



PASADENA, CALIFORNIA, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1902.

W. L. RICHARDSON NOW IN INDIA

DESCRIBES MANNER OF LIFE

Pasadenan Wandering Among the Strange Peoples of the Far East.

Travellers Bungalow, Trichmopoly,
India, Nov. 6th, 1902.

Well I am over her in India now. It is a very strange country. I have seen the Indians out in Africa but they are quite different here at home. This is no doubt one of the most wonderful countries of the East. There is an enormous population, speaking many different languages and having many different religions. The people I am going to tell you about are the Tamils, and they live in the southeastern part of India. We had a fine, smooth passage across the Gulf of Monaar to Tuticorin. Not a great many tourists come this way, but we had on board two Americans who were touring around the world, going west, and several English people, a few Indian gentlemen and a big deck load of coolies. We breakfasted at Tuticorin and took the fast mail train for Madrass. There is little difference between the fast mail and the slow train. These Indian trains are rather peculiar in construction. They are made with a double roof, and a kind of a hood extends down over the windows built out about six inches and covering the half up. There are blinds that you can draw up and this gives good ventilation. The windos are of black glass so that the glare of the sun will not hurt the eyes. There is room for four in each compartment, with lavatory and a compartment adjoining for your servants. There is a little window into this, with iron bars across it, that you can open and talk to your servant. Everybody who is anybody at all in India, has a servant of two because, like in Africa, they are cheap and the white man thinks he can't get along without them. They are a necessary evil. You can do very little with them and nothing without them, like their African brothers. They are useful to keep your punka going, if they don't go to sleep on the job. A punka is a kind of a great fan suspended by ropes over your head and a servant outside of the door pulls a rope to keep it going. You find these things in all the railroad stations, eating houses, bungalows, etc., in India.

The journey for some distance lay through forests of palmyra palms. There are large cultivated fields beyond this and many smaller villages of native huts which are made of mud, oblong in shape and have thatched roofs of palm leaves. The same flat leafed cactus that is a native of Western America, and has now become the pest of every warm port of the world, grows here.

The country is level, quite open and nearly all under cultivation. The farmers are ploughing now with their ox-teams and primitive wooden ploughs. They use the humped cattle here, but they seem to average bigger than those in Ceylon. Herds of water buffalo lie in the muddy pools of water, with their heads just out. There are hordes of very long legged goats. Here and there now we see large patches of thorn trees and cocoanut palms. This is the country of rice fields, the staple food of the Indians. When the rice crop fails there is starvation in India, and no money for the Britit treasury. Rice is a marsh plant and requires a great deal of labor in its production. The seed is grown in a nursery first until it is six or eight inches high and then it is transplanted all by hand to the field, which is divided up into sections and flooded. Men, women and children all work at this very industriously. The water for this flooding is conserved in large dams or tanks, as they are called here. These are many hundred years old and are now much silted up. They are supplied by the rivers, and a canal system, and water is drawn from them upon the rice fields as required. The rice when it is ripe is gathered by hand, boiled, dried, then flailed to take off the husk, and then it is ready for the market. The farmer's requirements are few, a piece of cloth for himself and another for his wife, and a piece for a turban, a mud hut and he is satisfied. He and his family live on rice which they raise. When he sells his crop one half goes to John Bull & Co. Then with one-half he pays a small land tax, and the balance is profit. He is getting rich in his own small way and John Bull has got a good thing and he knows it. They are an industrious lot and keep toiling on without complaint. They are nearly all Hindus, but there are many shades and degrees of this religion as is found in most of the other great religions. We have just passed some of these curious banyan trees with their many trunks. I notice many bright plumaged birds and some aquatic birds among the rice fields. We have crossed a good sized river and are passing through many little villages. We stop now and then at some small station. A crowd of Indians pour out of the carriages and others get in. These roads pay well. The great amount of traffic they handle, and the low cost of operating make it pay. Indians do the whole business, and do it well. Just as well as any white man

could be at one quarter the cost. The Indian is very quick to learn, and smart. If he can get a salary of \$20 per month he is fixed for life. Here in India are many races of people speaking almost as many languages and dialects as there are days in the year. They are nearly all producers from the soil. Their requirements are few and even under the tremendous burden of taxation they can prosper and save money. Here is a great stone rising several hundred feet above the level plain. We pass it and by a village. There is a Hindu temple here. The great stone gopura or gate, with its pyramidal mass of hideous sculpture, rises high above the palm trees that surround it.

We stop at Madras for dinner. I have travelled alone so far, but a gentleman got into the compartment with me here. He has lived in India many years, and I found him very entertaining.

We cross the River Vaigai just beyond the town. It is one of the large rivers in the south. At the next station some one threw a banana out of the window and a whole troop of monkeys came down out of the trees after it. There must have been twenty of thirty of them of all sizes. They are never molested by the native and these were certainly very tame. I hear that they are so bold in some places that they will snatch things out of a person's hand.

We have been climbing up through the mountains for some time now. These mountains are quite high; some of them being over six thousand feet. There are what are termed hill stations here, where the white people come to get away from the burning heat of the summers. Everything is dried and baked up in the summer months, so I am told. This is winter and the rice fields, etc., look pretty green now. Europeans wear large helmets made of pith and covered with cloth. They are $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch thick and come well down over the neck and even with this protection some get sun stroke from the penetrating rays of the sun. The ordinary sombrero, such as we wear at home, is of no use in this country. Away to the west are great jungles in which can be found wild boar, wild cattle, tigers, leopards and elephant.

We are through the Palmi Hills, as they are called, now.

Some of this is a tobacco growing country and there are some large factories here for the manufacture of cigars, etc. We had supper at Trichinopoly and went on to Tanjore, arriving there at nine o'clock at night. I found a boy to take my luggage to the Dak Bungalow, a government building provided for the use of travelers where there are no hotels.

This bungalow is a large stone building with very thick walls and a tile roof. The tiling is laid upon a cocanut leaf mat that offers a still greater protection from the sun. A broad stone paved veranda encircles the building and beyond this is another extension of cocanut leaves and bamboo poles, which completely excludes the sun. There are two rooms in the building. The one I occupy is about twenty feet square. There are two large doors with ventilating shutters, and three windows without blinds. The floor is of stone covered with matting. The bed has a large mosquito curtain which is useful in these parts. No covering of any kind is used on the beds in this country or Ceylon. It is so warm all of the time that it is not required. There are some ponderous pieces of furniture of native manufacture here; a great chair with extension to put your feet upon, two smaller chairs, a large table with punka hanging over it. These are all made of native hard woods. The table is covered with ink stains. I wonder how many travelers have sat down here to write as I am doing. These dak bungalows are the only accommodation for travelers in most parts of India. They charge one rupee a day, about 35 cents, for the use of it. You bring your own servant to cook your meals or pay the native in charge extra for doing so. The news of the tourist's arrival travels at once throughout the village. When you wake in the morning and have had your bath and breakfast, you step out on the veranda. They are all there. The silver merchant with his Indian wares, the coppersmith, the curio man who will unhesitatingly ask you ten times as much as he expects to get for an article; beggars of all kinds, and last but not least, the guide who will show you everything for a dollar, three rupees. He thinks he is jolly lucky if he makes eight annas, a half a rupee a day. He will argue with you just as long as you will let him, in his broken English, about his merits, and tell you how much each gentleman that he guided has given him. These dusky, gentlemen are so strong in their arguments that they could convince anyone that if they went with you for one anna less than three rupees that they would ruin their chances in life as a guide forever. Finally we strike on a very satisfactory bargain of one rupee and away we go.

We passed down the main street by some native hotels with thatched palm leaf roofs, and their signs in the Tamil language hung out. Some of the walls of the village houses of the better class are decorated with grotesque figures painted in red, blue and yellow. On one of the old walls of the village is an enormous wrought gun was used for the protection of the town by the Raja many years ago. It is not far from here to the Palace of the Raja of Tanjore. The Raja is iron cannon thirty feet long and four wrought iron bands shrunk upon a

core of the same material. This old feet in diameter. The gun is made of dead, but the palace is kept up and the princess lives there. As we enter the great court one is startled for a moment, for on one side two huge elephants stand tossing their trunks and swaying their bodies from side to side. Palms and other strange foliage half hide the Indian architecture. Scores of Indians in red turbans and white loin cloths keep coming and going. Their brown bodies glisten in the strong sunlight. Some have their hair down. It is long and very black. They go bare headed. How they stand the sun I don't know. Perhaps they have an extra thick skull like the Ethiopians. Some carry sun shades of palm leaves and others wear helmets. The Raja's court and throne are only separated from all out of doors by a few columns and arches decorated with a design of the grape vine. Everything has a dilapidated appearance. There are many lamps of an urn shape hanging from the ceiling like those in the Mosques of Cairo. Much of the decoration consists of the Hindu gods carved and painted. In another part of the building is a collection of old weapons for elephant and tiger shooting. Most of the guns are of the flint lock type, or the old muzzle loading guns. They are all beautifully made and some are inlaid with gold and set with precious stones. One, a double barrel tiger gun, was fitted with a long, sharp bayonet that folded back upon the barrels. Touching a spring released it and it fixed itself. Then there were all sorts of elephant trappings used by the Rajas on different state occasions. The swimming tank is about 150x100 feet, and about ten feet deep, supplied by a tank near by. In another part of the palace is the visitors' room, much like the throne room. One side of it opens upon a court. There is a large marble statue here of Larbhoji Maratah, one of the Rajas of Tanjore, which was presented by Queen Victoria. I am out of the line of tourist travel now. I only found a few names in the visitors' book for the year, and a number of these were Americans. Americans have the name for being great travelers and you do find them in some queer places. When I was out shooting in Cheringomas Country, Moniceland I thought I had got up to about the last place from nowhere, but I found that there was a lone American hunting many miles to the north of us, and he had heard that there were white hunters in the country, so I learned afterwards.

The Raja's library contains some 18,000 volumes in Sanskrit, written upon paper and tied up in bundles, and upon the leaves of the palmyra palm, which are strung together in books with a string through each leaf.

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We went down through the market, which was a very busy place. Then we went through one of the main streets on the way to the Great Temple. Here, in their little stalls, are native stone cutters, grinding precious stones upon little wheels that they keep in motion by a kind of a bow, the string of which has several turns around a mandrel that is attached to the wheel, and by moving this back and forward causes the wheel to rotate. Many kinds of precious stones are found here in India and Ceylon, and stone cutting in this primitive manner is a large industry.

Here are clerks and notaries, all as black as can be, and sitting cross-legged in their little places. Here are silversmiths working silver up into all sorts of jewelry and ornaments; copper-smiths, making cooking utensils and other household articles. All of the native work is crude, and yet there is a certain amount of attractiveness about it. We have now reached a great stone wall and pass through a gate with a huge bo-tree in front of it. Here is a large tank or reservoir where the people go to get water. The space is divided by walls, one place for Christians, one for Mahometans, one for Hindus and one for Brahmans. We pass out and around this inclosure to the gate of the temple. There are two walks to this temple and two great gates, or gopuras. They are very high, pyramidal in shape and covered with grotesque images of their many gods. The inner inclosure is very large and the wall around it has small images of the sacred bull, at short intervals. The first thing we see upon entering is the huge image of the sacred bull, carved from some dark stone, and upon an elevated platform covered with a canopy. There is one other smaller one upon the right. They are both washed with water every morning and then greased with coconut oil. They look very filthy indeed, even with all the washing they get. On the left, the high priests live, and at the rear and right of the inclosure, all around, are numerous shrines; a simple pillar of stone set upon a pedestal, with a drain and spout to carry off the dirty water. These pieces of stone are supposed to contain a god that will do certain things, and they are washed and greased by the people. Nearly in the center is the great pagoda, an immense structure covered with hideous images. Within this is the shrine of Shiva. This temple was built in the 12th and 13th centuries, and is now in a fine state of preservation. To one side of this is an elaborately carved stone building containing Karttikeya, the Brahman god of war. They make a lot of devilish music inside. They would not let me go in because they are having some kind of a doing with their great gods, for a week. Their big gods are kept in a dark place and there are dim lights burning about

them. I spent a considerable time wondering about these curiosities, and then came back to the bungalow. This town was at one time encircled by a wall and a deep ditch, which was full of crocodiles. The wall is in ruins now and the ditch nearly dry, and the crocodiles have disappeared. There are a few white people here, about ten I believe, but I haven't seen any today. I dined at the bungalow; got plenty of curried fowl and other curries, also chutneys made from different fruits. These are dishes peculiar to the East and I learned to like them while out in Africa.

At 3 p. m. I took the train for Trichinopoly, where I arrived at six. The bungalow is some distance from the station, so I took a native bullock cart, but my hand bags in, and sat in the end of the cart. This method is about as comfortable as traveling in a Transvaal bullock wagon. One must not be particular in this country. I found this bungalow somewhat inferior to the other.

This morning I engaged a bullock cart to take me to see the sights. The temple rock, and the two temples. We drove down through the town, by several oil mills, where they were making all sorts of vegetable oils. The great temple rock is several hundred feet high. A flight of stone steps lead to the top, where there is a small temple. The filthy, greasy image of Ganish, a god with elephant's head and man's body is here, decked out with wreaths of flowers. There is a grand view from the summit of this rock. The Couveri River, one of the largest in Southern India, flows on one side, and for a long distance around there are native huts. This section of the country has a vast population. The coconut palms, and other trees are so thick that many of the towns are almost hidden.

As I descended I met some Braminese women carrying up some brass vessels of water and oil. They were very much afraid that I would touch them. To touch a Brahmin, or any of their property, is the most sacrilegious thing that you can do. If one touch their jug of water they will throw it away. I found the men not so particular, and would take your money all right and ask for more. This caste business is one of the most difficult problems that the English have to deal with.

Beyond this rock, and across the river is a very large temple. The Great Temple of Sri Rangam, inclosed by seven walls, and having twenty-one great carved gates, or gopuras. Passing through the fourth inclosure we see two fine sacred elephants, with the heads painted white and red. Inside is the temple with a gilded dome over the chief idol, and beside this is the temple of a thousand pillars, in which they hold their holiday festivals,

and bring their goats out of the temple to see the fun. While the actual number of pillars in this structure is only nine hundred and some odd, it is a very large building just the same, and it is very nice and cool in there. In a dark corner I found several large idols of wood, which had fallen into disuse. With a few repairs, and a little paint they would be just as good as ever. That's just the way with humanity. They must have new things, and the old are thrown into some obscure corner and forgotten. I tried to buy one of these from the priest. He wanted to know what I would do with it. I told him that the thing had so many hands that it would make a good hat rack, and I would have a new nose put on it and put it in my hall. The idea amused him, but he wouldn't sell it to me.

From this temple I went to another about a mile away, Jonabukeshwar, that's what they call it. There are nine tanks in connection with this temple. The temple is sacred to Shiva, a very important god. My guide was not allowed to go inside, so I went around alone. It is very dark in the far recesses of the temple, where the big gods are. Half naked savages are moving about, thousands of bats upon the high stone ceiling keep up an incessant squeeling, and the droning of the temple music, or what ever you may call it, fairly gives one the creeps. They were feeding the gods, which they do twice a day, while I was there. A man with a few rice cakes is followed by the musicians, and along comes the priest and two others. The priest takes a rice cake, breaks it up in small pieces, and places it upon the stones provided, before the omages. Then he sprinkles a little water over the god, and it is done. One of the followers takes up the rice and throws it to the sacred cattle who stand near by and they eat it. Some of the stone carvings in these temples are very fine and the architectural work is good also.

I am going on to Madura tonight to look at the temple there, and then I shall go back to Colombo and make a journey up into the interior of the country somewhere. India is a strange and interesting country and I wish that I could see more of it.

WALTER L. RICHARDSON.

NEXT MEETING OF
THE FARMERS' CLUB