

the opportunity to create a disturbance, many boys started going one way. Another group went in the other while all started shouting "Forward!" or "Back! Back!" at the top of their lungs. Prefects failed to control the mob, and it took the intervention of the headmaster to control the situation. Still, it took him several minutes to achieve order. It might have taken a lesser man, many times as long.

Another time, a strong man exhibition was followed by the performer chewing a live snake. He then offered to distribute herbs and roots to cure snake bite, and, at this juncture the majority of the audience rushed the stage. An imminent riot was controlled by the prefects and masters present.

### **Service to Mankind**

A word about our headmaster, Mr Arthur Edward Foot. He stood head and shoulders above the rest of the staff, who, themselves were men of considerable eminence. Mr Foot could impose discipline by sheer force of personality, without recourse to threats and punishments. On the other hand, he had a rare understanding of human nature and of boys in particular. In fact, on one occasion, he supported me against a master when he felt I had the right of it.

Service to society was one of his leading principles, and the idea of helping others, especially those not as fortunate as ourselves, was strongly instilled in us. Quite aside from the weekly sessions of labour work, where we worked physically on many tasks for the benefit of the whole school, Mr Foot would organize an expedition of boys during the holidays to some disaster-stricken area to render assistance there. I



**Scouts, Raiwala (1945)**

went on one such trip. Aside from being spiritually and mentally satisfying, it was very educational, and highly enjoyable. We helped to build

mud and thatch houses, took trips on country barges which were worked by oars and long bamboo poles through flood waters. At different locations we ate the same food as the local people, got to know them and earned their confidence. All this made a great and lasting impression on me.

Mr RL Holdsworth or Holdy was, despite his exceptional prowess and achievements – or perhaps because of them – an extremely modest man. A dedicated and inspiring teacher, he would sometimes depart from his subject on a tangent, and speak on something he considered important. Once, during a history class, he walked up to the blackboard and chalked the word "Happyness" (sic). Throughout that school, he spoke on the subject, leaving us with a great deal to think about.

To write about all the interesting things that happened during my stay in school would fill volumes. I can only say we had a very full and useful time, and were extremely fortunate to have had such a galaxy of brilliant and dedicated people to guide us.

### **The Cruelty of Independence**

It would make this story incomplete, however, to miss two momentous events. Independence came with terrible birth pangs. It was the year of our School Certificate exams. Many of us, including myself, started out for school, and half-way there, the train had to be stopped. We were sent back home, only to return to School after a few days, or even weeks. Many of our friends from the other side of the border did not come back to School at all.

The other event was the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi - an event that shocked the whole world. At School, there was an air of bereavement; a deep and desperate sense of loss. Mr Martyn, who was then officiating as headmaster, assembled the entire school in a beautiful tree-covered copse nearby, and spoke to us solemnly. By the end of his talk, I don't think there was anybody among us who did not feel a powerful emotion; one of healing.