

Dean LeBaron's

TRAVEL FOLIO

by Diane Houser, H. JI. 2

If you were to attend a dinner party in India, you might find yourself eating silver for dessert. Dr. Helen R. LeBaron, dean of Home Economics at Iowa State, had just this experience on her recent travels through India, Egypt, Pakistan, Ceylon, Japan and the Philippines.

Dean LeBaron described the unusual dessert as being topped with a sheet of silver pounded thinner than paper. "When you pick it up, it tends to crumble into nothing, and is eaten with the rest of the dessert. The silver seemed to have a sweet flavor, but actually this was from the food underneath it," she explained.

Invited to serve as a consultant with the Ford Foundation for two months in India, Dean LeBaron spent some time at Baroda University, whose faculty of home sci-

ence had asked Ford Foundation to help strengthen and develop the graduate program and establish research in various areas of home science. Dean LeBaron was to see if the requested plan was feasible, and, if so, to propose a project to the Ford Foundation by means of which the College of Home Economics at Iowa State might help Baroda.

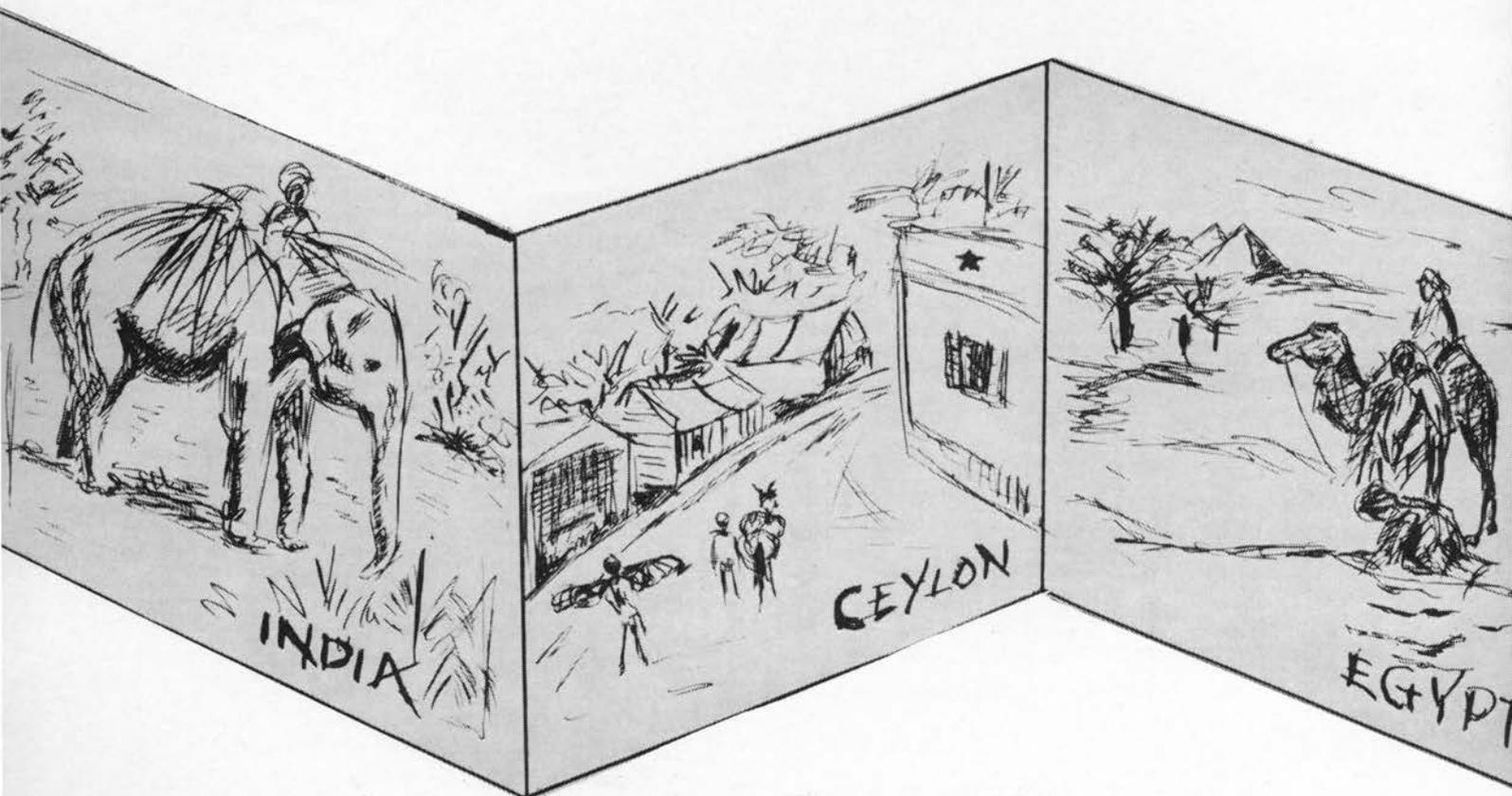
With hair plaited in long black braids, and flowing saris, home science students at Baroda see as many monkeys as we see squirrels as they bicycle across campus to class. They may be headed to a class in foods and nutrition, textiles and clothing or child development, much as home economics students at Iowa State might be headed for these same classes.

The average student at Baroda is younger than at Iowa State.

Dean LeBaron explained that Indian students go to school only 10 years before they enter college.

The buildings on Baroda's campus are built with wide verandas similar to covered porches running along the sides. This arrangement makes it possible for the doors and windows to be left open. No heat is needed in the buildings. "It didn't rain at all when I was there in January and February. It was quite cool in the mornings and became warmer later in the day," Dean LeBaron said. "There are two home management houses—very nice ones," said Dean LeBaron. One is built at one-third the cost of the other, for the two houses show different levels of income.

The general cooking principles are the same in foods and nutrition class at Baroda as they are at



OF ASIA

Iowa State, but the foods are different. Dean LeBaron pointed out that in India all ingredients are weighed during the preparation of foods.

In addition to the "silver" dessert, there were other interesting foods. One was a dessert of custard with shredded carrots mixed into it. Since many Indians are vegetarians, hotels all have vegetarian menus. Dean LeBaron said the vegetables were highly spiced and interestingly prepared. "Among the fruits available were wonderful loose-skinned oranges, mangos, papayas and red, green and yellow short and long bananas."

"They drink very strong tea in India," testified Dean LeBaron. "I always asked for a pot of hot water so I could dilute it. The cooks won't make weak tea be-

cause it makes them feel like they are being stingy," she explained.

Cooking utensils in northern India are made of brass. The demand for stainless steel is increasing, however, as there are fewer servants to do the time-consuming polishing of the brass. The pots and pans are scrubbed daily with sand and cigarette ashes.

Dean LeBaron said that all the meals at which she was entertained were buffet style. "Tea is served about four or five o'clock, and dinner is never before eight p.m."

The transportation in India is also interesting. In the city streets were vehicles of every imaginable kind. They included bicycles, tongas, (which are two-wheeled carts drawn by horses or donkeys), bullock carts, rickshas, motorized rickshas, bicycle-drawn rickshas and a

few cars and busses. "Traffic was very difficult," she said.

Dean LeBaron found traveling by train in India somewhat different, too. In the United States we usually take only as much luggage as we can carry ourselves, but in India train passengers take bedrolls and even hampers of food in addition to their suitcases. "Three of us traveling from Delhi to Baroda had 13 pieces of luggage among us on the train," Dean LeBaron said.

In India there are 19 colleges and universities offering degrees and about a dozen diploma courses. A number of new colleges are starting programs. Consequently, there is a tremendous need for graduate programs so college instructors can be trained. A need for research is illustrated by the fact that Indian universities are using American text books to a large extent. They are not appropriate for the Indians, since their cultural pattern, resources and economic and social systems differ greatly from ours.

All colleges in India restrict enrollment. "They don't have the drop-outs that we have," said Dean LeBaron. Students representing all levels of income attend college. The "backward and depressed" classes have scholarships available to them from the government, making it possible for some of them to go on to college. The greater percentage of students at Baroda, however, are from high and middle income families.

"I am very enthusiastic about the possibility of a cooperative program with Baroda University," said Dean LeBaron. "We are anxious to work with Indian home economists so that within a reasonable length of time, they will no longer have to come to this country for advanced degrees. Arrangements are being made to help Baroda through the Ford Foundation. Some of Baroda's faculty will come to universities in the United States and in 1961 we hope to have some of our faculty teaching in Baroda."

There is a great expectancy in India that girls working in home science can help raise the level of living among the people.

