

## Bombay the Beautiful

*non magnificent*

THIS was the title which Rudyard Kipling gave to his native city, and it richly deserves the name. No city in the world has finer public buildings. Dr. Parkhurst is of the opinion that there is nothing in America so artistic, rich and attractive as the Victoria Terminus, which he regards as the finest railway station in the world. It is in the Italian Gothic style and has a frontage on the Hornby Road of over 1,500 feet. The station platforms are roomy and afford ample accommodation for passenger traffic. Under the lofty roofs are located the necessary waiting and refreshment-rooms and a handsome booking hall, with tessellated pavement, the walls and roof being decorated in blue and gold, and the roof and entrance doorway supported on graceful marble pillars. The administrative office building forms three sides of a square enclosing an ornamental garden, the entrance gates of which are surmounted by a massive lion and tiger carved in stone, the most prominent feature being the high tower rising over the centre portion and which is surmounted by a large figure of "Progress." There is a fine statue of the late Queen-Empress Victoria in front of the building below the clock. That splendid example of Christian womanhood is everywhere honored in India by public statues, fittingly of white marble, and many parks and streets bear her honored name.

Margaret Boehme Deeming, in her wonderfully interesting book, "Mosaics from India" gives the following information about this great city:

"From the sea Bombay is imposing. The towers and fine buildings near Apollo Bunder or Prince's Dock, look fair in the Indian sunshine, and a closer view of the part known as "The Fort" confirms the impression. The city, almost free from smoke, retains in its buildings the beauty of variously tinted stone. The Esplanade is a beautiful sight, indeed, with its fine Elphinstone college and the many other stone buildings along its length. Malabar Hill also with its trees, gardens and elegant residences, is an enticing part of the city. 'Victoria Terminus' is the finest railway station in the world. Everything in this European Bombay conveys the idea of space, verdure, comfort and wealth. Fine equipages roll along the wide streets in the late afternoons and in the golden evenings of a climate of perpetual summer; beautiful Parsee ladies in dainty, silken, flowing attire, flit by among English beauties, while now and then a dark-hued but attractive Marathi face may be seen. Native gentlemen in rich and becoming headgear known as a "pugri," drive everywhere, and the Parsee's peculiar "stove-pipe," without a brim, is omnipresent. On the streets a throng, more truly cosmopolitan than is found anywhere else, sweeps along or turns aside to enjoy the cool of the evening in little parks or along the sea-beach.

All this brightness, movement and beauty, belong to European Bombay, although many of the wealthy and high-caste people share in it also. The native city is very different. Here are the narrow, badly-drained streets, the crowded tenements, where the plague finds such congenial quarters, and the numberless small shops which delight the foreigner and reward the curio-seeking tourists. In this part of Bombay the habits and customs of the people may be studied, as life is crowded in Naples.

However, here in the oriental city one notes a remarkable absence of the feminine element of the city's life. The few

women seen belong to the lower classes, with the exception of the favored high-born Marathi woman, who need not go veiled, or the fair Parsee lady, who rivals her Western sister in freedom as well as in beauty.

All sorts of occupations are carried on out-of-doors—not only the trades and handicrafts, but household duties as well. Here are fruits or grain being laid out in the sun to dry, a baby enjoying its bath on a door-step, rice in process of cleaning, a barber busy on the curlstone, a woman scouring brass cooking-pots—and all in the teeming streets of Bombay. The same unconcern regarding outward appearances will be found all over India. As the coolies work on the roads, pounding in sandstone and concrete, they sing in concert, or, in responsive couplets, keep time with their doolmots or pounders. Processions of all sorts pass through the streets, singing wedding ditties, funeral dirges or religious chants. Wedding dinners are served on the road in front of the bride's or bridegroom's house, and the guests seem to enjoy the feast all the more for being the cynosures of hungry eyes. Almost hide-bound by caste-rules and observances, the people of India are nevertheless free as air from the restrictions of our so-called proprie-



A Street Scene in the Native Quarter, Bombay

ties. The out door life is, in certain phases, very attractive and delightful, suited to the people and to the climate and fascinating to the foreigner from colder lands; but it is also pathetic in many ways. Its saddest feature is the dearth of real family life, the absence of the home. Men sit in groups and smoke or dally over their sherbet, but no family group is ever visible, except among the Parsees or resident foreigners. Even the Marathi woman, though not hid away as are most high-caste women, is never seen with her husband and sons. Travelling about India one misses more and more the shut-in millions—the lonely women for whom the marvellous Eastern moonlight means but a few rays in a dingy, walled back yard, and for whom the flowers and groves bloom and blossom in vain.

The great diversity of vehicles and animals in Bombay is very interesting. Almost all sorts of English carriages are used. Then there is the huge bullock-coach, holding eight or ten, drawn by the fine, humped Indian ox, the queer little too-heavy ekka, meant for one only, as its name signifies, but often fairly bulging with its human freight. Among the fine English turn-outs, the country carts, the bullock-coaches and