

*(ii) Lake District tour*

Most foreign students those days were looked after by the British Council. So we received a booklet, giving details of tours organized by the British Council over the Easter Break 1954. (That reminds me: the Christmas break 1953 I had, I think, spent with my uncle Farooq – who had come to the University of Manchester to do a post-graduate diploma in Textile Management. He asked me what I would like to see in London. A concert? (That was a strange idea to me: I knew nothing about European music.) An opera? (Ditto.) A play? (Yes, a good idea! We saw Shaw's *Pygmalion* – which I had already read.) Also, a circus? (Yes, yippee! We saw Bertram's circus.) Uncle Farooq also took me to Madame Tussaud's – and I/we also saw several museums of London: The British Museum, the Natural History Museum, The Science Museum, the Albert and Victoria. (I later wrote up a 3-instalment essay on 'The Museums of London', in Urdu, for the *Alhamra* magazine of Lahore.)

Anyway, for the Easter break (March – April 1954), I chose a trip to the Lake District – for I had read at GCL so much English romantic poetry (Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, Coleridge) – taught by Khwaja Manzoor Hosain and Professor Sirajuddiu – and was quite familiar with the names of lakes there: Windermere, Grasmere, Ullswater, etc. The trip was by coach, under the supervision of a Mr Bell, and the coach had some 30-odd students of perhaps 20 different nationalities. We probably started from London, but I am not sure.

It was a most enjoyable and informative tour. We saw all the hills, called Scafell, etc. – Mr Bell told us many of these were Norse words – showing affinities between Scotland and Norway. It was the lambing season (1<sup>st</sup> April) – and ewes and tiny lambkins were gambolling everywhere. We were shown how all the sheep belonging to a certain farm (all farms

separated from each other by loosely packed stone walls, ~3 feet high) were given specific different-coloured distinguishing marks on their coats and had their ears nicked in distinct ways. We visited lakes such as Windermere (and perhaps boated on it); graphite-pencil making factories in Keswick, etc. (where I think Southey had lived – the author of the Lodore-water(?) poem); landmarks such as Wordsworth's Dove Cottage. We stayed in various Spartan hostels and other guest houses.

The main thing I learnt from this trip was that one must judge people on their individual merit: not by nationality. Some Christians and a Jew (I think what Mr Safra was) I found to be more congenial than some Muslims or sub-continentals. Mr Safra, in particular, was a very friendly and humorous character – a Lebanese, whose second language was French. He asked Mr Bell in a loud voice, referring to some sheep in the field: Mr Bell, Sir, when do these muttons have their haircut (when are these sheep shorn)? There were some distinguished young people in our party. I remember a chap called the Kabaka of Buganda (a Chieftain probably from Yuganda). There were several girls in the party. One that I became quite friendly with was called Miss Faridah Enayat from Egypt. She was quite petite and good-looking. At the end of the tour she invited me to accompany her by train to London. I feared that it may lead to 'undue intimacy' and refused. (Though later on I regretted this decision and wrote a woe-begone poem about this.) Faridah went back to Egypt later that year – to teach English at a College, I think; but we kept up a correspondence. I wrote to her from Oxford in 1958 to ask how she was – and whether her name had changed (i.e. had she got married in the meantime). She replied: My name won't change – unless you change it. This was quite suggestive. She also sent me a small photograph, which I showed to my Mother in Pakistan in 1959 – or was it in 1956? – I think. My mother indicated that she would be quite happy if I married her. But when Farida sent me her CV – asking me to help find her a teaching job in England – I realized that she must be a good 10 years older than I. So the whole thing got quietly dropped. I still have that picture. My friend George Chadwick used to tease me about it – calling her the 'Egyptian mummy' – I don't know why.

On return from the Lake District trip, I wrote up the whole travelogue as 4-5 instalments article in the *Al-Hamra* (Urdu magazine of Lahore). When you also remember my 3 (or 2?) instalment article that I published about the Museums of London, it would be clear how much time I was spending on literature rather than getting on with Physics. P. S. I have a letter from my Grandfather saying he was surprised how I found the time for these long literacy compositions.

### *(iii) European coach tour and its aftermath*

The next big trip that I made in 1954 (August–September) was a "5 countries in 16 days" coach tour to get a bird's-eye-view of Europe. Actually, my Caius friend Khusrow Ali Baig

and I got a glossy holiday-tours brochure from a travel agent and looked through its pages together. One that appealed to us most was the above tour, costing £59 – one of the most expensive. Using the above yardstick (a 3'6d lunch of the time equating to £7.50 of today), £60 x 45 = £2700 of today. It was mad for two impecunious students to choose such an expensive tour. I wrote to my father for help – and he sent me the money (ditto I think with Baig). Later, on this tour, we found that only rich, old people were taking such a costly tour – apart from the two of us, and a third Indian from Kenya, etc., there were no young people on that tour, bar the 18-year old daughter – or granddaughter – of an Admiral, who was accompanying her aged parents/grandparents.

We started from London. We were supposed to take a train from Waterloo station to Dover – and then cross the English Channel. I was staying in the same guest house in Finchley, North London, where I had stayed with Uncle Farooq the previous Christmas (and where Sajjad also used to stay). The train was to leave Waterloo Station at 9am. But although I got up at 6 or 6:30am, I took so much time taking a shower/bath and having breakfast, that I left barely 30 minutes to reach Waterloo Station by tube. I had assumed the journey would just take 20 minutes! When I arrived at the specified platform at Waterloo, it was 9:30am – and the train had left long ago. Panic! But fortunately, the travel company had made a provision for block-heads like me. Their rep in a white jacket and carrying a placard greeted me and said a second train, leaving at 10am would be meeting the same ferry. Thank goodness for that. For else, bang would have gone my £2700. (Am not sure if I had taken out insurance.)

Anyway, it was a very horizon-broadening tour. We travelled by a luxury coach which covered: France, Germany, Italy, Switzerland and, I think, Holland. We stayed, throughout, in 4 or 5 star hotels. The places I especially remember were Paris, Freudenstadt (Germany), Venice, St. Anton and Cortina d'Empezzo (Italy), Cannes, Nice and Monte Carlo (Monaco), Zurich and Lucerne (Switzerland), and possibly Amsterdam. Khusrow and I were spending a lot of cash on buying trinkets, picture-card concertina booklets, and kitsch of all kinds (plus a cuckoo clock from Switzerland – which I finally gave as a gift to Javad Zahedy after my marriage in 1962). Khusrow, who had run out of money, importuned me and the Kenyan Indian to lend him £10 (equal to £500 of today) to gamble at Monte Carlo – for he had had a dream that he would be sure to greatly multiply that money in the Casino. In the end, he returned, heart-broken and drunk – for he had lost every penny. (Baig was an inveterate gambler. In Cambridge, he had taken me to the races at Newmarket (15 miles out). I bet 5 shillings on a horse called Saifullah – only because it belonged to the Aga Khan. I won 35 shillings – but I never gambled on horses again. He also once took me to the grey-hound races at White City in London. I bet £2 – but lost. I never repeated the experiment. At Monte Carlo, I did stake 5 shillings, I think (using jettons) – but got nothing. (A very rich-looking

dame, who was throwing good money, was looking askance and contemptuously at my two-penny gondola lapel-pin with a shiny green glass 'jewel' stuck on my gabardine jacket pin-hole.)

In Paris, at the Quay D'Orsay Hotel (?) we had an evening of ballroom dancing. Although I had taken some dancing lessons at Cambridge (to attend the Dorothy Café Tea-time Dances – before the European trip, I seem to think, but maybe it was later; Victor Sylvester's book on ballroom dancing is still with me) I knew nothing of the etiquette of dancing. I thought clinging on to your dance partner and rubbing your body against her was the main purpose of the exercise. I don't know how appalled my dancing partner – a woman of perhaps 49-50; I was 24 – must have been. Actually, I had had a bit of a crush on her – and had made friends with her. Once she was talking to the above-mentioned young girl of 18 (the Admiral's grand-daughter), when – note my utter naïveté in these matters – I asked them: Were you at school together? The older woman (called Rosemary, I think) replied: There is some difference in our ages, you know! Anyway, after the dance, I saw her up to her room – and when saying goodnight, had half-trepid wonderment whether she would invite me in – and if so, what would be in store. Needless to say, she only said: 'Goodnight. See you tomorrow!' She was an executive of Cadbury-Schweppes (or just Schweppes, in those days).

During that tour, when we spent many hours on the coach during the summer's heat, and I did not have the sense to take bottles of mineral water or drink a juice at halting places, I noticed on one or two occasions, that my urine had a red or pink tinge. It was, with hind sight, clearly caused by diseased kidneys which were not being properly flushed with liquids. I paid no attention to these symptoms.