

LIEUT.-COLONEL SIR FRANCIS EDWARD YOUNGHUSBAND,
K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E.

Gold Medallist 1891. Council 1911-14. Hon. Sec. 1914-16.
Vice-President 1916-19, 1922-42. President 1919-22

SIR FRANCIS YOUNGHUSBAND was born at Murree on 31 May 1863, the second son of Major-General J. W. Younghusband. Educated at Clifton and Sandhurst, he was commissioned to the King's Dragoon Guards in 1892, and was soon in India, where his regiment was stationed at Rawalpindi.

His enthusiasm for travel in the Himalaya was first stirred by a visit he paid on leave in 1884 to Dharmasala, the home for many years of his uncle Robert Shaw. There he talked with men who had accompanied Shaw to Yarkand and Kashgar, and examined books and relics of those journeys. He then set off on his first tour in the Himalaya, through the valleys of Kangra and Kulu, discovering the "delicious sense of satisfaction as each long day's march was over, as each pass was crossed, each new valley entered." On his return to duty he was sent at the age of twenty-one on a reconnaissance of the Indus and the Afghan border, and later attached to the Intelligence Department to revise the gazetteer of Kashmir.

His first great opportunity came when Mr. Evan James invited him to join in a journey through Manchuria. For seven months they travelled in that then little-known country, penetrating to the sources of the Sungari in the Chang-pai-shan, and later crossing the northern end of the range to Hunchun. These journeys are described in detail in James' 'Long White Mountain,' and briefly in the first three chapters of 'The heart of Asia.' At the end of this expedition Younghusband proposed to spend the winter in Peking, and to return to India by sea. While in Peking however he met Colonel M. S. Bell, who was preparing to journey overland to India. Younghusband was eager to accompany him; Bell, thinking it a waste of opportunity for both to travel by the same route, suggested that they should arrange to meet at Hami. Younghusband therefore, having secured an extension of leave, decided to travel by the direct route across the Gobi, while Bell journeyed through the more populous provinces within the Great Wall. Younghusband's route had not been traversed by a European, and lay between the usual route to Chinese Turkistan and that followed by Ney Elias in 1872. After three months of preparation he left Peking on 4 April 1886 with one Chinese servant, and traversed the Mongolian plains to Kalgan and Kwei-huachang, where he arrived two weeks later. There he engaged a Chinese camel man, his Mongol assistant, and eight camels for the crossing of the Gobi. The monotony of those long dreary marches was broken by the extreme beauty of the clear starlit nights, and the changing colours of the desert landscape. He noted in his diary how one morning the plain "fades away in various shades of blue, each getting deeper and deeper till the hills are reached, and these again in their rugged outline present many a pleasing variety of colours, all softened down with a hazy bluish tinge." After seventy days, having crossed the Altai at 8000 feet, he reached Hami, where he found that Bell had preceded him by a month. Reorganizing his party, he exchanged the camels for an *araba*, or

travelling cart, and a pony. Thence he journeyed along the southern base of the Tien Shan through Turfan to Aksu. Sending his Chinese servant by the usual route to Kashgar, he made a detour into the Kirghiz country, riding with an Afghan merchant up the Aksu valley to Ush Turfan, and over the Kara Kura or Belowti pass, the pleasantest part of the whole journey. The stage to Kashgar and Yarkand was along a well-known route much frequented by merchants and pilgrims "declaiming loudly in praise of British rule in India."

At Yarkand he received a letter from Colonel Bell suggesting that he should return to India by the direct but unexplored route across the Muztagh range, which had been abandoned by traders owing to its difficulty and the depredations of Kanjut robbers. Younghusband warmly welcomed this opportunity for further exploration. Having engaged a party of Baltis, who had crossed some years before to Yarkand, and obtained ponies and "some good strong ropes and a pickaxe or two," he set out on September 8. His route lay across the Kuen Lun to Chiragsaldi on the Yarkand river. It was supposed that the southern tributaries came straight down from the main Karakoram watershed, but he found that another range, the Aghil mountains, was interposed. This he crossed by the Aghil pass. There he was the first European to see the Karakoram from the north; at the foot of the pass flowed the unexplored Shaksgam river. The next day the party camped below the glacier descending from the Muztagh pass. After struggling for three days to get the ponies up the pass, he decided to send them round by Shahidulla and the trade route to Kashmir, and to attempt the Old Muztagh pass with a small party, the New Muztagh having been reconnoitred and found impracticable. On September 28 the pass was successfully crossed, after a hazardous descent of the precipitous ice slope on the southern side. The main obstacle on the journey had now been overcome, and the journey through Askole to Kashmir was uneventful. He finally reached Rawalpindi on November 4, seven months after leaving Peking.

In August 1889 Younghusband was again in the Karakoram to inquire into the Kanjut raids, and to report upon the passes between the Yarkand and Hunza. From Leh he took the trade route to Shahidulla and the Yarkand valley. Following the river down until he struck his route of 1887, he then turned southwards over the Aghil pass once more. Leaving his escort here he pushed on to explore the upper Shaksgam, which he took to be the headwaters of the Oprang, hoping to reach the Saloro pass. He was obliged however to abandon the ascent of what appeared to be the main tributary glacier on account of snow storms, avalanches, and crevasses. This glacier was subsequently identified with the Urdok glacier. By an oversight Younghusband's note in his diary that the Shaksgam valley continued south-east of the junction with the Urdok was omitted from his printed report, and for many years this caused the watershed to be misplaced on the maps of this region. His identification of a great peak seen from the Shaksgam valley with K_2 also created some confusion later, as his longitudes depended upon it: it has since been shown that it was almost certainly Conway's Staircase Peak (Skyang Kangri).

Returning to his escort he moved down the Shaksgam to a tributary coming from the direction of the Muztagh pass. A short distance up this was joined by a large glacier flowing from the west. At the head of this glacier (Crevasse glacier) was a pass which he thought might be the Shimshal. After struggling for six days to make his way up it with a small party, frustrated by the many crevasses, he was obliged to return to the Shaksgam, which he followed down to its junction with the Yarkand at Chong Jangal, where he had arranged to meet a party of Kirghiz with supplies from Shahidulla. After an anxious wait, the party arrived, and he turned back up the Shaksgam to the tributary coming

down from the Shimshal. A short distance up it the road was barred by a stronghold of the Kanjut robbers. By Younghusband's courage and firmness, friendly relations were established with the garrison, and the next day he crossed the pass, the first European to do so, finding it exceptionally easy, and travelling some distance down the Shimshal valley. Having thus achieved one of the main objects of his expedition, he returned to the Yarkand on the way to the Pamirs. A day's march below Chong Jangal, he met the Russian (or rather Polish) traveller, Grombchevski, on his way from the Pamirs to explore the country north of the Muztagh. Younghusband met Grombchevski, whose name is more accurately transliterated from the Polish as Grabczewski, in Yarkand the following year. Thirty-five years later he learnt that this enterprising traveller, whom he regarded as a friend though a rival, had died in Poland from hardships endured during the Russian revolution. Leaving the Yarkand valley, Younghusband crossed the Ilisu pass and entered the more open and wind-swept valleys of the Taghdumbash Pamir. Approaching winter prevented a long stay, though he was able to visit Tashkurgan and ascend the Kunjerab pass; after three weeks he returned to Hunza over the Mintaka pass, interviewing the chief, Safder Ali Khan, at Gulmit, and thence to Kashmir.

The sketch-map, drawn by Younghusband in 1889, showing his routes through the Karakoram on these two journeys, and his interpretation of the topography, is in the Society's collections, with his copy of 'Hints to Travellers' and his diary of the 1889 journey.

In the summer of 1890, Younghusband, accompanied by George Macartney, was sent on a mission to the Pamirs. Crossing once more the dreary Karakoram pass to Yarkand, they travelled westwards to Tashkurgan, the northerly limit of his route the year before, and then through the Little and Great Pamirs as far west as Yashil Kul, the morainic lake at the head of the Alichur Pamir. Retracing their route as far as Chadir Tash, they turned northward up the Ak Baital valley, visiting two lakes, Rang Kul and Kara Kul, the latter the largest lake in the region, and an impressive sight when swept by a violent storm. Continuing north-eastwards by the Kara-art pass and the Kizil Su, he reached Kashgar from the west, where he stayed until July 1891.

He returned by the most direct route to the Pamirs, up the defile of the Gez, where he was obliged by the heavy torrent to make several detours over low but difficult passes, and down to the Little Kara Kul. There he established that the great peak, observed from Kashgar by Trotter, was not identical with the Tagharma peak visible from Tashkurgan (25,800 feet), but was a separate peak of about the same height on the opposite side of the Little Kara Kul. From Tashkurgan he followed his earlier route to the Taghdumbash Pamir, diverging from it to cross the Wakhjir pass and to ascend the Pamir-i-Wakhan to Bozai Gumbaz, where he met Colonel Yonoff and a party of Russian soldiers. Russia at that time claimed that this area lay within her sphere, and in the face of superior force Younghusband was obliged to sign an undertaking to proceed to Chinese territory, and not to return to India by any of a number of named passes. Younghusband accordingly went back over the Wakhjir, and camped for six weeks in the Kukturuk valley, north of the Kilik pass, experiencing snowstorms and very low temperatures throughout September. There he was rejoined by an adventurous traveller, Lieut. Davison, who had also been turned back by the Russians.

They then determined to make their way back to India over passes not included in Yonoff's list: "always an easy matter in those parts, for the mountains there are rarely too difficult for small parties to get over." Turning up a side valley east of the Wakhjir they found and crossed a new pass, 8 miles to

the south. On this detour they passed by a small lake joined by a stream to a glacier at the head of the Ab-i-Wakhan. The foot of this glacier was later visited by Curzon who argued that it was the true source of the Oxus. After Curzon had read his paper to the Society, and Younghusband had recalled his visit, the former replied "He, as well as anybody who has been in those regions, knows that when you track a great river up to the glacier from which it springs, you must be content to regard that as its source, and not ferret out the little streams that feed the glacier."

Arrived back in the Pamir-i-Wakhan, they once more passed through Bozai Gumbaz, seeking for a pass across the main Hindu Kush range not included in the Russian list. By careful questioning Younghusband found that there was such a pass, unknown to Europeans, but very difficult, and obtained some unwilling guides. Two days beyond Bozai Gumbaz, they ascended a side valley and a 7-mile glacier, and crossed the narrow and deep-cut pass in a snow storm and a cutting wind. The night was spent on the edge of a precipitous cliff overlooking the Karumbar valley: the next morning they found a path to the valley below, down which lay an easy route to Gilgit, which they reached on 13 October 1891.

Thus in the four-and-a-half years between March 1886 and October 1891 Captain Younghusband had, by the time he was twenty-eight, completed the three journeys which placed him among the great explorers of Central Asia. His first accounts of these explorations were given to our Society in the *Proceedings* (New Series 10 (1888) 485; 14 (1892) 205), and the Founder's Medal was awarded to him before he returned from the third. It was not advisable to disclose at once all the details of his routes in the Karakoram and Pamirs, and the maps illustrating these early papers do not always correspond closely with the narrative which he published in his famous book of 1896, 'The heart of a continent,' from which the above summary has been made. The work with the same title, published in 1937, omits Chapters I-III and IX-XVI of the earlier book, covering only the Peking to India journey of fifty years before, with an additional chapter on later travellers.

In 1890 Captain Younghusband had been transferred to the Indian Political Department, and soon after his return from the Pamirs became Political Officer in Hunza, and then Political Adviser in Chitral, where in 1893 he made a long journey with the Mehtar along the northern boundary, which is described in the *Journal* for 1895 (5 (1895) 409). Long leave in 1896-97 was spent in the Transvaal and Rhodesia, and his book 'South Africa of to-day,' published in 1898, was a valuable study of South African politics before the Boer War. In 1902 he was Resident in Indore, and in the same year his appointment as British Commissioner to Tibet began for him at thirty-nine the second great period of his life. His distinguished conduct of the Mission to Lhasa is too great a subject for narration in a brief memoir, but three of his officers have contributed their remembrance of him as a leader and a friend. His book 'India and Tibet,' published in 1910, is a masterpiece of historical and political geography. Soon after his return from Lhasa he was appointed Resident in Kashmir, and he retired from the Indian Service in 1909.

In 1919 he was elected to succeed Sir Thomas Holdich as President of the Society and next year became the first Chairman of the Mount Everest Committee, in which responsible and not always easy position his tenacity of purpose and his great knowledge of mountain travel beyond the frontiers of India were equally engaged. The relatively great successes upon the first expedition, of exploration, and the second and third, of climbing higher than has been done before or since, owed much to his enthusiasm and judgment. Mount Everest

was always in his thoughts and on his tongue: once when he meant to say Mount Erebus. In the last ten years of his life he gave most of his time to his Presidency of the World Congress of Faiths: and one may see in the seventeenth chapter of his first book of 1896 that this was no new interest but had been in his thoughts from early manhood. He died after a very brief illness shortly after the last meeting of the Congress.

To this bare outline of a long, full, and distinguished life, three of his officers on the Tibet Mission, Lieut.-Colonel Sir Frederick O'Connor, Colonel C. E. D. Ryder, and Lieut.-Colonel F. M. Bailey, wish to add their tributes to the memory of their chief.

It was in 1903 that I first met Sir Francis (then Major) Younghusband when he arrived in Sikkim as Commissioner of the Tibet Mission, and in my capacity of Secretary and Interpreter to the Mission I was constantly by his side for the next fifteen to sixteen months till, after the signature of the treaty at Lhasa in September 1904, he, with the rest of the Mission and escort, returned to India, leaving me behind as the first British Trade Agent at Gyantse. I thus came to know him very well and was able to some extent to understand his mentality and his attitude towards current events and life in general. He was a perfect chief to work under. His outstanding characteristic was, I think, his imperturbability. He was never fussed or flurried, always courteous and good-tempered, and perfectly precise in his decisions and instructions. He lived very much in a mental atmosphere of his own, and based his policy for the conduct of the Mission on certain principles carefully thought out and uninfluenced by minor considerations and expediencies. Although always ready to listen to suggestions, he never allowed himself to be swayed by any one contrary to his own deliberately formed judgment.

As an illustration of these characteristics I may mention the occasion when he calmly announced to me one morning his intention of riding over, unescorted, from our camp at Tuna to the Headquarters of the Tibetan army a few miles away, with the object of having a heart-to-heart talk with their leaders. He thought that he might be able to induce them, and through them to persuade the Lhasa Government, to take a more reasonable view regarding the purpose of our mission, and so to avert the fighting and bloodshed which now appeared inevitable. It is a matter of history how, accompanied only by myself and a young officer of the Sikh Pioneers, he rode into the hostile camp, conferred for a couple of hours with the Tibetan Generals and Lamas, and rode back again unmolested. But it was touch and go. I know that we were within an ace of being arrested, and I believe it was only his superb aplomb and coolness that saved us. There is no denying that, however good the intention, it was an unduly risky proceeding, and if we had been made prisoners it would have created a most embarrassing situation for our Government. But he had thought it all out carefully, and he acted as his conscience directed from the highest motives.

Similarly at Lhasa, when the rapid conclusion of a treaty became a matter of urgency and time did not allow of references back to our government, he acted on his own judgment, formulated terms (some of which were afterwards disavowed by the British, not by the Tibetan Government, as too severe), presented an ultimatum to the Tibetan Government, and secured the signature of the treaty on the date he had fixed. It was a great achievement and showed immense moral courage and self-confidence. There are not many men who could have done it,

or who, especially in view of our somewhat drastic proceedings both military and diplomatic, could also have left behind so friendly an atmosphere. He may be criticized, and indeed he was severely criticized at the time, but the broad fact remains that he was successful, and in my opinion his success was due to a great extent to his remarkable gifts of character: courage, sincerity, and broad-mindedness, based upon the principles and the philosophy which he had elaborated for himself and which guided him throughout his life.

FREDERICK O'CONNOR.

Frank Younghusband had the quality not only of extracting devotion and the best work possible from his subordinates but also that of loyalty to them and of supporting them through thick and thin. I speak feelingly as on the Lhasa Mission, when I was in charge of the Survey, I was at first definitely under Younghusband and with his permission started to explore and survey the Chumli valley. Here I was met by the General commanding Younghusband's escort and ordered to return. I did so but referred the matter to Younghusband for a decision, under whose orders I was. Naturally, as he was a well-known explorer, I wanted to be under him, and so by higher authority it was decided, with the proviso that "if military considerations predominated" the Survey party was to be under the General. When later on we were attacked at our post outside Gyantse in the very early morning and collected on the roof of the main house, Younghusband said to me with a laugh, "I'm afraid military considerations predominate." And so it was that for the rest of the time I was under the General, but always had the warmest support from Younghusband whenever I wanted to get surveys carried out: especially was this the case with the proposed trip down the Brahmaputra, which was negated by the Viceroy, and with that up the same river, which Rawling and I, supported by Bailey and Wood, so satisfactorily carried out. But, throughout, the mainspring of any enterprise was Younghusband's. He had a most loveable character and we all loved and admired him.

C. H. D. RYDER.

As a very junior officer I owed a great deal to my contact with Younghusband. Several lessons remain prominently in my memory.

First: If you are offered an appointment and *want* it badly, rush at it! The proposed mission to Tibet in the 'eighties of last century was abandoned because the leader went to London and Peking to make arrangements. When Younghusband was ordered to Kampa Dzong in 1903 he came at once to Sikkim, picked up a double company of my regiment, the 32nd Pioneers, who were making roads, and marched them straight up to Kampa Dzong without any fuss or publicity.

Second: His marvellous calmness, patience, and persistence in his difficult negotiations with the Tibetans. I was present at many of his meetings with them. Their arguments were so hollow, full of repetitions, and so easily confuted that one felt inclined to interrupt and tell them to stick to the point and not talk nonsense. Younghusband was perfectly patient through it all, repeated his side of the question with calmness and, as we know, finally wore them down. It must be remembered that he had not *all* the military strength on his side; the Tibetans had that grand ally winter, and in what Younghusband had to do he was restricted by a narrow time limit.

Thirdly: It does not do simply to know the right thing and to do it, but you must also persuade your superiors that you are right. This was not easy with a Foreign Office in Simla cut off from realities in connection with the North-East Frontier—now, in 1942, unexpectedly a locality of such critical

importance. In this connection I may perhaps be allowed to quote from an encouraging private letter written to me many years ago:

"You will, of course, have heaps of heart-breaking disappointments in the future, for the dear old Political Department is a most maddening service, and for years you are treated as if you are a dangerous lunatic whom it would be unsafe to allow at large. But then the wheel comes round again and they suddenly discover that there never was such a splendid fellow as yourself . . . and clean away through increase your efficiency as much as you possibly can. That is where we generally fail. We have heaps of pluck and spirit and all that kind of thing but we often lack—I have felt it myself—what can only be acquired by good hard training and intellectual effort. You have to learn how to fight official battles, not for your personal advancement but for the job you are on whatever it may be. There is a point, of course, when, as a servant of Government, you have to accept their orders and there is an end of the matter. The responsibility for results rests with them and not with you. But, in the Political Department especially, it is the duty of the local officer to get the local views before Government with all the force he can, and I think it is well to learn young how to do this effectively. Lord Cromer is a splendid instance of a man who learned how to manipulate governments for his local purposes. . . . Perhaps we might still have been in the Chumli Valley if I had known better how to handle Government. The first essential is to *know* them, know their way of looking at things, and when you have learned all this you have to learn how to present your case to them in such a way as to ruffle up as few as possible of their prejudices and enlist as many as possible of their sympathies."

My excuse for this long quotation is that I think it reveals the character of this great man and his willingness to help a young man early in his career. I only wish I had paid more attention to this advice which should be drummed into all young officers who aspire to a similar career. Younghusband wrote a good deal more on this subject in Chapter IX of 'The light of experience.' The whole of this chapter should be studied both by every young frontier officer and also by his superiors who have to deal with him and his problems.

Younghusband had the power of extracting the best from his subordinates and inspiring in them respect and admiration to an extraordinary extent. I shall never forget his departure from Lhasa. I was one of a small escort of mounted infantry who accompanied him by double marches to Gyantse: the Treaty in a despatch box on which I was told that I had "better put a special guard." The troops followed us down the road cheering him for half a mile.

F. M. BAILEY.