

go together and do the business. But if I am to help you I will not promise not to perform some miracles, as you call them, though you know very well they are no such thing. Meanwhile, do as you please about the tiger-hunt; I shall say no more about it." He paused, and then, withdrawing one delicate hand from the folds of his *caftán*, he pointed to the wall behind Isaacs and me, and said, "What a very singular piece of workmanship is that yataghan!"

We both naturally turned half round to look at the weapon he spoke of, which was the central piece in a trophy of jewelled sabres and Afghan knives.

"Yes," said Isaacs, turning back to answer his guest, "it is a——" He stopped, and I, who had not seen the weapon before, lost among so many, and was admiring its singular beauty, turned too; to my astonishment I saw that Isaacs was gazing into empty space. The divan where Ram Lal had been sitting an instant before, was vacant. He was gone.

"That is rather sudden," I said.

"More so than usual," was the reply. "Did you see him go? Did he go out by the door?"

"Not I," I answered, "when I looked round at the wall he was placidly sitting on that divan pointing with one hand at the yataghan. Does he generally go so quickly?"

"Yes, more or less. Now I will show you some pretty sport." He rose to his feet and went to the door. "Narain!" he cried. Narain, the bearer,

who was squatting against the door-post outside, sprang up and stood before his master. "Narain, why did you not show that pundit the way downstairs? What do you mean? have you no manners?"

Narain stood open mouthed. "What pundit, sahib?" he asked.

"Why, the pundit who came a quarter of an hour ago, you donkey! He has just gone out, and you did not even get up and make a salaam, you impertinent vagabond!" Narain protested that no pundit, or sahib, or any one else, had passed the threshold since Ram Lal had entered. "Ha! you *budmash*. You lazy dog of a Hindoo! you have been asleep again, you swine, you son of a pig, you father of piglings! Is that the way you do your work in my service?" Isaacs was enjoying the joke in a quiet way immensely.

"Sahib," said the trembling Narain, apparently forgetting the genealogy his master had thrust upon him, "Sahib, you are protector of the poor, you are my father and my mother, and my brother, and all my relations," the common form of Hindoo supplication, "but, Sri Krishnaji! by the blessed Krishna, I have not slept a wink."

"Then I suppose you mean me to believe that the pundit went through the ceiling, or is hidden under the cushions. Swear not by your false idols, slave; I shall not believe you for that, you dog of an unbeliever, you soor-be-iman, you swine without faith!"

"Han, sahib, han!" cried Narain, seizing at the idea that the pundit had disappeared mysteriously through the walls. "Yes, sahib, the pundit is a great yogi, and has made the winds carry him off." The fellow thought this was a bright idea, not by any means beneath consideration. Isaacs appeared somewhat pacified.

"What makes you think he is a yogi, dog?" he inquired in a milder tone. Narain had no answer ready, but stood looking rather stupidly through the door at the room whence the unearthly visitor had so suddenly disappeared. "Well," continued Isaacs, "you are more nearly right than you imagine. The pundit is a bigger yogi than any your idiotic religion can produce. Never mind, there is an eight anna bit for you, because I said you were asleep when you were not." Narain bent to the ground in thanks, as his master turned on his heel. "Not that he minds being told that he is a pig, in the least," said Isaacs. "I would not call a Mussulman so, but you can insult these Hindoos so much worse in other ways that I think the porcine simile is quite merciful by comparison." He sat down again among the cushions, and putting off his slippers, curled himself comfortably together for a chat.

"What do you think of Ram Lal?" he asked, when Narain had brought hookahs and sherbet.

"My dear fellow, I have hardly made up my mind what to think. I have not altogether recovered from my astonishment. I confess that there was nothing

startling about his manner or his person. He behaved and talked like a well educated native, in utter contrast to the amazing things he said, and to his unprecedented mode of leave-taking. It would have seemed more natural — I would say, more fitting — if he had appeared in the classic dress of an astrologer, surrounded with zodiacs, and blue lights, and black cats. Why do you suppose he wants you to abandon the tiger-hunt?"

"I cannot tell. Perhaps he thinks something may happen to me to prevent my keeping the other engagement. Perhaps he does not approve —" he stopped, as if not wanting to approach the subject of Ram Lal's disapprobation. "I intend, nevertheless, that the expedition come off, and I mean, moreover, to have a very good time, and to kill a tiger if I see one."

"I thought he seemed immensely pleased at your conversion, as he calls it. He said that your newly acquired belief in woman was a step towards a better understanding of life."

"Of the world, he said," answered Isaacs, correcting me. "There is a great difference between the 'world' and 'life.' The one is a finite, the other an infinite expression. I believe, from what I have learned of Ram Lal, that the ultimate object of the adepts is happiness, only to be attained by wisdom, and I apprehend that by wisdom they mean a knowledge of the world in the broadest sense of the word. The world to them is a great repository of facts,

physical and social, of which they propose to acquire a specific knowledge by transcendental methods. If that seems to you a contradiction of terms, I will try and express myself better. If you understand me, I am satisfied. Of course I use transcendental in the sense in which it is applied by Western mathematicians to a mode of reasoning which I very imperfectly comprehend, save that it consists in reaching finite results by an adroit use of the infinite."

"Not a bad definition of transcendental analysis for a man who professes to know nothing about it," said I. "I would not accuse you of a contradiction of terms, either. I have often thought that what some people call the 'philosophy of the nineteenth century,' is nothing after all but the unconscious application of transcendental analysis to the everyday affairs of life. Consider the theories of Darwin, for instance. What are they but an elaborate application of the higher calculus? He differentiates men into protoplasms, and integrates protoplasms into monkeys, and shows the caudal appendage to be the independent variable, a small factor in man, a large factor in monkey. And has not the idea of successive development supplanted the early conception of spontaneous perfection? Take an illustration from India—the new system of competition, which the natives can never understand. Formerly the members of the Civil Service received their warrants by divine authority, so to speak. They were born perfect, as Aphrodite from the foam of the sea; they sprang

armed and ready from the head of old John Company as Pallas Athene from the head of Zeus. Now all that is changed; they are selected from a great herd of candidates by methods of extreme exactness, and when they are chosen they represent the final result of infinite probabilities for and against their election. They are all exactly alike; they are a formula for taxation and the administration of justice, and so long as you do not attempt to use the formula for any other purpose, such, for instance, as political negotiation or the censorship of the public press, the equation will probably be amenable to solution."

"As I told you," said Isaacs, "I know nothing, or next to nothing, of Western mathematics, but I have a general idea of the comparison you make. In Asia and in Asiatic minds, there prevails an idea that knowledge can be assimilated once and for all. That if you can obtain it, you immediately possess the knowledge of everything—the pass-key that shall unlock every door. That is the reason of the prolonged fasting and solitary meditation of the ascetics. They believe that by attenuating the bond between soul and body, the soul can be liberated and can temporarily identify itself with other objects, animate and inanimate, besides the especial body to which it belongs, acquiring thus a direct knowledge of those objects, and they believe that this direct knowledge remains. Western philosophers argue that the only acquaintance a man can have with

bodies external to his mind is that which he acquires by the medium of his bodily senses — though these are themselves external to his mind, in the truest sense. The senses not being absolutely reliable, knowledge acquired by means of them is not absolutely reliable either. So the ultimate difference between the Asiatic saint and the European man of science is, that while the former believes all knowledge to be directly within the grasp of the soul, under certain conditions, the latter, on the other hand, denies that any knowledge can be absolute, being all obtained indirectly through a medium not absolutely reliable. The reasoning, by which the Western mind allows itself to act fearlessly on information which is not (according to its own verdict) necessarily accurate, depends on a clever use of the infinite in unconsciously calculating the probabilities of that accuracy — and this entirely falls in with what you said about the application of transcendental analysis to the affairs of everyday life.”

“I see you have entirely comprehended me,” I said. “But as for the Asiatic mind — you seem to deny to it the use of the calculus of thought, and yet you defined adepts as attempting to acquire specific knowledge by general and transcendental methods. Here is a real contradiction.”

“No; I see no confusion, for I do not include the higher adepts in either class, since they have the wisdom to make use of the learning and of the methods of both. They seem to me to be endeavour-

ing, roughly speaking, to combine the two. They believe absolute knowledge attainable, and they devote much time to the study of nature, in which pursuit they make use of highly analytical methods. They subdivide phenomena to an extent that would surprise and probably amuse a Western thinker. They count fourteen distinct colours in the rainbow, and invariably connect sound, even to the finest degrees, with shades of colour. I could name many other peculiarities of their mode of studying natural phenomena, which displays a much more minute subdivision and classification of results than you are accustomed to. But beside all this they consider that the senses of the normal man are susceptible of infinite refinement, and that upon a greater or less degree of acquired acuteness of perception the value of his results must depend. To attain this high degree of sensitiveness, necessary to the perception of very subtle phenomena, the adepts find it necessary to train their faculties, bodily and mental, by a life of rigid abstention from all pleasures or indulgences not indispensable in maintaining the relation between the physical and intellectual powers.”

“The common *fakir* aims at the same thing,” I remarked.

“But he does not attain it. The common *fakir* is an idiot. He may, by fasting and self-torture, of a kind no adept would approve, sharpen his senses till he can hear and see some sounds and sights inaudible and invisible to you and me. But his whole system

lacks any intellectual basis: he regards knowledge as something instantaneously attainable when it comes at last; he believes he will have a vision, and that everything will be revealed to him. His devotion to his object is admirable, when he is a genuine ascetic and not, as is generally the case, a good-for-nothing who makes his piety pay for his subsistence; but it is devotion of a very low intellectual order. The true adept thinks the training of the mind in intellectual pursuits no less necessary than the moderate and reasonable mortification of the flesh, and higher Buddhism pays as much attention to the one as to the other."

"Excuse me," said I, "if I make a digression. I think there are two classes of minds commonly to be found among thinkers all over the world. The one seek to attain to knowledge, the others strive to acquire it. There is a class of commonplace intellects who regard knowledge of all kinds in the light of a ladder, one ladder for each science, and the rungs of the ladders are the successive facts mastered by an effort and remembered in the order they have been passed. These persons think it is possible to attain to high eminence on one particular ladder, that is, in one particular science, without having been up any of the other ladders, that is, without a knowledge of other branches of science. This is the mind of the plodder, the patient man who climbs, step by step, in his own unvarying round of thought; not seeing that it is but the wheel of a treadmill over which he

is labouring, and that though every step may pass, and re-pass, beneath his toiling feet, he can never obtain a birdseye view of what he is doing, because his eyes are continually fixed on the step in front."

"But," I continued, as Isaacs assented to my simile by a nod, "there is another class of minds also. There are persons who regard the whole imaginable and unimaginable knowledge of mankind, past, present, and future, as a boundless plain over which they hang suspended and can look down. Immediately beneath them there is a map spread out which represents, in the midst of the immense desert, the things they themselves know. It is a puzzle map, like those they make for children, where each piece fits into its appointed place, and will fit nowhere else; every piece of knowledge acquired fits into the space allotted to it, and when there is a piece, that is, a fact, wanting, it is still possible to define its extent and shape by the surrounding portions, though all the details of colour and design are lacking. These are the people who regard knowledge as a whole, harmonious, when every science and fragment of a science has its appointed station and is necessary to completeness of perfect knowledge. I hope I have made clear to you what I mean, though I am conscious of only sketching the outlines of a distinction which I believe to be fundamental."

"Of course it is fundamental. Broadly, it is the difference between analytic and synthetic thought; between the subjective and the objective views;

between the finite conception of a limited world and the infinite ideal of perfect wisdom. I understand you perfectly."

"You puzzle me continually, Isaacs. Where did you learn to talk about 'analytic' and 'synthetic,' and 'subjective' and 'objective,' and transcendental analysis, and so forth?" It seemed so consistent with his mind that he should understand the use of philosophical terms, that I had not realised how odd it was that a man of his purely Oriental education should know anything about the subject. His very broad application of the words 'analytic' and 'synthetic' to my pair of illustrations attracted my attention and prompted the question I had asked.

"I read a good deal," he said simply. Then he added in a reflective tone, "I rather think I have a philosophical mind. The old man who taught me theology in Istamboul when I was a boy used to talk philosophy to me by the hour, though I do not believe he knew much about it. He was a plodder, and went up ladders in search of information, like the man you describe. But he was very patient and good to me; the peace of Allah be with him."

It was late, and soon afterwards we parted for the night. The next day was Sunday, and I had a heap of unanswered letters to attend to, so we agreed to meet after tiffin and ride together before dining with Mr. Ghyrkens and the Westonhaughs.

I went to my room and sat a while over a volume of Kant, which I always travel with—a sort of phi-

losopher's stone on which to whet the mind's tools when they are dulled with boring into the geological strata of other people's ideas. I was too much occupied with the personality of the man I had been talking with to read long, and so I abandoned myself to a reverie, passing in review the events of the long day.