for the sake of

moral brightness. "I see," she replied. Suddenly, in the Mediterranean clarity, she had seen. Her

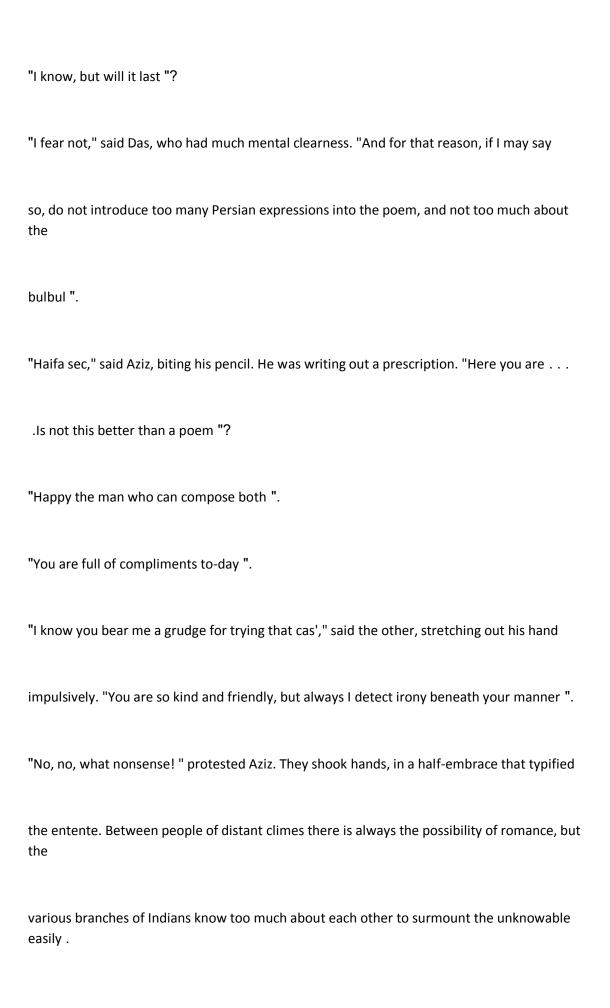
first duty on returning to England was to look up those other children of Mrs. Moore's, Ralph

and Stella, then she would turn to her profession. Mrs. Moore had tended to keep the products

of her two marriages apart, and Adela had not come across the younger branch so far .

CHAPTER XXX

Another local consequence of the trial was a Hindu-Moslem entente. Loud protestations of
amity were exchanged by prominent citizens, and there went with them a genuine desire for a
good understanding. Aziz, when he was at the hospital one day, received a visit from rather a
sympathetic figure: Mr. Das. The magistrate sought two favours from him: a remedy for shingles
and a poem for his brother-in-law's new monthly magazine. He accorded both .
"My dear Das, why, when you tried to send me to prison, should I try to send Mr. Bhattacharya
a poem? Eh? That is naturally entirely a joke. I will write him the best I can, but I thought
your magazine was for Hindus ".
"It is not for Hindus, but Indians generally," he said timidly .
"There is no such person in existence as the general Indian ".
"There was not, but there may be when you have written a poem. You are our hero; the
whole city is behind you, irrespective of creed ".



The approach is prosaic. "Excellent," said Aziz, patting a stout shoulder and thinking, "I wish
they did not remind me of cow-dung"; Das thought, "Some Moslems are very violent." They
smiled wistfully, each spying the thought in the other's heart, and Das, the more articulate ,
said: "Excuse my mistakes, realize my limitations. Life is not easy as we know it on the earth ".
"Oh, well, about this poem—how did you hear I sometimes scribbled?" he asked, much
pleased, and a good deal moved—for literature had always been a solace to him, something that
the ugliness of facts could not spoil .
"Professor Godbole often mentioned it, before his departure for Mau ".
"How did he hear "?
"He too was a poet; do you not divine each other "?
Flattered by the invitation, he got to work that evening. The feel of the pen between his fingers
generated bulbuls at once. His poem was again about the decay of Islam and the brevity

of love; as sad and sweet as he could contrive, but not nourished by personal experience, and of no interest to these excellent Hindus. Feeling dissatisfied, he rushed to the other extreme, and wrote a satire, which was too libellous to print. He could only express pathos or venom, though most of his life had no concern with either. He loved poetry— science was merely an acquisition, which he laid aside when unobserved like his European dress— and this evening he longed to compose a new song which should be acclaimed by multitudes and even sung in the fields. In what language shall it be written? And what shall it announce? He vowed to see more of Indians who were not Mohammedans, and never to look backward. It is the only healthy course. Of what help, in this latitude and hour, are the glories of Cordova and Samarcand? They have gone, and while we lament them the English occupy Delhi and exclude us from East Africa .

Islam itself, though true, throws cross-lights over the path to freedom. The song of the

future must transcend creed.

The poem for Mr. Bhattacharya never got written, but it had an effect. It led him towards

the vague and bulky figure of a mother-land. He was without natural affection for the land of

his birth, but the Marabar Hills drove him to it. Half closing his eyes, he attempted to love India .

She must imitate Japan. Not until she is a nation will her sons be treated with respect. He grew

harder and less approachable. The English, whom he had laughed at or ignored, persecuted

him everywhere; they had even thrown nets over his dreams. "My great mistake has been taking

our rulers as a joke," he said to Hamidullah next day; who replied with a sigh: "It is far the

wisest way to take them, but not possible in the long run. Sooner or later a disaster such as

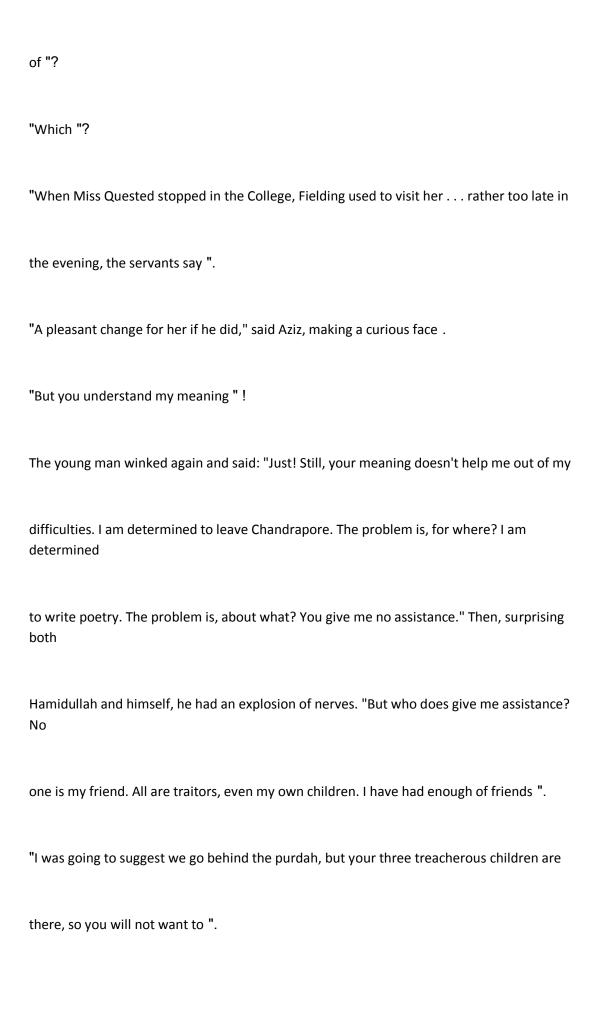
yours occurs, and reveals their secret thoughts about our character. If God himself descended

from heaven into their club and said you were innocent, they would disbelieve him. Now you

see why Mahmoud Ali and self waste so much time over intrigues and associate with creatures

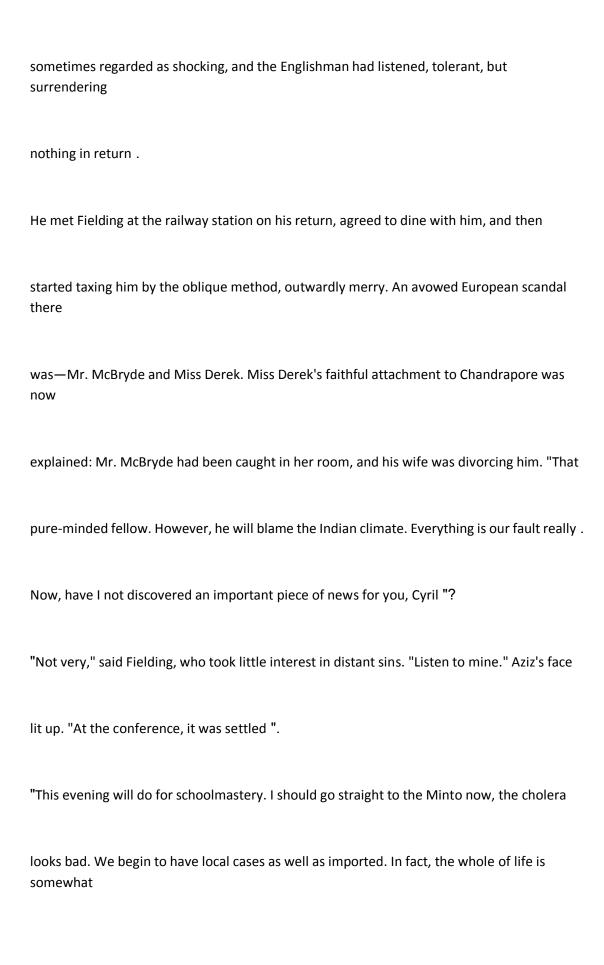


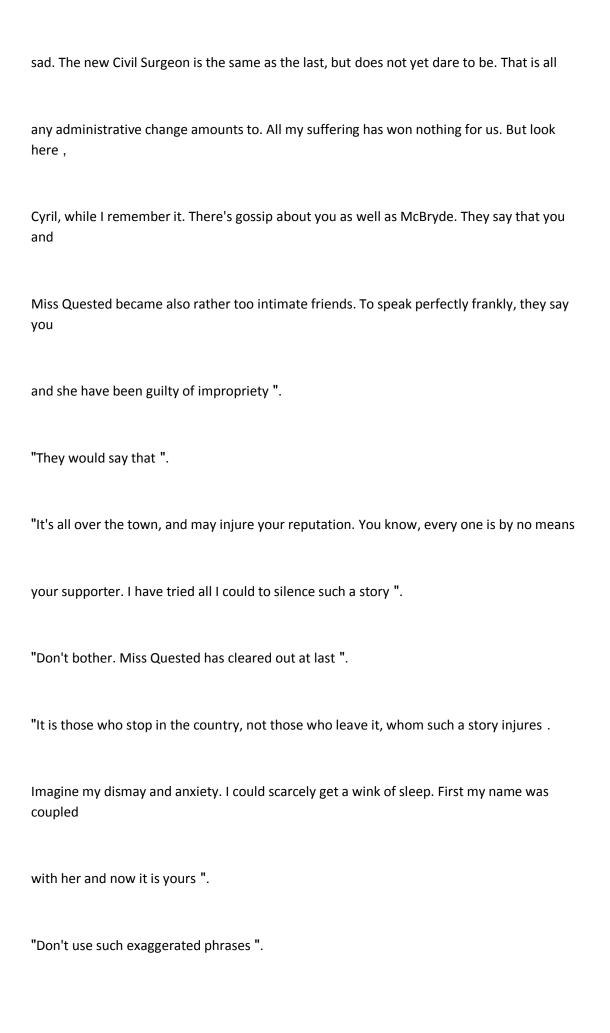
"I shall never be rich anywhere, it is outside my character ".
"If you had been sensible and made Miss Quested pay "
"I chose not to. Discussion of the past is useless," he said, with sudden sharpness of tone .
"I have allowed her to keep her fortune and buy herself a husband in England, for which it will
be very necessary. Don't mention the matter again ".
"Very well, but your life must continue a poor man's; no holidays in Kashmir for you yet, you
must stick to your profession and rise to a highly paid post, not retire to a jungle-state and
write poems. Educate your children, read the latest scientific periodicals, compel European doctors
to respect you. Accept the consequences of your own actions like a man ".
Aziz winked at him slowly and said: "We are not in the law courts. There are many ways of
being a man; mine is to express what is deepest in my heart ".
"To such a remark there is certainly no reply," said Hamidullah, moved. Recovering himself
and smiling, he said: "Have you heard this naughty rumour that Mohammed Latif has got hold

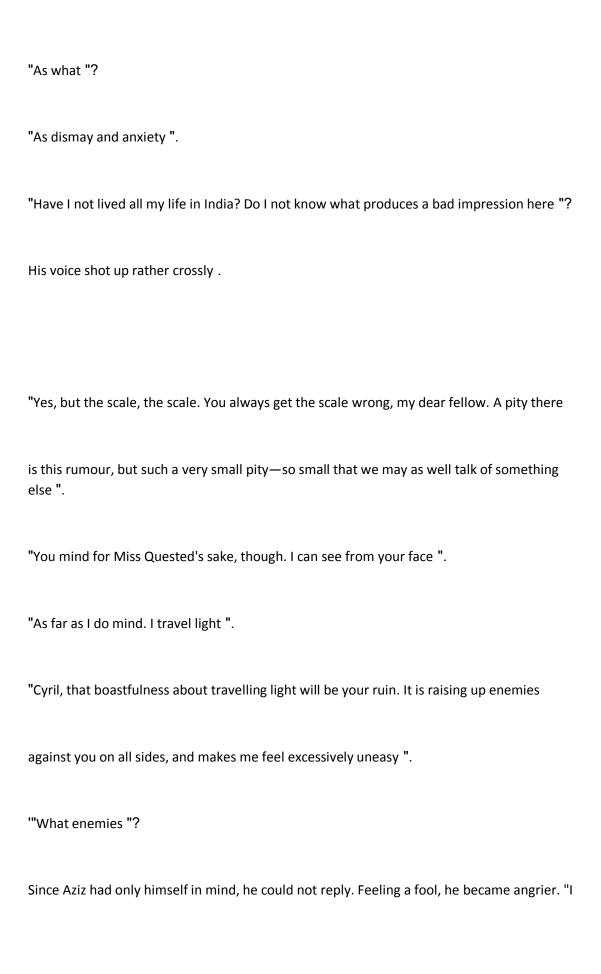


"I am sorry, it is ever since I was in prison my temper is strange; take me, forgive me ".
"Nureddin's mother is visiting my wife now. That is all right, I think ".
"They come before me separately, but not so far together. You had better prepare them for
the united shock of my face ".
"No, let us surprise them without warning, far too much nonsense still goes on among our
ladies. They pretended at the time of your trial they would give up purdah! indeed, those of
them who can write composed a document to that effect, and now it ends in humbug. You
know how deeply they all respect Fielding, but not one of them has seen him. My wife says she
will, but always when he calls there is some excuse—she is not feeling well, she is ashamed of
the room, she has no nice sweets to offer him, only Elephants' Ears, and if I say Elephants' Ears
are Mr. Fielding's favourite sweet, she replies that he will know how badly hers are made, so
she cannot see him on their account. For fifteen years, my dear boy, have I argued with my begum ,

for fifteen years, and never gained a point, yet the missionaries inform us our women are down-trodden. If you want a subject for a poem, take this: The Indian lady as she is and not as she is supposed to be ". **CHAPTER XXXI** Aziz had no sense of evidence. The sequence of his emotions decided his beliefs, and led to the tragic coolness between himself and his English friend. They had conquered but were not to be crowned. Fielding was away at a conference, and after the rumour about Miss Quested had been with him undisturbed for a few days, he assumed it was true. He had no objection on moral grounds to his friends amusing themselves, and Cyril, being middle-aged, could no longer expect the pick of the female market, and must take his amusement where he could find it. But he resented him making up to this particular woman, whom he still regarded as his enemy also, why had he not been told? What is friendship without confidences? He himself had told things











"But the way I said it must be cleared up. I was unintentionally rude. Unreserved regrets ".
"The fault is entirely mine ".
Tangles like this still interrupted their intercourse. A pause in the wrong place, an intonation
misunderstood, and a whole conversation went awry. Fielding had been startled, not shocked,
but how convey the difference? There is always trouble when two people do not think of sex at
the same moment, always mutual resentment and surprise, even when the two people are of
the same race. He began to recapitulate his feelings about Miss Quested. Aziz cut him short
with: "But I believe you, I believe. Mohammed Latif shall be severely punished for inventing
this ".
"Oh, leave it alone, like all gossip—it's merely one of those half-alive things that try to crowd
out real life. Take no notice, it'll vanish, like poor old Mrs. Moore's tombs ".
"Mohammed Latif has taken to intriguing. We are already much displeased with him. Will it
satisfy you if we send him back to his family without a present "?



"I have accepted re-election, sir. Do you regard it as necessary I should come? I should be glad to be excused; indeed, I have a dinner engagement this evening ". "It is not a question of your feelings, but of the wish of the Lieutenant-Governor. Perhaps you will ask me whether I speak officially. I do. I shall expect you this evening at six. We shall not interfere with your subsequent plans ". He attended the grim little function in due course. The skeletons of hospitality rattled "--Have a peg, have a drink." He talked for five minutes to Mrs. Blakiston, who was the only surviving female. He talked to McBryde, who was defiant about his divorce, conscious that he had sinned as a sahib. He talked to Major Roberts, the new Civil Surgeon; and to young Milner, the new City Magistrate; but the more the club changed, the more it promised to be the same thing. "It is no good," he thought, as he returned past the mosque, "we all build upon sand; and the more modern the country gets, the worse'll be the crash. In the old eighteenth century,

when cruelty and injustice raged, an invisible power repaired their ravages. Everything

echoes

now; there's no stopping the echo. The original sound may be harmless, but the echo is always
evil." This reflection about an echo lay at the verge of Fielding's mind. He could never develop
it. It belonged to the universe that he had missed or rejected. And the mosque missed it too .
Like himself, those shallow arcades provided but a limited asylum. "There is no God but God "
doesn't carry us far through the complexities of matter and spirit; it is only a game with words ,
really, a religious pun, not a religious truth .
He found Aziz overtired and dispirited, and he determined not to allude to their misunderstanding
until the end of the evening; it would be more acceptable then. He made a clean
breast about the club—said he had only gone under compulsion, and should never attend again
unless the order was renewed. "In other words, probably never; for I am going quite soon to
England ".
"I thought you might end in England," he said very quietly, then changed the conversation .

Rather awkwardly they ate their dinner, then went out to sit in the Mogul garden-house. "I am only going for a little time. On official business. My service is anxious to get me away from Chandrapore for a bit. It is obliged to value me highly, but does not care for me. The situation is somewhat humorous ". "What is the nature of the business? Will it leave you much spare time "? "Enough to see my friends ". "I expected you to make such a reply. You are a faithful friend. Shall we now talk about something else "? "Willingly. What subject "? "Poetry," he said, with tears in his eyes. "Let us discuss why poetry has lost the power of making men brave. My mother's father was also a poet, and fought against you in the Mutiny. I might equal him if there was another mutiny. As it is, I am a doctor, who has won a case and has three children to support, and whose chief subject of conversation is official plans ". "Let us talk about poetry." He turned his mind to the innocuous subject. "You people are







But as he drove off, something depressed him~a dull pain of body or mind, waiting to rise to the surface. When he reached the bungalow he wanted to return and say something very affectionate; instead, he gave the sais a heavy tip, and sat down gloomily on the bed, and Hassan massaged him incompetently. The eye-flies had colonized the top of an almeira; the red stains on the durry were thicker, for Mohammed Latif had slept here during his imprisonment and spat a good deal; the table drawer was scarred where the police had forced it open; everything in Chandrapore was used up, including the air. The trouble rose to the surface now: he was suspicious; he suspected his friend of intending to marry Miss Quested for the sake of her money, and of going to England for that purpose. "Huzoor? "--for he had muttered . "Look at those flies on the ceiling. Why have you not drowned them "? "Huzoor, they return ". "Like all evil things ".

To divert the conversation, Hassan related how the kitchen-boy had killed a snake, good,

but killed it by cutting it in two, bad, because it becomes two snakes.

"When he breaks a plate, does it become two plates "?

"Glasses and a new teapot will similarly be required, also for myself a coat ".

Aziz sighed. Each for himself One man needs a coat, another a rich wife; each approaches

his goal by a clever detour. Fielding had saved the girl a fine of twenty thousand rupees, and now followed her to England. If he desired to marry her, all was explained; she would bring him

a larger dowry. Aziz did not believe his own suspicions—better if he had, for then he would have

denounced and cleared the situation up. Suspicion and belief could in his mind exist side by

side. They sprang from different sources, and need never intermingle. Suspicion in the Oriental

is a sort of malignant tumour, a mental malady, that makes him self-conscious and unfriendly

suddenly; he trusts and mistrusts at the same time in a way the Westerner cannot comprehend .

It is his demon, as the Westerner's is hypocrisy. Aziz was seized by it, and his fancy built a satanic

castle, of which the foundation had been laid when he talked at Dilkusha under the stars .

The girl had surely been Cyril's mistress when she stopped in the College—Mohammed Latif was

right. But was that all? Perhaps it was Cyril who followed her into the cave. . . . No; impossible .

Cyril hadn't been on the Kawa Dol at all. Impossible. Ridiculous. Yet the fancy left him trembling

with misery. Such treachery— if true— would have been the worst in Indian history; nothing so

vile, not even the murder of Afzul Khan by Sivaji. He was shaken, as though by a truth, and told

Hassan to leave him.

Next day he decided to take his children back to Mussoorie. They had come down for the trial, that he might bid them farewell, and had stayed on at Hamidullah's for the rejoicings. Major

Roberts would give him leave, and during his absence Fielding would go off to England. The idea suited both his beliefs and his suspicions. Events would prove which was right, and preserve,

in either case, his dignity.

Fielding was conscious of something hostile, and because he was really fond of Aziz his optimism

failed him. Travelling light is less easy as soon as affection is involved. Unable to jog forward in the serene hope that all would come right, he wrote an elaborate letter in the rather

modern style: "It is on my mind that you think me a prude about women. I had rather you thought anything else of me. If I live impeccably now, it is only because I am well on the forties— a period of revision. In the eighties I shall revise again. And before the nineties come— I

shall be revised! But, alive or dead, I am absolutely devoid of morals. Do kindly grasp this about

me." Aziz did not care for the letter at all. It hurt his delicacy. He liked confidences, however gross, but generalizations and comparisons always repelled him. Life is not a scientific manual .

He replied coldly, regretting his inability to return from Mussoorie before his friend sailed: "But

I must take my poor little holiday while I can. All must be economy henceforward, all hopes of

Kashmir have vanished for ever and ever. When you return I shall be slaving far away in some

new post ".

And Fielding went, and in the last gutterings of Chandrapore — heaven and earth both looking

like toffee— the Indian's bad fancies were confirmed. His friends encouraged them, for though they had liked the Principal, they felt uneasy at his getting to know so much about their

private affairs. Mahmoud Ali soon declared that treachery was afoot. Hamidullah murmured ,

"Certainly of late he no longer addressed us with his former frankness," and warned Aziz "not to

expect too much— he and she are, after all, both members of another race." "Where are my twenty thousand rupees?" he thought. He was absolutely indifferent to money— not merely generous

with it, but promptly paying his debts when he could remember to do so— yet these rupees haunted his mind, because he had been tricked about them, and allowed them to escape overseas, like so much of the wealth of India. Cyril would marry Miss Quested— he grew certain

of it, all the unexplained residue of the Marabar contributing. It was the natural conclusion of

the horrible senseless picnic, and before long he persuaded himself that the wedding had actually

taken place.

CHAPTER XXXII

Egypt was charming— a green strip of carpet and walking up and down it four sorts of animals

and one sort of man. Fielding's business took him there for a few days. He re-embarked at Alexandria— bright blue sky, constant wind, clean low coast-line, as against the intricacies of Bombay. Crete welcomed him next with the long snowy ridge of its mountains, and then came

Venice. As he landed on the piazzetta a cup of beauty was lifted to his lips, and he drank with a

sense of disloyalty. The buildings of Venice, like the mountains of Crete and the fields of Egypt ,

stood in the right place, whereas in poor India everything was placed wrong. He had forgotten

the beauty of form among idol temples and lumpy hills; indeed, without form, how can there be

beauty? Form stammered here and there in a mosque, became rigid through nervousness even ,

but oh these Italian churches! San Giorgio standing on the island which could scarcely have

risen from the waves without it, the Salute holding the entrance of a canal which, but for it,

would not be the Grand Canal! In the old undergraduate days he had wrapped himself up in the

manycoloured blanket of St. Mark's, but something more precious than mosaics and marbles

was offered to him now: the harmony between the works of man and the earth that upholds

them, the civilization that has escaped muddle, the spirit in a reasonable form, with fiesh and

blood subsisting. Writing picture post-cards to his Indian friends, he felt that all of them would

miss the joys he experienced now, the joys of form, and that this constituted a serious barrier .

They would see the sumptuousness of Venice, not its shape, and though Venice was not

Europe, it was part of the Mediterranean harmony. The Mediterranean is the human norm .

When men leave that exquisite lake, whether through the Bosphorus or the Pillars of Hercules ,

they approach the monstrous and extraordinary; and the southern exit leads to the strangest

experience of all. Turning his back on it yet again, he took the train northward, and tender romantic

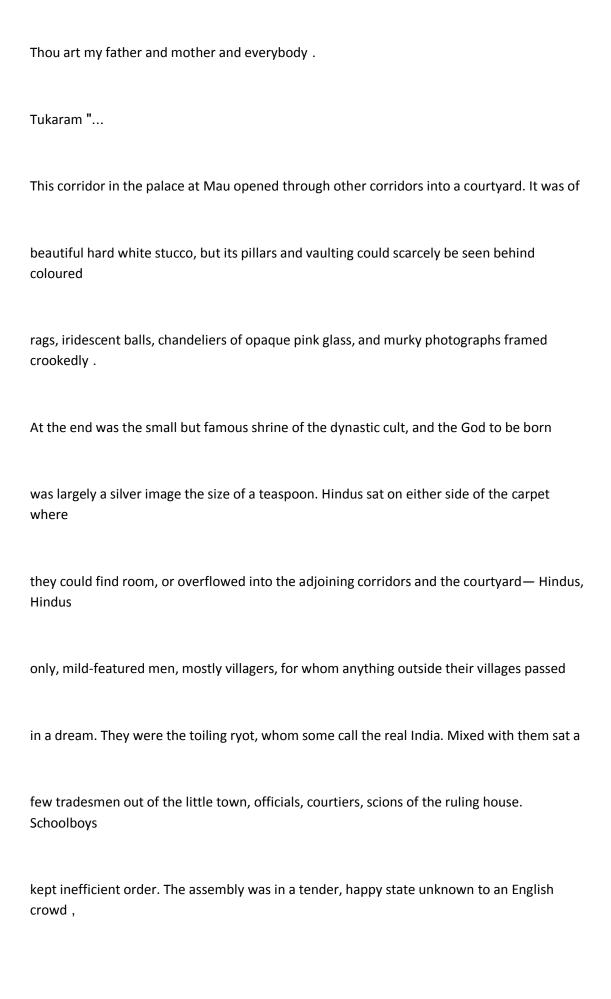
fancies that he thought were dead for ever, flowered when he saw the buttercups and

daisies of June.

PART III: TEMPLE

CHAPTER XXXIII

Some hundreds of miles westward of the Marabax Hills, and two years later in time. Professor
Narayan Godbole stands in the presence of God. God is not bom yet—that will occur at
midnight—but He has also been bom centuries ago, nor can He ever be bom, because He is the
Lord of the Universe, who transcends human processes. He is, was not, is not, was. He and
Professor Godbole stood at opposite ends of the same strip of carpet .
"Tukaram, Tukaram ,
Thou art my father and mother and everybody .
Tukaram, Tukaram ,
Thou art my father and mother and everybody .
Tukaram, Tukaram ,
Thou art my father and mother and everybody .
Tukaram, Tukaram ,



it seethed like a beneficent potion. When the villagers broke cordon for a glimpse of the silver image, a most beautiful and radiant expression came into their faces, a beauty in which there was nothing personal, for it caused them all to resemble one another during the moment of its indwelling, and only when it was withdrawn did they revert to individual clods. And so with the music. Music there was, but from so many sources that the sum-total was untrammelled. The braying banging crooning melted into a single mass which trailed round the palace before joining the thunder. Rain fell at intervals throughout the night .

It was the turn of Professor Godbole's choir. As Minister of Education, he gained this special

honour. When the previous group of singers dispersed into the crowd, he pressed forward from

the back, already in full voice, that the chain of sacred sounds might be uninterrupted. He was

barefoot and in white, he wore a pale blue turban; his gold pince-nez had caught in a jasmine

garland, and lay sideways down his nose. He and the six colleagues who supported him clashed

their cymbals, hit small drums, droned upon a portable harmonium, and sang:

"Tukaram, Tukaram,

Thou art my father and mother and everybody.

Tukaram, Tukaram,

Thou art my father and mother and everybody.

Tukaram, Tukaram "...

They sang not even to the God who confronted them, but to a saint; they did not one thing which the nonHindu would feel dramatically correct; this approaching triumph of India was a muddle (as we call it), a frustration of reason and form. Where was the God Himself, in whose

honour the congregation had gathered? Indistinguishable in the jumble of His own altar, huddled

out of sight amid images of inferior descent, smothered under rose-leaves, overhung by oleographs, outbiazed by golden tablets representing the Rajah's ancestors, and entirely obscured,

when the wind blew, by the tattered foliage of a banana. Hundreds of electric lights had been lit in His honour (worked by an engine whose thumps destroyed the rhythm of the hymn .(

Yet His face could not be seen. Hundreds of His silver dishes were piled around Him with the minimum of effect. The inscriptions which the poets of the State had composed were hung where they could not be read, or had twitched their drawing-pins out of the stucco, and one of

them (composed in English to indicate His universality) consisted, by an unfortunate slip of the

draughtsman, of the words, "God si Love ".

God si Love. Is this the first message of India?

"Tukaram, Tukaram "...

continued the choir, reinforced by a squabble behind the purdah curtain, where two mothers

tried to push their children at the same moment to the front. A little girl's leg shot out like an eel. In the courtyard, drenched by the rain, the small Europeanized band stumbled off into a waltz. "Nights of Gladness" they were playing. The singers were not perturbed by this rival, they

lived beyond competition. It was long before the tiny fragment of Professor Godbole that attended

to outside things decided that his pince-nez was in trouble, and that until it was adjusted he could not choose a new hymn. He laid down one cymbal, with the other he clashed the air, with his free hand he fumbled at the flowers round his neck. A colleague assisted him .

Singing into one an other's grey moustaches, they disentangled the chain from the tinsel into which it had sunk. Godbole consulted the music-book, said a word to the drummer, who broke

rhythm, made a thick little blur of sound, and produced a new rhythm. This was more exciting ,

the inner images it evoked more definite, and the singers' expressions became fatuous and languid .

They loved all men, the whole universe, and scraps of their past, tiny splinters of detail, emerged for a moment to melt into the universal warmth. Thus Godbole, though she was not

important to him, remembered an old woman he had met in Chandrapore days. Chance brought

her into his mind while it was in this heated state, he did not select her, she happened to occur

among the throng of soliciting images, a tiny splinter, and he impelled her by his spiritual force

to that place where completeness can be found. Completeness, not reconstruction. His senses

grew thinner, he remembered a wasp seen he forgot where, perhaps on a stone. He loved the

wasp equally, he impelled it likewise, he was imitating God. And the stone where the wasp

clung—could he . . . no, he could not, he had been wrong to attempt the stone, logic and conscious

effort had seduced, he came back to the strip of red carpet and discovered that he was dancing upon it. Up and down, a third of the way to the altar and back again, clashing his cymbals,

his little legs twinkling, his companions dancing with him and each other. Noise, noise, the Europeanized band louder, incense on the altar, sweat, the blaze of lights, wind in the bananas.

noise, thunder, eleven-fifty by his wrist-watch, seen as he threw up his hands and detached the

tiny reverberation that was his soul. Louder shouts in the crowd. He danced on. The boys and

men who were squatting in the aisles were lifted forcibly and dropped without changing their

shapes into the laps of their neighbours. Down the path thus cleared advanced a litter $% \left(1\right) =\left(1\right) +\left(1\right) +\left($

It was the aged ruler of the state, brought against the advice of his physicians to witness the Birth ceremony .

No one greeted the Rajah, nor did he wish it; this was no moment for human glory. Nor could the litter be set down, lest it defiled the temple by becoming a throne. He was lifted out

of it while its feet remained in air, and deposited on the carpet close to the altar, his immense

beard was straightened, his legs tucked under him, a paper containing red powder was placed

in his hand. There he sat, leaning against a pillar, exhausted with illness, his eyes magnified by

many unshed tears .

He had not to wait long. In a land where all else was unpunctual, the hour of the Birth was chronometrically observed. Three minutes before it was due, a Brahman brought forth a model

of the village of Gokul (the Bethlehem in that nebulous story) and placed it in front of the altar .

The model was on a wooden tray about a yard square; it was of clay, and was gaily blue and white with streamers and paint. Here, upon a chair too small for him and with a head too large,

sat King Kansa, who is Herod, directing the murder of some Innocents, and in a corner, similarly

proportioned, stood the father and mother of the Lord, warned to depart in a dream. The model

was not holy, but more than a decoration, for it diverted men from the actual image of the God ,

and increased their sacred bewilderment. Some of the villagers thought the Birth had occurred ,

saying with truth that the Lord must have been born, or they could not see Him. But the clock

struck midnight, and simultaneously the rending note of the conch broke forth, followed by the

trumpeting of elephants; all who had packets of powder threw them at the altar, and in the rosy

dust and incense, and clanging and shouts. Infinite Love took upon itself the form of SHRI KRISHNA, and saved the world. All sorrow was annihilated, not only for Indians, but for foreigners,

birds, caves, railways, and the stars; all became joy, all laughter; there had never been disease

nor doubt, misunderstanding, cruelty, fear. Some jumped in the air, others flung themselves prone and embraced the bare feet of the universal lover; the women behind the purdah slapped and shrieked; the little girl slipped out and danced by herself, her black pigtails flying.

Not an orgy of the body; the tradition of that shrine forbade it. But the human spirit had tried

by a desperate contortion to ravish the unknown, flinging down science and history in the struggle, yes, beauty herself Did it succeed? Books written afterwards say "Yes." But how, if there is such an event, can it be remembered afterwards? How can it be expressed in anything

but itself? Not only from the unbeliever are mysteries hid, but the adept himself cannot retain

them. He may think, if he chooses, that he has been with God, but as soon as he thinks it, it becomes history, and falls under the rules of time.

!A cobra of papier-m,chE now appeared on the carpet, also a wooden cradle swinging from a

frame. Professor Godbole approached the latter with a red silk napkin in his arms. The napkin

was God, not that it was, and the image remained in the blur of the altar. It was just a napkin,

folded into a shape which indicated a baby's. The Professor dandled it and gave it to the Rajah,

who, making a great effort, said, "I name this child Shri Krishna," and tumbled it into the cradle .

Tears poured from his eyes, because he had seen the Lord's salvation. He was too weak to exhibit

the silk baby to his people, his privilege in former years. His attendants lifted him up, a new path was cleared through the crowd, and he was carried away to a less sacred part of the

palace. There, in a room accessible to Western science by an outer staircase, his physician. Dr .

Aziz, awaited him. His Hindu physician, who had accompanied him to the shrine, briefly reported

his symptoms. As the ecstasy receded, the invalid grew fretful. The bumping of the steam engine that worked the dynamo disturbed him, and he asked for what reason it had been

introduced into his home. They replied that they would enquire, and administered a sedative .

Down in the sacred corridors, joy had seethed to jollity. It was their duty to play various games to amuse the newly born God, and to simulate his sports with the wanton dairymaids of

Brindaban. Butter played a prominent part in these. When the cradle had been removed, the

principal nobles of the state gathered together for an innocent frolic. They removed their turbans ,

and one put a lump of butter on his forehead, and waited for it to slide down his nose

into his mouth. Before it could arrive, another stole up behind him, snatched the melting morsel ,

and swallowed it himself All laughed exultantly at discovering that the divine sense of humour

coincided with their own. "God si love!" There is fun in heaven. God can play practical

jokes upon Himself, draw chairs away from beneath His own posteriors, set His own turbans on

fire, and steal His own petticoats when He bathes. By sacrificing good taste, this worship

achieved what Christianity has shirked: the inclusion of merriment. All spirit as well as all matter

must participate in salvation, and if practical jokes are banned, the circle is incomplete. Having

swallowed the butter, they played another game which chanced to be graceful: the fondling of

Shri Krishna under the similitude of a child. A pretty red and gold ball is thrown, and he who

catches it chooses a child from the crowd, raises it in his arms, and carries it round to be caressed .

All stroke the darling creature for the Creator's sake, and murmur happy words. The

child is restored to his parents, the ball thrown on, and another child becomes for a moment

the World's desire. And the Lord bounds hither and thither through the aisles, chance, and the

sport of chance, irradiating little mortals with His immortality. . . . When they had played this

long enough—and being exempt from boredom, they played it again and again, they played it

again and again—they took many sticks and hit them together, whack smack, as though they

fought the Pandava wars, and threshed and churned with them, and later on they hung from

the roof of the temple, in a net, a great black earthenware jar, which was painted here and

there with red, and wreathed with dried figs. Now came a rousing sport. Springing up, they struck at the jar with their sticks. It cracked, broke, and a mass of greasy rice and milk poured on to their faces. They ate and smeared one another's mouths and dived between each other's legs for what had been pashed upon the carpet. This way and that spread the divine mess, until the line of schoolboys, who had somewhat fended off the crowd, broke for their share. The corridors, the courtyard, were filled with benign confusion. Also the flies awoke and claimed their share of God's bounty. There was no quarrelling, owing to the nature of the gift, for blessed is the man who confers it on another, he imitates God. And those "imitations," those "substitutions", continued to flicker through the assembly for many hours, awaking in each man, according to his capacity, an emotion that he would not have had otherwise. No definite image survived; at the Birth it was questionable whether a silver doll or a mud village, or a silk napkin, or

an intangible spirit, or a pious resolution, had been born. Perhaps all these things! Perhaps none! Perhaps all birth is an allegory! Still, it was the main event of the religious year. It caused strange thoughts. Covered with grease and dust. Professor Godbole had once more developed the life of his spirit. He had, with increasing vividness, again seen Mrs. Moore, and round her faintly clinging forms of trouble. He was a Brahman, she Christian, but it made no difference, made no difference whether she was a trick of his memory or a telepathic appeal. It was his duty, as it was his desire, to place himself in the position of the God and to love her, and to place himself in her position and to say to the God, "Come, come, come, come." This was all he could do. How inadequate! But each according to his own capacities, and he knew that his own were small. "One old Englishwoman and one little, little wasp," he thought, as he stepped out of the temple into the grey of a pouring wet morning. "It does not seem much, still it is more than I am myself "

CHAPTER XXXIV

Dr. Aziz left the palace at the same time. As he returned to his house— which stood in a

pleasant garden further up the main street of the town— he could see his old patron paddling

and capering in the slush ahead. "Hullo!" he called, and it was the wrong remark, for the devotee

indicated by circular gestures of his arms that he did not desire to be disturbed. He added,

"Sorry," which was right, for Godbole twisted his head till it didn't belong to his body, and said

in a strained voice that had no connection with his mind: "He arrived at the European Guest

House perhaps—at least possibly ".

"Did he? Since when "?

to

But time was too definite. He waved his arm more dimly and disappeared. Aziz knew who "he" was— Fielding—but he refused to think about him, because it disturbed his life, and he still trusted the floods to prevent him from arriving. A fine little river issued from his garden gate and gave him much hope. It was impossible that anyone could get across from Deora in such weather as this. Fielding's visit was official. He had been transferred from Chandrapore, and sent on a tour through Central India to see what the remoter states were doing with regard

English education. He had married, he had done the expected with Miss Quested, and Aziz had

no wish to see him again .

"Dear old Godbole," he thought, and smiled. He had no religious curiosity, and had never discovered the meaning of this annual antic, but he was well assured that Godbole was a dear

old man. He had come to Man through him and remained on his account. Without him he could

never have grasped problems so totally different from those of Chandrapore. For here the cleavage was between Brahman and non-B rahman; Moslems and English were quite out of the

running, and sometimes not mentioned for days. Since Godbole was a Brahman, Aziz was one

also for purposes of intrigue: they would often joke about it together. The fissures in the Indian

soil are infinite: Hinduism, so solid from a distance, is riven into sects and clans, which radiate

and join, and change their names according to the aspect from which they are approached .

Study it for years with the best teachers, and when you raise your head, nothing they have told

you quite fits. Aziz, the day of his inauguration, had remarked: "I study nothing, I respect

—"making an excellent impression. There was now a minimum of prejudice against him. Nominally

under a Hindu doctor, he was really chief medicine man to the court. He had to drop inoculation

and such Western whims, but even at Chandrapore his profession had been a game,

centering round the operating table, and here in the backwoods he let his instruments rust, ran

his little hospital at half steam, and caused no undue alarm .

His impulse to escape from the English was sound. They had frightened him permanently,

and there are only two reactions against fright: to kick and scream on committees, or to retreat

to a remote jungle, where the sahib seldom comes. His old lawyer friends wanted him to stop in

British India and help agitate, and might have prevailed, but for the treachery of Fielding. The

news had not surprised him in the least. A rift had opened between them after the trial when

Cyril had not joined in his procession; those advocacies of the girl had increased it; then came

the post-cards from Venice, so cold, so unfriendly that all agreed that something was wrong; and finally, after a silence, the expected letter from Hampstead. Mahmoud Ali was with him at

the time. "Some news that will surprise you. I am to marry someone whom you know. ..." He did not read further. "Here it comes, answer for me—" and he threw it to Mahmoud Ali. Subsequent

letters he destroyed unopened. It was the end of a foolish experiment. And though sometimes

at the back of his mind he felt that Fielding had made sacrifices for him, it was now all confused with his genuine hatred of the English. "I am an Indian at last," he thought, standing

motionless in the rain.

Life passed pleasantly, the climate was healthy so that the children could be with him all the year round, and he had married again— not exactly a marriage, but he liked to regard it as one —

and he read his Persian, wrote his poetry, had his horse, and sometimes got some shikar while

the good Hindus looked the other way. His poems were all on one topic— Oriental womanhood .

"The purdah must go," was their burden, "otherwise we shall never be free." And he declared

)fantastically) that India would not have been conquered if women as well as men had fought

at Plassy. "But we do not show our women to the foreigner "—not explaining how this was to be

managed, for he was writing a poem. Bulbuls and roses would still persist, the pathos of defeated

Islam remained in his blood and could not be expelled by modernities. Illogical poems -

like their writer. Yet they struck a true note: there cannot be a mother-land without new homes .

In one poem— the only one funny old Godbole liked— he had skipped over the mother-land)whom he did not truly love) and gone straight to internationality. "Ah, that is bhakti; ah, my

young friend, that is different and very good. Ah, India, who seems not to move, will go straight

there while the other nations waste their time. May I translate this particular one into Hindi? In

fact, it might be rendered into Sanskrit almost, it is so enlightened. Yes, of course, all your other

poems are very good too. His Highness was saying to Colonel Maggs last time he came that we

are proud of you "--simpering slightly.

 ${\bf Colonel\ Maggs\ was\ the\ Political\ Agent\ for\ the\ neighbourhood\ and\ Aziz'\ dejected\ opponent\ .}$

The Criminal Investigation Department kept an eye on Aziz ever since the trial—they had nothing

actionable against him, but Indians who have been unfortunate must be watched, and to the end of his life he remained under observation, thanks to Miss Quested's mistake. Colonel Maggs learnt with concern that a suspect was coming to Mau, and, adopting a playful manner,

rallied the old Rajah for permitting a Moslem doctor to approach his sacred person. A few years

ago, the Rajah would have taken the hint, for the Political Agent then had been a formidable figure, descending with all the thunders of Empire when it was most inconvenient, turning the

polity inside out, requiring motor-cars and tiger-hunts, trees cut down that impeded the view

from the Guest House, cows milked in his presence, and generally arrogating the control of internal

affairs. But there had been a change of policy in high quarters. Local thunders were no longer endorsed, and the group of little states that composed the agency discovered this and

began comparing notes with fruitful result. To see how much, or how little. Colonel Maggs would stand, became an agreeable game at Mau, which was played by all the departments of

State. He had to stand the appointment of Dr. Aziz. The Rajah did not take the hint, but replied

that Hindus were less exclusive than formerly, thanks to the enlightened commands of the Viceroy,

and he felt it his duty to move with the times .

Yes, all had gone well hitherto, but now, when the rest of the state was plunged in its festival .

he had a crisis of a very different sort. A note awaited him at his house. There was no doubt that Fielding had arrived overnight, nor much doubt that Godbole knew of his arrival, for

the note was addressed to him, and he had read it before sending it on to Aziz, and had written

in the margin, "Is not this delightful news, but unfortunately my religious duties prevent me from taking any action." Fielding announced that he had inspected Mudkul (Miss Derek's former

preserve), that he had nearly been drowned at Deora, that he had reached Mau according to

time-table, and hoped to remain there two days, studying the various educational innovations of

his old friend. Nor had he come alone. His wife and her brother accompanied him. And then the

note turned into the sort of note that always did arrive from the State Guest House. Wanting something. No eggs. Mosquito nets torn. When would they pay their respects to His Highness?

Was it correct that a torchlight procession would take place? If so, might they view it? They didn't want to give trouble, but if they might stand in a balcony, or if they might go out in a boat. . . . Aziz tore the note up. He had had enough of showing Miss Quested native life.

Treacherous hideous harridan! Bad people altogether. He hoped to avoid them, though this

might be difficult, for they would certainly be held up for several days at Mau. Down country ,

the floods were even worse, and the pale grey faces of lakes had appeared in the direction of

the Asirgarh railway station.

CHAPTER XXXV

Long before he discovered Mau, another young Mohammedan had retired there—a saint. His

mother said to him, "Free prisoners." So he took a sword and went up to the fort. He unlocked

a door, and the prisoners streamed out and resumed their previous occupations, but the police

were too much annoyed and cut off the young man's head. Ignoring its absence, lie made his way over the rocks that separate the fort and the town, killing policemen as he went, and he fell outside his mother's house, having accomplished her orders. Consequently there are two shrines to him to-day— that of the Head above, and that of the Body below— and they are worshipped

by the few Mohammedans who live near, and by Hindus also. "There is no God but

God"; that symmetrical injunction melts in the mild airs of Man; it belongs to pilgrimages and

universities, not to feudalism and agriculture. When Aziz arrived, and found that even Islam was

idolatrous, he grew scornful, and longed to purify the place, like Alamgir. But soon he didn't

mind, like Akbar. After all, this saint had freed prisoners, and he himself had lain in prison. The

Shrine of the Body lay in his own garden and produced a weekly crop of lamps and flowers, and

when he saw them he recalled his sufferings. The Shrine of the Head made a nice short walk for the children. He was off duty the morning after the great pujah, and he told them to come .

Jemila held his hand. Ahmed and Karim ran in front, arguing what the body looked like as it came staggering down, and whether they would have been frightened if they met it. He didn't

want them to grow up superstitious, so he rebuked them, and they answered yes, father, for they were well brought up, but, like himself, they were impervious to argument, and after a polite

pause they continued saying what their natures compelled them to say .

A slim, tall eight-sided building stood at the top of the slope, among some bushes. This was the Shrine of the Head. It had not been roofed, and was indeed merely a screen. Inside it crouched a humble dome, and inside that, visible through a grille, was a truncated gravestone,

swathed in calico. The inner angles of the screen were cumbered with bees' nests, and a gentle

shower of broken wings and other aerial oddments kept falling, and had strewn the damp pavement with their flue. Ahmed, apprized by Mohammed Latif of the character of the bee ,

said, "They will not hurt us, whose lives are chaste," and pushed boldly in; his sister was more

cautious. From the shrine they went to a mosque, which, in size and design, resembled a firescreen;

the arcades of Chandrapore had shrunk to a flat piece of ornamental stucco, with protuberances

at either end to suggest minarets. The funny little thing didn't even stand straight, for the rock on which it had been put was slipping down the hill. It, and the shrine, were a strange outcome of the protests of Arabia.

They wandered over the old fort, now deserted, and admired the various views. The scenery ,

best

according to their standards, was delightful—the sky grey and black, bellyfuls of rain all over it, the earth pocked with pools of water and slimy with mud. A magnificent monsoon—the

for three years, the tanks already full, bumper crops possible. Out towards the river (the route

by which the Fieldings had escaped from Deora) the downpour had been enormous, the mails

had to be pulled across by ropes. They could just see the break in the forest trees where the gorge came through, and the rocks above that marked the site of the diamond mine, glistening

with wet. Close beneath was the suburban residence of the Junior Rani, isolated by floods, and

Her Highness, lax about purdah, to be seen paddling with her handmaidens in the garden and

waving her sari at the monkeys on the roof But better not look close beneath, perhaps— nor towards the European Guest House either. Beyond the Guest House rose another grey-green gloom of hills, covered with temples like little white flames. There were over two hundred gods

in that direction alone, who visited each other constantly, and owned numerous cows, and all

the betel-leaf industry, besides having shares in the Asirgarh motor omnibus. Many of them were in the palace at this moment, having the time of their lives; others, too large or proud to

travel, had sent symbols to represent them. The air was thick with religion and rain.

Their white shirts fluttering, Ahmed and Karim ran about over the fort, shrieking with joy.

Presently they intersected a line of prisoners, who were looking aimlessly at an old bronze gun .

"Which of you is to be pardoned?" they asked. For to-night was the procession of the Chief God ,

when He would leave the palace, escorted by the whole power of the State, and pass by the Jail, which stood down in the town now. As He did so, troubling the waters of our civilization ,

one prisoner would be released, and then He would proceed to the great Mau tank that stretched as far as the Guest House garden, where something else would happen, some final or

subsidiary apotheosis, after which He would submit to the experience of sleep. The Aziz family

did not grasp as much as this, being Moslem, but the visit to the Jail was common knowledge .

Smiling, with downcast eyes, the prisoners discussed with the gentry their chances of salvation .

Except for the irons on their legs, they resembled other men, nor did they feel different. Five of

them, who had not yet been brought to trial, could expect no pardon, but all who had been convicted were full of hope. They did not distinguish between the God and the Rajah in their minds, both were too far above them; but the guard was better educated, and ventured to enquire

after His Highness's health.

"It always improves," replied the medicine man. As a matter of fact, the Rajah was dead ,
the ceremony overnight had overtaxed his strength. His death was being concealed lest the
glory of the festival were dimmed. The Hindu physician, the Private Secretary, and a confidential
servant remained with the corpse, while Aziz had assumed the duty of being seen in public, and
misleading people He had liked the ruler very much, and might not prosper under his successor ,
yet he could not worry over such problems yet, for he was involved in the illusion he helped to
create. The children continued to run about, hunting for a frog to put in Mohammed Latif s bed , $ \\$
the little fools. Hundreds of frogs lived in their own garden, but they must needs catch one up
on the fort. They reported two topis below. Fielding and his brother-in-law, instead of resting
after their journey, were climbing the slope to the saint's tomb!
"Throw stones?" asked Karim .
"Put powdered glass in their pan "?

"Ahmed, come here for such wickedness." He raicod his hand to smite his firstborn, but allowed

it to be kissed instead. It was sweet to have his sons with him at this moment, and to

know they were affectionate and brave. He pointed out that the Englishmen were State guests ,

so must not be poisoned, and received, as always, gentle yet enthusiastic assent to his words .

The two visitors entered the octagon, but rushed out at once pursued by some bees. Hither

and thither they ran, beating their heads; the children shrieked with derision, and out of

heaven, as if a plug had been pulled, fell a jolly dollop of rain. Aziz had not meant to greet his

former friend, but the incident put him into an excellent temper. He felt compact and strong. He

shouted out, "Hullo, gentlemen, are you in trouble "?

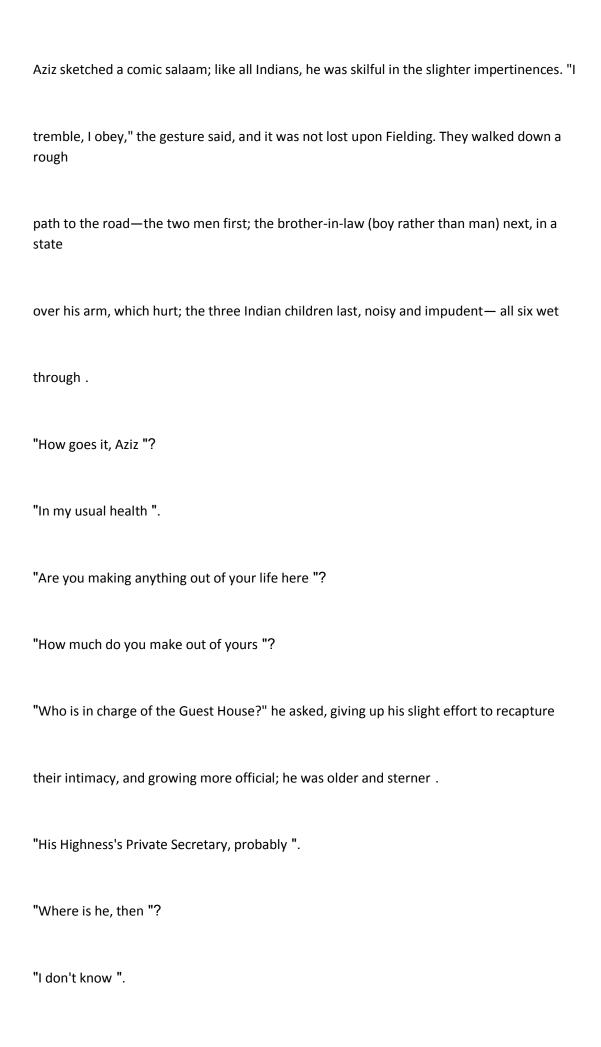
The brother-in-law exclaimed; a bee had got him.

"Lie down in a pool of water, my dear sir—here are plenty. Don't come near me. ... I cannot

control them, they are State bees; complain to His Highness of their behaviour." There was no

real danger, for the rain was increasing. The swarm retired to the shrine. He went up to the









He trembled, and went purplish grey; he hated the news, hated hearing the name Moore .
"Perhaps this explains your odd attitude "?
"And pray what is wrong with my attitude "?
"The preposterous letter you allowed Mahmoud Ali to write for you ".
"This is a very useless conversation, I consider ".
"However did you make such a mistake?" said Fielding, more friendly than before, but
scathing and scornful. "It's almost unbelievable. I should think I wrote you half a dozen times ,
mentioning my wife by name. Miss Quested! What an extraordinary notion!" From his smile ,
Aziz guessed that Stella was beautiful. "Miss Quested is our best friend, she introduced us, but .
what an amazing notion. Aziz, we must thrash this misunderstanding out later on. It is clearly
some deviltry of Mahmoud All's. He knows perfectly well I married Miss Moore. He called her '
Heaslop's sister' in his insolent letter to me ".
The name woke furies in him. "So she is, and here is Heaslop's brother, and you his brotherin -

law, and goodbye." Shame turned into a rage that brought back his self-respect. "What does it matter to me who you marry? Don't trouble me here at Mau is all I ask. I do not want you, do not want one of you in my private life, with my dying breath I say it. Yes, yes, I made a foolish blunder; despise me and feel cold. I thought you married my enemy. I never read your letter. Mahmoud Ali deceived me. I thought you'd stolen my money, but "--he clapped his hands together, and his children gathered round him--" it's as if you stole it. I forgive Mahmoud Ali all things, because he loved me." Then pausing, while the rain exploded like pistols, he said, " My heart is for my own people henceforward," and turned away. Cyril followed him through the mud, apologizing, laughing a little, wanting to argue and reconstruct, pointing out with irrefragable logic that he had married, not Heaslop's betrothed, but Heaslop's sister. What difference did it make at this hour of the day? He had built his life on a mistake, but he had built it. Speaking

in Urdu, that the children might understand, he said: "Please do not follow us, whomever

you marry. I wish no Englishman or Englishwoman to be my friend ".

He returned to the house excited and happy. It had been an uneasy, uncanny moment when Mrs. Moore's name was mentioned, stirring memories. "Esmiss Esmoor . . ."--as though she was

coming to help him. She had always been so good, and that youth whom he had scarcely looked at was her son, Ralph Moore, Stella and Ralph, whom he had promised to be kind to, and Stella had married Cyril.

CHAPTER XXXVI

All the time the palace ceased not to thrum and tum-tum. The revelation was over, but its effect lasted, and its effect was to make men feel that the revelation had not yet come. Hope

existed despite fulfilment, as it will be in heaven. Although the God had been born. His procession—loosely supposed by many to be the birth—had not taken place. In normal years,

the middle hours of this day were signalized by performances of great beauty in the private apartments of the Rajah. He owned a consecrated troupe of men and boys, whose duty it was

to dance various actions and meditations of his faith before him. Seated at his ease, he could witness the Three Steps by which the Saviour ascended the universe to the discomfiture of Indra ,

also the death of the dragon, the mountain that turned into an umbrella, and the saddhu who (with comic results) invoked the God before dining. All culminated in the dance of the milkmaidens before Krishna, and in the still greater dance of Krishna before the milkmaidens,

when the music and the musicians swirled through the dark blue robes of the actors into their

tinsel crowns, and all became one. The Rajah and his guests would then forget that this was a

dramatic performance, and would worship the actors. Nothing of the sort could occur today ,

because death interrupts. It interrupted less here than in Europe, its pathos was less poignant ,

its irony less cruel. There were two claimants to the throne, unfortunately, who were in the palace

now and suspected what had happened, yet they made no trouble, because religion is a

living force to the Hindus, and can at certain moments fling down everything that is petty and

temporary in their natures. The festival flowed on, wild and sincere, and all men loved each other, and avoided by instinct whatever could cause inconvenience or pain .

Aziz could not understand this, any more than an average Christian could. He was puzzled that Mau should suddenly be purged from suspicion and self-seeking. Although lie was an outsider,

and excluded from their rites, they were always particularly charming to him at this time;

he and his household received small courtesies and presents, just because he was outside. He

had nothing to do all day, except to send the embrocation over to the Guest House, and towards

sunset he remembered it, and looked round his house for a local palliative, for the dispensary

was shut. He found a tin of ointment belonging to Mohammed Latif, who was unwilling it should be removed, for magic words had been spoken over it while it was being boiled down ,

but Aziz promised that he would bring it back after application to the stings: he wanted an excuse

for a ride .

The procession was beginning to form as he passed the palace. A large crowd watched the loading of the State palanquin, the prow of which protruded in the form of a silver dragon's head through the lofty half-opened door. Gods, big and little, were getting aboard. He averted

his eyes, for he never knew how much he was supposed to see, and nearly collided with the Minister of Education. "Ah, you might make me late "—meaning that the touch of a non-Hindu

would necessitate another bath; the words were spoken without moral heat. "Sorry," said Aziz .

The other smiled, and again mentioned the Guest House party, and when he heard that Fielding's

wife was not Miss Quested after all, remarked "Ah, no, he married the sister of Mr.

Heaslop. Ah, exactly, I have known that for over a year "—also without heat. "Why did you not

tell me? Your silence plunged me into a pretty pickle." Godbole, who had never been known to

tell anyone anything, smiled again, and said in deprecating tones: "Never be angry with me. I am, as far as my limitations permit, your true friend; besides, it is my holy festival." Aziz always

felt like a baby in that strange presence, a baby who unexpectedly receives a toy. He smiled also, and turned his horse into a lane, for the crush increased. The Sweepers' Band was arriving.

Playing on sieves and other emblems of their profession, they marched straight at the gate of the palace with the air of a victorious army. All other music was silent, for this was ritually

the moment of the Despised and Rejected; the God could not issue from his temple until the

unclean Sweepers played their tune, they were the spot of filth without which the spirit cannot

cohere. For an instant the scene was magnificent. The doors were thrown open, and the whole

court was seen inside, barefoot and dressed in white robes; in the fairway stood the Ark of the

Lord, covered with cloth of gold and fianked by peacock fans and by stiff circular banners of

crimson. It was full to the brim with statuettes and flowers. As it rose from the earth on the

shoulders of its bearers, the friendly sun of the monsoons shone forth and flooded the world

with colour, so that the yellow tigers painted on the palace walls seemed to spring, and pink

and green skeins of cloud to link up the upper sky. The palanquin moved. \dots The lane was full

of State elephants, who would follow it, their howdahs empty out of humility. Aziz did not pay

attention to these sanctities, for they had no connection with his own; he felt bored, slightly

cynical, like his own dear Emperor Babur, who came down from the north and found in Hindustan

no good fruit, no fresh water or witty conversation, not even a friend .

The lane led quickly out of the town on to high rocks and jungle. Here he drew rein and examined

the great Mau tank, which lay exposed beneath him to its remotest curve. Reflecting the evening clouds, it filled the netherworld with an equal splendour, so that earth and sky leant toward one another, about to clash in ecstasy. He spat, cynical again, more cynical than before. For in the centre of the burnished circle a small black blot was advancing—the Guest House boat. Those English had improvised something to take the place of oars, and were proceeding in their work of patrolling India. The sight endeared the Hindus by comparison, and looking back at the milk-white hump of the palace, he hoped that they would enjoy carrying their idol about, for at all events it did not pry into other people's lives. This pose of "seeing India" which had seduced him to Miss Quested at Chandrapore was only a form of ruling India; no sympathy lay behind it; he knew exactly what was going on in the boat as the party gazed at the steps down which the image would presently descend, and debated how near they might row without

getting into trouble officially.

He did not give up his ride, for there would be servants at the Guest House whom he could question; a little information never comes amiss. He took the path by the sombre promontory that contained the royal tombs. Like the palace, they were of snowy stucco, and gleamed by their internal light, but their radiance grew ghostly under approaching night. The promontory was covered with lofty trees, and the fruit-bats were unhooking from the boughs and making kissing sounds as they grazed the surface of the tank; hanging upside down all the day, they had grown thirsty. The signs of the contented Indian evening multiplied; frogs on all sides, cowdung burning eternally; a flock of belated hombills overhead, looking like winged skeletons as they flapped across the gloaming. There was death in the air, but not sadness; a compromise had been made between destiny and desire, and even the heart of man acquiesced .

The European Guest House stood two hundred feet above the water, on the crest of a rocky

and wooded spur that jutted from the jungle. By the time Aziz arrived, the water had paled to a

film of mauve-grey, and the boat vanished entirely. A sentry slept in the Guest House porch,

lamps burned in the cruciform of the deserted rooms. He went from one room to another,

inquisitive,

and malicious. Two letters lying on the piano rewarded him, and he pounced and read

them promptly. He was not ashamed to do this. The sanctity of private correspondence has

never been ratified by the East. Moreover, Mr. McBryde had read all his letters in the past, and

spread their contents. One letter—the more interesting of the two— was from Heaslop to Fielding .

It threw light on the mentality of his former friend, and it hardened him further against

him. Much of it was about Ralph Moore, who appeared to be almost an imbecile. "Hand on my

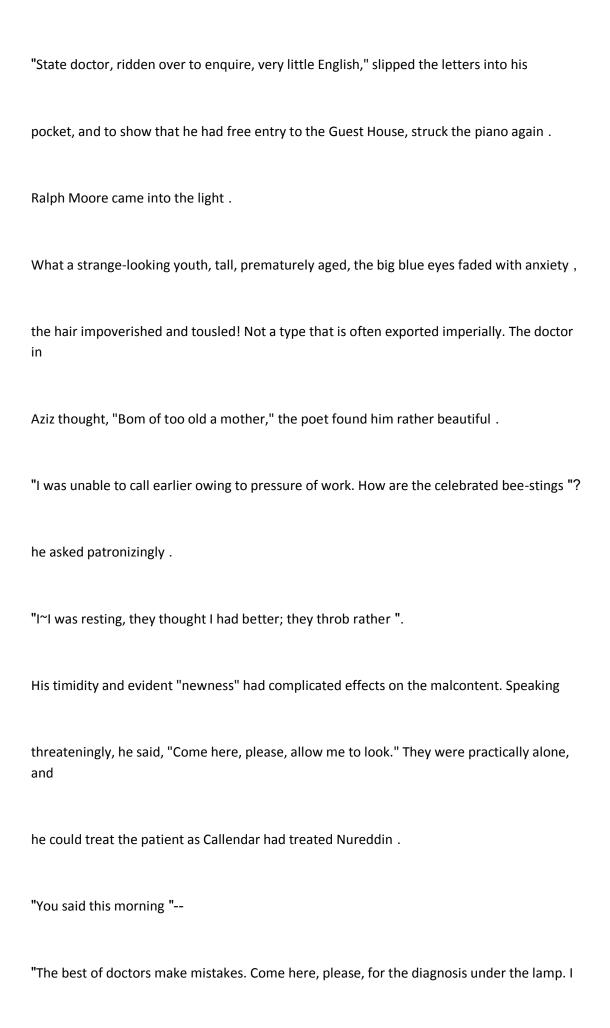
brother whenever suits you. I write to you because he is sure to make a bad bunderbust ".

Then: "I quite agree— life is too short to cherish grievances, also I'm relieved you feel able to

come into line with the Oppressors of India to some extent. We need all the support we can

get. I hope that next time Stella comes my way she will bring you with her, when I will make
you as comfortable as a bachelor can—it's certainly time we met. My sister's marriage to you
coming after my mother's death and my own difficulties did upset me, and I was unreasonable .
It is about time we made it up properly, as you say —let us leave it at faults on both sides. Glad
about your son and heir. When next any of you write to Adela, do give her some sort of message
from me, for I should like to make my peace with her too. You are lucky to be out of British
India at the present moment. Incident after incident, all due to propaganda, but we can't lay
our hands on the connecting thread. The longer one lives here, the more certain one gets that
everything hangs together. My personal opinion is, it's the Jews ".
Thus far the red-nosed boy. Aziz was distracted for a moment by blurred sounds coming
from over the water; the procession was under way. The second letter was from Miss Quested

to Mrs. Fielding. It contained one or two interesting touches. The writer hoped that "Ralph will enjoy his India more than I did mine," and appeared to have given him money for this purpose — "my debt which I shall never repay in person." What debt did Miss Quested imagine she owed the country? He did not relish the phrase. Talk of Ralph's health. It was all "Stella and Ralph," even "Cyril" and "Ronny"~all so friendly and sensible, and written in a spirit he could not command. He envied the easy intercourse that is only possible in a nation whose women are free. These five people were making up their little difficulties, and closing their broken ranks against the alien. Even Heaslop was coming in. Hence the strength of England, and in a spurt of temper he hit the piano, and since the notes had swollen and stuck together in groups of threes, he produced a remarkable noise. "Oh, oh, who is that?" said a nervous and respectful voice; he could not remember where he had heard its tones before. Something moved in the twilight of an adjoining room. He replied,





a problem," he continued, after a pause. "Please leave it with me ". "Certainly not. It returns to my dispensary at once." He stretched forward, and the other retreated to the farther side of a table. "Now, do you want me to treat your stings, or do you prefer an English doctor? There is one at Asirgarh. Asirgarh is forty miles away, and the Ringnod dam broken. Now you see how you are placed. I think I had better see Mr. Fielding about you; this is really great nonsense, your present behaviour ". "They are out in a boat," he replied, glancing about him for support. Aziz feigned intense surprise. "They have not gone in the direction of Mau, I hope. On a night like, this the people become most fanatical." And, as if to confirm him, there was a sob, as though the lips of a giant had parted; the procession was approaching the Jail. "You should not treat us like this," he challenged, and this time Aziz was checked, for the voice, though frightened, was not weak. "Like what "? "Dr. Aziz, we have done you no harm ". "Aha, you know my name, I see. Yes, I am Aziz. No, of course your great friend Miss Quested did me no harm at the Marabar ". Drowning his last words, all the guns of the State went off A rocket from the Jail garden

gave the signal. The prisoner had been released, and was kissing the feet of the singers. Roseleaves

fall from the houses, sacred spices and coco-nut are brought forth. ... It was the halfway moment; the God had extended His temple, and paused exultantly. Mixed and confused in their passage, the rumours of salvation entered the Guest House. They were startled and moved on to the porch, drawn by the sudden illumination. The bronze gun up on the fort kept

flashing, the town was a blur of light, in which the houses seemed dancing, and the palace waving little wings. The water below, the hills and sky above, were not involved as yet; there was still only a little light and song struggling among the shapeless lumps of the universe. The

song became audible through much repetition; the choir was repeating and inverting the names

of deities.

"Radhakrishna Radhakrishna,

Radhakrishna Radhakrishna,

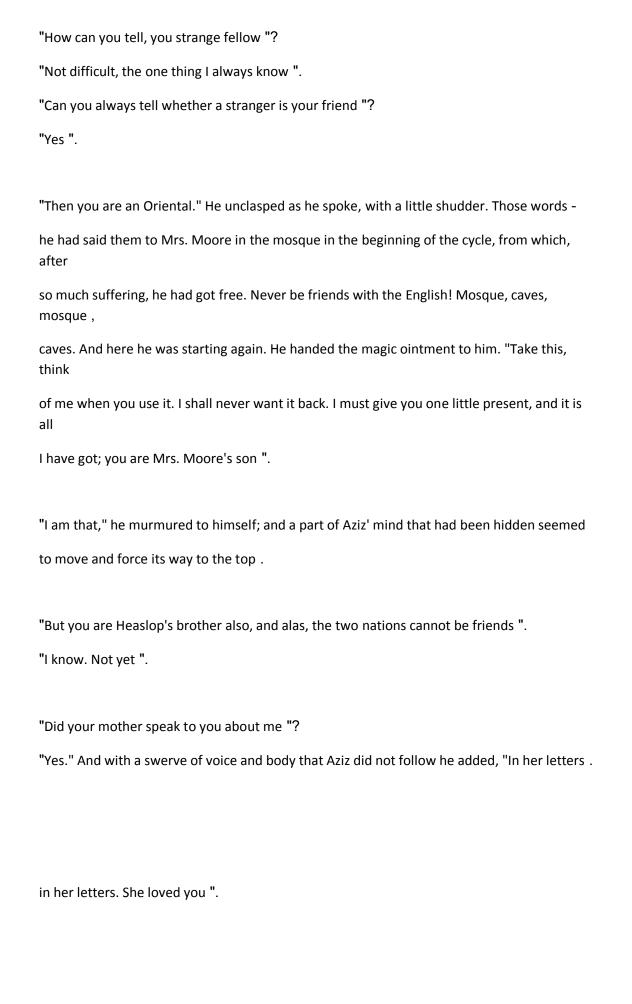
Krishnaradha Radhakrishna,

Radhakrishna Radhakrishna ",

they sang, and woke the sleeping sentry in the Guest House; he leant upon his iron-tipped spear .

"I must go back now, good night," said Aziz, and held out his hand, completely forgetting that they were not friends, and focusing his heart on somethiig more distant than the caves, something beautiful. His hand was taken, and then he remembered how detestable he had been, and said gently, "Don't you think me unkind any more "?"

"No".



"Yes, your mother was my best friend in all the world." He was silent, puzzled by his own great gratitude. What did this eternal goodness of Mrs. Moore amount to? To nothing, if brought to the test of thought. She had not borne witness in his favour, nor visited him in the prison, yet she had stolen to the depths of his heart, and he always adored her. "This is our monsoon, the best weather," he said, while the lights of the procession waved as though embroidered on an agitated curtain. "How I wish she could have seen them, our rains. Now is the time when all things are happy, young and old. They are happy out there with their savage noise, though we cannot follow them; the tanks are all full so they dance, and this is India. I wish you were not with officials, then I would show you my country, but I cannot. Perhaps I will just take you out on the water now, for one short half-hour ". Was the cycle beginning again? His heart was too full to draw back. He must slip out in the darkness, and do this one act of homage to Mrs. Moore's son. He knew where the oars were —

hidden to deter the visitors from going out—and he brought the second pair, in case they met

the other boat; the Fieldings had pushed themselves out with long poles, and might get into difficulties, for the wind was rising .

Once on the water, he became easy. One kind action was with him always a channel for another ,

and soon the torrent of his hospitality gushed forth and he began doing the honours of

Mau and persuading himself that he understood the wild procession, which increased in lights

and sounds as the complications of its ritual developed. There was little need to row, for the

freshening gale blew them in the direction they desired. Thorns scratched the keel, they ran

into an islet and startled some cranes. The strange temporary life of the August flood-water

bore them up and seemed as though it would last for ever. The boat was a rudderless dinghy .

Huddled up in the stern, with the spare pair of oars in his arms, the guest asked no questions

about details. There was presently a flash of lightning, followed by a second flash—little red

scratches on the ponderous sky. "Was that the Rajah?" he asked .





"Yes ".
He tried to keep the boat out of the glare of the torches that began to star the other shore .
Rockets kept going off, also the guns. Suddenly, closer than he had calculated, the palanquin of
Krishna appeared from behind a ruined wall, and descended the carven glistening watersteps .
On either side of it the singers tumbled, a woman prominent, a wild and beautiful young saint
with flowers in her hair. She was praising God without attributes— thus did she apprehend Him .
Others praised Him without attributes, seeing Him in this or that organ of the body or manifestation
of the sky. Down they rushed to the foreshore and stood in the small waves, and a sacred
meal was prepared, of which those who felt worthy partook. Old Godbole detected the
boat, which was drifting in on the gale, and he waved his arms—whether in wrath or joy Aziz
never discovered. Above stood the secular power of Mau— elephants, artillery, crowds—and high

above them a wild tempest started, confined at first to the upper regions of the air. Gusts of wind mixed darkness and light, sheets of rain cut from the north, stopped, cut from the south, began rising from below, and across them struggled the singers, sounding every note but terror, and preparing to throw God away, God Himself, (not that God can be thrown) into the storm. Thus was He thrown year after year, and were others thrown—little images of Ganpati, baskets often-day corn, tiny tazias after Mohurram— scapegoats, husks, emblems of passage; a passage not easy, not now, not here, not to be apprehended except when it is unattainable: the God to be thrown was an emblem of that . The village of Gokul reappeared upon its tray. It was the substitute for the silver image, which never left its haze of flowers; on behalf of another symbol, it was to perish. A servitor

took it in his hands, and tore off the blue and white streamers. He was naked,

thin-waisted— the Indian body again triumphant— and it was his hereditary office to

broadshouldered,

close the gates of salvation. He entered the dark waters, pushing the village before him, until the clay dolls slipped off their chairs and began to gutter in the rain, and King Kansa was confounded with the father and mother of the Lord. Dark and solid, the little waves sipped, then a great wave washed and then English voices cried "Take care "! The boats had collided with each other . The four outsiders fiung out their arms and grappled, and, with oars and poles sticking out, revolved like a mythical monster in the whirlwind. The worshippers howled with wrath or joy, as they drifted forward helplessly against the servitor. Who awaited them, his beautiful dark face expressionless, and as the last morsels melted on his tray, it struck them . The shock was minute, but Stella, nearest to it, shrank into her husband's arms, then reached forward, then fiung herself against Aziz, and her motions capsized them. They plunged

into the warm, shallow water, and rose struggling into a tornado of noise. The oars, the sacred tray, the letters of Ronny and Adela, broke loose and floated confusedly. Artillery was fired, drums beaten, the elephants trumpeted, and drowniiig all an immense peal of thunder, unaccompanied by lightning, cracked like a mallet on the dome. That was the climax, as far as India admits of one. The rain settled in steadily to its job of wetting everybody and everything through, and soon spoiled the cloth of gold on the palanquin and the costly disc-shaped banners. Some of the torches went out, fireworks didn't catch, there began to be less singing, and the tray returned to Professor Godbole, who picked up a fragment of the mud adhering and smeared it on his forehead without much ceremony. Whatever had happened had happened, and while the intruders picked themselves up, the crowds of Hindus began a desultory move back into the town. The image went back too, and on the following day

underwent a private death of its own, when some curtains of magenta and green were lowered

in front of the dynastic shrine. The singing went on even longer . . . ragged edges of religion .

.unsatisfactory and undramatic tangles. . . . "God si love." Looking back at the great blur of the $\,$

last twenty-four hours, no man could say where was the emotional centre of it, any more than

he could locite the heart of a cloud .

CHAPTER XXXVII

Friends again, yet aware that they could meet no more, Aziz and Fielding went for their last ride in the Mau jungles. The floods had abated and the Rajah was officially dead, so the Guest

House party were departing next morning, as decorum required. What with the mourning and

the festival, the visit was a failure. Fielding had scarcely seen Godbole, who promised every day

to show him over the King-Emperor George Fifth High School, his main objective, but always made some excuse. This afternoon Aziz let out what had happened: the King-Emperor had been converted into a granary, and the Minister of Education did not like to admit this to his former Principal. The school had been opened only last year by the Agent to the Governor - General, and it still flourished on paper; he hoped to start it again before ts absence was remarked

and to collect its scholars before they produced children of their own. Fielding laughed at the tangle and waste of energy, but he did not travel as lightly as in the past; education was

a continuous concern to him, because his income and the comfort of his family depended on it .

He knew that few Indians think education good in itself, and he deplored this now on the widest

grounds. He began to say something heavy on the subject of Native States, but the friendliness

of Aziz distracted him. This reconciliation was a success, anyhow. After the funny shipwreck there had been no more nonsense or bitterness, and they went back laughingly to their old relationship

as if nothing had happened. Now they rode between jolly bushes and rocks. Presently the ground opened into full sunlight and they saw a grassy slope bright with butterfiles, also a

cobra, which crawled across doing nothing in particular, and disappeared among some custard

apple trees. There were round white clouds in the sky, and white pools on the earth; the hills in

the distance were purple. The scene was as park-like as England, but did not cease being queer .

They drew rein, to give the cobra elbow-room, and Aziz produced a letter that he wanted to send to Miss Quested. A charming letter. He wanted to thank his old enemy for her fine behaviour

two years back: perfectly plain was it now that she had behaved well. "As I fell into our largest Mau tank under circumstances our other friends will relate, I thought how brave Miss Quested was and decided to tell her so, despite my imperfect English. Through you I am happy

here with my children instead of in a prison, of that I make no doubt. My children shall be taught to speak of you with the greatest affection and respect ".

"Miss Quested will be greatly pleased. I am glad you have seen her courage at last ".

"I want to do kind actions all round and wipe out the wretched business of the Marabar for ever. I have been so disgracefully hasty, thinking you meant to get hold of my money: as bad a

mistake as the cave itself "

"Aziz, I wish you would talk to my wife. She too believes that the Marabar is wiped out ".
"How so "?

"I don't, know, perhaps she might tell you, she won't tell me. She has ideas I don't share - indeed, when I'm away from her I think them ridiculous. When I'm with her, I suppose because

I'm fond of her, I feel different, I feel half dead and half blind. My wife's after something. You and I and Miss Quested are, roughly speaking, not after anything. We jog on as decently as we

can, you a little in front—a laudable little party. But my wife is not with us ".

"What are you meaning? Is Stella not faithful to you, Cyril? This fills me with great concern ". Fielding hesitated. He was not quite happy about his marriage. He was passionate physically again— the final fiare-up before the clinkers of middle age— and he knew that his wife did not

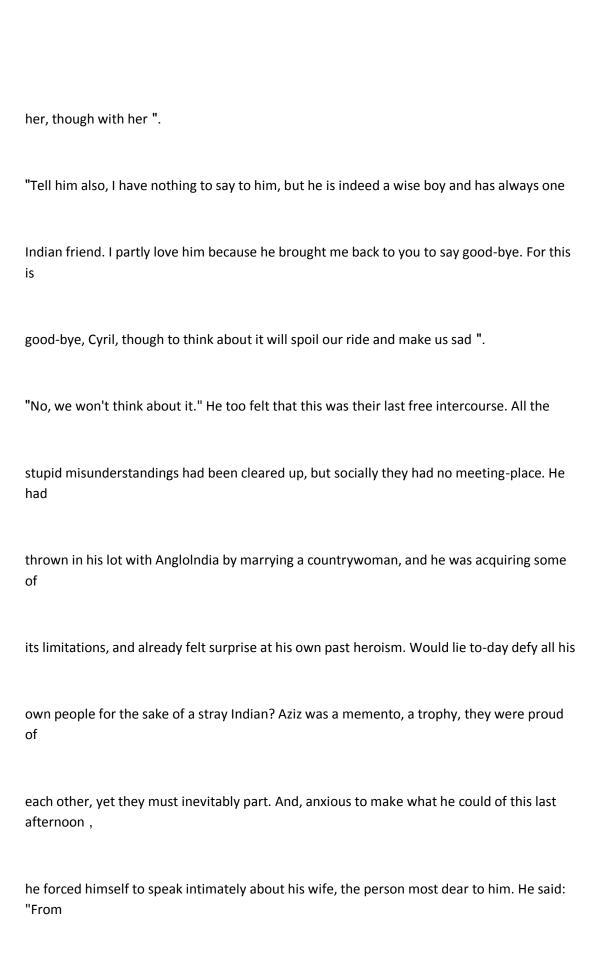
love him as much as he loved her, and he was ashamed of pestering her. But during the visit to

Mau the situation had improved. There seemed a link between them at last—that link outside

either participant that is necessary to every relationship. In the language of theology, their union

had been blessed. He could assure Aziz that Stella was not only faithful to him, but likely to become more so; and trying to express what was not clear to himself, he added dully that different

people had different points of view. "If you won't talk about the Marabar to Stella, why won't you talk to Ralph? He is a wise boy really. And (same metaphor) he rides a little behind



her point of view, Man has been a success. It calmed her —both of them suffer from restlessness. She found something soothing, some solution of her queer troubles here." After a silence—myriads of kisses around them as the earth drew the water in— he continued: " Do you know anything about this Krishna business "? "My dear chap, officially they call it Gokul Ashtami. All the States offices are closed, but how else should it concern you and me "? "Gokul is the village where Krishna was bom—well, more or less bom, for there's the same hovering between it and another village as between Bethlehem and Nazareth. What I want to discover is its spiritual side, if it has one ". "It is useless discussing Hindus with me. Living with them teaches me no more. When I think I annoy them, I do not. When I think I don't annoy them, I do Perhaps they will sack me for tumbling on to their dolls'house; on the other hand, perhaps they will double my salary. Time will prove. Why so curious about them "?

"It's difficult to explain. I never really understood or liked them, except an occasional scrap of Godbole. Does the old fellow still say 'Come, come ""? "Oh, presumably ". Fielding sighed, opened his lips, shut them, then said with a little laugh, "I can't explain, because it isn't in words at all, but why do my wife and her brother like Hinduism, though they take no interest in its forms? They won't talk to me about this. They know I think a certain side of their lives is a mistake, and are shy. That's why I wish you would talk to them, for at all events you're Oriental ". Aziz refused to reply. He didn't want to meet Stella and Ralph again, knew they didn't want to meet him, was incurious about their secrets, and felt good old Cyril to be a bit clumsy. Something—not a sight, but a sound—fiitted past him, and caused him to re-read his letter to Miss Quested. Hadn't lie wanted to say something else to her? Taking out his pen, he added: "For my own part, I shall henceforth connect you with the name that is very sacred in my mind, namely, Mrs. Moore." When lie had finished, the mirror of the scenery was shattered, the meadow disintegrated into butterfiles. A poem about Mecca— the Caaba of Union— the thornbushes where pilgrims die before they have seen the Friend— they flitted next; he thought of his wife; and then the whole semi-mystic, semi-sensuous overturn, so characteristic of his spiritual life, came to end like a landslip and rested in its due place, and he found himself riding in the jungle with his dear Cyril. "Oh, shut up," he said. "Don't spoil our last hour with foolish questions. Leave Krishna alone, and talk about something sensible ". They did. All the way back to Mau they wrangled about politics. Each had hardened since Chandrapore, and a good knock about proved enjoyable. They tmsted each other, although they were going to part, perhaps because they were going to part. Fielding had "no further

for politeness," he said, meaning that the British Empire really can't be abolished because it's

use

rude. Aziz retorted, "Very well, and we have no use for you," and glared at him with abstract hate. Fielding said: "Away from us, Indians go to seed at once. Look at the KingEmperor High School! Look at you, forgetting your medicine and going back to charms. Look at your poems "—".

Jolly good poems, I'm getting published Bombay side."--" Yes, and what do they say?

Free our women and India will be free. Try it, my lad. Free your own lady in the first place, and

see who'll wash Ahmed, Karim and Jemila's faces. A nice situation "!

Aziz grew more excited. He rose in his stirrups and pulled at his horse's head in the hope it

would rear. Then he should feel in a battle. He cried: "Clear out, all you Turtons and Burtons .

We wanted to know you ten years back—now it's too late. If we see you and sit on your committees ,

it's for political reasons, don't you make any mistake." His horse did rear. "Clear out,

clear out, I say. Why are we put to so much suffering? We used to blame you, now we blame

ourselves, we grow wiser. Until England is in difficulties we keep silent, but in the next European war—aha, aha! Then is our time." He paused, and the scenery, though it smiled, fell like a gravestone on any human hope. They cantered past a temple to Hanuman — God so loved the world that he took monkey's flesh upon him— and past a Saivite temple, which invited to lust, but under the semblance of eternity, it.s obscenities bearing no relation to those of our flesh and blood. They splashed through butterflies and frogs; great trees with leaves like plates rose among the brushwood. The divisions of daily life were returning, the shrine had almost shut. "Who do you want instead of the English? The Japanese?" jeered Fielding, drawing rein. "No, the Afghans. My own ancestors ". "Oh, your Hindu friends will like that, won't they "? "It will be arranged— a conference of Oriental statesmen". "It will indeed be arranged ". "Old story of 'We will rob every man and rape every woman from Peshawar to Calcutta,' I

suppose, which you get some nobody to repeat and then quote every week in the _Pioneer_ in order to frighten us into retaining you! We know! "Still he couldn't quite fit in Afghans at Mau, and, finding he was in a comer, made his horse rear again until he remembered that he had, or ought to have, a mother-land. Then he shouted: "India shall be a nation! No foreigners of any sort! Hindu and Moslem and Sikh and all shall be one! Hurrah! Hurrah for India! Hurrah! Hurrah "! India a nation! What an apotheosis! Last comer to the drab nineteenth-century sisterhood! Waddling in at this hour of the world to take her seat! She, whose only peer was the Holy Roman Empire, she shall rank with Guatemala and Belgium perhaps! Fielding mocked again. And Aziz in an awful rage danced this way and that, not knowing what to do, and cried: "Down with the English anyhow. That's certain. Clear out, you fellows, double quick, I say. We may hate one

another, but we hate you most. If I don't make you go, Ahmed will, Karim will, if it's flfty-flve

