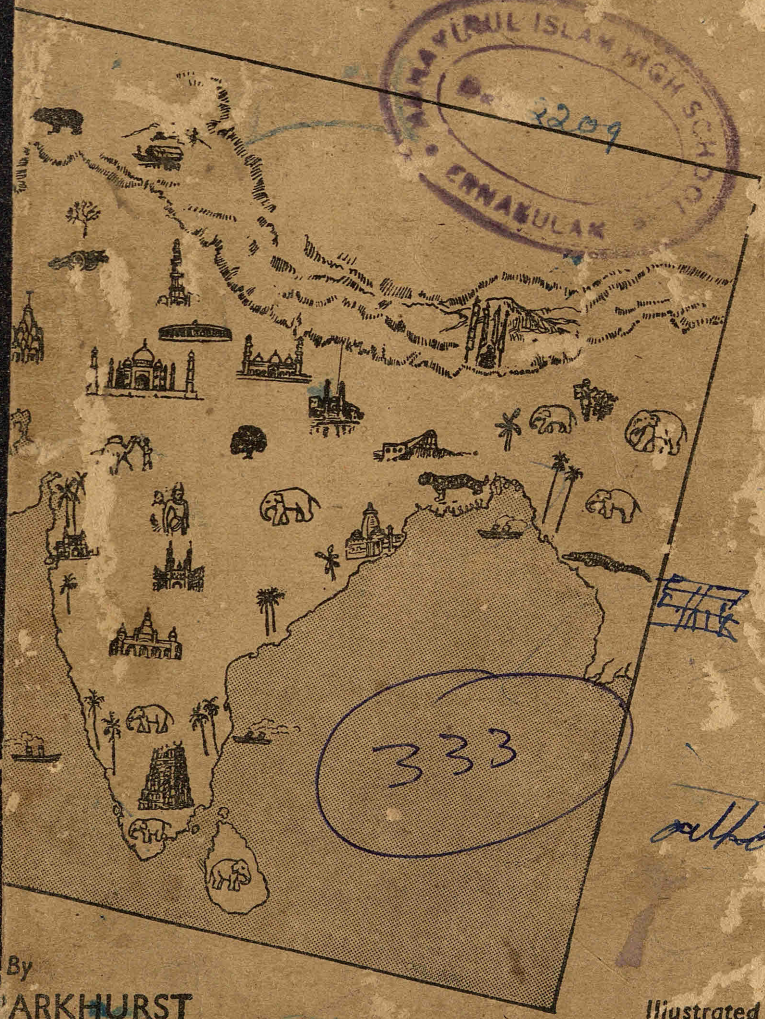
WESTERN INDIA

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NAZRUL ISLAM HIGH SCHOOL
No. 2209
ERNAKULAM
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By
PARKHURST

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First Edition 1943
Reprinted 1947

Published by
MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
CALCUTTA, BOMBAY, MADRAS & LONDON

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MARVIL ISLAND HIGH SCHOOL
2209

WESTERN INDIA

1

Our visit to Western India will mean two different trips from Bombay and back, and we shall be quite tired of the railway before we are done. However, it will be well worthwhile.

We leave Bombay for Poona on one of the popular G.I.P. Railway's electrified expresses. As our train ascends the Bhor Ghat, we get glimpses of the beautiful scenery of

the Western Ghats. Whilst we are flying along the iron road to Poona, let us refresh our memories with a little history.

Poona is the centre of Mahratta history, whose hero is Shivaji. He was born at Shivner in 1627 and was brought up at Poona. He grew up to be a bold and adventurous soldier. Besides that, he was a strict Hindu, who wished to found an independent Hindu kingdom amidst the many Mohammedan dynasties and kingdoms that then existed. Shivaji had many fights with the Moghuls, es-



SHIVAJI

pecially Aurangzeb. In 1674 he had himself crowned at Raigad with much pomp. He assumed the title of "Lord of the Umbrella" and "Protector of Brahmins". When he died in 1680 his kingdom was immense.

For the next hundred years the Mahrattas dominated India under the Peshwas, who were originally the prime ministers of the Mahratta Kings. In time they became the actual rulers of the Mahratta kingdom. From the reign of Baji Rao I down to Baji Rao II is a long history of wars, plots and counterplots. The year 1817 saw the end of Mahratta power.

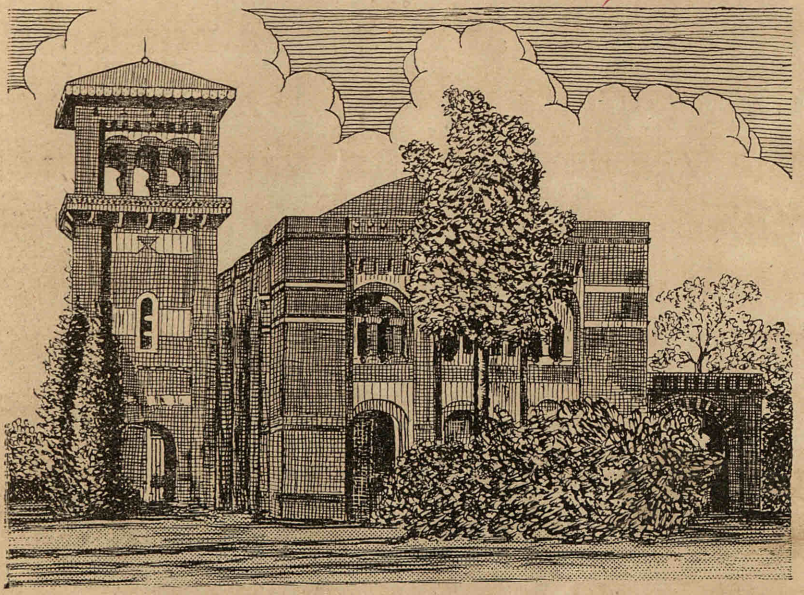
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Poona, with its suburb of Kirkee, is a military station of great importance. In 1599 the King of Ahmadnagar made over Poona to Maloji Bhonsle, the grandfather of Shivaji. In 1750 it became the capital of the Mahrattas. After the battle of Kirkee in 1817, the town surrendered to the British.

As the climate of Poona is mild and healthy, many schools and colleges have been opened there in preference to Bombay City. The office of the Director of Public Instruction is in Poona. In the centre

of the town is the Council Hall, containing pictures of many famous men and women. Other places in the Cantonment which should be seen are the Racecourse, the Empress Gardens, St. Patrick's Catholic Cathedral, and the Deccan College.

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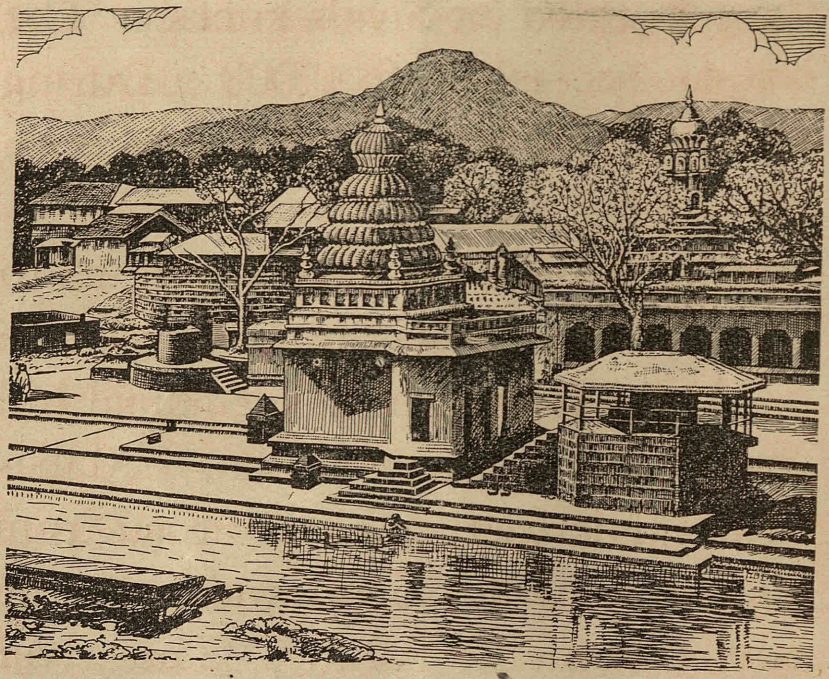


COUNCIL HALL, POONA

We enter the City of Poona by crossing the Lloyd Bridge. We soon come to the Shivaji Memorial Hall, in front of which is a statue of the great Shivaji seated on his horse. The figures are of bronze and weigh eight and a half tons. The city is divided into nineteen divisions called *peths*. In the Budhwar Peth are a number of old Mahratta palaces. One of them, the Visram Bagh, has very beautiful pillars, and is a splendid example of Mahratta architecture. On Parbat Hill are some interesting temples, the chief of which is dedicated to Durga or Parvati, the wife of Siva. There is a lovely silver image of Siva, with gold images of Parvati and

Ganesh seated on Siva's knees. The temple has cost £100,000. During the feast of Diwali, it is lit up with thousands of lights.

From Poona we take the train to Wathar, which is the halting-place for Mahableshwar, the principal hill station of Western India. Mahableshwar is forty miles by road from Wathar. Half way we pass the sacred town of Wai. The river Kristna runs through it and the river banks are lined with mango and pipal trees. There are many fine temples, and stone steps lead down to the river so that pilgrims can bathe in the sacred waters. Legend says that it was at Wai that the Pandava Princes



TEMPLES AT WAI

spent most of their banishment. You will read all about the Pandavas in the *Mahabharata*.

From October to March the climate of Mahableshwar is delightful, and many overworked people

from Bombay and other places find rest and recreation there. You may be sure many schoolmasters are numbered among the visitors, for, as my young friends know, a schoolmaster's life is not one of ease and pleasure.

The plateau on which Mahableshwar is situated is about 4,000 feet high. There are many fine walks in and around the town, and plenty of tennis can be had. Besides the human visitors, who are always welcome, there are also animal visitors in the shape of panthers, who very often pay a visit from the surrounding jungles. These visitors are not so welcome, so the human visitors often lie in wait for the

panthers in the hope of getting a shot at them. We will leave them to their sport, and go on to Satara.

Satara is situated between two ranges of hills and has a good climate. The ruling family of the Satara State was descended from Sahu, a grandson of Shivaji. The family died out in 1848 and the State then lapsed to the British Government. Near the centre of the town is the New Palace, built in 1840 for Raja Shahaji. In it is a huge hall supported by sixty-four teak pillars. The descendants of the last Raja live near at hand. They possess the crown jewels of the Satara family and also Shivaji's famous sword, called "Jai Bhawani". The

blade of this sword is three feet nine inches long. Shivaji's other arms in the same collection include the "tiger's claws" or *waghnakh*; a shield of rhinoceros hide studded with four stars of diamonds; and a handsome dagger, 18 inches long, the handle of which is studded with diamonds, rubies and emeralds.

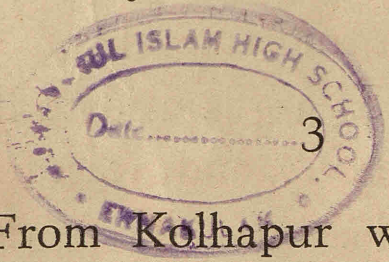


WAGHNAKH

The Fort at Satara is said to have been built in 1192, and was for a long time used as a state prison. Shivaji captured it in 1673. Its use as a prison was continued by the Peshwas, who shut up in it many of Shivaji's descendants.

We leave Satara for Miraj Junc-

tion, where we change trains for Kolhapur. Kolhapur is the capital of an important Mahratta State. There are some fine buildings in Kolhapur, including the New Palace, the Albert Edward Hospital, the Library and the shrine of Amba Bai. The fortress and caves of Panhala, about twelve miles away, are well worth a visit.



From Kolhapur we proceed via Miraj Junction to Castle Rock, which is the terminus of the M. & S. M. Railway. Portuguese territory begins here. The chief towns in Portuguese India are Margao, Vasco-da-Gama,

Marmugao, New Goa (Panjim), and Old Goa. The founder of Goa and the Portuguese possessions in India was the famous Albuquerque. He visited India for the first time in 1503. He died in 1515 and was buried in Lisbon.



ALBUQUERQUE

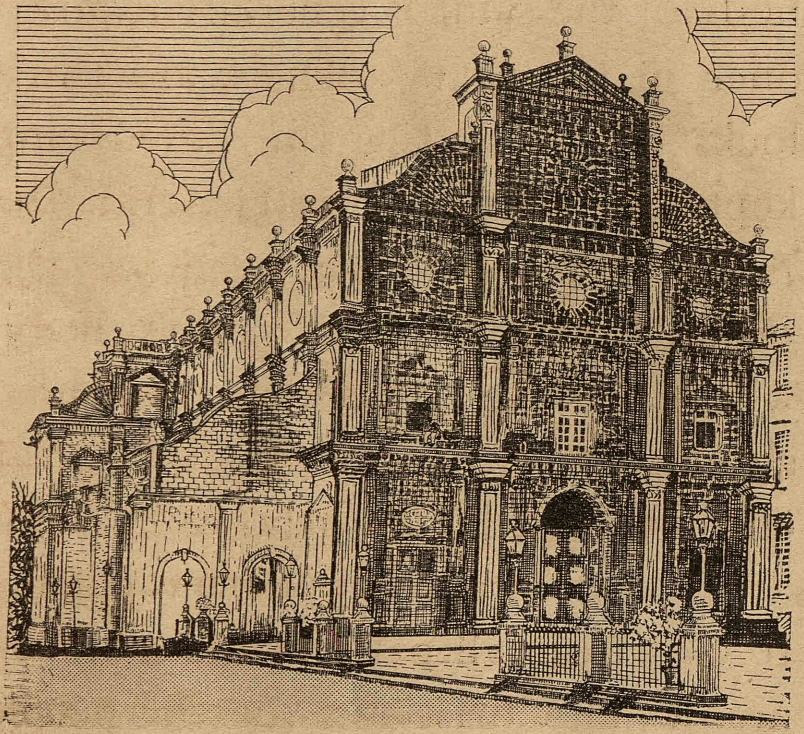
New Goa is the capital of Portuguese India, and the Governor-General lives there, as also the Archbishop, whose palace contains life-size portraits of many previous archbishops. A good road leads to Old Goa.

In 1510 Albuquerque's expedition of twenty ships and one thousand



ST. FRANCIS XAVIER

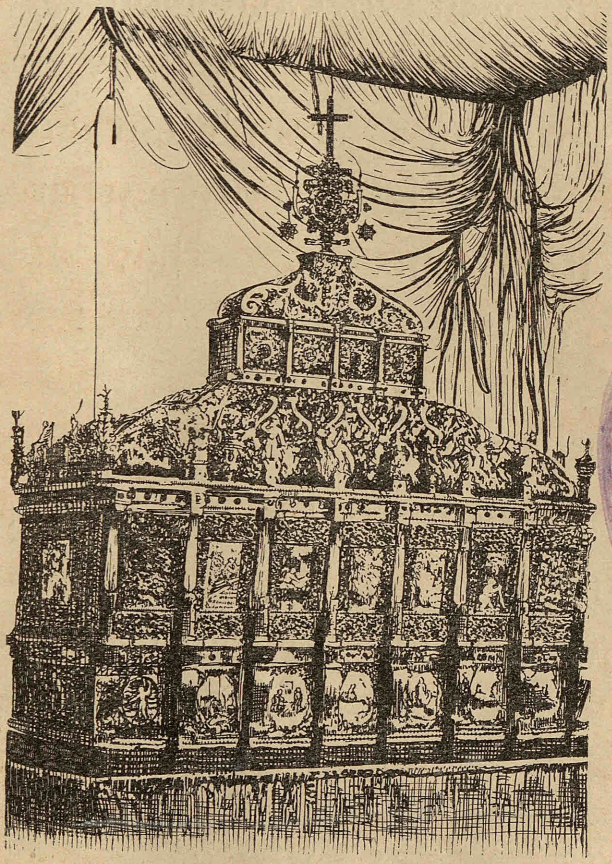
soldiers captured the town, which up till then had belonged to the Bijapur State. By 1525 Goa had become a wealthy city and the first Christian colony in India. St. Francis Xavier worked there for some time, and converted many of the people to Christianity. When the Empire of Vijayanagar fell, Goa's important trade collapsed and the city was abandoned. Yet amidst the ruins that remain, there are many fine churches still standing.



CHURCH OF THE BOM JESUS

The Church of the Bom Jesus is the most important. It contains the body of St. Francis Xavier, which is preserved in a silver coffin. The

body of the saint is generally exposed once in ten years. There are three locks to the coffin, the keys being kept by the Governor-General, the Archbishop, and the head of the Jesuit College. The saint's body, which was well preserved, has now shrunk in size. Scenes of great enthusiasm mark an exposition, hundreds of thousands of pilgrims coming to Goa from all parts of India. They are not all Christians, for the people of India are ready to do honour to any truly holy man, even if his faith was not their own. Many Hindus and Moslems are numbered among the crowds, who are all anxious to touch the body or the coffin with



SILVER TOMB OF ST. FRANCIS XAVIER

some article which they believe will in future heal the sick or do good in other ways.

This visit to Goa should set us thinking of the past. Why did not the Portuguese complete their conquest of India? Were there any special reasons why they did not do so?

4

Our visit to Goa is now over. Should any of our party have urgent business in Bombay they could return to that city by one of the coasting steamers which ply between Goa and Bombay. This strip of coast is called the Konkan, and its scenery is very beautiful. The first stop is at Malvan. In the middle of the harbour is a strong fort surrounded by the

sea. An interesting thing about this fort is that it has a number of fresh-water wells in it, the water being particularly fresh and sweet. Is this not very curious ?

The next port of call is Ratnagiri. It also has a fine harbour and an old fort. A short distance away is Vijayadurg, an old stronghold which became famous during the time of Shivaji.

Our next stop is Janjira. This also is a fortress securely built on a rock in the sea. It is owned by an Abyssinian Sidi family of Moslems. Bombay is only about fifty miles away, and is soon reached by our stout little steamer.

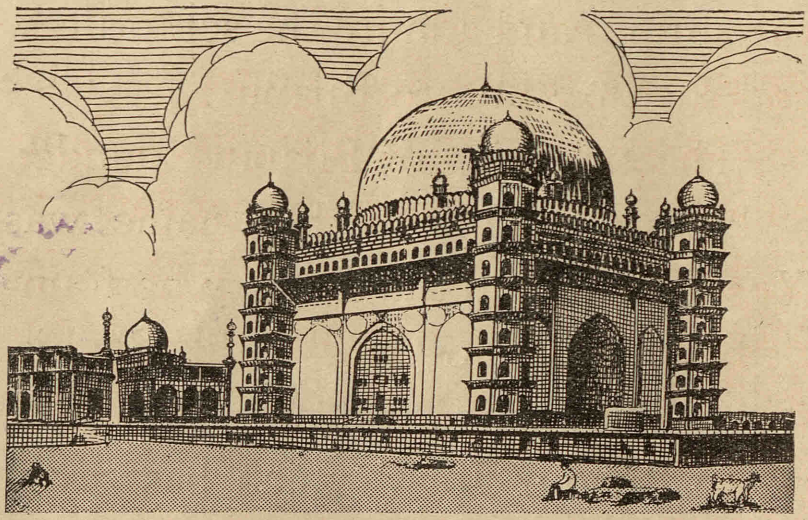
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Those of us who are continuing the tour from Goa proceed by train to Badami, passing the town of Dharwar on the way. Badami has a very long history. It was once the capital of the Chalukyas, but that is not why we are visiting it. We have come to see the four Cave Temples which date from the sixth century. Three of the temples were made by the Brahmins, the other one is the work of the Jains. All of them are full of sculptures of which those of Vishnu seem to be the most frequent. As we have no time to describe the caves more fully, let us wander round

the shrines and admire the sculptures, and then pass on to Bijapur.

The first king of Bijapur founded a dynasty in 1490. His name was Yusuf Khan and the dynasty he founded was that of the Adil Shahis. The Adil Shahis reigned till 1686, when Bijapur Fort, which has seven gates, was captured by the Emperor Aurangzeb.

The "show-place" of Bijapur is the wonderful tomb of Muhammed Adil Shah, the seventh king of the line. It is popularly known as the Gol Gumbaz, or Round Dome. It is built on a platform 600 feet square. At each corner is a tower seven storeys high. In the centre rises the enormous



THE GOL GUMBAZ, BIJAPUR

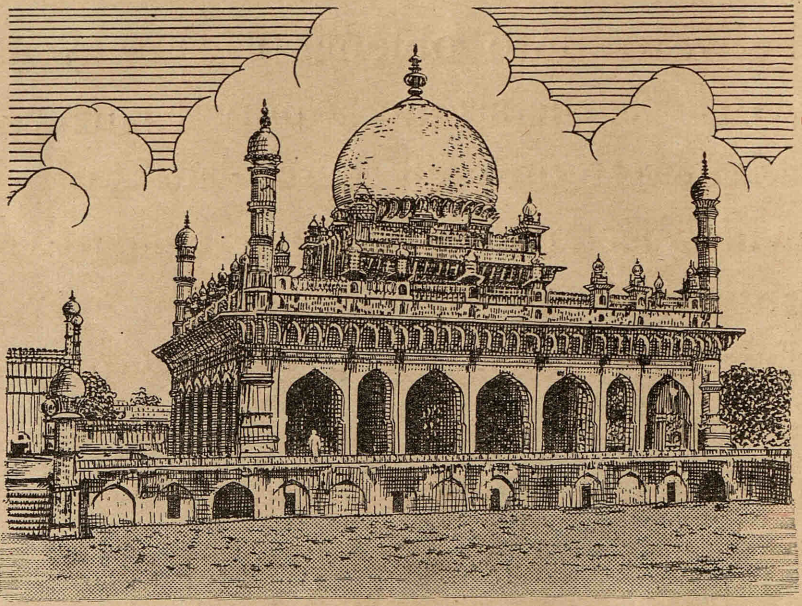
dome. It has a diameter of 124 feet, which is nearly as big as the dome of St. Peter's in Rome, the largest in the world. Beneath the dome is a spacious hall, in the centre of which is the grave of the Sultan. The huge size of the tomb amazes us. A great critic of buildings has said

that the way the tomb is built is "most ingenious and novel". This speaks well for India's architects and builders of five hundred years ago.

Half a mile away is the Jami Masjid. It was commenced by Ali Adil Shah I, but was never completely finished. The floor of the mosque is divided into oblong places called *musullahs*, the size of a prayer carpet. Aurangzeb ordered these places to be made because he carried away the beautiful prayer-mats which were there before he arrived. I wonder what he did with them. Let us hope that at least he put them into another mosque, perhaps at Aurangabad.

Other places we should see are

the Citadel, the Old Mosque, the Gagan Mahal, the Sat Manzili, and lastly the Ibrahim Rauza. The Ibrahim Rauza is a group of buildings and tombs enclosed by a wall. In the centre of the courtyard stands the tomb of Ibrahim II Adil Shah.



THE TOMB OF IBRAHIM RAUZA, BIJAPUR

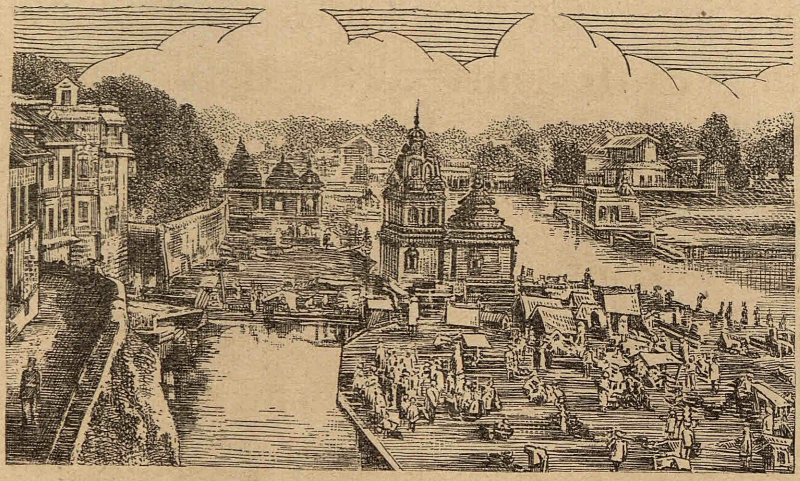
There is a seven-arched verandah on each side of the tomb. The ceilings of these verandahs are divided into compartments, each of which has been beautifully carved with verses from the Holy Koran. The Arabic letters have been gilded, and wreaths of flowers have been cut out between the letters. The ground-work is painted blue. Light is admitted through a lovely lattice which is fixed to the outer edge of the roof of the verandahs. The lattice-work is made up of Arabic sentences. The effect is very beautiful, and is unsurpassed in all India.

When Aurangzeb captured Bijapur, he made the Rauza his residence.

Some parts of this splendid building were badly damaged during the siege. They were partly repaired by the Raja of Satara, and completely restored by the English. There are several bastions to be visited, as also a number of tanks outside the Fort.

We are now near the end of our first trip and are on our way back to Bombay. But before returning we must call at Nasik via Ahmadnagar.

Nasik is a very holy place for Hindus because it is on the banks of the sacred river Godavari. The families of many hundreds of Brahmin priests are settled in Nasik. When the place is visited by any Hindu of rank he leaves a record of



THE SACRED GODAVARI RIVER AT NASIK

his visit with one or other of the "family priests" or *Upadhyas*. The river is lined with temples and shrines, and any day one can see hundreds of men and women bathing in the sacred waters. The beautiful Sundar Narayan Temple was built in 1750 and cost over ten lakhs of rupees. Half a mile away is the Sita Gupha,

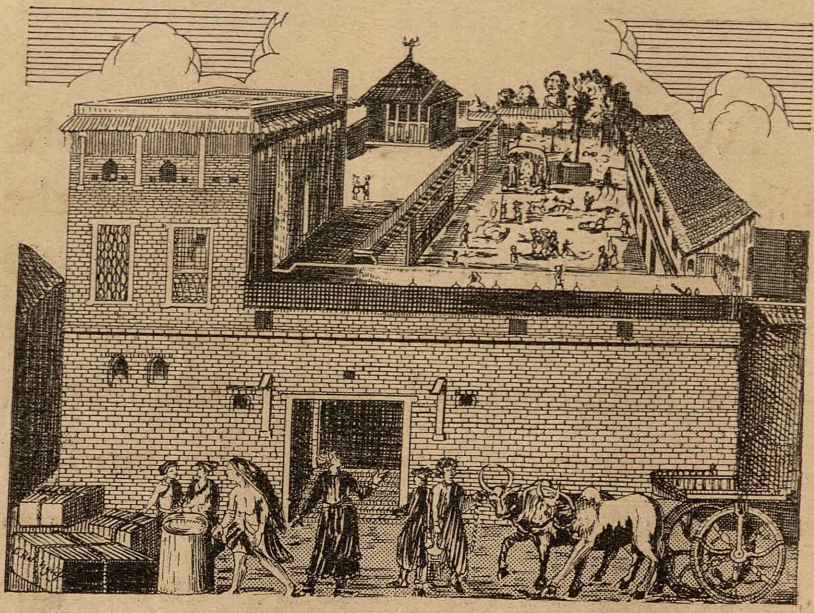
or Sita's Cave. Only Hindus are allowed to enter it. Legend says that the cave was used by Sita in her wanderings with Rama, and it was from here that Sita was carried away by Ravana to his island kingdom of Lanka. The Kala Rama and Kapaleswar temples are near the Sita Gupha.

We now go back to Bombay and enjoy a good night's rest. The city of Bombay has already been fully described, so we need not go sight-seeing in Bombay just now. We have agreed to meet the following morning at the Central Station of the B. B. & C. I. Railway, so off to your slumbers !

6

We all meet next morning at the Central Station and take one of the express trains to Surat, which is 160 miles from Bombay. Surat, or Soura-shtra, is mentioned in the *Mahabharata,* and is supposed to be "the land of the Suras". In 1573 the town surrendered to Akbar, and thus became the "Gateway to Mecca". Pilgrims to the holy places of Islam sailed from Surat. Its trade increased, and the townsmen became very wealthy.

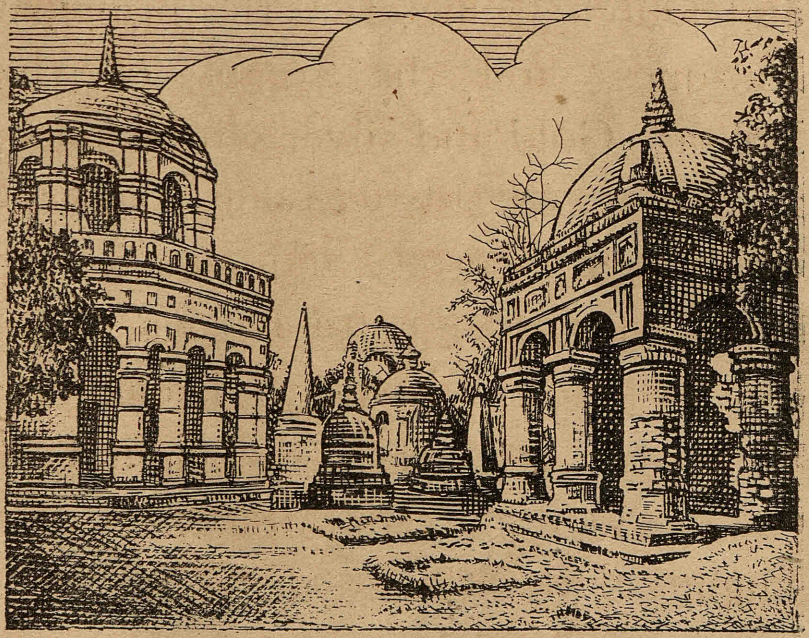
About 1610 the English began to visit the port. In 1612 the Moghul Emperor issued an important *firman,*



THE ENGLISH FACTORY AT SURAT IN 1638

or order, allowing an English envoy to reside at his Court, and also permitting the English to trade in Surat. Thereupon commenced a great rivalry in trade between the English, Portuguese, Dutch, and French. The fortunes of the English

in Surat had many ups and downs until the year 1759, when the Nawab signed a treaty with the English and made over to them the castle and his fleet for a yearly sum of Rs. 200,000. The Emperor in Delhi



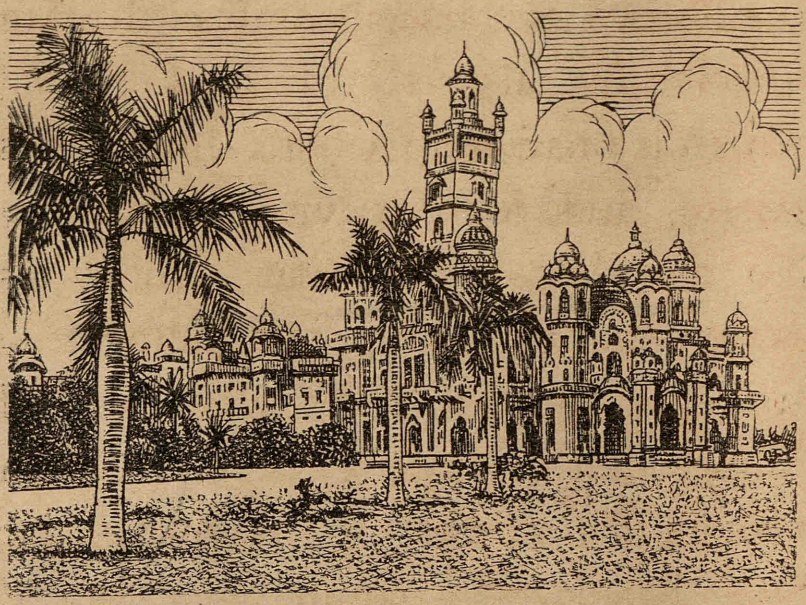
DUTCH TOMBS AT SURAT

agreed to this arrangement, and British rule was firmly established in Surat from the year 1800. The Nawabs continued to live in Surat until 1842, when the last of the Nawabs died. The places to be visited are the Castle, the English and Dutch Cemeteries, the principal Mosques, and the tombs of the Bohras. Gold and silver wire is made in Surat, and silk weaving is a well-established "cottage industry".

We leave Surat for Baroda, passing the ancient town of Broach on our way. Baroda is the capital of the very important State of His Highness the Gaekwar. The State has a population of over two and

a half millions, and covers an area of over eight thousand square miles. To the west of the railway station are the houses of a large number of State officials as also the Baroda Hotel, which is provided for His Highness's guests, and for visitors to Baroda. To the east is the city, which has many fine buildings, including the College, the Museum, the General Hospital, the State Offices, etc. In the middle of the city is the Nazar Bagh Palace. Two state guns, one of gold and one of silver, are kept there. The golden gun contains 280 pounds weight of solid gold and is drawn by milkwhite oxen. The Lakshmi Vilas Palace cost sixty lakhs of rupees.

Education in the Baroda State is highly developed, His Highness the Gaekwar having endowed many



LAKSHMI VILAS PALACE, BARODA

schools and colleges with special funds.

7

Sixty miles from Baroda is Ahme-

dabad, which is a beautiful city. It was founded in 1411 by Sultan Ahmad I, King of Gujarat. Sir Thomas Roe described it in 1615 as "a goodly city as large as London." The city had its periods of prosperity, rising and declining with the fortunes of the Kings of Gujarat. In 1573 it was taken by Akbar, and increased in prosperity until 1709, when its fortunes fell with the decline of the Moghul Empire. It is once again very prosperous, being the centre of the cotton trade.

During the reign of the Emperor Shah Jahan he appointed his brother-in-law, Shaista Khan, as Governor of the Province of Gujarat. Hearing



SHAISTA KHAN

that the traveller Tavernier had arrived in Surat with a collection of beautiful jewels for sale, Shaista Khan sent special messengers to call him to Ahmedabad. Tavernier says that during his stay in the city the Governor sent him everyday from his own table "four silver dishes containing pilao and choice meats." On leaving Ahmedabad Shaista Khan gave Tavernier "a *Khil'at* complete with sword and dagger, the whole worth more than one thousand rupees." He was also presented with a fresh and lively horse which he

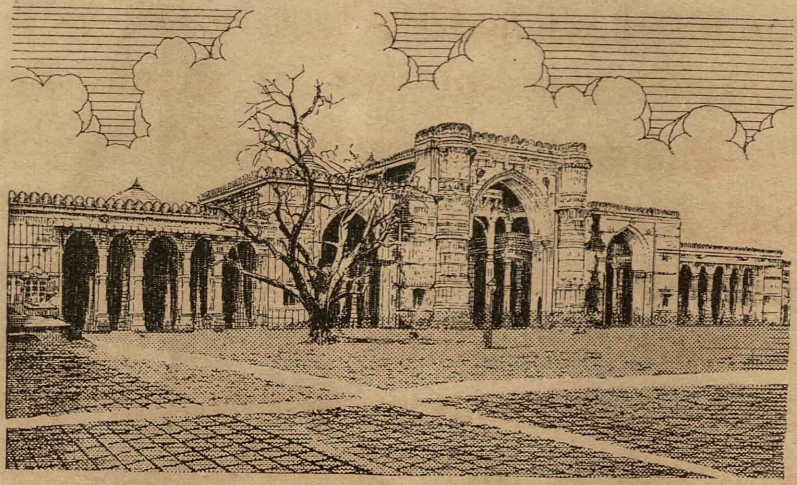
mounted with difficulty.



JEAN BAPTISTE TAVERNIER

The architecture of Ahmedabad is charming, being a mixture of Hindu and Moslem styles. Curious objects in many streets of the city are the resting-places for birds. They look like pigeon-houses, but are not meant for this purpose.

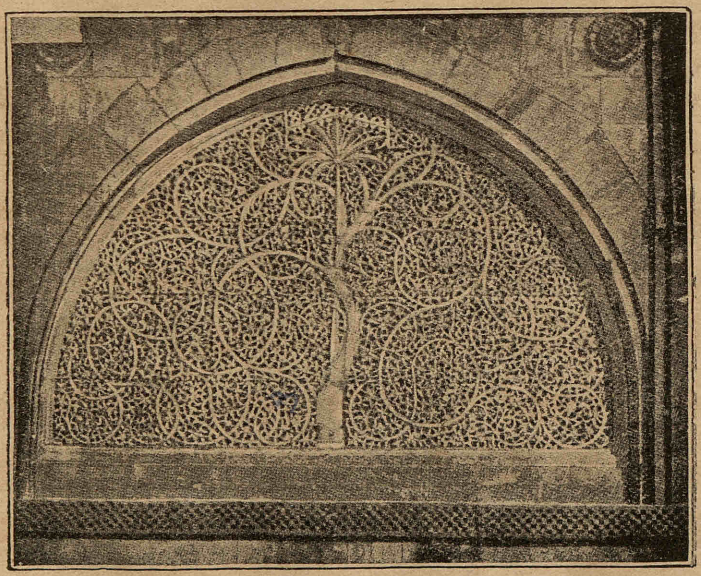
The principal mosque is the Jami Masjid near the city's centre. It was built by Sultan Ahmad I in 1424, and contains his tomb. The roof of the mosque is held up by 260



JAMI MASJID AT AHMEDABAD

columns. Other important mosques are Rani Sipri's Mosque, Haibat Khan's Mosque, and Dastur Khan's Mosque. Near the Bhadar or Citadel is Sidi Saiyad's Mosque. Although Sidi Saiyad was a slave of Ahmad Shah I, his mosque has become world famous on account of the beautiful carving in it. Two win-

dows are filled by tree-stems with branches growing out of them, the whole being wonderfully traced in stone. A critic says: "There are some exquisite specimens of tracery in marble at Delhi and Agra, but not one of them equals this beautiful work in Sidi Saiyad's Mosque."



WINDOW OF SIDI SAIYAD'S MOSQUE, AHMEDABAD

There are many more mosques and tombs to be visited, but it would take many pages to describe them all.

Ahmedabad is a city of handicraftsmen. Do you know what that word means? It means workmen who are very clever at making things with their hands. In Ahmedabad we find coppersmiths, brass-workers, goldsmiths, jewellers, carpenters, stone-masons, leather-workers, makers of gold and silver threads, and weavers of the finest brocades made in India.

8

From Ahmedabad we branch off to the west to Kathiawar, which is a peninsula of about 20,000 square

miles. The principal State is Cutch, the ruler of which claims descent from the Lord Krishna. One hundred years ago the jungles of Kathiawar contained many lions. Now these dangerous wild animals are confined to the Gir forest, where they are protected against hunters.



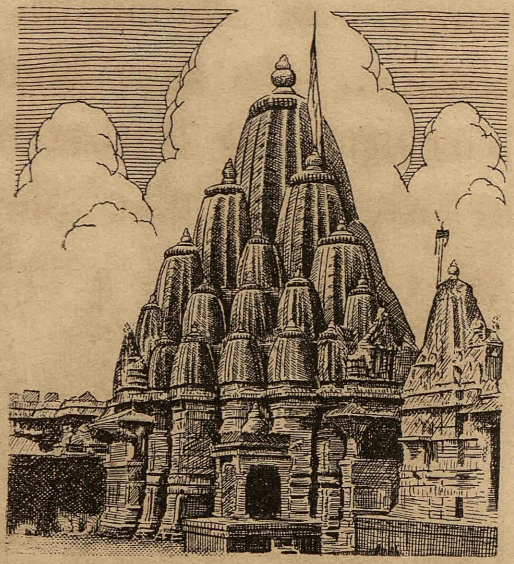
MANELESS LION OF GUJARAT

The principal towns in Kathiawar are Viramgam, Wadhwan, Limbdi, Junagadh, Verawal, and Porbandar. Whilst we are in Kathiawar we must not miss paying a visit to Satrunjaya or the Holy Mountain. This holy hill is near Palitana, which is 18 miles from

Sihor Junction. It is about one and a half miles from Palitana to the foot of the holy mountain. The hill-side is very steep, hence it is convenient to engage a *dholi,* which is a kind of chair slung between two poles and carried by four bearers.

The Satrunjaya Hill is, indeed, a city of temples, there being eight hundred and sixty-three in all. Every temple and passage is kept spotlessly clean and over all there is a silence which is very noticeable. Once in a while we hear a bell being rung in a nearby shrine, and from the larger temples comes the sound of *mantras* being chanted by the priests. It is therefore not very

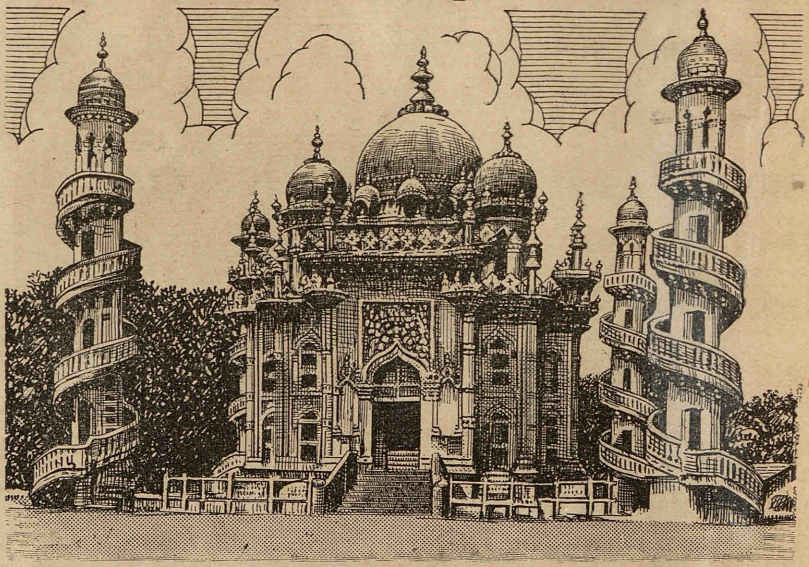
wonderful that peacocks, parrots, doves, pigeons, and squirrels should all find a happy home in this peaceful abode. The temples were built by the Jains, and some of them date from the 11th century.



THE TEMPLE OF NIMNATH, MT. GIRNAR

A visit must also be paid to Junagadh, where the Fort, the Tombs, the Mosques, the Caves, and Mount Girnar all attract attention. At Verawal we are near the ancient

temple of Somnath, famous in history. In fact Kathiawar, from Viramgam to Porbandar, is steeped in history and full of places of interest



THE TOMB OF WAZIR SAHEB, JUNAGADH

to enquiring students such as ourselves. But time passes. We can return to Bombay by a coasting vessel from Porbandar, or we can return by the railway. Which shall it be?

2209.

EXERCISES

1. Refer to your atlas and draw a rough map of Western India showing the positions of Kathiawar, Ahmedabad, Baroda, Surat, Nasik, Poona, Satara and Goa.
2. Write what you know about Shivaji.
3. Why did the Portuguese come to India ?
4. What do you know about St. Francis Xavier ?
5. The Gol Gumbaz of Bijapur has a very large dome. Make a list of any other buildings with large domes that you know of either in India or elsewhere.
6. Describe in your own words the following :—waghnakh, pilao, khil'at, dholi and mantras.
7. Suggest a tracery design for a window similar to the one in Sidi Saiyad's Mosque.

PRINTED BY G. F. BEST, AT THE I. S. S. D. PRESS,
95 B, CHITTARANJAN AVENUE,
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9B. THE NIZAM'S DOMINIONS.
10B. THE TAMIL COUNTRY.
11B. WESTERN INDIA.
12B. THE KINGDOM OF NEPAL.

