A. R. TAINSH

...and some fell by the wayside

An account of
the North Burma Evacuation

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

WHEN THE EVACUATION of North Burma was completed, the Indian Tea Association, which was largely responsible for the rescue and evacuation of refugees, asked all those who had assisted in the work to record their personal experiences. The intention was to collate all these into an accurate and historical document.

The evacuation was divided into three distinct phases—

(1) *From 6th May to 18th July, 1942,* when 20,000 refugees rached Margherita over the Pangsau Route.

(2) *From 19th July to 11th September, 1942,* when the Namyung River was in spate, forcing the refugees to wait throughout the monsoon in Tagup Ga and Shinbwiyang where they were fed by air-dropped supplies. During this period about two hundred refugees succeeded in reaching Margherita.

(3) *From 12th September to the end of November, 1942,* when the floods had abated sufficiently to enable a fresh rescue expedition to set out. This party was organized by Mr. Tommy Thomson, the Manager of Makum Tea Estate, Margherita.

My personal experiences, which I have here recorded in diary form, cover only the first phase of the evacuation. It is entirely unembellished and, if rather brutal at times, I ask the reader's indulgence—the conditions and events were brutal.

At the beginning of September 1942 I was invited to lead a new expedition up the Pangsau Route, which rescued about 1,800 men, women and children who had remained in the Kachin villages throughout the monsoon. By this time we were all experienced and only two refugees died while under our care. In both cases they were elderly people suffering from a combination of disease, extreme malnutrition and exhaustion.

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1: THE TASK BEGINS

WITH THE FALL of Singapore there was considerable confusion in Burma. Those who were not required by the Civil and Military services tried to leave the country by sea from Rangoon. There was not enough accommodation on the ships for everyone, and the great body of Europeans, Anglo-Indians, Anglo-Burmese and Indians travelled northwards on foot, away from the advancing Japanese armies. Some of these people managed to trek through the hills to Akyab and then proceeded by sea to India. The majority travelled further north and reached India by trekking through the Chin Hills and Manipur State.

The Japanese advance was so rapid that thousands were forced still further north and were left with the alternatives of escaping by air from Myitkyina, going into China over the Burma Road, or trekking through the Naga Hills to Assam.

At Myitkyina, the most northerly railway station in Burma, there was an airfield to which the refugees flocked in tens of thousands, and were flown to safety by British and American transport planes. At first the work proceeded leisurely, but when the crowds increased as many as seventy were packed into planes built to carry twenty passengers. The organization at the airfield soon broke down under the desperate strain of hungry and frightened people struggling to get on the planes. The pilots flew backwards and forwards all day, having little time to eat or sleep.

On the 6th May, 1942, while the transports were being loaded, a Japanese plane flew over waving a red flag as warning to the refugees that the airfield was about to be bombed. All the passengers at once dashed to take cover. Twenty minutes passed before they had sufficient confidence to get back into their planes, and just as the transports were about to take off, the Japs returned

with a bomber force and bombed and machine-gunned them. Only one plane survived this onslaught, and many of the passengers in the others were killed or wounded. Panic reigned for a long time over the field, and people dropped their small bundles and ran. Slowly they returned, picked up the dead and wounded and searched for their belongings. Hundred lost all their treasured possessions in the moments of confusion.

Only one thing remained, and that was for about 40,000 ill-equipped men, women and children to trek to Assam as best they could through the monsoon, which was just breaking. The route chosen by the majority of the refugees at Myitkyina was to follow the main road north as far as the hundred and second milestone where there was a Rest-house. From here a small jungle track crossed over the Dharu Pass to Maingkwan, a distance of about a hundred and twenty miles. At Maingkwan there was a large store of rice which had been dumped by the Government of Burma in the Rest-house in anticipation of refugees having to trek out of Burma by the northern routes. The rice was issued from here for a few days, but those in charge left their posts and joined in the general flight. From then on, the refugees helped themselves, and took with them as much as they could carry.

Not long before the fall of Burma, the Chinese undertook to build a road from Maingkwan through to Assam and a number of huts had been constructed as far as Shinbwiyang, forty miles distant. Shinbwiyang was only a small Kachin village but had a store of rice and salt, and was also the headquarters of Mr. North, the Political Officer of the district. The distance from here to Tipang, the railhead in Assam, was about one hundred and thirty miles of mountainous jungle. The trees in this region are so dense and the rainfall so heavy that all the animals and birds leave it during the monsoon, which lasts from May to September. Only insects, such as butterflies, mosquitoes, sandflies, hornets, and carniverous flies, as well as leeches, thrive in these steamy forests. The original path was about four feet wide, but it soon deteriorated into a succession of deep mud-holes as thousands of refugees and hundreds of cattle and elephants trudged through the sticky, wet clay in the ever-increasing monsoon. To add to the general difficulties several deep, swift rivers had to be forded during the short breaks in the monsoon when the waters fell a few feet. The Namyung River drowned scores of people while they tried to cross

it, and many more lost all their belongings, and as a result died of starvation before they could reach help. The Reverend Mr. Darling, a Missionary from North Burma re-crossed the river twenty-seven times on his elephant carrying women and children across this dangerous ford.

Back in 1936 the Rampang Nagas, who lived in the region between Ledo and Shinbwiyang, made a head-hunting raid on the peaceful village of Assam. As an aid to punishment, the Government cut a four-foot mule track from Tipang railhead to the banks of the Namyung River, a distance of about ninety miles. Two wire suspension bridges were also built across the Tirap and the Namchik Rivers. The Nagas, after this, were perfectly friendly and well-behaved, with the result that the track was allowed to fall into decay. However, at the end of 1941 the Government of India decided to re-open the mule track and convert it into a road large enough to carry a Jeep. The only organization able to tackle such a work was the Indian Tea Association and at the request of the Government, the I.T.A. started to build what came to be known as the Jeep Road. The Association had its Headquarters at Likhapani and established camps as far as Nampong at the foot of the Pangsau Pass, a distance of about forty miles.

By May 1942 small sections of the road were cut but they were still unconnected except by the old mule track. When news came through from Burma that refugees would attempt to reach India over the Pangsau Pass, work was stopped on the road, and the surplus labour withdrawn, while food and medicines were rushed forward to re-stock the camps. More camps were established beyond the Pangsau Pass and one expedition reached as far as Namlip, a distance of eighty-five miles, but eventually had to withdraw as it was uneconomic to maintain it at such a distance by porter.

The refugees were unable to carry sufficient food for the whole trek, so Captain Crawthorne of the R.I.A.S.C. hurriedly collected rations and packed them in make-shift containers, which were dropped by R.A.F. Transport Command to the refugees along the route and at such villages as Myitkyina, Maingkwan, Shinbwiyang, Tagung Ga and Nglang Ga. But for the initiative of Captain Crawthorne and the skill and team-work of Sgt. Pilot Lord and his crew, few refugees would have had sufficient food or strength to

reach the most forward camps of the Indian Tea Association.

12th May, 1942

On the 12th of May, 1942, I arrived in North East Assam where I had been appointed Deputy Assistant Director of Supplies and Transport to the Line of Communication Sub-Area, Ledo. On my arrival I found the place in a state of confusion as the Jeep Road project had been stopped in order that the refugees who had started to trek from Myitkyina to Ledo could use the route.

13th May

The Indian Tea Association, who were engaged in building the Jeep Road, asked for a radio station to be established at Nampong to help maintain communication with Ledo. Unfortunately the Signal Officer was down with a bout of malaria and unable to go. My Adjutant, Captain Ramage, who had only been in India a few weeks, was detailed to undertake the task. However, in the evening the Sub-Area Commander, Lt. Col. H. Gordon, learnt that I had been in Ledo in 1938 and had also had a little experience of refugees when the Turks drove the Assyrians into Iraq in 1925. I was therefore asked if I was willing to go and was quite happy provided Lt. Col. Gordon gave me a free hand to act as I thought fit once the communication had been established.

14th May

The Indian Tea Association had started to turn the Margherita Golf Course and Polo Ground into a reception camp for refugees. I volunteered to drive to Tinsukia and buy up all the available clothing, cotton blankets and mosquito nets.

15th May

General E. Wood, the Administrator General, summoned a conference to decide what rations were available to feed refugees and how they could best be transported. It was estimated that about 9,500 Indians and about 500 Europeans would attempt to trek from Burma. The Medical Officer had his Manual of Field Hygiene and was quoting bits every few minutes to us. However, no one except the doctor was interested in calories. The M.O. wanted to leave out salt from the diet as it did not add to the calories of

the small amount of food which could be carried by the porters. After a great deal of discussion it was decided that both Indians and Europeans would receive 103 pounds of food per hundred persons per day. The bulk of the Indian rations would consist of dhal and rice while the Europeans would have bully beef and Britannia ration biscuits.

16th May

I was very unhappy about the small amount of rations which could be carried to the forward camps and conceived the plan of collecting herds of goats and driving them before us into Burma, so that the maximum food could go forward with the minimum of transport. I was warned that the path was very bad and porters could only carry 60 pounds, but the food shortage was so great that it was deemed worthwhile.

17th May

I visited Mr. Lambert, the Political Officer of the Rampang District, to see what information I could pick up about the country, and read in an old Bengal Gazette of 1842 that it had been suggested that a road should be built over the Patkoi Range following much the same route as the present Jeep Road and Mule Track. Lambert promised to supply me with the necessary porters from his Political Porter Corps to carry both my own kit and also the radio equipment.

My party was to consist of No. 4525394 Lance-Corporal Webster, No. 463676 Signalman Davision and No. 2342216 Signalman Gregory. Captain Maxlow, R.I.A.S.C., who was running the Field Supply Depot, Ledo, issued us with ten days' rations and a vast supply of cigarettes and matches and promised to send us more if we were away longer than ten days.

18th May

On Sunday, 18th May, the three signallers and I were ready to start. We were to go to Likhapani by train, where we were to pick up the porters and then go on to Tipang, the railhead. The train was expected to arrive at Ledo at 8 A. M. but it did not arrive until 2 P. M. The goats which were put on the train were the most miserable animals I had ever seen. More than half of them were pregnant, and many were sick. I began to have forebodings of driving these animals forty-five miles.

When we reached Likhapani we heard that already a number of British troops had arrived from Burma, and were being given tea. The men said they had been in a hospital for venereal disease in North Burma when the order was given to them to return to India as best they could. Taking what food they could find in the hospital, all their personal belongings, and everything valuable that they could lay their hands on, they started out, although after a few miles most of these things were discarded, and they travelled as lightly as possible. They admitted that they obtained food by looting from the coolies who were portering it up the road for the benefit of the refugees. This was bad news, and soon the effect of it was felt. The coolies refused to move without an armed escort.

After some delay we were given coolies from the Political Porter Corps, and we got on the train again. At 5-30 in the evening we reached Tipang. It was much too late to attempt to reach Tirap Camp, a matter of four and a half miles, that day, so we camped in Tipang in an empty hut where we soon met our first problems. We had to cook our own food, and none of us was very good at it. Eventually we managed to have a fairly good meal. It is a wet night and bed seemed very attractive so we turned in early. About 8 o'clock I received a note from Mr. Hunter of the I.T.A. to say that some 80 goats had arrived that evening for me and were in an open wagon, and if I did not rescue them quickly, they would die. The three signallers and I got up, put on coats and ground sheets, and sallied forth to rescue the goats. We found the miserable brutes tied in groups of five and six. In their efforts to free themselves during the journey the ropes had become knotted and several had already strangled themselves. It was a messy, stinking job freeing the frightened animals and carrying them to a covered wagon; and as the wagon could only hold a few of them, the rest were tethered to the godown bashas.

19th May

In the morning, the goats were a sorry sight, and out of eighty, just thirty of them were fit for the journey.

We packed our loads as we were anxious to make an early start, but we had difficulty in getting the porters started. To begin with, the wireless loads were too heavy. The battery-charging machine weighed 120 lbs., and the Signal Officer had erroneously presumed

that if one man can carry 60 lbs., then two men can carry 120 lbs. The Political porters, however, were not trained to carry on the shoulders, and did not wish to carry the loads on poles. There was nothing to do but to discard certain articles which were not essential. I approached Mr. Hunter and asked him to give me a few men to drive the goats up the road. This he refused to do, so we selected 16 of the strongest animals and drove them ourselves.

The first half mile of the road runs along the trolley lines to the Tipang Coal Mines, then crosses the river and climbs steeply for about two miles. This was the part of the road of which I had been warned. It was cut out of the hillside, and had not been metalled. The Tea Planters, with years of experience behind them, had told the Royal Engineers that building roads in Assam was not the same as in the North West Frontier, but their advice was ignored. Deep drains had not been cut on the inner side of the road, with the result that the whole road was a quagmire of golden mud, two feet deep. It was good, tough clay in which every step formed a vacuum out of which it was difficult to drag our feet. Progress was dreadfully slow; we kept falling and slipping until eventually the porters dropped the wireless batteries. Among the few instructions I had been given was that I was on no account to interfere with the wireless arrangements, and as I watched the batteries rolling down the hill with all the acid leaking out, I realised that the Signal Officer had not taken the elementary precaution of sealing the battery cells. The wireless, in fact, was out of action within two hours of leaving the base. It was no use worrying, so we pushed on, now dragging the wretched goats, which were up to their bellies in mud. At the top of the first rise there was a jhum where we rested, and allowed the goats to feed in the field for half an hour. A jhum is a clearing in the forest made by Nagas and other hill tribes, for the purpose of cultivation. An area is generally selected on a ridge where the drainage is good and where there is plenty of sunlight. The trees are felled and allowed to dry. They are later burnt, and the ashes are dug into the soil. This form of agriculture is very wasteful and necessitates the village moving frequently. During this time Mrs. North, the wife of the Political Officer at Shinbwiyang, rode by on her pony followed by a string of porters. She was the first woman to arrive in India by the northern route, her husband having remained behind at his post in Burma when others fled.

We pushed on again through the pouring rain, soaked to the skin. Low clouds and rain completely obliterated the view, but even if it had been fine, all our efforts were required for the eternal exertion of getting one foot out of a vacuum only to create another with the next step. Sometimes we floundered for several minutes before getting out. In one of these attempts, the heel of my boot was torn off, and I had to continue the journey with nails driving into my foot. The signallers were faring little better, but as, in the jungle, one walks in single file, well spread out, I saw nothing of them except at halts. I had the feeling of being entirely alone. The goats were making poor progress, and eventually we had to leave three behind in a jhum as they were unable to continue. Completely exhausted we reached Tirap Camp, having covered only 4½ miles after six of the longest hours I can remember.

In Tirap two Indian Tea Association Officers, Mr. Alexander and Mr. Fairfield, and Captain England of No. 55 Mule Coy. welcomed us with hot tea. Not long afterwards we saw our kit and wireless arrive over the suspension bridge. The signallers spent the next three hours trying to cook a bully beef stew on a fire made of wet firewood, and I saw them on one occasion fanning the dying embers desperately while wearing their respirators. (Why it was thought necessary to carry respirators in the jungle I do not know.) During the course of the afternoon, several British troops reached the camp from Burma, and later one or two Indians arrived. Most of the men were in very good condition and after washing their feet and drinking hot tea, seemed to be none the worse for their trek. However, one of them had been sent to the hospital because he appeared to be in rather a bad state. He was hysterical, and kept bursting into tears about his pal who had been killed. Inexperienced as we were with refugees, we soon saw through him, particularly when the other men of his unit said that he had avoided every action by going sick with a skin complaint which he aggravated by rubbing Brasso on the affected areas.

20th May

The following morning he said he was too weak to walk and must be carried on a mule. He was the first of the kind of which we were going to see so many, but when he realised that there was no hope of being carried, he walked down the hill as easily as

the rest. I sent my party on, while I talked to the refugees, trying to get as much information out of them as possible. They spoke poorly of all troops except the Gurkha units, for whom they had the highest praise.

While I was listening to these men, a message came in from higher up the road to say that the Cavalry unit of the Burma Frontier Force were looting porters. An hour before about fifty coolies had gone up the road carrying gur and other foodstuffs. I decided to push on up the road to try to prevent this happening to the porters who had very recently left the camp. About half a mile from the camp I met two Sikh cavalrymen coming down the road; I greeted them cheerfully and congratulated them on getting through so quickly. The leading man scowled and spat, so I ignored him and told the other that there was tea to be had in the camp, and that I would go back with them to see that they were properly looked after. I raced back to the camp, and on the way received a message from Mr. Fairfield to return to Tirap Camp immediately.

Upon arrival there I found that he had collected a few Gurkhas of the Assam Rifles Camp Guard and had posted them near the entrance to the camp. I at once ordered buckets of boiling tea to be brought, and some packets of biscuits put ready for the refugees. We waited for another ten minutes before the first of the Sikhs arrived. They were welcomed with cups of hot tea, and while one of them received the tea and drank it gratefully, the other said he did not want our tea, and that it was not worth drinking. We laughed at him, and said he could have his next meal at the Golden Temple in Amritsar for all we cared, but he would be very thirsty before he reached it. His friend had another cup of tea while the first man chivied him to get a move on. I quietly told them that they were now only 4½ miles from railhead, that all troops must leave their arms in Tirap Camp and that they would be given a receipt.

This was too much for our unpleasant friend and, swinging his rifle in my direction, he told me that if I wanted it, I would have to take it from him. Then he turned abruptly, and started down the path. As he did so, I tackled him, rugger fashion, and brought him down in some deep mud. I tried to take the rifle from him without hurting him, but when he put his finger on the trigger, I gave him all I knew. The rifle

was taken from him, and unloaded, and we discovered that the safety catch had not been on. When the fellow recovered, he was given tea. His friend realised that he was covered from several directions by the Gurkhas and British soldiers who had collected a few rifles and a Bren gun, so he handed over his rifle at once, and was given a receipt. Our other Sikh was very angry, and threatened to sit up for me; he said he was going up the road to warn the other members of the B.F.F.C. His friend told him he would be a fool to go back, so he announced he would stay just where he was and make trouble. We did not want the others to see this scene, so we made it quite clear that there were more painful means of depriving him of this pleasure than shooting him, and he was driven across the suspension bridge out of the way.

By the time other members of the B.F.F.C. had arrived, Tirap Camp had become a peaceful halt with big buckets of hot tea, biscuits and cigarettes, all ready for these "heroes" of Burma, whose greatest known act of courage was to loot the porters who were carrying food to help the refugees. A cup of tea was put into their hands at once, and they were made to sit on a log while biscuits were passed round. While chatting to them, I would appear horror-struck to see that their rifles were loaded, and would tell them that as they were only $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the railhead, they were no longer in danger. They at once started to unload, and as new people came into the camp, they too unloaded their rifles while a hot cup of tea was held out to them.

While they were drinking their second cup of tea, I asked each man his name, and gave him a receipt for his rifle before he realised what was being done. Gradually as confidence was established we disarmed every man, including the V.C.O.s. Tarpaulins were spread on the ground, and I announced that unless they wished to be beasts of burden, they might as well put all their looted food and stores on the tarpaulin because a hot meal was waiting for them at Tipang. At first no one moved, so I told the least offensive fellow to open his pack and take out the tins of bully beef he was carrying. I added—"You know these tins contain beef, and you cannot eat beef because you are a Sikh. What would the Panch Piyare (their religious court) say if they saw you?" He was ashamed, and took out from his pack sixteen tins of beef, and some milk. The others followed suit, and it took four coolies working all morning

to remove the loot as it was laid out. The Sikh V.C.O.s had loaded their chargers with so much loot that they had had to walk, leading their animals. In three hours we cleared the camp of the B.F.F. Cavalry, who departed in high spirits, hoping to go on leave soon after their arrival at Likhapani. What happened to them afterwards I do not know, but their looting so upset the porters that the latter would no longer move without an armed escort.

2: THE GOLDEN STAIRS AND BEYOND

ONCE WE HAD SEEN the last B.F.F. Cavalry across the bridge there was no further need for me to remain. I pushed on to Kumlao. The road from Tirap was a distance of six miles, the first mile of which was level and followed the river, but the mud was deeper and more treacherous than the first march we had done, and much of the track was knee-deep in golden clay. The Golden Stairs were already known to me, and after an hour's struggle through the clay, I came to them. They are a flight of 781 steps, cut out of a very steep clay slope. The mules had used the stairs too, with the result that the clay had been churned up and the heavy rain which was still falling made the stairs into a cascade of golden liquid. From the top of the stairs to Kumlao the track is cut out of the side of the hill, and runs along a steep cliff. Most of the track was hard owing to the sandstone formation at the top of the hill. The last mile of the road to Kumlao was wide enough for two lorries to pass, as here the Engineers with Tea Garden coolie labour had built a small section of the Jeep Road to Burma. Near each camp there was a good section of road.

Kumlao camp was commanded by Mr. Spur, assisted by Mr. Stewart and Mr. Griffiths of the I.T.A. On my arrival at the camp I found the signallers sheltering under a tarpaulin with a number of Tea Garden coolies. They said that our porters had gone on to the Garo Porter Camp, a mile further on, in which there was no proper accommodation for us. We marched on, and it was still raining hard when we at last arrived. The Doctor Babu, after some hesitation, let us sleep in a couple of huts, and found a dry place for our porters. We were all covered with golden clay from head to foot, and our shorts were stiff with it. Just

below the camp was a stream that had been fitted with bamboo channels so that buckets could be filled without dipping them into the stream and disturbing the mud. We re-arranged the channels, making a crude shower-bath which we greatly appreciated. We washed our clothes and boots and put on the dry things we wore each evening. By the time we had eaten supper we were ready for bed.

21st May

The next morning the porters said they could not manage the battery-charging machine without more men. After a great deal of talking, the Doctor Babu lent me six men who were to accompany us as far as Buffalo, the next large camp six miles away. The track from Kumlao onwards descended to the bottom of the valley where it crossed a small stream and then climbed steeply to Ngokpi, an intermediate coolie camp. Hence from Ngokpi the track was fairly level and ran through a continuous tunnel of overhanging trees and bamboos to Buffalo. When I arrived at Buffalo, I found Mr. Wilkie paying off the coolies who were no longer willing to stay as they had been frightened by the firing and looting. He sent us along to his basha-house to have tea and biscuits and he came along after he had finished paying the coolies. We discussed at length the news which the refugees had brought, and what we thought of their behaviour. At first we were inclined to treat them as heroes who had been through very great trials. On reflection, however, it was apparent from the way they spoke and expected everything to be done for them, that the majority were just running for dear life with not a care in the world for anyone but themselves.

Our porters rested at Buffalo for an hour or so; then we pushed on to Namchik, four miles ahead, with six fresh porters to help carry the wireless set. At this time the three signallers and I were still each pulling along a pair of goats. This was no joke, and we all wished that we had never brought them, but we were equally determined to get them alive to Nampong.

About every quarter of an hour we met British troops coming down the road, and I stopped and asked them about conditions ahead. They described the road as terrible, and the mountains as the worst and steepest slopes they had ever seen. Many of them tried their utmost to make me turn back for they believed I

was going to certain death. They told me to go back and say it was impossible. One fellow, who thought I was a particularly hopeless case, in sheer desperation handed me an OXO tin full of M & B 693, and said, "You will need these more than I. Take them." I also met the Government House party who were travelling with a string of porters brought from Burma and moving in comparative luxury. A B.O.R. who had been in the Governor's Body Guard was carrying a pet monkey which had belonged to the Governor's daughter. This animal had sat on his shoulder since the 102 milestone of the Myitkyina Road, a distance of 270 miles.

Another three hours' march brought us to Namchik. Mr. Johnson, the Camp Cammandant, was unable to put us up, but sent us on to another Garo Porter Camp, half a mile away on the other side of the suspension bridge. We found there several well-built empty bashas where we spent the night. After rescuing our kit from the rain, we collected firewood and some fodder for our wretched goats; then we went off and washed in the river. Every night we washed our stockings, boots and puttees, and each day we changed our boot-laces as they became worn out under the tremendous strain to which they were put. That night the stitching of my boots began to weaken. I had only one pair of marching boots with me, as well as a pair of rubber hockey boots and a pair of gum boots. We all found the same difficulty; the stitching soon gave way under the continuous suction caused by marching through deep mud.

That evening it was considered my turn to cook the food. We had all been lazy about cooking and had had only a light meal for breakfast and some tea and biscuits at Buffalo. Our twelve-mile march had made us ravenously hungry. We did not want to open up too much kit, so I boiled the first things I could lay my hands on, figs and dehydrated potatoes. This mash put an end to our hunger, but it was voted the worst meal we had had. By this time the sandflies were making life thoroughly miserable. We lit a number of raw tobacco-leaves in a mess tin and waved it about until the sandflies were driven out, but we had to leave too. When the smoke cleared, we returned, but so did the sandflies, so we retreated to our blankets, pulled them over our heads, and were soon fast asleep.

22nd May

The camp was awake at dawn when we started lighting our fires and cooking our morning meal. We put on the wet clothing we kept for marching, allowing it to warm a little on our bodies before going out into the rain again. We were late in starting as several of our porters were unwell. One poor fellow had let a four-gallon petrol tin fall on his toe and had very nearly cut it off. Other porters had swollen legs and sore feet.

We were provided with extra porters as far as Namgoi, eight miles away, where we met Mr. Ali of the Political Department. He gave us the good news that the battery acid and distilled water, for which I had sent back, had arrived by special runners. With the acid was a letter asking for the bottles to be returned. This was typical of the mind of the Military Babu. The Government was spending lakhs of rupees on the evacuation of refugees whilst some wretched fellow was worrying about a few bottles and expected them to be carried back 45 miles by porters whose pay cost ten times the value of the bottles. Mr. Ali was having considerable difficulty in keeping his porters on the job. They were terrified of the things they saw and could not understand. Here were high Government officials, officers and soldiers running for their lives, not even stopping to help each other. They were dirty, bearded and tattered. Some were robbing the convoys, and all were cadging cigarettes and matches. It was no wonder that the porters were frightened.

At Namgoi, we were again lent porters to take us on to Nampong where I was to deliver the wireless set. These last four miles led through a level stretch of stinking black mud. Over long stretches there was absolutely no drainage, and we had to wade through water and mud. Toward five in the evening we reached Nampong. The whole camp was a quagmire. It had been built as a dry-weather camp and was meant to be abandoned before the monsoon started; but the arrival of refugees had made this quite impossible.

We were given a very warm welcome by Mr. Wooley-Smith, the senior I.T.A. Officer, and by the other I.T.A. Liaison Officers, and were taken to a new basha on the other side of the river. That evening we were invited to dinner with them; we were very glad not to have to cook our own meal, and it gave us a chance to get the battery-charging machine going. Damp seemed to have got in,

and we spent over an hour trying to get the wretched thing to start. The acid and distilled water were poured into the battery, but the signallers had been sent into the jungle without any testing apparatus, and there was no way of testing the strength of the acid. I had great hopes of sending a wireless message back that night, but they were unable to get the set to work.

At dinner we discussed new proposals for stopping the looting and restoring confidence on the road. A copy of my orders which had arrived ahead of me from base did not give any cause for confidence, and for a while I was treated with grave suspicion. My orders said I was not to interfere unless the efficiency of the evacuation was at stake. When, however, I offered to do whatever Mr. Wooley-Smith suggested, we got on very well. It was decided that Wooley-Smith, McDonald, Scott and I were to go forward into Burma the following morning. We were to push on as far as possible, and disarm the troops before they could come in contact with the coolies and porters. The wireless station and the three signallers were to be established at Nampong, and would stay there. We were short of porters and it became imperative for me to leave behind most of my kit.

23rd May

The road from Nampong to the Pangsau Pass at once crosses the Nampong river and then cuts straight up the hill. This path climbs steeply for two thousand feet before there is a single respite. The day was cloudy, and every now and again we had a cooling shower, yet we sweated profusely. A detachment of Assam Rifles accompanied us, and moved in jungle battle formation. Their pace was not very fast and they halted and moved to the whistle blast; one long blast was the signal to halt, and three short blasts meant advance. For the first four miles there was not a single stream or spring on the road, but at a place called Pahari there was a fine stream of pure water where a porter camp had been established by the R.E. sometime previously. In the next half mile the road climbed a thousand feet and ran straight up an uncultivated jhum to Nanki.

Nanki was a typical Naga basti, or village, with houses dotted about on the high ridges and in places where the drainage was good. The houses, substantially-built to withstand the monsoon, were long and open in front, thus forming a covered verandah where the

women spent most of the day. Inside there was no furniture other than a few paddy-straw mats. Round the walls were hung various hunting trophies, antlers, skulls of civet cats and monkeys, and in one part of the room were hung the large beaks of hornbills. The inner room was very dark as the only light that could penetrate was from the small doors.

Cooking in Naga houses is done on a square hearth in the centre of the room; above this is hung a large cradle in which meat is smoked. All cooking utensils other than an odd iron pot or two are home-made. They consist of spoons, ladles, cups and boxes, all made of bamboo. Baskets for carrying eggs, hens and bottles are made of split bamboo.

As we approached the basti, the light rain which had been falling became a real downpour. The Assam Rifles made for the houses, and stood sheltering under them until the Head-man came out and invited us to shelter in his basti. The porters were tired from their long climb and at first we decided to spend the night there, but after having some food and rest we arranged that Mr. Scott and I should go on with our own kit because the sooner I could disarm people and end the shooting on the road the better it would be for everyone.

Wooley-Smith and McDonald were to remain that night at Nanki, and come on the following day. By this time I had conferred the "jungle rank" of Major upon Mr. Wooley-Smith, and Mr. McDonald became Lieutenant. We could only find one more set of stars in my kit, so poor Scott could not receive a higher rank than 2nd Lieutenant. By wearing "jungle commissions" it was much easier for them to handle military refugees. Jungle-Major Wooley-Smith came a few hundred yards along the road to Shamlung with me, and we were discussing our plans for the following day when suddenly we heard "Good morning, Major!" General Lung of the Chinese Medical Corps, and the Rev. Mr. Slater had approached us unnoticed.

The Chinese doctor had for some time been a Lecturer in Edinburgh University, and spoke with a Scots accent. He told us there was considerable trouble at the ferry six miles ahead. Mr. Slater and the General had helped to control the crowds from early morning until the afternoon; they admitted that their language had been "fruity" towards the end and that their arms ached from swinging canes. Things at the river were bad, and

there was a certain amount of shooting going on. The General also said that there were a lot of his Red Cross men on the road and that he had come on to see if he could get help for them. We promised to do what we could.

During the climb up to Nanki we discussed the formation of a Jeep Club, the membership to be restricted to Liaison Officers who had either worked for a month on the road, or had crossed the Pangsau Pass into Burma. The badge of the Jeep Club was to be a double coil of red rattan cane worn below the knee of the left leg in the Naga fashion. There were already several members who had qualified and were wearing the insignia. This brought up the question which became a topic of much discussion. None of us knew the exact spot on the road which divided Assam from Burma. At first the ridge above Nanki was thought to be the Burma Frontier, but later the general concensus of opinion fixed it in a narrow valley about a mile from the Nanki basti. At this place there were a large number of standstone boulders, and one of those was chosen as the dividing line.

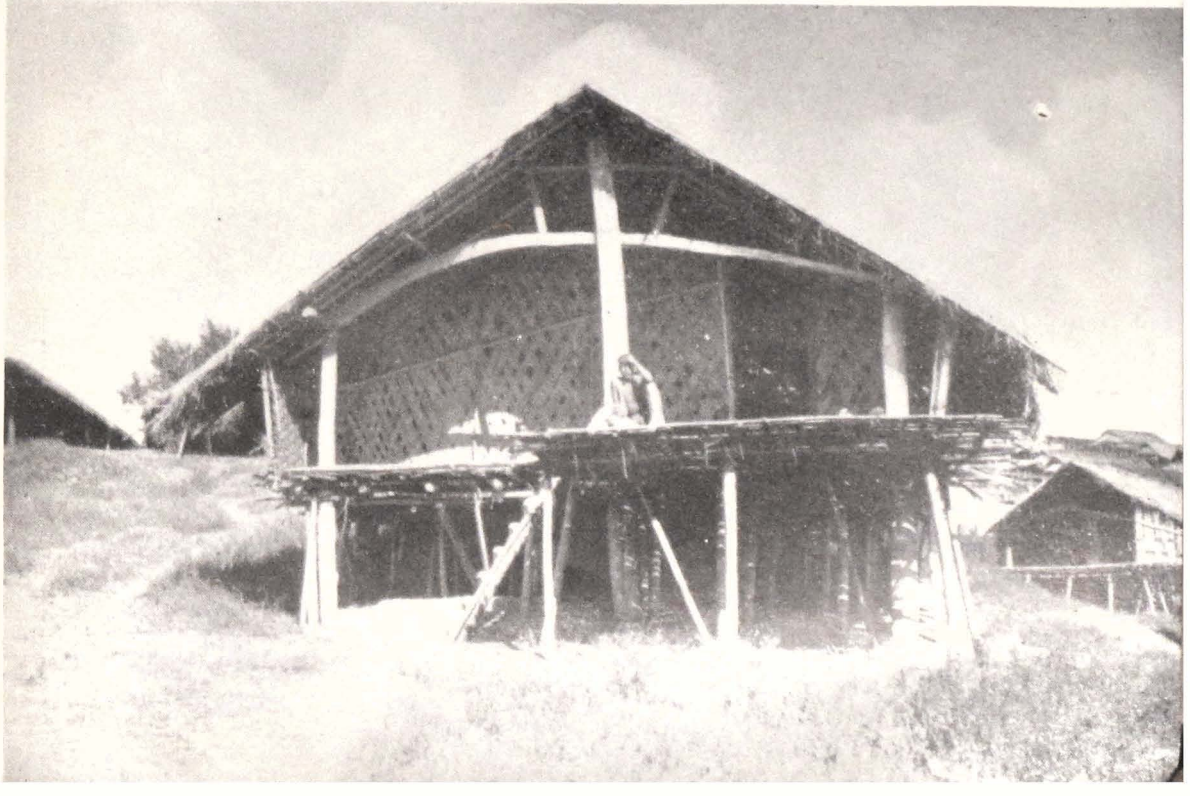
The porters were frightened now of going forward because the Assam Rifles had remained behind. They were tired, so we all kept together, and did not reach Shamlung camp until dark. It was a wretched, miserable evening, pouring with rain. In the camp were Mr. Clark, of the Burma Public Works Department, Mr. Owen, of the I.T.A. and Lieut. Webster of Assam Police. The camp was in a great state of confusion. There were hardly any shelters for the refugees and none for our porters. Miserable, wet refugees were trying to crawl under the bashas out of the rain; there was no cooked food ready, and the doling out of dry rice was little comfort when people did not know where to find water to dry firewood. People quarrelled and fought for fires all night, and at least fifty shots must have been fired before dawn.

The camp was in such confusion that our arrival was not welcomed, and for a long time we were kept out in the rain while Webster and the others debated whether or not they should allow us to enter their basha. After standing on the verandah of the basha for an hour we were told to come into the store-house at the back where the others had retreated. What had once been their basha was now crowded with European and Indian refugees who were in a desperate frame of mind. The situation in fact was com-

Photos: E. D. T. Lambert

Above: A Naga village

Below: A typical Naga house



EVACUEES

Above :
Two British soldiers

Above :
An elderly
Indian lady

Above :
The
Darlingtons'
eleven-week-
old baby

Above :
Searching the evacuees

Below:
Young survivors
of the ordeal

Above :
A party at
the railhead

Photos: I. T. A.

pletely out of control. We were nearly smoked out because our coolies who were sheltering under our basha had tried to light fires to cook their food. While dinner was being cooked I dug out a bottle of whisky to see if that would remove the gloom and despondency which had settled on the camp. It helped a little, but all three officers were tired out and were at their wits' end. After a meal we slept as best we could with our feet in one another's faces.

24th May

The morning was dull and miserable but our porters managed to make a fire; after a hot meal they felt better, but were not happy about all the shooting. The situation was so depressing that, instead of pushing on at first light as intended, we waited until Major Wooley-Smith had arrived with Lieut. McDonald. Then, leaving Wooley-Smith to reorganize the place, we went on to the Nawngyang River, four miles away.

When we reached the river we found that two lengths of rattan cane had been tied across it, and two crude rafts were being used to ferry people across. The larger raft could carry about five people with their kit, while the smaller one could only take three. There were plenty of people ready to pull the rafts towards the Indian side, but very few who were prepared to pull them back again. A big raft that had been built originally had been used to ferry the B.F.F. Cavalry across the river; they had organized the work themselves, but when the last had passed over they left the raft to drift down the stream, leaving other refugees to their fate.

From our side of the river we could see that about 200 people had collected on the far bank. They were all fighting and pushing to get onto the rafts. The Liaison Officers were having a grim time with armed people who fired their rifles to encourage the weaker ones to make way for them.

Scott and I at once crossed over on a raft to the other side, and were soon followed by half a dozen Gurkhas of the Assam Rifles. A few fixed bayonets had a very good moral effect. I moved about the crowd and collected all arms and ammunition. Some of the troops were not prepared to give up their arms at first, but we made it quite clear to them that no one would cross the river armed, and that even if they did succeed, the Assam Rifles on the other side would prevent them landing. The Chinese did not like the idea of parting with their Mauser pistols,

but with much sign language, and by pointing to my badge of rank, and giving receipts, we gradually had our way. Our porters who were crossing the river solved the great problem of the rafts' return journey. The pace at which refugees could cross soon increased, and with it tempers improved. Every now and again some Chinese would try to worm himself forward and would have to be dealt with. At first we were patient, but softness and kindness did not help, so we used our sticks after the first few general warnings. A little beating restored peace for half an hour or so, but when a new batch arrived the method had to be repeated. The disarming gave people confidence; to them it meant that law and order had been restored and that at last there was some organization to help them. That day we must have disarmed at least a hundred people.

Among the refugees were the Rev. and Mrs. Darlington, and their six-weeks-old baby. They were in good form and were very grateful for the Klim I gave them, as Mrs. Darlington was having difficulty in feeding her child. We told them they would have to wait their turn like everyone else, so they sat down and cooked a meal. About three hours later we got them safely across the river, and their party gave me a force filter-pump as they thought it would be a great help to us and as they could, from now on, get boiled water and tea in our camps.

The refugees all told the same story. There was no food ahead and many people were starving and unable to climb the hills in their weakened condition. That afternoon I watched a soldier dying from sheer exhaustion. He sat on his pack and leant forward; he had no longer any desire to live and did not want to be helped. He only wanted to be left alone, but I forced hot milk down his throat and carried him wrapped in a blanket to a shelter. He died next morning. The other refugees refused to help, and even Indian soldiers would not lend a hand. It was a Chinese Red Cross orderly who first came to my assistance. Later on in the evening, wandering round the ferry area, we noticed several corpses; some looked as if they had come to a violent end. We tied rattan cane round their legs, pulled them to the river and threw them in. We were having difficulty in dragging one body through the mud, so I asked an Indian who was standing by to help. We received the reply that he was going to drink water, so he could not help us, but after eating a little mud he found himself

sufficiently refreshed to help to clear the area of dead.

The news of starvation ahead rather worried me, as we had little food with us, and our own going forward without it might have made the feeding question more difficult. Refugees were often appearing with cattle—fine Burmese bullocks, but some had sore backs and were being deserted because they could not carry their loads. This gave me the idea of driving cattle instead of goats to feed the people. We commandeered a number and had them driven up to the camp we had built. They would be near at hand for the early march next morning.

Some of the Abor Porter Corps had come forward with the I.T.A. officers from Nampong. These porters come from the north-east corner of Assam, and are nearly as fair as Europeans, but are much stockier and have very strong calves. They are a very independent race and have had little contact with the outside world. They wear a small loin-cloth and a short home-spun jacket of heavy cotton, usually with intricate designs woven into the material. Around their legs and waist they wear coloured rattan cane, and on their heads, a strong heavy rattan cane hat shaped like the English bowler. This is strong enough, and designed, to withstand a sword blow. The Abor is never without his dah, or short sword which he carries across his chest. They even cut each other's hair with it by the simple means of placing a piece of wood between the hair and the head, and chopping all the way round, giving a neat bob effect. The dah is the universal tool which is used both in agriculture and in building *bashas*, the native house constructed entirely without nails out of logs, bamboos and thatch. Their *chungs*, or sleeping platforms are raised off the ground and are made of split bamboo tied to a frame very much like a bed.

The Abors had built us quite a good basha on the side of the hill with three chungs in it. While we were washing before dinner we heard considerable noise below, and went out to investigate. We found two Chinese soldiers carrying in an old Anglo-Burmese lady who gave her age as 72. She wanted to be put up for the night. McDonald gave up his chung to her, and went to sleep in the other basha with Mr. Millet and Mr. Gordon. The old woman was wet through, and smelt to high heaven. She had not taken her clothes off since she had started the journey a month before. They came off that night, everyone of them, and we had them washed out and smoked all night. She lapped down hot tea and whisky, and she

soon started telling us about the Chinese General—our doctor friend of the previous day—who had arranged to have her carried by his own men. We later fed her, and listened to the whole story of her life and that of her daughter who had married a "pure" Englishman. It was all rather pathetic, but it was rather amusing to see the old lady, with her false teeth soaking in a cup of salt water, telling us all about the famous people she had met and what they had said to her.

25th May

In the morning we gave the Chinese soldiers plenty of food and cigarettes to help them on their way. They hurried the old lady into the stretcher and sat down and ate their food for an hour, leaving her in the most uncomfortable position. They were not pleased about their charge, but the General's order had to be obeyed.

After a look round we could only find one out of all the cattle we had collected the previous evening. The remainder had been stolen during the night. With our depleted herd we started up the road. We had not gone far when we met an old man in a very weak condition. We still possessed ideals rather than common sense, and we gave rum and tea to a man who, if he ever reached the next camp, would certainly never have reached India. At this stage it was necessary to differentiate between people who were beyond our aid, and those who might respond to treatment. There was so much to do, and such shortage of supplies, that any wastage on hopeless cases would be to the detriment of those who still stood a chance of recovery. It took time and many heart-rending moments before we could harden ourselves to adopt this obviously sound, but seemingly uncharitable attitude.

It was a long climb to the top of the next hill; near the summit was a small jhum in which a few cattle were grazing. Two of them had sore backs, and had probably been deserted. Without making any enquiries, we drove the beasts on to Tagung Hka, where Dr. Anderson and Mr. Harrison had established a camp and dispensary.

The track down Tagung Hka was very steep, and there were very few springs on the road. Refugees had made shelters in the neighbourhood of them, and in the jhum at the top of the hill. In one or two places we saw banana trees growing. Although there

Left :
Mr. Wooley-Smith and Abors resting on the Pangsau Pass

Photo: Author

Right :
The Naungyang Crossing. A Gurkha soldier being ferried across by two Abors on a bamboo raft

Photo: Author

Left :
The Darlington Party, Mrs. Darlington and her six-week-old baby are in the foreground while Mr. Darlington, wearing a Shan hat, is standing on the right

Photo: Rev. Darlington

Right :
The Darlington baby in the cot in which it was carried out of Burma

Photo: Rev. Darlington

Photo: I.T.A.

"It was not a very good site . . . the approaches soon became a quagmire"

was no fruit on them the hungry refugees cut down the trees, and ate the central core of the stem. Other people boiled the young tops of the fern plant. Apart from the odd jungle roots there was no food to be found by the inexperienced dwellers of the towns.

At one place a large tree had fallen across the road and it was very difficult for even a man to get round the obstacle. Beside it was the remains of a saddled horse. That was the third dead animal we had seen. Further down the hill, we met two Oriya coolies who were in an exhausted condition. They had been lying in the open all night. We fed them and gave them some water, after which one of them was able to continue. Further down the road we came upon several corpses. Every corpse was found with its lower half exposed, and all the kit rifled. Many people died from various forms of stomach troubles, probably caused by eating raw plants. They certainly had suffered from diarrhœa, and at first we were afraid of cholera breaking out and spreading among the refugees. We, however, heard of no real case in our camps. The last part of the road down to the river was through great bamboo clumps which extended down to the water's edge.

The Tagung Hka is a narrow valley. The hills on either side are so steep that they can be described as cliffs. On each side of the river are level strips of ground covered with tall reeds, banana trees and scrub. The river itself, when low, was only 20 yards wide, but, in flood, it probably would have filled the whole valley. At the widest part of the valley, a swift-flowing stream entered the Tagung river. In the fork formed by these two streams we built our camp. It was not a very good site, but it was difficult to find a better one as the drainage was bad, and the approaches soon became a quagmire, with people wandering farther and farther off the path trying to enter our camp from all directions. Many people, finding water at the first river, stayed there, and did not know there was food to be had quite near at hand.

The camp consisted of the Doctor Babu's basha and dispensary which was stacked high with boxes of medicines; the store-house in which we fed, and in which Dr. Anderson and Mr. Harrison slept; and a tarpaulin shelter where Scott, McDonald and I lived. There was a tent for the dressers, and for the cook. My porters built themselves bashas alongside ours. In the centre of the camp we had a shelter for the Assam Rifle sentry. We divided the camp with fences to prevent stray people wandering about. We did not

encourage people to come inside the enclosure because they hindered our work, and had the habit of picking up everything they could lay their hands on. The refugees' camping ground was on the banks of the river about a hundred yards from our camp.

When we arrived in Tagung Hka there was hardly any food for our porters and certainly not enough to feed the refugees. It was a dreadful business being without stores, and many times we cursed the B.F.F.C. for their looting. If it had not been for them, camps would have been established right along the road but, as it was, Smith, Cooksey and Darlington were two marches ahead of us with only medicines and enough food for themselves. In the morning I took one of the bullocks down to the river and shot it. Some of my porters were Christians and were glad to help me cut it up for the sake of a piece of fresh meat. We started boiling the meat in a row of buckets and kerosene tins and we cut down dozens of plantain trees and boiled the stem with the meat. This was known as Tagung Hka stew. We all took our turn at cooking over the smoky fires. Our pots rested on two logs cut from a jungle creeper that festooned the trees. This wood was extremely soft but did not burn as it contained so much moisture. We built our fire under the shelter of two large trees which kept the rain off fairly well, but we could not escape from the smoke which irritated our eyes unmercifully. Finding dry wood was a very serious problem. We discovered that dried bamboos burnt best and gave out the most heat, so in the mornings we cut bamboos into fine splints. These easily lit and from them we built up our fires.

Each morning about dawn people started wandering into camp, some of them having spent the night a few hundred yards away, unaware of the camp close by. Others would wander up from the refugee camp and demand a second issue of food. We were so short of food and there were so many people that it was only possible to feed them once. Our war cry was "Keep them hungry, keep them moving." We did not want people to get that comfortable feeling under their belts because it made them relax and deprived them of the necessary urge to get out of the jungle as quickly as possible. The new arrivals in camp had to wait until the food was cooked, which was seldom before half past eight. In the meantime, we would take a walk round the camp and tell people to get a move on. Wise people were away by

dawn; they would probably have their next meal at the ferry by one o'clock. Other people cooked a little rice or some other foodstuff which they had either brought with them or bought from the Nagas. These people would hang about for a long time. Dr. Anderson and his assistant would go round and give notes to people who were too weak to proceed that day and needed medical aid; then we would have our own breakfast and start the day's real work, which was to get as many people alive to India as was possible. We cleared camp finally before we started dishing out food. Those people who begged a few minutes more were given it, but if they did not get out by the specified time we drove them out. This was done in all the camps; it was the only way to get tired and demoralized people to safety. We allowed no one who came into the camp before midday to stay. After that hour we did not encourage them to go on as they would be unable to reach the springs near the top of the hill before nightfall. We reckoned that few refugees could move at a greater pace than one mile an hour. We were tired out by evening, the cooked food was often finished, and to cook a big saucepan of rice or stew took over an hour. By evening all the best huts and shelters were occupied and a late-comer was unwelcome.

For the first three days we fed the refugees on Tagung Hka stew. We had no rice to spare, or any other food that we had brought from India, but our stew contained plenty of nutriment. Many Hindus who, under normal conditions would have found beef loathsome to their taste, now poor things, in their extremity hungrily ate this nourishing stew. We had refugees of every caste, and for very religiously minded people who were really hungry and were still not prepared to eat meat, we kept a stew made principally of plantain.

3: FEEDING AND DISARMING

29th May

ON THE EVENING of the fourth day Mr. Walker arrived with a small convoy of Abor porters. No one could have been more welcome! Walker is one of the stoutest-hearted people I have ever met, and we all trusted him to carry out any task he set himself or that was given him. He never let us down. Previous to this I had only met him at a dinner at Nampong after he had just spent five days completing the cutting of a new road over the mountains.

He was doubly welcome now for he had also brought us food for ourselves and for the refugees. When the food came in, the refugees started coming back towards our camp. It was decided to give them an issue of dry rice. One or two of us went around the camp shouting the glad news. Within ten minutes from twelve to fourteen hundred people swarmed round us. We soon realized that we had created a large and desperate crowd who were hungry, frightened and completely demoralized. We decided that the only way to handle them was to make them queue up in pairs, but that was easier said than done. We issued no food until all the crowd was on one side of the camp, and then, when Scott, McDonald and I had driven them into a queue, Dr. Anderson and Mr. Harrison started doling out half a cigarette-tin of rice to each person. There were many free fights in the crowd, and we did not hesitate to use our canes on men, women and children alike. We had to be absolutely ruthless in order to maintain control of a hunger-maddened crowd. Hitherto they had not seen any sort or kind of organization, and feeding arrangements for them had been a case of the survival of the fittest and best-armed. Hence their attitude on this occasion. We made no difference between sex or

race—anyone who tried to push forward, or made a noise was taken out of the queue, beaten, and put at the very end. Perhaps twenty people had to be handled roughly and nearly all were petty government officials. They, to the amusement of the crowd, would shout, "I am a government servant. You can't hit me." However, as bolting ex-government servants, they learned their lesson and when their turn came for food those who had too much to say were told politely that their food indent had not been received and we could not issue any to them. Their threats were of no avail, and we told them that if they did not improve their manners the other camps down the road would also refuse them food and help. The treatment we meted out here may seem to be harsh, but it had a very wholesome effect, and from reports we received and information we got on our return journey, we gathered that the people behaved better, and were sometimes even willing to help.

The process of feeding the crowd was long and tiring. Each person asked for more, and all the thanks we received was, "Is that all? So little! I have not eaten for four days. I am dying of hunger. My brother is looking after my kit. May I take his too?" Sometimes when a family came up we asked how many people were in it so that all the food could be put into one dish. We were told that there were six men. On the count, we could find a man and wife and four children, two of whom would be under the age of three years; yet they were always proclaimed as men until milk was required, when grown men and women tried to pass as children. If we had the food to give, as the camps nearer base had, it would have been a different matter; but to us, one person drawing double rations meant that someone else went without.

When we had been working for an hour and a half we realized that a number of people were coming up a second time. They would swear that they had not been before. Some of these obtained food, but as we doled it out we repeated many times, "If you are taking more than your share you will die. You will never reach the top of the next hill." This was truer than we had anticipated, for over-eating killed seventeen people in the next few days. Their eyes were bigger than their stomachs, and they could not digest so much. Often they did not bother to cook the extra rice, but ate it raw, with the result that it scoured their intestines. It had the effect of very bad dysentery, and after pass-

ing large quantities of blood they would sit down in a wet place and add a chill or pneumonia to their troubles. They seldom recovered, and often died where they first sat down. When we heard of the deaths on the road we all became adamant and cut down the dry rations and tried to issue only cooked food. The crowds, however, were too big and, although we kept eight or ten kerosene and mustard-oil drums boiling all day long, we could not keep pace with these crowds.

On this particular evening, while I was marshalling the crowd, I noticed that a small party of Chinese had arrived and I said "Mi" —rice—to the leading ones. They all smiled hopefully. I tried to tell them to go to the end of the queue and wait their turn. Just as the Chinese troops started to move, a short round-faced fellow came up and announced that he was a Chinese General, and would not queue up with common soldiers. I said it was all the same to me, and hoped he was not too hungry. He was left to his own devices, but without food.

As the work was coming to an end I noticed that the General's men were waiting in a group near the serving place. The General himself was having a stand-up row with Dr. Anderson and Mr. Harrison. The Chinaman was swinging his right arm, pointing to his chest with his thumb and announcing, "I am General—", (I do not remember the name), but no one was in the least impressed. After some time I came along and asked him what he wanted in my camp. I told him I would not feed his men, nor allow him to proceed until I had disarmed them—no arms, no rice or pass. I pointed to my stacks of rifles and he gradually realized he was wasting his breath, so he changed his tune, and told me he was commanding a party of one hundred and eighty men—the advance party of which was with him—and asked if he could draw rations for them. We at once said, "Yes, certainly, when you parade one hundred and eighty men to draw them, but in the meantime hand over your arms and your own pistol and ammunition, and then we will do some more talking." I left the General and took up my receipt book and wrote out a few receipts for his men. He refused to hand over his own pistol. I then gently suggested to him that although his own men were now disarmed and hungry, no food would be issued until he had handed over his pistol I called two of the Gurkha soldiers to stand near me with fixed bayonets, and then informed the General that he could now

go back to China without food or hand over his pistol at once. He did not hesitate long for he saw we were quite prepared to disarm him forcibly.

As he was being given a receipt for his pistol he again asked for the rations for the hundred and eighty men. We let him have a bag of rice, and also gave his men a feed of stew. They were a fine lot of fellows, and were full of smiles and gratitude. We could only count fifteen men out of the one hundred and eighty, but were really too exhausted to bother much and, as I had them disarmed, they could not make much trouble even if they had wanted to. We swore that in the future every Chinaman would draw his own rations. The next evening we found out that this "General" was our first bogus general, and declared, "God help the next man who says he is a general!"

That evening after coming into the hut to rest I developed a severe cramp in the stomach. It doubled me up with pain, and I broke into a perspiration all over. However, no one felt in the least concerned. Dr. Anderson gave me some bacteriaphage ampoules to drink, and in an hour I felt much better. Early in the morning I had some more of this bacteriaphage and by seven o'clock I had nearly recovered. I had decided to take it easy and remain in bed late. About 08-30 hours I was having breakfast alone in the basha when I heard McDonald raise his voice about a rifle. Disarming was my main job, so I ran out of the hut and hopped the fence to see what was the trouble. A sepoy of the B.F.F. was refusing to give up his rifle, and was pointing it in our direction. As usual he had "one up the spout". It was not safe to argue in that atmosphere, so I knocked his rifle to one side with my left hand and gave him a hook with my right. He came round five minutes later and was given his receipt for the rifle.

We then told him to hand over his ammunition. He did not want to take it out of his pack in front of us. This made us very suspicious so he was made to empty his kit on the ground. This revealed that he was carrying a large quantity of tinned food. He was asked where he had obtained these British-troop rations and we learned that they had been found on top of the hill at Ngalang Ga. The R.A.F. had been dropping rations for some days but this was the first sign of the food we had seen. We decided to search the other three men with him; two of whom were old Mussalmans. They at once protested, saying they had only clothes

in their bundles but their packs felt more like a suit of armour than modern clothing, so they were opened up. Out came a great deal of tinned food, tea, salt and sugar.

Just as we were searching them a British soldier arrived and at once said, "That is the fellow to whom I paid ten rupees for a tin of fruit." We had no objection to these people helping themselves liberally to stores dropped by air, but we did object to their hoarding and selling refugee-stores to other people who were less fortunate. While we were discussing what we would do with this fellow, a British Sergeant came up and pointed out another man in the party who had charged twenty-five rupees for a tin of fruit. We told these people to hand back the money. At first they denied having sold the things, then they refused to hand back the money as they found the stuff and therefore it was theirs to eat or sell. However, a good hiding so frightened them that they handed over not thirty-five rupees but over two hundred. This money was duly returned to the State.

One thing that became quite obvious was that the people who were coming from Ngalang Ga had more food on them than they needed. Armed men had the most, women and children often had none. We decided that we would search everyone whether sweeper or General. This meant much hard work but we were happy now that we had food to distribute and could save lives. We searched about a thousand people a day. Each person on arrival was disarmed and then was told that there were camps every few miles all the way to India where food would be distributed free and there was no need to carry more than two days' emergency rations with them. We would say, "Now show us what you have—if you are short we will make it up; if you have too much we will take some away." Most people were very good, made no objection and were treated with every kindness and all sympathy. Those who co-operated, and did not lie, were on their way in a few minutes. But many lied and pretended that they had only clothes and got up to all sorts of tricks. We always caught them because our search was thorough, and if people would not undo the bundles themselves, we did so for them.

The Sergeant and the other B.O.R.s who had bought food, joined us for about a week and helped in the searching. At first we were very bitter about the large amounts of food which strong and armed men had collected for themselves, but they unwittingly

brought to us what it would have taken hundreds of porters to carry. Our storehouse became well stocked by this means, and we were able to distribute food to people who needed it most. The large quantities of milk were a godsend to mothers, as most of them were by now unable to feed their babies from the breast.

Sometimes when searching we would find most extraordinary things—often large bundles of notes stolen from banks. Money meant nothing to us, so we would ignore a packet of hundred rupee notes, but make a dive at a tin of Klim. Refugees could not eat paper. Food was the only thing that interested us. Many refugee coolies still carried their hoes with them. We needed one very badly in order to dig a latrine, but nothing would make them part with one. We offered to pay cash on the spot and a replacement on arrival in India, but they hung on and refused to sell. Two dhobies (washermen) came down the road with large charcoal irons on their heads. Most Indians had bales of cheap cloth and silks that they had looted from shops. One man had rolls of medal-ribbon he had picked up. There were dozens of silver beer mugs, silver spoons, etc., taken from officials' houses. These things amused us and it was only when we found Government property, like field-glasses, that we took them away.

We were amazed at the large number of fine cattle that came down the road, but the refugees seldom looked after them properly, with the result that many were beginning to get sore backs. A well-fed bullock can cover about ten miles a day in the hills, but few were fed at all except at night, and lazy refugees would not take the loads off the beasts while they themselves rested during the day.

One morning Dr. Anderson and Mr. Harrison took a short walk up the road to tell people to come into camp. Only a few hundred yards from the camp they found a large fat man who was wearing a torn cap and coat, a cheap cotton shirt and a pair of shorts. He was lying exhausted in the middle of the road with a temperature of 104°. Arrangements were made to carry him into camp and put him on a chung we had built by the Doctor Babu's basha. He recovered a little and sat up, but died in the late afternoon. The Doctor Babu helped us carry him to the river into which we threw him. While cleaning up the area around the chung I found his coat and picked it up on the end of a stick preparatory to burning it. It was so heavy, however, that the stick broke. Whilst poking about the coat I found a heavy wallet which con-

tained a slip of paper showing the rail, bus, and boat fares to Chittagong from Rangoon. He had evidently intended to travel by that route, but had been forced to come by the northern route instead. From another piece of paper we found that he was Dr. N. John of Rangoon, quite a well-known Indian Christian doctor. He had with him more than a thousand rupees. These were all sent down to the base and then handed over to the Treasury Officer. It was usually quite impossible to tell who people were or what positions they had once held in Burma.

British Officers came through in large parties and we had heard that a Headquarters party was on the road. We all believed that this party would organize the area in which food was being dropped and their influence would restore peace on the road but, to our surprise, they had not stopped to do any organizing. I told the General and his staff that I was disarming everyone on the road and was making no exceptions. The General handed me his pistol and received his receipt with the rest. His pistol was so rusted up that he could not have fired it if he had tried. We allowed his party to sit about our camp and sleep in our beds, and we provided stew for his staff.

We heard from some of these officers that an Indian V.C.O. and some of his men had taken charge of Ngalang Ga and were collecting the rations and preventing other people from retrieving the bags dropped by the R.A.F. These men were using their Tommy and Bren guns readily and were selling these looted rations at exhorbitant prices. We had neither porters nor troops enough to do much good at Ngalang Ga, so we continued work at Tagung Hka until Walker sent us a few more Assam Rifles.

The refugees coming down from Ngalang Ga all confirmed the story of the V.C.O. He was one of the hundreds who seized the chance of making money out of other people's misfortunes. He was also doing us a good turn by ensuring that rations were being collected and distributed in small quantities, thus avoiding over-eating. No one could afford to buy very much, so there was fairly even distribution. Some people went hungry, but no one died of over-eating. Some of the refugees came in and made definite complaints. We wanted to have some witnesses against him for selling refugee rations, but none would stay with us until the V.C.O. arrived. They were keener to reach India safely than to have anyone punished.

A Mr. Green, who had been an evacuation officer, told us that a Sergeant Huq of the Ordnance had stuck a rifle into a Miss Susan Finlay's stomach and had taken all her rations from her by force. I sent for Miss Finlay and asked her to make a statement, but she refused to do so because we had given her all the food she needed to get to the next camp. So our time was better spent in feeding people than in trying to settle their complaints. Some people were afraid that they might be murdered on the road for giving evidence against anyone. This was very understandable because that very day Harrison and McDonald had found the naked body of a dead European in our river.

One morning I saw Mr. Beaver, a Burma Police officer, with what I took to be a Union Jack tied to a mule saddle. I explained to him that I needed a flag and that I had tried unsuccessfully to obtain one before coming up the road. He gave me the flag, which turned out to be the Burma Ensign. It was a blue ensign with a peacock in the blue field. This we flew over our camp. Its moral effect on the crowds was amazing. When people objected to being disarmed or searched we merely pointed to the flag and they gave way. To them it meant that all was not lost, that there was still some law and order and that arrangements were being made to help them.

The rain had fallen steadily from the 18th of May, and our camp became a real quagmire. Our hardest problem was to obtain dry firewood for ourselves and to cook for the refugees. The trees in the Tagung Hka Valley were large and provided no small branches for fuel. However, there was a certain amount of bamboo and buffalo-grass with which people built shelters for the night. As the bamboo and grass dried, bits of the shelter were pulled off and burnt to cook the evening meal, with the result that the refugees had to rebuild their shelters each evening. By the end of May there was scarcely a bamboo or piece of buffalo-grass left in the valley. The place was littered with refuse and excreta, and many people started camping some distance beyond our camp. By the end of each day we were filthy and longed to go off and wash. On the Ngalang Ga side of our camp was the small river that flowed into the Tagung Hka. Here we used to go each evening and swim in a beautiful clear pool full of small fish, until we were driven to putting on our long trousers to keep the sandflies from biting us. The sandflies at Tagung Hka were dreadful and

made life miserable for the refugees. We went to bed early to prevent them biting us. The refugees and porters who scratched these bites soon developed septic sores which rapidly deteriorated as they ploughed through the deep wet clay to Assam.

4 : THE SUBEDAR ON THE HILL

31st May

ABOUT THE END of May the weather cleared up and it looked as if we were going to have a few fine days, so it was decided that Harrison, Scott and I should go to Ngalang Ga and persuade the V.C.O. and his Merry Men to give up their retail business and go on to Assam. We were not very sure whether we would have to fight it out or not. However, to make sure that there would be no misunderstanding, we took six men of the Assam Rifles with us. We also had with us about fifty Abor porters and the twelve Christian Nepalis the political officer had lent us.

The route from Tagung Hka to Ngalang Ga involved an eight-mile march. The first part of the road climbed steeply for two miles. The trees were large, many of their trunks being three or four feet in diameter. Sometimes we saw a tree the diameter of which must have been at least six or seven feet. Having reached the top of the first ridge, the road ran along the level for a mile or so. Several times we heard the crack of a rifle shot and on one occasion a bullet passed quite near us. Our porters were not very worried as they had become used to the refugees firing off their rifles and they had seen no one hit. (Many of the refugees fired a couple of shots when they reached our camp for sheer joy, or as a signal to their friends to come on. Our bathing pool near the camp was a favourite place for people to shoot fish, so we were constantly hearing shooting.)

After a few minutes' walking we met a sepoy with a rifle; I asked him at what he had been firing and he said a Chinaman had come near him so he had fired his rifle to discourage him from coming too near.

The road now descended a short distance and then gradually

climbed another ridge. This ridge had been jhumed perhaps ten or fifteen years before. All the trees were very close together, slender and tall—ideal timber for building jungle camps. The path was wide here and the going comparatively easy. Wherever there was water on the road we found small shelters. We told the refugees that there was an organized camp not far away and persuaded them to hurry on their way. After a mile or so the track again became very steep and degenerated into another red clay quagmire where the Steel Brothers' elephants had churned up the path and left deep pot-holes which made the going difficult and sometimes dangerous. It was quite impossible to tell where there would be a deep hole into which a leg would plunge up to the knee. There are very few things more irritating than having gritty clay water splashed up the inside of one's shorts. On the higher slopes of the hill we occasionally caught glimpses of the view. When we did, we saw deep valleys and chain after chain of mountains. Those in the neighbourhood were all between four and five thousand feet high, thickly wooded and for the most part dark green with some lighter green patches of bamboo.

There were usually a few jhums on the more prominent ridges and sometimes a Naga basti on the crest of a hill. The Nagas always build their villages on the highest ground available because a village on the top of a hill is easier to defend. No one can shoot down on it and it is difficult to approach it unseen. The other great advantage is that there are fewer mosquitoes and sandflies at the tops of the hills than in the valleys. The villages are easy to keep clean as the heavy rain washes all the dirt down the hill. The Nagas do not mind having to walk half a mile or more for their water; in fact, in having the water a little distance from the village there is less chance of its becoming contaminated.

Near the top of Ngalang Ga hill I was stopped by some British officers who had been working with the Chinese Army. From them and from several other people, I learned that the V.C.O. (a Subedar) and his party were still carrying on their lucrative " business " at the top of the hill. No one, however, was willing to point out the Subedar to me, although they described him as short and thick-set, aged about forty and a Punjabi Mussalman. I walked on quickly to keep ahead of our men and, sure enough I found a group of sepoys on the top of the hill, all well-armed

and trying to look fierce. I sent for the Subedar and had a chat with him. He was very surprised to see a British officer who still expected to be saluted and who insisted on service formalities. We saluted each other and then sat down on the top of the hill. The Subedar asked me what I was doing going in the wrong direction and who I was. I replied that my Company was coming up behind me but I liked walking ahead. Just then a few of the Assam Rifles arrived and halted nearby. I told the Subedar I admired his courage in sitting on the top of a hill instead of marching towards safety when the weather was fine. I asked if he realized how far he had yet to go and described the horrors of the Nawngyang Hka and the ferry crossing. I added that the river was down just now but would rise again as soon as the rain started. This was the second day of fine weather and we could not expect it to last for more than two days. I then told him a long and exaggerated tale of all the troops I had on the road and of the feeding arrangements we had made. The Subedar was now so keen to get away while the going was still good that he left most of his hoard of rations behind. We parted the best of friends—so he thought—but he was later convicted for his crime.

By this time Mr. Harrison had caught up and we started to look for a camp-site. Walking over the crest of the hill and down the ridge for half a mile we found quite a good one. We continued a little further down the track to look for a lady who had been sending messages to us by Major Tao of the Yunan-Burma Railway, and found her in a hut on the bank of the Ngalang stream. She complained of colitis so I gave her some Entero-vioform and made her sit up. She had no skirt as she had soiled her last and had thrown it away. She had with her a servant who said he was unable to help her because his bundle was too heavy. He could not carry it as well as assist her. I opened the bundle and found several bales of looted cloth, heavy brass pots, dishes and some heavy, rusty, car tools. Having lightened the bundle considerably and made a new skirt for the lady we set her on the road. She was very reluctant to move as she believed the Chinese Major would send porters for her from India.

Mr. Harrison and I returned up the hill and gave orders for the jungle to be cleared and a camp built. The men were very tired and we did not manage to build a very good hut. Before it was finished refugees had arrived, looking round for rations.

These we issued in small quantities and encouraged people to hurry on to Tagung Hka where the food situation had improved.

In the early afternoon one of my Political Porter Corps men was struck on the ankle by a sack of potatoes dropped from an aeroplane. This aeroplane only dropped six bags but the jungle was so thick that it took several hours to find them. In the course of the search a few other bags dropped on previous occasions were also found. In several cases the bags had been torn open by persons in search of tinned foods. Food was spilt in all directions. I found a few Punjabi soldiers looking hopefully for rations—so I ordered them to help the Abors clear the jungle to aid the search. They were willing enough to do this. When we had found one bag I ordered one of them to carry it out of the jungle to the path. I turned to go on with the search and when I next saw this soldier he was in the act of tearing off the outer covers of the rice bag. I shouted to him to carry it up to the road at once where he would get his share. Instead he dropped the bag and swung his rifle at my stomach. It was what I had expected so I hit him on the side of the neck with a heavy rattan cane, whereupon he dropped his rifle and as he stooped to pick it up I gave him an upper cut which removed all further desire to try any more mischief. On recovering he was quite willing to carry bags of food to the top of the hill and later in the afternoon came and apologised and said that it was the first time in three months he had received an order from an officer. That evening he was served with a cooked meal and hot tea and the following morning went on to Tagung Hka.

I had brought my Peacock Standard with me and as soon as the camp was ready it was hoisted. We cut the jungle so that it could be seen as far down the path as possible.

From the top of the hill we carried down the canisters which had been dropped by the R.A.F. These had been loaded with tinned foods. By pulling the canister to bits we put every piece to practical use. The nose of the canister is a large aluminium dome, which made a cauldron for cooking rice. The dome had a plate riveted across the base; this was used for cooking chappatties. The canister itself was used for boiling water and making tea. The parachute was used as a tent and as bedding. Torn into strips it was used for making ration packs. The many cords were used to replace broken boot-laces and to tie on soles of shoes and boots which often came adrift.

That evening the weather looked threatening and we were not too happy about our roof. However, the rain held off and we passed a comfortable night.

1st June

Next morning Harrison and I climbed to the summit and decided to have the hill-top jhumed so as to make a better place for air-dropping. With the help of Abors and my porters we cut down hundreds of small trees and burnt down a number of huts. On top of the hill we spread out a large white cross. This work was in vain, for the R.A.F., for some unknown reason, did not drop supplies again.

The Abors helped me burn a few corpses. They did not like doing it at first, but when they saw Harrison and me piling wood and grass over the wretched remains the Abors came along to help. As they threw on the wood and logs they jumped in the air—whooping to keep the devils from getting them. Harrison and I joined in the whooping and we soon had everyone whooping and burning. In our endeavour to cleanse the hill we nearly burnt up an old man who at first sight appeared dead. Some people had been killed by bags dropping on them and one fellow had his leg badly bruised and was only able to crawl.

2nd June

The next morning Scott arrived with Darlington, Smith and Cooksey. They had been running a camp at Namlip, but were forced to withdraw as they had run out of food. They had marched all night by the light of hurricane lamps and came in singing, "Please do not burn our cookhouse down because Mother is willing to pay." They rested a little while and then continued to Tagung. Scott told me he had met two Chinese soldiers coming up the hill; one was carrying his friend on his back. The injured man had received a nasty sharpnel wound in the leg. Scott had dressed this for him and these men were so grateful that they gave Scott two tins of bully beef out of their very meagre store. These Scott gave to a passing Indian but the Chinese snatched them back from the Indian and returned them to Scott. The Chinese soldier then gave the Indian another tin of meat.

Johnny Walker, the Political Officer who ran the Abors, came up to Ngalang Ga and stayed two days. The Abors would

do anything for him and while he was with us they searched the whole of the air-dropping area and found 22 bags of food. We also improved the clearing so that if further dropping did take place we could find the bags more easily. Wooley-Smith also paid us a visit and we discussed the possibility of staying on at Ngalang Ga. I wanted to push on to Namyung Hka and try to organize the river crossing. In many parts of the jungle I had seen the rattan cane growing and felt sure that it would have been possible to stretch a rattan bridge across the river. However, as the food situation was getting worse and not better Wooley-Smith would not allow us to go further.

There was an alternative suggestion which I put forward; namely, that a message should be sent back to Nampong to the Wireless Section to have more rations dropped, then to stay on for the rains at Ngalang Ga with only a few coolies. However, the " powers-that-be " would hear of no such suggestion and Wooley-Smith had his hands tied, so we were forced to withdraw a few days later.

The people further back were having trouble with their porters. They were all keen to finish the evacuation and be done with it. Morale in India was low, very low indeed. A myth had been started that it was impossible to remain in the jungle during the rains, because it was full of blackwater fever.

5: THE SWEDISH CONSUL'S STORY

WOOLEY-SMITH AND WALKER went back to Tagung Hka and Harrison and I stayed to feed the refugees. There was much disarming to be done, which was always a tricky business and we did not want any accidents. One or two people had to be disarmed forcibly, but most people were keen to give up their arms. We had hoped to carry these back to India but the porters were unwilling to carry back any loads. However, we persuaded the Abors to take back all the pistols, Tommy guns and Brens. We amused ourselves with shooting competitions, and all the Abors were keen to fire the different kinds of weapons. I had left Ledo wearing a brand-new topi. I had enamelled it underneath the cloth so that it would stand up to the monsoon rains. The topi was doing well until Johnny Walker sat on it one dark night. With the crown forced in, it no longer kept me dry. I asked the Abor porters to make me a rattan-cane hat like theirs, but these stocky hillmen just laughed. However, while at Ngalang Ga I spent a lot of time cutting bamboos and light timber with a dah. I asked the Abor headman to teach me how to wield a dah properly and to construct all the different things they used to make themselves comfortable. The men used to stand round me and grin and roar with laughter and derision when the heavy knife bounced off a bamboo and flew out of my hand. But when they realized I was not playing but was determined to learn their art, they became very sympathetic and friendly and showed me dozens of apparently simple tricks in cutting, splitting and tying bamboo. A few days later the Abors made me a hat which I always wore after that, and they were delighted with half a dozen packets of "Golden Tree" cigarettes, which we considered one shade worse than the infamous "V's". A hatless European refugee, seeing

my hat, tried to buy one from our porters. But not even for a hundred rupees would he consider parting with his tribal head-dress to an outsider. The Abors have divided the people of the world into two groups, Abors and Uitlanders, and will do nothing to help the Uitlanders.

Later, one evening, Capt. Cowley arrived in the camp and after drinking some tea told us that his companion Mr. Higginbottom had failed to make the climb up from Ngalang stream. We went down to look for him and took with us some tea and biscuits; but after a long and fruitless search, during which we helped several other people, we returned to camp. There we found that Mr. Higginbottom had reached our camp before we set out, having followed Capt. Cowley in without being noticed. Mr. Higginbottom said he was suffering from some heart trouble, so we sent a special courier off with a message for the necessary drugs to be sent up the road to meet him. Later that evening we heard someone shouting "Government is here! Government is here!" I looked up and saw a European running back down the hill urging his friends to hurry and shouting that all was well. That was what a little Peacock flag could do to demoralized people in a forward area. These people were fed and given a few rations to carry them on the next day. It was explained that we allowed no one to sleep in our camp because we could not accommodate everyone and therefore we treated everyone alike. They told me that there were many people camped a little way down the road without rations. Before nightfall I took a couple of porters with me and went down the track telling people that there were rations to be had at Flag Staff House. Those who were unable to move were given food where they were. On this trip I met the two Chinese soldiers whom Scott had mentioned. I dressed the injured leg and, having finished, realized that both fellows were lame. In carrying his friend the fit soldier had fallen and hurt himself. I gave them enough food to keep them for about a week, so that they had a chance of travelling slowly to Tagung. Both these fellows reached India safely. They were not the only soldiers in distress. There came to our camp a Sikh who had his leg broken in two places below the knee. He had been carried by four Oriya coolies from Myitkyina, a distance of 330 miles. He had not slept for weeks and was in a dreadful state. We poured some Dettol over his dressings to drive out the

maggots and keep the flies away, but could not do much for him. Meanwhile we took care of his porters and gave them of our best. Whether the soldier got back to India or not depended on these men. The soldier did reach India safely, after being carried on by those porters all the way from Nawngyang Hka to Tipang, a further distance of 47 miles.

3rd June

An organized party of Chin troops arrived with a Subedar and a Quartermaster. They produced a parade state, neatly written out, and demanded rations for their company. This Subedar had brought through a complete company of Chin recruits. They were well turned out and perfectly behaved. The Subedar announced that as it was Sunday the men were resting and would continue the march next day. I did not disarm this unit, but gave them all the help I could. I wrote a letter to General Wood drawing his attention to the matter, but I did not receive any acknowledgement of this nor of any of my letters written up the road.

4th June

Early in the afternoon a short thick-set fellow carrying a heavy pack walked into the camp leading a small brown Chinese pony. After he had removed the two panniers from the wooden saddle-tree, he came over to where I was standing and asked for some rations for his party. As he approached I realized that he was a Swede and greeted him in Swedish, much to his astonishment. He informed me that he was Mons Hallberg, the Swedish Consul for Burma, and also head of the Swedish Match Company in that country. Among his party who were beginning to arrive were Mr. H. A. Pearson and 7 members of the Indian staff of the Swedish Match Company. They had been joined earlier on the journey by Mr. Raddon and Mr. Chubb of Dodwell & Company and a few days previously by Mr. Keeling, late of the Burma Police. Hallberg saw that all his party received some hot tea and biscuits which was all I could spare. He then came over to me and asked if his party could stay the night in Ngalang Camp as they were all worn out, especially Raddon who was suffering from repeated bouts of malaria. I refused and said they must all leave my camp in half an hour, because we were very short of rations

as the aeroplanes had ceased dropping supplies. The nights were so cold and damp on top of the mountain that already over a hundred people had died of exposure. I held out glowing pictures of the camps a few miles ahead well stocked with rations.

While Hallberg was resting I asked him to explain why, as Swedish Consul for Burma, and in charge of Japanese and Finnish interests, he had left Rangoon. His reply was as I expected: Rangoon like the rest of Burma was in a chaotic state ever since the criminal prisoners had been released from the jails and the lunatics had been set at liberty to prevent them from starving to death in confinement. These people had run wild, murdering, raping and burning, until no European or Indian was safe. Many of the Burmese had become very anti-European in order to ingratiate themselves with the new conquerors and did not respect neutral subjects or acknowledge the diplomatic status of Consuls.

The Japanese first bombed Rangoon on the 23rd of December 1941 and again on Christmas day, when they lost about eleven planes which were shot down by the Tomahawks of the American Volunteer Group. The R.A.F., who were flying old Brewster Buffaloes, were hopelessly outclassed by the swift enemy planes. From then on, air raids were frequent and most of the labour moved out of Rangoon, bringing all but the most essential work to a standstill. The Government of Burma therefore asked the Burma Match Company to move all its valuable chemicals and stores to the factory in Mandalay, which was working at full pressure. They were also assured that Upper Burma would be held. Early in the New Year Mr. Thorsen, the Rangoon Factory Manager, started moving the Company's stores up-country. The task, which he carried out without a single loss to his firm, required superhuman effort and considerable courage, as the railway and river were frequently bombed by the Japanese.

On Friday, the 20th of February the Governor ordered a complete evacuation of Rangoon within 48 hours. On Saturday the few remaining members of the office staff left by road for Mandalay. Mrs. Pearson, who had been working up to the last moment in the Army Headquarters Cipher Branch, sailed for Calcutta on Saturday the 22nd on the very last ship to escape from Rangoon, before the demolition. Pearson and Hallberg were among the last Europeans to leave Rangoon except for the demolition parties. When they set

out on Sunday afternoon by road for Mandalay they left behind them a deserted, burning town which was in the process of being looted by the inmates of the Mental Asylum, the Lepers' Home and prisoners from the local jail. After two days' motoring, Hallberg and Pearson reached Mandalay and found that Mr. Prien, the factory Manager, had been able to keep his factory working. However, people were getting jittery and large-scale evacuations were taking place by land and air to India. Hallberg soon realized that Burma could no longer be held so he arranged for all the Company's valuable chemicals and stores to be taken up-river to Bhamo and Myitkyina where it was hoped it would be possible to sell them to the Chinese Government.

On Good Friday the Japanese bombed Mandalay with explosive and incendiary bombs and started fires all over the town. Ninety per cent of the houses were built either of wood or bamboo so that the fires spread rapidly, though the factory itself escaped. In the factory compound there were eleven hydrants and a large reserve of water which enabled the factory staff to keep the fires in the neighbourhood under control. On the 3rd of April the situation deteriorated and the workmen refused to run the factory. The Europeans remained on in the Company's bungalows within the compound until dawn on the 5th when the fires came too near. Later in the day the wind changed and the danger passed, so they returned; but not for long, as the bombers paid another visit on the 8th, and also on the 12th, when there was a hurricane and part of the factory was burnt in spite of the staff's superhuman efforts in trying to save it. The next few days were spent in paying off all the factory hands who could be found before leaving Mandalay. Hallberg, Prien, Thorsen and Pearson left by lorry and car on the 17th and reached Bhamo on the 25th where they waited until the 1st of May, hoping that their Danish friends in the East Asiatic Company, who were supposed to join them, would arrive. The party left Bhamo for Myitkyina on May 1st, but it was not until noon on the 5th that the party reached the airfield from where they hoped to fly to India. Next morning the enemy bombed and machine-gunned the transport planes and only one of the four planes was able to return to India. This was the end of the evacuation by air. Hallberg as Consul was offered a seat in the last plane but gave it up to a lady.

The Swedish Match Company party, which consisted of

Hallberg, Thorsen, Prien, Pearson and the 7 Indians, was joined by Raddon and Chubb. After much discussion it was decided to motor north through Sumprabum to the end of the road and then trek to Fort Hertz. On reaching Sumprabum they met Leyden, a Frontier Service officer, who advised them to return to the 102 milestone on the Myitkyina Road and take the jungle track which led over the Daru Hkyet Pass to Maingwan. Raddon, Chubb and Pearson returned to mile 102 to try and meet the Danes of the East Asiatic Company while the remainder of the party tried to collect some coolies for the journey. The Danes never appeared, and when the news came through that the Japanese had entered Myitkyina, they realized that it was no use waiting any longer. The party once again re-formed and set out on their long trek on the 11th of May. After a few days the coolies refused to continue the journey but Hallberg was able to buy a sturdy Chinese pony which carried most of their stores and the Consular and Company records safely to India. Tage Thorsen, who had been a tower of strength and courage for so many months, began to crack up. He was worn out, as he was one of those people who undertook all the heavy tasks, such as loading lorries and pulling them out of the mud. He developed fever and began to pass blood in his urine and, to add to his difficulties, he also developed dysentery which weakened him further and made frequent stops necessary. The track grew worse and worse and the mud was never less than ankle-deep and was often knee-deep and sometimes deeper. It was hoped when they reached Maingkwan they would find a doctor, but he had already left for India. Thorsen's temperature now rose to 104° and he kept passing into a coma. When he rallied he begged his friends to leave him to die so that they could reach India safely. Hallberg, who was the leader of the party held a council and reluctantly decided that it was impossible for Thorsen to go on in his present state, as he was too ill to be moved. If the Japanese arrived they would at once kill the British and Indian members of the party, so it was unsafe for them to remain. Swedes, being neutrals, might have been spared by the Japanese and even have received medical aid. Prien and two servants from Rangoon very gallantly volunteered to remain behind and nurse Thorsen until he was well enough to continue the journey. Hallberg thought he was only about 100 miles from the Indian frontier where he would be able to arrange for help

to be sent to Thorsen and therefore, once the decision was made on the 22nd of May to leave Thorsen, he pressed his party onwards so that arrangements could be made to help his friends. Near Namyang River Hallberg met Mr. Arnold, I.C.S., who was distributing rations dropped by air, and asked if he could send a message to India about Thorsen. But Arnold had no means of getting a message quicker to India than Hallberg could walk. However, he promised to send a Kachin runner to Shinbwiyang to ask Mr. North, the Political Officer there, to try and help Thorsen and if possible bring him by boat from Maingkwan. Hallberg asked me to keep a sharp look-out for his Swedish friends and also for the Danish party and to do everything to help them, which I promised to do.

I was disarming everyone at Ngalang and was not prepared to make any exceptions for a Consul. But after a little while I gave Hallberg back his pistol, with a letter of authority to carry it. I felt that there was no chance of him mis-using it, as he was in very good mental condition and had complete control of his party. However, I laid down one condition: that he in turn would promise to visit my fiancée, Karin Beskow, when he returned to Sweden and tell her I loved her and was still waiting for her. Hallberg loaded his pony again, rallied his exhausted friends and proceeded on his way.

5th June

On 5th June we were forced to withdraw to Tagung Hka, as food was running short and we were unable to maintain the camp. On the way back I saw the Anglo-Indian woman to whom I had given food and Entero-vioform on our first arrival at Ngalang Ga. She had a good basha and plenty of food, but had made up her mind to stay where she was. There was nothing to do but leave her. We had to carry several of our porters who were sick, and as a great many porters and coolies had died during the evacuation, it was necessary to save our own people first. The morale of the porters was none too high. On our arrival at Tagung we found Dr. Anderson in very poor health, but still gay and working. His Doctor Babu was doing really Trojan work. Nothing was too much trouble; he had lost all his fear and took a very firm stand with troublesome refugees.

By this time there were many corpses on the track, both of

animals and men. Wherever there was death there was always life; for around each corpse were hundreds of beautiful butterflies of all sizes, shades and colours. It would have delighted a collector to have been with us. The unfortunate people who had died on the way were mostly young men, Indian and Anglo-Indian subordinates from Government Offices, Posts and Telegraphs, Railways and P.W.D. fellows who had stayed to the last and only left after they realized that their masters had flown with their families and left them to their fate. Many people told me that Government had promised to look after their families, and they had sent them north but they did not know if they had been lucky enough to reach India by air or not. The young men travelling alone suffered worst because they were strangely helpless, and were unable to look after themselves. They ate their food uncooked, and did not know what plants were safe to eat. These fellows were usually found lying on their backs with the legs drawn up and the buttocks bare. They had died in great pain from colic.

6th June

The climb from Tagung Hka is very difficult; the hill is practically a cliff on the southern side. The first two thousand feet is through a thick bamboo jungle; later on there are trees, some of which are six and seven feet in diameter, their crowns completely obscuring the sky. Near the crest of the hill there was an old jhum in which the refugees grazed their animals. Here too, a number of people had died. They had all been robbed of anything which might have been useful.

In this jhum there were a number of pumalow trees; but the fruit was not yet ripe and was quite uneatable. On the way down to Nawngyang Hka one catches glimpses of the Nawngyang Valley which is almost completely surrounded by a continuous mountain ridge about five thousand feet high. The floor of the valley is three thousand feet above sea level. It is a flat plain about seven miles long and four miles wide, in the middle of which is a lake forming the source of the Nawngyang river. The sides of the lake are covered with tall reeds but the edges of the high ground are covered with shrubs. Higher up the hills one sees bamboo and then thick evergreen forest. The river flows out of the plain through a narrow gap between the Tagung and Pangsau mountains.

The track by this time had become even worse than before, the mud being so deep that it was all a strong man could do to wade through it. The journey of only eight miles took some refugees two and three days to accomplish. In one place I found a soldier clerk named Cherryman who had died, having stepped into a mud hole three feet deep from which he was unable to get out. These holes had been caused by Steel Company elephants. There is no doubt that those elephants caused far more deaths than the lives they saved. From now on, the track was thoroughly dangerous; ankles and knees of weak people could not stand the sudden jar of stepping into these deep elephant foot-marks. When people put their feet into such a hole, they usually fell face downwards in the mud. There are few things more demoralizing and more exhausting than this. After people had fallen a few times they gave up trying altogether and lay where they fell, waiting for death to end their misery.

When we arrived in Nawngyang Hka, we were given a great welcome. We were treated to hot tea and biscuits and then went off to the nearest stream to wash. How good it felt to get that heavy clay off one's body! (I too had fallen head-long in the mud.) I sat in the stream and washed all my clothes and my boots, which were by now a sorry sight. However, I found that Capt. Maxlow, R.I.A.S.C., had sent me up a spare pair of boots and some socks, so I was able to carry on in comfort. There were still three planters working at Nawngyang Hka, and the place was now well organized. There were rest houses for the refugees, and the ferrying was properly controlled by a Havildar of the Assam Rifles. One could not have had better soldiers for the job. They were tough and stood the long hours and constant strain of their job. They had a sense of humour and a ready, cheerful smile. They stood no nonsense from anyone, and everyone crossed the ferry in turn, whether sweeper or Commissioner. The Abors were pulling the rafts across the river, a task at which they became quite expert, and it was amazing how quickly people crossed those wide murky waters. The unfortunate animals had to swim across the stream; many refused to do so, and others were carried away and were drowned.

The area round the ferry was a loathsome, black, stinking swamp. Here there were dozens of rough shelters where people waited their turn to get on the ferry. The whole place seemed sinister under the heavy shade of the tall trees. By now the rains

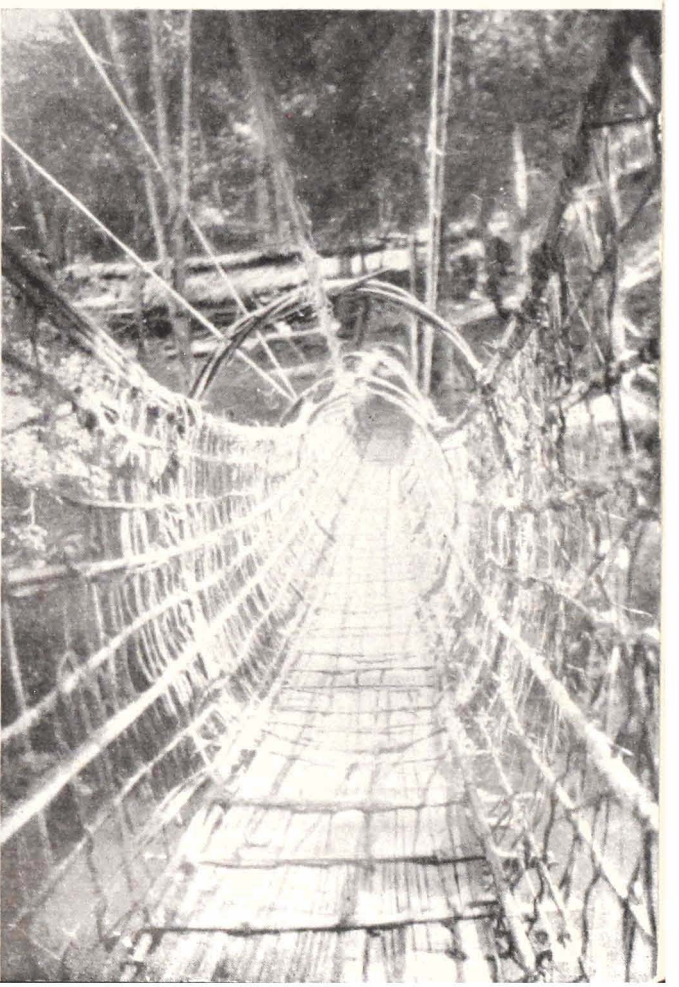
were on again, and for days on end the sun did not break through the grey clouds. When the rain did stop, the atmosphere was even more unbearable. It was a continual struggle to obtain enough dry firewood to cook for so many people. Many refugees died while awaiting their turn to cross. Their bodies were quickly thrown into the river as grave-digging was out of the question.

Flies were just beginning to appear, but so far not enough to be troublesome. But there were millions of sandflies which made life difficult.

The Abors had built a rattan cane suspension bridge across the river, anchored to trees on the north side of the river, and to stout ground anchors on the other side. The art of building these bridges is to select a place where the banks are high or where there are suitable trees to fix the bridge high above the river. Two stout logs are driven into the ground, and two short poles are lashed across them, making a frame. This frame is then very securely anchored to the neighbouring trees. All the lashing is done with split rattan canes about one inch in diameter. The rattan cane is extremely tough and very hard to tie. It is quite impossible to work with unless split. At least six strong Abors all pulling together wind the canes round spars and lash them together. When the pier frames have been constructed and well anchored on either side, a split cane is securely tied to the lower spar of the frame, and carried across the river on a raft. This is then wound round the corresponding spar on the other side of the river, and carried back to the starting point. New lengths of cane are added on each trip across the river, so that the whole bridge is one continuous cane, involving between fifty and a hundred trips across the river. The cane is gradually worked round the whole of the frame; then the Abors make large oval hoops of whole rattan canes by winding a cane around itself, making three complete rings. Using light split rattan canes of another variety, each cane is tied to the hoop. The hoops are placed at six-feet intervals, over the whole length of the bridge and are to keep the canes apart across the river so that they form a tube. The canes in between the hoops are also tied at about six-inch intervals. When the whole tube is completed, a split-bamboo flooring is laid to prevent the canes from becoming worn out and cut by the continuous tread of boots. Other canes are tied to the sides of the bridge, and moored to the bank to prevent it swaying too much in the wind. This bridge was about twenty feet

Photo: Author

The Abor bridge at Naungyang Hka



A view through the bridge

Photo: Author

Photo: I. T. A.

An elephant churning up a jungle track

above the river. It took fifty Abors two days to build. I have seen as many as ten loaded porters cross it at one time. The bridge was not for use at this time, as it was intended as a last means of escape for the refugees after the camp withdrew. This was a stupid idea as such a bridge, if kept in repair, would last for several years.

No one was allowed to cross the river after 4 o'clock in the afternoon because it was four miles to the next camp; and the refugees who came late into camps were unwelcomed as it was not possible to give them proper attention. By stopping them early they got a chance to rest and also to feed their animals.

That evening we slept with the camp staff. They had built themselves a very comfortable basha with a long verandah looking down to the road below. We discussed the many incidents of the road, and the methods we had used to help the people. When the day's work was over it was surprising how much humour we got out of it all. The things that made us laugh most could not even be mentioned to people who had not seen the evacuation. They would not understand and probably would think we were a lot of warped maniacs. However, our laughs and jokes were a marvellous antidote to the grimmer side of things. We took all the pain and suffering and death as a matter of course. We did not waste our emotions and strength being sorry for people. If their wounds needed dressing, they were dressed, the hungry were fed, and the dead, if they died near the camp, were thrown into the river.

6: THE TEA CAMP AT NANKI

7th June

THE NEXT MORNING Harrison, Scott and I made an early start for Shamlung. The track climbs up and down until it reaches Shamlung which is about 4,000 feet above sea level. Here the going was easy, as several parts of the track were sandy. A lot of people and animals had died on the way. I counted over twenty corpses and about a dozen dead horses, bullocks and mules. The smell was terrible, as the usual animal or bird scavengers were not about, bodies lay where they fell in the track, and gradually dissolved in the rain. The heads came off and the stomachs soon disappeared, but all the strong tendons and sinews remained for weeks.

Although most of the road was good there were one or two extremely difficult places for animals and weak people. Here again the elephants had destroyed the path, and made the track so difficult that many refugees gave up trying and died where they fell.

On reaching Shamlung we found that the I.T.A. officers had built themselves a very good basha on the top of a small hill above the old camp. This basha was well off the ground, and had a cookhouse and bathroom attached. In the hollow below their basha a large store-godown had been built. The refugee camp was in the old jhum which now looked very different from the first time I saw it. There was accommodation for a thousand or more refugees as well as porters.

The camp still contained many refugees and I did not like the look of things. What was to happen after we left that area? I knew, and I began sounding the other fellows about remaining for some time. The porters were the difficulty. Hard work, rain

and lack of any fresh vegetables had made many of them ill. It was felt that the porters' lives were to be saved if possible, but the death and sickness rate among them was very high, largely due to lack of proper sanitation in the refugee camps, and to the fact that most of them ate too much rice when not working.

We refreshed ourselves with tea and biscuits and cheese and, after an hour's rest, continued the climb up the hill towards the pass. The path climbs very steeply out of Shamlung and follows a narrow gorge. Here the forest is very thick, and it is quite impossible to see the sky. The top of the hill is a narrow ridge not more than 35 yards wide. On one side is a cliff dropping sheer about 500 feet and then gradually turning into a steep slope down to the valley 3,000 feet below. The other side of the hill is not quite so steep and drops into the Nawngyang Valley. Visibility was poor as heavy rain and thick clouds obscured everything. Just beyond the highest part of the road the track takes a sudden bend and then turns into a narrow gorge in the middle of which is a large red sandstone boulder. No one knew the exact frontier between Burma and Assam, and while resting there I carved the words "Assam" and "Burma" on the stone. From then on it was known as Frontier Boulder. From here the track quickly descends to Nanki village. Nanki is where we had rested on our way into Burma. In those days it was a typical village full of sturdy children and pretty Naga girls. The headman had entertained us in his house. Now the village was deserted except for refugees. The place was a shambles and there were many dead cattle lying about with, here and there, a human corpse which had been thrown out of a house to make room for new arrivals. The cold wind and driving rain made Nanki a death trap to exhausted refugees. We visited all the huts and counted over 200 sick people who were unable to move without help.

From Nanki the regular path had been completely destroyed by elephants and cattle. The Abors and other porters had cut a new path straight down the side of the hill for a thousand feet. This was one great slide of liquid clay. It was all one could do to get down the hill by hanging on to trees and going from one to the next. After a drop of about 500 feet the path came out in an old tea garden which had been planted by the Nagas. A little further down was the porter camp of Pahari, which was

run by Peter Burnside, of the Burma Forest Service, and Archibald of the I.T.A. Here there were Garo porters, but very little work was being done because many of them were sick and the headman was almost useless. However, beside the stream a cheerful tea-stop was arranged where refugees were given hot tea and cooked rice and dhal. Some of them received a cigarette. These were few and far between as they were usually looted before they got far forward.

Here again, we stopped for about an hour and had tea with the camp staff. We had many tales to exchange. Burnside told me he too had seen the Swedish Consul and that they were old friends. I again raised the question of not closing down the evacuation and said I was convinced there were many more people to come through. I was invited to join the Pahari camp, but I said I would first go down to Nampong and see the three signallers whom I had left there.

We started down the hill again. The track from here on is not difficult, as the ground is fairly sandy and the mud not too deep. Between the three-and four-thousand foot level the trees are very large, and many of them are five to six feet in diameter. On the lower slopes there are several deserted jhums now covered with Mexican wild thistle. From one of these jhums a view is obtained of what appears to be the rest camp not far away; but it takes another hour before reaching the river beside which the refugee camp is built. The first view is of another camp a mile or so above Nampong which itself is not visible until one actually reaches it.

Here, too, was a small guard of Assam Rifles who kept law and order and counted heads as they came down the road. The camp was still deep in black, stinking mud; but duckboards had been arranged so that one could walk about without getting more than ankle-deep in mud.

I visited my signallers and discussed the news with them. The wireless was not working properly. They had been sent out without tools and instruments for testing. On the whole the wireless had been disappointing as it was not powerful enough to get through to Margherita except under favourable conditions. I then went over to the Camp Commandant's basha and had another cup of tea. We discussed my return to Pahari, and it was decided that I should start up the hill the following day.

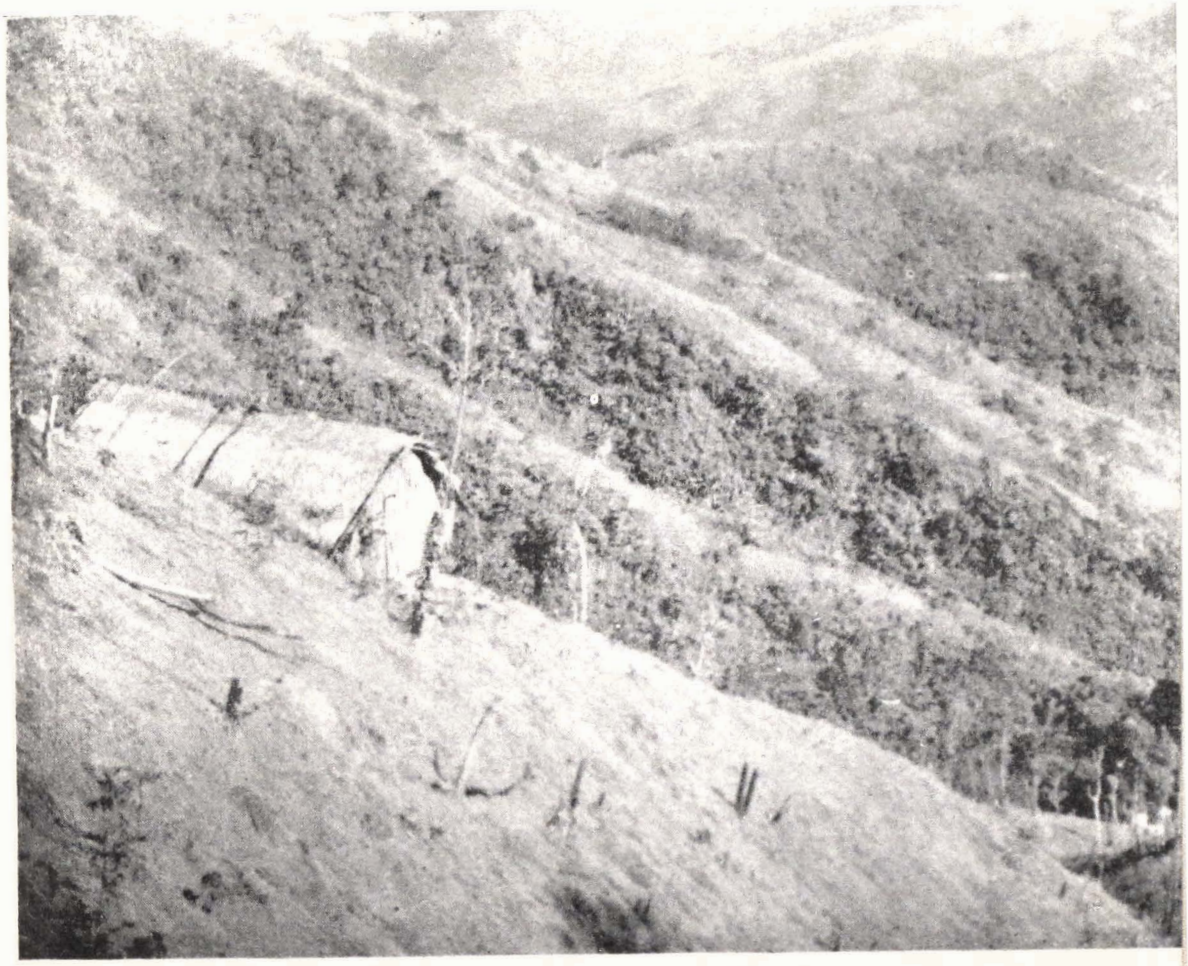
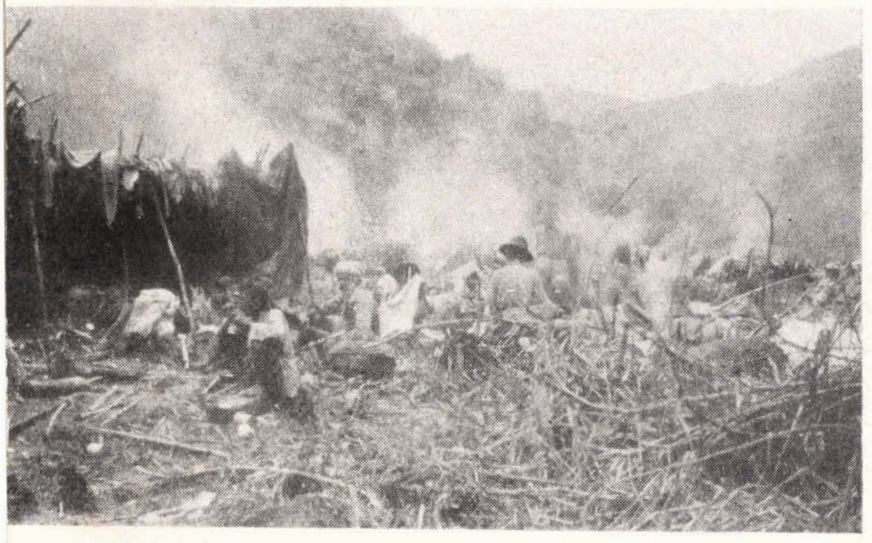


Photo: E. D. T. Lambert

Deserted jhums in the Naga country

THREE
REFUGEE
SCENES

Above : A halting-place near Shamlung



Above : A group of refugees by the roadside

Below : A typical Naga hut used by the refugees

Photos: I. T. A.

8th June

Early next morning I started up the hill again and after 3 hours' hard climb reached Pahari where I was welcomed by Burnside and Archibald. We discussed our plan of campaign, and I persuaded them to start a tea camp at Nanki. The scheme was simple—we would live at Pahari and each morning climb a thousand feet to Nanki and make tea and serve cooked dhal, rice, bully beef and raw onions and then chase all the fit people off the top of the mountain down to Nampong.

9th June

In June the temperature and climate in Nanki is comparable to a wet winter's day in Scotland. The driving rain seldom stopped. In the Naga village we found that the refugees were nearly all suffering from diarrhœa and pneumonia, and some of them had malaria.

As soon as the tea was ready and food cooked, we toured the village and made all the fit people pack up their kit; then we drove them down to where we were serving out the food under a hut. As soon as they had eaten they were sent down the hill. The new people who came into the village were fed and sent on their way immediately. We toured the huts and gave out medicines. At first we gave ordinary doses of "Bungo", a cholera mixture prepared by the Madras Relief Committee to Burma. However, ten drops had no effect on these people. It might have been enough if we could have kept them in bed and warm, but most of them would have died of exposure before we could have cured them of their diarrhœa. I tried giving ten times the ordinary dose and had the pleasure of reducing one lady's 27 motions to 3 a day. This achievement was commemorated by a song being written that night which went to the tune of "Kiss me good-night Sergeant Major". After this we gave large doses with the object of getting these people off the hill before the dysentery had time to sap their energy. We knew that they would have trouble later on, but further down the road there were hospitals and porters and better means of help. Up on top of the pass, if one could not walk one just stayed until one died.

The pneumonia cases had little chance of getting better, but we saw one case recover enough to get down to Nampong and be

carried on. We fed this case on hot rice-water and gave the man four M & B 693 tablets whenever we remembered; which worked out that on the average he got 16 tablets every day for 5 days, when we managed to get him down the hill. In the malaria cases we gave quinine sulphate, from 5 to 10 grains at a time, and drove them out before they could have another rigor.

The water at Nanki had become polluted, so we did our utmost to make people move on fast as possible. One afternoon a large family of Punjabis came into the village, all in good condition, travelling with three bullocks. I warned them about boiling the water, and suggested they either pushed on at once to Nampong or got moving at dawn. About midday the following day, after I had been round the village several times telling people to move out, I found this family still there. I bluntly ordered them out, but the head of the family stood posed to make me a great speech about his being an Executive Officer, and said that they would move out just as soon as they felt like it. I warned them that if they remained in the village several of them would not reach India. To help them make up their minds I used my cane and was amused to see this fine Executive Officer and his six grown-up sons and womenfolk reduced to hysterics in a few minutes. They would not have been much use to India if they had arrived, so I left them to their own devices. I let them stay on another day, and five of them died before reaching the base. The polluted water and exposure of the mountain did it and it was a very miserable Executive Officer, unable to walk, whom I met ten days later.

10th June

This very cold wet afternoon a Gurkha soldier arrived with a small girl of seven and dumped her beside me while I was serving tea. She was not a Gurkha child, so I said, "Thank you, did you see any more like her?" He just nodded and said, "There is another one half a mile back lying in the mud too weak to move." We gave him some tea and sent him on down the road. One of our coolies went back for the other child. In the meantime we wrapped the little girl in a blanket, and held her over the fire. We kept turning her over like a roast on a spit. Gradually she recovered consciousness, and then we rubbed her hard all over. She wanted to sleep but she had been too

long exposed to be allowed to do so at once, so we spanked her until she cried, and then gave her hot strong tea. After her tea she wanted to eat, so we gave her raw onions and a little rice and dhal. We took her to one of the Naga houses and got an Anglo-Indian woman to look after her for the night. Just as we had finished with this little girl, the coolie returned with the other child hanging from his shoulder over his back, her arms almost pulled out of their sockets. This child, like the first, had on only a small cheap dress; she too was unconscious, and very cold, and her heart was hardly beating. We borrowed some clothes and wrapped her up and put her near the fire. We carried on dishing out tea and food, chasing out people who tried to sneak into the village too early in the afternoon. When the girl was getting too hot on one side we turned her over and eventually were able to give her some hot tea. We took this child also to the Naga house and handed her over to the Anglo-Indian woman. To make sure she would keep these children warm we sent our coolies to collect a large pile of firewood and provided her with good drinking water.

It seemed a bad day for ladies because, just as we were settling down to dish out some more food, two Gurkha soldiers walked in holding a young woman in Punjabi dress and covered with yellow clay from head to foot; she had obviously fallen face downwards in the mud, and had rolled over several times. The soldiers said nothing, but sat a few yards from us and tried to make a fire. The wind was too strong and the war-quality matches made it quite impossible to light a fire except under the best of conditions. How these matches were cursed on the road! Matches that would not light drove hundreds to eat their food raw; and uncooked rice and dhal tore the intestines out of people, often killing them in a few hours. The soldiers then asked for some fire, so we invited them to come and warm themselves by ours and to bring the girl over. The Gurkhas told us that they had picked up the girl about a mile away where she had been left lying in the road by her husband, who had beaten her until she had dropped. He had then given her up as a bad job, and deserted her. We sent a coolie down to Pahari to fetch clean sacks as we had no blankets or dry clothing to lend these shivering people.

The Gurkhas asked to be relieved of further responsibility

for the Punjabi girl as they wanted to go on and join their own people who were ahead. We washed the girl's face and liked the results, so we amused ourselves by washing her hair in a small saucepan, managing to dry it over the fire with the help of her scarf. When the sacks arrived, we made a two-piece costume by cutting the appropriate holes with a Kukri. By this time all the rice had been eaten, so we cleaned out the large cooking pots and bathed her "by instalments". This was the first wash she had had for a month, and it took some pretty hard scrubbing to remove the grime. We then boiled her clothes, and dried them over the fire. This girl was taken to the same house as the other girls and she remained there for the night. It was now getting dark and we had a difficult descent to do before nightfall, so we started down the jhum to Pahari. The path was so steep that it was impossible to go down without hanging on to the trees.

About half way down we heard the whine of an exhausted woman. She was a South Indian who kept on saying, "I can't walk. What shall I do?" She could not have chosen a worse place to pass the night. She was sitting in deep mud in a place exposed to the full blast of the wind and rain. She would not have lasted the night there, so we tried to encourage her to move and started by holding her on both sides, but the road was too narrow, and all three of us fell several times. To carry her in the failing light was equally dangerous, both for us and for her. That part of the jhum was devoid of small timber and bamboos, and our only sticks were short spears. However, we put these under her armpits, and managed to get her to a hut on the lower part of the jhum.

11th June

In the morning when we came up the hill again we brought her some hot tea and biscuits and arranged with our coolies to have her taken down to Pahari. We carried on up the hill to look after the crowd on top. As usual several had died and had to be carried out of the houses. The ground was so slippery that we only carried the corpses a few yards below the houses and left them uncovered. We could not spare the sacks or blankets to cover them, and we had no implements to dig graves for them.

The two little girls seemed much better when we first went

to see them and to take them food. The Punjabi girl was weak and worn out but she had nothing much wrong with her except extreme exhaustion. We saw to it that the house was well provided with firewood. Later in the day when going round the village some one shouted there was a corpse in the house where I had left the girls. Much to my annoyance I found that one of the little girls had died, and when I examined her I found that some careless person had spilt boiling water over her.

7: WITHDRAWAL

ABOUT MIDDAY a party of about twelve British and Indian officers arrived and asked for rations and the usual question about how far they were from the next camp. They sat under the Naga hut where we were cooking rice and dhal and boiling tea. It was the one cheerful haven in a storm. That morning was even colder than most, if that could be possible. During the course of the talk someone mentioned that 2nd Lt. Davis was having some trouble on the road. The party moved off, but nothing more was said about Davis. When the next lot of food was cooked I did the rounds of the village, again giving large doses of medicine to stop the dysentery that was sapping everyone's strength. By now quite a number of people were able to move down the road on their own. Some of the children who had been deserted were carried down to Nampong.

When I had finished my round I came back to the cooking pots and saw, coming towards us, a little Abor carrying a fellow who looked twice his size. Following him were several officers, one of whom was leading a bullock. The Abor dumped Davis at my feet and shook his head. He had carried him for about half a mile through deep mud and was completely exhausted, but one of the officers held out one silver rupee as an inducement to carry his helpless companion five miles down one of the most difficult mountains on the whole trek. The Abor looked this European straight in the face, gave him one withering glare, spat, turned on his heel and went over to where tea was being prepared.

I asked the officer what he was going to do. He did not answer but it was quite obvious that, having offered a rupee to save his companion, he felt that there really was nothing more he could do. 2nd Lt. Davis was in a bad way. His legs were three times

their normal size, due to very bad œdema. He also had deep ulcers all over his legs and huge holes at the back of his knees. His general condition was bad and his arms and legs were almost paralysed. Archibald came over and we discussed what we should do with him. The Garo porters refused to carry him down the clay slide to Pahari camp. The hill was too steep for the bullock to carry him. If Davis had remained up in Nanki overnight he would have died of pneumonia. I suggested that we should try to carry him between us. Archibald refused to do this as he felt by doing so he would "write himself off" helping with any further work, and by helping one person many others would be left to their fate.

I tried lifting Davis, but our combined weight drove my gum boots so deep into the wet clay that it was difficult to lift my feet without leaving my boots behind. I eventually found a couple of sacks and tried to slide Davis down the hill. I sat in front and held a corner of the sack between my legs while Davis sat behind me and tried to hold me round the waist, but he was not strong enough. We travelled for 20 or 30 yards in this way and then gave it up. I put Davis on my back and tied him on with a dhoti and carried him a few steps at a time to Pahari. It was a painful business for Davis; his ulcers gave him hell, but I was too tired to worry about his pain. After three hours of stumbling about in the mud and many falls we reached the tea-stop where Peter Burnside gave Davis some hot tea. I stripped and washed the clay off myself while Davis was being refreshed. The officer brought the bullock along and Davis was carried up to the camp a hundred yards from the stream. Here again the officer stood by with a helpless expression on his face. I put Davis into a basha and bathed him and gave him some clean clothes. We had a lot of sacks of tea which we arranged as a mattress on which we let Davis rest. After drinking a jug of Marmite and eating a biscuit or two he went off to sleep. The officer in the meantime was trying to persuade the Garo to make him a fire but now he was offering *five* rupees.

12th June

The next morning the officer tried for a long time to saddle the bullock. Eventually it had to be done for him and Davis rode down to Nampong where the Planters looked after him

and sent him in quick relays down to base. Archibald was right; all morning I sat about limp and useless. I did nothing and wanted to do nothing. I felt I did not care any more if all the refugees died. However, after a long rest I went down to the tea-stop to see who were arriving. Mr. Howe arrived with his daughter and son; he was a tall gaunt fellow and very humble. He begged for two sacks so as to keep the rain off the children's backs. He told us how he had started the journey with seven bullock carts fully loaded. He even took his grand piano. Gradually the carts got stuck in the mud. Then he drove bullocks with packs on them until these, too, died or were stolen. All he had left of a life-time's hard work and savings were the few clothes he stood up in and a bundle of wet notes. They were a nice family and offered to help us dish out tea. We let them stay for the night and lent them clothes while we washed and dried their rags.

Archibald was a great cook and each night, if we let him, he would prepare a mixed stew into which went a little bit of everything, but it took hours to cook. It was a great performance and by ten o'clock at night we were more than ready to eat it. While this was going on Peter Burnside would make up poems about the day's incidents and the various characters we had met. We had also a little whisky which helped to cheer us up when the primus stove spluttered and went out, delaying our meal for another hour.

One morning Mr. Berry of the North Burma Sugar Co. arrived in camp. He was a little hurt because he had been chased out of Shamlung Camp where he had been nursing a sick servant. His servant was now better but Berry did not look so well. He wanted to hang about but we persuaded him to go on and see Doctor Robertson at Nampong.

That afternoon I wandered slowly up the hill looking at the view. It was one of the few fine days we had had and it was possible to see across the Brahmaputra to the snow-capped Himalayas to the north. The view was magnificent. In the foreground were several Naga villages on the hill-tops. I climbed on up the clay slide into Nanki village to visit the sick and then on to the hill above the village. Here I found a few people wanting to settle down for the night. They were without food so I drove them down to Pahari. In a hut a long way off the track I found an Indian student who had been deserted by his friends. I ordered

him to stand up and after a lot of hesitation he staggered to his feet but fell down. I then saw that the tops of his feet had been completely rotted away by Naga sores. I picked up and carried him to another hut on the main track and left him there for the night. I gave him a biscuit but he could not eat it as he had no water. I had none either and I knew I was too exhausted to do any more for the student that day.

On my return to Pahari I found a large party of armed Kachins arriving in camp and demanding rations. They had a note from some Colonel who had given them permission to return to their own country. They were very keen to return home, but I was very much opposed to any one returning to Burma by this route because if the Japanese knew where the ration camps were we might have had a visit from them. The Havildar asked me about the road and what food they could expect to find. I gave them lots of good advice, described the exact condition of the road, told them that all their Indian paper-money would be useless in Burma and on the road and that only silver was accepted by the Nagas. Gradually they became a little alarmed; but I continued to maintain that the journey was possible but not all could survive the ordeal; and by issuing them with so many rations they were convinced I was doing everything to help them on their journey. However, that night the Havildar came to me and told me eighteen of his men proposed to return to India instead of going on. In the morning I made those who were going on take all the rations I had.

These fellows started up to Nanki and by the time they got to the top they decided the road was worse than I had foretold and returned to me saying they would wait till after the rains had ceased. I kept them for a day and got them to carry down the student whom I had left on the hill the previous evening.

13th June

Before finally leaving Pahari camp Archibald and I returned to Shamlung to see what was happening. Dozens of people were living in the I.T.A. bashas and several people were sitting in the store godown selling refugee rations at the most exorbitant prices. On the road we had several complaints about this, so when I got to the refugee rest camp I gave a refugee some marked money. However, we only caught one South

Indian selling salt. He was given a good hiding and taken down to Nampong to be handed over to the Political Authorities. We brought back a report that lots of people were still coming through and something must be done for them. Pahari camp was now closed down because the Garos were dying like flies. They would do nothing to help themselves or make themselves comfortable.

When I handed over my prisoner no one was prepared to take any official action about his selling rations, but he was detained at Nampong for a few days and made to work as a sweeper, after which he was released and allowed to continue the jouruey.

That evening I slept in the Abors' Camp with Archibald and Peter Burnside. Webster of the Police was also there. He was suffering from fever and was very sorry for himself. We had a miserable night as the whole of the Nampong Valley was swarming with starving cattle, which spent the night trying to eat the banana-leaf walls of our hut. Several times during the night I got up and chased the poor brutes away. During one of these sallies I broke Archibald's favourite stick across the back of an animal. Archibald loved that crab-apple stick and never forgave me.

14th June

Early next morning I went down the road towards the base. All the way along the track I overtook refugees, and cheered them on. I stopped at Namgoi and saw Mr. Ali and had some tea with him. A few miles farther on I stopped at the tea-stop and porter camp. I have forgotten who was running it ; but I was received with the customary hospitality. Here I overtook a sturdy negress, the low-dive Queen of Rangoon. She was her cheery self, driving along a group of pregnant girls and carrying a small boy on her wide back. She asked if I could help her to get some porters, as one of the party was in difficulty. This was arranged immediately by the camp Commandant and I pushed on to Namchik. All the cattle and elephants had been stopped at Nampong so the road here was not too difficult and I made quite good time.

On reaching Namchik I found a grave being dug. A little later I helped to lower Mr. Berry to his last resting place. He

had stayed to look after his sick servant at the cost of his own life. His kit was sent down to the base.

Namchik was a large camp and run quite differently from all the others. Food tickets were issued and people queued up for food. The camp staff did not have the same personal contact with the people as in the other camps.

There was a British Army cook who had offered to stay behind and help instead of rushing on to India with the crowd. This fellow did remarkably good work and was a great asset to the camp. That evening I stayed in the I.T.A. camp by the river. The river was in flood but I could not resist the temptation to go for a swim and was nearly carried away by the current.

15th June

Next morning I started early and reached Buffalo Camp in about two hours. Here I found Mr. Wilkie and Miss Susan Finlay whom I had first seen at Tagung Hka Camp. Susan was now hard at work looking after all the women refugees and providing that personal touch which meant so much to tired and hungry people. Mr. Wilkie was very hospitable and kind to the refugees, but I do not think he was firm enough in dealing with them or with the porters. His camp was often overcrowded because he would not drive the people on each morning. By this time many people were more afraid of what was going to happen to them once they rached India than of the troubles on the road. In the camps near base there were good huts and plenty of food so "why hurry"? In India they would be penniless and starving and few would do anything to help them.

I pushed on and came to Kumlao where I was made welcome. On the way up I had been told to spend the night in the Porters' Camp. I was now accepted as a member of the Jeep Club. That night I had a hot bath—the first one for a month; it was very good and comforting.

Kumlao is a delightful place situated about two thousand feet above sea level. Here there is a large open sward of beautiful short green turf on which the village is built. There are some twenty or thirty Naga houses. These are long buildings, constructed on poles high enough off the ground to shelter cattle and pigs. Each house stands apart, with its own granaries and store houses also built high off the ground to protect them from rats

and animals. The front of the house is open; this is where the women work and people spend the day. The inner rooms are windowless, so are used only as dormitories.

On one side of the village is a fruit plantation with pumalows, pomegranates and guavas. All the rice fields are on the hill slope. The people depend mainly on the sale of pigs for a livelihood. The pigs had grown grossly fat cleaning up after the thousands of refugees who had passed through the camp. Naga women generally wear very few clothes; but the women of Kumlao were a treat to see. They had exchanged food for refugees' clothing and I saw one young Naga lass wearing what was once a backless white lace evening gown—pulled well above her knees to keep it out of the mud. All the Naga men had also decked themselves out with all sorts of garments. They were specially keen to obtain pullovers or jerseys.

In the middle of this great meadow was a large ceremonial drum hollowed out of a hollock tree. It stood about four feet high and was ten feet long. When struck with a heavy pole, it resounded with a deep booming note which carried for miles. Not many years previously human sacrifice was carried out in the village. Now it was a place of even greater horrors.

Sitting on the great drum I forgot the refugees for a few minutes and watched the lovely sunset. Away to the north west was a wide golden streak on the plain. It was the Brahmaputra reflecting the evening light. To the north were the snow-capped Himalayas rising thousands upon thousands of feet above the valley. The mountains to the east took on a deep Prussian-blue shade as the sun set. The upper village was now quiet and the pigs had stopped looking for food and were settling down under the houses. A chilly wind drove me off the drum and I wandered down to see what was happening below.

As I approached the ration stand and saw the food being doled out, I heard the old plaintive cry "Kia karega, bhuk se murta". There was plenty of food, but people's eyes were still bigger than their stomachs, so the pigs had it both ways.

Down in the I.T.A. camp food was ready and served. My hosts that evening were Spur, Stewart and Dr. Simpson, of the R.A.M.C. It was a jolly party and we had some tales to exchange. Dr. Simpson had only been in India a few weeks when he was sent into the jungle. He learnt a lot.

That night I slept on the dining table, which gradually gave way under my weight (despite the fact that I had lost two stone during the month). However, Spur came to my rescue and placed a couple of boxes underneath to prevent it from collapsing completely. No one had seen fit to send me any rations, although I had gone out with only ten days' supplies.

8: CIVILIZATION

16th June

NEXT MORNING I took my leave and went along to the top of the Golden Stairs. It was these wretched stairs that had prevented rations from reaching our forward areas. These stairs had a great psychological effect on people. They were difficult but were so near the base that people talked about them, and gradually a myth grew up that it took a superhuman effort to get up them with a load. But these stairs, bad as they were, were no worse than the red clay slide up to Nanki or the Tagung Hill. Coming up the road earlier I had seen nothing but mud because it was raining and I was so "soft" and out of condition that all my concentration had to be on the track; but now I had the muscle which enabled me to stand up on slippery mud without doing the splits and I could choose my footsteps unconsciously, which gave me time to look around and see the view. The jungle is beautiful when the sun comes out, it is so green and fresh. There are quite a number of villages visible on ridges and hill-tops. It took me about half an hour to get down the Golden Stairs and on the way I passed the bodies of two porters who had died on them. They had been left unburied. There were also the bodies of several refugees who had died of exhaustion.

Once one reaches the bottom of the stairs there is still a mile or two of the vile swamp before reaching North Tirap where Captain England kept his Mule Company. The mules made daily trips to Kumlao and back and also down to railhead. This Company saved hundreds of people by their efforts, carrying the food over the difficult part of the route which had most frightened the porters. Captain England's men carried back refugees on the mules and did thousands of unnoticed services for the refugees and planters.

In North Tirap there were also Fairfield and Alexander whom I had seen on my way up. I asked them what had happened to the B.F.F. Cavalry Unit which had done all the looting and had to be disarmed. They laughed and told me that a heavily armed platoon had been sent up to arrest them—but they passed each other on the road between Tipang and North Tirap. No one was punished and they got away with a series of crimes which, although small in themselves, had done incalculable harm in demoralizing the porters. But for the B.F.F.C. we would have had camps established as far as the Namyung Hka. As it was, we were withdrawing for lack of food.

North Tirap was a large camp, built on a flat piece of land in a bend of the river. In the middle of the camp was a small stockade with a watch-tower. This was an Assam Rifle outpost. Its defences consisted of a ditch and palisade and rows of sharp pointed bamboos. It is quite impossible for men to rush such a place. In the middle were a number of barracks which were now being used as a hospital. Near the river was a large four-roomed basha which had been built by the Royal Engineers but was now taken over by the I.T.A. It was here that Fairfield and Alexander lived. Captain England had a small hut built of tarpaulins.

This camp was very muddy as there was no means of draining such a large flat area. The mules stood up to the hocks in black, stinking mud and the whole place swarmed with house-flies. There was, however, good bathing to be had in the river, so despite the mud people were able to keep fairly clean.

A small post of Assam Rifles guarded the wire suspension bridge which had been built several years before by the Assam Rifles. It was strong enough to carry two or three mules at a time.

Fairfield told us that, since we had begun disarming people in the forward area, things had been very quiet and the work was extremely dull. Everyone was bored stiff with the refugees. Most of their time was occupied in transporting "carrying cases" and re-allotting porters to various jobs. There was also the routine work of forwarding rations up the road. It was hot and sticky in North Tirap and I could well sympathize with him. But I warned him that he would see me back in a few days as the job was not nearly through.

17th June

The next part of the road, which was only four and a half miles to Tipang railhead, did not seem nearly as bad as when I had gone up a month before. This was due to the heavy rain washing the loose mud off the road and exposing the virgin rock below. Thousands of feet had trampled a hard track and it was only in a few places that mud came over one's knees.

The country between the Tirap and Tipang Rivers is well wooded with medium-sized timber, but now and again the road cuts through a jhum where millet is cultivated. It was in one of these jhums that I had fed my miserable goats on the way up to Nampong a month before. Of the eight goats that reached Nampong only two remained. They had become camp pets, as one had given birth to a black kid, and the other to a white one. The Assam Rifles guarded them with loving care and fed these animals with all their scraps of food.

On the highest part of the road between the two rivers the Nagas had a basti. Below the village was a nice shady spot where the villagers sold Naga rice beer called "Zu". It was a thick yellow beverage which looked and smelt rather like home made cider. This became a favourite halting-place for porters and refugees. From here onwards, the road descends steadily into the Tipang Valley. At one place on the road there was a large coal seam, part of the same formation that was being worked in the valley below, and which extended right on to Makum. A little further down the road we heard the cheerful hoot of the mine locomotive. This was real civilization. In another few minutes we were passing the Mine Manager's house, and were crossing a small railway bridge.

Another quarter of a mile took us to Tipang railway station. Here two motor rail-cars were "shuttling" people to Likhapani, 5 miles away. There refugees were fed and doctored and then sent on to Margherita by train. Likhapani was a complete town in itself. I am told there were sometimes as many as 20,000 coolies and porters staying there. That may be an exaggeration, but it was a very large place, and well organized. Harrison had arranged the purification of the drinking water on the simple, but effective silver-colloidal system. All the water flowed between two silver plates which were connected to the electric mains or batteries.

Photo: I. T. A.

North Tirap Suspension Bridge built by the Assam Rifles in 1936

We were all photographed on our arrival as we stepped off the rail car. That evening we were asked many questions about the road and what was happening in the forward areas. Although we made light of the difficulties and said little of the real horrors of the evacuation, we were only partly believed. We were all considered slightly mad, but deserving gentle and kind treatment. What had amused us so much at the time was now received with stony silence.

I slept that night at Likhapani and then went into Ledo to collect my kit which I had left there.

18th June

I saw Lt. Col. Gordon for a few minutes, and gave him a brief account of our work. I told him the evacuation was not nearly finished, and that I wanted to go back as soon as I could get some more boots and clothing.

I then reported to my new C.O. who had arrived as Assistant Director, Supply and Transport, Ledo Sub-Area. He had obtained a small house at Baragoli which he made his HQ. I moved my kit to this house, and arranged for some of it to be washed. I then drove down to Margherita to see how things were being organized there. The golf course was now a mass of tents, and the old club house was the camp office. There were lots of doctors and officials around. Refugees were divided into their various groups, Civil and Military, and then sub-divided into Europeans and Anglo-Indians (together), and Burmans and Indians. The hard part came when married people were sent off together, and those who had been sharing a blanket for months became separated. Who was to have the blanket? Because half a blanket was of no use to anyone. Up the road we never asked any awkward questions. Our one and only aim was to bring as many people as possible safely to the base. But here all racial, social and sex taboos were recreated.

Lt. Col. Hodson of the I.T.A. invited me to lunch—so after a short time in the camp I drove over to Mr. Connell's where he was staying. It was a strange sensation sitting down to a table beautifully arranged with lace mats, crystal and silver, where no one was whining for more food, and murmuring "Kia karega, kia karega—bhuk se murta". Lt. Col. Hodson gave me a new pair of shorts after lunch as my shirt was coming through the seat of

mine. Among the guests at this hospitable table were the Flemings from Digboi. Mrs. Fleming invited me over to Digboi for the night, so that I could go to the pictures which were showing there that evening.

Next morning while we were still at breakfast two Generals called. They asked me a few questions about the evacuation, and how I liked being back in Assam. To the latter I described the situation in Assam as "Little Burma", and said I longed to get back in the jungle where something could be, and was being done. My expression "Little Burma" hit hard, as it was meant to do, and I heard these officers repeat these words several times to themselves. A few hours later I received orders to return to Burma.

9 : THE PANGSAU AGAIN

THIS TIME I KNEW what I was up against. I had no sentimental illusions about rescuing fair maidens or being heroic. It had been grim often during the previous month; but now refugees had to walk another twenty-five or thirty miles before finding any help. Their condition was bound to be much worse. I had been let down over my rations once, and I was determined not to be let down again. This time I selected my own rations, and arranged to have at least enough for three people for a month.

I found that meat did not agree with me if I could not eat fresh vegetables with it. Therefore I took very little meat, but lots of fish and several boxes of dried fruit. My diet was to be simple and easy to cook, and suitable if I became ill. Therefore I collected porridge, sugar, salt, milk, marmite, biscuits, ghee, spices, and dehydrated onions and potatoes. I also obtained a flit pump, and plenty of oil and mosquito cream. I took with me three hurricane lamps, a torch with spare batteries, bulbs and an umbrella. I left my topee behind and took with me my rattan cane hat which the Abors had made for me at Ngalang Ga. I selected 2 pairs of marching boots, 2 pairs of canvas hockey boots and a pair of gum boots. I also took plenty of washing- and bath-soap. To this I added a fishing line, hooks and a throwing net. I had learnt from bitter experience that it was best to go out well prepared. By being comfortable and sleeping well at night I could do much more for the refugees. If they had to sleep in all the rain and mud, I certainly was not going to do it because my good physical condition was all-important to them. This is what I mean by a realistic attitude to refugees. I took a camp bed, a "lilo", mosquito net, blankets, sheets and a pillow.

While I was making all these preparations I met Masahid Ali, of Sarang Del Brahman Gaon, a short thin Assamese bearer who wanted a job with me. I warned him I was going immediately to the jungle, that the jungle was a dangerous place, that hundreds of refugees and porters were dying, that life might be hard. He watched me with a serious expression on his face and, when I had finished, smiled and asked if I knew that the Namphuk was the best fishing river in Assam. I gave him five rupees to buy himself some fishing tackle. He did not approve of my pots and pans so he went off and bought things to his own liking. When we were ready we got into a jeep and drove to Likhapani.

21st June

Early next morning we started up the road again. Mr. Smith, whom I had met at Ngalang Ga, joined the party. It was he who provided me with porters, as he was conducting a large party of them to Nampong. These porters were frightened by the stories of the road. They were quite sure that they were all going to die or be killed by armed refugees. Those returning told many stories which needed no exaggeration. Their morale sank as we proceeded. The corpses on the Golden Stairs frightened them, but Kumlao was a good camp and after spending the night with Spur we moved out in the morning without difficulty. Kumlao was always the nicest and most cheerful camp and I was quite sorry not to be able to stay a little longer.

2nd June

From Kumlao the road drops about a thousand feet and then climbs up a few hundred feet. After this the road is almost level, the track following the contour of the hill. The bamboos and trees are so thick in this area that the road never has a chance to dry. The mud was not deep, but extremely slippery. A small drain ran down the middle of the path, forcing us to walk either in the drain or on the steep side of the bank. By walking in the drain muddy, gritty water squirted up our legs and, by taking to the side of the bank, we were forced to keep running to maintain balance. As long as the studs remained in my boots it was easier to walk on the bank, but gradually the studs came out and I eventually had to walk in the water.

From Ngogpi to Buffalo Camp a Jeep road had been completed

Photo: Author

A completed stretch of the Jeep Road near Buffalo

and over this length the going was very good. We stopped in Buffalo Camp for tea to see Wilkie and Susan Finlay. I could not help thinking what a pity it was that the tea planters had not brought their wives up to help.

By taking the short cut to Namchik we arrived in the early afternoon. A basha was put at our disposal for the night. Everyone in the camp had read all the local supply of literature, so we exchanged books with them.

23rd June

Next morning when we were due to leave, the porters refused to march a step further. They were frightened. Smith formed them up into groups and gradually and very tactfully found out who were the leaders of the discontent. There proved to be only two or three who wanted to return. Then Smith asked which were willing to go on. All except this small group agreed to do so. The dissentients were semi-educated fellows, and Smith gave them a very fine exhibition of *coolie bat* in which he told them their whole family history. This caused shrieks of laughter and many guffaws from the remainder. A few minutes later we marched off with this small group begging to be allowed to follow. Smith's firm handling of that situation made the next month of the evacuation possible. If the rot had been allowed to set in then, it would have been quite impossible to keep more than a handful of porters on the road.

I wanted Smith to come with me to Shamlung and reopen the camp up there; however, he had ideas of his own and was keen to get on with aerodrome building. His job ended when he delivered the porters to Nampong.

At Namgoi we called in for tea, and here I met Mr. Mackie. He had been working down at Tipang in the early days of the evacuation and had run a rest point where a gang of coolies washed the legs and feet of the tired refugees when they reached the railway. This humble service did a great deal to restore their morale and self-respect.

I told Mackie what I was proposing to do at Shamlung. He at once said he would like to join me if I could get sanction from the Nampong Commandant. We reached Nampong in the afternoon. Here we found Mr. Kenney who was Commandant, and Dr. Robertson who was Medical Officer in Charge of the camp.

I told them about my plans, and how Mackie had offered to join me. The scheme was simple; Mackie and our bearers and two porters should be taken to Shamlung with as much food as possible by all the porters available. We should remain on in Shamlung and be visited now and again so as to keep the camp stocked and carry any people who were too sick to walk. Kenney sent back word to Mackie who at once packed up and joined us late that evening.

Dr. Robertson, an Assam tea-planter's Doctor, took me over to his hospital, and dispensary which he called the "Klim and Biscuit". Here I watched him dressing Naga sores and treating all the ailments of the refugees. He gave me a great deal of advice and all the medicines I would need while working on my own. While at Buffalo Camp I met a British soldier carrying a bottle of M and B 760, containing 500 tablets. These he gave me as he had no further use for them. I still had some M and B 693 which a soldier had given me before. Mrs. Carrie Orr Simpson, an American lady missionary had sent me a large quantity of yeast, nicotinic acid and thiamine chloride, entero-vioform, mercurochrome powder, and quinine hydrochlorate. To this private collection Dr. Robertson added quinine mixture, cough mixture, Dover's powders, Kurchi Aspro, a quantity of bandages and cotton wool and two rolls of elastoplast. Later on other things were added. I knew I could not *cure* people with this outfit. That was not the object; I only wanted to get them over the Pangsau Pass to where they could be properly treated or be carried down to the base hospitals.

Masahid Ali had not wasted his time. He had not yet found the Namphuk, but he caught a few small fish for supper out of the Nampong stream.

24th June

Kenney searched the camp and found a light tarpaulin twelve by eighteen feet long. We were determined that we would not get wet that night at any cost. Seventy porters were assembled to carry us to Shamlung which was only seven miles away, but which involved a climb of four thousand feet in four miles. It was decided that Mackie should go ahead with light loads of food and the tarpaulin, while I should follow with the heavier loads. The porters were scared stiff and were very difficult to get

going. At last they did move and I followed on behind an hour later. Not half a mile from the camp we ran into the first corpse. It was new, not more than a day or so old. All the porters stopped and stared at it for a long time and I had great difficulty in getting them to pass it by. Eventually I got them moving, only to see another corpse two hundred yards further on. This one was older and swarming with flies, maggots and red and brown beetles. Luckily both the bodies were off the road.

The next thing the porters met was a dead mule which lay in a part of the path where it was quite impossible for them to pass without stepping over it. All the stinking juices of the decomposing mule ran right down the track through which we were forced to walk. There was a high pungent odour rather like ammonia which we could smell two hundred yards before we reached the mule. The porters certainly did not like walking through the contaminated mud with their bare feet. I did not blame them, but there was no time to be fussy about smells and corpses, so I drove them on. I had already become used to this kind of thing and walked straight past these horrible sights paying the least possible attention to them. Poor Mackie, who had not had any of this type of experience before, went ahead of his men and tried to pull the bodies out of the way. He wasted a lot of time and his men hung back because they thought that the Sahib was afraid.

While passing Pahari Camp I went in to see what had happened to Peter Burnside's old home. Several people had already died there and one woman was lying near a large cooking pot with the lid on her chest. I left her the lid, but took along the pot with me. Down at the tea-stop too there were now bodies where we used to sit and listen to the tales of woe of the refugees. All the way up the hill to Nanki we saw corpse after corpse, each one smelling stronger than the last. The maggots and flies were increasing. I took a quick look round at Nanki and gave out a little food to the people I found there. They were glad to see us and their hopes of reaching India revived. At Nanki I found one or two Nagas selling rice at about a rupee for three or four ounces. The rice was probably stolen or taken from our deserted camps. At first I was very angry about it, but later on when I knew what refugees did to our uncontrolled food dumps I thought it was a very good way of distributing food and prevent-

ing refugees from over-eating when they got the chance. These Nagas were also selling a few fresh vegetables. The whole village was stinking and there was not a single house in which, or beside which, there were no corpses. I walked round Nanki for an hour waiting for the porters to come up the clay slide, but they all remained squatting at the edge of the jhum and refused to move unless I went down the hill and accompanied them up. They had confidence only if they could see me. This meant that I had to travel at the speed of the slowest porter.

The forest beyond Nanki is gloomy even in fine weather, but this day at noon it seemed darker and more miserable than ever. The rain had not stopped for four days and we were all soaked to the skin. However, by continually cheering and driving the porters on we eventually reached the spring above Shamlung Camp. Here I found Mackie trying to prevent the porters from bolting back to Nampong. Mackie told me he had had a quick look round camp and had found a corpse in every hut. It was now half past one and the porters had to be on their way back in half an hour to reach Nampong in daylight. The porters had started to repair a very bad hut near the stream. I asked Mackie if he had found the I.T.A. basha on a hill, but he had not been far enough down the road to find it, so I ordered all loads to be picked up and carried on for about a quarter of a mile. We climbed the little hill on which the I.T.A. officers had their basha and were happy to find it still in good repair. We ordered all the rations to be dumped inside and while I was supervising this, some of the porters started running back to Nampong. It was not until I drew my pistol and made it quite clear that I would shoot at once if anyone tried to return without permission that they stood still and eventually came back up the hill and helped to throw the tarpaulin over the roof. When that was done we gave the men some biscuits and sent them back to Nampong.

10 : FLAG STAFF HOUSE

MACKIE AND I sat on a log outside our house and considered the situation. We had a roof overhead for the night, plenty of food, dry bedding and a change of clothes, and four stout-hearted servants. We sent the porters off to collect water and firewood and the two bearers got down to cooking a meal. The basha was full of sandflies and house flies. The floor was covered with human excreta and the whole place stank like a public lavatory. Within a hundred yards of where we sat were twenty-two human corpses, five within twenty-five yards of us, and the carcases of three bullocks beside our kitchen. The whole area round the basha was a mass of empty tins. While we were working out a plan to make the place more healthy without a large staff, the answer arrived in the form of hungry refugees. They wandered up the hill to ask for food which we showed them and then said, "If you want rice you cannot eat it until it is cooked. To cook it requires dry wood and water. Go and fetch these and I will give you a packet of biscuits." Everyone was too tired to go; they all said they had not eaten for four or five days. "All right," I said, "no water, no wood, no rice," and left them standing looking at the food. Eventually some of them went off and returned with wood and water. I at once paid for the work in biscuits which needed no cooking and could be eaten at once. There was nothing the refugees wanted more than the Britannia ration biscuit. I found a sensible sort of woman and gave her enough rice and water to cook for about fifty people. Her job was to see that the food was cooked properly and we paid her one biscuit down and three to come when the rice was ready. By this time there was enough water and wood for the night and people were clamouring for jobs so as to be able to

eat something until the rice was cooked. I made the little girls collect all the dirty tins together and these we put in sacks and tied the mouths. We made men and boys bring bamboo flooring from other disused bashas and huts and put a Gurkha soldier in charge of repairs to the house.

While everyone was doing what he could to improve the camp a very superior English gentleman arrived and stood in a lordly fashion surveying the work. He announced himself and his very superior rank in a loud voice. He was one of those gentlemen with a permanent smell under his nose. Mackie and I were under the basha at the time scraping up the mess of decomposing food and human excreta which had fallen through the floor of our basha. We took little notice of him until he started to demand immediate attention and food. Then we crawled out and welcomed him to Flag Staff House. I jocularly announced I was the new Governor of Free Burma and Mackie was my Chief Councillor and Undertaker to the State. We were just looking for a Minister for Sanitation and he was the very man for the job. His salary would be one packet of biscuits and a pension of enough food to take him to Nampong. The smell under his nose increased as he crawled under the basha to take up his new post.

While the camp was being cleaned up, Mackie and I searched the area for useful things that had been abandoned. In one basha I found several hundred phials of bacteriaphage. We collected all the buckets, oil drums and tarpaulins and brought them back to Flag Staff House. On our return we found that our new Minister of Sanitation had gone on furlough, but he was quickly recalled and our policy explained. The Government of Free Burma recognized no race, religion or previous social standing. Everyone had to work for the common good to the full extent of his physical and metal ability. Only workers and the sick were fed at State expense. The remainder were granted passage through the State without let or hindrance, but they were not allowed to occupy the workers' bashas or receive rations.

Our Minister for Sanitation then crawled under the basha again and completed his task and received his salary as promised. We burnt fires under the basha which killed off or drove out all the insects. By nightfall the house was clean and about fifty people were fed.

Photos: Author

Above : The Author at Flagstaff House

Below : The Author with Miss Nell Baker, Mrs. Peters and Miss Joan Halstead waiting for food to be dropped

When it was dark and all the refugees had found a place to sleep, Masahid Ali announced my bath was ready. We had a little bathing platform attached to the house. On this we stood and soused ourselves with hot water. This bath seemed to wash away all the unpleasant things of life and all the toil and horrors of the day. We changed straight into our pyjamas and put on jerseys for dinner. We ate a simple but substantial meal which was usually the same, dhal soup, a little meat or fish and rice and onion, followed by stewed dried figs or apricots with condensed milk. This was washed down with pints of hot tea. Mackie loved cheese and thought that he did not like vegetables. As soon as we had finished our meals we retired to bed. Mackie and I were such good friends that there was no need to talk. Within a few minutes I was asleep. I had a camp bed, but Mackie preferred to sleep on the floor.

Our four servants slept in the basha with us as there was no room anywhere else. A clean place to sleep and one where it was safe to keep their own things gave them a sense of security.

26th June

We were never allowed to stay in bed for long in the morning. At the peep of dawn we had people poking their heads into the bashas begging for food. We had a very strict rule that we never started the day's work until we had shaved, washed and dressed. My bearer soon had some water boiling and we all got up and drank tea. Our first task was to get the fire alight under the rice and dhal pots so that those people who wanted to make an early start for Nampong could get away as soon as possible. Wet wood was the plague of our lives. Once the fires were lighted we could keep them going all day. Our rice was cooked until it was dry and then served with a little dhal. Dhal was our main trouble. Our second pot was too small to give everyone sufficient dhal. The yellow dhal (gram) we had been given took much longer to cook than the rice and the two were seldom ready together. We always managed to get some woman to do the cooking because cooking rice well is a great art and we could not afford to waste any. When the dhal and rice were cooked, Mackie or I shouted that the food was ready and those people capable of moving streamed up the hill. They all carried their plates, dishes or cups. Those without vessels picked wide leaves and twisted them into cornets.

The sight of cooked food and the delicious smell of the hot dhal drove the refugees nearly mad. They would fight and push and yell in their attempts to be served first. However, when they got too rowdy, I would wade into the trouble-makers with a cane until everyone kept quiet. Then Mackie or I would continue to dish out the food. The ration was three small mugs of rice and three quarters of a mug of dhal per man and boy over fifteen. The women received two mugs of rice and half a mug of dhal and the children one of rice and a quarter of dhal. It was not very much food, but they had been accustomed to less. In some cases this proved too much for the first meal. However, I soon got the knack of judging the exact amount a person was able to digest.

We would have liked to issue tea but the water was so far away that it was not practical to do it with so few porters. The rice pots had generally to be filled twice during the morning, and three or four times in the evening. Once the food was served Mackie and I had our breakfast. This consisted of porridge and milk, followed by fish and rice with biscuits and jam or cheese, washed down with several large cups of tea.

Once the meal was over, I again stood on the top of the hill and shouted to the world that Dawakhana was open. While I was attending the sick on the hill, Mackie went round the camp and encouraged people to leave for Nampong. Often it took shouts, threats and beatings to overcome the mental and physical inertia of these tired people, but we knew that if they did not keep on moving, their legs would swell with œdema, due to vitamin B deficiency, and they would never be able to reach the base. Mackie told certain people that they might remain for another day provided they worked. On the whole the refugees were very good about this sort of thing. They realized that if they all did a little, the general lot of the refugees could be made better.

When the crowds arrived at the top of the hill, I stopped them at the lower side of a large log, and invited all the people with dysentery to come forward. These were again subdivided into three groups. Those who had had dysentery for one or two days, those who had had it from three to four days, and those who had been ill for along time. As each group came forward I made them sit on a long log and await their turn. Some people thought they would be attended to first if they grunted and

groaned, but a sharp slap on the face put an end to these stupid exhibitions.

I usually made one of the patients help me by holding the box of bacteria-phage which I gave to the early cases of dysentery. By having the patients sitting on a log I could pour the phage straight into their mouths without spilling any. This bacteria-phage was excellent in new cases of dysentery, but quite useless in old. When I had finished with this group, I dismissed them and called in the second group. These were given Dover's powder or extract of Kurchi (raw material of Emetine grown in Assam), and again some one was asked to hold the bottle while I administered the doses with the medicine glass. The next group was given two tablets of M and B 693 and two of 760. This mixture was very effective if it was repeated three times a day for three days.

All this was a very rough-and-ready way of treating people, but on the whole it was effective. When I had time I laid the patients on the log which served as a bench and examination table and felt their stomachs. If they were tender on their right side, and the dome of the liver was enlarged, I treated them for amœbic dysentery. If they were sore on the left side or (which was much more common) sore and tender all over, I treated them for bacillary dysentery, and for food fermenting in the intestine. If the refugees, by some trick, deceived Mackie or me into giving them a double ration they always developed stomach trouble.

After I had dealt with the dysentery cases, I called the people with coughs and colds, who took their place on the log. A small dose of cough mixture all round was invariably popular. Some of these colds were the beginning of pneumonia. These cases were sent down to a small basha away from the main building where the refugees slept, and they were kept warm and as still as possible. To make nursing easier, we cut a hole in the bamboo bed alongside where they lay, so that they did not have to be moved to relieve themselves. We gave these cases four tablets of M and B 693 every four hours and fed them on hot milk, tea, rice and dhal. When they had recovered enough they were carried down to Nampong.

The next group were the fever cases. I spent a long time over these cases because I was on the look-out for black-water

fever. I took everyone's temperature and felt his pulse. Most were between 101 and 103 degrees. I had with me quinine mixture, quinine sulphate and hydrochloride. The quinine mixture produced the best results. The sulphate, before we learnt to crush it up, was often passed through without dissolving. Most of the refugees were having their rigors on the second or third day. Some of them complained that they felt very sick and could not eat.

After working for about two hours with the sick, I took a look round the camp. We had come up without hoes and the various corpses round our house made one continually aware of their presence. Wandering round the upper part of the camp I found a hoe that had been forgotten during the withdrawal, so I fitted a new shaft to it and proceeded to bury the corpses in the upper camp. I had just finished my third when Mackie arrived. He too had found hoes and had been at work cleaning the main refugee basha. Most of the refugees were not strong enough to help so we kept them on lighter work, such as fetching wood and small pots of water. Mackie thought it would be a good idea if we collected the corpses from round our area and put them into a basha and burnt it down. It seemed a very easy way of cleansing the place so we got to work. With two poles through a sack we made a stretcher. The fresh corpses were quite easy to carry, but some of the old ones required several trips before we had collected all the bits and pieces. The head and ribs always gave the most trouble. We piled the flooring and walls of the basha round the bodies in the hope that they would all be consumed, but the house did not burn well as it was made of green wood and after the thatch had flared up we were still left with our rotting corpses.

More refugees arrived during the course of the morning and asked for food and medical attention. Without discussing the matter, we divided the work of the camp between us. I attended to the sick and the food, while Mackie got on with the cleaning of the camp. Mackie selected strong men and women to help him and gradually he got the main rest basha less dirty. It was built on a slope but had no drains on the upper side, so that the water ran through the building. Inside there were two long chungs on which the refugees sat and rested. All the dirt, scraps of food and excreta were allowed to drop through the chung on

to the wet ground below. To add to the general stench two partially decomposed corpses had been thrown into the passage and trodden into the mud. In the middle of one chung was a great pile of bedding which, on being removed, exposed another corpse that fell apart and had to be laboriously gathered together. We removed the flooring of the chung and, wearing our gum boots, waded into the mire and scraped the ground clean. To cleanse it still further, we lit fires which killed off many of the fly larvæ. After cleaning the place we rebuilt the chungs. However, the basha needed constant attention because the people that we were dealing with were so demoralized that they were too lazy to go outside to relieve themselves and, if they did get out, it was only under the eaves of the basha. The refugees' area was filthy each morning, but we made them clean up their own dirt as far as was possible. Occasionally we had refugees crowding under our own basha out of the rain. Unlike theirs, it was a grand clean place to relieve themselves, but if we caught them with their pants down we trained them in the same way as a kitten, except that we had no pepper. A refugee, having lost everything he or she had loved and owned, was no respecter of property and as soon as we put down split bamboo flooring on the chungs it was torn up for firewood. To overcome this difficulty we made the people collect their own firewood before nightfall. Another favourite nuisance was lighting fires in tins on top of the chung. The hot tin gradually burnt a hole right through the flooring which then had to be replaced. It was on these things that much of our time was spent.

27th June

The evening meal was the most difficult to cope with because after we had been in Shamlung for only two days there were three hundred refugees in our camp. We had plenty of food so we allowed useful people to stay a day or two and look after the very sick until porters could be sent to carry them to Nampong. In the course of the day I spent on the average six to eight hours attending the sick.

To save time I made the refugees bathe and wash their own wounds and sores until all the mud was removed from them; then they were given swabs of cotton and acriflavine solution to continue the washing. When they thought the sores were clean,

I took over and cleaned them out thoroughly with various dyes such as gentian violet, brilliant green, congo red and mercurochrome. My favourite dye was acriflavine as it seemed to be the most soothing. However, when I had a very nasty sore to deal with, I tried out all the dyes I had. The refugees liked me to use everything as it convinced them I was doing my best and a little patter did much to restore their shattered morale. I encouraged them to talk and they were delighted to have a synpathetic listener. From these people I learnt many of the causes of the rot in Burma. They said it was a case of the senior officials not backing up their juniors. Corruption was so general that nothing was ever done about it. If a junior official tried to expose some ramp, he was soon shifted or warned to mind his own business. " Peace at any price " were the watchwords. " I have only a few more years to do before getting my pension," or " I can't afford to have a row because I have two or three children in expensive schools." There was many a tit-bit of scandal which came to light while I was dressing a Naga sore.

These Naga sores were on the lower parts of the leg and had started in many cases as a result of secondary infection after a leech bite or a scratched sandfly bite in the Namyung valley. They had taken between five and ten days to develop. The Naga sore smells like a rotting corpse but it is not very painful. The skin round the wound is stretched tight and takes on a pastel blue shade. The rim of the wound is bright red and undercut, and can be lifted. Underneath it is watery yellow pus. The centre of the sore is granular, and has small pieces of pus adhering to the granules. My method of treating these sores varied from time to time, but the most successful way was to wash the sore with hot water, and soap, and then clean it out with 5% alcohol. When it was dry, I dyed it with 1/100 acriflavine, and packed the hole with magsulph and glycerine. Magsulph and glycerine dressing remained wet and did not damage the new cells when it was taken off to clean the wound. The sores sloughed badly for several days before clearing up. From my point of view there was little one could do for these people as I had not enough Vitamin B compounds to treat everyone. When these Naga sores attacked the front of the foot all the tendons became exposed. However I have seen men continue to walk when half of the top of their feet had completely rotted away.

Now and again I found refugees with large yellow patches of dead skin on their instep which I cut out with a broken razor-blade and removed all the pus from underneath. Very little, if any, blood flowed while I removed large pieces of dead flesh. These wounds I sometimes treated with magsulph and glycerine and at other times with powdered M and B 760. Both were equally effective and showed signs of recovery in a day or so. One of the hardest parts of this work was to keep their feet wounds clean in such a filthy place.

When the next lot of food was cooked, dozens of eager people came to inform me. Again there would be fights and squabbles among men and women who tried to borrow each other's children, hoping I would be deceived into giving out large portions to families. After a day or so I put a tin of gentian violet beside me and as each person came forward he or she was first marked and then given rations. When borrowed children came up a second time for food they were unlucky. Their real guardians would then come forward and say that there had been a mistake and beg forgiveness. I was adamant, because it was easier to forgive them than to cure a starving person who has over-eaten. On the first day I marked people on the right wrist and on the second day on the left. If they were there a third day I put a mark on the forehead and the next day on their nose and so on. By this means I could see at a glance how long refugees had been in my camp. Great efforts were made to wash these marks off and no doubt it was one way of making people wash before meals.

Masahid Ali and Mackie's bearer were busy all day. One of their jobs was to see that I always had plenty of boiling water for washing wounds and giving tea to very exhausted people. They washed our clothes and dried them over the fire. They were the permanent guards of the basha and kept a watchful eye on everything. In the evening when Masahid Ali thought we were getting too tired he used to chase us into our basha and announce that our bath was ready.

During the day, if he found a lull in the work, he would call us to a meal. Masahid Ali was a great philosopher and never let anything worry him. When he came to a corpse lying across his path he just took a long step straight over it as if he was crossing a puddle in Sylhet road. His only hint about

Shamlung not being as beautiful as the Namphuk river was when he sometimes sniffed and said, "Sahib, the wind has changed." All round us we had various odours and we soon learnt to tell the direction of the wind by the smell that accompanied it. There were two very bad smells which we named "George" and "Mary". We spent days trying to locate their source, without result. Eventually we became quite fond of "George" and "Mary" and always spoke of them affectionately.

14: THE SKY IS BLUE

28th June

"SAHIB, SAHIB, bhuk se murta." I opened my eyes and saw the sky was bright; a lovely morning in the middle of the Monsoon. One of those mornings when life seems very good and all the troubles of the world do not matter.

"Sahib, Sahib," called a group of women and children, "biscuit do, we want to make an early start." I handed them each a packet of Britannia biscuits and bade them be off, with a grave warning not to drink any water until they reached Pahari stream.

Masahid Ali soon fetched me some hot water and, after shaving and dressing, Mackie and I went down to see the refugees and encouraged them to pack up and be ready to leave as soon as the rice and dhal were cooked. It was much too good a day to hang about camp. By seven o'clock only those who were seriously ill were left with their immediate relatives. We went back to our basha and ate a large breakfast because this was a perfect day for cleaning the camp.

After breakfast we dug communal graves and buried every corpse within a hundred yards of our house. We then set to work to bury the bullocks which had been slaughtered beside our kitchen. We worked hard till mid-day and had everything covered up. We thought this must be good-bye to "George" and "Mary" and wondered if we would miss them.

We called Masahid Ali to cook us some food as we were hungry and then wandered up to the spring to wash and bring back water. On arriving there we found many of the refugees to whom I had given food at dawn sitting in the sunshine and thoroughly enjoying themselves. We drove them out of camp

and returned to our basha for lunch. We did not really blame the refugees for drying out their kit; a wet blanket is heavy to carry and very poor comfort at night. However, they did not know that they could get down the slope from Nanki to Pahari in half-an-hour on a fine day, but it would take several hours on a wet day.

By the time we were half way through our meal another crowd of refugees started to arrive. They saw our flag on the crest of the hill and wandered up hopefully. This party brought the news that there were about three hundred refugees, including several Army Officers and their wives, at Tagung.

The Nagas were doing a roaring trade in rice. There was also an Indian gentleman who was selling three silver rupees for Burma ten-rupee notes. The Nagas did not like paper money, but would accept one-rupee notes when nothing else was available. The Anglo-Indian women sold all their underclothing to buy food and by the time they reached us had only thin wet cotton dresses sticking to their ribs. They often begged for some clothing to cover their nakedness. We were able to help some of them by robbing the dead of their garments and washing them. These we handed out to the most needy.

We had dozens of light cotton blankets in the basha in which the porters had carried packets of biscuits when they brought us to Flag Staff House. These blankets we lent to refugees for the night and collected in the morning. Some of these Anglo-Indians were absolutely destitute. One woman told me she had lost her husband while crossing the Namyung river and had travelled on alone with three children, the eldest of whom was six. She had exchanged everything she had, except her dress, for food. She offered to live as my mistress if I would feed and look after her children. I pointed to the flag and said that everything in the camp was free except love. I repaired a hut near ours and let her rest for a few days. She and her children had starved and were very weak. I asked her how she managed to keep going so long on so little food. She explained that she never missed a meal since she had set out from their home. No matter how little food they had, they divided it into regular meals even if it was only a dozen grains of rice. She and her children had never had any stomach trouble on the road.

While doling out the food that afternoon, a small absurdly fat

Gurkha boy, aged about two, toddled up to me with a plate in his hand. I gave him the usual child's ration and he disappeared, only to reappear a second time with a grin on his face holding out his plate for more. He was fit enough to have more, so I gave him a little extra. Very soon afterwards he was again standing before me, but I shooed him away. He was not in the least afraid of me and hung around my basha. The crowds came and went, but this little boy remained playing by himself. I began to ask refugees if they had seen his parents. A Gurkha told me that his father was a fool and had fed his son well, but had so starved himself that he was no longer able to walk. He had last been seen here about two miles down the track. This little boy had arrived in camp alone. This was not unusual, because children were often sent on ahead to walk at their own pace. Mackie said he would go and look for his father and filled up his pack with biscuits and set off down the road of Nawngyang. Hours later he returned with a crowd of refugees, but he had not found the father. To each person Mackie had given a biscuit. He knew how many packets he had taken, so by counting the remaining biscuits we knew the number of people he had met.

29th June

We decided to adopt "Sunshine", as we called this little fellow, and I gave him a good bath and washed his shirt, his only garment. "Sunshine" was given a cup of milk and put early to bed. At dawn I had my first taste of being a foster-parent when "Sunshine" made noises which indicated I had to put him outside. He was a grand child and never cried and was always full of fun and mischief. When given anything he would come to attention and salute. In one corner of my basha was a tin of ration biscuits. When no one was watching, "Sunshine" would open the box and take out two packets of biscuits. He used to play with them as if they were blocks. After a time he would slowly undo the wrapper and lay the eight biscuits in a row. These would be moved about until they were all touching and perfectly dressed. "Sunshine" would then pick up an end biscuit and nibble it at the corners until it was round. This was put back into its place and the next nibbled. Thus he fed and amused himself all the morning, until all the

biscuits were round. By this time he was thirsty and would go to Masahid Ali, cup in hand, and salute.

One morning a Gurkha Recruit came into the camp and offered to help us. We accepted his offer and he became one of our regular staff and was paid by the I.T.A. for his services. This lad was worth his weight in gold, as he would help to regulate the crowds who wanted medicine and he helped me at times at the log hospital. A night or so after he arrived he saw a hand come into the basha and remove a tin of sugar. It was the last tin of sugar which we had kept solely for the children and the very sick. I was in my pyjamas at the time and did not feel like going out in the rain down the steep slope in the mud, but Mackie slipped on his gum boots and darted down the hill to a hut where he found our sugar box lying outside. He looked inside and asked if anyone had been out. Of course, everyone denied it, but one man had wet mud on his feet and sugar still sticking to his jersey. Mackie brought the thief back to our basha where he was given a good hiding and his face dyed with Brilliant Green. His face was still green a fortnight later.

The story was repeated by the refugees to new arrivals and we never had any more pilfering of food in the camp.

A day or so later a sepoy, No. 3378 Ayub Khan of the 1st Bhamo Battalion B.F.F., came into my camp and asked me to change some silver for him as his wife was ill and unable to climb to Tagung Hill. The Nagas were selling food, but only wanted silver money. He gave me the names of many people in the Tagung Valley and the approximate numbers. I gave him about 30 lbs. of food and the necessary medicines to treat his wife and other people in need. Ayub Khan rested that day and then went back to his wife, taking the glad news with him that there was a camp near at hand. His return must have saved dozens of people because many had decided to remain at Tagung for the rains and the Naga supplies were too scanty for everyone.

The next few days were very busy as Ayub Khan had certainly spread the good news. We were so rushed from morning till night that we hardly had time for tea. This period brought in all kinds of sick people. Several of the refugees, in their last efforts to reach us, overstrained themselves and died during their first night in camp. This meant more digging to be done. However, we managed to get a little help from the refugees

in this matter. We paid two packets of biscuits for each grave dug. Several people who came into the camp developed very high temperatures soon after their arrival. When I went to see them they were delirious and throwing their legs and arms about, but were stiff from their shoulders upwards. It may have been cerebral malaria or spinal meningitis. If it was cerebral malaria I knew I could do nothing to save them as I had no intravenous quinine. Therefore, I treated these cases with M and B 693. I gave them four tablets of the drug every four hours and kept the patients in a hut by themselves where a friend looked after them. Five out of eleven cases treated in this way recovered enough to be carried down the trail. Some of the middle-aged people complained before their death of a severe pain in the area of their left armpit. They puffed and panted up the short slope to my logside hospital. I let them lie on the log for some time before examining them and when they recovered their breath I put one finger on their chest and tapped it with the other hand. In this way I sounded the area around the heart. It was very noticeable that their hearts seemed nearly twice as large as normal hearts and shaped like a boot. I did not try to have these refugees carried to Assam because they would have died long before their arrival. They stayed in my camp a few days and died quietly in their sleep.

During the lulls when there were only a few people wanting to be treated, I examined their hearts by this tapping method. This enlargement of the heart was most noticeable in people who suffered most from malnutrition.

These unfortunate people had been existing for months on a few ounces of musty dirty rice which they thoroughly washed before cooking. In cleaning their rice they washed away the last traces of vitamins and natural salts. The obvious signs of this deficiency were a vague but constant pain in the back of the head, a burning sensation in the hands, and pins and needles in the legs. Many of the refugees had great difficulty in seeing and in the corners of their eyes were little white flakes. The edges of their tongues were red and sore. However, I saw no signs of loose teeth or soft gums. Very often when these refugees rested a day or so their legs became swollen and badly pitted. At first I tried soaking their legs for long periods in brine. This only had the effect of cleaning out the small ulcers and sores on their legs,

but did not relieve the œdema. I had been sent some thiamine chloride and nicotinic acid pills with which I dosed two of the worst cases of œdema. These people were in a very exhausted state and were made much worse by my efforts. The swelling did not decrease as I had expected and they found it impossible to digest their food. Two men died from palagra, diarrhœa and general exhaustion. In the next few days we had dozens of very sick people in the camp and far more than we could possibly arrange to have carried to Nampong. If we did nothing for them they would die of starvation, when we left Shamlung, or of exposure on the road. The weather at this time was bitterly cold on top of the Pangsau Pass. Refugees were taking two and three days to cover the seven miles to Nampong.

I tried again to treat these œdema cases and this time I first gave them several cups of marmite and two yeast tablets three times a day for two days. I then started them off on two five-grain tablets of thiamine chloride and two tablets of nicotinic acid, as well as their marmite and yeast. These people seemed to spend the rest of their stay in my camp urinating. Their whole bodies shrank like pricked balloons. After a week's treatment their legs were still pitted, but they were able to walk on to Nampong without assistance. In my enthusiasm to treat all the new cases of œdema, I used up all my stock of thiamine chloride, nicotinic acid and yeast. It looked as if the next lot of people was going to be unlucky. They certainly had a bad time, because we kept them moving to prevent their legs from swelling.

30th June

Up till now we had been so busy in cleaning up Shamlung Camp that it had been impossible for us to go forward and see what was happening ahead of us. But one morning I walked down the track to see what was going on. Not two hundred yards from our camp I found a bunch of Nagas selling Indian corn and mouldy rice. They charged a rupee for four cobs and the same for a milk-tin of rice. These cunning fellows told the refugees that the next camp was many miles ahead and thus increased their sales. These Nagas always ran away and hid in the jungle when they saw Mackie or me. We tried on several occasions to make friends with them but were unable to speak their language; they were shy and thought we might put an end to their

business. Further down the track I found several groups of people encamped in huts where they had been, for several days, living on the supplies sold to them by the Nagas. I told these people there was a camp not far ahead and drove them out of their huts. They did not want to leave a place where they could buy food from the Nagas in case they got stranded in a worse place. I handed them each a biscuit and pulled their huts down so that they had no alternative but to go on to my camp.

There were, at this period, about ten corpses to the mile. Quite a number of them were soldiers. I poked about their bones and searched their clothing for pay books and identity discs. Sometimes I found the pay book lying some distance from the corpse where it had been thrown by the first person who had searched and robbed the bodies. It was a most unpleasant job but like everything else on the road one got used to it and only considered the practical side of the matter. Until these men were reported officially dead their families had a very poor chance of obtaining a pension. Identification was made much more difficult as many of the men wore no discs at all, and often those who did had been issued with such inferior ones that they rotted in the rain and I was unable to read them. Often when I examined the pay books I found that no entries had been made at all against their names. Occasionally I found a regimental number stamped on a shirt or jacket. This I tore off and put in my haversack in which I collected the relics.

At Nawngyang Hka sat a soldier and his weeping wife holding a newly born infant in her arms. The child had just died of colic. Its mother had tried to feed it with rice water as her breasts were dry. She refused to give up the child, and her husband had not the heart to take it from her. I spoke to them for a few minutes and gave the women some tea from my flask and told them about my camp four miles away, where they would find food and shelter. I took the infant from its mother and let the murky waters of the Nawngyang Hka claim another victim.

Near the Abor bridge lay a Jamadar of the Myitkyina Bn. who had died a few hours earlier. He had already been robbed of all his possessions. However, on the inside of his tunic I found his Battalion number. I added his shoulder titles, badges of rank and his number to my collection.

The Abor bridge, the building of which I have described

earlier, was in perfect condition and the refugees were now using it. Only the unfortunate cattle were unable to cross the dark deep river. On the far side of the river I counted the remains of forty dead cattle and higher up the hill, where the old porter camp used to be were several animals still mooehing around living on bamboo leaves. In one or two places I found cattle tied to a tree and unable to stray, with the dead owners lying nearby. I freed all the animals I found and drove them up to the jhum where there was a little grazing. I went from hut to hut shouting that I had food to give away, but no one came to me, so I searched every building counting bodies and looking for the living. There were thirty dead in an upper camp and another twenty or so in the shelters by the side of the river. In one hut I found a family of six unable to move so I gave them some biscuits and promised to send help in a day or two. We managed to save four of these people a few days later.

I wandered up the road a short distance, where I heard some chopping, and found a Gurkha family preparing a meal; one son had killed a bullock and was in the process of skinning it. These people had not eaten since they had left Tagung when they heard of my camp from Ayub Khan. The road had proved more difficult than they had expected and they were unable to continue without some food. I gave these people some biscuits and made them promise to feed the six other people in the hut nearby. It was now time to return to camp as I had four miles to go. On the road I found a widow carrying a heavy basket and a baby tied across her chest. I relieved her of her child so that she could reach the camp before dusk.

Nearly every day we wrote letters to Kenney about our work and the number of people we had in the camp. When he considered we had too many sick he brought up a party of porters loaded with food and returned with the sick.

We carried the sick in blankets tied to a pole. The path was so narrow that only two men could carry at a time. It took about eight to ten men to carry a ten stone person; however, we managed to carry most of these thin starved people with four and five porters. There were many cases where, if we arranged to carry the children, their parents were able to struggle along themselves.

Choosing the right people to carry was a great responsibility.

We had the power of life and death because we never had enough porters to carry every sick person. By carrying someone who died on the journey another person was deprived of his right to live. It was the border-line cases that made us worry. Were we to carry men and women or should children come before grown-ups? As long as we had no policy we allowed ourselves to be swayed by sentiment and common convention but, after a few days' thought, I decided that we would save those people who on reaching India would be most useful to the State.

Each time Kenney brought up porters and carried away some people the others felt like men in a condemned cell. They were too sick and weak to make a fuss but their eyes followed me wherever I went.

A report had been sent to Base that there were far more sick people than had been originally expected and word came up to me that Capt. Keene of the 2nd Assam Rifles was being sent to rescue me. I did not feel like being rescued and was sorry to hear that heavily equipped troops were coming up to help me. I knew at once that they would not be able to carry the refugees because they had never been trained to carry on the shoulder.

1st July

With this in view I got up before dawn and was ready to start at first light with one of the porters. He was to carry a small sack of rice. I was to carry a pack and a canvas bucket filled with biscuits. My other equipment was a kukri, a torch, pieces of white cardboard on which I had written messages in English, Roman, Urdu, and Hindustani and several packets of matches. We each had two days' rations for ourselves and a few necessary drugs.

12: "GEORGE AND MARY" AGAIN

I HAD not gone more than a few yards down the hill when I saw stumbling towards me an old merchant with his head split open. I put my pack and my bucket in the basha and called out to Abdul to heat some water and then went down to meet the fellow.

He was suffering from shock, and was quite incapable of giving any clear statement until he had drunk several cups of hot sweet tea. In the meantime I examined his head and found a cut four inches long and gaping open an inch wide at the centre. The skull was exposed but did not appear to have been damaged. I made the old man sit down and clipped all the hair away on either side of the wound, and then shaved the scalp clean. In the meantime Masahid Ali brought me some hot water and I washed the wound for an hour with acriflavine 1/1,000. The wound was fresh and was quite clean. I next ground up some tablets of M and B 760 between two spoons and packed the wound with the powder. Then sticking a large piece of Elastoplast on the lower side of the wound, drew it together leaving a small drainage outlet. I wrote my name and the date on the Elastoplast to discourage people from opening it too soon. While this was going on we got the story out of the merchant of what had happened.

For a month he had been travelling with a crowd of Sikh sweepers from Myitkyina and they had all been good friends. However, at Nawngyang Hka some Nagas came and offered rice and vegetables for sale. In taking out his money he exposed too much and one of the sweepers made a cut at him with a sword. He received only a slight wound and the attack was not pressed home. Due to the shortage of cooking pots and matches it was impossible for him to leave this party without starving to death.

But the following day he noticed, while crossing the Abor bridge, a cigarette packet, on which I had written a message about our camp, fixed in the pier. When the merchant saw this he tried to push ahead and leave the party. But one of the sweepers hit him over the head with a rifle butt. He was with a crowd of friends who yelled to him to leave his fallen bundle and run. He had run for four miles and was completely exhausted by the time he had reached me. After some time his wife and daughter arrived and filled in many details of the story. We sent a description down to Nampong and gave orders to search all Sikhs passing through.

While the family was being questioned Mackie suddenly announced that " George " and " Mary " were back in force. We had buried everything we knew of and here right in our midst was that old smell back again. Looking round for the source of the smell, I noticed a small dirty Nepali coolie who combined the full odour of both " George " and " Mary " in his person. He sat quietly watching me dress the merchant's head and, when I finished, asked me to examine him. He had dirty shirt-sleeve tied round his head and a lump of burnt rag stuck on his nose. His face and clothes were incredibly dirty. I tried to untie the sleeve but it was firmly stuck on with dried blood. The Nepali took his short off and I poured warm water over his head until this crude bandage loosened. The burnt rags on his nose came off, too, revealing that his nose had been nearly cut in two. Between his eyes he had a deep gash which had cut half-way through the bone. He said he had several other head wounds and then showed me his wrist and arms. I sat down to the laborious job of cutting his hair with a pair of nail scissors and shaving his head with my safety razor. While I clipped his hair, I got him to tell his story which was as follows:

" Since leaving Myitkyina I travelled with an Indian and his son. They were helpless sort of people and they stuck close to me because I could build huts and make fires without matches. We reached Tagung Hka together a week ago. They had run out of money so I bought a little rice and shared it with them. The father had thrown away his blanket because he said it was too heavy to carry but I kept mine and never took off my overcoat. We rested at Tagung Hka for a day or so as the rain was very heavy and the river too swift to cross. During the second night the father asked me if I would give him my blanket as

he was cold and wet. I refused to do this and chided him for throwing away his own. A little later the father said he would try and make a fire and asked to borrow my kukri. This I lent him and the father went out in the rain to search for dry firewood. In the meantime I fell asleep rolled in my blanket. Some time later I was hit on the forehead by the kukri. I sat up, still half asleep, and tried to defend myself. The shelter was so low that the Indian could not swing the kukri hard. I yelled and screamed for help which made my assailant run away. I have not seen the pair since but if you will let me, I will stay here until they arive. I know they are still in Tagung Hka."

By this time his head was as bald as an egg, revealing six wounds which had in every case chipped the skull. Some of these wounds had been packed with burnt cotton rags an hour or so after the attack. These wounds had healed well, but the undressed wounds were very dirty. I washed and washed his wounds until they were clean and then treated them exactly as I had done the merchant's.

I told my little Nepali friend that if he wanted to do any killing it was quite all right as far as I was concerned, but he would dig the grave first and he could find a hoe at the back of our basha. He rested a day with me and then continued as far as Nampong where he watched the road until he was told that his enemies had died of eating uncooked rice at Tagung Hka.

It was now eight o'clock and if I wished to reach Tagung Hka and return before dark I would have to move fast. Mackie and I agreed that we would do nothing about the Sikhs until I returned. Our main job was to feed people—not to kill them. The porter and I set off down the road as fast as we could and covered the four miles to Nawngyang Hka in just over two hours. This included stops to distribute food, examine all the new corpses and have a cheerful chat with the Sikh sweepers to whom I gave biscuits as to everyone else. I told them to go up and see Mackie and he would give them food and biscuits for any work they did. One of the Sikhs was carrying a rifle and several of them were carrying talwars, Sikh swords. They told me that there were some ' Karbia ' sahibs not far behind. This was the word used on the road to indicate Anglo-Burmans. We parted as friends and I continued my trek, crossed the Abor bridge and started up the Tagung Hill. A mile or so from the river I met three

old brothers whom I guessed were the Shaws, with whom was an Italian. They were sitting on the side of the path admiring the view. I gave them each a biscuit and told them to get moving. I was very angry with the Shaws as I had been receiving frequent messages about them and had been expecting them for at least a week. When one of them asked for a second biscuit before he had finished his first, I gave them all a piece of my mind which made them get up and hurry on to Shamlung like a lot of whipped puppies.

A mile farther on at the Tagung stream I found a pretty girl of about nineteen and her brother. They were both in a dreadful state. The girl was suffering badly from dysentery and the boy was very weak. I made them some hot tea and gave them a tin of milk and several packets of biscuits. I told them if they could manage to get down to the Abor bridge somehow Mackie and I would carry the girl to Shamlung. I had spent an hour with these people and it was nearly midday by the time I reached the summit of the Tagung Hill. Near the top of the hill I found a little Gurkha girl, aged about six, lying huddled in a hollow of the bank. She was wearing only a flimsy cotton dress and was bitterly cold. I asked her where her parents were and she replied simply that they had gone on as she was no longer able to keep pace with them. She had been alone for two days and nights. I gave her some tea from my flask, and a few biscuits, and told her to rest a little longer and then try and reach Nawngyang Hka. I wanted to take her back, but if I did perhaps hundreds of others might remain at Tagung Hka without knowing there was help at Shamlung.

It was a beautiful day, and from the top of the hill I could see the great basin of the Nawngyang Lake. There were no villages in the valley but the hill-sides had been extensively jhumed. These jhums were now covered with secondary forest, but they showed up clearly as they were of a lighter green. This area looked as if it should have been a perfect game sanctuary teaming with bison, elephant and rhino ; but I saw no sign of wild life, not even a marsh bird.

To the south in the Tagung Valley several large grassy jhums occupied the tops of the ridges. In each jhum was a small hut, built high off the ground, where the Nagas lived while tending their crops. Here too there was no sign of life. At

every footstep I was reminded of death and destruction. The struggle for existence seemed too hard for man and beast. I had not seen a single bird since I had left Ledo. Only butterflies seemed to be happy in the monsoon and they flitted round in their thousands to cheer and brighten every corpse.

The Tagung Hill had been a favourite resting place for the refugees and the clearing was littered with tumbledown huts where often whole families stayed and died together. I found the bodies of a mother and child still locked in each other's arms. In another hut were the remains of a mother who had died in the throes of childbirth with the child only half born. In this jhum more than fifty people had died. Sometimes pious Christians placed little wooden crosses in the ground before they died. Others had figures of the Virgin Mary still clutched in their skeleton hands. A soldier had died wearing his side-cap, all his cotton clothing had rotted away, but the woollen cap sat smartly on his grinning skull. Already the ever-destroying jungle had overgrown some of the older huts, covering up the skeletons and reducing them to dust and mould.

I met Ayub Khan who told me he was returning from Nampong with some silver to buy food from the Nagas. As he was going to Tagung himself it was no longer necessary for me to continue. I gave him some rice to distribute and a number of biscuits, and asked him to tell everyone he saw that I would stay in the jhum and issue rice free to those who would come and fetch it. He carried the good news down the hill but for an hour no one came. The refugees did not believe that any one could be so foolish as to distribute food free. I walked down the road a little way, and shouted in English which convinced the people that Ayub Khan's tale was true. First only one or two people came, but when they returned with a mug of rice, they shouted the news down the hill in relays. At two o'clock I handed over the remains of the rice to a soldier, first giving him all he required for himself and his family, to make sure he would distribute it. I gave him double rations. He did not let me down, and distributed the rice amongst fifty more people.

I started my journey back, picked up the little girl, and carried her nine miles back to camp. She was very dirty so I bathed her in a mountain torent. This made he very cold, and I was unable to get her warm again until I reached Flag Staff

House. On the way back I found that the brother and sister were still there where I had left them. If it had not been for the Gurkha lass on my back I would have carried the sister to Nawngyang. I sent her brother for a bucket of water so that she could be washed, and I helped her out of her shelter where she had been sitting in her own dirt for a week. She had filthy ulcers on her buttocks, and her whole body was crawling with lice. I left them some more food, but it was impossible for me to stay longer and get back before dusk, so I hurried on. My Gurkha lass made walking difficult as her extra weight drove my feet deep into the mud. Sometimes I carried her sitting on my shoulder, and at others slung on my back in a cloth. I was very tired when I reached my basha, and my neck and shoulders ached.

Mackie, feeling sorry for the Shaw brothers and their Italian friend, had allowed them to come into the basha and had given them a meal. They were getting in the way, interfering with our work and wanting our servants to do things for them. In the circumstances I could not let this go on, so I asked them what arrangements they had made for the night. The brothers looked a little alarmed, and while they were considering what to say, I handed them a lamp, a piece of soap and a towel and told them where to find the spring. This made them realise the standards expected of them. When they had gone, I bathed little Miyah in hot water and wrapped her up in heated blankets. Pneumonia was setting in, so I gave her some hot milk and marmite. Half a cup of milk was all she could manage. After a little while I gave her four tablets of M and B 693 which dose I continued every four hours for five days. "Sunshine", the little Gurkha boy, was very interested in Miyah and came to where she lay beside my bed and tried to get her to play.

When the Shaw brothers returned I examined their papers to see who they were, and why they had an Italian with them. One had been a High Court Judge, another a Deputy Commissoiner, and the third a Customs official. The Italian had owned a restaurant in Rangoon. The Shaw brothers were all tall, lank men aged between forty-five and sixty. It was difficult to judge their ages as they had grown long grey beards and their hair hung in locks down their necks. Their nails were long and broken, and their hands were cracked and lined. They had felt hurt

when ordered out in the dark to wash, but when they returned they were much refreshed, and they realised it was my way of restoring their morale. We all sat down to dinner together and had a cheerful meal. The Judge recovered his sense of humour, and told us many tales of the confusion before the evacuation. Courts had tried to function long after orders for the evacuation. No orders had been issued for his court to be closed, but eventually, after sending several wires and letters to the Governor, he had ordered his staff to Myitkyina to try to reach India as best they could.

I had a large number of sacks which we laid on the floor to make a bed for our guests, and I provided a few thin blankets for their cover. That night the Shaws and the Italian slept at one end of the basha with the Gukha orderly, while Mackie, Sunshine, Miyah and I had the other. The bearers and porters, crowded out of their usual place, spent the night on the kitchen floor.

This was my first disturbed night at Flag Staff House. My guests raised a chorus of grunts and snores, while poor little Miyah breathed with great difficulty. Once or twice I had to put on my gum boots and carry her outside. I kept on looking at my watch so as to give her the tablets at the proper time. As dawn broke I had just sunk into a nice comfortable sleep when "Sunshine" announced with a yell that a new day was born and he wanted to be allowed out.

2nd July

It was no use trying to remain in bed as refugees were already streaming up the hill looking for food. I got up, shaved and dressed slowly. I was tired and fed up with this mass of humanity from which there now seemed to be no esacpe.

My pack had rubbed me under the right arm-pit during the previous day's march, and it was becoming extemely painful for such a small gall. No sooner was I dressed than I put a new blade in my razor and with it the old men shaved off their precious but grimy beards. With their face-fungus off they were quite different beings again and, while I was busy, they got my bearer to prepare breakfast of porridge and fried sausages for themselves. By the time I returned to the house they had finished their porridge. One of the brothers gave my servant

a Burma ten-rupee note, which he thought very funny, as it was quite useless to him in the jungle. No doubt it was meant well, but at that time money and gold were worth less to us than a tin of milk.

I asked the Judge what he thought we ought to do about the Sikh sweepers and invited him to try them. He refused to do so. I came to the conclusion that it was better to say nothing about the robbery and put the sweepers on to a good day's work. The merchant was worried about his wealth and was foolish enough to offer me six thousand rupees if I would recover it for him. When he staggered back to his feet I pointed out to him that if I wanted his money I could have the lot for the taking and I was not prepared to leave other people to die in Shamlung at the cost of providing an escort to a few Sikh sweepers. I would recover the money in my own way and when it suited me. The merchant had not the courage to make an accusation in front of the sweepers so I had very little sympathy for him.

The Shaw brothers and their friend continued on to Nampong and reached India safely.

Not long after the departure of the Shaw brothers, I went to the edge of the hill to announce that the "Dawakhana" was open and saw two weary figures looking up at our basha. I did not recognize them as I.T.A. Liaison Officers, but they had not the refugee's beards. When they came a little closer I saw they were Dr. Bertram and Lt.-Col. Hodson of the I.T.A. who had come up to pay us a visit and had found our track worse than they had expected. I brought them up to the house and filled them with tea and biscuits, while Masahid Ali prepared a hot meal. Lt.-Col. Hodson had twisted his knee and had found it difficult to walk. Luckily I had a bottle of neat's foot oil with which Dr. Bertram massaged it. The main object of their visit was to try and get the road closed as soon as possible. I was very much opposed to this because the fine spell of weather we were having at this time would lower the Nawngyang and encourage another batch of refugees to cross. These people would not arrive for at least another ten days.

I told Lt.-Col. Hodson that closing the road was sheer murder and I proposed to stay on as long as I had the food. I suggested that camps should be thinned down and only small batches of porters kept in each camp, as we were doing. Our main job

was to see that people did not over-eat at their first meal and to drive on those people who wanted to hang about. Lt.-Col. Hodson did not agree that I should stay out any longer and tried to convince me that the whole evacuation had come to an end. He chaffed me and jockingly threatened to put me under arrest if I refused to return at the appointed date. I jocularly retorted that, as Governor of Free Burma, I was not prepared to lower my Ensign until I was convinced that there was no use in staying longer. Lt-Col. Hodson and Dr. Bertram were shocked and badly shaken by the sights of rotting corpses in the middle of the track over which they had been forced to step, and at the helplessly weak individuals waiting by the side of the track for death to relieve them of further suffering. The dark, gloomy vale at the top of the pass made a deep and morbid impression on my visitors. We asked them to stay a night with us, but they decided they had seen enough and after lunch hurried back to Nampong.

Mackie thought he would go down to the Abor bridge as he had not yet seen it, and combine a little work and pleasure. It would make a change from an eternal round of funerals. Amongst the refugees who arrived that afternoon were some officers of the Burma Army and a 2nd Lt. Harding, who claimed to be an American. These people had been chased out of Tagung by Ayub Khan. There was also a group of Jamaicans led by Mrs. Francis. Her party had divided at Tagung Ga, and she had sent on ahead the Queen of Rangoon with her flock of expectant mothers whom she was shepherding to India. As soon as she saw me Mrs. Francis asked if she could help in any way, so I sent her off to fetch a bucket of water. She returned a little later with it balanced on her head. It was only then that I noticed that one leg and arm were withered. She was a cheery soul despite her afflictions.

When Mackie returned he brought with him a child who had been deserted on the road. This one too had pneumonia and Flag Staff House gradually turned into a hospital.

That evening, when we had finished dishing out the rations, we thought we would amuse ourselves by tracking down "George" and "Mary". "George", we knew, was hiding somewhere near the refugees' cook house. We started to pull the branches away from a heap where they had been piled when

the jungle was first cleared. Under this Mackie spied what he claimed to be a human knee. We decided to burn the whole heap of brushwood and "George" with it. For an hour we puffed and blew but the firewood did not burn. In the morning Mackie sent for the sweepers and paid them a packet of biscuits each to dig a large grave. When a hole four feet long and three feet deep was ready, the sweepers asked us to see "George" buried. They pulled back the brushwood and revealed the small partially-cooked kneejoint of a bullock. We were desperately disappointed in "George", but we gave him the best grave ever dug during the whole evacuation. After this we refused to have anything to do with "Mary".

13 : THE NIGHT MARCH

I HEARD some sepoys shouting in Punjabi and hurried to see who these noisy arrivals could be. It was a party of men from Capt. England's No. 55 Mule Coy. who had volunteered to carry up four large tarpualins to Shamlung. They were now wanting to carry back some refugees. The mules were fitted with pack saddles which were not very comfortable for riding. We had to select fairly strong refugees to ride the mules as the weak and sick people could not hold themselves on. We found a few suitable people to ride and loaded the other mules with refugees' bundles so that they could follow on more quickly

The Mule Coy. brought word that Capt. Keene was leading a large party of recruits to my rescue. These old sweats grinned and said, "next time you must ask us to help you". As soon as Masahid Ali had given them a cup of tea they set off at a fast pace up the hill.

3rd July

About noon the following day, Capt. Keene arrived with his company of 2nd Assam Rifles. I did not hear their arrival until he was half way up the mound on which my house was built.

I went down to meet him wearing an Abor cane hat, the only head-dress I had. Keene thought I was trying to be funny and greeted me very coldly. However he came up to Flag Staff House, where he was given tea, while I suggested a suitable camp site for him above the spring. This was the most suitable area in the vicinity as it was clean and had an adequate supply of water.

I invited Keene himself to stay with us, and suggested that he should send some of his men to make a chung bed in our home. Keene agreed with my suggestions, and marched his men to the

selected area. The Gurkha Officers quickly pointed out the exact positions where bashas were to be built and the troops automatically set to work at their specific job. Some men took up the positions of sentries and watched over the rifles and kits of the other men. Others lit fires and started cooking the rations while the rest drew their kukries and cleared the jungle. A little later a number of men cut down tall slender trees, trimmed them and carried them to the site. Others disappeared into the jungle and came back with large bamboos. A few men dug holes with their kukries and planted the upright poles in the correct places while more sat down and prepared bamboo tapes to bind the poles together. There was no noise, no audible orders, but the bashas slowly rose out of the jungle. By the time the tarpaulins were pulled on to the roof, the cooks had the afternoon meal ready. Once things were under way, Keene came back and had lunch with us. I wanted him to take a walk down to the Nawngyang Hka and see what he was up against, but he was tired out, and so were his men. Mackie said he would like to go down to the river and would take a porter with him to help carry some rice. I gave Mackie my torch and suggested that he should take with him my lilo and several boxes of matches. He was making very careful preparations for such a short journey; but we understood one another too well to ask any questions. After a huge meal, Mackie set off at a fast pace down the hill. The road was dry, as there had been a short spell of fine weather. About 6 o'clock the porter returned with a scribbled note to say that Mackie had gone on alone to Tagung Kka, and that I was to expect him when I saw him. It was typical of a planter to go off quietly, do a tough and dangerous job of work and see to it that if things went wrong his friend would not be embarrassed. It was no use crying. Mackie could look after himself, and being a dour Scot, the jungle ghosts would not disturb him.

"Sunshine" at once made a hit with the Assam Rifles and very soon the men asked Keene if they could adopt him. Keene was no longer standoffish and began to enter into the spirit of our work; but he could not stand the smells and sights to which we had become accustomed. I think he was a little afraid of the dead, and thought the place was more unhealthy than it really was. He and his men carried pieces of cotton wool dipped in eucalyptus oil which they kept sniffing, or stuck up their nostrils. The smell

was strong in places, but there is no dust in the jungle to carry germs about, and the only way of becoming infected was through the mud.

The cotton wool "stunt" was bad from a psychological point of view because it seemed to prove to the wretched recruits who formed the main body of men that the area, and the job they had to do, were unhealthy and dangerous, when as a matter of fact the greatest danger was of falling and twisting a leg while carrying a refugee.

4th July

By 10 o'clock on the 4th July, Dr. Robertson arrived from Nampong. As soon as he reached Shamlung I set out with Keene and his men. We advanced through the jungle taking every precaution against ambush and surprise. The recruits stopped and started at every corps and dying refugee. It was difficult to keep them on the move. I went on ahead at a fast pace so as not to delay them when I stopped to search a corpse or give a word of encouragement to tired and exhausted people. I pointed out all the people I wanted carried back, to Keene, and went quickly on. I thought he was detailing men to do the job.

It was two o'clock before we reached Nawngyang Hka, and we still had several miles to go before meeting the brother and sister I had promised to help a few days before. Capt. Keene had been ordered to go only as far as the river, but most of the people who required help were on the far side. He did not like disobeying his instructions, but he had been put under my command for this operation. To return empty handed after a march of ten days with about one hundred and seventy men, would have been criminal.

I asked Keene to give me forty men so that I could push on ahead and carry in the people on the Tagung Hill.

There was a delay of about forty minutes before I could get these young recruits moving. They stood round in circles, sniffing hard at the eucalyptus, but quite unable to make up their minds what they were going to do.

The sky became cloudy and a light rain began to fall, damping everyone's spirits still further. I asked Keene to send back all the carrying-cases in Nawgyang Hka at once; but he apparently thought differently, and kept all his men together at

Nawngyang Hka waiting for my return. Just as I was setting off Mackie arrived back from Tagung Hka where he had spent the night in a hut with a corpse. He said it was lucky that the corpse was not very "high" because he woke up once and found he had been using the dead man's knee as a pillow. He brought back word about the number of people still at Tagung Hka, and confirmed that the MacFadgen girl and boy were still alive.

Mackie returned straight to Shamlung where Dr. Robertson was holding the fort, while I led a Subedar and 40 men up the Tagung Hill. Our party moved slowly because the men could not keep up with me, but they were no longer frightened and I laughed them out of using cotton wool. On the road we found one or two families trying to settle down for the night and advised them to move on to where we could give them food. A little later we met a coolie staggering under a huge bundle which he carried on his head. I ordered him to put it down so that I could search it. He had several suits belonging to Mr. Lillywhite which he had picked up during the confusion in Burma. The clothing was clean and dry so I relieved him of most of it as it would be more useful to the girl we were hoping to save. The coolie received a packet of biscuits in exchange, and having less to carry was able to reach India safely.

A little further on I met the girl's brother wandering down the track. He had at last realised that he could do nothing for his sister and if he was to reach India safely he must desert her. He told us that his sister was now mad and lazy, and would not come with him. A few minutes later we found the poor girl lying in a hut. She was not quite sane, and kept on talking about her uncle, Mackie, who had been so kind to her in Burma. I realised at once I had come too late by a day, to save her, but having come so far I was determined to try to take her back alive to Dr. Robertson.

Some of the men were detailed to make a bamboo stretcher, while others heated water and dried the clothes over the fire. When the tea was ready, I gave the girl a cupful to drink, then stripped her, and bathed her with hot water. This got rid of some of the lice and other bugs which were crawling over her cold white body. We then slipped on the dry clothing and let her rest. She lay back scarcely breathing, with closed eyes. The recruits brought me the stretcher they had made, but it was quite unsuitable, and

I decided to tie a piece of canvas to a bamboo pole and make a litter. I walked over to a hut where I had seen a heap of canvas, and gave it a pull. To my surprise out rolled a pretty little girl aged four or five, quite naked, and bitterly cold, who stared at me with wild eyes. She had been deserted that day by her parents. We gave her some tea, and wrapped her in some of the spare clothing we had taken from the coolie, and sent her down the road carried by four soldiers. One of the soldiers who had been watching the elder girl, called me to come and see her as she seemed about to die. While we watched, she stopped breathing, and her pulse ceased altogether. I ordered the hot stones from our fire place to be wrapped in cloth and placed round her, while I put my mouth over hers and filled her lungs with air; after a minute or so life returned again, and she continued to breathe naturally. We gave her a little more tea, and then started to carry her down to Nawngyang Hka.

I had asked an old Subedar to take a few men up the hill to see if there were any other people who needed help. He had been warned not to go too far, but when we were ready to move off he was nowhere to be seen. Having shouted at the top of my voice several times, I set off up the hill to find him. When I eventually caught up with him he was in the upper Tagung jhum trying to make perfectly fit people come back with him. The Subedar and his men ran back with me until we had caught up with the stretcher party. The recruits were having a bad time as none of them had shoulder muscles strong enough to carry the weight of the pole. The rain had made the track very slippery, and it was impossible to hurry without an accident. Although we had more than 30 men to carry this light, starved girl, I found it necessary myself to carry the front part of the pole down all the more difficult parts of the track. Slowly and painfully we reached Nawngyang Hka about half-past four. Capt. Keene had some hot tea and a number of bamboo cups ready for us. We refreshed ourselves and the other refugees we had found.

To my disappointment most of the soldiers were still on the south side of the river. We sent all the spare men across as soon as we arrived because it took a long time for such a crowd to cross the cane suspension bridge.

I went with the leading party and ordered a number of men to carry and assist refugees. A few men were sent ahead to bring

back all the available lamps and torches from Shamlung. We travelled at less than a mile an hour, picking up six stretcher cases and a number of walking refugees on the way. Near the head of the column I found a widow with a three-year-old child trailing behind her. Carrying the child, I accompanied the mother for a little while and then I realised that the men who had been sent on from the bridge to fetch the lamps had not yet returned, so I ordered some more men to run all the way to Shamlung. However, they were frightened to be on their own and, as soon as they found a fork in the track, they waited until I caught up them again. This was useless and it was quite obvious by now that we were going to be benighted in the jungle. Just as it was getting dark I found some silver bangles in the middle of the track and what appeared to be a bullock load in the bushes half-way down the khud. I stayed to investigate, expecting to find an injured person nearby.

Leaving the child sitting on the road, I climbed down the khud and searched for the owner among the undergrowth. By the time I had convinced myself this was not the scene of an accident, it was pitch dark.

It was too risky to carry the child so I put her down and let her hang on to my walking stick. Soon we met some sepoys squatting on the track where they were resigned to spend the night. They said they thought it too dangerous to carry on in the dark without a light and were waiting for dawn. These were some of the men who had been sent on to fetch the lamps. I told them to look after the child while I went on.

This part of the road is difficult even in fine weather, as the track follows the khud-side where a slip would mean falling thirty or forty feet into thorn palms below. The short cuts and detours which avoided the quagmires often required climbing, using both hands and feet. While negotiating one of the steep places, I dropped my stick and was unable to recover it. I sat down and weighed up the advisibility of going on and risking a serious fall, or sitting down in the hope that Mackie or Dr. Robertson would send out some lamps. I decided to push on and feel my way with my hands. This was quite easy going uphill, but quite impossible when going down the steep slopes. Many times my hands gripped the strong, thorny tendrils of the palms and other jungle briars. Having taken a few nasty falls

I began to get a little frightened and sat down to recover.

It is very easy to lose one's head in the jungle at night because it is full of strange noises and creeping sounds. The insect world is wide awake and several types make noises like a high pitched electric drill. Many of the older trees and fallen timber are covered with bright phosphorescent fungi These are so bright that I was deceived into mistaking one for a refugee's fire and tried to light a bamboo torch from it. Eventually I decided to start walking again and this time I kept to the muddiest part of the track, relying only on my feet and the mud to guide me. This was much the best way and for long periods I closed my eyes so as not to be deceived by the luminous fungi. Looking at the trees was rather like a view of a well-lit town on a distant mountain. After walking alone for three hours I arrived at a stream two hundred yards below Flag Staff House where I found a few more soldiers who had given up the struggle and had decided to wait till dawn. The men joined me and we reached camp just as an N.C.O. was setting out with a dim torch and an almost empty hurricane lamp in search of his officer and men. We all went up to Flag Staff House and filled every lamp full of oil, borrowed all the available torches and lamps and set off down the road again. With five lamps and three torches we only took a quarter of an hour to cover the mile and a half to the leading refugees. They were not in total darkness as Keene had a flash light and several of his own men had prepared long bamboo torches which flared up and died down, throwing their hot sparks in all directions as the men waved them to keep them alight. One Havildar had stuffed a few rags into the neck of the kerosene oil bottle I had given him in the morning to help light fires and turned it into a flare. This threw a red glow for ten yards around him. The refugees were having a dreadful time as the troops were determined to sweep the road clean and bring into camp everything that moved. In all, six carrying cases reached camp and thirty walking cases. Some of these walking cases were held up on either side and would have been far happier if left for just one more night in the rain. No doubt the recruits will remember that night march to the end of their days. They were enthusiastic at the thought of saving so many of their own race from Burma, but at what a price! Mackie and I were digging

graves all the following day with the help of the sweepers.

Dr. Robertson examined all the refugees we had brought in and did what he could for them. I went to see the eighteen-year-old MacFadgen girl whom we had tried so hard to save and said good-bye. Her long cold fingers gripped my wrist as she tried to smile and murmur her thanks. They were probably the last words she ever spoke. I was so tried and weary that I had not the courage to go to see how the remainder of the refugees were faring.

Masahid Ali brought me some hot sweet tea which I drank down quickly and then stripped and washed from head to foot. That day we had gone to save life—but I knew we had failed.

" Sunshine " was sleeping peacefully, having spent a happy day playing with the Gurkha Sepoys left in Shamlung to guard the Flag Staff House. Little Miyah, who was now much better, sat up and asked to be taken outside. She was a pretty little thing and I was growing to love her. She expected only kindness from us as if we were her parents. I was soon in bed and left Dr. Robertson to turn out the lights.

14 : MAINLY MEDICAL

5th July

DAWN BROUGHT the sad news that several had died during the night. The refugees had learned by now they were not allowed to touch a corpse or its possessions until they had been checked and recorded by us. Many of the dead were carrying their friends, as well as their own pay books and it was often necessary to examine the dead man's thumb to identify the body. All their valuable possessions and papers were tied up in bundles and sent to Margherita. Their blankets and pots and pans were given to those who needed them.

After removing the dead from the huts and arranging for their disposal I came up to the house to wash before feeding the children. Miyah was feeling hungry and ate a large plate of dhal soup and drank a cup of hot milk and sugar. " Sunshine " was nibbling his biscuits which he took out of the tin himself. Mackie's little girl had her face in a mug of milk enjoying herself on her own. The new girl whom I had found naked was now washed and clothed in one of Mr. Lillywhite's shirts. She too was having her milk and biscuits when she suddenly looked up at the doorway from where a number of refugees were watching the kids being fed. I glanced up to see what had stopped her meal and saw the usual group of tired, hungry faces, but one woman was staring at the child. Not a sound passed her lips as she stood there transfixed. This went on for a minute or so until I thought the strain would cause hysterics, so I broke the spell by sternly telling the woman that she could not have her daughter back until she had reached Margherita. The mother broke down and wept and the little child went over and comforted her. The mother started pouring out promises never to leave her behind

again and making a great fuss of her, but I ordered the mother to hand over a smaller child as well so that they could both be carried safely to Margherita by the Assam Rifles.

By eight o'clock Capt. Keene had assembled his men who had been detailed to carry refugees. Dr. Robertson and I went round the camp selecting the people to be carried back to Nampong. We decided that all the children would go and there was a regular scramble to carry "Sunshine" as the recruits were enthusiastic over the idea of the Regiment adopting him. Several of the refugees who had been carried the previous night to the camp were not fit to continue the journey. They were left behind to rest.

In the upper part of the camp I saw Dr. Gupta Nath Sen, who had been found lying only a short distance from our camp. He had with him three heavy bundles which he was unwilling to leave and yet was unable to carry. For three days he had remained there without food or water, guarding his precious kit, by discarding which he would easily have reached our camp and saved his own life. When I went to see who he was he begged me to send his possessions down with him. If I sent them down it would have meant leaving a child behind and this I was unwilling to do. I sent for the kit, examined it and found a pile of wet clothing, numerous books, a medicine case and instruments. I sorted out the golden jewels and cash certificates valued at Rs. 23,000, tied them in a small bundle and put them on his stretcher. However, on reflection I thought it a little too risky and promised to see them delivered personally to him or his family. For days this wealth lay about the floor of Flag Staff House unguarded until I took it to Margherita and gave it to Dr. Sen's brother. Dr. Sen died in Nampong and his baby son died on reaching Chittagong.

Some porters had been sent up from Nampong to help clear the camp and with them came the news that a Captain Street was coming up to help us. Kenney said in his letter that Street was a "real tiger" and wanted to distinguish himself. No sooner had the last of the porters left than some more refugees started pouring into the camp. Keene stood watching them climb up towards the Flag, shook his head and said to me, "You will be here for a long time yet. You'd better have these shorts. You are through the seat of yours." We said good-bye and I turned

into the house to try on my new shorts. They went one and a half times round my waist. I had lost two and a half stone in six weeks.

Mackie and I were both tired out; his long trip to Tagung Hka had been too much for him. He had given all his food away to refugees, and by the time he had returned to Flag Staff House had covered 26 miles without eating.

The gall that had started a few days before now developed into a beautiful boil under my right arm and interfered with my work.

A few hours after the Assam Rifles had disappeared, the camp was just as full as ever. The people who came in now were on their last legs. Naga sores increased a hundredfold. Nearly everyone had a sore on the legs. Many of these were infested with maggots which quickly enlarged the sore, eating both live and dead tissues.

A mother of five children arrived with a temporary husband, and brought me her stinking son. This poor kid had a large hole just above his forehead, three inches in diameter and an inch deep. It looked like a young volcano perched on his head. This was the source of the smell. I gave the mother some scissors from Dr. Sen's medical outfit, and told her to remove all his hair. In the meantime I boiled up some raw tobacco-leaves and poured the warm liquor in the hole in the hope that this concoction would drive out the maggots, which were in groups of six lying side by side, all with their heads pointing in the same direction. The maggots had separated each layer of skin and tissue with their bodies, thus building the side of the hole up to a great height. The skull in the centre was exposed, but was covered with the debris of the maggots' ravenous meal. The child, a small boy of six or seven, was almost demented with the torture, and wanted to scratch and tear the wound. When I realised that the tobacco was not working as quickly or as effectively as I had hoped, I filled the hole with kerosene oil which I kept for my lamps. The hole was so large that it took a third of a cigarette tin to fill it. The kerosene oil ran down the little boy's face and got into his eyes despite the large pads of cotton wool I told him to hold over his face.

The maggots did not like the oil, and very soon began to loosen their grip and I was able to pick them out from between

layers of the skin with a pair of forceps. I kept a count of the maggots as I dropped them into a tin. In an hour I had removed 350, and there were still quite a number left in the wound. But the boy could not stand the strain of having his wound cleaned any longer—so I washed it out with some clean kerosene oil and stuck a large pad of cotton wool in the hole to keep out other flies. When extracting the maggots I noticed four different kinds, two were smooth, the third had spikes all over it, and the fourth appeared to be the maggot of the jungle scavenger beetle. The mother did not think the child would live, and the temporary husband was " fed up " with him, threatening to desert him and the woman, or kill the boy. To make it quite clear to this man that I did not like to see my work wasted, I gave him a good hiding, dyed his face with gentian violet, and sent word down the road to all camp commanders to stop a man with a purple face if he was seen without the boy. The boy reached hospital safely where I saw him a month later in Panitola.

Many men and women had maggots in the feet, between the toes. These were much easier to deal with, because I made them soak their feet in hot water and then in kerosene oil. Even then dead maggots still hung on, and it was necessary to use some fine forceps to remove them. Several unfortunate women came to me and told me that the maggots had invaded them after their abortions. They were in a dreadful condition, which we described as Maggotty Meg. These too were treated, not with kerosene oil, but diluted condensed milk and chloroform. This killed the maggots, but it was difficult to remove their bodies with the very limited instruments we had. However, two of the cases of Maggotty Mag reached Margherita. I do not know whether they survived or not.

Several women who gave birth during this period came to the camp and asked to be cleaned up. Soap and warm water was our great stand-by, followed by acriflavine and several tablets of M and B 693. Feeding of newly born babies was a great problem as most of the mothers were completely dry. Our supply of milk was very small and there was very little else we could give them. It was really amazing how tough and hardy newly born babies were and how much better they were able to stand up to rain, cold and starvation than the young men.

The educated Indian young men whom we saw showed less

courage and determination to reach India than any other type. They gave in more easily and tried to push the responsibility of their reaching Margherita on to us. They would come and sit beside the log where I examined the sick and, if they did not get attention quickly, would proceed to groan and grunt and do everything to excite pity and sympathy. Neither of these things was I prepared to give because there is nothing more demoralizing than self-pity. I was always ready with a cheerful word of encouragement and good advice as I gave them a dose of medicine or dressed their wounds, but I could not allow myself to feel any emotion, for all day long I heard stories of death, tragedy and great suffering. Some of the young men refused to move away from my house and announced that they were going to stay and die where they were. Die they might, but I was not going to give up any more time to burying them than was absolutely necessary. When they lay at my feet calling for death to relieve them from suffering I took a rattan-cane and beat them until they thought they would find another place to die. They generally changed their minds and went round to the other side of the house where a hot meal was ready to be served. These wretched youths with their semi-European education had given up the ancient faith of their fathers and had nothing to resort to when physical help seemed far away. Those who stuck to their religion and never wavered in their faith seemed to have some greater strength that the others lacked. The outward signs were the self-respect in their bearing, their patience in the queues while waiting for food, and in the way they helped each other. During the evacuation I met many missionaries of all creeds and races and, without exception, they were the guides, philosophers and friends of their parties. This applied equally to the Hindu priests and Mussalman moulvis, as it did to the Christians. But, during the whole of the evacuation, though I fed hundreds of Roman Catholics, both Anglo-Indian and South-Indian, I did not see a single Roman Catholic priest. Refugees brought tales of priests and mans who had remained behind in Burma to look after orphans and sick.

Among the many tales I heard was the story of Mr. Higginbottom, a Church of England padre, who objected to the Japanese stealing his Church funds. A Japanese Officer overruled the objection with his sword and cut off the padre's head.

Many of the refugees had been in Japanese hands, but very few had any personal tales against the Japs. One Anglo-Indian told me how he and his friends ran into a party of Japs unexpectedly. They thought the worst would happen, but a senior Japanese Officer walked up to them and asked them who they were and where they were going. They then chatted pleasantly together and exchanged cigarettes. The Japanese Officer said he was tired of the war and was longing to see his family again. Before parting the Officer wrote something in Japanese on a piece of paper and told the Anglo-Indian to show it to any Japanese they met. The refugees went on their way and soon ran into a Jap patrol led by an N.C.O. The paper was shown to the Jap N.C.O. who allowed the party to proceed without hindrance. I asked to be shown this interesting document and it was taken out of a damp musty wallet and carefully unfolded. I wanted to send it down to the intelligence Authority, but the refugee was unwilling to part with it.

The Sikh sweepers who had hit the merchant over the head with a rifle butt had left that morning with a note from me to Kenney recommending them as grave diggers, but also pointing out that they were to be searched as soon as he had time. The search was carried out by the Assam Rifles who found several pounds of golden ornaments and much money in the sweepers' kit. Three of the sweepers were arrested and conducted down to Margherita to await trial.

One of the refugees we had brought up from Nawngyang Hka was a senior Military Engineering Service Clerk of a very good type. The poor fellow had some malaria infection which would not allow him to keep down any food. He had with him thirteen service record books belonging to his friends who had died on the way. He had now arrived at the stage when he knew he could not reach India and he asked me to take over his papers and money and the possessions of all his friends and gave me all the addresses to which they were to be sent. I wrote a letter at his dictation which he signed. I wanted to save this man, but I knew he would not stand the journey down to Margherita. The tragic part was that, although he was dying, he still had all his senses and hated to die.

During the afternoon, several families of Anglo-Burmans arrived with pack bullocks. These included a Mr.—and his

two small sons, a policeman called Smith with his mother and wife, and a Mr. Lillywhite. (This Mr. Lillywhite was *not* the owner of the clothes I had taken from a coolie a few days before.) They were all very sick and demoralized, except Mr. Smith's old Burmese mother who did not seem to notice the trouble and strain of starvation and rain. The man at once parked his children in my house and disappeared. I looked after them for two nights before I discovered who the father was. Somehow we managed to collect another crowd of children. Several of them had dysentery and two had pneumonia. The house began to get dirty, and while searching for someone to clean up I realised that Mr.——was the father of two of the small boys in my house. When I told him to clean up the mess his sons had made he became very angry about the disgrace they had brought on him and threatened to shoot them. This strange father was always threatening to shoot his children, so I relieved him of his pistol.

Mr. Lillywhite's boy was aged about eight or nine and when he arrived seemed as healthy as could be expected after such a journey. The boy was very disappointed at the meagre ration of rice and dhal I gave him and asked several times for more. This he was refused and was warned not to eat too much on his first day. During my absence I think he must have helped himself because in the evening he was very sick and was passing his food undigested. I kept the boy on only marmite and milk for several days and he improved a little. I do not think Mr. Lillywhite believed me when I pointed out the danger of his son's eating any food at all as long as his stomach was upset.

I had plenty of food in Flag Staff House, but the porter difficulties were increasing. The death rate of refugees was going up by leaps and bounds as they neared the base camps. The new porters were meeting these dying people from the moment they reached North Assam. The conditions and arrangements made for refugees once they were out of the hands of the I.T.A. left much to be desired. Of rumours and tales there were plenty; even if they were not exaggerated, they were quite enough to discourage officials from coming up and seeing for themselves. Although the porters were unwilling to do some of the tasks they were asked, it was a great credit to the Sardars and to the Tea Planters that they did so much. My main worry was that sometimes the first porters to arrive would pick up the lightest people

and dash down the track leaving the weaker men to carry the heavier refugees. Very often the Sardars carried the refugees themselves. The older porters, especially from the Tea gardens, showed a very fine example. The part played by the porters of all kinds was never appreciated by the refugees. They thought that their lives depended on the camp staff. It did not occur to them that we would ourselves be starving if it were not for the sweating porters and Captain England's mules.

We cleaned out one or two of the huts in the upper part of the camp for the Anglo-Indians and allowed them to rest and recover their strength. Mr. Smith's family helped me with the cooking of the food and its distribution. I tried to keep them busy so that they would move about enough to prevent their legs from swelling. However, within two days Smith told me he could not get his shoes on and he had pins and needles all over his legs.

15: LAST DAYS AT FLAG STAFF HOUSE

6th July

ONE MORNING Street arrived with his string of porters. I was interested to see what Kenney had meant by a " real tiger ". Street was a well-built planter aged about thirty-five and as keen as mustard. He had come to rescue " a fair maiden in distress " and was shocked by our crude, realistic methods of dealing with refugees. There was a touch of romance about him which we sadly lacked. He did not realise our limitations and forgot that too bright and rosy a picture painted to refugees soon brought a sadder reaction. While talking to Street, refugees felt that their troubles were over. From me they only heard that their troubles would last until they were well and healthy again and had earned enough money to buy a complete outfit of worldly goods. No one liked refugees and the kindest hearts soon found their limitations.

The Anglo-Burman and the Anglo-Indian is always against the Indian, and the British are too short-sighted to be their friends. I held out no rosy pictures to them, but pointed out that their safety and welfare rested solely on their own courage and adaptability. Once the refugees lost their desire to fight on, there was very little we could do to help them.

Soon after Street arrived an Anglo-Burman widow came in to the camp with her eighteen-year-old daughter. They joined Smith's party and sat in the cook-house long after the food had been distributed. This was not a very comfortable place to sleep, but the refugees made no effort to improve their lot. I had some hot tea left over from my dinner so went out to see if any of the refugees would like it. The girl was trying to sleep on a log table which I used for dishing out the food. She only had a thin cotton

sheet over her and was very tired and weak. It was a miserably cold night with a light drizzle so I invited her into our basha. She did not answer, so I picked her up and carried her into Flag Staff House. Like all refugees she was covered with mud from head to foot. I sat on a biscuit tin while Masahid Ali brought a bucket of hot water and some soap. I was just about to strip her and give her a good scrubbing when Street and Mackie began to show interest. They insisted in each washing one leg and were so obviously careful not to overdo it that they ended up in only partly washing the poor girl and thoroughly embarrassing her. I retired into my own bed and left them to it. Having washed her, they wrapped her up in a sheet very tightly and put her in a large treble bed they had made for themselves on the floor. There was a little quiet manœuvring for position, but it ended up in the girl being in the middle. No vestal virgin was ever more carefully watched over than this girl. I had a quiet laugh when during the night they both took her outside.

7th July

By morning the romance of rescuing fair maidens had died. Street got up early and left Mackie and the girl to sleep off their restless night. The girl's mother arrived and we all had a laugh at the peaceful scene of Mackie sleeping beside the girl, still tightly tied in the sheet—no risks being taken.

During the course of the morning Street and I did several minor operations to remove long bamboo slivers which had been driven into refugees' feet. The smallest piece of bamboo is most painful, but the pieces we removed were too large to be removed with a safety pin. We worked with a broken razor-blade and a fine pair of forceps which Street had brought with him. We were careful not to do any more cutting than was absolutely necessary to get a grip of the sliver. Once the bamboo was removed we wrapped a little cotton wool round a fine bamboo splint and cleaned out the hole with acriflavine. A few grains of powdered M and B 693 were packed in and the wound was covered with elastoplast.

The refugees used sometimes to call me Doctor and one Government servant pulled out a five rupee note and offered it to me as the fee for lancing an ulcer in the sole of his foot. I asked him why he thought he had to pay me for my services

and he explained that there was a Dr. Sen on the road not far behind charging fees for giving injections. This Dr. Sen was from the Dufferin Hospital, Rangoon—not Dr. Gupta Nath Sen who had died at Nampong.

8th July

When the next lot of porters came up I warned Lillywhite and Munro to get the children ready and bring them at once to my house. The porters were under a Sardar and a Planter who seemed to have very little control over them. The porters only stayed a few minutes, picked up the nearest refugees and darted down the road to Nampong. We sent off the girl and Munro's boys and Mr. Lillywhite's son remained behind. Mr. Lillywhite was bitterly disappointed so I persuaded an Indian servant of the North Burma Sugar Company to take the boy down to Nampong on one of his bullocks. We sat the boy on the bullock, but he was too weak to stay on. We only ended up in soiling the blankets placed on the bullock as a saddle. Street wanted to carry the boy on his back, but I persuaded him not to as he was not in hard enough training for such a long carry. In any case the boy had again been eating solid food, as his stools proved, and I was convinced he would die in a few days but, by letting him rest, there was just a small chance of his recovery.

Word now came up that we must withdraw to Nampong as the loss of life among the porters was heavier than that of the refugees. I was loath to go back as I was convinced there were still many more people to come through. However, it was agreed that Shamlung would be well stocked with rice and biscuits and I should try to find a Naga to act as guard and issue rations to the refugees. On several occasions I contacted the Nagas, but they were unwilling to take on the work as their village was a long way off. When we withdrew to Nampong we were unable to clear the camp, so I left Mr. Lillywhite in charge of it and the food, until we could send up another party of porters to clear the camp finally.

9th July

The porters came up early, and carried out all our kit and as many refugees as we could manage. We hung on till about two o'clock as Street had gone down to Nawngyang Hka to visit the

Abors' Bridge and see how things were going on there. He arrived back in camp with a ruck-sack belonging to a Sergeant Field whom he had met a mile or so from Shamlung. Street had opened up a tin of sardines and tried to persuade Field to eat them, but one was as much as he had been able to manage. Street then tried to carry him to Shamlung, but gave it up after a few hundred yards and came on with the ruck-sack. As Field did not arrive he went down the road again to give the ruck-sack back to him.

There were about twenty people in the camp when we left, mostly those who would never be able to reach India or their friends. In Flag Staff House we left an Anglo-Burman girl with pneumonia, her mother, the boy whom we had found on Tagung Hill whose sister had died, and the Smith family. We promised to be back within three days when we hoped to clear the whole camp.

Before lowering the Flag, Mackie and I checked over the stores we were leaving behind. There was enough food to feed about one thousand refugees for one day. The stock consisted of rice, dhal, salt, tea, tinned milk, marmite and biscuits. There were at least 100 boxes of sweet biscuits and several tins of army ration biscuits. We left the large cooking pots and told Mr. Lilly-white to insist on centralized cooking as long as he was there and to hand over to a reliable person before leaving the camp. We wrote out several notices explaining that there were large stocks of food at Nampong seven miles ahead.

Mackie and I did not wait for Street as we had no idea how long he might be finding Sergeant Field. We left camp travelling light, but carrying enough biscuits to give to refugees who were unable to reach Nampong before nightfall. On the way out of the camp we searched all the huts to make a final count of the people we had left behind. On the steep climb out of the camp we found a South Indian Christian lying by the side of the road. He was still strong enough to get back to the camp, so I gave him a little food and a drink and told him to make his way back to our camp where others would look after him; but he had resigned himself to death and had already planted his own cross in the ground by his side. I wrote his name and address down in my notebook and went on. At the top of the climb I met the Gurkha lad who had joined my staff sitting by the side of the track still

holding the two rifles I had given him to carry. He was having an attack of fever so I took the rifles and his pack from him and made him stand up. By my shouting " Left, Right " behind him all the way to Nampong he arrived there safely. I let him sit down for a short time while I searched the remains of Nanki village. Kenney had found that so many refugees were staying in the village and drinking the water which was now polluted with rotting corpses and human excreta, that he had burnt the village down. Only three of the granaries were still habitable. In one of these I found a group of people about to die. One of their party had already died and had been thrown out. The others, who had seemed quite well a few days before, were now beyond help. They admitted they had not heeded my advice and had laughed at the skulls I had placed on poles as warning not to drink "the water of death". It was no use wasting food on them so I left them to see if I could feed others who, by our help, could reach the next camp. In Nanki village I met a few Nagas who were selling Indian corn, chillies and cigarettes. The Naga is quite an enterprising business men and made a lot of money by trading with the refugees at resting places between our camps.

Leaving the village I slipped and slid down the steep track to the jhum below with my orderly trailing the big boots which I had lent him, while I shouted " Left, Right " every time he slackened his pace. In the jhum we found two fresh corpses and a dead bullock. Further down the hill, in the shed where Peter Burnside used to serve tea, we found several more corpses. In Pahari camp, just above, we met some Burmans with elephants on their way back to Burma. They were some of the men and animals who had helped " Steel's party " through some weeks earlier. It was not until six o'clock that we reached Nampong. I went over to see the Assam Rifle Section which had been guarding the camp for two months. The Gurkha lads had been more than guards. Whenever there was a job to be done they did it without fuss or bother. They built a suspension bridge over the river and kept it in repair. They were so quiet and unassuming over their work for the refugees that most of it passed unnoticed. Their spirit of service was untiring and speaks very highly of their unit.

Twenty yards further on I was surprised to see a Chinese sentry standing on the bridge. He was part of a Chinese Provost Section sent to look after Chinese troops who might come down

that route. These men were selected from a number of different regiments and were a fine, well-disciplined body of men, commanded by a Chinese Captain. They carried out all their orders at the double. They got on very well with the Gurkha troops who showed a mutual respect.

I crossed the suspension bridge and walked over to where Dr. Robertson ran his "Klim and Biscuit" hospital and dispensary. Together we went to the Camp Commandant's basha, where Kenney had some hot tea waiting for us. Kenney at once asked what we had done with Street. While explaining how Street had decided to go back in search of Sergeant Field and saying that we did not expect him for some time, Street suddenly appeared on the bridge. He had run most of the way.

Masahid Ali had been in Nampong since early afternoon, thoroughly enjoying himself with rod and line. He had caught several half-pound fish which he exhibited with pride and cooked that evening for our dinner. After tea we all stripped and carried our towels and soap to the stream. The river was fairly low at the time, but there was one small stretch where it was possible to plunge off a rock and swim for a few yards. It was good to lie soaking in the cool water after a month of washing in a bucket. When we kept still the small fish came and bit at our legs and sometimes nipped quite hard.

That night I shared Dr. Robertson's room, while Mackie went in with Kenney, and Street slept on a spare bed on the verandah. Kenney was up at dawn arranging for the porterage of the sick and sending all the healthy people down the road. Once that was done he issued rations to the porters and gave orders for the camp to be cleaned. Half a dozen porters cooked the food and dished it out in very liberal quantities. It was very different from Shamlung where I gave such meagre meals. In all the camps, except the most forward, the feeding was left to the porters. Probably many refugees took the opportunity of over-eating and it was very noticeable that the death rate rose quickly as the food conditions improved in quantity.

Once the sick were carried to Namgoi there was little to do but chase out a few lazy people who wanted to hang about in Nampong. The refugees either reached Nampong in the early morning or in the late afternoon so that there were long periods when there was very little to do. The idle hours were very irksome

after the strenuous weeks when sometimes more than a thousand people arrived in one day.

Dr. Robertson had an assistant and several male nurses who attended to the sores and ulcers and administered the medicines. In fact life was rather boring in the camps and even the porters had little to do once they had delivered their refugees and returned to camp. As the track improved the porters accomplished the work and returned to Nampong by eleven o'clock and sometimes earlier. During the rest of the day they amused themselves by fishing with casting nets and chasing deserted cattle out of the camp.

The camp staff read books, wrote letters, swam and sunbathed for long periods on the large boulder in the middle of the river and only slid into the water when female refugees approached.

16: THE BOGUS DOCTOR

10th July

THE WEATHER at this time was delightfully warm and sunny, with not a cloud in the sky. These fine days were spent in washing our clothes and putting everything out in the sun to dry. I had found hundreds of one rupee notes on various corpses and took the opportunity to dry them out and separate the stinking masses of paper before sending them to the Treasury at Margherita with the other valuables I had found.

During the course of the day we discussed some of the strange incidents of the road and of various people who had tried to return to Burma along the trail.

One or two individuals wanted to return to rescue their relatives who were said to be in Fort Hertz. These we always stopped and sent back because we trusted no one and, if the Japs had known the situation and had made any real effort, they could have easily reached Digboi and supported a force of at least a thousand on the rations from our camps.

Kenney told me about the Chinese Generals who were supposed to be on their way to Burma. I had received a note ordering me to give them every assistance possible a little while before, but I was determined that they would not get past my camp. The Generals and their troops never appeared at Shamlung and I was interested to know what had happened. The Chinese party travelled up as far as Namgoi and were offered every assistance, were received with hospitality and given good bashas in which to stay. While resting in one of the bashas at Namgoi a Chinese soldier fired a pistol through the split bamboo wall, hitting a British Sergeant in the head, fatally wounding him. About five minutes later he

fired a second shot, wounding an Abor porter in the groin.

This did not exactly endear our allies to us. However, word was sent to Nampong and Kenney arrived on the scene late in the evening, having covered the distance of four miles through the deep mud in under an hour. The Sergeant died that night and the wounded Abor was sent to base. At the enquiry which took place the following day, the Chinese soldier explained that he was just cleaning his officer's pistol and it went off. I knew these bashas well and, although it is difficult to see from the outside into the basha, it is quite easy to see from inside everything in the bright sunlight outside. The explanation caused no satisfaction, but the Senior General promised that the soldier would be punished.

The soldier was punished in a Chinese way. He was ordered to kneel down, and after the General had said a few words to him, he slapped him across the face with his hand. Another Senior Officer also hit him and a Major kicked him in the belly. The Assam Rifle Havildar was hoping to be in at the kill and drew his kukri, but that was the end of the ceremony.

The Abors who were portering for the General's party carried them as far as Nampong. However, the Generals had had enough and after a short while returned to base.

In the evening very few refugees arrived from Shamlung, but Munro arrived with his bullocks and one son. The two boys had seemed well enough when I saw them at a short distance from Nanki the previous evening.

Next morning Mackie, Street and I decided we would take a day's holiday and visit the Governor's Pool in the Namphuk river a few miles from Nampong. We borrowed a fishing rod and took along enough tackle to make ourselves a rod each. Setting off early with a picnic basket we wandered up to Machum village which is on a small hill at the fork of the Nampong and Namphuk rivers. The village is approached along a narrow ridge with steep banks on either side. A few hundred yards from the village there is a high stockade to prevent cattle from straying out of the village area into the crops. This had been partly pulled down to allow the passage of elephants which had brought up food from Simon. Some rations were carried up the Dehing River as far as Simon from where they were carried by elephants to Nampong.

Machum village had been deserted for some years and many of the houses had been burnt down. However, there were a few women living in some of the better buildings who were probably engaged in trade with the refugees, selling fowls and goats.

Two or three of these women were suffering from goitre like the women of Kumlao. We wandered through the village and picked some fruit which looked rather like the Indian Leachy, but it had a smooth yellow skin when ripe. We climbed the trees and thoroughly enjoyed our stolen fruit. In the village orchard we found limes, pomegranates, oranges and pumalows, but none of these were ripe. We walked about examining the agricultural implements and hollowed-out logs which were used as pig-troughs. In several huts, hanging from the roof, were the usual hunting trophies such as antlers, monkey skulls, horn bills, heads and mithan horns. In one hut was a small piece of a skull, a souvenir of some human sacrifice. At the far side of the village were several paths. Unfortunately, we chose the wrong one and never found the Governor's Pool. The path we took led through a steep banana plantation where an elephant had been feeding. This elephant was probably Darlington's Mission elephant which had been lent by him to some people to make their escape from Burma. The elephant disappeared during the night and was not found in the morning. Months later, when all the camps withdrew, it was taken back to Burma by its mahout.

At the bottom of the steep descent we reached the Nampong stream a few hundred yards from where it joined the Namphuk. Here we found a sunny bank on which we stripped and swam down to the main river. I had brought my lilo with me, and used it as a boat to cross the fast-flowing river. At this point the river was about 70 yards wide. The Namphuk has a rise and fall of at least eight feet, and probably more. We quickly grew tired of swimming in the swift current and waded and swam up the smaller stream, fishing in all the likely pools. We saw plenty of fish but we had no luck. The sun was hot and burnt and reddened our backs. Eventually we found it more comfortable to put on our clothes and sit in the shade of the trees for lunch. After lunch we explored the river, looking for signs of game. In the soft sand we found the clear imprints of otter, jungle cat, and barking deer. There was also a salt lick where animals came to eat the mud. We had found a similar salt lick in the

Nawngyang valley. In the afternoon we were driven home by the savage bites of the large elephant-flies. These brutes are about ¾ inch long and grey in colour with bright red markings on their heads.

When we reached camp we met Mr. Lillywhite who told us that his son had died. He had not been able to maintain discipline in the camp, and everyone was cooking for himself. He also brought news that an aeroplane had dropped a number of bags of rice.

11th July

Next morning Mackie and Street returned to base while Dr. Robertson and I set out to Shamlung with every available porter. We took all the short cuts, following the crest of the ridge until we reached Pahari. It was a straight climb of at least 3,000 feet and avoided all the mud.

The trip to Shamlung was uneventful. We only found two people dying on the way. These we moved to the lower side of the path so that when they died their decomposing bodies would not contaminate the mud. In the jhum above Shamlung camp I saw something under a pile of sacks. Pulling off the sacks I found a soldier lying on three full bags of rice. He had hidden his store and was guarding it so that no one else could have any. We searched for the other bags which had been dropped by the aeroplane, and carried them to Flag Staff House.

In another part of the jhum was a tall Hindu fakir sitting cross-legged in a hut, very much at home and apparently happy and completely oblivious of the death and destruction around him. We went over to him, asked what he thought he was doing, and ordered him to get moving. But he looked at us and smiled benignly and replied, " I am in no hurry, and as far as I am concerned one part of the world is as good as another ; in fact the solitude of the jungle appeals to me." I handed him a packet of Britannia biscuits, and again ordered him to pack up and start moving. He had with him an odd collection of treasures which he had spread out to dry. These consisted of a begging-bowl, a pair of long flexible tongs which served the dual purpose of lifting hot coals and of a musical instrument. He also had a small drum which had lost one of its skins, and was now filled with strange bits of bone, snake skin and dried herbs and

roots. We told him to leave this junk behind and go, but he picked up his drum, tapped it with his fingers, danced around and announced, " I am in no hurry because my Gods look after me and give me all I need ; all one requires is faith and constant prayer." This naked philosopher was a good advertisement for his own way of life as he had no cooking pots, matches or stores of rice. But for the fact that his hair had grown about four inches since it had last been plastered with ashes, it would have been difficult to believe he had walked from Myitkyina, and probably much further.

We made arrangements to carry Sergeant Field, Mr. Smith and quite a number of other sick people. The porters were not helpful and refused to carry Field without ten men. Most of the porters started off down the hill before the loads had been properly arranged. We had to leave several people behind who would have lived if we had got them as far as Nampong. The M.E.S. head clerk was still alive and I hated leaving him behind. Those who were left this time were being condemned to death, and it is not much fun being executioner on a large scale. Among the people we left behind was a young woman who appeared to be perfectly healthy except that her legs were completely paralysed. She told me she had eaten only rice for the last 3 months so I was not very surprised at her condition. Another person who remained behind was an Oriya coolie who had the tops of his feet completely eaten away with Naga-sore ulcers, and had all his tendons exposed.

In our old basha I found the weeping mother of the girl who had had pneumonia. I had left the mother with enough tablets of M and B 693 to treat her child, but during the previous night she had become frightened, and on hearing that there was a doctor in the camp, called him in to see her daughter. The frightened mother begged him to give her an injection. Like all semi-educated people in Burma, she believed an injection would cure any illness no matter what was injected. Dr. Sen agreed to inject her daughter once, free, but would charge five rupees for every subsequent injection. The only thing he had to inject was emetine, and soon after the injection the girl's heart stopped.

In a long basha behind Flag Staff House I found a crowd of Bengali men and women. I told them that the road and camps were being closed down, that it was their last chance of receiving

help from us, and that they must travel ahead of our rear party. These people said they would move when they pleased, and that they belonged to Dr. Sen's party from the Dufferin Hospital, Rangoon. I asked if Dr. Sen had a brother, and if he was any relation to Gupta Nath Sen, but he was not. I again asked these people to get moving, but they refused. I warned them that I would drive them out by force if they would not go of their own free will. On these occasions we carried rattan canes to help people make up their minds. I swung mine as a warning, at which one of them stood up and announced he was a Burma Government servant, and I could not beat him; I left him and his party in no doubt that things had changed since the Government had bolted from Myitkyina. They quickly picked up their things and ran so fast out of the camp that I did not catch up with them until I reached Nanki.

Dr. Robertson and I both carried children so that none of them would be left behind. On the steep climb out of the camp I found a young Gurkha woman making very heavy weather. I gave her my stick to hold, and pulled her up the hill for a mile. Her long saree caught in the mud, and she fell frequently. She was so tired and weary that she did not care whether she lived or died, but she was too good a type to leave in the jungle.

I let her rest for a short period, and when she refused to get up I beat her until she staggered to her feet. I could not carry her as I was still carrying a small boy round my neck; when some of the porters' sardars caught up with me I handed over the boy, and with the help of another sardar we dragged and pulled the wretched woman. Eventually I tore a couple of yards off one end of the saree, and threw the remainder away. With this short length tied above her knees the going was easier. But by the time we reached the Frontier Boulder it was four o'clock and there were still five miles to go. While considering what to do with the young woman, Mr. Smith arrived in a stretcher. I had him taken out, and the girl put in the place. Smith had had an uncomfortable ride and was quite ready to try walking. He wanted to throw away his shoes, but I warned him he would need them, as his pitting œdema would decrease as soon as he started walking again. I gave Smith the warning about the water at Nanki and advised him to make for Pahari Camp.

The sardar gave me back the child to carry, and I hurried

on to see what was happening to the stretcher cases ahead. I caught up with them a mile or so below Pahari. Several of the Anglo-Burmese women begged me to ask the porters to be more careful and not to bang them on the sharp rocks and logs they had to climb over. I thought these were unnecessary complaints until I overheard a porter demanding ten rupees (he was threatening to leave the woman in the jungle for the night), but when he heard my voice behind him, he said no more.

As darkness fell we met Kenney coming up the track to help us in. He brought with him several fresh porters, and a few hurricane lamps. He saw the trail of the porters in, and checked up on the missing refugees. It had been found necessary to leave three people at Pahari for the night. These we fetched in the morning.

The complaints that the refugees had made were genuine enough and several of them received severe bruises on their buttocks and spines. Kenney investigated the matter in the morning, and gave several men a sound hiding. He then handed them over to me so that I could dye their faces yellow with a strong solution of acriflavine. The other porters took the hint, and we had no other cases of ill-treatment of refugees by the porters.

12th July

About midday the head clerk of the Dufferin Hospital arrived with most of his party. I had a long talk with him about the journey and the members of his party. After a great deal of hedging he admitted that Sen was not a doctor but only a rather indifferent compounder. He called himself "doctor", and charged fees for examination and treatment as if he was fully qualified. I went round the camp collecting further information about Sen's activities, and took down a statement from a registered nurse who had allowed her daughter to be injected. She had provided her own drugs for the injection, but was charged ten rupees for this service. To obtain the ten rupees she had first to sell some gold jewellery. Sen had also sold her three M and B 693 tablets for three rupees each. Other people in the camp told similar stories. The mother who had lost her daughter also made a statement. Late in the afternoon I was sitting by the bridge checking the refugees, when an evil looking Bengali walked across the bridge, and as he approached me I asked him if he had seen

Sen. He drew himself up proudly and announced that he was Dr. Sen. I asked again if he was the doctor who had been doing so much good work on the road. Again he announced, "I am Dr. Sen, I have been looking after all the refugees on the road." This was more than I could stand, and I gave him a very hard punch on the nose, and took him over to Dr. Robertson who was in the Commandant's basha. We ordered Sen to return all the money he had taken from the refugees by false pretences. Dr. Robertson was very weak on medical jurisprudence, but I was determined that Sen was not going to get away with killing my patient. I ordered him to make a written statement of the way he had treated the girl, and why he thought emetine was the right treatment for pneumonia. I provided him with ink and paper, and let him sit down to write out his statement. When he had finished, I asked him to read it out and then sign it. He had written the document in some obscure Bengali dialect, and was having a quiet smile to himself when I said, "That is all very interesting. I will send for a Bengali to translate it." Our camp Doctor Babu translated a weird oath about never returning to Burma. There was no mention of the girl or about his activities. He had had his fun, and it was my turn now. His nose increased in size and he was thrown into the river naked. When he came ashore I dyed him red with his own mercurochrome from head to foot. Afterwards he decided he would repay the money he had taken from the unfortunate refugees and paid up most of it on the spot. To prevent his killing any more refugees he was deprived of all his medical kit, which was eventually handed over to the Political Officer at Margherita. Sen did not need an escort to Margherita, because he was unable to conceal his identity. Later on he was arrested and given one month's imprisonment.

Later in the evening the Oriya Coolie whom we had left at Shamlung with Naga sores, reached our camp. It was incredible how he had managed the journey unaided. Dr. Robertson dressed his feet himself, and arranged for him to be carried from Nampong. The coolies were all impatient to get back and so were most of the camp commanders. However, I was loath to return because I had promised Mr. Mous Hallberg, the Swedish Consul for Burma, that I would do everything possible to help his nationals, and was still expecting Mr. Prien of the Swedish Match Company. Prien had remained behind at Maingkwan with his two servants

to nurse Tage Thorson while the remainder of the Swedish party continued the journey to India. Mous Hallberg had met Mr. Arnold, I.C.S., at the Namyang river crossing and had asked him to send a message back to Mr. North, the Political Officer at Shingbwiyang, with a request to help the Swedes. North went down the river to Maingkwan by canoe and brought the two Swedes and their servants to Shingbwiyang. When Thorson was well enough to continue the journey they set out for Tagup Ga but could proceed no further as the Namyang river was in flood and was impossible to ford. About the beginning of July Tage Thorson died and was buried in Tagup Ga. A few days later Prien took advantage of a break in the weather, crossed the river with his servants and continued the trek to Assam.

17: CLOSING DOWN

NAMPONG CAMP remained open for a few days longer than was ordered; to make sure, we were leaving the least possible number of the people to their fate. We cleaned the camp and collected all the buckets, tools and lamps, and put them in the store basha with a political storekeeper who had undertaken to remain in the camp to feed the refugees. There would be no shortage of food or medicine if they were properly issued.

When we saw that no refugees were arriving at Nampong Kenney closed the camp and went to Namchik. He drove out the refugees in the early morning and left Dr. Robertson and me to bring in the trail. We waited until midday to see if any one would arrive from Shamlung but only one man appeared, and did not know if there were any other people following him. We told him not to hang about in Nampong, but to come on the following day. Two of the goats that the signallers and I had laboriously carried to Nampong were still running around with their kids. No one had had the heart to eat them as they had become camp pets.

I counted the head of cattle which were still roaming round the camp area, and found that there were 50 left. Most of them had large holes in their shoulders which were getting daily worse through the ravenous appetite of the maggots. On one occasion Kenney had exchanged ten large bullocks for four small fowl eggs. The eggs proved to be bad, but the Naga did not get the best of the bargain as the bullocks ate his millet crop.

Not far from the camp we met a refugee sitting by the side of the road trying to light a fire. He was in a dying condition and had the large blue- and green-bottles buzzing round him. We gave him a box of matches, lit a fire for him, and then hurried on. Further on we found a family who had spent a night huddled

under a sheet. Our shouts and yells did not cause them to stir, so I pulled off the sheet and found a father, mother and son all crouched under it with their heads resting on their knees. They refused to move, and tried to pull the sheet back. The father said they were tired of the struggle of trying to reach India, and were going to stay there and die. I had some sweet tea in my flask, and gave them each a drink and some biscuits. We told them to get moving, but they had not the mental energy to make the attempt. I pulled the child on to his feet, and he just sat down again—he was cold and stiff. We then pulled up the father and mother but the same thing happened. It was easier to die than reach India. However, we were determined that all who could be saved would reach the base. We shouted and yelled at them, and then started to beat them lightly on the legs, arms and body. This stimulated them sufficiently to make them get up; a little more physical encouragement and they were shuffling down the road. We made them as angry as we could, and handed them another biscuit each, threatening a real good hiding if we had to come out and search for them in the evening. All the way along the road we found groups of people who wanted to remain behind and die, but we made things so hot for them that they found it more pleasant to keep ahead of us. We had expected to stay at Namgoi for the night, but Kenney had left a note telling us to come on to Namchik where we would spend two nights.

One of our old Gurkha lady friends gave us considerable trouble and a certain amount of amusement. Her main vice in life was picking up everything of value or use she saw on the road. The old lady was at least 70, and had taken ten days to cover twelve miles; at her own rate of progress we would have had to wait another month to get her into Margherita. Every time I saw her, I searched her basket and threw out all her treasures other than two small cooking pots, some matches and a little food. After these raids on her, I drove her along the road until it was not worth while going back to fetch them. However, even while I was with her, she picked up every pot in sight. This was quite a common disease among the refugees, and many of them overloaded themselves to such an extent that they strained their hearts and died.

The stolen fruit we had picked at Machum village upset my stomach and I found myself having to behave like so many of the

refugees. The road was so steep on either side that it was difficult to find a place to get off the track. Dr. Robertson got fed up with repeatedly having to wait for me, and pushed on to Namchik.

13th July

We occupied the three bashas built by the previous camp commandants by the river. Mr. Tew of the I.T.A. had been sent up to help us clear the road and went out with a few porters to bring in any stragglers who might have remained out for the night.

During the late evening a discussion arose over the cause of Naga sores and other skin ailments that worried our feet and legs. Several of us had had groups of small water-blisters which irritated every two days. Dr. Robertson was of the opinion that they were caused by some kind of fungus which irritated the skin during its sporing period. We amused ourselves by dividing these blisters into groups, and treating each group with different drugs.

We first scrubbed the area clean with hot water and soap, and removed the skin from the blister. Then we treated the sores with M and B 693, M and B 760, Gentian Violet, Brilliant green, Congo red, Dettol and zinc oxide powder. In each case we covered the areas with elastoplast to keep them clean. We came to no great conclusion as each method proved equally successful.

We enjoyed our stay at Namchik as the bathing was good. We found a large pool a short distance above the camp where we could dive into deep water and swim across the river to the far bank.

The river was alive with fish and it seemed to be an angler's paradise. Masahid Ali and several of the porters lost no time in making themselves some fishing rods out of the light bamboo which grew in a large clump near Dr. Baruah's old basha. When we left Namchik there was plenty of food and medicine to provide for all the refugees who were likely to need it. A Naga family from the neighbouring village took over control when we left.

15th July

The next stage of the journey is only 4 miles by the jeep road, but not more than $2\frac{1}{2}$ by a Naga short cut. Tew went back towards Namgoi to see that nothing had happened to some of the people left behind, and then joined us at Buffalo. Buffalo

was the camp where Wilkie and Susan Finlay had worked. They had now gone on to Likhapani. The hospital was in a filthy condition as no one had made any attempt to clean it. Kenney lost no time in having a fresh layer of earth thrown over the floor, and in generally cleaning up. Although the camp was in a bad condition and a great many people had died there, refugees always said it was the first camp where they were treated as human beings.

The view from Buffalo was one of the most beautiful on the whole road. In the distance was the continuous ridge of the Patkoi range. For long stretches this range is so steep towards the summit that there are few trees on the highest three hundred feet. On the long spurs which descended into the Namchik valley were jhums and scattered villages. In the evening we saw the bright wood fires lighting up the verandas of the Naga houses. Between Patkoi and Buffalo there were several smaller ridges which are covered with virgin forest. Along this valley we saw the American transport planes carrying stores to China.

16th July

The following day we went on to Kumlao; Kenney set off at dawn with all the refugees who gradually strung out; Dr. Robertson and I left the camp about 10 o'clock while Tew went back to Namchik for a final clear-out there. The nearer we got to base the harder it was to keep the refugees moving; few of them had friends in India, and fewer of them had any money. The one question they kept asking was, "What is to happen to us when we do reach India? We will not be fit to work for very many months, and we have no friends to feed us while we are in hospital." For the old people the question was very real as most of them had lost their children who in the ordinary way would have supported them. Many of the pensioners had lost all their papers, and they well knew it was hard enough to get money out of the Government when all their papers were correct, but without them they would starve long before anyone would spend the time to investigate their cases.

These people had to be driven down the road and at Ngokpi an old coolie camp, we came across a party who had been the bane of our existence since I had first met them on the Tagung Hill. Kenney had driven them off the Pangsau Pass, and now

they had been sitting in Ngokpi for the last three days. The leader of the party was a fat Madrasi lady, the widow of a Sub-Assistant Surgeon. She had beautiful black hair which was so long she could sit on it. Every time we saw her she was sitting combing it, surrounded by her friends and servants.

We had all urged her on, and Kenney had been called a " Bad Boss " for chasing her out of Nampong. We told these people in no uncertain tones to get out of Ngokpi, but " the lady with the beautiful hair " told the others not to move and that there was no hurry. We wasted little time on the party, and quickly pulled them out of the huts with the crooks of our long rattan canes. As they tumbled out, we hit any part of them that came within reach. Most of the party picked up their bundles and were out of sight in a few minutes. In another hut there were a husband and wife; the woman was not very well but the man was quite fit. We drove these people out too, and then continued the journey to Kumlao. Soon after we arrived I noticed the husband of the sick woman in the camp. I asked him where he had left his wife, and heard from his own lips that he had deserted her in the jungle. I gave him a hot meal, and as much tea as he wanted, and then ordered him back to fetch her. He refused to go at first, so I gave him a beating which made him change his mind. On the road he met Tew who wanted to know why he was going in the wrong direction. The man explained that the Major was very angry and had beaten him, and told, without shame, how he had left his sick wife in the jungle. Before nightfall we had everyone in the camp, including the deserted wife.

One of the things we often discussed on the road was the fact that so few refugees ever showed the slightest gratitude for all our efforts to feed and generally look after them. So few people had ever said a word of thanks in the forward camps that when they did we all remembered those occasions, and often the names of the people and who they were.

At Tagung, in May, when we fed about ten thousand people in a week, only one person said " thank you ", and he was the late Commandant of Myitkyina. Kenney had received a letter of thanks from someone who had arrived in Margherita safely. On his arrival at Kumlao, Kenney had found in [illegible] basha a post-card size photo of two Anglo-Burmese girls who had passed down the road a fortnight before. This gave Kenney

and Dr. Robertson the idea of pulling my leg. They steamed a stamp off a letter and stuck it on to the card. Dr. Robertson wrote a simple short message of thanks. I swallowed the trick completely, and spent a long time trying to recall who the girls were.

While we were having tea an old sweeper came to see me about some money that had been stolen from him in Namgoi. He had stopped me on the road once to tell me his tale of woe, and at Buffalo he had come again to see me and asked me to send word down the road to have the thief stopped. He described the thief as a fellow sweeper who had travelled all the way from Myitkyina with him. I wrote a letter which was sent on by courier to Likhapani. Now the old sweeper came to tell me that the thief who had run on ahead was ill and in one of the long bashas in the upper part of the camp. The old sweeper, from the end of the basha, pointed to where the thief was lying wrapped in a blanket. We examined the sick, and in due course came to the thief whom we ordered down to the hospital for treatment. Before going, he tried to pass a small bundle to a woman beside him. We made them both come down to the hospital, and faced them with the sweeper. The lying was perfect, and when he was ordered to place all his money on the ground the sum was far smaller, and consisted of quite different values of notes from those which I had mentioned in my report. The woman too laid out her money, but that did not complete the picture. Each denied that they had any more money concealed about their persons. The old sweeper, however, did not alter his tale, and again mentioned so-many one, five and ten rupee notes. I asked the sick man if he was willing to swear he had absolutely no more money on him. He made a great show of being an honest man, and swore a few solemn oaths. When this was over, I said, "I am going to search you and, if you have lied to me, it's going to be unpleasant for you." I ordered him to take off his shirt; in doing so he revealed that he had a woollen scarf tied round his waist. In it was the stolen money and some of his own. The lady was also searched, but she had nothing with her except her dead husband's barber's outfit and a small amount of money. We painted the thief's ears with gentian violet and let him go. The money was returned to the old sweeper, who promised to pray for our long life and prosperity. We merely

hoped that he would have a hundred sons, and we noticed that the barber's widow had changed her alliance before leaving us. The following morning she confirmed it even more impressively.

17th July

The refugees were driven out early from Kumlao, and Kenney again went on with the stretcher cases. Dr. Robertson and I waited till about ten before leaving. We searched all huts to make sure that no sick refugee was left behind, while fat Kumlao pigs followed us round hopefully. I don't think I have ever seen such well fed animals. In one of the huts I found a new saree which I thought would be useful to the girl whose saree I had torn near the frontier. Before leaving Kumlao, the ration store was handed over to the local headman to look after. Like all the other stores it was well stocked with rice, salt, tea and dhal.

A short distance along the road there was an open place which caught the morning sun. Here to our disgust we found the Madrasi lady still combing her hair surrounded by her friends and servants. Snatching the infamous comb from her I handed it to her servant and chased him down the road. The lady was furious with me as it hurt her *amour propre*. However, I was not the least sympathetic as she had only walked 200 yards since five in the morning. Further on we found a man with a very high temperature, and dragged him to his feet and helped him down the road. As usual, Dr. Robertson and I each found a mother staggering along with a heavy pack, and a crowd of children. We each picked up a child, and took another two in tow.

The Golden Stairs were now quite dry and were much easier to descend than the jhum below Nanki. It was hard to realise what an important part the stairs had played in the evacuation. The weather was now hot, and the sun at midday was too warm to be comfortable. On reaching one of the small streams near the Tirap river I stopped to bathe. It was a good opportunity to make my smelly companions wash too. Many of the refugees were afraid of washing in case the cold water in the mountains brought on their fever.

On reaching North Tirap Camp I found a party of Chinese troops camping there for the night before going on to Rema to meet the Chinese troops who were being evacuated by that route.

With them were some British Liaison Officers who were trying to make themselves a stew. They were still trying to make the same dish 3 hours later.

The North Tirap hospital was very full, and among the patients I saw Mrs. Francis and her children. (She was the Jamaican negress who had been so cheerful at Shamlung three weeks before.)

Sergeant Field was there too, complaining bitterly that the porters had dropped him and had at least broken his spine. He told us he would have been better off if we had left him in Shamlung. The saree that I had found in Kumlao was much appreciated by the girl for whom I had brought it. She was now better, and was ashamed to walk about with only a short length of cloth tied round her waist.

In one of the wards was a Burmese girl who had fallen out of the Tresham party. She had some strange idea that Mr. Tresham, who had been a missionary or a school master, had left the refugee trail to spend the rains in a Naga village. Nothing would convince the poor girl to the contrary so we carried her down to Likhapani to make sure she would not return up the road on a fruitless quest. As far as I know Tresham reached base, but none of the camp commanders remembered him.

In the late afternoon I again wandered round the hospital to see how various people were getting on. On one of the beds I found a Madrasi man dead with his two gold front teeth knocked out. He had been dead for not more than 20 minutes, so the thief had wasted no time. Robbing corpses of gold teeth was practised throughout the evacuation and it was a very common sight on the road to find these teeth missing in skulls.

The dead man belonged to the Madrasi party. He had kept fairly well until he had to wait in Ngokpi for 3 days with "the lady with the beautiful hair". When I reported his death, one of the women in the party burst into tears. However, our friend, who had by now retrieved her comb and was busy with her toilet, only stopped long enough to give the weeping woman a withering glance which dried her tears immediately.

18: RETURN TO BASE

18th July

THE NEXT morning we packed up and sent our things down to Likhapani, but we waited until the afternoon as one or two people had not managed to reach the camp, while some porters were sent up the road to fetch in the missing refugees. In the meantime we bathed and enjoyed ourselves in the river. About lunch time Mr. Harrison came up to meet us, and much to our surprise he told us he had left the Railway Station at Tipang only an hour and a half before. When I had done the same journey in May, it had taken me six hours to cover the four and a half miles.

Just as we were setting off on the last lap of the journey a strong healthy-looking Gurkha soldier walked down the road. He looked so well and fit that I was extremely suspicious of him and had him brought to me. He told me he had waited until the Namyung River had dropped, and then hurried on and reached us in six days. He gave a description of all the people he had seen on the road including a European who was not English, but had worked in a Match company. This man was not very well, but had decided to rest at Namchik, only 20 miles back, and nurse his sick servant. This must have been the Swede, Mr. Prien of the Swedish Match Company. I was very keen to go back, but all our kit was by now at Likhapani, and Harrison assured me that in a few days he was himself going up the road to see what was going on.

The Chinese Liaison Officers took over the camp and all the stores and medicines that remained, and promised to help the few refugees who were still coming through from the Pangsau route.

The road had improved beyond recognition, and there were only two or three places where the mud came above the knees.

In parts it was almost motorable. We hurried on unhindered until we were within half a mile of the railway, when we caught up with the tail of the refugees. On seeing the railway, there was a tendency for them to collapse, and we found several corpses not more than 400 yards from the track. On reaching the Railway Station I looked for the planter who had been running the rail-cars to Likhapani and, not finding him, went to his hut and ordered myself some tea. In the newspapers lying about his room I read of the burning of the railway stations and derailing of trains all over the country and came to the conclusion that the jungles of Burma were far safer.

The rail-car soon arrived and we all piled in with the refugees and travelled down to Likhapani. There we were met by many of the staff from Likhapani who saw, in our return, a chance of getting away from the hot, sticky camp. There were many questions to answer, and wild stories to correct. After a short time it was suggested that we should all go into Margherita where a picture was being shown in the club.

Some kind person allowed me to use his bath tub and loaned me a clean change of clothes. Then we all piled into a stone-lorry which drove us along a bumpy track to Margherita. When the show was over we went out to look for the lorry, but it was nowhere to be seen. We started to walk back to Likhapani, 15 miles away. Some of the party went into the refugee camp and slept there; others walked back with me to Baragoli where we broke into the R.I.A.S.C. Mess, and slept on the floor.

19th July

We were up before dawn, and continued our journey to Ledo on foot where most of us obtained a lift to camp. I collected my kit and loaded it on a jeep. I was then reminded that the Governor of Burma had sent some beer for the planters who had worked on the road. This beer had been kept on ice for a month waiting our return. It worked out at one bottle per head, the only recognition the majority of us ever got for our part in the evacuation. We had looked forward to that beer, and had often spoken about it at times when we had to tighten our belts, but when it came to drinking it most of us sipped it and give it away.

I went back to Baragoli and settled in my office, but it was hard to get down to routine work. I still had many matters to

clear up. First I was a witness in the trial of the sweepers who had hit and robbed the Marwari merchant. The Marwari was still wearing the large piece of elastoplast which I had put on his head three weeks before. The wound was now better. The sweepers were given five years' rigorous imprisonment each. Then there was the trial of Sen, the pseudo doctor, who got away with only a month. The Court reckoned that he had received half his punishment by virtue of my summary justice. Later I was warned that I was to be tried for assault and battery on five counts. I was very disappointed to think that I had made so little impression on the thousands who had been driven to safety by the liberal blows of my rattan cane. I severely embarrassed the Political Officer by pleading "guilty" to all five charges. During the trial, the plaintiffs all admitted that they owed their lives to me, and made a complete *volte face* when the judge suggested that the evidence, being of such a serious nature, necessitated the reconstruction of the crimes at the scene of happening, and that to expedite justice the witnesses should immediately start up the road under their own arrangements. The only person who wished to press the matter further was "the lady with the beautiful hair", but on further thought even this Amazon decided the game was not worth the candle.

22nd July

The question of the arms and ammunition which I had collected from refugees had to be dealt with. As far as I knew about 250 pistols reached base safely, and were handed over to the police at Dibrugarh. I sent down at least 20 Tommy guns and 6 Bren guns which the Assam Rifles took over. Practically all the Lee Enfield rifles and shot guns together with 30,000 rounds of ammunition had been left at Tagung Hka, and Ngalang Ga. After due deliberation it was decided impracticable to recover these dumps, valuable as they would have been. Later I discovered that the Naga villagers had removed the arms and had often used them against the Japanese to good effect.

An expedition consisting of the Rev. Mr. Darlington, Mr. Henry Munroe, Dr. Weymouth and a platoon of Assam Rifles was assembled at Margherita to go to Shinbwiyang to relieve Mr. North. He was one of the very few Political Officers who had stayed at his post and was still doing magnificent work for the refugees.

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At

Tipang railhead

Below : I. T. A. coolies on the Jeep Road

Photos: Author

Darlington invited me to join him, and together we went along to see the Sub-Area Commander. Unfortunately I was not allowed to go just then. My work was not yet completed, as many of the dying refugees had entrusted me with their papers and valuables. I had also collected a mass of documents, pay books and other means of identifying those who had not been fortunate enough to reach base. These I had to dispose of. The Military documents, medals and identification discs were forwarded to Military Records. Civilian documents and any valuables were sent to as many owners as we could trace. The remainder were entrusted to the Treasury Officer at Margherita. I had promised Dr. Gupta Nath Sen before his death that I would personally undertake to hand over his jewellery and other valuables to his wife. After lengthy negotiations, this was accomplished.

My essential tasks having now been completed, I felt a moral obligation to visit those refugees who were in hospital. My first visit was to the Assam Oil Company hospital in Digboi, part of which had been loaned to the Army. Here I found Mr. Higginbottom, Capt. Cowley, and the boy whose sister I had tried so hard to save. Everything possible was being done for them, but their progress was very slow as they were all suffering from amœbic dysentery, hookworm, malaria, pellagra, Naga sores, and septic leech bites. I also visited Panitola hospital which had been put at the disposal of the refugees by the kindness of the I.T.A. Here all the aforementioned diseases were prevalent plus pneumonia, meningitis, scabies, ticks, lice and complete malnutrition. The death rate was high despite the untiring efforts of local doctors, nurses and voluntary helpers. The refugees' resistance was so low that they had very little to work on. The difficulties of the hospital staffs were increased by the very efficient sabotage which was carried out by the Congress Party. This took the nature of train wrecking, burning of railway stations, disorganization of railway staffs and subsequent desertion of minor officials. Sometimes we were cut off from our sources of supply of food, clothing and essential drugs. There was a golden opportunity for Black Marketing. This was fully exploited by the local merchants. It was pitiful to see how these poor, sick and weak refugees were subjected to the attacks of the human vultures the moment they left the kindly protection of the I.T.A. Those refugees who travelled down from Dibrugarh to Gohati on the river flats

were charged the most exorbitant prices for fresh food sold to them by the crew. Even the sweepers joined in the exploitation of the refugees, and charged them a rupee for normal bodily functions. The majority of refugees were suffering from dysentery.

In Margherita Rest Camp, run by Mr. Tommy Thomson of the I.T.A. and Lt.-Col. King of the Burma Army, the refugees were cared for by doctors and nurses and were given good food. New clothing and shoes were issued to those who required them. They were allowed to wait for their relations and friends from whom they had been separated either during the trek, or on admission to hospital. Capt. Hardy, a Burma Army Officer, exchanged Burma currency notes for Indian, while another kept a register of all the people who passed through the camp. About 27 different nationalities were helped, including people from all walks of life, from diplomats to freed convicts from Rangoon prison. The majority of refugees were pensioner Gurkha soldiers and their families who had settled in North Burma. Their behaviour was exemplary and they showed an outstanding spirit of quiet courage and determination. It was the Gurkhas who carried women and children, irrespective of race or creed, across the Namyung River; the people who gave most help in our camps were the cheerful Gurkhas. I found one Gurkha soldier who had carried his sick wife, a forty pound pack, and his service rifle, from Shinbwiyang to Tagung Ga, a distance of about 80 miles of mountainous jungle. Both the Anglo-Burmans and Anglo-Indians showed a very high spirit of co-operation with us and were always willing to help one another.

Two or three hundred children who had been separated from their parents arrived in Margherita. Many of the refugees offered to look after these orphans, and for strong healthy children like little " Sunshine " there were many offers of adoption. Eventually the 2nd Assam Rifles obtained legal control of this boy and took him back to their Headquarters at Sadyia. The children who were not claimed or adopted were sent off to various Government Orphanages.

As the planters gradually were released from their respective duties they returned to their Tea Estates. Later, however, they were re-employed by the Government to supervise the construction of local defences, airfields and the building of the Manipur Road.

The cost involved in rescuing over twenty thousand refugees

on the Pangsau Route was statistically estimated at the surprisingly modest sum of eighteen rupees per head. No one knows for certain how many people perished on the trek, but by counting the skulls lying on the track six months after the evacuation, and questioning hundreds of refugees, I am convinced that at least eighteen thousand died. I actually searched and counted seventeen hundred corpses between Tipang Rail Head and Tagap Ga, a distance of ninety-six miles. About 60% of these were young educated Indian men between the ages of 17 and 27, and about 20% were older men between the ages of 40 and 50. They consisted of junior government officials, military pensioners, and coolies. Only about 10% of the corpses were those of women; they were of all ages and had died of exhaustion while bringing out their families, often having to carry children as well as their rations. Some women died with their babies in their arms and surrounded by their children. Approximately equal numbers of children perished. The absence of the males of the age group of 27 to 40 was noticeable, but still more remarkable was the stamina of pregnant women, as only two of these were found dead.

The story of the trek from Myitkyina, as I saw it, has now been told, but the narrative should not end without tribute being paid to those who made it possible.

My readers will appreciate that the task of bringing these thousands of refugees to safety could not have been accomplished without the untiring co-operation and organization of men of far-reaching vision, engineering skill, medical knowledge and familiarity with local conditions in face of many horrors, hardships and set-backs. All this, and much more besides, was given willingly and joyfully by a team who had worked together for many years under the proud title of the Indian Tea Association.

Even the most willing and able efforts on their part would not, however, have been successful, but for the timely, and often heroic, efforts of individuals who rendered invaluable aid when things became most difficult; Capt. Maxlow, R.I.A.S.C. of the Field Supply Depot, Ledo, and Capt. (now Lt.-Col.), Cawthorn, M.B.E., R.I.A.S.C., in addition to the I.T.A. worked unceasingly to supply the vital needs of these hungry and ailing hordes. Capt. Cawthorn devised and invented new and special methods of dropping supplies;

Capt. England, M.B.E., R.I.A.S.C., of 55 Mule Company daily carried supplies over the most tortuous country; the pilots and flying personnel of the R.A.F., at considerable risk to themselves, dropped stores and supplies where they were most needed, and later developed a regular service when other forms of transport could not get through; Messrs. Walker and Webster of the Assam Police whose Abors cut trails and carried rations to forward areas, and the Assam Rifles who guarded us, built bridges, and helped in thousands of different ways. Nor must one overlook the ceaseless efforts of the Planters along the route, the porters who carried the loads, the coolies who cut trails, built shelters and rest camps, and the various welfare centres and hostels which provided whatever aid was in their power.

APPENDIX I

KEEPING FIT IN THE JUNGLE

1. Nearly everyone is a little frightened when they hear they must work and live in the jungle. The word "jungle" conjures up in their mind a place literally swarming with lions, tigers, elephants and snakes. Nothing could be further from the truth, because wild animals and even snakes need food, and such wild animals as there are, live on the edge of cultivation, and are seldom seen in the thicker parts of the forest.

2. During the early part of the monsoon, in May and June when the rain is heaviest, all animals and birds disappear. The only life that remains are the insects and leeches. There are thousands of beautiful butterflies varying in size from an inch to five inches in span. During these months there are also several kinds of flies which, if not controlled, can make themselves a nuisance.

3. In July the rain slackens and there are often fine spells; the trees and bushes begin to flower and a few birds appear again. The first to come are the wagtails, then the doves and later on the hornbills. August and September is the time for leeches to be at their worst, and for a short period every stick and bush besides the jungle paths are covered with them. Wasps and hornets, too, make their appearance. These generally nest in holes in trees beside a path and deserve to be treated with great respect.

4. By October the nights become very cold and there are ground mists until ten o'clock in the morning. All the butter-

flies and bluebottles disappear but their place is taken by the "dimdam", a small blood-sucking fly. This too is the time when the trees are in fruit and occasionally troops of monkeys are seen on the topmost branches of the trees, but they seldom come down on the ground and run about like the monkeys of the plains. In November a few barking deer are heard, but these are few and far between as there is so little grazing to be found except in old jungle clearings. Therefore, to be afraid of the jungle, even when one has to spend the night out in it alone, is absurd. After all, there is nothing to hurt one, and thousands of women and children had to do it for months on end during the evacuation from Burma. Just make yourself comfortable and go to sleep.

5. The way to keep fit in the jungle is exactly the same as anywhere else. All one needs is sound sleep, clean water, a reasonable diet and a liberal use of soap and water. But how is sound sleep to be obtained? Well, one must learn how to make oneself comfortable in the worst of conditions. It is not being tough or clever to sit in the open all night when one can make a shelter and build a chung in a couple of hours with a dah or kukri. If one has to spend the night out and away from a camp, it is best to start thinking about the matter several hours before sunset. First, there is dry wood to be collected, and this in the middle of the monsoon is not easy to find. However, usually in bamboo clumps there are a few bamboos which have died and with a little encouragement can be lighted. Then there is water to be boiled and food to be cooked. Once these domestic matters have been started, it is best to lose no time in cutting bamboos or saplings to build a hut. The easiest form of shelter to build is made by fixing two upright poles in the ground eight or nine feet apart. To the top of these is bound a long bamboo making a frame like goal posts. The roof is made by leaning a number of poles against the top bar forming an angle of about 45° with the ground. A number of parallel bamboos are tied to the sloping poles and into this framework banana or junput leaves are thatched.

6. It is very unwise to sleep on the ground even in the dry season because the leeches would consider it a heaven-sent opportunity for a blood feast. Under the shelter one must build a chung or sleeping platform on which one is perfectly safe from leeches. The easiest way to do this is to place on the ground two logs about six feet apart; on top of these are laid at right angles a

dozen or so poles, all about three inches in diameter. These are tied to the logs with creepers, rattan cane, or bamboo strips. Now a number of absolutely straight bamboos must be selected for the flooring. These are cut to the required lengths and then split at the nodes. By continuing these processes round the circumference and eventually splitting right down one side, the bamboo can be flattened out like a board. These bamboo boards are now laid across the poles and tied down, thus completing a dry and fairly comfortable shelter.

7. A hut of this type takes men about two hours to build and will provide shelter for about four people comfortably. If more people are to be accommodated all that is necessary is to make it longer, allowing about two feet for each person. This work should be practised constantly before men are sent to the jungle. Once men have mastered the art, they will never forget it and become quite expert. An experienced man can choose the exact tree he needs at a glance and fell it in the direction he requires. Felling trees and cutting bamboos to the required lengths is a knack and can only be learnt by practice. There can be no hard and fast rules about building: each area and season are different, so one must learn to make the best use of the materials available. The division of the labour is a matter of choosing the men who are best at doing the various tasks.

8. By this time it will be beginning to get dark and there is no time to lose. One must wash in the jungle, and most important are one's feet and legs. There are some people who think once they are away from so-called civilization, it is tough not to wash. Nothing could be more foolish. Washing is not only refreshing after hard day's work but it is essential to get the mud and dirt out of the scratches and leech bites that one collects during the day. A clean skin is germicidal.

9. While at the source of water it is well to fill a couple of bamboos with water so that they can be boiled in readiness for an early start in the morning. To drink unboiled water is foolish. One thinks one can get away with it because one does not generally develop dysentery within a few days. Amoebic dysentery does not often attack people until they have returned from the jungle and are settling down to normal conditions again.

10. If one has not a kettle, a long bamboo makes an excellent pot in which to boil water, make tea, or cook rice. The outer

skin of the bamboo is peeled off until only about an eighth of an inch of wood remains. The bamboo is now filled with water and a few leaves are stuffed in the top. The base of the bamboo is now placed near the fire and the bamboo leant across the fire at an angle of forty-five degrees, and held in position by forked stick or some similar arrangement. The water in bamboo keeps the wood from burning.

11. The water in the jungle is often muddy; this mud contains mica and there are few things which can irritate the intestines more than mica. Therefore it is worth while straining the water through a folded handkerchief if one has nothing better. One very simple and quick way of making water safe to drink is the colloidal silver method. All one requires are two Victoria silver rupees soldered on to two copper rods about ten inches long. These are the electrodes, wires connect them up to three flat torch batteries arranged in series. By stirring a bucket of water with these silver electrodes, the water becomes safe to drink in thirty seconds. If the water is very muddy, it is best to double this time. However, this does not get rid of the mica.

12. The food problem in the jungle is always difficult, because it has generally to be carried by porters or dropped from aeroplanes. Fresh vegetables are seldom obtainable from base. The jungle does provide certain edible plants, such as the inner stem of the banana tree, bamboo shoots, growing tips and roots of the wild ginger, the tips of young bracken ferns. In some places the yam and wild tomato are found. It is advisable to learn to recognize these plants before trying to eat them.

13. Before going into the jungle, it is well worth spending a few hours asking the local people about these things. It is the poorest people who will know most about these matters, and they will know how to cook them, which is just as important as recognizing the plants.

14. The Nagas always drink the water in which they cook their vegetables, and it is advisable to follow their example, because it is very hard to supply a well-balanced vitamin diet in the jungle. If you are short of vitamin B1 and B2 over long periods, your efficiency will quickly deteriorate. You will also find that little cuts, scratches and insect-bites will turn septic. If you are to be a long time in the jungle, it is well to read up the subject of food values, so that you can make the best possible use

of what you have. Most people destroy their food by cooking it too long.

15. In the jungle the insects are no more numerous than in the plains and towns. Exactly the same anti-malaria measures must be carried out in the jungle as in any cantonment. Never sleep without a mosquito net, and keep yourself well covered up after five in the evening. In most parts of the jungle it is the sandfly and not the mosquito which is most troublesome. Gum boots are the best things to wear in the evenings. At certain times of the year the leeches make themselves a nuisance. They work their way through the eyelets of one's boots and climb up one's legs. There are several ways of dealing with the leech, none of them are fool-proof but a combination of them is fairly effective. First rub your feet with mosquito cream before putting on your socks. Some people swear by wearing an old pair of ladies' silk stockings under marching socks. However, the eyelets of the boots should also be packed with mosquito cream as this prevents entry into the boots. In your pocket you should always carry a little salt knotted in the corner of a handkerchief, and when a leech is seen it should be dabbed with salt. Leeches should not be pulled off, because in the process they are apt to leave their teeth behind and the place not only bleeds for a long time, but often becomes septic. If leech bites are neglected, they sometimes develop into Naga sores. The way to treat these is to scrub them with soap and water, and then wash them with Acriflavine. The ulcer should then be packed with Epsom salts and kept covered up.

16. In the jungle one is often a very long way from a doctor and therefore it is well that everyone who has to work in such areas has some knowledge of drugs and the way to treat various diseases that one comes across. Here are a few suggestions which have been well tested and found effective for dysentery. New cases from one to two days old are given two ampoules of bacteriaphage taken orally three times a day. Cases which have been running from three to four days are best treated by giving a tablespoonful of Liquid Extract of Kurchi three times a day. Cases which have been running for a longer period can be effectively treated by giving the patient four tablets of M and B 693 or 760 four times a day.

17. If someone is going to be ill in the jungle it is best to

decide early if he is to be carried to hospital. Being carried in a blanket tied to a pole is one of the most exhausting modes of travel. But that is the only way of moving sick or injured people in mountainous jungle.

18. There are many forms of malaria met with in the jungle and quinine may be scarce. However, most fevers can be got under control by giving as little as only one grain of quinine every two hours. This should be kept up for four days, by which time the temperature subsides to normal.

19. Pneumonia is quite common in the jungle, especially when people are sleeping in cramped quarters. Here again, the treatment is simple and it is far better to treat a pneumonia case on the spot than to carry him in a blanket for miles to a doctor. The patient should be kept warm and still; a hole can easily be cut in the floor so that he has not the necessity of getting up to relieve himself. By feeding the patient on hot milk and soup and by giving four tablets of M and B 693 every four hours, he is usually well enough to be carried in five or six days.

20. After you have treated one or two cases, and have got away with it, don't imagine you are a doctor. When you are in doubt it is often better to do nothing than to do the wrong thing.

21. Living healthily and happily in the jungle is mainly a case of being careful and using one's commonsense, seeing how the local people do things and learning from them. It is the practical man who succeeds in the jungle, not the theorist. Keep your matches dry and your kukri sharp.

Head gear	Abor rattan cane hat or felt hat.
Clothing	Long sleeved woollen shirts, jersey, very short khaki shorts for day work and heavy drill trousers for the night.
Foot-gear	Socks, short puttees and well-studded ammunition boots, as many pairs of spare laces as days' marching to be done. The Bata canvas hockey boots are equally good, and for fast silent marches, are better than the heavy army boot. They, however, last only a week, and sometimes less in bad conditions. It is not worth carrying a raincoat in the jungle, an umbrella is far more useful.
Bedding	Blankets and mosquito nets are necessary all the year round. A six foot "Li-Lo" is recommended. It is also useful in crossing rivers.
Equipment	The less one carries the better, but every man should have good quality matches in a watertight container, or a cigarette lighter. Every man must carry a sharp heavy knife.
First Aid Kit	Instruments.—A folding lancet, very fine forceps, and a pair of curved scissors. A hypodermic syringe and the correct needles are useful if people are properly trained in their use. Torch batteries, silver electrodes, copper wire.
Drugs etc.	Acriflavine, M and B 693 and 760, Bacteriaphage, Extract of Kurchi, Quinine either in tablet or ampoule form, Glucose, Zinc Oxide with 5% Salicylic acid, Epsom Salts, Vaseline, cotton wool, bandages and four-inch Elastoplast tape.

APPENDIX II

METHODS I USED TO TREAT REFUGEES WHILE WORKING WITHOUT MEDICAL AID

THE BOMBING of Myitkyina by the Japanese on the 6th May 1942 made further evacuation by air of women and children impossible. Their only hope of reaching India was to motor or walk one hundred and two miles to the end of the macadam road and then follow a jungle path for a hundred and sixty miles to Shingbwiyang. There was a little food at Shingbwiyang but after that there was nothing until they reached Nampong, ninety miles further on across many swollen rivers and mountainous jungles. The track between Nampong and the railhead at Likhapani was forty-five miles of stinking liquid mud, two feet deep.

The Indian Tea Association had been improving the track to Nampong and had a number of coolie camps along the route. The tea planters volunteered to take control of the evacuation and get as many people alive to India as possible. They at once started carrying food and medical stores over the Pangsau Pass and established camps in the direction to Shingbwiyang. The mud by the middle of May was everywhere about two feet deep and the strongest porters could not manage more than a forty pound load for five miles a day. The porters themselves ate at least two pounds of rice daily so by the time a sack of rice was carried for sixty or seventy miles there was very little food for the 20,000 refugees. There were critical periods when the food ran out in the advanced camps, and thousands were fed on the stem of the banana tree and boiled bullock.

The medical technique had to be altered to fit the situation. There was no rest, good food or care to be had. There was nothing but rain and mud, day after day and night after night. The people who reached us were the toughest—not brawny youths from eighteen to twenty-five, but children, young women, middle aged people and old folk. It was not a matter of brawn but of determination and common-sense. Those who could keep their matches dry and could light a fire, those who washed their stinking bodies and their dirty socks, those who started the day's march at sunrise and walked unhurriedly until midday and then camped: those were the people who survived; the others are still in the jungle.

In the early days of the evacuation the refugees demanded cigarettes as their nerves were shattered by lack of sleep and forced marches through the deep mud. A few of them had bad feet but that was all. They were able to continue after being given hot tea and a little food. By the 23rd May we were beginning to find young men in an extreme state of exhaustion. They had often been walking for five or six days without any food. These people were given a little rum mixed with tea and milk. The result was always the same, the refugees died after drinking even the smallest quantities of rum. The word went quickly up and down the road that alcohol was poison in cases of extreme exhaustion. At first in the advanced camps food was very scarce; the refugees were given very little to eat and they proceeded on their way grumbling. When the food arrived in quantities the refugees were given as much food as they asked for. But once they had eaten it, and had that comfortable feeling under their belts, they always asked to be allowed to stay and rest for a day or two. They promised to move on the following morning but, when morning came, they felt less inclined to move on to the next camp. They hung around and tried to get more food but this was refused them. Very often refugees had to be driven out of the camps to make them continue the journey to safety. It took several days and a great many deaths before it was realized that the generous portions of food were proving lethal.

By the end of May at least seventeen people had died from what at first appeared to be dysentery but was nothing more than over-eating on a starved stomach. The amount of food given to each person was at once cut down and by doing so it was hoped

that the death rate would drop. But it did not, the reason being that the people who were now coming through had been on the trek longer and had run out of matches and were eating uncooked rice and raw jungle plants. Those were people who had damaged their feet and whose sores were turning septic. Hundreds of them were treated by the doctors and dressers with gentian violet. From the medical point of view it did little good but from the psychological side it was a great help. It was the visible sign that there was help on the road and it was worth trying to reach India.

By the beginning of June we were beginning to see the signs of Vitamin B1 and B2 deficiency. It took various forms but the reason for it was that refugees were existing solely on rice. Their rice had been very dirty and often musty. These people washed their rice thoroughly before cooking it. In this way they washed away all the salts and vitamins in the rice and, having eaten a large meal of it, they were actually physically more exhausted after the meal than before it. Some people had not slept soundly for more than a month and this quickly destroyed their B complex. The outward signs were a red sore tongue, burning sensation in the hands, pins and needles in their legs and a vague but constant pain in the back of the head. These people lost all sense of what is called "common decency". They did not try to help themselves or their children. If they rested more than a day their legs and ankles became swollen and badly pitted. This of course is caused by a thiamine chloride deficiency and is often found amongst Marathon runners. To overcome this, some refugees were given thiamine chloride and nicotinic acid but the results were disastrous and sometimes fatal. But when they were given nicotinic acid and thiamine chloride along with large quantities of yeast and marmite the refugees made rapid progress.

Naga sores made their first appearance at the beginning of June. The first cases were all men and mostly men who were trekking alone. The Naga sore is an ulcer which generally only attacks underfed people and people who are lacking in Vitamin B and calcium salts. The women knew more about cooking and they used to cook bracken fern-tops and banana stems with their rice and in this way they kept themselves going longer than the men. The ulcer starts as a small blister on the leg or foot in a place where there is not much flesh. It develops rapidly for four

or five days and then stops. By this time it may be five inches in diameter and an inch deep, destroying all the upper layers of flesh and often the tendons and muscles. The ulcer stinks like a rotting corpse but has often a clean appearance when washed. However, when covered up it soon becomes full of thick pus. Every camp doctor tried to find a cure but eventually they all came to the same conclusion, that there was little hope until the refugee's general condition could be improved. However, the most satisfactory method of dealing with the ulcer on the road was to wash it thoroughly with soap and water, followed by alcohol and then dyed with 1/1000 Acriflavine in glycerine. When this was done the wound was packed with Mag. Sulph. and covered over. (If available, powdered M and B 760 should be used in place of Mag. Sulph.) This cleaned the ulcer thoroughly and started the healing. The new cells began to form in a day or two. By giving the refugee four tablets of M and B 760 three times a day the progress was slightly increased.

Many of these ulcers were complicated by the presence of hundreds of maggots in the wound. There are many kinds of maggot and it was soon learned that all maggots did not live on pus and some had an abnormal appetite for healthy flesh. Therefore every effort was made to get rid of these brutes. On one occasion Kerosene oil, second grade, was poured into a hole in a small boy's head and three hundred and fifty half-inch maggots were removed. In this hole four different species of maggots were seen. The boy survived and is now well. To remove maggots from a foot the quickest and most effective method was to pour 5% phenol and water into the wound and after a minute wash the wound, thoroughly, with water. The wound must then be dressed and kept covered up.

Natural abortion was common in the jungle and hæmorrhage was frequent. This was stopped quickly by putting a pad against the vulvæ and pressing the pad with a clenched fist, at the same time pressing downwards just above the pubic bone. Sometimes before these women reached the camps they had been affected with maggots. Here again an easy remedy was at hand, warm milk with a 5% solution chloroform was syringed into the vagina. This was followed by a neutral douche which washed out all the maggots. A solution of one tea-spoonful of common salt to a pint of water is best.

The leech under normal conditions does little harm. It has its fill of blood and drops off. But when people are starving it rapidly makes them very weak and tired. Their resistance is low and their blood takes a very long time to clot, with the result that there is every opportunity of a secondary infection setting in. Many people said their Naga sores had started at the site of a leech bite. A leech should never be pulled off, but it will leave go at once if a hot cigarette end or salt is put on its tail. The wounds caused by some types of leeches do not properly heal for three and four months and result in something like a wart. Leeches like to climb up one's legs and on several occasions they entered vaginas and penises. Here, if not removed at once, they often cause death from hæmorrhage. The method of removing them is just syringing a little salt solution in the affected part. The hæmorrhage is stopped by following this up with an infusion of strong warm tea or some solution which helps the blood to clot.

The large green and brown tiger leech seems to be poisonous, at any rate the site of the bite is discoloured and may be visible for several months. The way to deal with these bites is to wash them thoroughly with soap and water and put zinc oxide with five per cent salicylic acid powder on them. If the leech bite is in such a place that there is a danger of mud getting into it, the bite should be covered with a piece of elastoplast.

There are thousands of sandfly in the jungle and these little insects can make life more miserable than all the mud and rain put together. The bites feel like red hot needles and most people scratch them with their dirty finger-nails or rub their hands hard up and down their legs. This, however, does not relieve the irritation and quickly leads to secondary infection. In the early stages zinc oxide with five per cent salicylic acid dusted over the legs is a great relief. However, very often a small scab forms and underneath this scab is a pin head of pus. In a day or two this pus eats downwards about half an inch, still leaving the scab intact. A day or two later a small hole appears in the scab and a little heavy white pus appears. The scab then falls off but the white pus remains in the gaping hole, which gradually gets larger and deeper. This sore, unlike the Naga sore, attacks the most fleshy parts of the legs, arms and buttocks.

In their early stages they are quite easy to cure; they must be washed with hot water and soap, which removes the scab, and

helps to clean away the white pus. Continual washing will remove the pus but it is less painful to use hydrogen peroxide. Once the wound is clean it must be dyed with Acriflavine, and then packed with M and B 760 and covered with elastoplast. In cases when there were a very large number of the sores, it was found better to soak the affected parts in a bucket of hot Mag. Sulph. solution for several hours. These sores were worst in people who were suffering from malnutrition and who generally gave the history of dysentery.

In the open parts of the jungle and generally near a river the "dimdam" makes its appearance when the monsoon is over. The "dimdam" is a small blood-sucking fly. Its habits are quite regular. It only appears when the sun has cleared the blanket of morning mist out of the valleys and disappears as soon as the day starts to get chilly. This fly is a curse to the bare legged porters, while they are working in camps. On the road these "dimdams" do not trouble one but in camp they give one very little peace. Each bite causes a small blood blister. Those blisters irritate unmercifully especially when they occur on the under side of the hand which seems to be the favourite place for these flies to bite. To avoid being bitten one must keep oneself well covered up and rub a little mosquito cream on the exposed parts of the body.

The porters, when not provided with plenty of soap, scratch these bites and their legs swell rapidly and they are unable to work. When they wash frequently they do not suffer in this way.

Many of the women and children had their heads full of head lice and nits. These wretched people sat for hours searching each other's heads and killing the little brutes between their teeth. However, the Flit pump was the answer and all that was required was to flit the head several times and then thoroughly comb out the dead lice. This was repeated several times and then the women were given a piece of soap to wash the oil out of their heads. With double strength pyrethrum, the lice die quickly.

In the cold season large hornets and wasps are very common in the jungle. They generally nest in hollow trees. When hornets are seen flying about it is time to watch carefully. They usually choose a tree which gives them a long straight flight to their nest. When such trees are found it is best to cut a path round them and block the path from either side. If one suddenly finds

hundreds of hornets buzzing round one, stand quite still for several minutes. If one does this one usually gets away with only a sting or two. If one runs, run for the bushes and undergrowth, not down the open path where the hornets will follow and continue their attacks. These hornet's stings are very painful and when a large number of stings occur the shock and pain drive people mad for a short time. There is not very much one can do except remove the stings if they are still embedded in the flesh and then dab on ammonia if one has it. Drinking strong tea helps to steady people but one seldom has anything like that handy when one meets hornets.

The jungles are full of beautiful butterflies during the monsoon. Their bright colours flitting about relieve the depressing jungle green. However, the butterfly despite its delicate and elegant appearance is one of the dirtiest feeders of the jungle. Its choice is decomposing corpses and human excreta. Butterflies are a sure sign that someone has died or is about to die.

The jungle-flies, bluebottles, greenbottles, and bronze-coloured flies too know when someone is going to die. As soon as the person weakens enough not to be able to brush off the flies, egg clusters are laid on the neck and in the private parts. When a healthy, strong person stands by a person on whom the flies are settling not a single fly will come near the healthy person. In the jungle many people fell by the wayside from exhaustion and disease. There were never enough porters to carry everyone. To be carried in a blanket for miles through deep mud is almost as exhausing as walking. Therefore, it was necessary to select those who were strong enough to survive such a journey. In most cases the pulse was so weak that it could hardly be felt, peoples' eyes lost all their sparkle and became opaque. The voices were weak but clear and in most cases people spoke sensibly until they died. However, these flies never made a mistake and one soon learned to trust their uncanny judgment.

These flies never bother one at meal times like the common house-fly. In the parts of the jungle away from human habitation one seldom sees the common house-fly. But if a camp is kept dirty and no arrangements are made for refuse and latrines, flies will quickly become a pest. With these dirty conditions come bacillary and amoebic dysentery and infantile paralysis. It is therefore essential to choose a camp site which has good drainage

and can thus easily be kept clean. Huts should be faced in such a way that the maximum amount of morning sun enters them. Latrines must be dug before the camp is built, otherwise the ground will be fouled from the beginning. The other sources of flies are scraps of food thrown into the jungle round the camp. To overcome this, deep pits should be dug and then covered over with logs leaving only a small hole. To enforce sanitary discipline it is necessary to have an armed guard who is not afraid to use his weapon. For once dysentery breaks out it is almost impossible to control it in the jungle.

In the jungle it was quite unpractical to carry out the usual routine treatment for dysentery. This would have meant delaying the refugees for a week or ten days. There was not the accommodation or the food to do this. But even if there had been the food it would have been fatal. For once people stopped moving on daily it was only brute force which would drive them on again. Refugees moving on daily were exhausted but they did not catch cold and pneumonia. But once they started sitting about in crowded and dirty camps it was impossible for them to remain well. Therefore it was necessary to give them such a dose that they could reach the next camp and continue from camp to camp to the base.

What demoralized the people most was having a large number of motions on the line of march. It held up their friends, and parties became separated. Often the person with the rice spent the night a mile or two from the person with the cooking pot. Our main object was to bung the people up so that they could continue to walk. For this reason very large doses were often necessary. At the same time it was necessary to choose drugs which would do this and yet not affect their strength and hearts.

In the camps fifty miles from base the dysentery cases were divided into three groups; those who had dysentery from one to two days were given bacteriaphage. They were given two phages on their arrival in camp, two in the evening and a couple before they left in the morning. The cases which had been running from three to four days were given a tablespoon of Liquid Extract of Kurchi three times a day. Cases which have been running for a longer period can be effectively treated by giving the patient four tablets of M and B 693 or 760 four times a day.

At the beginning of the evacuation a sharp look-out for any

signs of cholera was kept but not a single case was seen in any of the organized camps. However, many people reported there was cholera at Shingbwiyang but this does not seem to be borne out. The types of intestinal troubles soon fell into three main groups: those people who caught stomach chills through exposure while lying in the open at night in the pouring rain for weeks on end; those who ate uncooked food or were so starved that they were unable to digest their food when they got it; and those who suffered from amœbic dysentery. There seems to have been very little, if any, bacillary dysentery. From 18th May until the first week of June several thousand refugees were treated with bacteriaphage by the doctors at Tagung Hka. Most of these people were able to continue the trek to the next camp without further assistance. Many of those people had both blood and mucus in their stools. It was, however, impossible to tell how successful this treatment was because the refugees were not seen again. But on the withdrawal from Tagung Hka seventeen corpses were seen between Tagung Hka and the next camp. These people died with the buttocks bare, lying on their back with their legs drawn up. Their death was caused by a combination of things. The dead were Oriya coolies who had been trying to carry to India all their worldly possessions and anything of value they could pick up on the road. These people were weakened by starvation and diarrhoea and collapsed on the steep Tagung hill. Here it was bitterly cold at night and there was no dry wood with which to make fires and warm themselves. They often ate the rice and dhal that had been given them without cooking it. This soured the stomach and intestine to such an extent that they had prolapse of the rectum.

By the middle of June fifty per cent of the refugees were suffering from diarrhoea of one kind or another. The refugees arriving in the forward camps in July had been existing on a few ounces of rice a day since the beginning of May. Their general condition was very bad, they were suffering from pellagra, hookworm, Naga sores, malaria, amœba and scabies.

It was very noticeable that those people who appeared to be fairly fit soon cracked up after reaching the base camps. The reaction sometimes set in a few hours after arrival in Margherita and sometimes as late as a month or so afterwards. The symptoms of the amœba infection were: loss of appetite a

very full feeling of the stomach, a swelling of the dome of the liver and pain in the right side of the intestine when the stomach was examined. The anus was often very sore, due probably to ulcers in the lower bowel. The blood-pressure was higher than normal but the pulse was very slow — often as slow as forty in a strong person.

Experience proved that many of these people died after being treated with Mag. Sulph. and the ordinary routine methods for dysentery. The worst cases however recovered when treated with Emetine and Stovorsol.

From June onwards, refugees frequently asked to be treated for worms. The source of their infection was from the diseased cattle or mud. The cattle had been driven over from Burma and when they became too exhausted to continue they were slaughtered. The refugees were in the habit of roasting this meat on sticks and eating it when only slightly cooked. However, the most common form of worm was the hookworm and this was caught equally by those with boots and shoes as by those without. These cases we refused to treat as most of the refugees were too weak to stand a dose of Chenopodium followed up with a purgative. They were treated in India afterwards, sometimes several months later.

There were only a few cases of malaria seen during May. Those refugees who did manage to stagger into the forward camps over a track a foot deep in mud, generally died before much could be done for them. The first cases of malaria we met had temperatures of 104° to 106° and were probably malignant. Later on in June many of the refugees who had fever did not have a temperature higher than 103°. Many of these cases were treated with quinine mixture and most of them reacted well. However, it was very noticeable that the refugees were unable to absorb the quinine sulphate tablets we gave them and passed them out unchanged.

At the beginning of July three refugees complained of blood in their urine. They died before it was proved whether they had blackwater fever or not.

From July to October there were a few cases of an unusual fever. The patients complained of feeling off colour for a few days. During this period the temperature was sub-normal. Then suddenly the temperature would rise to 102° and they would start to

vomit. These cases were very difficult to handle as they could keep nothing down. Quinine seemed useless and made them more sick. There was a small quantity of German Atabrine in the camp and the first lucky few recovered rapidly and were well enough in about a week to continue their journey. When the Atabrine was finished there was no way of saving the weaker people and they died from sheer exhaustion before they could be carried to base.

A number of cases of Cerebral Malaria or Spinal Meningitis were found. These refugees were found writhing about in the camp. They seemed stiff from the shoulder upwards. There was no way to diagnose those cases and as we believed that all cases of Cerebral Malaria must die we treated them for Spinal Meningitis. The refugee was carried to a hut away from the others and given four tablets of M and B 693 every four hours and fed on hot tea, milk, salt and rice pudding. In one forward camp, five out of eleven cases recovered.

In July many children were treated for Pneumonia. The treatment was simple: they were wrapped in dry blankets and sacks and fed on a light diet and given from three to four tablets of M and B 693 every four hours. None of these cases was lost.

One of the most valuable things on the road was soap, because it prevented people from suffering untold misery from scabies. The refugees who had rested at Tagup Ga for the rains were covered with this skin disease from the top of their heads to the tips of their toes. When they arrived in our camps we gave them a piece of carbolic soap and made them scrub themselves all over. Usually one of their friends helped them. Their clothes were boiled in a kerosene tin while the washing was taking place. In our early efforts to cure them, we painted them with Acriflavine in the "ensemble". This helped but was not quick enough. Finally we found that 90% alcohol was the best way of drying these sores. With alcohol the sores dried in three days.

Foot-rot was one of our constant worries amongst the porters. A porter without boots could hardly be expected to keep his feet dry or his wounds clean. This problem was never really solved but we soon realized that Gentian violet definitely did not help. In fact it caused a thick white pus to form between the porters' toes. Soaking the feet in a strong solution of Potassium Permanganate helped a little; Zinc oxide with 5% Salicylic acid relieved the irritation. On our return to India we cured ourselves

with Mersagot (Glaxo) and the patent dopes sold by Thompson and Taylor, Bombay.

Two cases of small-pox got through as far as Nampong where they were stopped and isolated. They were fed by food being put near their hut, which they fetched. The disease did not spread and when the refugee was better the hut was burnt down.

The refugees sometimes attacked each other and the survivors eventually arrived and asked for treatment. In July an Indian merchant was hit over the head with a rifle butt; this happened a short distance from Shamlung, so the unfortunate fellow reached the camp soon afterwards. He had a gash four inches long on the right side of his head, exposing the bone. The hair was shaved from round the area and the wound was washed for a long time with Acriflavine 1/1000. When it was quite clean the whole wound was packed with M and B 760. The flesh was drawn together with a large piece of Elastoplast leaving a small drainage at one side of the wound. This dressing was left for six weeks, by which time the wound had made a complete recovery.

The same day that the merchant was treated another man who had been attacked while he was asleep reached the camp. This man had received six head wounds and eight deep cuts on the arms. A few hours after the attack his friends had patched him up. Their treatment was simple but very effective. All the deep wounds were packed with the ashes of burnt cotton rags. Although the attack had taken place five days previously the wounds were still clean and they had started to heal. He was patched up and sent down the road.

Two people walked down the road quite happily suffering from appendicitis. It was impossible to do anything for them and it was unnecessary to try as by the time they managed to reach the camp the infected area had been enclosed in a large ball of tissue. Other people might not have been so lucky but they may have died unnoticed.

The greatest and most constant problem of the refugee work was the food of the first meal. Most starving people will over-eat when they are given a chance. They will eat their food before it is properly cooked. To overcome this difficulty in Shamlung one or two refugee women were put in charge of the cooking pots and they cooked for everyone. As a reward they were given a packet of biscuits and their families were fed first. The food issued

to refugees seems very little when compared to the normal diet of such people. Each man was given three cups of rice and one of dhal. The women were given two cups of rice and three quarters of dhal. The children were given one cup of rice and half of dhal. There was a limited supply of milk, biscuits, salt, sugar and dried fruit which was distributed as needed. Very little tea could be issued at Shamlung as all water had to be carried for about six hundred yards and with a staff of only six it was not possible to supply tea to three hundred people daily.

At the beginning of July orders were received to close down Shamlung Camp. These orders were ignored and the camp kept going until the 10th July. Then for various reasons and against the wish of the camp it was forced to withdraw.

In September the Tea Planters again came forward and lent their labour so that the evacuation could be reopened and the refugees who had spent the rains in Shinbwiyang and Tagup Ga could reach India. Camps were re-established at Kumlao, Nampong and Nawngyan Hka. These camps were lightly staffed and well organized. Very few refugees died on the road between September and the end of November. The main reason why so few died was that we all had considerable experience in feeding and nursing starving people. When refugees arrived in camp they were given hot tea and a biscuit and then issued with what rations they required. The ration situation, which was looked after in Base by the Administrator, Margherita and an R.I.A.S.C. officer, was always excellent. Refugees were kept for sometimes as much as a week in camp so that they could be fed and fattened and made strong enough to continue the journey.

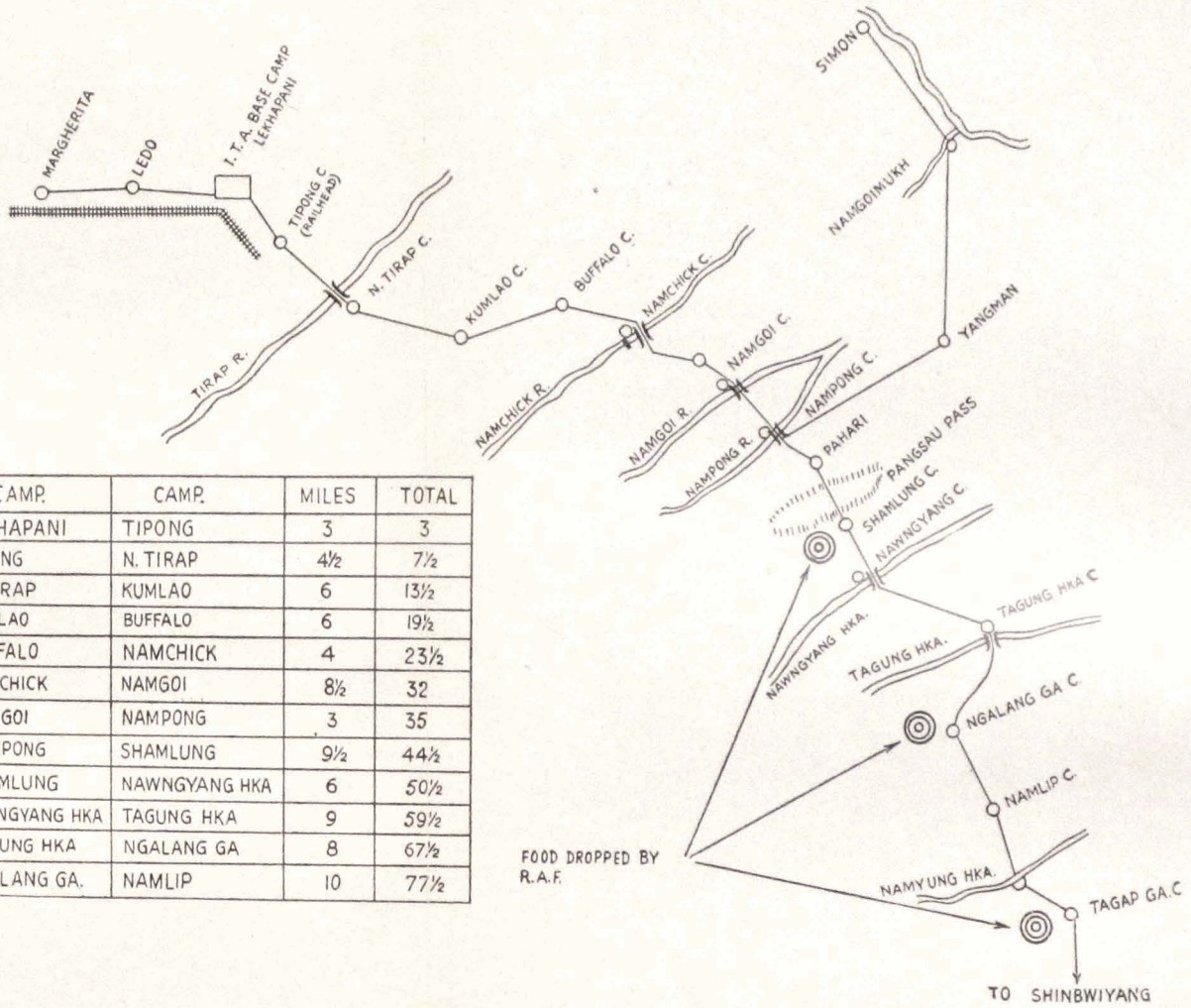
The way in which the first food and drink is given to an exhausted person is of the greatest importance. It is very easy to kill off people by misguided kindness.

On our trips forward, refugees who had been deserted by their friends and family would often be found. It was not unusual for a mother to have to decide whether she would carry her food or leave her baby to die or carry her baby and both die of starvation. Often whole families stayed and died together. When these very exhausted people were found, at first we gave them tea and biscuits. But they soon died. Gradually we learnt the technique of stimulating them so that all their organs were set in

motion again. It was also necessary to make the refugees fight both physically and mentally for their life. When no drugs were available this was done by shouting and insulting them until they got angry. If this did not work they were slapped all over and their legs and arms rubbed. When their faces showed signs of flushing they were shown a cup of Glucose D and water. This they were allowed to sniff but not drink for a little while. Then they were given a few drops at a time. All this time things were said to the refugees which were calculated to arouse their emotions. After they had drunk two ounces of Glucose and water they were given nothing more until they started to react. It usually took twenty minutes before they would start to gurk and belch. When this happened we knew they would live and not die. They were then allowed another two ounces of Glucose and water. Half an hour later they would be put in a position where they could see everyone eating and drinking tea. They were given nothing until all the others had finished. Then they were given a small cup of tea with lots of milk, sugar and salt in it. The refugees were now ready to be carried for about four miles where they would again be given a small amount of Glucose water. On reaching a camp for the night they were given only tea, milk, salt and Glucose or sugar. By this time their kidneys had started to work and the refugees wanted to urinate. If this did not happen they were given very strong tea which generally did the trick. In the morning the refugees were made to watch the coolies eat, but were kept hungry and longing for food. They were then given half a biscuit softened in a hot cup of marmite or tea. The refugees would then be carried to a permanent camp where they would be kept for a week. For the first few days they were given mainly tea, milk, sugar, salt, marmite and biscuit. Then they were introduced to germinated gram and onions, garlic and rice. In a week or so these people were fit enough to be carried over the next pass and after a day's rest went on to India.

The main thing to remember about refugees is that their morale must be kept up. Their desire to fight for their life must be continually stimulated. They must never be allowed to stop seeing the flag still flying or to feel they have no further responsibility towards themselves or their families.

DIAGRAMMATIC ROUTE MAP—MARGHERITA TO TAGAPGA



	CAMP.	CAMP.	MILES	TOTAL
1.	LEKHAPANI	TIPONG	3	3
2.	TIPONG	N. TIRAP	4½	7½
3.	N. TIRAP	KUMLAO	6	13½
4.	KUMLAO	BUFFALO	6	19½
5.	BUFFALO	NAMCHICK	4	23½
6.	NAMCHICK	NAMGOI	8½	32
7.	NAMGOI	NAMPONG	3	35
8.	NAMPONG	SHAMLUNG	9½	44½
9.	SHAMLUNG	NAWNGYANG HKA	6	50½
10.	NAWNGYANG HKA	TAGUNG HKA	9	59½
11.	TAGUNG HKA	NGALANG GA	8	67½
12.	NGALANG GA.	NAMLIP	10	77½

MAP
SHOWING
ROUTES FROM BURMA TO ASSAM

Scale 1"=16 Miles nearly