

**A Visit to the Hills**  
**Or**  
**A Trip to the Kashmir Valley**  
**Or**  
**A Visit to a Hill Station**  
**Or**  
**Kashmir—The Switzerland of India**  
**Or**  
**A Visit to a Place of Interest**

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Travelling must form an important part of education in our schools and colleges. It gives us firsthand information about things, places, persons and events. It is essential for the healthy growth of the mind. Tagore rightly said, "The health of the mind cannot be maintained on the ration of books served up in motionless classes within the prison walls of a static school." Tours and trips not only educate the students but also provide a healthy change from a mere dull, academic routine.

A visit to a hill station is both a profit and pleasure. It improves our health by its bracing climate. It improves the boredom of the prosaic severity of daily life in the plains. It saves us from the grilling heat in the plains. Wordsworth, the high priest of nature, once rightly remarked that a visit to the lakes and mountains is equal to visit to the church.

I had heard a lot about the beauty of the Kashmir Valley. I was told that a visit to the lovely valley of Kashmir reveals to us the workmanship of God who combines in Himself the poet, the painter, the singer, the sculptor and the architect. It is also well-known that if there is any Paradise on the earth, it is Kashmir alone. Kashmir is also called the Switzerland of India.

I yearned to visit Kashmir. My friend and I went to Kashmir during the last summer vacation. We left Pathankot by bus and reached Srinagar after a very interesting journey. On both sides of the road, we could see the lofty green hills and a panorama of natural beauty. We stayed in a houseboat named Jal Pari.

Our stay was very comfortable. We saw a large number of tourists from different parts of the world who walked in a leisurely way as we were in a gay and festive mood. We halted during the journey to appreciate the beauty of a scene or to watch the fast-moving water in a stream. We saw a large number of waterfalls on the way. We did not trek more than twenty miles a day. We were much delighted by the scenes of thrilling beauty.

Every day we used to leave our house-boat early in the morning and go out sight-seeing. We walked in a leisurely way as we were in a gay and festive mood. We halted during the journey to appreciate the beauty of scene or to watch the fast-moving water in a stream. We saw a large number of waterfalls on the way. We did not trek more than twenty miles a day. We were much delighted by the scenes of thrilling beauty.

It was not for nothing that Wordsworth, the high priest of Nature, said,

“One impulse from a vernal wood

May teach us more of man,

Of moral evil and of good,

Then all the sages can.”

The mountains, the valleys, streams, waterfalls, and other objects of Nature in all their grandeur and majesty, seemed to be pervaded by the Divine Spirit. The bracing climate of the Kashmir Valley refreshed our spirit. We were thrilled by the delights of the Kashmir Valley. We now came to realize the truth of what Byron had said long ago:

“There is a pleasure in the pathless woods

There is a rapture on the lovely shore.... “

We also visited Gulmarg, Pathalgam, and Kokaranag. We found that the water at these places was very healthful. It was quite appetizing.

We never felt tired of eating because we felt hungry every time, we drank water. We felt that we had put on a few pounds of flesh. We then visited the Shalimar and Nishat gardens. They were so beautiful that we felt that we were in the seventh heaven of joy. The beauty of the hills, ever-green with tall trees, beggar's description. Then we had to get back to the plains to face the sweltering heat. My visit to Kashmir is indelibly sketched on my mind. Really, a thing of beauty is a joy forever. Whenever the happy memories of Kashmir haunt my mind, I am reminded of Wordsworth's lines:

“For oft when on my couch I lie  
In vacant or in pensive mood,  
They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude;  
And then my heart with pleasure fills  
And dances with the daffodils.”