

Chapter 5 Mother Teresa 原典

The poorest of the poor

Calcutta is a huge city, stretching across more than 270 square miles, and with a population of more than seven million people. It is the largest city in India and one of the largest in the world. It is also a great seaport and industrial centre, sending cotton, silk, rice, sugar, paper and other things all over the world.

The centre of the city has large parks, fine squares and many beautiful buildings. It has schools and colleges and a university responsible for almost two hundred thousand students. It's a wonderful city, an exciting place to live in, in spite of its steamy heat, if you are not one of the very poorest of the poor.

But thousands of people in Calcutta have no jobs and no homes, or live crowded together in homes made out of mats and boxes and rusty sheets of tin. Many have to camp permanently in the railway stations, cooking, eating, sleeping and nursing their babies there. People are born and die in the streets. As many as seventeen out of every hundred families live in the streets, having nowhere else to go. Something like 100,000 people sleep in the streets every night. Many of these people are sick, for in such conditions, in a hot, damp climate, fevers and diseases spread quickly. And all the time more and more people pour into the city hoping to find a job and a share in the city's wealth.

Nothing the government does, no matter how hard it tries by providing houses, schools and medical services, ever quite keeps up with the increasing population. Most people have just got used to the sight of these homeless thousands of very poor people and hardly notice them.

There are people belonging to many different organisations, who try to feed the hungry, heal the sick and educate the children of Calcutta. The problems are so great that it seems as if only large organisations with huge amounts of money them.

But one woman has caught the imagination of the world by going to the poorest of the poor people alone – with only a few coins in her pocket. This is the woman known as Mother Teresa of Calcutta.

'I do not agree with the big way of doing things,' she said. 'To us what matters is a single person. To get to love the person we must come in close contact with him. If we wait till we get the numbers, then we will be lost in the numbers. And we will never be able to show that love and respect for the person. I believe in person to person; every person is Christ for me, and since there is only one Jesus, that person is the only one person in the world for me at that moment.'

原典のある英文については、テキストデータを収録しています。