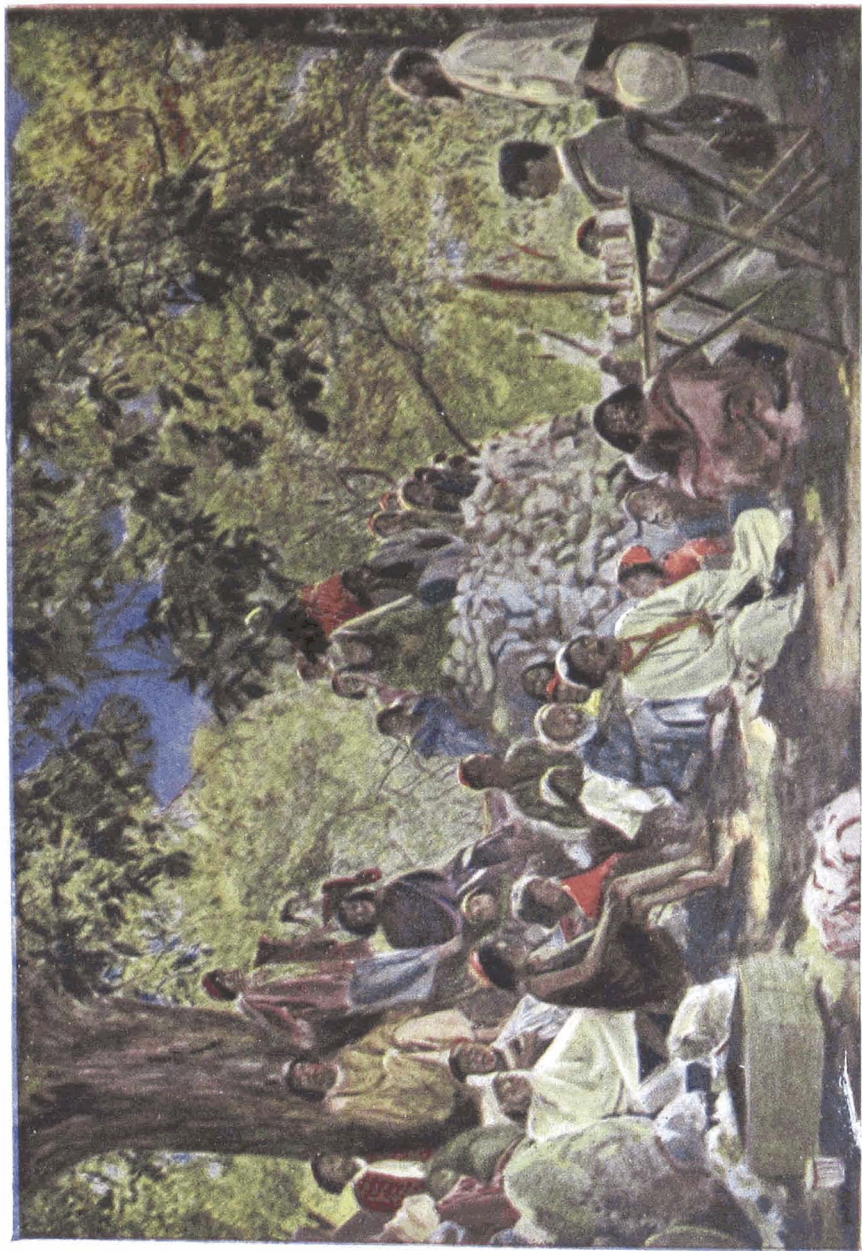


**ARTHUR NEVE
OF KASHMIR**

A. P. SHEPHERD



A Wayside Audience—Dr. A. Neve and Mr. Gustafson in the Shigar Valley

Arthur Neve *of Kashmir*

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CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY
6, SALISBURY SQUARE
LONDON, E.C.4

1926

*Made and Printed in Great Britain by
Wyman & Sons Ltd., London, Reading and Fakenham.*

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FOREWORD

IT is written of an officer in the army of King Charles I that "he served his king with difficult, dangerous, and expensive loyalty." These words aptly describe Arthur Neve of Kashmir and the service which he gave so unsparingly for thirty-eight years in Kashmir and beyond. Endowed with gifts which would have won him fame and distinction at home, he yet chose to devote his life to the service of God and humanity in one of the world's backwaters.

No attempt has been made in these pages to give a complete and detailed account of Dr. Neve's career; but it has seemed well to present in broad outline some pictures of the man at his work in order to show to the men and women of to-day the life of a medical missionary. Dr. Neve's desire was "to make it easier for those who come after." The hospital at Srinagar, where his brother still works, and the hospitals along the North-West Frontier are waiting with eager longing to welcome physicians and surgeons who will build on foundations that were well laid by the great men who have gone before.

C.M.S.,
Salisbury Square,
July, 1926

ARTHUR NEVE OF KASHMIR

CHAPTER I

BOYHOOD

“THE child is father of the man”; and nothing could have been a better preparation for the life of Arthur Neve, adventurous climber of untrodden peaks and fearless soldier of the Cross in a far-flung outpost of the empire of Christ, than his boyhood days. He was born in 1858, and the first twelve years of his life were lived at Brighton. There, he and his brothers and sisters could indulge to the full their love of an out-door life. Bathing, sailing, and fishing brought endless enjoyment, and had their part in cultivating a sense of responsibility, for it was always left to the boys to decide for themselves if the weather was safe for boating or bathing.

The blood of Huguenot and Royalist ancestors was in their veins, and often on winter evenings the children would beg their parents to tell them tales of that heroic past. It was always with a thrill that they listened to the story of the massacre of St. Bartholomew in Paris and the flight of those long-dead Neves to the sheltering shores of England, or of battles bravely fought in England

for King Charles by the grandsons of the French exiles. Nearer still, they learnt how their own grandfather was wounded in India in 1805, when General Lake stormed Bhartpur in the face of tremendous odds. Nor were these the only stories that the children loved. Those were the days when missionary adventurers were thrusting their way into new lands, and Mr. and Mrs. Neve were never weary of telling their children the stories of heroes such as Carey of India, Morrison of China, or Adoniram and Ann Judson of Burma.

To Arthur Neve the stories that meant most were those of Africa, that great, unknown continent, where geographers drew elephants and palm trees instead of the mountains and rivers and lakes which they did not know where to place. When the boy was only six, Livingstone visited England, bringing his challenge to heal "the open sore" of Africa, and from quite early days Arthur had visions of following in the great explorer-missionary's footsteps and giving himself to serve the people of that vast, stricken continent.

When Arthur was twelve years old he went to the Brighton Grammar School. He was fairly successful at games and work, and was popular without being in any way a marked boy in the school. In the same year in which he went to school the family moved to Frankbarrow, at Burgess Hill, a beautiful country house standing in fifty acres of ground. Here, the interests of country life took the place of those of the sea. Whole days were spent in rambles on the Downs, exploring the great horseshoe-shaped chalk-pits, from which they brought home many treasures—

fossils of all kinds, sea-urchins' shells, and sharks' teeth. In these their father taught them to read the story of the long-buried past, knowledge which Arthur and his brother Ernest would use later among the upheaved masses of the Himalaya mountains.

School-days ended for Arthur when he was fifteen. He then went for six months with a school friend to Orbe in Switzerland. The main object of his visit was to learn French, and apart from a few hours a week given to attending lectures at the local college, the boys spent most of their time in exploring the surrounding country. It was an ideal spot for this purpose. The town of Orbe itself stands on high ground above the river of the same name, which nearly encircles it. Five miles to the west rise the Jura Mountains, while the same distance to the south the Orbe empties itself into Lake Neuchatel. Farther to the south and east rise the snowy peaks of the Swiss Alps.

Arthur was now a tall, lanky boy with a quiet, reserved expression, except when his blue eyes flashed with interest at some story or proposed adventure, lighting up the quiet of his pale face. But his early training in independence had now borne fruit, and in everything he was the leader. Bathing and cliff climbing were possible at Orbe, and longer expeditions to the Jura provided opportunities for more adventurous scrambles, and gave Arthur his first thrill of the mountains.

All too swiftly the happy summer days passed by, and soon it was time for him to return to

England, and to start his course at the Medical Mission School at Edinburgh. He had now fully made up his mind to spend his life in the great quest of the Kingdom of God and, if possible, to follow Livingstone to Africa.

Happy as had been his childhood and school-days, the crowded, busy years at Edinburgh were happier still. The work was hard but intensely interesting, the lecturers were men of wide distinction and reputation, and a whole new world of knowledge and experience opened before him—knowledge in which he soon won distinction. Then there was the comradeship of many delightful friends, for at Edinburgh at that time were men who have since become famous as leaders of medical mission work. There were the games together, the rowing on the Union Canal and, perhaps best of all, the rambles over the Pentland Hills, and reading parties in the Highlands during the vacation.

Each student was responsible for the medical care of his own district in the Cowgate, a poor part of Edinburgh. There, Arthur Neve came to realize the appealing power of the loving healing of the body. On Sundays there were services taken by the students in the Magdalene Chapel or in the open air. Although the students were popular enough among the rough inhabitants of the Cowgate, it was not easy to get the men to attend the services. But Neve and his friends did not despair, and often there were amusing incidents in their attempts to get their week-day acquaintances to church.

“Me come to church!” exclaimed a well-

known lodging-house keeper one Sunday evening. "You'd have to carry me then!"

"Right you are!" replied Duncan Main, and without more ado he offered a fairly broad back to the challenger. Laughingly, the latter allowed himself to be picked up, and helped by Neve and the other students, and followed by a laughing and ever-growing crowd of inhabitants, Duncan Main carried him downstairs, across the Grassmarket, and up the Cowgate to the Magdalene Chapel. There was a good congregation that night!

When Arthur Neve was in his second year at Edinburgh an event occurred which fired yet further his imagination and his longing to serve Africa. In November, 1875, a dispatch had been published from Stanley, the great explorer, telling how in the heart of Africa he had met Mtesa, king of the powerful Baganda, and issuing a challenge to the people of England to send men to Uganda to teach the Baganda to become Christians.

Five months later the challenge was taken up, and eight men started out to take the Gospel of Jesus Christ to Uganda. One of them was a young engineer, Alexander Mackay, who was to become one of the greatest of all missionary heroes,¹ and the leader was Shergold Smith, a lieutenant of the British Navy, who had retired from the service because of the loss of an eye in the fever-haunted jungles of West Africa. Ere long came the news that fever and the spears of hostile natives had claimed half of the eight; but

¹ See "Mackay of the Great Lake," by C. E. Padwick.

Arthur Neve remembered the courageous words of Mackay before he sailed : “ I want to remind you,” he had said, “ that within six months you will probably hear that one of us is dead. When that news comes, do not be cast down, but send some one else immediately to fill the vacant place.” When Neve heard that the gallant Shergold Smith himself, after leading his much reduced party to the Great Lake in the heart of Africa, had been killed in a native brawl, his heart burned to be one of those sent to fill the gaps.

Meanwhile, he had to prepare himself, and if he had not been particularly distinguished at school, in his medical career he carried off many of the prizes and medals. For a short time he was house-physician in the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh, and then he was appointed resident medical officer at the Cowgate Dispensary, where he had served his apprenticeship as a student. It was a position of great responsibility, and a splendid preparation for the life of a medical missionary, with its daily unaided responsibilities of life and death.

In 1881 the call came—but not from Africa ! He was asked to go thousands of miles from Africa, to Srinagar, the City of the Sun, set in the lovely valley of Kashmir in the north of India. At first it was a disappointment, for his heart had been set on Africa ; but when he turned to look at the quest to which he was called, he found it was one which would need all the powers of body, mind, and character that he could bring to it.

CHAPTER II

THE SPOIL OF CONQUERORS

IN the extreme north of India the Himalaya Mountains rise from the great plain of the Punjab, not in one single sweep but range behind range, each higher than the last, till they reach the Karakorams, and north-eastwards the snow-bound table-land of Tibet, 17,000 feet above sea-level, literally "the roof of the world." Between these mountain ranges lie great valleys down which flow the mighty rivers that water the plains of India, the Indus, the Jhelum, the Sutlej, and the Ganges. They are fed by the melting of the mountain snows and by countless glacier streams, and pass through many a deep precipitous gorge before they flow, full-bosomed and life-giving, through the densely populated plains.

First of the great cross valleys that intersect the mountain ranges, divided from the plain of the Punjab by the Pir Panjal range, lies the Vale of Kashmir—one of the most beautiful spots in all the world. It forms an oval basin, eighty miles long by twenty miles broad, stretching from south-east to north-west, and circled by snow-capped peaks. The Jhelum flows a winding course right through the valley, taking its rise at the south-east, and then, swollen by the waters of tributary streams, forcing its way out at the other end through a deep-cut gorge.

The soil of the valley is richly fertile, and its climate varies from the tropical heat of the river banks to the cool upland meadows—or *margs*, as they are called—fringed with deep forests and carpeted with lovely flowers. After the intense, unchanging heat of the great plain, the cool beauty of this mountain valley can hardly be imagined.

Is it any wonder that the beautiful Vale of Kashmir has for centuries been the spoil of conquerors, the first prize of the fierce invaders from the north, the garden of pleasure and delight for the mighty monarchs of the sweltering Indian plains? From the old chronicles it appears that there was a line of Kashmir kings going back to 3000 B.C. Of these early days nothing remains but dim legends. From about 250 B.C. to 500 A.D., the country was governed by Buddhist kings. In the valleys and on the mountain tops were monasteries, with troops of yellow robed monks, and on every hill-side spun the prayer wheels or fluttered the rags inscribed with the mystic Buddhist prayers. But by the sixth century A.D. the religion of Buddha was moving eastwards from India to Tibet and China, and the people of Kashmir once more worshipped the Hindu gods and goddesses. Only on the barren mountains bordering Tibet did the yellow-robed monks still hold their own.

For eight hundred years Kashmir was ruled by Hindu kings, some of whom built the vast temples of Martand and Avantipur. The temples are deserted, no priests or worshippers tread their abandoned courts, but still they stand, majestic

in their ruin, their massive pillars and beautifully proportioned arches a witness to the power and civilization of those forgotten kings.

In 1306 disaster fell on Kashmir. Through the mountain passes poured the Tartar hordes, fierce men with high cheek bones and black, slanting eyes. Srinagar was sacked and burnt, its people slain or captive. But the Tartar victory was short lived. Famine, the avenger of plunder, forced the Tartar conqueror Zulzu to retreat, and on the heels of famine came winter. High up, on a snow-bound pass, he perished with all his warriors and his captives.

But the subjection of Kashmir had begun. For four and a half centuries it passed into the power of Mohammedan kings, who threw down the old Hindu temples and fiercely persecuted their Hindu subjects. Almost all the lower classes were forced to become Moslems. At first these kings were Sultans of Kashmir, but about 1600 A.D. the country was seized by the emperors of the great Moghul dynasty of India, and Kashmir became one of their provinces under a governor. To the emperors, Kashmir was a pleasure land of delights where they built summer palaces in the midst of lovely gardens. Many of these gardens are there to-day. Marble-basined tanks feed the silvery streams that flow through cool groves, or past velvet lawns, while there are parks, timbered with stately chenab trees, and giving lovely vistas across the sun-bathed valley to the blue snow-capped peaks beyond.

As the Moghul empire waned in power, so the

people of Kashmir became more and more the prey of unscrupulous governors. Then in 1752, through the western passes poured the fierce warriors of Afghanistan and wrested the land from the dominion of the tottering empire. These were the darkest days of Kashmir history. Hindus were persecuted and massacred with utter ferocity, until finally in 1819 the people made an appeal to the rising power of the Lion of the Punjab, the Sikh monarch Ranjit Singh, and by force of arms Kashmir passed under Sikh rule.

It was now the turn of the Moslems to suffer, for though the Sikh is neither Moslem nor Hindu, the former is his more implacable foe. Men and women whose ancestors had been driven into Mohammedanism, were now in turn persecuted for the once enforced faith.

At last in 1846, after their defeat by the British, the Sikhs ceded Kashmir to the conquerors who in turn handed it over to the Dogra rulers of Jammu, on the southern slopes of the Pir Panjal mountains, thus securing their allegiance. The rulers of Jammu were a family of able men, once the dependents of the Sikh monarch, but they had cleverly escaped from his downfall, and made their position good at his expense. They were Hindus by faith, but from the commencement of their rule in Kashmir a British representative was present at the Court and prevented anything like religious persecution. Since then there has been in Kashmir a reign of comparative prosperity. The Maharajah has a State Council consisting of ministers for the chief public departments.

British officers, lent by the Government of India, act as advisers, with executive power, to these ministers. Thus Srinagar is never without its resident British community. It is no wonder, however, that the people have been found lacking in courage and ambition and strength of character. For centuries they have been plundered by adventurers, oppressed by underlings without hope of redress, persecuted relentlessly by successive dynasties, now for one faith, now for another. Even better times did not avail to arouse them from their weakness and lack of energy.

It was in this region, so lovely in its natural surroundings, so hopeless in the character of its people, that in 1863 was begun one of the greatest of adventures for the Kingdom of God.

On the banks of the Jhelum, midway in its course through the valley stands Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir. "The Venice of the East" it is called, its houses crowding along both banks of the river, which is spanned by seven bridges. Its population of 126,000 is densely packed in courts and alleys on either side of the river and its canals.

In 1863 there came to this city a clergyman, the Rev. Robert Clark, and his wife, who took a house and settled down. It was soon known that they had come to preach the faith of the Christians. Already they had received permission for their work from the Maharajah of Jammu, who said: "My subjects in Kashmir are very bad. I am sure that no one can do them any harm. I am rather curious to see whether the padre sahibs can do them any good."

But if the Maharajah was not unfriendly to their work, it was very different with the Governor of Srinagar and the local authorities, and it was soon obvious that the friendliness of the Maharajah, far away over the mountains in Jammu, was of little avail against the hostility of the Governor on the spot. Mr. Clark's house was surrounded by a howling mob who threatened to burn it down, and the police made no attempt to interfere. Sentries were stationed on all the approaches to the house, to prevent inquirers from going there, while those who went were threatened and persecuted. At that time no European was allowed to stay in Kashmir for the winter, but for two summers Mr. Clark persisted in his work, the whole time in the face of bitter opposition.

In 1865 Dr. Elmslie, the first medical missionary ever appointed by the C.M.S., took Mr. Clark's place. The persecution still continued, but a change began to creep in. In his first summer over 2000 patients came to see the doctor. There was an argument in the work of healing which appealed to everybody. But when Elmslie arrived again the next year he found that the authorities had forbidden any one to let him a house. Nothing daunted, he had two wooden huts erected and made shift with a tent for a hospital. With a break of two years from 1869, Dr. Elmslie worked till his death in 1872, and each year saw his untiring labour of love gradually breaking down the hostility.

In 1874 he was succeeded by Dr. Theodore Maxwell. Now it happened that Dr. Maxwell

was the nephew of the famous John Nicholson, a name to conjure with in North-West India. Instantly all state opposition was withdrawn. The Maharajah granted a site and erected a small building on the Rustum Gaddi hill to the north of the city. But after only two years' work Dr. Maxwell's health broke down and he had to leave India.

In 1887 his place was taken by Dr. Downes, who had resigned his commission in the Royal Artillery for this purpose. Dr. Downes was a brilliant surgeon, and the reputation of the mission increased very much during the six years in which he was there. For the first three years of his work, 1877-79, Kashmir was visited by a terrible famine. People were reduced to eating chaff, the bark of trees, grasses, and roots, and thousands died, their bodies lying about the streets or piled in heaps, the prey of starving dogs. Pestilence came on the heels of famine. The authorities were inefficient and corrupt, and the burden of relief fell on the shoulders of Dr. Downes and his fellow missionary, the Rev. T. R. Wade. There were thousands who never forgot what they owed at this time to the Kashmir Medical Mission, but it was at the price of Dr. Downes's health. The work itself had grown beyond the power of one man to cope with it, and for a failing man it was quite impossible.

So it was that in 1881 the C.M.S. asked Arthur Neve to give his life to this great venture for God in Kashmir.

CHAPTER III

ON THE ROAD TO SRINAGAR

ON the way at last! Arthur Neve's heart beat with eager anticipation one bright morning in February, 1882, as his pony climbed the first low foothills rising from the Indian plain towards the goal of his ambition, the mountain-locked valley of Kashmir. It was some months since he had landed in India, but the road to Kashmir was impassable in winter, and he had spent his time in the great city of Amritsar, in the Punjab plain, learning something about the ways of medical mission work, and studying the language and the people of the land in which he was to spend his life. Although he found his time full of work and interest, he would often gaze across the great treeless plain, to where on the northern horizon could be seen a low line of snowy peaks, beyond which lay his quest.

One day a letter came to him from Dr. Downes in Srinagar, saying with what eagerness he was looking forward to the arrival of his young colleague, and how he himself was almost incapacitated through ill-health. Neve determined to wait no longer. Few travellers would have cared to cross the mountains before March, and even the *tonga* (mail-cart) was not yet running on the good road that led up to Murree, the station on the summit of the first range of

hills. But Neve was young, and the sickness of his colleague was all the excuse he needed. He started off at once on his horse, leaving his luggage to follow on ponies.

After the monotonous heat of the plain it was refreshing to ride through the woods and gardens of the hills already in their spring-time beauty, but as the road climbed higher, spring gave way to winter, till, when he reached Murree, he found its houses half buried in drifted snow. From Murree the road dropped steeply down to the Jhelum River, which divides those mountains from the great Pir Panjal range to the east, and in two days Neve passed from a snow-buried village to tropical heat, with banana trees and date palms growing by the river.

From this point the road continued, first north and then east, along the valley of the Jhelum for more than a hundred miles to Kashmir. It was a wild and difficult journey, for the engineered road that now runs from Murree to Kashmir was then scarcely begun, and the only way was along the native paths, that wandered up and down with an utter indifference to the comfort or speed of the traveller. Sometimes Neve would find himself high up on a hill-side, looking down over the serried ranks of pine tops beneath to the blue mists that hid the valley, then suddenly and steeply the path would drop, through the pines, through the forests of oak beneath them, down to the river, then across the river by a ford or a shaky native suspension bridge, climbing again on the other side. Sometimes the path skirted a precipitous cliff, with the river foaming at its

base, sometimes it dropped to some side valley and climbed again, so that many hours' march seemed to bring the anxious traveller but little on his way. It was necessary, too, to accommodate his horse's speed to the slower rate of the baggage ponies, and often he would rest at some lovely spot to wait for them, and would spend his time in his favourite recreation of sketching.

As he gazed across the valley he often contrasted his surroundings with the slums of Edinburgh, where he had worked only a year before, and a thrill passed through him at the freedom and adventure and responsibility of his present position, at the head of his own caravan, on a two hundred mile journey through wild and beautiful country. It was after one of these rests that an opportunity occurred of testing his powers of leadership. He had stopped to sketch some beautiful view and had allowed the baggage ponies to pass ahead. When presently he rode after them, he came on them halted in a bunch beyond a narrow broken piece of path. One of the ponies was standing with flapping girths and broken pack, while the porters were scrambling down the cliff-side, rescuing books, clothes, and eatables, some of which could already be seen bobbing down-stream on the waters of the river.

It was not an unusual occurrence for a pack to give way when a pony slipped and scrambled, but on this occasion an oil tin—a precious commodity—had been damaged, and a halt was called while a tinsmith was fetched from the last village to do the repair. Delay is part of the life of the East, and the porters settled down to

wait very readily, while Neve strolled on ahead to catch up those who had been too far in front to be stopped by the mishap. Suddenly he halted. In the glade in front of him, a baggage pony was standing, with the baggage trunks open on the ground beside it. What could it mean? Had the porters been attacked and robbed in open daylight? Just at that moment two men emerged from the trees each carrying in his arms a bundle of clothing, which they proceeded to stuff into the empty boxes. Instantly Neve stepped out of sight behind a tree-trunk, and by the help of his field-glasses confirmed his suspicion that the marauders were two of his own porters.

For the moment he did not betray his discovery, but that night at the rest-house he searched his trunks. Evidently the porters had been disappointed with their contents, for all that was missing was a turquoise scarf-pin. Immediately, however, an impromptu court was set. Neve was the judge, while his own old native servant, who had gone in search of the tinsmith, and had since been informed of the whole occurrence, was the prosecutor. He denounced the porters' wickedness and ingratitude, while the accused in injured tones protested their innocence. The sahib's box had fallen off the pony and burst open, and they had repacked its contents. But they had taken nothing! Their protestations were of no avail in deterring the judge from passing sentence. They should not be prosecuted as they deserved, and if the pin were restored they should be forgiven. But if not, its value would

be deducted from their wages, and they should receive no baksheesh at the journey's end.

The pin was not forthcoming, and when, a few days later they left, the sentence was duly carried out, in spite of renewed declarations of innocence. But the sahib, beardless as he was, had proved himself a man who could detect the most carefully-planned misdemeanours and who was swift to punish them! In his servants' eyes he had made good!

The journey, too, was not without its dangers. The risk of robbers was very slight, and though panthers were plentiful and dangerous to solitary travellers, they would hardly attack so large a party. But on the ill-kept native tracks there was always danger of a fall. One day the way led by a narrow path skirting a precipice. At one place, the rains had washed part of the path away. As Neve was crossing it his horse's hind legs slipped and the broken edge of the path crumbled beneath them. There was a clatter of falling earth and stones and wildly scrambling hoofs. Neve caught a glimpse of the rocks three hundred feet below, and was on the point of attempting to throw himself clear as the horse fell, when, with a final scramble, his steed regained his footing, sweating and trembling.

The final rest-house was at Uri, high up above the Jhelum. A heavy fall of snow made it impossible for them to continue the journey next day, and there was nothing for it but to sit wrapped in a fur coat in the tumble-down rest-house, leaving the door and windows open to get rid of the clouds of smoke which never seemed able to

escape through the chimneys, and even drove the travellers to crouch on the floor to avoid its eye-smarting attacks. To be held up at the end of his long march was very irksome to Neve, but he whiled away the time listening to his old servant's tales of former masters, and of battles and hunting expeditions of past days.

The next day the weather was still too bad for most of the waiting travellers, but Neve would delay no longer and with his porters made tracks through the knee-deep snow, keeping a keen look-out for avalanches from the mountain slopes above. That day they were to reach Baramula, the westernmost town of the Kashmir Valley, and for the last few miles the road climbed the hills behind the town.

Neve rode on ahead, when suddenly he stopped with an exclamation. At a burst the whole view of the valley opened before him. At his feet, calm and still in the late afternoon sunlight, lay the broad waters of the Wular Lake, through which the Jhelum passes. To the north on his left rose a mighty, precipitous-sided mountain, so near that it seemed to rise from the water's edge. Its valleys and gorges showed like deep purple gashes against its snow-streaked sides, while the gleaming peak flushed pink in the westerling sunlight. Around the lake the valley sparkled in emerald and golden-brown, except where the mountains threw long blue shadows across the plain. Away in the distance the view faded into a soft blue that enveloped everything, so that it would have been hard to discern the distant mountains, except for the flashing of their

snowy peaks. Above the mountain-tops were piled huge pyramids of cloud, and in the surface of the lake was mirrored all the flame and pink of their billowy sides.

For a long time Neve stood entranced by the scene. Its beauty held him, but not its beauty only. This was the land of his life's quest.

Soon, however, the baggage ponies arrived, and as the February afternoon was closing in there was no more time to linger. Quickly they dropped down the slopes, and before long the red wood houses of Baramula with their grass-grown roofs appeared, all huddled along the river bank. This was the end of the long march, the porters were to be paid off and the rest of the journey to Srinagar would be by water.

CHAPTER IV

THE CITY OF THE SUN

THAT night Neve slept at the *dak* (post) bungalow, but he was up at dawn to continue his journey. The bungalow was on the river bank and a number of boats were moored before it ready to take passengers up the river. Already the previous evening Jamal Ju, the old servant, had bargained with the clamouring boatmen, and when Neve arrived a *doonga* was lying ready for him, his baggage packed upon it. It was not a speedy-looking craft, but roomy and comfortable, in appearance like a long, flat-bottomed ferry-boat. Except for the bows and stern the whole length of the boat was occupied by a sort of cabin, about eighteen feet long and six feet wide, its sides composed of reed matting which could be rolled up at will. As Neve stepped on board he felt that the last days of his journey would be easy and peaceful, compared to his fortnight's ride up the Jhelum valley.

His arrival was the signal for immediate departure, and as soon as they were clear of the *mêlée* of boats moored to the bank, two stalwart boatmen stepped ashore and proceeded to tow the boat. This is the usual method of progression up-stream in Kashmir; down-stream the current does all the work. After a few miles the river broadened out into the Wular Lake, a wide

expanse of water covering most of the west end of the valley. There the boatmen came aboard again and with paddles began slowly to row across. Neve sat in the bows enjoying the scene, the calm peace of the waters barely ruffled by the wind, the almost imperceptible motion of the boat, the silence unbroken except for the occasional splash of the steersman's paddle, or a word spoken by Jamal Ju engaged in the stern in the preparation of breakfast. On the left towered the sheer precipices of Mount Haramukh, its valleys still deep in mysterious shade, and where the lake-side hills fell to the waters, tiny shut-in coves and verdant camping places could be discerned. On the right the unbroken line of the Pir Panjal range stretched for fifty miles and more, the lower half a dark belt of forest, making a sharp contrast against the higher gleaming line of snowy peaks. Before him lay the valley, a shimmering haze in the morning light.

Soon the boat was once more entering the river channel, no longer green, as at Baramula, but coffee-coloured with the silt which would be filtered from it in its passage through the lake. Now the towing recommenced, and all day long the boat slid between curving banks, following the windings of the river through the broad plain. Early as it was, the brown of the fields was here and there relieved by masses of yellow mustard and clumps of purple iris, while now and then could be seen the grass-covered roof of a village peeping through its sheltering plane trees. That night the travellers encamped moored to the bank and resumed their journey next day. Long

before they reached Srinagar, Neve caught the gleam of its temple roofs across the plain, and soon it became apparent from the number of craft on the river that they were approaching a town. Light passenger boats, on business or pleasure bent, went skimming by, barges piled high with grain or wood or other produce, small punt-shaped boats, paddled by market women sitting in the bows, who having sold their country produce in the town were now returning home, their babies sprawling or sleeping in the boat behind them, while they exchanged with one another the latest gossip.

Suddenly at a bend of the river, Srinagar, the City of the Sun ! Neve sat in the front of the boat, eagerly scanning the view before him. On either side of the river the houses clustered thickly, but yet there were trees and gardens among them. Through and beyond a bridge he could catch a glimpse of other bridges linking the two halves of the town. Up and down the river a large number of craft were plying. As the boat drew closer, he saw that the bridge consisted of piles of cedar logs laid crosswise so that each layer projected over that beneath it, till finally, they were joined with stout beams and the bridge laid upon it all. With the curiosity and leisure of the East a crowd hung over to watch the arrival of the stranger. He could not help contrasting this with the reception given to Robert Clark less than twenty years before, when hundreds shouted and jeered at him from the bridges and then, later, threatened to mob and burn his house !

As the boat moved through the city, Neve's eyes turned this way and that with unceasing interest. The quaint wooden houses crowded in irregular lines to the water's edge, the rich red tones of their carved cedar gables reflected in the water. The upper storeys often overhung, sometimes at a seemingly dangerous angle, propped up on wooden pillars. At intervals there were *ghats*, or landing places, where there always seemed to be life and bustle. Here a number of women were washing clothes, some of them beating the clothes against a stone, others treading them out with their feet in a long wooden trough. Here they were filling their water pots or scouring their vessels, the bright red and green of the Hindu women's clothes making a splash of colour against the dirty grey of the clothes of the Moslem women. Often a violent quarrel was in progress and the shrill, angry voices rang across the water.

Everywhere there were boats. Boats of all kinds were moored to the banks, and a constant succession of boats passed to and fro in mid-stream, skiffs and barges, doongas beneath whose awnings could be seen whole families, and most crowded of all, packed to the gunwale, passenger boats plying between the bridges. Here and there a canal branched off the river and there, too, was life and bustle. It was the Venice of the East!

Presently the boat drew in to a landing-place and Neve stepped ashore to meet a thick-set, bearded man, with clear eyes and an upright bearing, who introduced himself as Dr. Downes.

Neve clasped his hand warmly and looked with interest and admiration at this man, who accompanied only by natives, had defied the dangers from the fierce hillmen of Afghanistan and the decrees of the British Government, in a bold endeavour to carry the Gospel into the wild country of Kafiristan; the man whose strength and skill and courage had fought for three years against the horrors and suffering of famine in Kashmir, and had done much to break down in the heart of the people the suspicion and hatred that they had once felt for the mission hospital.

Leaving the servants to follow with the luggage the two men turned and walked through the town. The main streets lay parallel to the river, and along one of these Dr. Downes led the way. The street was full of people, many of whom looked with curiosity at the strange European. There were not enough Europeans then in Srinagar for a stranger to escape notice. Neve returned their looks with equal curiosity. Among the bewildering medley of people around him, the most numerous were the Kashmiri natives, short, spare men, in dirty grey or red skull caps which almost seemed to form part of their sallow, close-cropped heads. The rest of their dress was a loose gown, or *pheran* and, as it was still cold, a woollen shawl over one shoulder. These men, like nearly the whole population of Kashmir, were Moslems, but in Srinagar itself were a large number of Hindus, who could be distinguished by their turbans, the caste-mark on their foreheads, and their more intelligent and alert expression.

On either side of the road were deep gutters, immediately above which were the open shop fronts, from which the shopkeepers displayed their wares, or bargained with a likely purchaser. Often shops of one trade were grouped together ; here a row of grain shops, with baskets of wheat, maize, rice, lentils and walnuts ; here the potters' stalls, stacked with bright red pottery of all shapes and sizes ; there a row of shops with gleaming brass pots and pans. A little farther on were the bakers' shops with their piles of flat, round, wheaten cakes ; then the leather shops, selling shoes and saddlery, bridles and whips ; then sweet shops with pans of boiling syrup ; then piles of calico, white for the Moslem women or bright colours to attract their Hindu sisters. Once above the din of the chattering, ceaseless crowd, Neve could hear the clang of the coppersmith's hammer as he made his pots and kettles. Occasionally a horseman or even a drove of ponies might push their way with loud cries through the crowd, but there was no wheeled traffic.

Presently the crowded part of the city was left behind, and the two men began to climb the grassy spur of a hill whose summit could be seen crowned with a ruined temple. In a few minutes a bend in the road showed a low, unpretentious-looking building on the hill-side.

" Here we are ! " exclaimed Dr. Downes. As Neve entered the hospital ground the short afternoon was drawing to a close. He looked with interest at the buildings, very unlike the hospitals in Edinburgh, but his mind was not on

these things at the moment. He had reached his quest! Half-way across the world it had led him—and now he was there!

“Come on,” said Downes, “you are tired. We will go straight down to the house to tea. To-morrow will be soon enough to look round.”

They passed through the hospital compound and down again to the doctor's house on the river bank. It was to be Neve's home for thirty-seven years.

CHAPTER V

THE HOSPITAL

NEVE was up the next morning as early as a boy on the first day of his holidays. It was a lovely morning, frosty, but with the breath of spring in the air. Immediately after breakfast Dr. Downes took him up to the hospital. When they reached the compound Neve turned and looked out over a wonderful view. Below him to his left were the gabled roofs of the city, picturesquely huddled together, with here and there a gleam from a temple pinnacle. Between waving poplar trees he caught the flash of the river where it flowed towards the distant blue hills. Immediately in front of him to the north lay the Dal Lake, a wide stretch of water, from which a network of canals led to the city and river. Round the lake, enclosing it like an amphitheatre, rose a wall of mountains whose steep sides dropped to the water's edge. Countless floating gardens broke the expanse of the lake, while many a village peeped through its sheltering trees along the shores.

Although it was early, there was life and movement in the hospital. Sweepers and servants were going to and fro through the doors, and already some patients were sitting outside in the sunshine.

“ Not much like English hospitals ! ” Downes

said with a smile, as they approached the buildings. Nor were they! They were arranged on three sides of a square and were built of lath and plaster, with grass-covered mud roofs. The buildings were insufficient for the hospital's needs, and Dr. Downes laughingly pointed out the "extra ward," a barn with walls only four feet high, between which and the roof a space of two feet was open to wind and weather.

But when Neve entered the hospital, the contrast with English cleanliness and efficiency was even more apparent. There were indeed a few *charpoy*s or string bedsteads, but the majority of patients lay on mats on the mud floor, clad in their own dirty clothes. Beside each patient two or three people squatted on their heels in eastern fashion.

"They are their relatives," Downes replied in answer to an inquiring look. "The Kashmiris will never entrust their sick folk to us, but they stay with them for weeks, sometimes a whole family of them. It is all very dirty and insanitary, but we get a chance of influencing them as well as the patients. Besides, they help with the nursing. Our attendants are quite untrained and not reliable."

There was very little ventilation in the wards except when the doors were opened, and the smell of unwashed and diseased humanity was almost overpowering. The first thought that struck Neve was the apparent hopelessness of it all, but the calm courage of the man with him, who had faced this—and worse—through years of famine, soon infected him, and as they moved

from bed to bed, discussing together the cases that lay before them, all the new-comer's professional ability rose to meet the challenge of the situation.

Here were cases and operations that in England would tax the skill of leading doctors, that would demand the most careful nursing, utter cleanliness, and every precaution against septic poisoning. And these cases they alone must deal with, in insanitary, unequipped buildings, for patients whose religious prejudices made cleanliness almost impossible, with no help in nursing except what could be obtained from ignorant native attendants, whose hearts were moved by no Christian impulse and upon whose natural stupidity all the doctor's training could make but little impression. Difficulties were forgotten in the challenge of the enterprise !

They had barely finished their round of the wards when the midday bell sounded and they passed out of the building towards another, round the door of which a large crowd of natives was already pressing.

" Motley lot, aren't they ? " exclaimed Dr. Downes. " You would hardly believe the extent of country these people represent. Of course most are Kashmiris, but there, do you see those two ruddy-faced fellows with long padded coats ? They come from Yarkand in Central Asia. And that yellow-skinned old man with high cheekbones is probably from a Buddhist monastery in little Tibet."

The appearance and costumes of most of them were strange to Neve, but with some he was

already familiar. There was an old man, almost naked in spite of the cold, his body smeared with ashes. He knew that he was a Hindu fakir and had come up from the plains. Then he soon recognized some fierce-looking, bearded men to be Afghans. He had seen such at Amritsar.

“Where does that fellow come from?” he asked, pointing to a tall, pale man in a dark blue robe, with a strange, melancholy look in his eyes.

“He’s a Gujar,” Downes replied. “They are herdsmen and come from the southern slopes of the Pir Panjal to the uplands here for the summer. We get many of them with bear-mauls or other accidents occurring in the forests.”

The crowd was now beginning to pass through the doorway into the other building and the two doctors followed them. All squatted patiently on their heels while a short service took place, and then an address was given in Urdu. Only a few of those present could understand this language, and there was a look of indifference and blank ignorance on most of the faces. After the service the doctors saw to their wants. Here was a swollen limb, broken weeks before and badly attended to in native fashion; here a festering sore, rendered all the worse by the filthy rags that were bound round it. Here an old man lifted his eyes to the doctor, piteously asking again for his sight.

“You shall see again,” the doctor promised, “but your eyes must grow yet darker before light comes. When they are quite dark, you must come to the hospital and you shall see again.” The old man shook his head. Strange

men, these sahibs, and strange ways that could only give light to eyes completely dark. Yet he would come again, if by that he should see once more.

Here, a little child was brought by its parents; there a leper, terribly disfigured, huddled in his rags. One after the other the doctors attended to them, with kind smiles and gentle words removing their fears of the *feringi* (foreigner) and his strange ways. Some of them, however, were old patients come to have wounds redressed or medicine replenished, and on many lips were words of gratitude and wonder for what had been done for them.

It was dark before the needs of all had been met. "You see what it is," Downes said that night as they sat by a crackling pinewood fire. "The hospital is like a fire in the darkness. Sparks are lit from it and carried—who knows where? North, south, east, and west they go—ten, fifty, hundreds of miles. The patients understand little of what we say, but they all understand what we are trying to do. And the sparks that are carried—some of them burst into a tiny flame. It's worth while to keep the fire burning!"

One day followed another, and to Neve they were all so full of work and interest that he hardly noticed how they were passing. Soon, too, his youthful energy and enthusiasm began to make themselves felt. The wonderful discoveries by Dr. Lister of the means of aseptic surgery, which are the foundation of the wonders of medical achievements to-day, had only lately

been introduced into England and had not as yet reached India. But Neve had brought out with him a carbolic steam-spray, at that time the latest thing in antiseptics, and by its help a tremendous advance was made in the success of operations. Its smells and hissings even began to impress the native assistants with the need of cleanliness !

A couple of months after Neve's arrival, an event of real importance to the hospital occurred. There came from the Punjab Dr. B. K. Thomas, an Indian Christian surgeon. Dr. Neve had met him in Amritsar, and, realizing what an asset he would be to the hospital at Srinagar, had arranged for him to join the staff. With him were his brother and their families, all Christians, who were prepared to help in the nursing, and proved a great advance on the only local assistants available.

The buildings, too, came in for the general improvement. Walls were limewashed, some mud floors were concreted, and glass windows began to replace the old wooden shutters. The authorities were outwardly friendly, inviting the new doctor to lengthy receptions, where much time had to be spent in the deliberate conversation and tea-drinking of the East. But even so there were petty annoyances.

"Do you see that dark-bearded man ?" said Downes one day, as the out-patients were assembling. "He is a police spy."

He was there on many occasions, but the doctors betrayed no knowledge of his identity. One day, however, the carpenter, who had

omitted to obtain official permission before doing some slight repairs to the hospital, announced that his father had been imprisoned on some trivial charge. These pin-pricks were nothing in comparison with the persecutions of early days, and as the summer advanced the work increased.

Dr. Downes suggested one day that as he would soon be leaving Kashmir and it might be difficult for Neve to get away, the latter should take the opportunity of seeing something of the surrounding country. Accordingly when June came he crossed the ranges to the great Indus Valley in the north.

It was a remote land of mighty mountains and strange peoples, and Neve longed to be able to take his skill and love to those far-off dwellers on the fringes of civilization. But when he got back to Srinagar it was to find that Dr. Downes's health had completely given way, and that he would have to say good-bye to Kashmir in the autumn, leaving Neve the only European to carry on the work which had sapped the health and strength of three great men before him.

CHAPTER VI

THE DOCTOR ON HIS ROUNDS

THE first two or three years were marked by no great event. Conditions were no longer what they had been in the days of Dr. Elmslie, and each month saw some little improvement in the hospital structure and equipment. But though the service of Dr. Downes through the famine years had done much to win popular favour for the actual hospital and its work, there was still a declared hostility to the Christian religion, which manifested itself especially in an indirect persecution of the boys—or rather of the parents of the boys—who attended the mission school.

The increasing popularity of the hospital, too, constituted a further difficulty, for the work was not based as yet on a secure financial footing, medical missions being then only at a comparatively experimental stage. In 1883 it became necessary on this ground to close the wards temporarily. This was not wholly a misfortune, for it gave Neve time to do much itinerating, and to get to know his patients in their homes, and carry the message of his medical skill up and down the valley.

One of his earliest expeditions was up the valley and across the Kishtiwari Mountains to pay his respects to the Maharajah in his capital

at Jammu. The visitor was treated with the lavish hospitality of an eastern court, being brought into the city by an escort, and conveyed the following day on a richly caparisoned elephant to the palace. The Maharajah himself was much less antagonistic than the local authorities at Srinagar, and he chatted warmly about Neve's predecessors, Maxwell and Downes. An amusing example of the despotic, yet courteous insistence of an eastern potentate occurred when Neve intimated that he intended to return by a difficult, but more direct route over a high pass. In spite of assurances that he welcomed its possible hardships, his royal host intimated that he could not think of allowing him to venture on it in its present condition, but that he would gladly keep him as his guest until the road had been properly improved.

"This process," Neve remarked in telling the story, "might be going on for twenty years or more! So I reluctantly accepted his suggestion that I should travel by the Banihal route, one which was usually regarded as closed to Europeans and reserved for the use of State officials."

But the impetuous spirit that had crossed the Pir Panjal a year before while the mail route was still closed, was not to be deterred, and we have a delightful account in Neve's book on Kashmir of a youthful enthusiast covering ten stages in three days on relays of ponies, following through the dark forest the gleam of the *dakwalla's* (mail-runner's) torch, sleeping in a woodland camping ground with his pony's reins looped to his ankle, losing a night on the way through having to chase

his runaway hired steed intent on getting back to its own village, and finally spending the night as the guest of a Moslem fakir, who entertained him with philosophic arguments and tales of far travel in Persia and Bokhara.

But Neve's itineration in these months was usually for medical mission work along the Kashmir Valley and its neighbourhood. The villages lay mostly at the foot of the hills just above the alluvial river plain, or along the slopes of the lovely side valleys; but sometimes Neve journeyed up through the forest to the Alpine beauty of the margs, visiting the rough, log-wrought camps of the Gujars, or mountain shepherds.

The following story of Kabira, a little patient brought to the hospital by a visit of the doctor to his house, is typical, not only of the work, but of the people and places which Neve found in his itinerations. The village lay on the slopes of the foothills on the north side of the Jhelum. It was sheltered from storms by the great chenab trees which grew in and about it, hiding it all the summer long with their thick green foliage. Through the village flowed a mountain stream, from which little canals led off to irrigate the fields of rice and maize, barley and wheat, which terraced the hill-side.

There were not many travellers up that side valley and little news came to it, so that Neve's entry with his assistant late one afternoon created quite a stir. He was met by Mohammed Sheikh, the headman, a tall man with a beard dyed red with henna, and an air of solemn importance.

He wore a wide-sleeved pheran, such as is universally worn by the Kashmiris, and short loose cotton trousers; the only thing that distinguished him from the rest of the villagers being that he wore a turban instead of the usual skull cap and that he looked so self-important. With him was the *chowkidar* or village policeman, and Moulvi Nuruddin, the Moslem mullah.

When Neve had explained the object of his visit, he asked if they had any sick, and was told that the son of Gulam Rasul was seriously ill. The mullah frowned. He had sold Gulam Rasul many charms for the boy and they had all failed.

"He is past all recovery," he said solemnly. "It is the will of Allah!" Neve made no reply but asked to see the lad.

The house was two-storeyed, with a straw-thatched roof, the wooden framework of the walls filled in with sun-dried bricks. The whole of the ground floor was taken up by the animals, some sheep and goats and the plough buffaloes, while the family lived in the upper storey. Even then the dark, almost windowless rooms were only used in the winter, the summer residence being the veranda, which ran the whole length of the house, with a clay kitchen at one end of it.

At the call of the men a woman came out to them. She was dark-eyed, and might have been handsome if you could have got below the dirt of her smoke-grimed face. Kashmiri houses have no chimneys! She wore a full, wide sleeved pheran of dark blue cotton, decorated with a red pattern, and on her head was a red cap studded with pins and covered with a square

of cloth that fell on either side of her face and down her back. On her neck was a brass enamelled collar, and she had heavy silver bracelets on her arms and rings on her fingers. She was wearing leather shoes on her bare feet.

The headman told her that the doctor sahib from Srinagar had asked to see her son. She looked suspicious till Neve spoke to her kindly and asked after the boy, then she turned and called, and the little patient came slowly round the corner of the house. He was about fourteen, very dirty and very thin, his dark eyes glowing above hollow cheeks, and he dragged his feet listlessly. He wore a skull cap and torn pheran, nothing more. Through the folds of his pheran some dirty rags could be seen wrapped round his chest.

Meanwhile some one had fetched Gulam Rasul from the fields, and he appeared, a short, thin man with a stubbly beard. He, too, wore a pheran, and had plaited straw sandals on his feet. Neve asked him about the boy, and he answered in a dull, resigned voice, that seemed beyond any surprise at what life might bring. The boy's name was Kabira. He had been quite well until a year ago, and had never ailed a day. He had been swift as a dog in rounding the flocks and could carry a fifty pound load of wood from the forest. (Though they are small, the Kashmiris are good porters, and can carry a load of a hundred pounds for five miles.) A year ago he had complained of a pain in his chest, and at last a wound had broken out and would not heal. He had got thinner and could neither run nor carry. He had

not even been able to sit on the *machans*¹ the previous autumn with the other boys, blaring trumpets and banging drums and tins to scare off the bears from the maize crops and ripened orchards. His father had consulted the mullah and had bought many charms, but it was of no avail. It was the will of Allah !

The boy stood listless during his father's talk, but when Neve asked if he might look at him a scared look came into his eyes, and he never took them off the doctor's face while his bandages were undone and the wound washed and gently probed. He was like a trapped hare waiting to bolt ; but his father held him too fast.

“ Little son,” Neve said gently, “ wouldst thou be made well and run again on the hills ? ” Kabira looked round him in a bewildered way and said nothing. He had ceased to think of running again.

Neve turned to his father. “ You must bring him to the hospital at Srinagar,” he said. “ Bring him soon, while the days are warm. He must stop a while and then he will come back quite well.”

The mullah muttered and shook his head, but a new hope came into the eyes of Gulam Rasul and his wife. Neve then gave them some medicine for the boy and bandaged him cleanly, and having looked at a few other cases, moved on to his camp.

Three weeks later Gulam Rasul turned up at the hospital with Kabira. The boy seemed worn out, though his father had given him many rests

¹ Platforms erected twenty feet from the ground.

and carried him much of the way. A year before he could run all day without being tired.

As soon as they arrived they were taken to a room where Neve was waiting to see them. He spoke kindly to Kabira and examined him again.

"He will have to stay here some time," he said. Then, as Kabira's face fell: "Do not be afraid, thy father shall stay with thee."

Presently they went across to another building where many sick people were lying on mats. Kabira was frightened. All the people were bandaged, heads, legs, or arms, and many groaned.

"Take me back," he pleaded with his father, "take me back to my mother!"

Gulam Rasul himself was distressed by the boy's tears. "Nay, do not fear," he said, "the sahib speaks kind words."

Then a man spoke who was lying on a mat, his head so bandaged that he had frightened Kabira almost more than any one.

"Do not be afraid, little son. The sahib doctor has skill and tenderness in his hands. He hath taken a large swelling from my head and in three days I shall be home again. See that man there with a long piece of wood tied to him. He broke his leg, but the sahib has mended it again."

"Did not the sahib want to cut off his leg?" asked Gulam Rasul. "I have heard that the sahib doctors always want to cut off one's limbs."

"No; and he said that the leg would soon be well."

"But do not the English make medicine out of people's bones?"

"Indeed, they may do. The sahib took the

whole bone out of that boy over there." Kabira looked with amazement at a rosy-cheeked little lad, who was walking about as though nothing was the matter. As a matter of fact Dr. Neve had cut away some diseased bone and the healthy part had formed again, but Kabira and his friends did not know this. Kabira only wondered if they would take out the inside of his chest, and make medicine of it!

When evening came Gulam Rasul and some of the other friends of the patients went to the kitchen and brought back food for the patients, rice and lentils, vegetables, oil, and salt. "At any rate," thought Kabira, "the sahibs give you good food."

He passed a restless night, and when the sweepers came in to clean the wards in the morning he went out on to the veranda, and looked with interest at the house tops of the city below. Suddenly his eyes caught the far-off hills to the west, shining in the morning sunlight. He thought of his mother and brother and sisters, and if he had been able he would have run away before the sahib took out the inside of his chest. He could not think why he was allowed no breakfast, like every one else; but the other patients said it was always so at first. After breakfast time he was taken into another room, very bright and light, and he was laid on a table and told to breathe deeply. He was very frightened, too frightened to disobey, and then he smelt a strange, sweet smell. The room got dim; his father seemed a long way off; he tried to get up and could not; then he tried to speak. . . . When

he woke up it was afternoon, and his father was leaning over him murmuring : “ Kabira, my son, it is all over. Thou art brave as a man. Soon thou shalt be well again.”

He tried to move, but his chest, which was bandaged tightly, hurt him and he lay still. For a few days he did not move except when the doctor dressed his wound. He cried a great deal at first, but soon, when the sahib looked kindly at him and told him to be brave, he could bear the pain.

One day the Doctor Sahib told Gulam Rasul to pray to God for his son and not to believe in charms. He said that Allah was loving to all, and that charms could do no good, and he cut off the one on Kabira's neck.

In two or three weeks the boy was better and so happy that Gulam Rasul went back home, until Kabira grew quite strong and could be taken away. In those weeks he used to go all over the hospital and saw other wards, some with Hindus, and one with lepers in it. He found the little church, too, built of cedar wood, and used to go to the services there, where he heard strange words, like those the Doctor Sahib had said to him and his father. He did not understand much that they said, but he did feel that Christians were kinder and tried to be better than most of the Moslems he knew. He grew to love the Doctor Sahib, who touched him so gently and spoke so kindly, though he always felt a little shy of him. When his father came to take him away, though he longed to see his home and his mother, he was quite sorry to leave the hospital.

Some months later Neve saw him again, when he happened to be in the neighbourhood of Kabira's village. It was a healthy boy who came running to meet him, and soon the doctor was surrounded by the villagers, all anxious to see again the sahib who had wrought so wonderful a cure. Presently Neve found himself alone with Kabira near Gulam Rasul's house. "Thou hast not forgotten all that thou heard at the hospital, Kabira?" he asked gently. The boy looked at him shyly.

"Nay, sahib; I have the little gospel of Hasrat Isa that thou gavest to me. I heard my father tell the moulvi that a mullah at the hospital had told him that he had a great reverence for Hasrat Isa and read His gospel. The moulvi was very angry and threatened to excommunicate any who should bring His gospel here. My father said nothing; but I keep the book in the attic where my mother has the silkworms. My father comes with me sometimes, and I read him the verses you taught me. The words are very good, sahib, but I know but very few."

Neve looked down with affection into the dark, trustful eyes, that a few months before had looked at him with such fear and suspicion. "Perhaps when thou art older, Kabira, thou wilt come again to Srinagar, and I will teach thee many more of the words of the book. They are all good."

CHAPTER VII

THE EARTHQUAKE

THE spring of 1885 had been unusually cold and wet, and heavy rains had lasted right on into the summer. It was five o'clock one May morning when Arthur Neve was wakened by what seemed like a slight jar or shock. He looked out of his bedroom window; it was still drizzling. Suddenly the whole house began to rock and shake as though in a moment it would collapse. For more than half a minute the noise increased; roof-timbers creaked, doors banged. Crash! Somewhere below, pictures and china were falling. Then a still louder crash, as the staircase ceiling collapsed with a rumble of falling bricks and plaster. Occupying sleeping quarters on the ground floor were the Rev. J. Hinton Knowles and his wife, who had joined the Mission two years before. After a moment of uncanny silence, Neve leapt out of bed at a shout from Mr. Knowles. He went to the window. "It's an earthquake," he said. "Are you all right?"

"Yes, so far."

"Then you had better get out through your window. There may be another shock. I will be down in a moment."

As he spoke there came from the mists of rain that still shrouded the city, a cry that rose into a scream from thousands of throats. Instantly

Neve shouted to one of the terror-stricken servants to send up to the hospital for Dr. Thomas and as many splints, dressings, and bandages as they could carry. Fortunately the hospital and its inmates had suffered hardly at all, and soon Neve and Mr. Knowles were leading a rescue party to the city.

The streets were filled with the panic-stricken population, and over everything rang the cries and screams of the wounded or dying. For the most part the wooden houses, tumbledown and dilapidated as they appeared, had not fallen, but some more cheaply built native huts, many of which had thick mud roofs, had collapsed utterly.

Suddenly a message was brought to Neve that the barracks had fallen with a terrible loss of life. It took him and his companion some time to make their way through the crowded streets. Nothing could be seen of the building but the tumbled masses of the heavy roof, on which already hundreds of men were working desperately, pulling at timbers and digging through mud and plaster. There was not one soldier that was not badly hurt; most were dead, and in many cases, though still alive when rescued, they were crushed beyond hope of recovery.

All day long the doctors worked, dressing wounds, setting fractures or dislocations, and sending up patients to the mission hospital, which fortunately was not full at the time. They had the invaluable co-operation of the staff of the State hospital, which had been built and organized by an Indian doctor and had the professional help of successive Residency surgeons. That night

twenty-one fires were burning on the river bank consuming the bodies of dead soldiers.

Next day, however, news was brought that the earthquake had been much worse down the valley and that the town of Baramula had been nearly wiped out. Instantly Arthur Neve and Mr. Knowles started off by boat, accompanied by the Rev. Rowland Bateman, who was there on holiday. When they had passed the Wular Lake, they arrived at Sopor, a town a few miles above Baramula. Hardly a house was left standing, and numbers of wounded people pleaded for help. No houses were safe to use, so Neve hired a number of barges and turned them into hospital wards.

For two or three days the doctors worked incessantly, and then they moved on to Baramula. Here, too, hardly any houses were left standing, and Neve erected tents along the river bank. The patients numbered hundreds, some of them brought in ten miles by their friends. Each day matters became worse. Wounds had festered, fractures had set themselves crookedly, mortification had set in upon crushed limbs.

Piteous stories of the condition of the villages were brought in, until at last Neve and his helpers determined to leave Baramula and go out to the villages.

Along the way they were met by terrible sights. In one place the whole side of a hill, saturated by the great rains, had slipped away, engulfing the village below in a sea of mud and broken tree trunks. Hardly one villager escaped. In some places all that remained was a heap of ashes. The Kashmiris always sleep in cold

weather with their *kangri*, a pot with live coals in it, and in many cases these had fired the dry thatch of the fallen houses. The people seemed stunned. In one village where a number of people lived together under a great roof of earth two feet thick, only three men were left alive out of seventeen people and over a hundred cattle, and the survivors were seen mechanically digging through the roof for the corpses of their friends. Everywhere there was an awful smell of unburied bodies of men and cattle.

In one village they found a woman sitting by a wrecked house, holding her baby to her breast with one arm, while the other hung useless, badly broken. It was necessary that she should be taken to the hospital, but she could not walk.

“No,” she said, in answer to their questioning, “my husband is not dead. But after the earthquake he looked at the house and then at me and the child, and he cried out in horror and ran away. He has not returned.”

Mr. Bateman searched the house for beds, but they were all smashed. “Can we get a pony?” he asked.

“They are all killed.” She pointed to where a great roof shelter had fallen on all the village animals.

“See,” he said; “there is a cow! I can get you down on its back.”

“Alas, sahib! Its leg is broken.” Her voice was dull and lifeless. All hope was past. But her rescuer was determined to save her, and in the end she was carried away on a rough stretcher of branches.

In one village there was a famous shrine. All the houses there were built of wood and had completely escaped damage.

"Ah, sahib!" they said to Mr. Bateman, "our Pir saved us from the earthquake."

"Yet at the last village the Pir did not save them. Even his shrine was demolished and the trees rooted up."

"Why should he save them? They heaped too much earth upon him, the fools, and it was his turning in his grave to shake it off that was their destruction."

But if superstition still remained strong, there were thousands who learnt at that time of the love and goodness of the Christian doctors. Scores, too, were taken up the river to the mission hospital, and took back to their villages its good report. One terrible result of the earthquake was the poorness of the harvest. Hundreds of men who worked in the fields and hundreds of plough bullocks had been killed. True, there were not so many mouths to feed, but the following winter would be a hard one.

All the summer and autumn Neve was kept busy at the hospital, and it was not until the snows of winter had fallen that he found time to revisit the district of Baramula. This time he decided to try the experiment of travelling alone, without either servant or a tent to sleep in, and to accept the hospitality of the places he visited. He hired the lightest of boats, needing only one boatman. There was the usual awning in front for the passenger, but so small that it was completely filled by a bedstead, a box,

and a charcoal stove. Holes were cut in the matting and windows fitted, so that Neve could live in the warmth of his shelter and yet have ample light. He took with him, besides his usual medicines, a supply of warm clothes and money for those whose breadwinner had perished in the earthquake. It took two nights and a day to make the journey to Baramula, but the time passed quickly, for Neve was his own cook, and though the menu was restricted to eggs, porridge, and puddings, it gave him plenty to do ! When he reached Baramula, he received a warm welcome from his old patients and from the governor of the district, a finely set-up Sikh, with whiskers tied to his ears !

Neve's main purpose, however, was to revisit the villages, so accordingly he had his baggage transferred to a flat-bottomed boat, in which to shoot the rapids below the town. Swiftly and pleasantly they were swept down the smooth-flowing stream, going faster and faster as they dipped in a swirl over some hidden rock.

There would be the excitement of broken water, when the boatmen, with straining paddles, would check the boat, spinning her against a whirling eddy, or, with a loud shout and sudden effort, swinging round the corner of a rock into temporary calm. Then on again with a rush, sometimes dipping so sharply that water was shipped, then splashing and bumping over a shoal. At last the rapids were passed, and they slid smoothly into a little bay.

Wherever Neve went he was hospitably welcomed, for the news of the mission soon spread,

and although he came unattended and accepted the native hospitality, he was still the great sahib, whose influence and favour were worth much to the people. The afternoon was closing in as he reached a large village. Immediately the guest room in one of the chief houses was cleared for him, but the room was dense with smoke from a wood fire. The Kashmiris made nothing of it, sitting and chatting unconcernedly in an atmosphere so thick that they were hardly visible, but Neve took refuge in the least smoky corner he could find. It was not long before a crowd of poor people came, widows to receive money, and naked little children paddling through the slushy snow with blue lips and chattering teeth to beg for pherans. From the appearance of some and the murmurs of the onlookers, he could not help feeling that they had been stripped for the occasion, for lying and deceit are the commonest faults of the Kashmiris. But to find out the truth was almost impossible.

Even up through the floor and through the windows, shivering, crying urchins were thrust, while voices clamoured outside in the most pitiful tones. It was with the greatest difficulty that Neve avoided giving away all his good things at once. At last, however, the room was cleared, and a native supper was brought in of savoury dishes of meat and rice and other vegetables. Supper over, Neve joined the circle round the fire in the next room. But he soon retreated before the smoke, and wrapping himself in his blankets, fell into a dreamless sleep.

CHAPTER VIII

“ THE CITY OF DREADFUL DEATH ”

ONE brilliant summer day in the year 1892 Arthur Neve was making his way up one of the fertile side valleys of Kashmir. Not far in front of him, on a little rise, a village peeped out of its groves of walnut and plane trees.

A strange quiet seemed to possess the place. Except for a few scratching fowls and the barking of a dog there was no sign of life, no playing children, no women busy with their domestic duties, no men at work in the fields around. It might have been deserted. But Neve approached it without any sign of surprise. He knew only too well what that silence meant.

Upon the smiling Valley of Kashmir had fallen with terrible swiftness the dreaded cholera. Only those who live in the East can understand the horror of that word. Once started, nothing is able to stem the scourge. Through the crowded streets and reeking alleys of the cities and from village to village it sweeps, claiming tens of thousands of victims, and only ceasing when it has spent its dreadful force. Even with all the resources of western medical skill, only the utmost precaution and immediate treatment can give any chance of success against the disease. The native filth and superstition of Kashmir make resistance almost impossible.

For the past two months since the cholera started, Neve had been going to and fro among the villages in the valley. Fortunately six years before, his brother Ernest had come out to help him in the work in Kashmir, and he remained behind to fight the disease at Srinagar. This was the second time cholera had visited Kashmir in the six years they had been together. Arthur Neve's face looked drawn and weary as he approached the silent village. In most cases he found his patients too far gone for successful treatment, while those who were as yet untouched were terrified into a despair that made their ears deaf to his advice and entreaty. The chief means by which the disease spread was the pollution of drinking water, and as many villages drew their water from stagnant tanks or streams polluted by drainage, they had little or no chance of escape. In several villages only one or two had been left alive.

As Neve entered the village street he immediately saw that a similar fate had overtaken this place. Even in the roadway, huddled against the hut wall, two or three corpses were lying. Evidently no one was left strong enough to bury them! Here and there a man lay semi-conscious, his glazing eyes looking dully at the stranger. Beside them the doctor knelt, administering remedies where possible, but nearly always the case was already hopeless.

A house stood open, and Neve made his way into it. He was met by a foetid odour, but his ten years in the East had hardened him to smells! In one room five bodies lay. One by one he bent

over them. Four were dead, a woman and three children. The last form was that of a man, still alive, but with barely enough strength to look up. No one was left to give him food and drink. Neve tended him as far as he was able, and then with the help of his hospital assistant carried him out to the shade of some trees.

In the middle of the village he came upon a sacred tank surrounded by trees. On its edge dead and dying lay. From one of them, only in the first stage of the disease, Neve inquired how they had all been so suddenly struck down.

“Ah, sahib!” the man murmured, “the Pir is angry with us. He would not save us!” “Nay,” replied Neve, “what do you mean? The Pir could not save you?” The answer came in broken gasps. “Taib Khan had the plague. . . . Did not the mullah tell us the sacred water would save us? We filled the tank, each one with his pitcher. . . . Did not we all drink? That was two sunsets past. . . . To-day we are all dead. The mullah is dead. . . . The Pir is angry.”

With a groan, Neve raised himself from the sick man. He knew it would be useless to tell them that they had brought infected water to their tank, and so had spread the disease. No, they knew better. “The Pir was angry!” Could anything prevail against such ignorance and superstition? Sick at heart, he turned away.

Two days later he was returning by boat to Srinagar. On either hand the sun shone on rice fields of vivid green, varied by masses of white, sweet-smelling clover or sheets of blue iris.

Beyond lay the forest-clad, snow-capped mountains with their ever-changing lights and shadows. Yet over all the beauty hung the horror of the pestilence. There were few boats on the river, and scarcely a man to be seen in the rice-fields. At the river-side villages there were no groups of chattering, busy women, and here and there from some seemingly deserted hut could be heard a low wail of mourning.

As the boat neared Srinagar it would have been apparent even to a stranger that it was indeed a “City of dreadful Death.” Beautiful it was, with the curves of its picturesque bridges, and the warm tones of its carved cedar-wood houses mingling in the calm waters with the soft green of the poplars and plane trees. But now and again the beauty of those reflections was disturbed by the carcasses of dogs or masses of dirty straw and refuse that the slow stream swept against the prow. This was no unusual feature of an eastern river-side town, but to-day amid the hush of the plagued city, it seemed to Neve particularly horrible.

The usual river hustle was gone. Only a few boats moved up and down stream, and in many of them a shrouded heap showed the grim nature of their burden. The ghats were deserted, the shops were closed, barges loaded and empty stood by the banks as though forgotten. Only now and again from within the awning of a barge came the low moan of suffering, or the wails of mourners, rising sometimes to a hideous shriek, could be heard from some house ashore.

Here and there on the banks were even more evident signs of the plague. At one place a

collection of newly-erected wooden huts in tidy rows—a cholera hospital, while at not infrequent intervals the smoke of a funeral pyre curled lazily up into the sunshine. About half way through the city the river banks stood bare, where some plague-stricken houses had been demolished. From their cellars grimy, skeleton-like figures might be seen emerging, while others, who had fled from their own houses, camped in the ruins under the shelter of filthy rags or matting.

The day after his arrival Arthur Neve flung himself once again into the thick of the work of relief. Although the cholera was abating in the country districts, it still raged in the city, whose crowded alleys made it an easy prey. All the city drank the water of the river, yet not only were garbage and carcasses constantly floating down it, but the whole drainage of the city flowed into it!

Day by day the brothers and their Indian colleague, Dr. Thomas, went from house to house, tending poor and rich alike. Ere a week was out, Arthur Neve's topee was begrimed as he bent beneath the lintels of wretched hovels.

One day he went down to the river to see a sick boatman whom he had visited the day before. As he boarded the barge he saw that the man had been taken out of the little cabin and was lying on the top of the pile of gleaming rice. Almost as the doctor stooped over him he died.

Neve pointed to the rice. "Why did you lay him here?" he asked.

"He wanted air, sahib. He prayed to die in the light."

“ But the rice is poisoned now. No one can eat it.”

“ Not eat it, sahib ? ”

“ No, it will carry the disease to those who eat it.”

“ It is the will of Allah, sahib.”

“ It is *not* the will of Allah. The rice must be destroyed. To whom does it belong ? ”

“ To the Maharajah, sahib. It may not be destroyed without the Governor’s orders.”

“ Then it must not be touched till his orders come.”

“ Nay, sahib, this very afternoon merchants are coming for it.”

“ Then it must be destroyed at once, *now*, before you take that body ashore. Fetch spades ! I will bear the blame. But the rice shall be destroyed before any one leaves the boat.”

The men shrugged their shoulders. The ways of sahibs were strange and sudden, but Neve sahib was not a man to be disobeyed ; and he had the ear of the Governor and even of the Maharajah himself. Spades were fetched, and soon the gleaming grains with their death-dealing germs were sinking through the green water. Not until a ton had been tipped overboard did Neve allow them to stop. That night he wrote to the Governor an explanation of what he had done.

At last the cholera seemed on the wane. The sick were being isolated and the people were beginning to understand how to protect themselves against infection. Suddenly calamity fell upon the hospital, for Dr. Thomas was stricken down with the disease. Worn out with the strain

of weeks of work and constant watchfulness, he had no strength left with which to fight. Hour by hour Arthur Neve sat by his bedside, administering every remedy that was possible. All was in vain, and by the second evening the patient was passing rapidly into the final and fatal stage of the disease. Only one hope remained. Opening a vein in his arm, Neve pumped his own blood into the weakening body of his friend.

But it was of no avail. Even as he sat holding his hand, the dying man's eyes glazed into unconsciousness and almost imperceptibly his life slipped away. As he saw that he was dead, Neve bowed his head into his hands, and between his long fingers his tears stole unashamed. His dead friend had been the first helper who had come to him ten years before, and through opposition, earthquake, and plague had fought at his side. Now in the thick of the fight, he had given his life.

The next evening a friend of Neve's was passing the European club in Srinagar. An old general, who had fought in the Mutiny, stopped him.

"Hullo!" he exclaimed, "how are things going at the hospital?"

"Pretty bad. The native assistant died last night. I think that has knocked Neve up more than all these weeks of strain. They have been working together for ten years."

The old soldier's eyes filled with tears. "I know what it feels like. If any fellow in the world deserved the V.C., it's Arthur Neve!"

CHAPTER IX

A MOUNTAIN HOLIDAY

A PLAIN of rolling hills and flat, marshy levels, stretched on all sides as far as the eye could see to distant mountain ranges. Across one of the dips in the plain moved a string of baggage ponies and porters, at whose head two Englishmen were walking. The hot noonday sun beat down into the little hollow and they mopped their faces, and vainly tried to beat off the clouds of fierce mosquitoes that swarmed incessantly about them. The only other sign of life was the colonies of marmots on the hill-sides, creatures like overgrown guinea-pigs who disappeared into their burrows as by magic, when the shrill whistle of their scouts announced the approach of the travellers. Hardly had the latter passed, however, when the hill-side was again dotted with their perky little figures, peering inquisitively after the intruders.

As the afternoon wore on clouds rolled up from the west, and scudding hail-storms made the travellers don coats and mackintoshes and left on the highest hills a streak of white. For this seeming tropical plain was really a great table-land, 13,000 feet high, that formed the last barrier between the Vale of Kashmir and the great valley of the Indus, a hundred miles north of it. From the highest hill-tops it could be seen that it was

a vast shallow saucer, and that what seemed low distant ranges were the snow-clad peaks of giant mountains 18,000 to 20,000 feet high.

For nine months of the year the Deosai plateau lies deep in snow, and it is only passable during the last months of summer. Even at this time the nights are bitterly cold, and the travellers were glad to pitch their camp that evening in the neighbourhood of some old stone walls, where the porters found warm shelter. But Arthur Neve and his companion cared nothing for heat or cold. Whether they were fending off clouds of mosquitoes, or eating their supper by a blazing fire of tough juniper roots, or thawing frozen tents and hand-basins in the morning, it made no difference to their spirits. Their faces were to the north, to those far-away, mountain-locked lands of the upper Indus.

It was not only a holiday expedition, for one of the baggage ponies was laden with medicine and surgical instruments. The object of the journey was to penetrate to Hunza-Nagar, a remote district beyond the Indus which had been brought to order by a military expedition three years before in 1892, and where Neve was anxious to prospect for the possibility of medical mission work. The ordinary road through Gilgit was closed by military orders, and Neve had determined to try to find a way over the Hushik Pass and down to the Hispar glacier.

His companion was George Tyndale-Biscoe, the brother of the head of the mission school at Srinagar, a mountain lover like himself. Three days' march brought the travellers to the edge

of the plain and the Indus Valley lay beneath them. Right opposite, one behind the other, rose some of the highest mountains in the world, their snow-capped summits lost in cloud, their precipices veiled in deep blue shadow, while 10,000 feet below lay the plain of the Indus, its sunbaked sands a striking contrast to the snow-fields on which they stood.

The descent was through a dark and precipitous gorge—in days gone by a haunt of robbers—and in a few hours the caravan emerged upon the glaring sands of the plain, and halted for breakfast. It was pleasant resting in the warmth, and the travellers were lingering over the meal, when suddenly they were startled by an appalling din, as of the smashing of many tins and bottles. It was Neve's old pony Lancelot, whom he had brought as a present to the Tahsildar of Skardo, and who meanwhile was laden with a miscellaneous, if undignified, burden of stores, photographic plates, and bottles of lamp oil. He was indulging in an after-breakfast roll, and already many bottles of precious oil were in fragments.

“There goes all our photography,” Neve exclaimed, as a rush was made for Lancelot's head; but fortunately examination proved that nothing, except the bottles of oil, was broken, and soon a fresh start was made.

After the wind-swept plateau the heat and light were intense, for the sandy valley winds between towering, bare precipices, and the air is heated like a furnace. Plodding through the loose sand was almost intolerable to men and horses after the firm going of the uplands, and all were

glad when a short march of two hours brought them in sight of a rocky spur crowned with a fort, around whose base swept the grey waters of the Indus. At the foot of the spur and on its sides clustered the flat-roofed houses of Skardo, the chief town of the country. Soon the travellers were sheltering in the cool of the rest-house.

That evening in the garden of one of the largest houses in the town, there was a glare of torches and a bustle of servants, for the *tahsildar*, or governor of the district, was entertaining the two Englishmen with true eastern hospitality. Roast mutton was provided, also curries, stews, and all manner of vegetable dishes, all highly spiced, and all served together. Feasting at their ease with the thermometer even at that hour at 78° was a pleasant contrast to huddling in overcoats and rugs round a fire to escape the freezing winds of the Deosai plateau—and the travellers' appetites rose to the occasion!

The next day the Rajah called, and the day following his call was returned. Neve and Biscoe were ushered up a dark, rickety staircase to a long, low room at the top of the house. At the end of the room a small camp table was laid with a common-looking cloth and a bunch of flowers set in a tumbler upon it. Behind the table were two camp chairs, adorned with white antimacassars, in which the callers were set. On either side were two forms on which the Rajah and his son sat, dressed in spotless white clothes. Sitting on the floor with their backs to the wall the members of the household were ranged in order of precedence, and also

of appearance, those farthest away being mere ragamuffins.

Tea, served in delicate china cups, was immediately followed by cocoa, a dirty-looking servant meanwhile fanning the visitors with the end of his neckcloth! Conversation was difficult and proceeded by occasional nervous remarks, the visitors with difficulty keeping their countenances. Some mysterious whispering then took place, and a man was sent out and returned with a tray, on which were a number of bottles. These, the Rajah explained, were medicines which some European traveller had given him, but they did not know what they were for and would like the Doctor Sahib to tell them. The bottles were then solemnly handed to Neve one by one, and he removed the corks, smelt them, and pronounced their name and use. They were all comparatively harmless concoctions.

There was no time, however, to linger in Skardo, for their enterprise lay up the Shigar Valley to the north. Very early the next day they started off on foot with a new set of Balti porters. It was not many hours' march to the town of Shigar, but the travellers were footsore and weary with plodding through the hot, shifting sands, when a cloud of dust and a blare of trumpets and clarionets heralded an approaching procession. This turned out to consist of the Rajah of Shigar and one or two notables, together with the State band! Two gaily-caparisoned horses had been brought for the Englishmen, who soon completed their journey by a pleasant ride through avenues of willows.

On arrival at the guest house, they were met by a tall European, mild-eyed and bearded, looking not unlike an apostle from a stained-glass window. This was Mr. Gustafson, a Swedish missionary, who had worked alone at Shigar for several years. It was partly to cheer and encourage him that Neve had decided to visit this part of the Indus Valley.

Once again the travellers were given a royal welcome; presents poured in from the Rajah, and from others who had received or were expecting Neve's services, till the rest-house looked like a greengrocer's and a poulterer's shop rolled into one! Then they were taken by their host to watch a game of polo, which is the national game of the ruling classes of Baltistan. It was played on a magnificent ground and the riders were accomplished horsemen. The whole population of the little town was grouped round the ground, and all through the game the band played over and over a rousing tune, to the accompaniment of the booming bass of a big drum! If an important man scored a goal or made a good run, there was a perfect frenzy of sound!

Next day, however, amusement ceased and work began. There was no State dispensary at Shigar as there had been at Skardo, and the news spread like wildfire that the Doctor Sahib of Kashmir had arrived. Patients crowded in from all the surrounding villages. Several cases needed an operation, for which the Rajah put at Neve's disposal the "royal stand"—really nothing more than a wooden shelter from which they had viewed the polo the day before. Operations were a

novelty at Shigar and crowds gathered to watch the doctor. From nine to five each day Neve found his time fully occupied, and it was several days before he could make his arrangements to continue their journey to the Hushik Pass. By that time there were few hamlets in all the surrounding valleys which had not heard the story of the miracle-working skill of the Neve Sahib.

Again a new set of porters was collected, and the Rajah appointed a petty official, the Wazir Haider, to accompany the Englishmen and see that they had all the help they needed in the Rajah's territory.

The journey up the Shigar Valley was a change after the burning plain, for the sky was overcast. Harvest was in full swing and there were orchards of apples and pears, while the roofs of the houses glowed with every shade of yellow and orange, where the season's apricots were spread to dry in the sun.

Soon they turned off up a narrower valley, from which the swift stream of the Basha River empties itself into the broader waters of the Braldo. As they got higher, the walnut groves gave place to scrub and juniper, and on the terraced fields the buckwheat, which was ready to reap below, was still a mass of snow-white blossom.

At last the Wazir pointed ahead. "Yonder is Arundo," he said. "It is the last village up the valley."

Neve and Biscoe looked keenly ahead, but there was little sign of a village. The valley had narrowed, and towering mountains shut it in on either side. Ahead across the valley lay the

snout of a great glacier, a huge ridge of ice, fronted by a confused medley of earth and stones. Soon, however, the travellers arrived at the village, which looked nothing more than a flat terrace, hardly raised above the level of the ground, upon which the whole population was gathered. This terrace, they soon discovered, was formed by the roofs of the huts, upon which, as it was summer, the villagers spent all their time. The only opening to the houses was through the roof, and the Englishmen peered curiously at the dark rooms below in which the winter months were passed. Below these rooms again were cellars for the animals. The village lies too high for crops to ripen, and the villagers are mostly shepherds.

When the people learnt from the Wazir that the Englishmen intended to try to cross the pass to the Nagar Mountains, and that by the Rajah's orders the village must provide them with porters and guides, there was an outburst of alarm and protest.

"None could cross the pass. The summer was too late, the snow was now soft. They would all perish."

Neve could not help contrasting them with the patient Balti porters. But the men of Arundo were no Baltis. Their fathers had come from over the mountains, and their remote village was too far from Shigar for them to fear the Rajah. But for all the grumbling the porters were forthcoming!

Then the Balti porters made ready to return to their villages, but when Neve would have paid

them the Wazir stopped him, saying that they were *begar*, that is unpaid labour levied by the Rajah. With an even greater amazement at their patient submissiveness, Neve insisted on paying something, and the knowledge that they would be paid lessened—though it by no means silenced—the grumbling of the people of Arundo.

The next day was Sunday, so the travellers rested, but the village collected on the roof terrace to see the Doctor Sahib heal their sick, and to listen while Mr. Gustafson sang some hymns and preached.

Early on Monday morning a start was made, and quite a caravan they looked, the Englishmen, the Wazir and his men, the *shikaris* or guides, and about thirty porters and one or two goat-herds driving a little flock of goats for milk and meat. The loads had been divided into smaller packages for the climb, for each porter carried in addition ten days' food for himself and a heavy sheepskin coat. For three days they climbed, sometimes finding an easy path alongside the glacier, but more often scrambling among the debris of rocks that the ice of ages had piled up, or picking their way over the glacier, skirting the edges of yawning crevasses. The porters, loaded as they were, often refused the help of the Alpine ropes, although their way lay along a knife-back crest with deep crevasses on either side. The Wazir soon bade them farewell and returned. He was a jovial companion, but had not the figure for mountain climbing.

On the third night they camped 16,000 feet up, pitching their tents in a sheltered spot, and by

5.30 the next morning were astir for the final climb. A cup of hot cocoa—and then a start was made across snowfields firmly frozen at this height, and with practically no crevasses. In about an hour they had reached the summit of the pass, over 17,000 feet, and there below them stretched a view of peaks and glaciers merging one into the other till they ended in the great Hispar glacier far below.

But though they had arrived at the summit, the most difficult part of their journey lay before them if they were to reach the Hispar glacier before nightfall. The snow slopes up which they had climbed so quickly ended suddenly in a great frozen cornice overhanging a dizzy precipice. No way of descent seemed possible, but the old guide, Rahim of Arundo, led them back somewhat over the snow and then on right up the steep slopes which shut in the neck of the pass on either side, till they reached some big rocks.

“ ‘Garfo-fong Branza’ we call these rocks, sahib,” he said. “It is thirty years since I was here, but I know the place. Yonder is the path,” and he pointed to a crack in the hitherto unbroken line of the cornice.

With the help of ice axes the crack was widened into a tunnel which led through the cornice to the edge of a steep, black ice slope, beyond which was snow and a descent which was possible though perilous. Neve, wearing *crampons* or ice-boots, cut steps in the ice and found the snow safe beyond. But the porters were already terrified. “*Qatl karo, sahib!* (Slay us!)” they exclaimed, laying their hands to their throats.

But Neve encouraged them to follow him, and by fastening a length of Alpine rope to a rock above the crack all the porters were brought across the ice, most of them led by Neve. They had advanced a hundred yards in two hours !

Then with some picked men, Neve descended a few hundred feet farther, but found his way barred by a berg-schrund, a yawning chasm thirty feet wide and sixty deep, which crossed the whole face of the snow, and was bridged by a very thin surface of ice. It was a weird and perilous position. To the left was the precipice, which towered up 1000 feet to the summit of the pass ; to the right was a glacier covered with impassable seracs, towers of ice formed by intersecting crevasses ; beyond the chasm in front of them lay snow slopes, in places too steep to see down but seemingly practicable.

To right and left Neve tracked along the chasm, but no way across could he find. Early in the year a snow bridge might have afforded him a passage, but the summer had melted the snow. Presently he came to such a bridge, but he could see it was not of last winter's making. Already on several occasions there had been a slight crack on the clear, frosty air, and a piece had broken off the snow cornice 1000 feet above and dusted them with a small avalanche. Some such fall had laid a bridge across the chasm.

It was a bare chance, and Neve resolved that if it was to be taken he would take it himself. With the rope fastened round him and the other end held by the shikaris, he crawled slowly out on to the bridge of snow. Within a few feet of

the edge it gave way and he disappeared through it, to be drawn up immediately by the guides.

The porters who were collected on the snow mound were terrified and some were weeping aloud. "See, sahib, the day is passing; we shall all perish!" Some of them indeed laid down their loads and began to retrace their steps. Reluctantly, but inevitably, Neve gave the order for retreat, and by sunset they had all safely passed through the ice-tunnel and reached the shelter of the Garfo-fong rocks. Immediately the porters and shikaris embraced each other, and then came to touch Neve's hand in gratitude for their safe return.

As it was late, it was decided to camp at the rocks for the night, and soon in a sheltered spot they were enjoying mulligatawny soup and a delicious stew. The Englishmen gave up their tents to the shivering porters, and getting into their sleeping bags and blankets, lay warm in the shelter of the rocks. What with the great height and the excitement of the day, sleep was impossible, but the moon came out and flooded the scene with fairy wonder as they lay and planned how yet they should defeat the dread ogre of the Nagar Mountains. In the brilliant moonlight the ogre's haunts seemed guarded by grim dragons, where the gleaming glaciers wound in and out of the deep shadows of frowning precipices below them. Nothing broke the breathless stillness save now and then the rumble of a falling avalanche.

The next day the pleas of the porters and a threat in the air of a change of weather decided

them to return. With hearts and loads alike lightened, the porters easily kept abreast of them, and the descent to Arundo was soon accomplished. The whole village turned out to meet them, kissing the porters' cheeks and embracing them. The Englishmen quickly passed down the Basha Valley, soon overtaking the Wazir, who told them how he had been insulted and nearly mobbed by the women of Arundo on his way down! The only halts that were made were to heal the sick who had come to meet them.

Where the Basha joins the Braldo it was decided to complete the journey by water. The usual raft was made of inflated sheepskins tied together and covered with a framework of sticks. It was a buoyant craft, and rode lightly over stones and shallows. At each corner stood a Balti, armed with a long pole wherewith to fend off the raft from sharp rocks or guide it here and there through the rapids. After the long march over sand and the perilous climbs it was an exhilarating and delightful journey. Nor was it without excitement. Occasionally they would spin in an eddy and the raft might be sucked down till it was awash; then there were the shouts of the steersmen as they thrust lustily this way and that into the rapids, while not infrequently a sudden wave would souse the passengers. Once after a rough passage some of the skins became deflated and dragged behind and a halt had to be made on a sandbank, while the damage was repaired. In a few hours they descended what had been a two days' march on the way up.

The weather had become clouded and the mountain tops were invisible, and when they reached Shigar Neve congratulated himself that they were not then snowbound on the Hispar glacier, and that the men of Arundo were safely housed in their subterranean homes.

As they had failed in their original objective of reaching Hunza-Nagar, Neve determined to return to Kashmir by a somewhat roundabout route which would give him the opportunity of breaking new ground. Accompanied by Mr. Gustafson they crossed the Thalle Pass, 16,000 feet high, to Kapalu, the capital of the petty State on the Shyok River. Coming down from the pass they found themselves among a rough, jovial people of Mongolian type who, while they welcomed Neve's skill, regarded Gustafson's address with obvious amusement.

Kapalu was a repetition of their experience in Shigar, polo, band, and lavish hospitality all complete. From Kapalu they journeyed up the Shyok and then over the Chorbat Pass to the Indus, which they crossed by a little bridge of only eighteen paces span. Neve writes: "The River Indus has there cut its way deeply through the limestone cliffs and flows with but little current through this narrow gorge. The water must be of tremendous depth and looks almost black and oily. I sat on the slender bridge and mentally pictured the turbid flood of this same Indus, some miles wide, at Dera Ismail Khan."

On the way from the Chorbat to the Indus they came across a settlement of Dah-Hanus, where Neve did much medical work.

They now said good-bye to Gustafson, and returned to Kashmir by the Zoji Pass. There storm and rain overtook them, and they sheltered for the night on the Kashmir side of the pass in what was supposed to be a rest-house, but was obviously used as a cattle-shed. A space was cleared at one end for their beds and a path was dug to the door, but soon the air was choking with the smoke of their preparing meal, and ere long they found their shelter shared by other travellers, who came in with their ponies. To Neve and his companion these were only interesting and amusing incidents of travel.

When they reached Kashmir autumn snows had commenced and they were glad to be home again.

CHAPTER X

SOME PATIENTS

“**M**AKE way! Make way for the Doctor Sahib!” The shouts mingled with the clatter of horses’ hoofs and as the people moved aside Neve came past at a hand gallop on his white pony, the anxious look on his face explaining his speed through the crowded streets.

“The Sahib is in haste to-day, but when is he not hasting? He is well called *Bijli Sahib* (Lightning Sahib)! For myself I know not how men can live at such a speed!” And a plump Hindu shopkeeper shrugged his shoulders contentedly.

“How shouldst thou know?” replied a bystander. “A crooked path needs a slow gait.” The crowd laughed at the gibe, but the Hindu only shrugged his shoulders again. Let them laugh; these Kashmiris were fools and safe plunder!

“The Doctor Sahib hasteth not for gain, but on the works of mercy, Allah be with him!” The speaker was a Kashmiri mullah, and the crowd listened respectfully to him and murmured approval of his praise of Neve.

“In sooth thou speakest truth,” the Hindu replied. “None loveth the Doctor Sahib more than do I. Did he not heal my little daughter, the jewel of my life, even from the point of death?”

But whatever his errand he hasteth dangerously with so loose a rein ! ”

It was a careless practice of Neve's, but so intent was his mind on his errand and so well did he know the ways of old Lancelot, that more often than not the reins hung loosely on the pony's neck. Even as the Hindu spoke a shout was raised down the street. From a side alley a bullock had suddenly blundered right across the pony's track. There was no time to swerve. Gallantly Lancelot jumped. He cleared the bullock's back, but the loose rein caught on a horn, and horse and rider came down in a heap. It was well that the road was inches deep in mire, for although he was partly stunned, Neve was soon helped to his feet by willing hands, and as neither he nor Lancelot had sustained any serious damage, he insisted on completing his visit.

It was now thirteen years since Neve had arrived at Srinagar, and in the hearts of the people suspicion had given way to affection and respect. Wherever he went he was trusted ; in any and every need men knew they would find a willing friend in Neve Sahib. “ Neve-Khuda,” “ Half-God,” they called him, for his cures in their eyes were nothing short of miraculous, and whatever their complaint they believed that he could cure them, and trusted him accordingly.

It had not always been so. There had been a day once, ten years before, when a father and mother had brought their son, a little Hindu boy, with disease of the knee-joint. After examination, Neve explained to them gently that nothing could save the boy's life except the amputation of his

leg, and he told them that he would prepare to do it.

Instantly the father swooned, and in another moment his wife swooned also. Terror lined the little lad's face. The Doctor Sahib had slain both his father and mother, and now he would slay him! "Bhagawant," he cried, pointing up with his wasted hands, "Bhagawant, hear and have mercy! Hear and save us!"

Nothing could be done that night, but Neve hoped that in the morning he would have been able to give them courage and trust. When dawn lit the ward, the bed was empty. They had taken away the boy—to die! Cases like that had been quite frequent in the old days; now they were rare.

The hospital buildings, too, would have been quite unrecognizable to one who had only seen them thirteen years before. In place of the mud-walled "stables" were seven brick blocks of buildings, with sashed windows and verandas. In-patient wards there were, with one special block for women; out-patient rooms, an operating room, nurses' and assistants' quarters, and, latest addition of all, a beautiful chapel, dedicated to St. Luke, on which the Neves had lavished much time and affection. But if the outside appearance of the hospital betokened such a difference, the interior of the wards was even more striking. In place of the dirty mud floor, were concrete floors with rounded corners; in place of the open space between walls and roof, scientific ventilation and glazed windows; in place of the string charpoys and the patients' dirty clothing, "Lawson Tait" iron bedsteads,

warm blankets, and clean sheets! Yet there was still the most hopeless superstition and ignorance to overcome.

One day not long before Neve had had a very difficult case. A boy had been brought in; again only an immediate amputation of his leg could save his life. The boy was too young to understand an explanation, the old father was in his dotage. What was to be done? If the operation failed—and the boy was in a very poor condition—the consequences might be very difficult to meet.

Neve only hesitated a moment. The operation was the boy's only chance and he must have it, but in that moment he lifted from his heart a prayer that God would grant success to his daring. Under pretext of further examination, little Mahamdu was taken to the operating table. In a moment he was unconscious, and quickly, but with the utmost skill and care, the operation was performed.

When the little patient was safely in bed, Neve brought in the father and mother and gently explained what he had done. His worst fears were realized. The shrieks and lamentations of the woman were mingled with the curses of the old man. The native nurses and assistants trembled at the terrible and blasphemous maledictions called down upon the heads of the doctors and all in the hospital, and at the threats of dire vengeance from the authorities and the relatives of the boy.

But Neve was unmoved. Soon the cursing died away into a ceaseless moan of lamentation from the parents beside the little lad's bed. On the

other side Neve sat hour after hour fighting for that flickering life. For a few days there was constant anxiety, then slowly improvement set in.

One day three weeks later the doctor entered the ward. As he approached the bed the figure of the old man rose. Doffing his turban, he lifted his hand, and in a frail voice prayed for the blessing of Allah and of Jesus Christ on Arthur Neve and his brother. Ere long Mahamdu was strong enough to return home. His people were very poor and could show their thanks in no material way, but their faces were aglow with gratitude and affection as they bade the doctors good-bye.

The constant attendance of relatives upon the sick was a considerable strain upon the resources, and indeed upon the clean linen of the hospital. Neve often smiled to think how impossible it would seem in a London hospital. At the same time it was in many ways their greatest opportunity. A whole family was often brought within reach of the Christian message and had a practical illustration of Christian love. They learned, too, something of the meaning of cleanliness and got a better idea of how to treat the sick. It was so very rarely that a patient arrived at the hospital without relatives, that a considerable amount of surprise was caused one day in the out-patient ward when a little girl suddenly walked in alone. About six years old she seemed, a wild little figure, with one ragged garment over her dirty body and a sharp, keen face looking out from a mass of unkempt hair. But what arrested attention even more than her

loneliness was the little head twisted to one side, so that her eyes looked up in a queer, sidelong glance. It was the scar of an old burn that in healing had drawn her head to one side till the cheek nearly touched the left shoulder.

A misformed, lonesome little figure she looked, nervously rubbing one foot upon another till an attendant came to her and asked who had brought her. All his questions, however, got no reply until Arthur Neve himself came and questioned her. Gently and kindly he spoke. Who was she? Who were her parents? There was an expression of fear in the twisted upcast eyes, but no reply.

“Where had she come from?” The little hand pointed away to the west.

“Where had she slept?”

“On the road.”

Nothing more was to be gleaned, but she was taken in, and before long an operation was performed. The deformity was removed, but always a little sideways tilt of her head testified to years of ignorance and neglect. Soon the starved, ill-kempt body was clean and bonny, and the dumb fear in her eyes had given way to merry laughter. But of her home and parents no more was ever known, and she passed on from the hospital to a Christian boarding school, a little fragment of wreckage upon the tide of heathen ignorance that had safely stranded itself upon the shore of Christian love.

For weakness and real suffering Arthur Neve had always the utmost tenderness and sympathy, but his was in no way a soft nature, and he was

quick to see and expose the sentimentality and mock grief with which patients sometimes sought to win his help. One day a bearded Kashmiri patient tried to excite his compassion. With tears streaming down his face—tears are always near the surface in Kashmir—he was crying, between his sobs: “O dear, O dear, my father and mother are dead, and I am an orphan!”

Neve took out his handkerchief and began crying too: “O dear, O dear, so am I.” The man’s sobs ceased, and he looked in amazement at the weeping sahib. Then he caught the twinkle in his eye, and his grief and protestation ceased as suddenly as they had begun. Like most eastern hypocrites, however, he was in no way discomposed because his imposture had been discovered.

Another marked difference in the hospital from its appearance thirteen years before, was the entire absence of lepers. In 1891 the Maharajah had given a beautiful site on the shores of the Dal Lake for a leper hospital and granted an annual sum towards its upkeep. There was little or no segregation of lepers in Kashmir, and this asylum gave the opportunity for a beginning to be made. Most of the patients came from the hill districts, some from as far as Little Tibet. In their beautiful surroundings and with good food and Christian kindness about them, many of the lepers got for the first time an idea of what happiness might mean. In many cases the disease was arrested, and every effort was made to keep the children from contagion. On gala days when the children

ran races and festive laughter could be heard everywhere, it was hard to realize that so heavy a shadow of disease hung over the place.

It was as the doctors went from village to village during the summer months that there was revealed to its full the dreadful ignorance of the people. Although the years had made them familiar with it, they never encountered it without a feeling almost akin to despair. One day Arthur Neve arrived at a village set at the entrance of a lovely side valley and bowered in groves of walnut and plane trees.

“Are there any sick in this village?” he inquired of the first man he encountered.

“Come this way, sahib,” was the reply, and Neve was led to a low hut which was entered by a tiny trap door through which he could barely squeeze his tall body. Within, all was darkness and smells. From one corner came a low moan. After the brilliant sunlight, Neve could see nothing, but he knew that others beside the sick person were in the room.

“Open the window,” he commanded.

A figure moved past him in the gloom and pulled out the rags that stuffed the tiny window. A beam of sunlight fell across the room and Neve saw that its occupants consisted of a man and woman, the latter crouching beside a heap of rags on which lay a lad of eighteen years of age. Tears were running down his cheeks and on his face was a look of terror. As the doctor looked at him he was seized with a racking cough. Neve turned sternly to the man. “Do you mean to kill your son?”

“ Sahib, what can we do ? It is fate ! ” He moved his hand with a slight gesture of despair.

“ Bring him out—*now* ! He is dying for want of light and air ! ”

Dully they obeyed him, and soon the boy was lying outside in a sheltered spot.

“ While the sun shines, let him be here, and I will send you food for him and medicine. As soon as he is stronger bring him to the hospital.”

The parents, desperately poor and desperately ignorant, listened to the instructions with an apathetic fatalism, and Neve left them, wondering when the work of the hospital would prevail against the mountain of utter ignorance and superstition. There were not wanting occasions, however, that sent a thrill of cheer to his heart.

One day he was passing through a village when from a hut a little way in front of him a small figure arose and came hobbling towards him on one crutch, waving the other in the air. It was Mahamdu !

Attracted by his shouts his parents appeared at the door of the hut, and loud were their protestations of joy. By this time all the villagers had gathered round, and with many ejaculations of praise the old man recounted the oft-told tale of Mahamdu's wonderful cure, till all eyes were fixed in admiration upon the wonder-working sahib. Very poor they still were, and Mahamdu was sadly ill-nourished.

“ Send him to the hospital again, and we will feed him up,” Neve told them. “ Eh, Mahamdu, will you come ? ” A happy smile and a dirty little hand slipped into his own were the answer !

Sometimes the gratitude showed itself where it was least expected. Evening was falling when Neve reached a village in one of the remote valleys. He had begun to make inquiries as to the best spot for a camp when an old fakir came up.

“Come, sahib, to my room,” he said. Then as Neve looked for a moment surprised, “You do not remember me. It is seven years since you treated me at the hospital.” Neve followed him to his little hut in the shadow of the village mosque. The fakir had little book-learning, but he had seen many places and men, and many were the strange tales he told his guest as they talked over the simple evening meal. Later as they sat in the warm summer night he produced a well-thumbed copy of the New Testament.

“It is the book you gave me, sahib,” he explained. “Its words are very good.”

Far into the night they talked while the village slept, and as they discussed one passage of the gospel after another, Neve saw with joy that the light had been kindled in that heart.

The brave words of Dr. Downes came back to him : “The hospital is like a fire in the darkness. Sparks are lit from it and carried who knows where ? Some of them burst into a tiny flame ! ”

CHAPTER XI

ON THE GREAT TRADE ROUTE

IN the passion for trade and commerce and in the quest of gain men have wrought mighty achievements. All over the world they have flung a network of trade routes. Some of them were trodden out in the dawn of civilization, others are being added to-day by sea and land and air. Through many strange and difficult places these nerves of human civilization are drawn. They fling their ribbon-line across endless, sunbaked deserts; they keep a trackless path over deep and restless seas; they thread the dark glooms and fever-haunted marshes of primeval forests.

The most remarkable of them all is the great trade route from Central Asia to the rich plains and cities of India. High up in the great table lands of Turkestan it starts, from Yarkand, that strange town where the traffic of three great empires meets. It climbs the mighty mountains of the Himalayas, range after range. Twenty thousand feet up it scales the passes of the Karakoram range and then drops to the sweltering heat of the Shyok Valley. Then 17,000 feet over the Khardong Pass to the Indus Valley and then over two slightly lower passes, and finally through the famous Zoji Pass, where the bones of many an avalanche-swept caravan bleach on the bare

rocks, or are held vice-like in the frozen grip of the great glaciers. Over the Zoji to Kashmir, the garden of delights, the gateway to the wealth of India. Only in late autumn, when the summer sun has melted all it can, and the winter snows have not yet fallen, are the high passes possible, and then the caravans pass and re-pass south and north, for the love of gain daring death a hundred times, by blizzard or avalanche, by hidden crevasse or dizzy precipice.

Half way along this great trade route, in the Upper Indus Valley, lies the town of Leh. North of the Indus the country rises in a bare, rocky plain, dotted here and there with green villages. Four miles from the river, where the ground rises more sharply to a crag, clear defined against the mountains beyond, the flat-topped, terraced houses of the town huddle together, their sun-dried bricks toning with the drab yellow background of the plain. The town mostly consists of one long straggling street, entered by a gateway at the south and ending at the north in the slope of the hill. A line of poplars runs through the street, and the two-storied houses and shops are bright with a cheerful display of goods.

Frowning down upon the town and almost overhanging it is the nine-storied palace, above which again the hill-top is crowned by the red buildings of a Buddhist monastery. Empty, huddled, lost, it looks most of the year in the bare sweep of the plain, but in summer and early autumn it is a seething mart of merchants coming and going, the meeting place of races, high-cheek-boned Tibetans, yellow-skinned Chinese, slant-

eyed Tartars, tall, bearded Afghans, soft-featured, subtle Hindus. Then the main street is alive with the noise of men and beasts except when it is cleared for a game of polo played on small, active ponies, to the great danger of shop fronts and to the accompaniment of blasts from a band, increasing to a deafening blare whenever a goal is scored.

One summer afternoon, late in the 'nineties, there was a great stir in the little town. It was full of travellers, for the caravan season had just begun, but it was no talk of business or the state of the passes, nor even of a polo match that was on every one's lips that day. The interest centred round the little mission hospital that the Moravian missionaries had built in the town. People knew it well, for many a one had been treated there by the kindly mission doctor. But there was a special interest to-day, for the great "Daktar Niel Sahib" (as they called him) had come to the town from the famous hospital at Srinagar, a doctor the report of whose miraculous skill had reached even the farthest valleys of the Himalayas. Moreover, on that afternoon he was to do such a thing as no one in Leh had ever seen or heard of.

A Ladakhi had been brought to the mission hospital suffering from an incurable disease of the face and neck. The Moravian mission doctor had done his best, but the disease was incurable and the man must soon die. Then "Daktar Niel" had arrived at Leh on his way to the mountains beyond, and they had brought him to the patient. Very soon he had told them that the only chance

of saving the man's life was that he should cut away the diseased part of his face and neck.

It seemed incredible, impossible! Who had ever seen such a thing? The mission doctor at Leh had declared that he could not attempt to do it. But "Daktar Niel" was going to do it, and moreover, he was going to do it in the open courtyard where all might see.

A strange operating theatre that courtyard made, the operating table in the centre with a space clear about it, and all round, close packed, the wondering folk of that cosmopolitan town. They filled the courtyard, they crowded the compound walls and the dispensary roof, they packed every roof of the neighbouring houses that could afford them a glimpse of the proceedings.

There in that primitive setting, before the wondering eyes of hundreds, Arthur Neve performed a most delicate operation with absolute skill and coolness, and with complete success. The man would certainly recover. The excitement of the Ladakhis knew no bounds. Nothing else was discussed that evening in the market place or the shops. "If Daktar Niel Sahib can do that," they said, "there is nothing that he cannot do!"

The next day a quaint cavalcade might have been seen making its way through Leh for the upper gate leading to the Khardong Pass and the mountains of the north. Besides his porters, Neve was accompanied by two friends, Mr. Millais, an artist, and Mr. George Tyndale-Biscoe. It was too early in the year to cross the pass on ponies, but by the kindness of the Governor of

Ladakh, yaks had been procured for the purpose. Quaint creatures they were with their short legs and long bodies, shaggy manes, bushy tails, and fierce-looking horns. They gnashed their teeth constantly in a most terrifying manner, but they are not half so fierce as they look and sound. In wild mountainous country the yak is invaluable as a beast of burden, for it can not only find means of sustenance on a snowy waste, but on most difficult slopes, strewn with loose rocks, it is as surefooted as a goat. Two of the Englishmen were seated on these strange steeds, their saddle consisting of a folded blanket, while they hung on to the shaggy mane to keep themselves from slipping off.

The third member of the party, however, was astride a very small Tibetan pony, saddled with an old-fashioned, high-peaked saddle. His feet were thrust into huge stirrups, hung on such short leathers that his knees threatened his chin! He broke from the train of slow-moving yaks in a smart canter down the main street, but almost at once a stirrup went flying, while a broken girth threatened the stability of the saddle, which at the unwonted strain seemed about to collapse entirely. A halt had to be made in the middle of the bazaar, much to the amusement of the bystanders, while a more useful, if less picturesque, saddle was procured.

That night camp was pitched high up on the verge of the snow line, and a start was made long before dawn, in order to cross the pass before the sun had melted the snow crust. Soon the summit of the pass was reached and the wonderful sweep

of the mighty mountains of the Karakoram lay before them. As, however, all the travellers were suffering from mountain sickness only a short halt was made before they commenced the descent to the Shyok Valley. Their path was neither easy nor safe. Above them to the north towered a great cornice of snow. At any time portions of it might break away and sweep in an overwhelming avalanche across the path. Only the year before a whole caravan had perished in this manner, the bodies of some of the victims being hurled down to the dark waters of a mountain tarn, 2000 feet below.

On these steep and difficult snow slopes the yaks are at their best. Neve knew how much surer the mountain instinct of his great steed was than his own, and he made no attempt to guide it while it picked its way unhesitatingly along the firmer parts of the snow. Sometimes there would be a little drop as one of the legs of the yak slipped through the snow-crust, perhaps into a hidden crevasse; but with undisturbed calmness the great beast steadied its long body against the snow and easily withdrew its leg.

Swiftly the descent was made, past the barren-looking village of Khardong, through a steep gorge smothered in flowers, to the swift, grey waters of the Shyok. Just before the river was reached, the mountain stream they had been following widened out into a shallow lagoon round which it was necessary to make a detour. As, however, it seemed shallow enough the Englishmen determined to ford it, and choosing two

baggage ponies, two of them mounted on one, while the third followed behind alone.

Suddenly it became evident that the foremost pony was in a quicksand, for it floundered about from one leg to the other, until both its riders were tumbled into the water. Finding themselves wet they continued their way across on foot, much to the amusement of their companion on horseback. His triumph, however, was short-lived, for in another moment his pony had stepped into a hole, and horse and rider promptly disappeared beneath the surface. Three very wet, but cheerful travellers waded ashore on the other side. So dry was the atmosphere that in a few minutes all traces of their ducking had disappeared.

The crossing of the river was a tedious business, for everything had to be taken over on ferry boats, which the fierce current swept a long way down at each crossing. Once over the party soon arrived at the village of Tirit, which stands at the entrance to the Nubra Valley. A quaint little place it was, its narrow streets bordered with neat thorn hedges, but almost completely occupied by a channel of ice-cold water a foot deep, so that the travellers were glad to see that gaily caparisoned little ponies had been provided for their entry.

The chief of the district met them and was soon busy with Neve in arrangements for supplies for their climbing expedition. Suddenly a series of deafening howls rang out from a neighbouring house-top. Neve and his companions were startled for the moment until their host assured them that the purpose of the noise was to secure

porters. This was done by the simple expedient of calling every man by name in a voice which it seemed any one could have heard from the top of the neighbouring hills.

The next day the party set out with their new porters up the valley. The Nubra Valley is the most fertile part of Ladakh, though to eyes accustomed to the luxuriance of Kashmir it appears barren. The natives cultivate every possible space with the greatest care, and near many of the villages were hay-fields bright with flowers and shady willows by the streams. The base of the expedition was Panimik, the last village up the valley, the object of the expedition being to attempt the conquest of one of the Karakoram peaks to the east.

The mountains drop sheer into the Nubra Valley, with hardly any side valleys of any size except the gloomy gorge of the Saser, and the way of the climb for the first few thousand feet lay straight up the face of a huge granite slide, on the loose surface of which the going was terribly hard. On the fourth night the camp was pitched at a height of 19,000 feet. At that height cooking operations were very difficult. The oil stove seemed to give no heat, and when at length the water boiled it did so at only 180 degrees, and the Irish stew was merely lukewarm. But all was cheerfully borne in the hope of making the summit the next day. One or two of the coolies seemed to be suffering from the altitude, so the Englishmen gave them the heavier tent, which they laid completely over them like a blanket, crowding together for warmth. The other tent

was fixed like an awning from an overhanging rock while they lay down in their sleeping-bags on some slabs beneath it.

A few hours' climb the next morning brought them to the summit of the mountain, which they christened Panimik Peak. They were at a height of 21,000 feet, Neve's highest climb, and he looked out with a thrill at the wonderful panorama spread out before them. They looked across a sheer abyss, 2000 feet deep, to even greater peaks, "ice-bound giants that rose so impressively sheer from the glaciers, just as some lofty, cliff-girt island stands out from the stormy ocean."

On their return to the valley Neve found plenty of sick and blind folk waiting to be healed. Among them were some severe-looking yellow-robed monks from the Samtanling monastery, suffering from cataract, and Neve accepted their invitation to return with them. Unlike most Buddhist monasteries, which are perched on a rocky summit, this one was built at the fertile mouth of a gorge, among levelled terraces, flanked with poplars and willows and with already ripening apple and apricot trees. A rose-bordered water lane led up to it, from which there were charming views down to the mouth of the valley.

The time, however, was now pressing for the return to Srinagar, and in a day or two the camp was shifted to the banks of the Shyok, from which next day they would commence the climb to the Khardong Pass. It was dusk and the Englishmen were sitting round the camp fire, when three figures were seen making an uncertain approach. When they were brought to Neve he

saw that they were native women suffering from cataract.

“ Sahib,” they said, “ we could not come before. Will you not give us back our eyes ? ”

“ It is too late ! There is no light now to see, and we must start to-morrow at dawn to cross the river. But come over to the hospital at Leh and you shall be given again your eyes.”

“ Ah, sahib, the pass ! How should *we* cross the pass, women, alone—and blind ? The sahibs have yaks ! Who will give *us* yaks ? ” Neve was silent. They were right. They could never cross the pass. Yet what was to be done ? One of the women broke the silence.

“ Sahib, have pity ! Give us again our eyes ! We have come far to see thee. Without our eyes, we are but dead.”

Neve was touched by their helpless importunity. Something must be done.

“ We start at dawn,” he said, “ but be at the river bank at daybreak and I will do what I can for you.”

The mountains were just touched with the first grey light of dawn and the valley was still in deep shadow, when Neve reached the river bank. It was windy and rainy. As he arrived, three cloaked figures rose to meet him. Lest they should miss their appointment they had slept by the riverside. With his box of instruments and two or three Ladakhis to help him, Neve clambered into the ferry boat and the women were helped aboard. Swiftly the current bore them across, about a quarter of a mile down stream. The boat would have to be towed up and taken across

for the rest of the party, probably an hour's task. This was Neve's opportunity.

First, however, it was necessary that a fire should be lit to sterilize his instruments. Neve explained this to the Ladakhis, and they produced flint and steel and tinder. But it was all to no purpose. The tinder was damp in the morning mist and refused to light. What was to be done? Native ingenuity, however, prevailed. Tearing a piece from his shirt, one of the Ladakhis frayed it out and placed it on a stone with a little gunpowder. As soon as he struck a shower of sparks the powder ignited and soon a merry flame was crackling and water boiling in an old cooking pot. Meanwhile Neve cleaned the women's eyes and injected cocaine, and then kneeling by them in the sand, one by one he removed the cataracts.

A strange group they made in the early light by the grey waters of that lonely river, the patient, motionless women, with their absolute faith in the skill and love of the tall, pale-faced figure kneeling over them, while the firelight threw grotesque shadows on the watching faces of the Ladakhis, whose eyes moved to and fro from the tense face of the "Daktar Sahib" to his wonderful, miracle-working hands. When Neve had removed the first lens from one of the patient's eyes he handed it to her daughter, who threw it far into the stream. To her it was the devil the sahib had taken from her mother's eye.

Hardly had the last patient's eyes been safely bandaged than a gust of wind swept down the valley, enveloping the whole party in a cloud of

dust, that a minute earlier would have made success impossible. When the whole of the baggage had come over the women were helped back into the boat to return to their homes. With broken words they tried to express their gratitude, but more eloquent than their words were the tears that trickled down their wrinkled cheeks from beneath the bandages, and their hands outstretched in farewell as the boat leapt to the swift stream.

CHAPTER XII

FLOOD, FAMINE, AND PLAGUE

THE next few years were years of steady progress and prosperity, both for the hospital and the country. The influences of civilization—of which the hospital formed a very important part—were beginning to make themselves felt; roads were being made and better conditions of sanitation were gradually being established. The years 1898–9 were years of good harvests, which meant prosperity and comfort for the country people, and though cholera broke out in 1900, the conditions for tackling it were far better than in the past, and its victims were far fewer. It was a striking commentary on the value of isolation and good sanitation, that there was not a single case of cholera at the Leper Asylum. In Srinagar itself, owing to the new water supply, the fatalities were comparatively few.

In 1898 Neve was on furlough, and during his absence a new block of hospital buildings, equipped with all the latest medical improvements, was completed. On his return he threw himself into the work, which flourished with the prosperity of the country. There was at this time a revival of Mohammedanism in North-West India, but its effect was little felt in Kashmir. Indeed in these days there was little hostility to Christian teaching,

many of the mullahs themselves reading the Bible, yet there were still but few converts. "The words of the Book are good," was often said, "but each man must keep his own religion. If God had meant me to be a Christian, He would have made me one."

At New Year in 1901, at the end of the cholera plague, a great distinction was conferred on Arthur Neve. By the recommendation of Lord Curzon, the Viceroy, he was awarded the Kaiser-i-Hind gold medal of the first class, "for public services in India," an order which had only recently been instituted by Queen Victoria.

These quiet, prosperous years, however, were suddenly interrupted by one of those overwhelming disasters that are so typical of Kashmir.

It was a June afternoon in 1903. Neve was crossing the hospital compound when a messenger handed him a telegram. As he read it a low exclamation broke from him. "Thirty feet! That means trouble!" He looked up the valley. "How beautiful it all is," he thought, "and how constantly threatened with disaster!"

Only a few days before, as he had returned over the hills from Kishtiwari, the beauty of the view had almost taken his breath away, the gold of the ripening wheat, the young green maize, the gleam of river and lake, the blue of the town, and the encircling sweep of the mountains. Little he had dreamed how close at hand disaster was! For several days, with one short break, the rain had fallen in a torrential downpour. It had been a wet season and already the Wular Lake was at flood level. The streams in the side valleys had

become raging torrents. Many of the bridges had been swept away, and already in places the Jhelum was overflowing its banks. As he looked across the country Neve could see the river brimming level with the standing crops, and here and there among the green and gold of the wheat and maize the sparkle of water.

Now disaster had come in one brief message from Islamabad at the head of the valley. "River has risen thirty feet."

The city was alive with the news. Hundreds crowded the river banks watching the inexorable rise of the water. Inch by inch it crept up the ghats and into the streets, then the courts were flooded, then the lower storeys of the low-lying houses. Higher and higher it rose, till every street was a canal and all traffic was by boat. As one looked down the valley the course of the river had disappeared. The whole valley was a lake right up to the spurs of the foothills.

The hospital on its rising ground became a city of refuge. Natives from the lower parts of the city camped on the slopes, even Europeans found refuge there, and the wards and houses were full to the utmost. Ekkas and carriages stood in rows, and at the flood's edge boats and barges were moored.

There was much distress in the city and not a few cases where relief was urgently needed, and in all this the Neves were to the fore. All relief work had to be done by boat, and it was no easy task, nor without danger, to manipulate a boat in the swift currents and uncertain eddies, among the upper branches of a submerged orchard, or past the debris of a collapsed house.

Here and there Arthur Neve went, rescuing those who had refused to heed the public warning, and carrying medicine and skill to those who needed it. As he went about he felt greatly cheered to see among the rescuers Kashmiri boys from Mr. Tyndale-Biscoe's school, boys who a few years before would have regarded such service as beneath them.

One afternoon Neve might have been seen hazardously balancing himself in a large tub, which he propelled with a makeshift paddle. A fox-terrier had been heard howling piteously from a deserted house and the flood was rising rapidly. Spinning in eddies, steadying himself against submerged branches, Neve brought his unmanageable craft to the front door, but there he had to perform the most delicate balancing feat of all as he bent his long body under the lintel. Inside the house floating furniture threatened to wreck his craft, but he soon emerged triumphant with an excited and happy terrier in the tub beside him.

Within a few days the floods began to abate, and soon the inhabitants of the city were back in their homes. Much damage had been done, but the town-dwellers had not suffered in any degree like the villagers. Many whole villages had been swept away, and almost everywhere the crops had been completely washed out. The refugees from the lower villages, with eastern fatalism, returned to their old homes before even the lands were clear of flood, and they made a pitiable sight paddling about in knee-deep water, trying to recover their property and rebuild their

demolished dwellings. Fortunately the flocks had been safe up in the hill pastures when the flood came, but ruined crops meant no food. Prices soared high even in Srinagar itself, and profiteering was rampant. To most of the villagers these prices were impossible, and the poor only kept alive by eating herbs and the stalks of water-lilies.

Once again Neve was to the fore. With the help of a generous Parsi friend, large quantities of grain were sent up to the hospital from the Punjab and were then sold to the poor at less than half price. This distribution Neve left to one of his colleagues, as he was himself put in charge of relief for a very large area. To and fro week after week he went, distributing money and food, making grants of timber from the forest for the rebuilding of the villages. It was nearly all done by boat, but often he found himself compelled to wade across water-logged fields.

The prospect was dark. Not only was there no food this winter, but there would be no seed for next year's crops, and it would be a long time before the ground would recover from the saturation of the flood. But Neve was never daunted by possible difficulties ahead. He was prepared to tackle any emergency. One day he found himself temporarily short of money. Without any hesitation he bicycled to the office of the Maharajah's principal secretary, and borrowed 500 rupees from his private purse. It was no wonder that his resource and his high influence made his name a byword among the people of Kashmir.

But famine and want were not the worst enemies that the flood brought in its wake.

Suddenly, without warning, the dreaded plague broke out in Srinagar. It had been brought from India by a servant escorting his mistress in a tonga. In forty-eight hours the man was dead. A day later the plague was abroad in the city. Men died like flies, and rapidly the whole country-side was involved.

Instantly there was a fresh task for Neve and his colleagues at the hospital to tackle with all their particular skill. Neve was again asked to take charge of a large country district. It was a battle, not only against disease, but against ignorance and superstition. Every village in the district was visited, house by house, and all cases brought to a segregation camp. But inoculation, which alone could check the spread of the disease, was regarded with the utmost suspicion. To the keepers of local shrines the plague provided a unique occasion for trading upon the superstitions of the people, and they were the greatest obstacle to the success of Neve's efforts.

Stories were put about that the disease was not the plague at all, and in many cases the bodies of those who had died of this disease were exhumed by relatives, to be buried in sacred ground, on the assurance that the continuance of the plague was due to the disturbed rest of the departed. But with unflinching patience Neve and his colleagues pursued their uphill work and by winter had the satisfaction of seeing the disease checked.

Flood, famine, pestilence! It had been a dreadful summer, and Neve returned to the hospital exhausted.

CHAPTER XIII

THE HEALING HAND

TH**ERE** was a good harvest in 1904 and the land soon recovered after the devastation of the plague. Besides the ordinary work of the hospital the time of the doctors was very much occupied in the erection of two new blocks of wards, one for private paying patients and one to take the place of the first buildings Neve had erected eighteen years before. In 1905 he was away on furlough, and on his return in 1906 the hospital was visited by Lady Minto, the wife of the Viceroy, and Lord Kitchener, who opened the new block.

At the end of 1906 another terrible epidemic of cholera attacked Kashmir. Once again it was evident how much the influence of the Neves had done for Srinagar, for owing to a proper water supply the city practically escaped the plague which raged in the villages. It was particularly bad in the beautiful Lolab Valley, to the north-west of the Wular Lake, and Neve spent the whole summer in this district carrying on his old fight against disease and ignorance. Panic, superstition, and prejudice were the enemies that he always had to fight. He was not alone in his struggle, but had the assistance of two State doctors, both of whom had originally been assistants at the mission hospital.

A camp was pitched outside the cholera area in which all cases were isolated when it was possible to get there. All day long Neve would be treating cases in the camp, and when the evening came he would ride down to the villages to see new cases and to respond to frantic appeals for help. Only two of these came too late. In one village the official who had sent the appeal was himself dead when Neve arrived ; in another the doctor found that all were dead but one man, who lay helpless with no one to minister to his needs. In one month more than 2000 people died of the disease.

The Lolab Valley is richly wooded, and often in the woods Neve would come across a settlement of Gujars. They are a strange people, quite unlike the Kashmiris in appearance and characteristics. The men are tall, pale, and sad-looking, with long, hooked noses, bushy eyebrows, and long stringy beards. They are dressed mostly in dark blue tunics and turbans, with baggy trousers, though some wear light grey coats with braided red borders. Many of the younger women are pretty. They wear capes of blue cloth hanging over their shoulders, and trousers baggier than the men's, made of striped blue and red cotton cloth.

The Gujars winter on the southern slopes of the Himalayas, but return to the higher valleys for the summer. They are a bold, courageous people, and are feared by the timid Kashmiris, whom they despise. Armed only with their axes, they and their dogs will boldly attack a bear.

Neve's approach to their encampments used

to be heralded by a violent outrush of these great dogs, almost immediately followed by the men. There was, however, always a welcome for the Doctor Sahib, for many of their number had been treated by him in the hospital at Srinagar for bear-mauls and accidents from axes and falling trees.

One day a little procession of tall Gujars arrived at Neve's camp, followed by a weeping woman, and carrying on a rough stretcher of branches a little mangled figure, his face and body ripped and torn by the teeth and claws of a bear.

Nathu—that was the boy's name—had been following the herd home through the forest and had dropped behind to chase a butterfly. As he dreamed along the path suddenly a shadow had fallen across him. He looked up and saw a black bear standing erect before him, its eyes gleaming with rage. He just had time to scream before the bear smothered his voice in its terrible hug. The men came running with the dogs, and the bear made off, leaving a little huddled heap on the path. For two days Neve watched by him, and at last was rewarded by seeing the flame of life grow a little steadier, and as soon as the boy could bear it, Neve made them carry him to the Wular Lake and thence by boat to the hospital at Srinagar. The boy's father stayed with him in hospital, and in two months' time the little patient was ready to return to his home.

That night in the chapel, when Neve had finished his address, Nathu's father got up. The tall, pale man was not used to speaking, and for a moment he could find no words to say. Then slowly and brokenly in his own tongue he

thanked God for his little boy given back to life and for the kindness of the sahibs. The other patients could not all understand him, but they knew what he was doing, and the hearts of Dr. Neve and his brother were full of joy that they had been able to touch the heart of this ignorant mountain shepherd with a sense of the love and tenderness of God.

In the autumn Neve refreshed himself by a short tour up a lonely mountain valley towards Gilgit. He had pitched his tent one evening under the shadow of one of the loftiest mountains in the district. He knew that the village lay up on the mountain side, and he had sent a message that he would see patients next day down in the valley.

It was just twenty years since he had been there before. He remembered, as if it were only yesterday, photographing in the very spot where his tent was pitched an ugly-looking lot of armed scoundrels. One of them was an old man-stealer who grumbled to the young Englishman that his trade had been spoilt by the conquest of his country by the rulers of Jammu. In past days these fierce mountain tribes had made a good thing of swooping down in the half-light of some grey dawn on passing caravans, and carrying off men and women to sell as slaves in the markets of Central Asia. The old man's eyes had gleamed at the recollection of these fierce hand-to-hand fights and the prize of human plunder. Men and women had been cheap in those old days, but they had been plentiful enough to give a comfortable living to the fierce hill warriors.

After looking Neve up and down he had informed him that he would probably have fetched ten tolas of gold (roughly £10). If he had not gone quietly, the old man added grimly, he would have been hamstrung, but of course that would have only been as a last resort as it would have reduced his market value. Neve could still remember the hankering in the old ruffian's eyes, and indeed the appearance of the whole band had made it seem quite likely that such events might repeat themselves at any moment. But these things were mere echoes of the past to-day in that peaceful valley where travellers might go without any fear of molestation.

The next morning only two or three villagers came down to the tent to be treated, so Neve strolled up the mountain side to where the village nestled in a little fold of the hill. He soon found the reason for the fewness of his patients, for almost the whole village was out on the hill-side gathering the crops. Just a few elders whom age or dignity excused from work lounged about and soon he gathered them round him and began to talk. When he opened his Bible a smile broke on the face of one old man and he pointed to the book as he spoke to the others.

“Did I not tell you about the book the Doctor Sahib always reads to us at the hospital in Srinagar? This is the book and this is the sahib.” The villagers nodded approval of this unexpected proof of what they had no doubt often heard before and had taken for an old man's idle tale. Neve looked at the speaker but failed

to recognize him until the old man reminded him how years before he had brought his boy to be treated of bone disease. After he had read and talked for some time some of the other villagers returned from the fields, and it was suggested that they should move to the tiny village mosque where Neve might talk to them all. The mosque proved to be a crazy log building perched on a steep slope, and looked for all the world like a tumble-down summer-house. The villagers gathered round, rough, bearded men in the usual full, wide-sleeved gowns gathered at the waist and reaching to their knee, and with dirty turbans on their heads. Their ignorant, toil-worn faces promised little response to what Neve was saying, but his heart was touched at the sight of these men, living in the utter isolation of their mountain home, listening for the first time—and perhaps for the last time for many years—to the story of God's love for them. Something, he thought, might remain in their minds, even if it were only the confirmation of what the old man had told them about the sahib and his Book.

The next morning quite a number came down to the tent to be treated. When all the cases had been seen, a young man, dressed in a blue embroidered coat—probably the cast-off of some rajah—called at the tent and asked to see the Doctor Sahib. Neve recognized him at once as the chief religious teacher of the district. He lived at Srinagar under the shadow of the hospital and often listened to and indeed professed to believe much of the teaching he heard there.

Every autumn, accompanied by one disciple, he would journey a hundred miles up the Gilgit Road and its side valleys, teaching ignorant mountain folk to say their prayers and receiving their gifts. His face was clouded that morning, and he poured out to Dr. Neve an angry tale of a relative of his who that autumn had stolen a march on him, and had appropriated some of the offerings of his simple-hearted flock upon which he had been counting. Neve solaced him with the gift of one or two simple medicines, by means of which he could not fail to make an impression during the rest of his journey, and the man left him with every protestation of friendship.

The next day Neve started back to Kashmir by a direct road which led him over three high passes, four days' march from any habitation.

CHAPTER XIV

AFTER THIRTY YEARS

IT was early in the summer in the year 1912. For two days all the roads leading into Srinagar had been crowded by country people coming up for a great Moslem mela, to visit the sacred shrine at Hazrat Bal, where from time to time a hair from the head of Mohammed was displayed to awestruck worshippers.

For weeks the villagers had been looking forward to the mela, the women because of the opportunity of displaying their best clothes, and of buying new ones, and the children because of all the excitement of the journey by road or river, the gay life of the town, the shops full of things to tempt their taste or their curiosity. They were a gay and picturesque crowd, laughing and singing as they went, the men with a bundle on their backs containing food for a few days, and the women carrying their babies, and sometimes a fat cock under their arm as a present for the mullah. The city was crowded and full of life. Every street was a dense mass of humanity over which rang the din of shopkeepers crying their wares, the hoarse excitement of bargaining, and all the laughter, shouting, and quarrelling of an eastern crowd.

But in the heart of many pilgrims there was another end to their journey besides the shrine

at Hazrat Bal. The mela afforded them a splendid opportunity for visiting the mission hospital at Srinagar, and many sick, blind, or maimed had been encouraged to face the difficulty of going to the mela in the hope of having their illnesses treated by the Neve sahibs. On the day of the mela, the hospital looked like a second goal of pilgrimage through the gates of which streamed successive waves of humanity.

It was a busy season at the hospital, and nearly all the beds were already full. From the early hours of the morning, doctors and nurses had been going the round of the wards, and by ten o'clock all had been seen. Meanwhile the crowd in the patients' waiting-room and the grounds outside was ever increasing.

The first thing that was always done was to address the out-patients, and on this morning addresses were given by the doctors both in the waiting-room and outside in the grounds. The crowd listened patiently, and on the faces of many to whom the kindness of the doctors had already shown something of the love of the Jesus of Whom they preached, there was an expression of real understanding. The preaching over, the patients streamed into the consulting rooms where for the next hour doctors and nurses were kept incessantly occupied. Some needed medicines, some a slight operation for which they were taken to other quarters. Some really bad cases were sent to the few unoccupied beds. Twelve o'clock had struck, and there was a pause for the mid-day chapel service.

Then the work began again. There were some bad cases brought that morning. A boy had fallen from an upper story and had fractured his skull; a woman had had an accident and sustained severe internal injuries; a man was brought in with a broken leg. Many of these serious cases demanded immediate operation, and still there seemed to be waiting an endless stream of patients. It was 2.30 before they had all been seen, and then the doctors and staff sat down weary to a well-earned lunch.

Immediately after lunch the doctors began to deal with the serious operations that it had been possible to postpone from the morning. Suddenly a messenger came to say that a new case had been brought in. Arthur Neve went down to receive it. It was a boy carried in on a roughly made stretcher. His father and the men who had brought him stood round the pale little figure. "We have carried him for ten days, sahib," the father said in answer to Neve's question.

"But is there no doctor in your town?"

"Yes, sahib, there is a doctor."

"Then why do you come so far?"

"Oh, sahib, when the doctor saw my son's smashed leg he would have cut it off, and we know that you save people's legs and do not destroy them, so we came to you."

Quickly Neve examined the boy and saw that if the leg was to be saved not a moment was to be lost. Instantly he was given an antiseptic bath, then immediately operated upon, and pieces of smashed bone removed from the leg.

When it was all over, Neve came to the anxious

father. "All will be well," he said. "Your boy will walk again on two legs."

It was seven o'clock before the doctors had finished their operations, and the nurses would be busy with dressings and attendance for some hours.

As Arthur Neve sat that evening on the veranda of his house, his thoughts ran back over the thirty years that had gone by since he came out to Kashmir. An event had happened this year that would mark out the future for him quite clearly from the past. On his return from furlough in England at the end of 1911, he had surprised all his friends by becoming engaged to Miss Bessie Havard, a missionary working among the women of Amritsar. Four months later he had married her and brought her to Kashmir. He looked up at her now as she sat facing him, busy with some work. What a welcome every one had given him and his bride! Not only the staff and the Christians, but all the people and officials of the city. What a contrast it was to the suspicion and hostility of the days of his first coming!

Yes, it was a very different Kashmir from the one he had arrived at thirty years before. Instead of the bridle track from Murree to Baramula, there was now a well-engineered road, over which motor cars could cover in a couple of days what formerly had been a two or three weeks' journey. In Kashmir itself, where formerly there had been only tracks through the rice fields, there were broad roads; where there had been only wooden houses or mud huts, now, where wood was scarce,

houses were built of burnt brick. The fields were far better cultivated and the crops more carefully produced than in those past days. The mission, too, had had its direct result in the planting of State dispensaries and schools in many parts of the country. Srinagar was still as insanitary as most towns in the East, but it had now a splendid water supply which had more than once saved it from cholera and plague, when country districts had suffered severely.

But most of all Arthur Neve's heart leapt at the change in the hospital. Only a week before Lord Hardinge, the Viceroy, and his wife had paid them a visit of inspection. As he walked round the hospital, Lord Hardinge could hardly believe his ears when he was told how only thirty years ago the hospital had been a building of mud and laths, and of how Arthur Neve and his native assistants had wondered if they would be allowed to put windows in the building! Now there were many blocks of wards, men's wards and women's, private wards, operating rooms, an X-ray room, and in the wards themselves, every modern medical appliance. Instead of one native assistant and two or three untrained helpers, there were now three doctors and an array of assistants and nurses. Even the gardens and grounds were beautifully laid out with shady trees and grassy lawns and flowers.

It seemed to Neve on looking back that God had indeed blessed their work, and now with his new-found happiness he felt himself doubly blessed. With such a past and present, what might not the future be?

CHAPTER XV

HOME LIFE AND HOLIDAYS

THE next two years passed quickly and happily for Neve. He had been an outstanding man all his life, but his marriage added an indefinable touch of completeness to his character. A certain stiffness and unapproachableness that some people had felt with him, and that is often the accompaniment of a great character, seemed to disappear under the influence of his wife's happy disposition.

Their home was the doctor's house on the riverside to which Neve had come in 1882, and which he had shared with his brother since the latter's arrival in 1886. It was open house to all and sundry, missionaries from the plains who needed to be nursed and cared for for a time, Europeans from the station, men and women seeking Neve's counsel and advice or even the mere inspiration of his company and knowing that they would not come in vain. Arthur Neve had always been popular with the Europeans; he was so many-sided and so keen upon anything he took up, whether it were sport or his hospital work.

The Rev. C. E. Tyndale-Biscoe, the head of the Srinagar mission school, and one who knew Neve more intimately than most, says of him: "He was ready to join in any sport going. . . . When

joining in games he played most energetically, and always for his side rather than to draw attention to his own prowess; his great delight appeared to be to see the good play of others. I think of him at hockey, dead keen on getting the ball through, no matter how many whacks he receives on his shins, as his eyes are always on the ball—go in the right direction it must! Then in a four-oared race at one of the school regattas, I shall never forget how he plugged. Even now I can see that blade pulled right through, as he puts in every ounce of weight, and then after the winning post was passed, how he goes flop, having rowed himself clean out—no sparing of himself when there was some work to be done.”

To all this was added his versatility. Busy as he was he had many hobbies, of which one of the chief was sketching. Wherever he went his sketch book accompanied him, and every one of his journeys was recorded in colour. At every time and place he had tried to sketch, even when the paint froze as soon as it reached the paper. Sketching brought to him that relief that a pipe brings to many men. Often in his study he would have a sketch on an easel behind his chair, and would turn round to find relaxation from some deep reading in the pursuit of his hobby. Of music he was also passionately fond and, though he was too busy ever really to develop his abilities in that direction, he always played the organ in the station church and spent many spare minutes improvising on his own piano.

He was besides a real student and lover of books. Often when the work of a hard day was

over, he would sit up late poring over his medical books, that he might be abreast of the latest knowledge in his profession.

All this many-sidedness increased his influence with the station, but it did not stop there. Once when the " Bachelors' Quarter " of house-boats in one of the side canals, largely occupied by officers on leave, was rather notorious for its licence, it was Neve who used to go and talk and hold a service with them on a Sunday, and always he found a welcome. After his marriage this influence seemed to deepen even more, and many were the letters he received from all parts of the world, from those who had come within the range of that influence during their stay in Srinagar.

The words that Neve quotes in one of his books as pasted up in the surgery of Dr. Grenfell of Labrador give the key-note to his own life :—

He did kindly things so kindly,
It seemed his heart's delight
To make poor people happy
From morning unto night.

He was himself supremely happy in his marriage. He and his wife had so much in common in ideals, aims, and work that their lives were closely knit together. During the furlough of Miss Norah Neve, the doctor's niece, who had been on the nursing staff of the hospital since 1898, Mrs. Neve gave a helping hand in the clothing department. Her work, however, lay especially in teaching, and here she was able to give the greatest help in the mission school and in one of its branch schools. She also accompanied her husband in his visits to the leper asylum, and

while he talked to the men, she would address the women.

Some of their happiest days were spent on two itineration tours in 1913. Mrs. Neve proved herself a true companion to the happy-spirited, adventurous mountaineer that Neve was on holiday. He writes of their second tour to Leh : " Yesterday my wife and I, with our shikari and two Tibetans, made a first ascent of a peak of over 17,000 feet. We slept the night before in a Whymper tent, pitched on a glacier, and it froze hard at night. (August in the tropics !) Next morning we did the last 2000 feet roped, chiefly up loose stones and slabs dipping forty degrees, with low cliffs below us."

An extract from a letter of Mrs. Neve's in regard to the same tour shows that she shared her husband's saving sense of humour.

" Part of our equipage was a huge two-decker basket, which carried our food supply in the way of live chickens. These were always let out on our arrival and supplied us with plenty of exercise in catching them again on our departure. They were especially troublesome on this occasion. At last all were gathered in except one very lively specimen. My strength was nearly exhausted in trying to catch her, when I looked up and beheld over the rather high garden wall of the monastery enclosure in which we were encamped, a long row of red-hooded Buddhist monks who all along had been watching the fun. Suddenly the hen tried to fly the wall, but the monks were too much for her. They opened their arms and seized her, handing her back with amused smiles ! "

The most important part of their tour was the medical work. "I never seem to get quite away from patients," Neve writes. "Every village supplies some, and every caravan contains those who have been to our hospital, or are on their way to it." Even in lonely camps the news spread like wildfire over the country-side that "Niel Sahib" was there and patients soon flocked.

Mrs. Neve writes of their first tour in a lovely part of the Lolab Valley: "The sick and needy, the blind, halt, and lame, soon discover that a doctor sahib is here. Day after day my husband was kept busy ministering to their needs, bodily and spiritually, and while he talked to the men, I spoke to the women, and that would be all the opportunity those people would have of hearing the Word of Life until another missionary passed by that way."

So steadily and with a new power Arthur Neve's influence grew. If he was trusted and admired by the Europeans, he was beloved and almost worshipped by the Kashmiris among whom he worked. The secret of their love for him was his love for them. He says of them: "They have not the picturesque qualities of the bold bandits of the Afghan frontier, they have not even a heroic past; and yet I have a vision of a bright future, for there are many attractive qualities in the timid but versatile Kashmiris. . . . In addition to their alert intelligence, their quick wit and artistic qualities, many of them are not lacking in elements of heroism."¹ He then gives an account of the quelling of a village fire which

¹ "Thirty Years in Kashmir," page 305.

he had witnessed, the men working "like demons, or rather like fire brigade heroes, as if possessed by a spirit that set all dangers at defiance, with bare feet walking on red-hot timbers. . . . There is indeed some good and brave material among this people. . . . If the Kashmiri could only be touched by the Heavenly Vision, what might not he become!" And so love begets love.

His friend Dr. H. T. Holland, of Quetta, describes Arthur Neve as "probably one of the finest men who ever walked this earth, a man of wonderful humility, amazing cheeriness, and tremendous power." Few men prayed as he did, and his little room, with his prayer desk, where he spent so much time, was familiar to his intimate friends. Dr. Holland asked him once if he ever felt depressed because he could see so little result of his work. Promptly came the reply: "Not a bit; the results are coming. I may not see them; but what a privilege to be able to make it easier for those who are coming after!"

At a meeting at which Neve was addressing the Royal Geographical Society during his furlough in 1911, Sir Walter Laurence, who spoke as a member of the Council of India and private secretary to the Viceroy, said of him: "I think this is a good opportunity, before this great audience, for letting you know what the medical mission in Kashmir is doing. I lived six years in that country. . . . Wherever I went there was only one question. The people did not want to see me, but they wanted to know when Neve Sahib was coming—Neve Sahib who brought comfort and healing wherever he went."

CHAPTER XVI

WAR PICTURES

IT was the beginning of April in the year 1915. For nine months the cloud of war had overhung the world. Its dark shadow had even reached the mountain-locked valley of Kashmir. All these early months there had been a constant possibility of a frontier rising, and there had been much military activity in Srinagar. Most of the European residents who were fit and of age were anxious to be back in England at her hour of need. Many had gone and those who remained behind fretted at their enforced inability to help.

When war broke out, Dr. Ernest Neve was in England, and had immediately offered his services. But in those early days it was felt that only young men were needed, and he returned to Kashmir. As the dreadful months of that first winter passed by, and as they heard of tremendous casualties and the great need of doctors, Arthur Neve felt that one of them could be spared, and he applied for a commission in the R.A.M.C. He was all the more anxious to take on this task as he knew how difficult it would be, among the thousands of Indian troops who had crossed the seas to France, to find a doctor who would understand not only their language but their ways.

For many weeks he had been waiting in vain

for the expected commission, when suddenly a telegram arrived at the end of March gazetted him as major in the R.A.M.C., and ordering him to cross to England by the last troop ship out from Bombay, sailing on April 7. He was away at Peshawar at the time, and travelled as fast as a train and motor car could take him to Srinagar.

There was not a moment to lose if he and his wife were to pack and reach Bombay in time. Indeed it was quite impossible if they were to depend upon the usual means of transport. Quickly, however, the news of the appointment got about among the Europeans, and a business man in the city sent round to offer them the loan of his car to get down to the Punjab. In great haste farewells were said, and soon Dr. and Mrs. Neve were swiftly passing through the scenes he had travelled so often in the last thirty years. Was it good-bye, he thought, as he looked up at the forest-clad mountains, at the villages peeping through their plane trees, at the smiling fields of rice and maize? What would war mean? They had all thought it would be a matter of weeks, and after nine months the end seemed farther off than ever. How long would it last? Then, suddenly, the motor turned a bend in the road beyond Baramula. The valley was shut out.

“ Ah, well,” thought Neve, “ the future was, as it had always been, in God’s hands. They were heading for England and a new adventure for the Right.”

* * * * *

The Sussex downs were flooded with the light

of a summer evening. It was a familiar scene of sweeping downlands, distant blue woods, and grazing sheep. Now and then, through the intense hush of the hills, could be heard a barely audible throb, almost like a heart-beat from the bosom of the earth. It was the guns in France murmuring to the silent hills of England their song of death.

Suddenly the stillness of the scene was broken by the sound of a sad monotonous chant. In a fold of the downs a group of men stood, khaki-clad but with strange dark faces and the turbans of the East. Their figures were lit up by the dancing flames of a fire round which they stood, and a column of smoke rose straight into the evening air. The words they sang were in a foreign tongue, and the whole scene seemed strange as a dream on those homely Sussex downs. But among the turbaned figures was one tall English soldier on whose face was a far-away look. On his arrival in England, Arthur Neve had not, as he had hoped, been sent to France. Because of his Indian experience he had been sent to the Indian hospital at Brighton, full of wounded soldiers of that gallant first Indian Army. In spite of his disappointment it was a great joy to him to be able to be of real help to the Indians he loved.

Now he stood beside them while they paid the last rites to the comrade who had given his life for the British Raj far over the *kala pani* (the ocean), away from his land and his people. It brought back to him a distant vale in sunny India and many such burial scenes as this. How the war

had brought together the East and West ! How strange to hear on the Sussex downs those ancient Sanskrit chants that the people of India had sung when these Sussex hills were the scene of the old Druid sacrifices of his own people.

East and West, one in a great adventure, one in a great sorrow ! Arthur Neve could not help praying, as he listened, that this new fellowship of East and West might beget a greater understanding of and a greater love for the people of India in the hearts of his own people.

* * * * *

It was a dark, moonless night in the spring of 1917. A silence seemed to brood over all London, the silence of fearful expectation, for warnings had been issued that the Zeppelins were near. The military hospital at Dartford on the banks of the Thames was in complete darkness, and from the wards came low moans and sometimes hysterical cries of fear. The hospital was packed with German wounded and among them were many shell-shock cases to whom the dread of that night brought back distant scenes of terror that they could never forget. Suddenly there was a boom of a falling bomb, then another, then closer still, a third ! In a moment the air was stabbed with spears of dazzling light as search-lights flashed up in all directions. The cries in some of the wards arose to shouts and screams. To and fro among the beds the nurses moved, and with them a tall khaki-clad figure, comforting, easing, calming the panic-struck Germans.

For over a year Neve had been surgeon specialist at the Dartford Hospital. At first

it had been for English soldiers, but for many months now it had been reserved for German wounded. But though they were the enemies of his people it made no difference to Neve's love and tenderness and devotion as he operated upon them and ministered to them. Long years before he had learned the joy of loving service in the face of enmity and suspicion. When his friends sometimes said that it was a shame to spend his skill on tending the enemy, their words stopped short at the slow smile that broke on his face. It seemed to speak of an understanding they had not themselves grasped.

As for the Germans themselves, many a man had had hatred purged from his heart by the reality of the love which served him in the tall, silent doctor. It was the same all through the hospital. Surgeons, nurses, orderlies, all fell under the spell of Major Neve. When the time came for him to leave, the commandant, an old R.A.M.C. officer, said: "I cannot imagine what we shall do without him."

* * * * *

It was October, 1918, and the last great offensive of the war was about to start. The casualty clearing stations had been pushed right up into the shell area in order to cope with the tremendous rush of wounded that would inevitably result. Only a few weeks before, Arthur Neve had been transferred from Dartford to France, and he now found himself in one of the foremost casualty clearing stations. The autumn night was closing in with a touch of frost, and though it was yet early he was turning into bed. Eight hundred

cases had come in that evening, all of them serious, and the doctors were working in teams, operating incessantly.

Neve had been put on a night team and was due to start at 2 a.m., so that if he was to get any sleep he had to turn in early. But sleep was almost impossible that night. The endless rumble and rattle of waggons and lorries was accompanied by the constant booming of heavy guns and the noise of exploding shells. The sleeper dozed restlessly and woke suddenly to the crash of bombs near at hand. It was a Gotha attack, and instantly there was the sharp reply of anti-aircraft guns firing rapidly. Suddenly a glare lit the sky and a shout went up from the darkness. One of the Gothas was down in flames.

At 2 a.m. Neve was roused. It was a cold, frosty night, but there was no time to think of the cold before he was plunged into an endless series of operations. One after another the cases came, as fast as possible. It was worse even than the old rush on mela days in Srinagar, worse not only because the pressure was greater, but because of all that lay behind it. In Kashmir it was Christian love fighting against the disease and ignorance of darkness. Here it was a case of Christians mangled by Christians. Many of these men had swung by a few hours earlier in the pride of manhood; now they lay groaning or unconscious, or raving deliriously, while the doctors tried to mend their broken bodies. But fortunately the rate of pressure gave little time for thought; almost mechanically the doctors worked. At 4.30 tea was brought in and then

the operations went on till breakfast time. Between five and seven o'clock there was the roar of an intense bombardment from the British line. Then it stopped, and the reply of the enemy guns got farther and fainter as the broken German line fell back. Then suddenly there was silence.

At last Neve was off duty and stepped out for a few moments in the autumn air. Strange how silent it seemed now the guns had gone, with the sun shining on the frost-rimed fields. It would have been a scene of peace but for the endless stream of lorries and the columns of marching soldiers, the ever-returning ambulance cars, and the stumbling procession of broken men.

CHAPTER XVII

L'ENVOI

“SO thy son hath returned safely.”

“He has, thanks be to Allah! For us who waited the years have been heavy-footed. But to have him again alive and well! Allah be praised for peace!” Two old Kashmiris were talking together in the Srinagar bazaar, one spring day in 1919.

“A strange peace,” the first speaker replied, “with the price of rice beyond what ever man heard of even in famine days! A curse upon these Hindus! They would rob a babe of its milk! 'Tis well that we have the padre sahibs to speak for us. Else we should indeed starve.”

“Yes, but all will be well soon. To-morrow Neve Sahib returns. Is he not ‘the father of the people’? I remember nigh on sixteen years ago when there was the great flood, he brought these dogs of Hindus to their senses. He had a rice-shop himself at the hospital!”

“'Tis good news that he returns. Yes, in sooth these thieves must speed their hand, for Bijli Sahib will soon end their doings. But here comes Ali, from the hospital. Say, Ali, doth Neve Sahib return to-morrow?”

“Nay, he hath returned already. We had thought that he and the mem-sahib were returning to-morrow, and lo! they were in their house

to-day almost before we knew they were here. Else had we known, surely he would not have come unwelcomed."

"Neve Sahib's welcome is in the hearts of the people. There are few in Srinagar—ay, in all Kashmir—that will not rejoice at his return. But to come a day soon! Aha! those Hindu thieves must hasten! Bijli Sahib will soon overtake them!"

With a chuckle at his own joke the old man went on his way, spreading everywhere the news that Neve Sahib had returned.

Meanwhile up at the hospital Arthur Neve had immediately plunged into the whirl of medical work. It was with a great sense of joy and home-coming that he and his wife found themselves again in Kashmir after their four years' absence. He looked but little older, thinner perhaps and paler, and with a slightly more military cut in his moustache; but as always he seemed the very embodiment of life and activity.

At the news of his arrival the whole city was delighted. Not only did the Europeans call, but the Kashmiris also, and the officials of the city, while the Maharajah himself sent a message of welcome. In mosques and temples services of thanksgiving were held for his safe return.

Almost at once he threw himself into the fight against the profiteering in rice—the people's staple food—that had followed on the war. Something had already been done by Mr. Tyndale-Biscoe and others, but Tyndale-Biscoe himself was now on his way to England, and the burden of it all fell upon Neve. As soon as possible he

laid in privately a store of rice and sold it at a reasonable price, while the rice sold by the rice-merchants was frequently brought to the hospital and tested and complaints made as to its very poor quality.

In June cholera broke out in the city. It was a terrible epidemic. Out of 12,000 attacked, 10,000 died ! Dr. Ernest Neve and his wife were away on holiday, and as always Arthur Neve was everywhere, in and out of filthy plague-ridden houses, up and down the reeking alleys, and all the time carrying on the work of the hospital.

When his brother returned, he consented to take a holiday, but only for three weeks, as the cholera was still raging. August found him back at Srinagar and the epidemic unabated.

Early one Tuesday morning towards the end of August, an urgent call to the European hotel was brought to the hospital. Arthur Neve went down at once and found a tall, soldierly-looking man obviously in the first stages of cholera. He recognized him as a stranger he had noticed in the European church the Sunday evening before. A strange English face in Srinagar was always a matter of curiosity, and Neve had learnt from the chaplain that he was a Colonel Condon, and had only arrived in Kashmir with his wife and daughter-in-law a few days before.

Neve put a few questions to Mrs. Condon and learnt to his dismay that, ignorant of the risk they were running during a cholera epidemic, they had gone out on the Dal Lake and had had tea in one of the gardens there and eaten uncooked fruit. Immediately he had the patient removed

to the visitors' hospital which he had built some years before at the foot of the mission hospital hill. All that day in the midst of his own work he was in and out of Colonel Condon's room. Every possible remedy was tried, and the next morning the patient seemed to rally. Later, however, he collapsed, and on Wednesday afternoon he passed away with the doctor at his side.

When Neve returned to his wife that afternoon there was a look on his face as though he had seen a vision. "It was the death of a Christian gentleman!" he said. But though his eyes shone, his face was pale with the strain of the past weeks. Colonel Condon was buried the next day and Neve plunged again into the whirl of hospital work.

On the Saturday morning he seemed very tired and his wife urged him to stop in bed, but he shook his head. "There is so much work to do on my table." Later on Mrs. Neve was busy in her own room when to her surprise her husband walked in and leaned against the wardrobe. "I do feel so ill," he said. Then, as he saw the colour rush from her face at this unusual admission, he added with a wan smile: "Don't look so sad."

Immediately Mrs. Neve got him to bed and sent for his brother. It was plain that he was very ill, and it looked like a case of influenza, which was already claiming thousands of victims. Even then his courage and determination would not give in. European patients, ignorant that anything was the matter, called that morning to see

him. He insisted on attending to them, sending them advice or medicine through Mrs. Neve.

Later that day he became delirious and for hours he lived through the many scenes of his busy life. Now he was climbing a mountain and anxious about the safety of his porters, now he was down in some slum of the city fighting the cholera. At other times he was in his casualty clearing station in France, with wounded cases crowding in one on top of the other. But mostly his mind was held by the work of his beloved hospital. He must get up, there was so much to be done, and the others would not be able to carry on alone. Or it was a mela day and he could see the crowds gathering at the out-patient doors. Then his weakness overcame him and he begged his wife to send the crowds away—he could do no more!

There were times when his mind cleared, as on the Sunday evening when he had his wife read to him the Epistle and Gospel and listened to her singing a favourite hymn :

O Jesus, keep me in Thy sight,
And guard me through the coming night.

On Tuesday he changed for the worse and grew gradually weaker, until on Friday morning it was clear that the end had come. To his wife and brother and those who were watching it hardly seemed possible that that untiring personality, so lately full of life and energy, could be leaving them.

That morning he was quite conscious, but almost too weak to speak. On his face there was a look of peace. Suddenly, without a struggle, the

eyes closed and the undaunted spirit had slipped from the worn-out body.

There was a mela that day in Srinagar and the news spread rapidly. The whole city was plunged in grief. In the mosques the mullahs announced to the crowds what had happened. For a moment there was silence, then the silence was broken by the sobs of men. Immediately meetings were held both of Moslems and Hindus and arrangements were made to put up a memorial to the doctor they had loved so much. One of them was to be a consumption hospital on which it was known that Arthur Neve and his brother had set their hearts.

The funeral took place the next day, and it was a sight no one in Srinagar would ever forget. It was a military funeral. First came the State band and troops sent by the Maharajah, together with the European Indian Defence Force Company. Then followed the coffin, covered with the Union Jack and a beautiful Kashmir shawl which the Maharajah had sent for the purpose. The coffin was carried by European and Indian Christians together, and after the coffin came the crowds of mourners, twenty abreast.

Neve was buried in the little English cemetery in which Colonel Condon's body had been laid a week before. For the whole mile and a half to the cemetery the roads were packed by a dense throng of people, quietly weeping for their beloved "Daktar Sahib," whom they would see no more among them.

From all sides letters of sympathy poured in

to Mrs. Neve, some from Europeans all over India, some even from distant parts of the world from those who had at one time profited by his gentle skill, some from men who had met him in the hospitals or battlefields of France. But most touching of all were the letters from the people of India to whom he had given his life and love and who had learned to love him in return. Very quaint sometimes their eastern expressions sounded in the stiff English of their letters, but they spoke of a depth of love of which the writers themselves had to a great extent been unconscious, till the object of their love was taken from them.

One such letter came from a young Hindu doctor who had been one of the Indian officers Arthur Neve had treated at Brighton. "He was a benefactor for the poor," he wrote, "and those who were in suffering and distress. . . . Oh ! he was a living idol to worship ! . . . Really, India has lost one of her most precious jewels."

The Municipal Committee of Srinagar sent a long vote of sympathy. "He was truly a doer of golden deeds. . . . Our debt of gratitude to this noble departed soul is too deep to be ever repaid."

But in Kashmir and the mountain lands beyond Arthur Neve has never died. In those distant places life moves slowly and with little change, and memories are long. In many a heart and for many a year will Arthur Neve live, in the heart of some Buddhist monk muttering his prayers in a rock-girt monastery in Little Tibet, or some mountain porter, remembering

the skill and endurance of the tall sahib and his thoughtfulness and gentleness to the porters. Or it will be some rajah in one of the towns of the Indus Valley, or some farmer who remembers the Doctor Sahib who stopped at his village high up on the terraced side of one of the Himalayan mountains, or some lonely villager in a secluded valley, who once heard the Doctor Sahib and saw him heal the sick, or who perchance had himself once been a patient at the mission hospital. Or some blue-clad, bearded Gujar of the Pir Panjal, dreaming beside his feeding flock, will suddenly remember a tall, fearless figure walking into the camp, or some village woman will remember his gentleness with her child. Some mullah seated in the starlight by his mosque when all his village flock is sleeping, will call to mind just such a night and a gentle, earnest voice talking with him through the still hours. Many a one in plague or flood or famine will remember "the father of his people" and all that he did for them.

Always while the mission hospital stands and as day by day the crowds throng the dispensary and the wards are full of sick, those who work there will be conscious of the spirit of that tireless lover and healer of men. Always while, through the hospital, love reaches out after the hearts of men, while the love once kindled in those hearts still flares, in the mountains and valleys of the farthest lands and in the smiling villages of Kashmir and the crowded streets of its capital, Arthur Neve still lives—will ever live.

He who loves not, lives not ;
He who lives by the Life cannot die.

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