HIDDEN HIGHWAY

IN THE HILLS OF THE HINDU KUSH

FLORA M. DAVIDSON

[R. F. D.

SIGN-POST IN THE KHYBER FOR CARS AND CAMELS
"God's Highway is still to be discovered" (Page 125)

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IN THE HILLS OF THE HINDU KUSH

By

FLORA M. DAVIDSON

With Introduction by Samuel M. Zwemer, D.D.

(*Second Edition—Revised*)

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TO THOSE WHO DARE TO LEAVE THE SAFETY OF THE LOWER WAYS TO PREPARE A " HIGHWAY FOR OUR GOD " IN THESE WILD UPLANDS, THOUGH PERCHANCE IT BE AT COST OF PERILS AND PAINS, TEARS AND BLOOD

INTRODUCTION

THE CHAPTERS of this book challenge attention because they deal with a geographical area which is unfamiliar to most people. The North-West Frontier of India conjures up a mental picture of bare, rocky hills, of Pathan tribesmen and border warfare. But there is far more hidden in these hills and passes: there is a complex of all the tragedies of Moslem life; there is soul hunger, and hospitality too; there are those who fall among thieves, but there is also the Good Samaritan.

Here is a challenge to faith and sacrifice. Although William Carey at Calcutta translated the Gospel into Pushtu for the Afghans as early as 1818, Afghanistan to-day is still an unoccupied field. Only on its frontiers are there mission stations with hospitals and schools. The author, with other brave pioneers, has cast longing eyes across the Khyber Pass, eager to preach the Word of Life,

> " That those might see to whom no tidings of Him came,
> And they who have not heard might understand."

These pages tell of great faith and bold adventure and patient endurance. Miss Flora Davidson mentions other pioneers who in the past four decades have endured as seeing the invisible—apostles and martyrs for the truth: Doctor Mary Holst of Mardan, Dr. Pennell of Bannu, the Swedish missionaries of Central Asia, George Hunter the lonely hero, the Misses French and Cable of Gobi Desert fame, and Miss Jenny de Mayer in her " adventures with God." But she herself is in the same glorious company. The social and spiritual condition of Pathans, Afghans, Afridis and other Moslem tribes is portrayed from actual experience, and the real life among the villagers and city folk is eloquent with pathos and tragedy. The excellent illustrations are no less

luminous than the view through the windows-of-the-soul that forms the text.

As I read the pages and realized that here Islam has held sway for twelve centuries, the words of Principal Fairbairn in his *City of God* come to mind :

> " The God of Mohammed spares the sin the Arab loves. A religion that does not purify the home cannot regenerate the race ; one that depraves the home is certain to deprave humanity. Motherhood must be sacred if manhood is to be honourable. Spoil the wife of sanctity, and for the man the sanctities of life have perished. And so it has been with Islam. It has reformed and lifted savage tribes ; it has depraved and barbarized civilized nations. At the root of its fairest culture a worm has ever lived that has caused its blossoms soon to wither and die. Were Mohammed the hope of man, then his state were hopeless ; before him could only lie retrogression, tyranny and despair."

Miss Davidson knows Islam at its best and at its worst. She belongs to the Fellowship of Faith for Moslems. She has seen the glory of the dark impossible and also the dawn of a new day. Our long friendship across the years since my visit to her home in Scotland during the First World War makes it a privilege to introduce this fine book to the reader. It should have a large place in a wide circle and lead to intercessory prayer for the peoples of Afghanistan and Central Asia.

SAMUEL M. ZWEMER

New York City

PREFACE

THE STORIES recorded in this book have been picked out as being typical of life on this Frontier. They are true, as far as my memory and my informants are to be depended on. For obvious reasons some of the real names have been changed to fictitious ones, and chronological order has not been observed.

Most of these incidents could be multiplied many times over from a missionary's experience. Frustrations, religious antagonism to the Gospel, official opposition, disappointments, dangers, loneliness, hardship, intense joys and sorrows, great love, wonderful friendships, and glimpses of glory: these make up life among a fierce, fanatical Moslem people, and the writer feels it has been a privilege to live among them; although had it not been for the constant Presence of the Great Companion, it would at times have been too grim!

But for the persuasion and encouragement of my sisters and some of my friends, especially Miss Margaret W. Haines and Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Clark, this book never would have been written. My thanks are due to Mrs. Frost and Mr. Durham and all who have helped by suggestion and correction; to Mr. Holmes for his artistic advice and very beautiful photographs; and to all those dear friends who have so faithfully helped by prayer and inspiration these many years.

This is sent forth to show the need of those who are without the knowledge of Christ, and with the prayer that some who know Him may be led to leave behind the tents of ease and, should He call, to follow Him where Satan's seat is, to his most inaccessible stronghold!

Afghanistan still stands a challenge to faith. The Cross is the Signpost which shows the way. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (I John

3: 16). The path is marked by the blood of those who have given their lives. Who follows in their train ?

F. M. D.

Peshawar, N.W.F.P.
1944

PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION

Owing to war restrictions and other difficulties, this book is only now being published in Scotland. The conditions in the N.W.F.P. to-day are very different from what they were in the days of 1944. Moslem rule began in 1947, and many have been the changes—but though out of date, it may help some to picture the lives of these people, and inspire prayer ; for the need is the same.

1950 F. M. D.

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

1957, and ten years since Pakistan was formed, and took over this part from British rule. How great the difference ! And yet still remains the impenetrable Beyond, and the forbidding Frontier with iron gate and armed guard, and still the challenge of that dark, unoccupied country. Still the blood-feuds go on, still the oppression of women, and still the awful need. Thank God, still a few Pathans are witnessing to Christ's delivering power, and many others, one in heart and soul with them, still giving out the Message, and ready to go forward when the way opens.

F. M. D.

Troutstream Hall,
Rickmansworth, Herts.
1959

CONTENTS

PART ONE—THERE IS A PATH . . .

PART TWO—THERE IS A RIVER . . .

PART THREE—THERE SHALL BE A DAY . . .

ILLUSTRATIONS

PART ONE

" There is a Path . . ."

Job 28, 7

I

A NEW PATH

" In His Hand are all the corners of the earth
. . . the hills also."

—*Psalm* 95, 4, *Prayer Book Version*

IT WAS a very steep, stony road, and their feet were tired and sore before Bibi Jan and her companion reached the Shrine of Torspin Baba; but " even though the hill be high, yet there is a way ".*

When they reached the top and came out of the tangle of mimosa and thorn trees, a panorama opened before them, a typical frontier scene. Mud villages and forts were to be seen dotting the plain, a bunch of trees wherever there was a spring, and the brilliant green of the early clover interspersed with flowering mustard looking like lines of molten gold. There were little pink tulips and spring poppies in the fields, although it was too far off to see them. Stretching away into the distance was the white ribbon of road winding its way to the Border and then on to Afghanistan. In the background were the blue and mauve bare, rocky hills, which turn carmine in the setting sun, and the snow-capped peaks of the Hindu Kush and Sufed Koh peeping over.

There is always something special about every shrine. The peculiarity of Torspin Baba, it is said, is that once you have visited it you must return. The writer seems to be an exception to this rule, but although her feet have not again found their way to that very spot, her thoughts have very often returned, not only there but to all the different places on that bit of the Frontier visited during these last thirty years; to the many dear friends made, and to the thrilling experiences lived through.

* Pushtu proverb.

It was on one autumn evening in 1914 that the way led to the North-West Frontier Province. The train chug-chugged over the bridge at Attock. Surging through the narrow gorge far beneath were the turbulent waters of the mighty *Abba Sind*—the Indus, natural boundary between Hindustan and Pathanistan. The hills in the distance stood out welcomingly in the sunset glow. Before the goal was reached, the white moonlight was flooding the whole countryside and the palms were swaying gracefully in the night breeze.

It has been a score and a half of years, half a lifetime, since the Voice said, "Come after me!" He Who called has been faithful all the way. It has been a wonderful path, though often rough and stony. There have been steep bits, thorny bits, thirsty bits, dangers and difficulties, many stumblings and falls; but His Hand has never failed to hold and keep. At times there has been a great loneliness, but the companionship with Christ has been very sweet and one has had an intimacy with Him which perhaps could not have been known in the more sophisticated paths of the world.

"It is far, far better to let Him choose
The way that we should take;
If only we leave our Life to Him
He will guide without mistake.

"We in our blindness would never choose
A pathway dark and rough,
And so we should never find in Him
The God Who is enough!"

Returning to Peshawar after twenty years, one finds great changes. No longer is the City a closed one; some of the gates have either tumbled down or been pulled down. No longer need one tie oneself into a ball to hurl oneself through the small hole, eighteen by twenty-eight inches and twenty-eight inches from the ground, cut out in the big City gates for late comers. Now the chief bazaar actually has a pavement for pedestrians on each side of it. No longer are droves

of cattle, sheep, donkeys, or camels allowed in that street. The imposing edifice of the Afghan Consulate, known as " The King of Kabul's Building," is a busy centre for business men of several nationalities. Lorries and bicycles rage in the streets, jostling one another in the broad ways and at every corner, while the poor old camel feels his day is done.

No longer is a woman or girl an extraordinary sight in the streets or on the roads. Daily one sees groups, books under arms, wending their way in search of education. No longer is it a shame for a woman to draw attention to herself by wearing a clean burkha. No longer is it a disgrace for a girl of good family to attend school. Some are still in burkhas, some with the veil thrown back and some with openly uncovered face; and yet not the tremor of a whisker nor the turning of a male head is to be seen!

Cinemas advertise their sensuous dramas by lurid posters and the doors are thronged daily. European clothes are so greatly patronized by the male population that it is no longer worth raiding a man for English shoes or coat. Electricity, radios, fountain pens, and most of the luxuries of civilization are no longer matters of marvel.

There has been some presentation of the glorious message of salvation and some sowing of the living Seed. The little coloured portions in Urdu, Pushtu, Hindi, Gurmukki, Persian, and Arabic have become familiar in very many homes. Yet the age-long antagonism and opposition is much the same as of yore, as also is the need of this great, old Moslem city.

With all these enterprising agents for trade and novelties, why tarry the wheels of the chariots of the Lord's ambassadors? Why come they not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty? Thank God for the few who have " exposed to reproach, and jeopardized their lives unto the death in the high places of the field "! They who have borne and laboured for His dear Name's sake, and

have not fainted, they shall have their name confessed in heaven and shall sit down with the great Overcomer. " He that hath an ear, let him hear ! "

II

PESHAWAR CITY

" That great city, wherein are more than six-score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand."
—*Jonah* 4, 11

IT WAS very thrilling living in Peshawar City, the gateway of Central Asia. An old City of more than one hundred thousand inhabitants, it is surrounded by thick, high, mud walls, pierced with seventeen gates, which are carefully shut at sunset. " The City of a Thousand Sins," they call it, but that is a low estimate. The winding old streets are interesting with their carved doors and celebrated Peshawar latticed windows. Sometimes the sky is shut out altogether by the upper storeys, which are so close that one can step from the window of one house into that of another on the opposite side of the street.

How eerie it was walking those unlighted streets at midnight, when called out to a sick woman! To fall into an open drain was no uncommon experience, and sometimes one barely escaped from a shower of refuse, flung from an upper window by some thoughtless housewife; but except for a broken collar-bone, and a few minor mishaps, though there was certainly danger around, it never came near; God's protection was always sufficient.

Most of the flat-roofed houses adjoin, and at times there are exciting chases after thieves from roof-top to roof-top. In winter the roofs are popular, with the full blaze of the warm sun, but in summer the cool darkness of the lower courtyard is sought, or sometimes, in the richer houses, a cellar is built, some twenty feet below ground, to evade the fierce heat of 125 degrees Fahrenheit, or more.

The main street or " Gossip House," as it is called, teems with a mass of different peoples from all parts of Central Asia. It is a gay street, with well-stocked fruit shops filled with the luscious grapes and pomegranates from Kabul, and the plums, apricots, and peaches of the Frontier.

The wood shops add their quota of colour, with their brightly painted bed-legs, wedding kists, milk churns, bowls, and enamelled toys. There are other shops, with red Swati blankets, blue puggrees, gold-braided caps, and pretty muslins of every shade for the women's heads. Dyed silks of many colours are hung out to dry, their bright tints mingling with the gleaming rays of gold radiating from the burnished copper vessels shining in the sun.

It is a noisy city with so many people carrying on their trades in the open street. The brass vessels are being hammered out, wood is sawn, palm rope is beaten soft to be made into chuplies ; and there is the clip-clip of sugar cane being cut up into convenient lengths for chewing. Beggars are droning out their incessant wail of " Oh, Believers, one anna in the Name of God ! " The Azan, or Call to prayer, sounds from Moslem mosques and the beating of gongs is heard from Hindu temples. Vendors are shouting their wares at the top of their voices, and tonga drivers are scolding and swearing their way along through the seething mass of camels, donkeys, and men, most of them quite oblivious of the constant cry of " Escape ! Escape ! " until the horse is actually upon them. Here and there in a tea-shop, an old cracked gramophone is blaring out an Eastern love song, men are fighting, children shrieking, babies yelling. There are ceaseless sounds of talking, rejoicing, wailing, praying, quarrelling, till darkness falls.

There are other voices, inarticulate yet insistent, to be recognized by those who have ears to hear. The cry of the oppressed for justice, the cry of needy ones for light and life, the cry of the lonely for love and for God.

And the smells ! One recognizes the sweetness of the

jasmine wreaths dripping with fresh water, the attar of roses, the pungent smell of asafœtida, the fumes of the bubbling hookah, the acrid smoke of the dung-cakes burning in the fire, the horrible smell of skins drying in the sun, the effluvia of camels and other animals, and the unmistakable odour of unwashed man and uncared-for drains.

Such a mixed crowd of people! "So many that one would think that never one had died."* Mongols, Turkis, Usbegs, and Bokharis from far-off Russian Turkestan; Chitralis and Swatis from the mountain heights of the Northwest; Persians and Afghans from their native countries; the proud, fierce, independent Border folk; and the Jews who, as restless wanderers, yet await their home.

"Only as souls I see the folk thereunder,
Bound who should conquer, slaves who should be kings!"

Conquerors they look, these people filling the bazaars of Peshawar. Fair, strong, straight, and unafraid, many of them showing marks of their descent from God's ancient people. The Peshawaris have been tamed to a certain semblance of respect for law and order; but those from across the Border bow to no master. Yet all are slaves to passion and lust, and all their lifetime are subject to bondage, though they realize it not.

In the centre of the city the money-lenders sit cross-legged before their piling heaps of coin, changing money for the merchants from across the Border. Near-by is a synagogue where the Jewish families, who trade with Kabul in Persian carpets and expensive skins, so much in demand in the West, meet for worship. There, written on fine white skin, is the Hebrew text of the Pentateuch, the "Roll of the Book" so reverently listened to on the Sabbath but understood only with the help of the Persian text written in the Hebrew script. "Moses from generations of old hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath."

* Pushtu proverb.

It is a picturesque scene to watch the caravans from Kabul with their mile-long stream of camels tied nose to tail, and the medley of men, women, children, dogs, and donkeys arriving at the Bajaori Gate, most of them weary, dusty, and hungry after the two-hundred-mile march.

The advance party of men will have arrived a few days earlier and will be found already comfortably ensconced on beds in the serai. Here they are either sleeping, or drinking green tea from small china bowls, or pulling at the bubbling hookah and cheerfully exchanging news and picking up information in the roundabout way of the East. Of course, the Mullah of the party has the biggest bed and the warmest quilt—in fact, the best of everything!

What a scramble it is when the long strings of camels file into the serai! Such grunting, such shouting, such pushing and jostling, such swearing and cursing! The merchants of Peshawar have been expecting the caravan, and almost before the tired camels have bumped themselves to the ground they are surrounded by a babbling crowd, each one trying to outdo the other and make a better bargain. The rough old Ghilzai is nearly pulled in pieces by them all, but he stands his ground, for he is not easily to be outdone.

Bargaining in the East is an art, an essential, as well as a most enjoyable, pastime. In former days, the reckoning was always by scores. (A score is two feet held out, toes pointing to the sky, and two hands with fingers outstretched!)

One clever prospective buyer has seized the Ghilzai by the hand and under the heavy posteen coat is carrying on his bargaining. The Peshawari gives two squeezes, signifying two score of rupees. No, this is not nearly enough! The Kabuli nearly crushes the townsman's hand with four hefty grips. Soon they agree on two and a half score. Then comes the fight over the units and two fingers are clasped. But the camel man will not accept that; he stands out for four. After some time, and some more squeezes, the sale

is duly clinched without a word being spoken: six rupees less three score, or four above two and a half score, and both parties are satisfied.

Soon all is quiet as the tired travellers join their friends in a well-earned rest, before the coming of the morrow with all its bustle and excitement.

But times are changing in the unchanging East. Nowadays, instead of the grunting and burbling of the dignified camel, one hears the unmusical blare of heavy motor lorries, busily trading between Afghanistan and India.

There were many disturbing things during early days in Peshawar. Life was neither dull nor monotonous. There was the Jalianwala Bagh incident which led to such high feeling and finally the surrounding of the city by troops and guns and the demand that the instigators of the riots be given up to the authorities. There was the unwanted visit of a British royal Prince which terminated precipitately by his being insulted and stormed out of the city. There was the Third Afghan War, which resulted in Afghanistan's independence. Later, came the Red Shirt Movement, the Ahrars, and the Congress.

It was exciting to live in Peshawar in those days, to see the flares go up at night, to hear the crackle of firing and the fighting. But the most terrifying sound of all was that of the angry mob marching through the streets to incite to more hatred and violence.

But for Bibi and her companion in their unpretentious house in the heart of the City there was no danger. There were several times when, in the bazaar, the latter had to be hustled into a dark corner of some shop and told to remove her hat and wait until the crowd had surged by.

"You need have no fear," they all said. "You belong to us; it is the Government we are up against!"

Once a Sikh pushed her into a corner and kindly stood in front to hide her with his six-foot burly person as the mob seethed past in a narrow alley. But, surrounded by the Angel Guard and many mercies, for her there was absolute safety.

III

LIFE IN PESHAWAR CITY

" Blessed be the Lord : for he hath shewed me
his marvellous kindness in a walled city."
—*Psalm* 31, 21

THE MISSION HOSPITAL was a fruitful place for gaining experience, making friends and getting invitations to villages. It was not always easy to preach, for most were taken up with their own affairs, some were opposed to the message, some were bored and indifferent, and some absolutely, blankly dense ! The rich did not know that they had need of anything, and so it was the poor, as of old, who gave the most encouraging response.

But the Seed was daily sown. One dared not withhold one's hand, not knowing which would prosper, either this or that ; and when one saw the promise of any fruit, oh, with what joy one welcomed it ! Among the crowds who came were all sorts of people, but if among a score there was even one touched for Eternity, how well worth-while it was !

Opposite one doctor's table was the verse :

" Peace, perfect peace—by thronging duties pressed ?
To do the will of Jesus—this is rest ! "

And it might be that her unfailing patience among that pushing, noisy crowd was also a way of preaching. All were needy, all were sinful, most were heart-weary and sad, but in other ways they differed. Some, as they said of themselves, " had not a thought besides their stomachs " ; others had eyes filled only with the world ; while still others were so overburdened with care and trouble that they could in no wise lift themselves up.

It was interesting to see arrivals at the hospital gate. The poor came on foot, carrying many bundles and babies. Some-

times a woman had on her head a flat grass-plaited basket containing two babies huddled together. Others travelled from the villages on buffalo, or camel, or donkey, or on a bed borne by four. The richer City women would squeeze themselves into a small litter twenty-six by forty-eight inches and about thirty inches in height, sitting cross-legged with head bowed, and tightly closed in with heavy curtains. The very rich and modern might come by tonga covered in front and behind with a sheet.

The hospital courtyard filled up early. Peshawar was beginning to learn that first come was first served and that no distinction between rich and poor was observed. This extraordinary custom, so foreign to them, was being very unwillingly learned by the rich, influential patients. Did birth, then, count for nothing? Of what use was money if it could not procure benefits? Of course, there were ways. The watchman at the door had a palm always open and ready to be greased, and the Mohammedan workers inside were willing to help for a small concession. But the foreigners were impossible!

One day, some opulent Hindus, rustling in rich silks and satins and carrying an enormous basket of fruit, came into the waiting-hall. Evidently they were the wives and daughters of successful lawyers, or contractors, or money-lenders. Of course, they could have called the doctor to their home, but that would have meant a fee. Here in the hospital they could get for one anna all the treatment they needed.

The blue trousers of the older woman were of such heavy satin that they could have stood by themselves, and the upper shirt of bright mauve was almost covered with gold braid. Over her head and shoulders she wore a diaphanous silk shawl bordered with an intricate embroidery of a flower pattern. This served to hide the massive gold jewellery with which she was bedecked and the mark on her forehead denoting which particular Hindu god she worshipped. It also sheltered her powdered face from all too inquisitive male eyes. The

tap-tap of her heelless shoes was self-conscious and arrogant, as befitted the wife of wealth. The others were attired in much the same fashion, the different colours of their clothes suggesting a bright guldasta.

" This is all for you," they said, putting the heavy basket down so that the luscious grapes, pomegranates, oranges, and bananas could be seen. They were set out with cool loquat leaves, jasmine garlands and gold leaf. Many appreciative thanks were bestowed and then the evangelist continued, saying :

" Now we will sing the hymn beginning, ' Jesus Christ is the Saviour of my life '."

" Yes, but this morning we are very hurried and must see the doctor at once."

It was reiterated, as it was daily, that " even though the flour mill may be owned by your father, yet you must go in turn ! "*

" But our husbands are outside, and the tongas are waiting. You must let us go ! "

" Bibi, see these poor village women. They rose before light to come to the hospital for treatment. They will not be able to get home till the evening meal. They have been sitting here for an hour already. Don't you think it only fair that they should go first ? "

One contemptuous glance and a loud sniff at the simple women, sitting in their tattered clothes with their many babies on the ground, answered the foolish remark. But even that made no impression. Still, the ladies were told to await their turn. At last, with an exasperated snarl, they cried : " For what, then, do you think we brought that big, expensive basket of fruit to you ? "

It was explained that fruit was very gratefully received for the patients in hospital but that the workers did not accept gifts for themselves, and the remark was added : " Of course,

* Pushtu proverb.

if you feel it is being wasted you had better take it back again ! "

With grunts and snorts of disgust and annoyance, the large basket was lifted, and, with a disapproving rustle of silks and satins and the tinkle of bangles and anklets, the arrogant ladies pushed rudely past the other patient patients and jostled noisily out, to the amusement and amazement of the rest of the company.

The first two years in Peshawar were spent in the luxurious bungalow given over to the missionaries in the Gorkhatri, the highest part of the city, which contained a spacious garden and also housed the headquarters of the City police and the fire brigade. It was surrounded by a high wall and the gates were shut at night.

It was not long, however, before the writer realized that it was not possible for purdah women to come to the bungalow ; and so, with great difficulty and not a little trepidation, a small house in the heart of the City was hired. It was so small that the bath had to be used in the passage after the household had retired for the night. It was neither very water-tight nor air-tight but, as the old philosopher said :

" I gladly make a garret do,
And where there comes a chink or hole
A bit of heaven squeezes through ! "

It was open house to all women where they could feel quite at home, which they could not do in the Western-arranged drawing-rooms of the bungalow, with men-servants about.

Never before in Peshawar City had a foreign woman lived outside police-protected areas, and it was strictly censured by Government Officials and even by the other missionaries. But the venture was made by faith and was never regretted.

That first little mud house will always have sacred memories. Mirman Jan and her companion had many happy times there. On cold winter evenings, the charcoal brazier

would be brought down from the roof where the cooking was done, and all would gather around it. Very often there were other women guests and sometimes near-by neighbours would drop in. One of Hole's beautiful pictures would be shown, the story told, and then a very simple prayer offered. Then all would chat; perhaps one would tell a Pathan story, invariably either a murder story or a love story, generally both; another would oblige with a song, topical matter always being introduced *ad lib.* Different customs would be discussed, or the gossip of the day would be rehearsed.

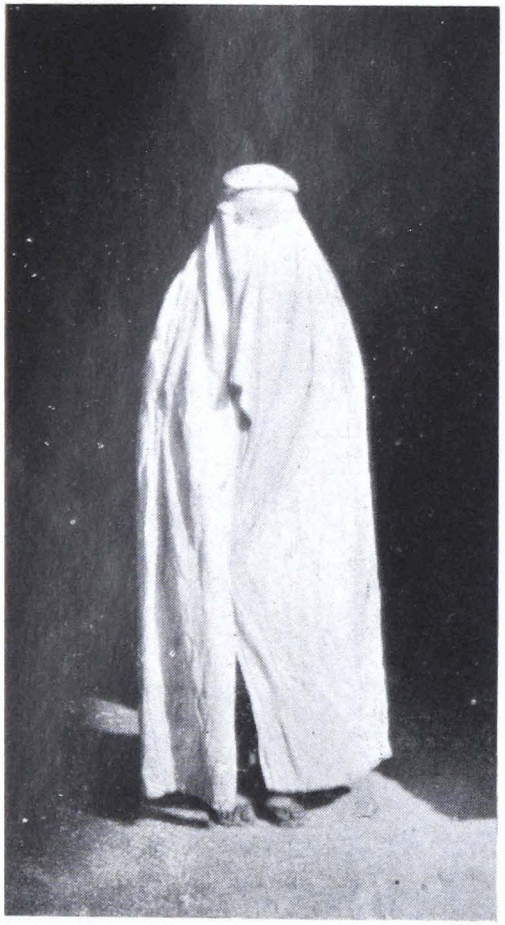
"A calf has been born with two heads: don't you want to see it? You have only to pay one farthing!"

"A man was murdered in the next street last night and the woman's ornaments torn out of her ears and nose and from her fingers!"

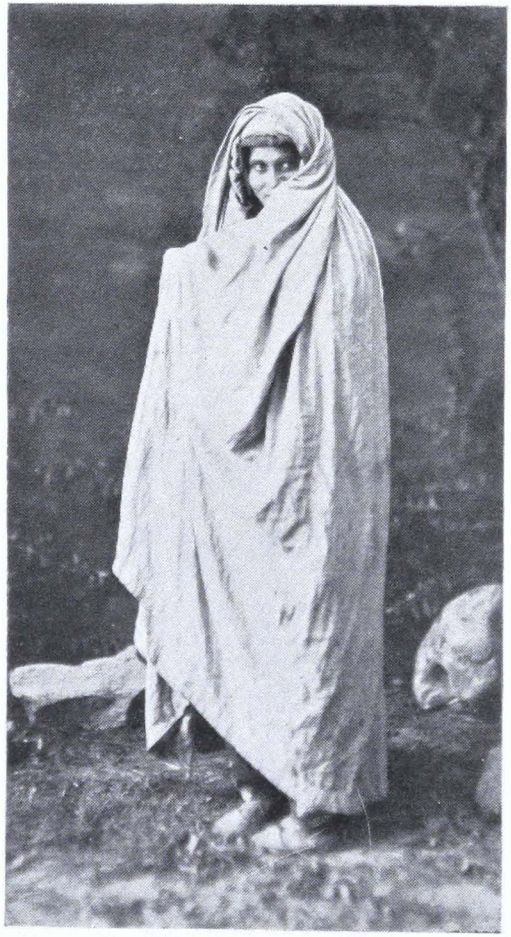
"Mirman Jan had an offer of marriage to-day in the bazaar; the man wanted a good strong woman to cook for him. She answered, 'who gets me gets my four boys and adopted daughter also!' So he turned off, muttering, 'It is true there is no rose which has not for its companion a thorn.'"

Fatima asks with relish to go to see her uncle to-morrow. "He has just been sentenced to be hanged, and I would love to go and see him in prison!"

Many were the visitors who would stroll in at any odd time and for many different reasons. Poor Piari came when her husband died. She had been a dancing girl from the Bazaar and he one of the richest khans of Charsadda. It had been a real love match, and very touching were the flowery Persian letters he used to write to her. But he was gone, as were also her nice home and all the friends. Now a case was filed to try to defraud her of his big fortune. Her friend received her with a big Pathan hug and, with her arms around her, tried to tell her of the One Who could comfort. She sat up.



" Some are still in burkhas "



[R. B. Holmes

" Some are beginning to peep out."

" Some with openly uncovered face "

(Page 17)

" Babo, don't talk to me of Jesus. I came here to see you, because I love you ; but I hate your religion ! "

Another day, an Adam Khel woman came from the Kohat Pass. She was going to shop in the bazaar and wanted to leave her baby where she knew it would be safe.

One day, pretty little Tajo appeared with a bulky bundle from which a mass of silver bangles, anklets, rings, ear-rings, toe rings and other sorts of jewellery tumbled out. She wanted to borrow some money from her friend and would leave all this as security.

Sometimes they would hear the town-crier going round with his drum, giving out announcements. Perhaps it was a lost child for whose recovery eight annas were promised as a reward ; perhaps it was warning the people about another innovation of the hated British Raj. Had they not already broken the woman's purdah on the roof-tops by flying aeroplanes over them ? Had they not tried to inoculate the people with Christianity, pretending that it kept plague and cholera away ? This starting of Infant Welfares, too, what was it but putting heavier burdens on the poor man—more children to clothe, more mouths to feed ? Or perhaps it was a new tax, draining India of its gold, as a goat is milked, to pour it into the pockets of the Sirkar sitting in their armchairs in Whitehall, as Pundit Nehru had warned them.

Sometimes there would be a wedding party, with its brilliant petrol lamps hired for the occasion. Khuttak men would be flinging themselves about and firing from their hips, their long bobbed hair flying out at a right angle from their heads in a mad dance, accompanied by the deafening banging of many drums. These would surround the bridegroom, who was seated on a horse and covered from head to feet with jasmine garlands like a veil, the horse gaily caparisoned with scarlet satin trappings.

Sometimes it would be a funeral, the corpse carried on a bed borne by four and hidden with a bright red silk cover,

flat for a man but raised on a basketwork cage for a woman.

Sometimes even after the door was shut at sundown there were interruptions, but " if you keep camels you must build your doorways high ! "* It might be a call to a midwifery case, or some visitors arriving by the late train. Before coming down to unlatch the door, Mirman Jan would throw up the wooden shutters and lean out of the unglazed window to ask who was there.

One evening it was Khalim Ullah's little boy to say his mother had died. Poor, foolish Khalim Ullah ! He had refused to have help for his wife, choosing rather to pay heavily for charms at different shrines and for women to come in and blow prayers and incantations over the patient. All was of no avail—she had gone on her last, long trek ; and now the little son had come to ask if their friend would kindly lend a lantern so that they could keep the " wake " that night.

Another night, quite late, a tremendous knocking was heard from next door ; it must be something very urgent, surely. Most of the household were wrapped in heavy and noisy slumber, but the one awake went up to the roof and opened the connecting door. Mansuma Jan tripped lightly in.

" What, shut up so early ? "

" Yes," severely, " it is getting on for midnight ; it is not early at all ! But is there anything wrong ? "

" Oh, no, it is just that my uncle is going to the Durbar to-morrow and he was wondering if you could lend him a gold safety pin for his tie ! "

Walking through the streets used to be an unpleasant experience at first, until Peshawar got used to it ; but after some time one found it difficult to get along because of the many friends who stopped to speak. Mirman Jan would be left at home and her friend would sally forth, greeted by many shopkeepers as she passed, praising their goods and remarking

* Pushtu proverb.

how cheap prices were to-day. A man rushes up to tell her how his sick wife passed the night; some Afridi women put their thumbs to their foreheads, fingers outspread, with a pious prayer for long life, or riches, or honour. "May you never be tired!" they call. "May you never be poor!' "May God not lose you!" "May your face never be yellow (blackened)!" "May it be well before you!" "May God be your Companion!" and many other such wishes. A purdah woman, peering through the little lattice-work window of her burkha, seizes her in an affectionate hug, quite unrecognizable until for one brief, stuffy minute she takes her under her very dirty burkha.

"Oh, Babo, do come and see us! My daughter wants you so much!"

"Why can't you come to my house?"

"Oh, tauba, tauba! We are sufed-posh. She dare not even cross the threshold of our home. Only I go out, because we are so poor and I am old, and, besides, no one can recognize me in this burkha!"

Now a dirt-cart is passing—oh, odoriferous Peshawar! But a small boy, with a charcoal fire in a pan on which he is throwing spelani seeds, is coming along, and he, for the moderate charge of one farthing, will be delighted to blow the smoke over you. This, though perhaps not thoroughly removing the smell of the revolting contents of the dirt-cart, yet gives you a different one and insures immunity from the Evil Eye and all other ills!

Driving in a tonga, though shattering to the nerves, is most amusing. Now a crowd blocks the way. Perhaps it is an auction of some old clothes, or a Kabuli trying to swindle over a horse deal, or two Kochis fighting, or a prisoner in chains bidding a fond farewell to his relatives before disappearing into jail. Suddenly, down swoops a vulture, four feet from wing tip to wing tip, having spotted some delicious bit of offal, seizes it, and up into the blue again before one realizes what the commotion was. The tonga presses through.

There is a snake-charmer on one side, and on the other a woman beating her small child with her shoe ; and all the way along are beggars begging, buyers bargaining, salesmen shouting their wares, old friends greeting each other, and all at the top of their voices !

The tonga driver is an artist in apt titles and expressions. " O man-with-coat, have you neither eyes nor ears ? "

" O maternal uncle of the asses, you are the greatest one among them ! May you become blind ! "

" O Kabuli," addressing a man with a long string of camels, " take your carrion out of my way ! "

" O great Maharajah," to a wretched tramp, sitting in the middle of the roadway catching lice in his clothes, " be pleased to remove yourself ! "

" O long-bearded one, escape ! "

" O paternal-uncle-of-the-waterpots, why do you not look in front ? "

" O chicken-man," to a man who carries on his head a crate made of willow and banr containing two dozen or so of cackling, struggling cocks and hens, " save yourself ! "

" O son-of-a-pig, unbeliever," to a fellow tonga man, " may you be lost ! May your family become hideous ! May they die early ! "

" O tailless donkey, may God uproot you ! May you become a corpse ! "

And so on, all the way along, an endless stream of jokes and curses !

IV

THE STORY OF BEGAM JAN

" God is able to deliver."—*Daniel* 3, 17

SOMETIMES the path thrilled with the unexpected and one was guided safely through dangerous moments. One day in 1919, Begam Jan, a pretty little Pathan girl, was in sore trouble. She had been given in marriage to a man in the village simply because he was the first one to offer cash, and he got her cheaply. Not until afterwards did she and her father realize how cruel and worthless the man was.

One day he had threatened her life and Begam Jan felt she could bear no more of his brutality. At that time there was no missionary at Mardan, but she remembered Doctor Holst, " the Deaf Doctor," and her helpers and their kindness and love. Begam Jan had heard that one of them was living at Peshawar and it was the only refuge she knew. Secretly borrowing some money from a kind neighbour, she fled the house in the dark but found there was no train until morning. She found an empty shed, in a corner of which she cowered all night in terror of her life. Whenever footsteps passed, or a dog barked, she held her breath until silence once more reigned.

It was a night of horror but, " though the cock crows not, yet dawn will come,"* and God was watching over and caring for Begam Jan. After many dark hours dawn came, and she dashed off to the station, catching the early train, which was just ready to start. On arrival in Peshawar, she found her way with difficulty to the Mission Hospital. A young girl travelling alone could not but arouse suspicion.

* Pushtu proverb.

" Have you a relation there ? "

" Are you ill ? "

" Why are you going there ? "

" Where is your husband ? "

Many were the questions with which Begam Jan was plied as she inquired the way. At last, she arrived and asked for her friend.

" Here is one, the Doctor."

" No, that is not she."

" Here is another one, the Nurse."

" No, neither is she the one I seek ; there must be another."

Then she learned that the only other one was out at a village and would not be back until evening. " There is no use your waiting," they told her, " you had better go home and come another day. Hospital is now shutting ! "

But she begged only to be allowed to sit in a corner in the safety of the hospital walls until her friend returned. All day long she waited and when at last her friend came, she found Begam Jan nearly fainting from anxiety, fear, and want of food. She was taken home to the little house, and there she poured out her story to sympathetic ears.

It was a happy month they spent together, in spite of stormy visits from Begam Jan's father, husband, and mother-in-law, a Malik and a Mullah. Later, her little sister, Hussein Jan, joined them. Then one day, came the dreaded summons : Begam Jan's husband claims her and comes for her to-morrow !

In a country where women are " less than the dust," what could she hope for ? Her friend immediately hurried to the Cantonment to find out if there could be any protection for her. She appealed first to the Deputy Commissioner, but there was no help to be found there. Then to the Superintendent Missionary, who suggested consulting a friend of his ; but the friend could not be found. Then to the City Magistrate, but he was out playing golf. The Super-

intendent of Police was found, after the third attempt, and his advice was to find the City Magistrate. Back she went to the Missionary to ask him to accompany her. It was then after nine o'clock in the evening. She found him in front of a large dish of walnuts which he was cracking and enjoying. Yes, he would go with her, but, first, he must finish his walnuts. It seemed a long time before the bottom of the bowl was sighted; his visitor slyly pocketed a few of the nuts to lessen the pile, although she too was anxious to eat them. At last it was finished, and, the last one eaten, he rose, and they started off.

The City Magistrate was most sympathetic. "But," he said, "in this country all we can do is to bind the husband over not to ill-treat his wife. Wives are the rightful property of their husbands! I advise you to get on the right side of the Policeman in charge of the City, so that he will make the security as heavy as possible."

Just before midnight, Begam Jan heard the reassuring sound of her friend's footsteps, and the two women, realizing how vain is the help of man, committed the matter to the Lord.

Next day, Majido, the husband, arrived.

"Little Sister, are you afraid?"

"No," she replied, "when with you not a hair of my head trembles; I know Jesus will help me!"

A few days later, in Court, the husband was bound over for eight hundred rupees not to ill-treat her, and Begam Jan was carried off back to Mardan.

It was about three weeks later that there came a thrilling bit in the path. As of old the Angel spake to Philip, guiding him to the desert to help the unknown Eunuch, so He speaks still to His servants. Mirman Jan had brought in the morning tea, and her companion was just about to begin when the word of God came to her heart, "Begam Jan needs you! Go at once!"

Leaving the tea untouched, the two women quickly locked

the house-door and dashed off, Mirman Jan all the time questioning why they should rush off so urgently, and strongly protesting that it was too late to get to the station in time to catch the morning train. But it had been delayed that morning, so they got it, Mirman Jan remarking with a smile, " I have done this journey a score of times, but this is the first time I have ever had a ticket ! " She was still in the dark over the mysterious urge of the journey, but when they arrived in the vicinity of Begam Jan's father's house, they learned that the night before Majido had ill-treated and beaten his wife so unmercifully that the neighbours had interfered to save her life. " Who told you about it ? " they asked, " Who sent you here to-day ? "

" It was God," was the answer, " how else could we have known ? " And Mirman Jan then realised for the first time that God's Hand was in this.

As they asked for details, a great crowd gathered round. Why had this foreigner come, just at this juncture ? How had she known anything about it ? And what did she think she was doing poking into their private family affairs ? True, they had intervened to prevent murder, else the Government might have made trouble, but what was a wife-beating ? Had not a man the right to treat his wife (his property for which he had paid) as he wished ? It was a risky thing for anyone to take the side of a wife against her husband ; no man could allow that ; they each had one wife or more of their own. It was not a nice position for the two women, surrounded by scores of Mohammedan husbands. The crowd was increasing at an alarming rate ; and the sullen Majido meant trouble .

" No, you cannot see her ! " he said, " The Khan, in whose house she is, is sleeping and cannot be disturbed."

" But I will not leave this place until I do. If necessary, I will call in the help of the police ! "

At this Mirman Jan whispered : " We had better go, for they are angry at your coming. The police will not interfere in a case like this."

A woman is only " a chattel, a drudge and a slave." A man buys her and can do with her what he wishes. No Mohammedan man would think of taking a woman's side against her husband. Certainly, they did feel very small and helpless before that big crowd getting dangerously angry. They had no one to look to for help but to God Who had led them there.

Mirman Jan's companion pulled out her watch, saying: " We will wait five minutes ! "

Those five minutes ticked away terribly slowly, but, just before the last one, there was a movement in the crowd and they saw poor little Begam Jan, covered with a sheet, being hustled along. She was a sorry sight, clothes torn and stained with blood, face swollen with crying, and body black and blue with bruises. The whole party congregated in the courtyard of Majido's house, and he was faced with the necessity of deciding the matter. He thought of the security, a big sum. No, he could not lose so much.

" I do not want her," he cried. " She is worthless ! "

And so, in front of the whole company, he picked up three small stones and, after the Islamic method of divorce, threw each stone one by one at his wife, repeating: " I divorce thee, I divorce thee, I divorce thee ! "

The matter was settled. " She is delivered ! " everyone cried, and Begam Jan and her father and some others wept quiet tears of thankfulness.

Later, Begam Jan became the happy wife of a Christian Pathan, and her family have all been brought up to know the Lord, Who delivered her in her great distress.

V

A PEEP BEHIND THE VEIL

I looked for some to take pity, but there was none."—*Psalm* 69, 20

THE MENTAL sufferings of the women are worse than the physical. Poor Zershi! she knew that she was failing as a wife; she could not produce a son, so of what use was she? One day, her husband told her to bring some wood and accompany him to a certain Shrine. She gathered a bundle and, tying it up, put it on her head; and they set out, he leading and she following behind. On arrival at the Shrine, she was told to sit down and wait outside while her husband went in.

After waiting for about three hours, Zershi heard footsteps. Seeing a strange man approaching, she pulled her black cloth closer round her face and was surprised and frightened when he stopped and spoke to her.

" Come along, Woman ! " he said.

" I am waiting for my husband," she replied.

" Husband ! " he laughed, " I am he ! I have just bought you ! "

And so, by his whim, Zershi's husband, home, and whole life were changed, and she had just to accept it without a word. It was her fate !

Sahib Jan once asked her friend to attend her niece when her time came, and continued : " But she asks me to beg you that, if it is a girl baby, you will not let it live ! She has already asked her father to promise this, but he refuses and has told her to call you ! "

" But why does she not want her baby to live ? "

" She says she cannot bear to bring a girl into the world to face such a life of suffering as she has had ! "

Oh, what a message there is for such, of the One Who loves and cares, and of the joy and peace He gives to those who trust Him !

It was a dark, moonless night. Sabra and her companion were wakened by someone banging on the street door. They threw on some clothes and went down. It was a neighbour of theirs from the opposite side of the street, with a baby in her arms, and some other women with her.

" Oh, Sister, look at this ! My own baby, my precious one, and I have killed him ! With my own hands I have killed my baby ! "

It was difficult to make out anything for her crying, but they soon grasped the pathetic story. The baby had been ailing for some days ; that evening, when the husband came home, he demanded his food, and she had to leave off nursing the baby to attend to his wants. The child could not stop whimpering and the man was annoyed.

" Stop that noise ! " he shouted.

His wife, knowing his violent temper, quickly got some opium and stuffed it into the child's mouth. Alas ! it was an overdose and soon the wee thing was quite comatose. There was still life in him, so they all rushed off to the hospital and, though it was long after midnight, the kind Doctor got up and did all she could. But it was too late, the little life was ended, and they had to return sadly home with the body. There the father was probably sleeping happily, without any tiresome twinges of regret or remorse.

It seems that without the knowledge of Christ there can be no true, unselfish love. There is lust and passion in abundance, and pleasure in the charms of dainty, laughing children, and ambition for them. But of self-sacrificing love little is shown, by the male population at any rate. As one gets below the surface of things disillusionment comes.

One such came in the passing of Khanmaro, a poor little Afridi child of twelve years, unattractive and sick, but her utter loneliness and discomfort called out all the writer's compassion.

The child's father and aunt appeared willing to do anything in their power to save her life. They had brought her down from Tirah with this object, and Nurse and her companion daily visited her and did what they could to ease her sufferings.

Daily Khanmaro was carried out of the stuffy, windowless, smoke-blackened room and dumped on to a string bed in the Serai courtyard among the buffaloes and chickens, and other children playing and quarrelling all around. She seemed to have nothing of what the West considers essential to comfort.

As they visited her day by day, Nurse and her companion tried to teach her something of God's love, but she was a strict Moslem and would have nothing of it. Little by little, however, love won, and one day, to their surprise, after Nurse had tended and bandaged her and they were going away, Khanmaro caught hold of the writer's dress and, pulling her down, whispered: " Tell me what you said about Jesus, I want to learn it now ! "

She was very simply taught that He loved her and wanted to save her. Who can tell how much she understood ? But it made her happier and brought a new light to her eyes. That last night, as she lay propped up by the wood fire, since she could not get her breath in a recumbent position, she remembered it all, and the last thing she said in her husky voice was : " Jesus loves me and saves me from hell ! "

Next day, her two friends resolved that they would walk out with her father and aunt to the burying-place. There, while the men were digging the grave, they waited with the aunt, who, as well as the father, seemed dazed and grief-stricken. They sat by her on the hot ground and tried to suggest some comfort ; but she broke in, saying : " Oh, you don't understand a bit ! I have plenty of other nieces ! The thing is that we sold Khanmaro for six hundred rupees and, although the money has not yet been paid, we have spent it in advance. Now what hope is there for us ? Since the girl is dead the man will never pay, and how are we to face our creditors ? "

How often, as each newcomer arrives to help in the mourning over some death, the loud cryings and wild beating of breasts seem but a mockery to one who has known the treatment in life towards her who has now passed away ! Certainly Pathans are capable of love, even to the death, but it is mostly of a very earthly character, and the loss of a small child, especially should it be a girl, seems, except to its mother, to be generally of little account. There are so many of them. Some little daughters are dubbed with such significant names as " Don't Come," " Enough Girls," " Louse," " Worthless," " Evil Spirit," " Ugly," " Hunchback," and so on ; while boys are given titles such as " King-of-the-World," " Turquoise-of-my-Heart," " Flower-of-the-Pomegranate," " Knight-of-the-Happy Heart," " Slave-of-the-Prophet," and so forth.

Gulmarjan's tragic fate will never be known. When she first came, she was the daintiest wee thing of thirteen years old. She had been sold four times already, and one day her mother came to tell how this last husband was tired of her and would sell her cheaply. If he could not find a purchaser, however, he would throw her down the well because, after having been passed from man to man, she had been ruined and there was no hope of her being able to bear children.

The writer, who lived in what used to be known as the Cave of Adullam, was moved with pity. How could one resist trying to help these unwanted ones, even though it meant breaking the law of the land !

" If you will bring her here," she said, " I will raise the money he is asking, but she must live with me at least until she is of age. I know you would only sell her again, when you got the chance ; and are not all Pathan husbands the same ? "

" True," said the mother, " and she would be happy with you."

Her friend turned back to her writing, and Gulmarjan's mother went up to the roof to have a gossip with Amro. A short while later, hearing steps on the stairs, the writer called

out a good-bye and said she would be ready to receive the waif whenever she came. The mother came slowly into the room.

" No," she said, " I am not bringing her. I have decided otherwise ! "

What had happened was later learned. Amro and some other women, hearing of the plan, were horrified.

" Do anything but that ! " they cautioned. " Think if she were to become a Christian ! That would be a greater shame and a bigger calamity than to be killed out in the village by her husband ! "

Oh, how bound these poor folk are all their lives by cruel customs, by inhuman reasonings, by absurd public opinion, by a devastating religion which, while claiming equality for women in theory, in reality ignores all the rights they should have !

One day, when Mirbaz had gone off to the Post Office, the writer, having heard a rumour of a new shop in the City where English bread and buns could be procured, started off on a voyage of discovery. She found herself in a dark street with high houses and windows covered with chics opening out to the street front, which struck her as queer in a Moslem city. A bright, bold eye suddenly peered out at her from behind a curtain, and then she realized where she was. At the same time, a friend passing by advised her not to linger in the vicinity.

The bright-eyed woman's profession is a recognized one in the East, and a lucrative one, good dancers getting very well paid. Some girls of good family join it, but never again can they return to their homes ; and, unless they marry, their old age is tragically lonely. Sometimes a big Khan in British India will marry one of these graceful, attractive women, and the marriage often turns out a success. A woman with plenty of character may become a power and an influence, not only in the Khan's house but in the village as well.

Poor Khurshed, one of these, was not so fortunate. An Afridi was attracted by her and offered to marry her. She gladly consented and went off with him across the hills to

Tirah. At first she was welcome in his house, and her sparkling eyes, blackened with antimony, rouged cheeks, curled hair, pretty clothes and lively ways made the country women feel dull and boorish in comparison. But suspicion began to rise and rumours to fly round; and then the truth came out. A woman of the bazaar! Her husband could do nothing but sell her to a man in another part of the country who had not heard the rumour. He was glad to get her off his hands, although he got less than he paid for her.

Within a month the same thing happened, and again Khurshed was sold to another unsuspecting, would-be husband. Then it occurred again and again, and she was passed on from man to man during that awful year, each time a little cheaper. Finally, after being sold for the tenth time and unable to bear it longer, she ran away back again to the comparative shelter of the dark street in Peshawar.

Polygamy is not so common now as it was, chiefly for financial reasons, though Islam allows four wives to a man. As for concubines, there need be no limit. Has not woman been created merely to give pleasure to a man? But worse still are those rich khans who, wholly given up to a life of luxurious sensuality, copy the unholy practices of the days of Sodom. Let none think that the description of those without Christ as portrayed in the first chapter of Romans is out of date; for here on the Frontier every detail of it is all too tragically common.

VI

IN THE VILLAGES

"Heavy burdens and grievous to be borne."—*Matthew* 23, 4

THE DAYS were not all spent in the City. Sometimes excursions were made into the district. It was very thrilling, in the quiet of the far-away villages, to be allowed to give the message where it never had been heard before, as when Ahmad Gul took the writer by invitation out to Dilazak. Many came to meet the tonga on the Shubkadr road to show the way across the fields to the village. On arrival, a friendly group of women were found in the courtyard of the farmhouse and, after the first shyness had worn off, they showered questions upon their visitor. They fingered the odd foreign clothes and wanted to know the price per yard of each material. They plucked at a bit of brown stocking, asking if it were skin!

"Are you really a woman? Everyone tells us you are a man in disguise!"

"How many children have you?"

The visitor needed only to put her thumb to her chin and wave her hand in the air to indicate that she owned no bearded one!

"How is it that God has so blessed you that you have no husband?"

"Is it true that Christians are buried upside down?"

"Do they grow tails at the Judgment Day?"

The questions were unending and very quaint. The women have so little in their monotonous lives that the coming of a visitor was like a festival to them. With the giving of medicines began a new shower of questions and comments.

"Is this really a good powder, and should I swallow the paper as well?"

[R. B. Holmes

AFRIDI WOMEN BRINGING IN SUGAR-CANE

" Can you not tell us of a soap by which our skin can become white like yours ? "

At times the dispenser caught remarks about herself.

" Yes, you just drink the medicine, and she does not seem to care whether you are facing Mecca or not, but of course you had better say ' *Bismillah* ' as you do it, to be on the safe side ; otherwise some terrible calamity might overtake you ! "

" Beware," an older woman cautioned, " I have heard that she puts something in the medicines to make women's hearts soft, so that they want to become Christians ! "

" Surely for a headache one should put it up one's nose ; but she says to swallow it ! "

" She says these twelve pills are to be taken for six days, but it stands to reason that if one eats them all at once they are bound to cure one sooner ! "

" Last time, she gave me liniment for my mother's rheumatism, but my child was ill when I returned home, so I gave it to him instead. It did him no good, for he got a violent stomach-ache, and she says it was my fault ! "

Sometimes the pushing, noisy crowd was rather trying, but one had to remember it was their day.

" Why can't you quieten that boy ? We can hear nothing while he is yelling so ! "

" What can we do ? God made him so ! "

Then it was their turn to be questioned, but the answers revealed many tragedies. Pretty Bachbibi of eighteen years of age had been married only five months when her husband was murdered last July. Her life holds little hope of happiness now as they do not re-marry in that part, and a childless widow is of no account. Shahzadgai seemed in great pain and was asked if she often had such bad headaches.

" Oh, always," she replied. " My eyes have hurt ever since I was first married, when my husband, to punish me, used to tie me to the roof by my ankles and swing me head downwards over a fire of burning chilies ! "

Halima asked in a whisper, " Cannot you give me something ?

My husband beats me every day because I have no children ! "

Another woman broke in, " Please, for me also, but it must produce a boy, not a girl ! "

The dispenser was sorry she could not guarantee that !

" Oh, but there is a doctor in Delhi who advertizes pills to ensure the birth of a son at ten rupees per pill. My neighbour ate three and had a beautiful baby boy ! "

Here they were interrupted by an urgent message from a man outside. One glance was enough to show that he came from Tirah.

" You have all sorts of medicines ? Well, I need something to bring on an abortion."

A stern refusal to have anything to do with such a request was the only answer.

" But listen," he urged, " this is a case of necessity. A woman of my house is pregnant and we have just heard that her husband, who has been overseas for the last year, may be home any day. If he finds his wife in this condition he will not only kill her, but the man who led her astray, and his brother who was left in charge of her, and her father who sold her and, if very angry, may kill others in the house also ! If you will help us in this small matter—and what is the life of an unborn child ?—it will save so many lives ! "

The dispenser turned back to the women in the house, sick at heart and feeling utterly helpless before the tragedy and the hopelessness of the lot of these poor women. How futile the giving of a few pills and drugs really seems ! Their need goes so much deeper than bodily ailments.

" O Saviour, they have naught to plead
In earth beneath, or heaven above,
But just their own exceeding need,
And Thine exceeding Love ! "

Poor Faregha, with a double cataract, is condemned to blindness while life lasts because of the purdah system. She was told that she would be cured by an operation.

" Yes," she sighed, " that is all right for men, but it is not

our custom to leave home. My husband will not allow me to come to Hospital ! " He had already married another woman —one who could see to cook his food—and had ceased to trouble about Faregha ; for of what use was she to him now ?

Dilfaroza insisted on having the stethoscope ; to which part of the body it was applied was quite immaterial.

" Last year," she said, " I had it, and it cured me ; I will have no other medicine ! "

One young woman was terribly bruised and hurt. Her husband had beaten her unmercifully because the food was not ready for him when he came in.

" But he is a weak old man and she is big and powerful. Why did she not retaliate and beat him instead ? "

All around heads were shaken, and aside the women whispered, " How little she knows our people ! " To the dispenser who had voiced such an innovation they explained : " Do you not know that if we dared to wink an eyelid when our husbands were angry or were punishing us our lives would be gone ? "

Then an old woman came in with a sore leg, having been pulled around the courtyard by her big toe by an irate daughter-in-law, and many other patients of all sorts and sizes. Then came the thrill of giving the Good News to those who had never heard !

Before leaving the village, the dispenser was dragged into a house nearby to see another patient. As she had surmised, it was a man. He had a wound on his leg which had been professionally done up with a hospital bandage. She protested against the clean dressings being taken off, but the women worked feverishly at disclosing the wound, whispering to each other, " Don't let her away ! Quick, off with the bandage ! Only let her glance fall upon the sore ! " So, to please them, she gave it a good, long look, hoping that this as well as the hospital treatment would help the cure ! Then the dressings were replaced.

Reluctantly the visitors had to tear themselves away, as the roads were unsafe after sundown. It was a glorious

evening. The loving farewells of the women were still sounding warm in their ears. The men of the household were walking back with them to the road, a Pathan politeness. As they came along the river bank, Ahmad Gul sighted some duck and went off to shoot them with his ever-ready gun. All sat down to wait and the men wanted to know what had been told to the women in the house. The big picture was unfolded and the stalking of the duck forgotten, even by those keen sportsmen, and only the ripple of the Kabul River, as it flowed at their feet in the sunset glow, broke the hush which fell on all as they listened to the Old, Old Story in that far-away corner of the North-West Frontier Province.

"Ah," said one man, "but it is wonderful; there is no story like that!"

> "In the Cross of Christ I glory,
> Towering o'er the wrecks of time;
> All the light of sacred story
> Gathers round its head sublime!"

Only a few days later, very early in the morning, Mirbaz was knocked up by an Afridi who asked if he could bring the writer out to Pachakilli, where his wife Zerdunna was dying. All through the night she had moaned, "Oh, if only my eyes could see my sister before I die!" She was in great distress, and the tragedy of dying far from her beloved Tirah added to her pain and fear. As they drew near the house they saw the great splash of blood on the outer door that showed the inmates knew how seriously ill Zerdunna was; they had sacrificed a fowl—since they were only poor folk—in the hope that the visit of Azrail, the Death Angel, might be averted.

Zerdunna's face lighted up as her friend, stooping under the low doorway, came up to her and knelt on the mud floor, and spoke to her of Jesus. Zerdunna had heard about Him before and knew that He was the only One Who could take away the fear of death and give peace of heart. She had been hung round by charms of all sorts, spells against the Evil Eye, prayers that in the grave she might sit up and answer satis-

factorily when the two Angels of Judgment came to question her, prayers that her spirit might find rest and not haunt those who had wronged her in life. These were mere scraps of paper, on which the Arabic characters were scribbled; so much the more valued, if not more efficacious, if blessed by Kerbela or Mecca! Some were sewn up in cloth or greasy leather, others encased in silver or gold. A wave of cold apprehension swept over the onlookers as Zerdunna took all these off and flung them into a far corner. She had realized that they were of no use. To her friend there was a great thrill of joy as she saw this evidence of a living faith. Only Jesus could save—this was Zerdunna's testimony to those gathered there, a testimony that could never be forgotten.

One did not always meet with a welcome on excursions to villages. One day in autumn the missionary and Mirbaz were invited out to Derhi by a friendly Subhadar Major to stay the night and show the magic lantern. The motor found it hard going on the rough unmetalled road, and almost gave out. Eventually they got there only to find that their host had been called away and his son of twenty was there alone to greet them.

" I am so sorry," he said, " my father has been called away on urgent business, but do stay all the same."

Evidently the father was one whose " bed was in the sky,"* as he so often went off on jaunts! A doll from some kind friend at home was presented to the little daughter of the house, who immediately made off and was not seen again for two hours. Coming back, she confided to the visitor with glowing eyes: " There is not a house in the village that has not seen my doll! They say it has everything except breath! "

The magic lantern was arranged in the Hujra, or Guest-house, to which, of course, only men could come. It was in full swing and there was an attentive audience. Suddenly, a commotion at the end of the big room occurred. A party of Mullahs entered blusteringly and all was immediately

*Pushtu Proverb

in confusion. Nothing could be heard for the deafening row. Mirbaz, the faithful, stood guard over the lantern and the precious slides, while the young Khan seized the preacher by the arm and hauled her, protesting and struggling, out of the crowd and across the courtyard, and pushing her into an empty barn in the pitch darkness, locked the door upon her, and hurried away. She stood listening to the angry shouting across the courtyard and wondered what the outcome would be and whether she would ever see the blue sky again when all at once the memory of the old hymn filled the room :

" Through the long night watches,
May Thine Angels keep
Their bright wings around me,
Watching while I sleep ! "

Was it an echo from the Ivory Palaces, or the prayers of dear ones at home wafted across the miles, or the faithful Angels sweetly fulfilling their ministry ? Whatever it was, it took all fear and anxiety out of the traveller's heart, for she knew that under those sheltering Wings there was perfect security, wherever one was in God's world. Feeling round and finding a wooden bed-stead, strung with rope, leaning up against the wall, she threw herself down on it and, after the excitements of the tiring day, was soon fast asleep.

The young Khan, coming in some two hours later, was surprised to find her sleeping.

" Forgive me for being so rough with you," he said, " but our people are so easily aroused, sometimes acting before thinking and I feared what it might result in. Had my father been here this would not have happened."

He kindly led the way to the living-room, where all the family was collected ; and happy indeed was the evening meal, even at that late hour, round the wood fire in the middle of the room.

" But how was it," they asked her, " that you were not afraid ? You actually went to sleep in spite of that awful turmoil and all that had happened. Even we were afraid here!"

There were some wistful eyes in the farmhouse that night when the secret was told—how one could lie down in peace, knowing that He makes His own to dwell in safety !

One day the writer, taking a friend with her, started out to visit one who had come to love the Lord. They had to pass the " House of the dead," the Mortuary, a necessary building in every village of any size. Both the Civil Surgeon and the Lady Doctor were hurrying towards it.

" A big murder last night," they called out. " Three men and two women ! Won't you come along and see ? All five corpses are lying there ! "

But the gruesome sight did not appeal to them, so they passed on. There was a plague of locusts at the time and the countryside was covered with them. The sky was darkened as if by a heavy snowstorm. So thick were the locusts that it was not possible to see more than a yard or so ahead. They hit one in the face, got entangled in one's clothes, and were crushed at each footstep. The travellers had brought with them some *Kababs* wrapped up in a chupatti. But how was the food to be conveyed to the mouth without swallowing the wretched creatures ? A passer-by helped them solve the dilemma.

" Go on about a mile," he said, " and you will come to a very sacred shrine near the river. There will be no locusts there ! "

There was doubt in their hearts but they proceeded on their way. On arriving at the shrine, they found it was quite an ordinary grave surrounded by a two-foot mud wall. To their amazement, within the boundary of this low wall not a locust was to be seen ; so here they ate their lunch in comfort.

While passing through the village of Taikal sounds of revelry were heard, and they knew it must be either a wedding or a *Sunnat* ceremony. Women and boys were carrying trays on their heads with " portions " for those who could not attend. One small boy had stumbled and fallen, and all the beautiful golden rice and candied peel and sweets were lying in the dust

of the road, but, with the help of some passers-by, the stuff was collected and again heaped on the platters, the recipients being neither the wiser nor the worse for the incident.

They learned that a wedding was in progress and, of course, at such times any or all are welcome. There would be no shortage of food, as the large deks of rice indicated. What would a few extra mouths matter? "A grass fan will not overburden a camel!"* The wedding had been going on already for seven days. The pretty girls in their gay clothes were singing old folk-lore songs and playing games, but the women looked heavy-eyed from want of sleep and tired out from entertaining. Most of the children were quarrelling and shouting to be taken home. A large dish of henna had been freely used and all hands and feet, even those of the smallest infants, were dyed a beautiful, warm brown. The poor little bride-to-be was huddled in a dark corner, dressed in her oldest clothes till the actual ceremony. She had been crying continuously for seven days, as was only proper for a bride. Besides, this, as she knew, was the end of childhood joys and the beginning of her troubles!

It was old Ahmad Gul they were on their way to visit. The old man presented a queer appearance, with a very ragged puggree hanging loosely round his head with ends all over the place, a heavy coat made for somebody else with buttons of various sizes and colours, and a thick muffler filling up all the odd corners; a pair of some Sahib's bright, blue socks, held up by things that probably had been suspenders in their day, and his dirty, loose trousers, once white, were kept together by these also, boots of enormous size, tied or not by bits of tape or string. But one look at his keen old face with the love of Jesus shining in it made one forget all the oddity of dress!

On reaching the village, the visitors were made to remove their shoes or chuplis and sit cross-legged on string beds. After admiring the new grandchild and feeling the elder boy's pulse, they were regaled with very sweet tea in small bowls.

* Pushtu proverb.

Ahmad Gul had a wonderful story to tell them. He had been in great trouble the month before, having been accused of theft. He came into Peshawar, seeking advice from his sporting friend, Colonel Young, but could not find him. He had also written to his other friend, the companion of many expeditions, who was then at Kohat. She at once went to the Superintendent of Police to ask how the old man could be helped; but the Policeman was a youngster and could not be bothered with such trifles and, of course, he did not believe her. What can a woman missionary know about such things? So both Admad Gul's friends had failed him.

It seems as though God very often speaks by dream or vision to the simple souls of these parts. The night that Ahmad Gul heard that he could expect no help he was in great distress. Tossing sleeplessly on his bed in the little dark room out in that far-away village, he suddenly saw One standing by him with flowing white beard and eyes of flame, dressed in a long cloak and with staff in hand.

"Trust in me," He said, "I will deliver thee to-morrow!"

Ahmad Gul looked up. "Lord Jesus," he said, recognizing at once Who had come to his assistance, "I do believe; I know Thou wilt help me!" Then he fell into a quiet sleep.

Next day, full of expectation, he boldly faced his accusers, and his name was completely cleared. "And so now," he continued, "I must follow Jesus! He has delivered me, He is responsible for all, He is my Surety!"

Later, Ahmad Gul came over to Kohat. Mr. Jock Purves introduced him to those of the little church who really love the Lord, and he had a beautiful welcome into the family of God. All were struck by his evident sincerity and simple faith. His old face would shine as he met one after another, counting them as brothers.

"My heart gets bigger and bigger," he said, "as I meet these. I cannot help loving them all! I love Jesus so much that I would like to go and sweep the church or do anything for Him!"

The Sunday before he confessed Christ openly rumours began to get about. One young fellow came up to Ahmad Gul.

" O Luckless One," he said, " what art thou doing giving up Islam and becoming a Christian ? Art thou not ashamed ? "

Next morning early, he appeared again with a group of kindred spirits.

" How much art thou getting to become a Christian ? See," holding out a roll of notes, " if it is money thou needest, here it is, but do not disgrace our religion ! "

In spite of all, however, Ahmad Gul stood up boldly and confessed Jesus as the Son of God and declared his faith in Him only. Afterwards he was given the hand of fellowship and was, as he himself expressed it, " counted in."

VII

LIFE IN THE VILLAGES

" The dark places of the earth are full of . . . cruelty."—*Psalm* 74, 20

How often dolls have played a part in the opening up of homes and the making of friends on the Frontier! And how very greatly they are prized by the little recipients!

Sherin's appreciation was quite touching. The courtyard was very still as she sat in the doorway with the doll in her arms. All the men and boys were out in the fields, the buffaloes were lazily munching at the sweet-smelling clover in the shade of the big ber tree; the pigeons were bowing and cooing to one another; the dogs were lying asleep; and even the flies buzzed drowsily in the heat of midday. Sherin's small sisters were contentedly chewing sugar-cane, every now and then giving a push to the square string cradle swinging from the rafters of the verandah, in which the youngest member of the family was lying, all tightly bound up like a bambino, while their mother slept.

Sherin lifted the corner of her *chaddar* and her beautiful brown eyes grew bigger still as again she gazed on the wonder of a real English doll with fair hair and eyes that opened and shut. Was it really hers? She clasped it closer and, softly rocking to and fro, sang a Pathani lullaby. The doll had arrived the day the " Foreigner " came with their aunt to the village. At first Sherin was frightened, of course, but after a time she really quite liked sitting on her knee and even being hugged. Then came this! Never in all the five years of her short life had she even dreamed of such a beautiful thing. But the story had really begun two months earlier.

It was a cheery party which had gathered around the fire that fateful winter evening in the comfortable old farmhouse,

with its smoke-blackened rafters, which had been in the family for generations. The shadows were deepening outside as the sun dipped behind the snow hills of the Sufed Koh in far-off Afghanistan, and the air had a cold nip for those outside, but inside all was cosy and warm. The harvest of the sugar-cane had been more than usually successful, all the cattle were doing well, there was good promise from the still sleeping fields, and the children were healthy and happy, and there was much to be thankful for.

So Faruq thought, as she handed over the large flat grass-woven basket containing the big, heavy chupattis and looked around at her six fine " Treasures of God," their bright faces shining in the firelight. How she thanked God again and again for a good, kind husband, while many were not so blessed. Just across the courtyard were the two other wives and, as day by day they were neglected and forgotten on account of this, his sixth and favourite wife, resentful feelings burned into their hearts. Faruq knew that when occasion arose these feelings would no longer be hidden and suppressed, but would burst out into the fierce flame of revenge and retaliation. But with her husband to guard her what need had she to worry? Was she not the " wife of his love " ? The time came when she sorely needed that outside help but found it not.

The earrings and the golden studs in her nose caught the light, and her bangles sounded musically against the large earthen-ware basin in which her graceful hands were kneading the bread for yet more hungry mouths. Yes, he was a good husband to her and denied her nothing.

One by one, when satisfied, the little ones tumbled into bed, rolling themselves tightly, head and all, under the heavy cotton quilts. Later Faruq, having made up the fire, adjusted the lamp that was to burn all through the long winter night, tried the fastenings of the big, heavy door, and then wedged herself in beside the children. Soon, but for the crackling of the wood fire and the steady breathing of the sleepers, silence reigned.

It was quite early in the night when the robbers came. Some climbed up on to the roof, killed the two dogs in the courtyard, and fired off a good many shots to warn the villagers not to interfere with such a formidable party, while others were hacking at the outside door with axes.

The noise woke them all. Quickly the children's father extinguished the lamp. Faruq was trembling. "Oh, my dear one, my life! Oh, that they kill thee not! Save thyself" she begged. "Save thyself for my sake and the children's. It is thee they want, they will not harm me, a woman, or the little ones. Hide thyself, let them take all we have, only may God spare thee!"

"Then help me on to the roof," he said, "and I will try to escape in the darkness."

The ladder had been forgotten and left outside that night. Faruq bravely stood, making herself the ladder, and the Khan mounted on to her shoulders and tried to pull himself up through the small trapdoor. Three times he made the attempt, only to fall again and again to the ground.

The battering and hammering outside continued. The robbers had broken in the courtyard door and were now hacking at the door of the living-room.

"No use, my wife, my little Moon, it is all over for me! 'I am standing on the edge of my grave,'* my time has come!"

As he spoke, the door broke down and a crowd of men rushed into the room. The chief instigators of the plot had tied the ends of their puggrees across their faces, but these loosened as they accomplished their ghastly work and Faruq recognized them, men of their own village, known to her since childhood. There was no hesitation as they rushed upon their victim and struck fiercely with their cruel double-edged knives. At the first blow the Khan gave a deep sigh and fell on the ground, arms outstretched; and, as he fell, other daggers were plunged deeply into his unresisting body again and again.

* Pushtu proverb.

Faruq wildly rushed out into the courtyard, calling out, " They are killing my husband ! Will no one come to help ? "

The three sons of the Khan's first wife, all grown men, and their women were so near, surely they must have heard. But would they be likely to risk their lives for the one who had ousted and supplanted them ? No, she had had her day, now things would be more equal.

Faruq went back despairingly and flung herself across her murdered husband's body.

" You have killed him, my love, my life ! " she cried. "Now go ! Take anything you want, but go ! "

Even seven-year-old Taj repeated, " Yes, you have killed our father ; go and leave us to mourn him ! "

But the robbers flung her aside. " Quick, woman," they shouted, " we want all the money and the jewellery ! "

Seizing little Taj by the hands, they roughly pulled off her bangles and, throwing her to the ground, said " Now you may mourn ! " Spreading the bedding on the floor, they collected all the valuables the house contained—money, jewels, clothing, and food.

" There must be more still ! Quick, now ! "

Faruq stumbled across the room as best she could for her blinding tears and, taking the Koran from where it lay on its high shelf and bringing it to them, said, "I swear on this book there is nothing else ! "

She was lying, but they had found much and, tying up their loot in the quilts and blankets, they threw the bundles over their backs and turned to go. At the door two men turned and, coming back, lifted up the dead man's body and flung it down again to the ground to make sure that there was no breath left in him.

Then away they went into the darkness, leaving Faruq and the six little ones in the dark, empty, and now dreadfully silent house. What a terrible night it had been ! Little Sherin shuddered to think of the men's evil faces, the flashing knives, and the piteous cries of her mother and the other

children. It had been far worse than that other night, years ago, when they had been awakened to go to their grandfather's house in a neighbouring village. Though only a toddler, she could still remember having to cross that terrible dark red stream slowly oozing across the courtyard, and the sickening sight of her grandfather stretched out his full six-feet length on the bed, dying. He had been shot in the gathering dusk, as with folded hands on his breast he bowed in prayer in the Mosque. Oh, why did such things happen? Sherin knew that her mother, sleeping there, was worn out with crying. Day by day, and night by night, how she wept! Sherin saw her beating her breast and heard her mourning:

"I am fallen, I am fallen! They have their hands filled with gold, and I have dust on my head. O God, only give me enough to keep the children from being hungry and from falling into the hands of their father's murderers!"

What had they done that they should suffer so? They had been so happy together. Was it the same for those foreigners, she wondered? Did they live in dread of their enemies and relations? Did they go to sleep never knowing if they would live to see the dawn? She did not understand it, something seemed to be not quite fair. The only explanation that could be given was that it was all Fate, that inexorable, incomprehensible thing.

How cruel Pathans can be! The stories of raids in any village are appalling. One does not wonder, as a newcomer might, that no woman could think of being left alone at night.

Bafa Jan tells of one night at Hazarkhana. Her husband had been detained—perhaps on purpose—and she was alone, cooking the evening meal, when a robber came in.

"I have come for the jewellery!" he said.

Quite calmly she answered, "Let me finish cooking and I will collect it."

The ghee was simmering on the fire. She added some more and, as soon as it came to the boil, she raised the big flat pan and flung the contents full into the man's face, and

before he could recover, the neighbours came in and killed him.

The house where Sabra's pretty little girl-friend lived when she was only a bride was pillaged, and the robbers were attracted by her new gold bangles.

" Here, hand those over ! " one of them said.

She fumbled and tried to delay.

" Quick, girl, or I will help you ! " And, with the full force of his Afghan knife, he chopped off both her hands and the gold bangles clattered to the ground.

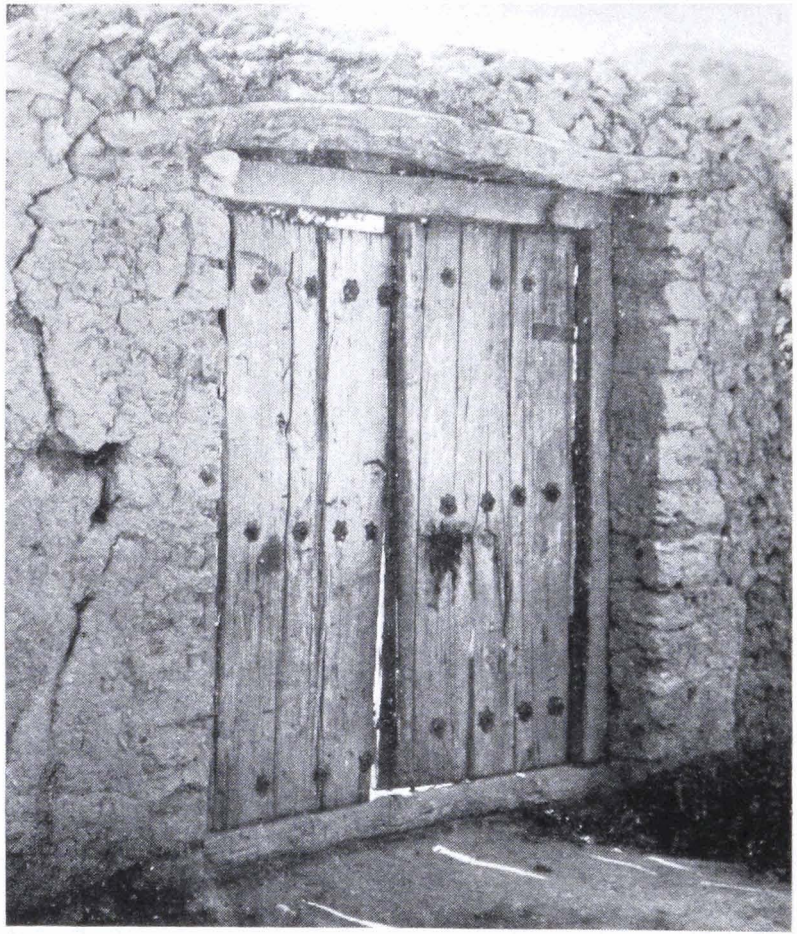
" I would have given them," she cried out in agony. " Why did you cut off my hands ? "

" Your hands for my life ! " he roughly replied. " It will teach you to be quicker next time ! "

The other women and girls in the house had the rings torn out of the lobes of their ears and out of their noses, which were left ragged and bleeding.

Necessity makes these women resourceful. Bibi Jan's friend in Teri was left alone one evening while her husband, a policeman, was on duty at the Post. A raider, knowing this, came to the house and knocked gently, she, still nursing her baby and thinking it was her husband, opened the door and saw a strange man standing there. Quickly he entered the room, and she was quite powerless to prevent him. He glanced at the bed and, realizing his intentions, she made an excuse to go into the courtyard. His fierce eyes watched her with suspicion until she had laid the baby on the bed. Then she darted out and quickly fastened the bolts and bars of the heavy door from the outside. Finding himself trapped, the raider seized the baby, the only thing on which he could wreak his wrath, and cut it into small bits which he scattered about the room. Then he looked around for means of escape. There was no window in the room and no outlet to the roof, so he began to make a hole in the mud wall. Laboriously he worked, and the woman outside heard and awaited him. At last the hole was big enough for a hand, then for half his head. Finally

" It was interesting to see the arrivals at the Hospital "
(Page 24)



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" They saw the great splash of blood on the outer door "
(Page 48)

his whole head came slowly through to see if there was anyone about. Crash! Down came her waiting axe, cutting the man's head nearly in two. Then she sat down to watch him die. "A man like that dies hard, you know!"

When assured that he was quite dead, she went off to call her husband from the Police Post and to show him how a noted raider had met his death at the hands of a woman. Later, when the Tahsildar had cut out the man's heart, it was found to be bigger than two hands could hold, thus proving conclusively that he was a raider!

VIII

SONGS IN THE NIGHT

" I call to remembrance. . . ."—*Psalm* 77, 6
" I walk as one who sees the joy shine through
Of the other life behind our life, as the stars behind
the blue ! "

THERE WERE " weary ways and golden days " in the path. The heartbreak of seeing some turn back was the worst of all, but these disappointments could never kill the thrill of seeing a soul won for Christ. Every such one is a sacred memory ; a rosary of very precious pearls. There surely can be no other such joy on earth !

One such came on the evening of Good Friday in 1933. The English Chaplain had very kindly arranged for an Urdu service in the big Church. Magic lantern slides were shown while he read the matchless story from the Gospels. It was a happy little party which went from the house on the hill. Fazl Jan, the fine-looking Khattak woman who really loved the Lord, was ever ready for any kind of an outing. She was a faithful old thing and was always making us laugh. The sweet-looking Chitrali woman who helped us in the midwifery work had never seen anything like this before. She had been sold in childhood to an Afghan and then in Kabul had met a Kohati man and married him. His politics being rather of the weather-cock variety finally ended his course by his being blown from the guns by order of the then-reigning Amir. She as a widow, with her two little sons, came down to Kohat and settled in the house of her brother-in-law, which (as Kohat later remarked) was " unfortunately " situated just below the missionaries' house. Friends were made over the illness and death of her beautiful baby, and a true friendship it proved to be.

The audience in the church was very quiet and reverent during the reading of the Story of the Cross. As the little group returned to the city, they could feel the younger woman trembling all over. As they knelt together in the living-room and she opened her heart to the Lord, the Holy Spirit's presence was felt in a way those present can never forget. Then they shared in the joy of the angels in heaven, a joy unspeakable and full of glory. Oh, there were difficulties and sorrows and even tragedies in plenty to come, but the memory of that sacred hour will ever be treasured and remembered !

Another precious memory is stored from a visit to Bilitang. Tutia and her companion had been called out there to a maternity case. They arrived to find that the baby had been born but that the girl-mother was in a bad state and looked as though she were dying. They tried to help all they could, but it baffled their small stock of inexperience, and at last they had to confess that they did not know what else to do.

" What," said the mother, " you say you can do nothing for my daughter ? I was up there " (pointing to the village on the hill near-by) " only three months ago, when you told us of Jesus Who cured all who came to Him, and even raised the dead ! "

" Do you believe He could cure your daughter ? " she was asked.

" But of course ; that is why I called you ! "

They knelt on the mud floor by the dying girl, seeking His intervention ; and, as of yore, He came to them. It seemed as if again that Hand was outstretched to touch and heal. Little by little, though still groaning and shivering, the girl grew quieter and the fits became less frequent as they committed it all to Him.

The following day, the girl was practically well, and the mother was exclaiming with joy, " You said you could do nothing, but I knew that Jesus could cure her ! " And so it was, as the miracles of old, an unveiling of His gracious power in answer to a woman's faith.

But the path was lonely at times, even in a place where there were other missionaries. It was all right if one did as all former workers had done in the traditional manner of generations; but if God called one out into a new path, then there was cold disapproval to be encountered.

Sometimes in that little mud house in the heart of that Mohammedan city, surrounded by unrestrained evil passions, cruelty, injustice and sorrows in abundance, the words of Christina Rosetti's hymn were experienced:

> "My hope burns dim, my faith burns low,
> Only my heart's desire cries out in me;
> By the deep thunder of its want and woe,
> Cries out for Thee!"

But He Who never fails and never forsakes was there. "Few know," wrote Samuel Rutherford from his prison-house in Aberdeen, "few know what is betwixt Christ and me!"

On one occasion, Miss Warburton Booth had to go, leaving her friend perplexed and ill and very lonely. Before leaving, she bent down and whispered, "His servants shall serve Him and they shall see His face!" That last word shone out with such a glory that the loneliness vanished and the difficulties and troubles seemed insignificant, relegated to their rightful places. "Gates of brass all broken, iron bars transfigured form a ladder to the skies!"

Sometimes in the dark days He would manifest Himself in marvellous ways. One winter's evening, just after a Pathan boy had declared his love for the Lord and his father had threatened to come and murder all in the house, and all the town was up in arms, a call came to attend a sick woman. Fazl Jan was sleeping, so her companion got ready to go. She was told it was to the very street in which the lad's father lived that she must go, and her heart failed her. Surely this is the end, she thought.

On her safe return home, some hours later, she realized with shame how foolish and how faithless she had been to doubt. Kneeling alone in the dark room, she knew she must

have grieved the One who had always been so faithful to her. Suddenly, conscious of a Divine Presence, she felt irresistibly compelled to look up, and, lo ! all around was a glorious Light ! and yet only the small hurricane lantern smoked in the corner. It was a wonderful experience, and one she could never forget. She realized the nearness of the Lord in a new way and she knew that, though she might fear, she could never so doubt again.

To have one's life threatened was not at all an uncommon experience ; in fact, one grew quite accustomed to it. The first time it was a well-trusted servant of the Government in a high position, and he let it be known throughout Peshawar and Tirah that if a certain missionary died, there would be a reward of five hundred rupees ! Of course, there was no thought of his doing it himself, but to hire an assassin is not an expensive job, although, in this particular case, there were no candidates ! It was quite interesting meeting him a few days later, tightly buttoned into his black frock coat and shaking hands with polite smiles at the Government House garden party !

It was Easter Day, 1929. In reading the last chapter of Mark, the three-times recurring words, " He appeared," seemed to glow with a new glory. Just then things ahead seemed very dark, and the workers were discouraged and tired out, and one was sick in bed. But " very early in the morning " of that wonderful day He came, and it was proved again that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, and all was changed.

" In the solemn hush of dawning,
Before the stir of morning,
Lo, He came to me !
There a garden, dew-washed, holy,
Fresh the scents from Eden blowing,
And I knelt in worship lowly
As He talked with me !
In the burning heat of noonday,
In the busy well-trod way,
He drew near to us !

Then the common dusty road
Changed for us as we toiled along,
Seemed like the golden path to God
As He walked with us!
In the calm of the evening hour,
Wearied and spent and e'en heart-sore;
But He sat with us!
Water and bread were enough that night
To quench the thirst and satiate,
'Twas a Sacrament of pure delight
As He supped with us!"

One day, a small screw of paper was thrown in at the open door of the house on the hill and hastily retreating steps were heard. Fazl Jan picked up the paper and handed it over to her companion with a humorous shake of her old white head. The note read: "For God's sake, let me come and have a talk with you!" signed "Hairan." It was a common occurrence for queer little notes to arrive, and one had no indication that there was more to this than to many others; but when the writer of it came it was clearly evident that the Lord was drawing this dear lad to Himself. Afzal Khan spent many hours helping him with open Bible and believed that his heart was really won for Christ. Then began a fight for a soul.

When the father realized what was happening he was furious. He shut him up several times for days on end, without food, and once beat the delicate boy so unmercifully that his mother could no longer bear it and interceded for him. The father boasted that he would have killed his son had the mother not interfered. He took Hairan to the school and told the teacher what the boy was up to. The teacher stood him up before the class and showered abuse upon him; his father got hold of his Gospel and burned it; but Hairan stood firm.

One morning, just as prayer was actually going up for him, he quietly slipped into the room and joined his friends. He was at his wit's end and he got up and paced the floor.

"What can I do?" he asked. "To stay on here is impossible, and yet I have nowhere to go. One thing I know is that I cannot give up Jesus!"

It was suggested that Hairan should go to Rawalpindi, to a Christian friend there, so after dark, he sallied forth, wrapping the end of his puggree round his face up to the eyes, so that no one would recognize him, and went off by train. In Rawalpindi, Hairan got a real grasp of Gospel truths and his faith was strengthened. But he was under age and so, according to law, was subject to his father and was forced to return. The Authorities, hearing of the case, advised the missionary to leave things alone and try to make the boy return to his father and home, to the bondage and darkness of Islam. But Hairan had got something worth holding on to.

" Is there any advantage in becoming a Christian ? " Ajab once asked him.

" Think you, would I risk losing my life and all if I were not gaining something more than life ? " replied Hairan.

Afzal Khan offered him the shelter of his house and, realizing the risk it might mean, said, " I want to bear the brunt of this. If it should bring punishment or imprisonment, or whatever it might mean, I would rejoice to suffer for Christ's sake ! "

Then Hairan's father came, storming and swearing.

" I will have my boy, dead or alive," he shouted. " I will murder all in this house ! What care I if I get hanged for it ? I will have my boy ! "

His lawyer friend advised calmness, reminding him that this was British India. Others also tried to reason with him, but he would listen to nothing.

" If he were lying dead, I would not even lift the shroud to look upon his face ! " he told them. " He may throw himself under the train, or go to live in the prostitutes' bazaar or in a gambling den ! I would far rather hear of all that than of his becoming a Christian ! "

One evening, his father and a close friend came, and Hairan had a long interview with them. What specious arguments they used we know not. Islam has an uncanny power, almost a stranglehold, upon its followers. Hairan was evidently frightened, for he was very quiet after they had gone ; and

later on in the course of the evening, without a word to anyone, he surreptitiously slipped out of the house and disappeared. Afzal was completely puzzled; he did not know what could have happened. After that experience and that courageous stand, was it possible that Hairan had given it all up?

Hairan's two friends resorted to prayer, but the hours passed by and no Hairan! They sent down to see the night train, but he was not at the station. At last, they sent a small boy to spy out the father's house, hardly believing he would be there. But there he was, quietly sitting as if he had never been away!

"No, I am not returning, I am staying here," was all he would say.

Just on midnight the messenger returned with the news. As they stood in the dark, wind-swept courtyard, the two friends who had prayed could hardly realize that it meant the end of all. The Enemy had been too strong and had won. The blow seemed too hard to bear. Afzal's voice was husky and broken with sobs.

"More than a brother I loved him! I coveted him for Christ! Surely it cannot be that he has given it all up!"

Neither could his companion restrain her tears; she, too, had loved Hairan as a son. They were not unaccustomed to death, or even to murder, but this was the death of a soul. In that hour they entered into the fellowship of Christ's sufferings. He, too, had wept over such foolish ones who went back to the husks. Hairan had chosen the safety and pleasures of the world for a season, and those who had loved him and prayed for him were grieved to the heart.

IX

A LITTLE FARTHER

" He made his own . . . to go forth . . . and guided . . . and led them on safely."

Psalm 78, 52, 53

AFTER SOME years in Peshawar, the call came to move on to Kohat. This was a stony bit of the path, for no missionary had ever worked there before. Kohat! Famous for its murders, its uncivilization and its glory in its lack! The filthy little Zenana Hospital had been for months without either doctor or nurse. Every week, women in the city were dying of sepsis, for Kohat could not boast a single trained midwife. If need constitutes a call, surely this one was insistent enough. And is not such a need just the objective for a call, not the objection to it?

Was it coincidence or confirmation that, just three months after the call came, riots should have broken out between Hindus and Mohammedans in Kohat City—the worst that had taken place in India, except for Calcutta? Inevitably the riots were brought up as an argument against the commencement of missionary work in Kohat, to which the answer was made that surely they made conditions all the safer, at least for a time. This was reluctantly agreed to by the Deputy Commissioner, and he kindly promised to recommend the project to the higher authorities. The permission from the Chief Commissioner came in March, and a few contacts were made before going away to the hills for the hot weather. That summer new regulations had been issued in the N.W.F.P. forbidding foreigners to live outside the barbed-wire entanglements of Cantonments, unless they had a strong Government guard. In June, the writer received an 18-inch-long document

which ordered her to leave Peshawar City, and come inside the wire. This notice coincided with her plans for moving, but would the Authorities now consent to her living in Kohat City? It seemed against all reason. After months of prayer, she visited the Deputy Commissioner in Peshawar, showing him the already written permission, giving her leave to live in Kohat City. He remarked that the Authorities must have forgotten that they had granted her this. "Well, if they have, will you be so good as not to remind them?" she begged.

The Official, who was later the first Governor of the Province, laughingly agreed not to interfere, adding, however, "I don't think you will last long there!"

The Deputy Commissioner, who was then in Kohat, was going home in a fortnight, very disgruntled about everything, and did not want any more disturbances, so he shut his eyes to this innovation. The next one was rather young and inexperienced, and was not sure what he should do about it, and, as he was only very temporary, he, too, did nothing. By the time the new and permanent D.C. arrived, missionaries living in the City was an accepted fact!

Then there was the house problem in Kohat. Who could be found to rent his house to a Kafir propagating Christianity? But God, Who had called, made a way. A house in the heart of the City was procured from an absentee landlord by paying three times its original rent in advance.

This first house was overlooked by seven other houses, so that the neighbours had a free look-in and in time became well acquainted with all the curious ways of the newcomers, which was to mutual advantage. But Kohat did not want missionaries. The Mullahs, as always, were bitter opponents. One more tolerant than the others remarked, "Certainly, Christianity is good, but if all become Christians how shall we live?" A lawyer in favour of the work replied, "Why should you be so afraid of two gentle ladies? They are only two, and there are hundreds of you; why do you not try to convert them?"

Another lawyer spoke up for the workers: "They save women's lives. Surely, Christianity is not worse than death! I think the ladies are more useful than harmful!"

The members of the Khilafat Committee were strong in their policy of opposition, and the Indian newspapers helped them air their woes. After enumerating all the evils and calamities which missions bring, they concluded by informing the world that the missionaries had seized all the important towns on the Frontier and that, so far, only little Kohat had escaped. "And now," they added, "even it is made the victim of these tyrannies, and Government overlooks such incidents with a cool heart!"

But there were friends too. Some suggested surrounding the house with rifles, and the women even offered their burkhas so that the missionaries could escape in them if there were danger. It was not an easy time to live through but the affection and faithfulness of true friends shone out like stars in the gloom.

Many were the petitions to the Authorities, and even to the Viceroy, that the "mission agents" should be withdrawn; many were the meetings and discussions held. There were cursings and expectorations, and even tumults sometimes, when the missionaries walked through the bazaar. One Mullah never passed their house without lifting up his voice and calling down blood-curdling curses upon them and their activities.

The Hajji Bahadur Mosque stands almost in the centre of the city. It is the big mosque of the town and very picturesque with its minarets and brightly coloured frescoes. It dates from the time of Aurangzeb, as does also the Shrine hard by in the cemetery, with its old, crooked tamarisk trees covered with colourful bits of silk, flags and flowers, offerings from a constant stream of petitioners, and black with the smoke of many centuries of lamps. The Mosque is a big open one, with a fine entrance up a flight of steps and through an imposing archway. The water for ablutions lies sparkling in the sun.

One day, all the elders and greybeards of Kohat District were summoned to the Mosque to meet the notables of the city, the Khilafat Committee and the religious leaders, and to settle this problem of the missionaries. Mirbaz, wrapped to the eyes in his heavy blanket, went quietly to hear the result. Meanwhile, prayer was going up from the stifling, fly-ridden room of the rented house. After about three hours, he returned, a great wonder in his eyes.

" It is all over, Babo, Kohat is ours ! " He told how different things had taken up all the time, but how one Khan had pressed the question, saying, " You have called us for this ; now what is going to be done about it ? "

" Be silent, foolish one, other things are taking our thoughts!"

" Yes, but are the missionaries going to be allowed to continue here ? What is the answer to this ? "

" Peace, there is no answer ! " And the company broke up.

Those early days were distinctly stormy, and the coming of the missionaries to that bigoted place was no more agreeable to the Authorities.

" Why not leave these people alone ? " asked the short-sighted, live-easy, peace-in-our-time officials. " Their religion is quite good enough for them ! "

How little most of the British Officials know of the people of the land ! Pathan home life is a closed book to them. Most of their knowledge is gained from some trusted servant, or from a Government Official who tells them only what he wishes them to know. In cases of judgment, so much depends on the one who presents the case. This prompted the remark of an Afridi, who said, " We say of the Sahibs that they have ears, but they have no eyes ! " In dealing with the " powers that be " missionaries have found some who are very sympathetic, but there are others not so helpful. Their point of view, their way of approach, and their aims are so totally different from those followed by one who is seeking to win souls. They mostly resent the bother of missionaries and the problems

that arise from mission work. The peace-at-any-price policy is favoured by many.

Shahzadgai's little Anwar was one who suffered from this policy of the British Government in India of appeasing Islam even at the expense of others. She and her mother had been baptized some years before, but the latter had re-married, and now the little girl of eight was being condemned by her Mohammedan stepfather to marry an old, old Bluebeard. Shahzadgai came and poured out the whole tragic story. Her friend promised to go and see what could be done. She entered the Courthouse where the Judge sat writing at a table. He raised his head as she drew near.

" What do you want ? " he asked rudely.

Flushing to the roots of her hair, she explained.

" No," he said, " I will do nothing about it. True, the child is a Christian in name and the rightful property of her mother, but this stepfather is an influential man and the thing might cause a riot. I am here to keep the peace ! "

" Is there, then, no justice for Christians, because they are a negligible minority in this Province ? "

" Kindly leave the matter alone ; I do not wish an argument. If missionaries cause trouble in this part, it is not at all difficult to have them removed elsewhere. Good-day ! "

One day, after a fierce row in the city over an Afghan convert, one of the missionaries was ordered to appear before the new Deputy Commissioner.

" I hear that you are proselytizing here," he said. " Are you making people into Christians ? "

It was explained that hypocrites could be made but that it was beyond anyone's power to make a true Christian, for that only God could do.

" But I won't have it," he shouted, bringing the full force of his fist down on the table and making the inkpots dance. " Any more of this, and out you go ! " Then, with severe injunctions and threatenings, he dismissed the quaking missionary who returned to the City to carry on as before. Hope

and expectation were justified when, only a few months later, a fine young man from one of the leading families in Kohat confessed his faith in Christ.

Kohat is well watered. There is the wonderful spring of the Five Fairies which issues from under an enormous pepal tree into five clear channels; and there are other beautiful, never-failing springs. The Cantonment, encircled with barbed wire, and well laid out, was celebrated for its violets and poinsettias, all very orderly and peaceful. One would not think that it was at that time the most notorious place on the riotous Frontier for murders, lootings, and kidnappings. Outside the wire entanglement was the City, with about thirty-six thousand inhabitants—a walled City with several gates where, it was said, no Christian could live. The streets in the bazaar were unbelievably filthy.

After two years, the missionaries built a little brick house, Pathan-style, within the City walls, on a rubbish heap on a hillside; which was the only place they could procure; but its wonderful view up the valley was an inspiration to all, and there they lived for ten happy years.

On the lowest storey, opening to the outside, was a *Hujra*, or guest-house for men, and many were the guests who patronized it, from Tirah or Afghanistan or other far-away places. It was a touching sight to see these wild, rugged ruffians, after they had supped, sitting quietly in the dusk while, by the light of a hurricane lamp, God's Word was read and the Gospel invitation given out.

On the higher level, the door opened into a pleasant courtyard. That door was shut only at nightfall, but the purdah, or curtain, which hung in front indicated to all that there were women within. The entire female population of the Frontier might walk in without question; but no man dared even to peep in!

One day, a poor half-wit wandered in and Shira, the big Afghan dog, not knowing he was harmless, was on him in a moment. Luckily, he was rescued before he was hurt, but

he went out with tattered clothes. At night Shira's deep bark at the least whisper of approaching footsteps would strike terror into the stoutest of raider hearts. To " break the purdah " of a house on the Frontier means death to the invader at the hands of the men of the household.

How many and varied were the visitors who constantly dropped in ! Big or little, they were all welcome. One of the most frequent was Khaperi, who loved playing in the water basin in the centre of the courtyard and bringing in other children to share in the fun.

Sahib Nur loved her wee girl very dearly. Her Afridi husband (was it the fourth or the fifth ?) was without any paternal feeling and considered his daughters only as a means of ready cash. Before Khaperi was born, Sahib Nur decided she must safeguard the child. She was a hard worker and by her earnings she had bought a fine buffalo. This she suggested selling to her present husband, and in return she was to have the whole rights to her unborn child.

" A cowrie shell in the hand is better than a hawk in the air,"* so he agreed and, shortly afterwards, having nothing to gain by staying on, he wandered back to Tirah, driving the buffalo before him and leaving Sahib Nur to fend for herself and the coming child as best she might.

By this time, Khaperi was four years old. " Fairy " was her name and a fairy indeed she was. How she loved Shira ! Indeed, she loved the whole household and in return was everyone's pet. She was always dashing in to see what her friends were doing and to have a game with Shira. They were both much of a size, and nothing could have been gentler than Shira's play with the little girl.

One day, a Kabuli woman strolled into the courtyard. Khaperi and her friend were watching her. There seemed to be no one about, and the woman started on a voyage of investigation, not knowing that Shira was padding noiselessly behind her. When she got to the water tap, feeling

* Pushtu proverb.

thirsty, she reached for the drinking cup, but no sooner had her hand closed on it than she felt the calf of her leg gently seized from behind, and, turning round with a wild shriek, she saw the big dog. Khaperi and her companion flew to her rescue before she went into hysterics, and all had a good laugh over it.

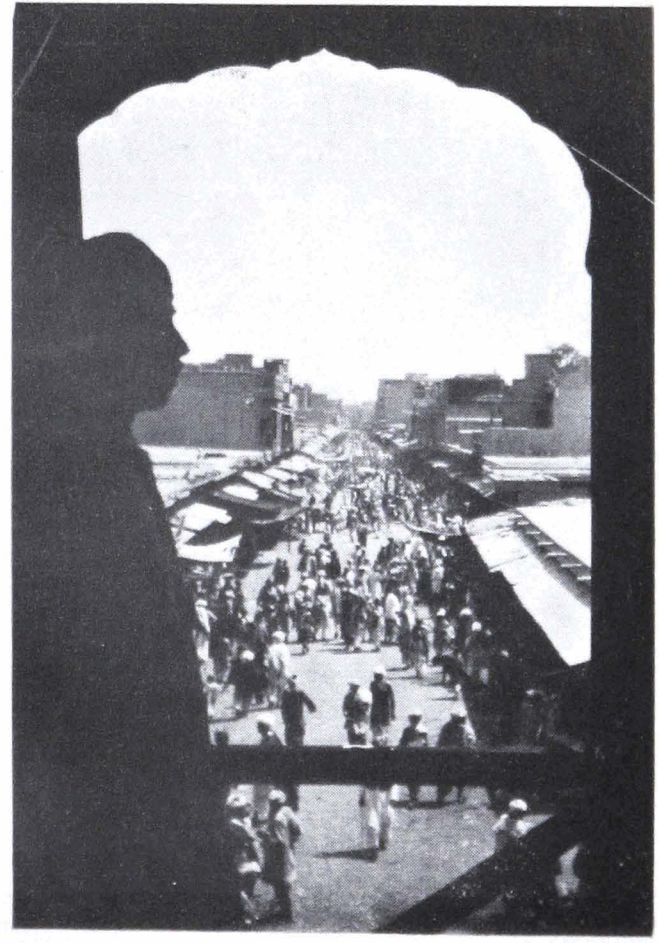
But for Khaperi there were no restrictions and no danger; she was " of the house." Often she would set her heart on some small thing and, shaking her curly head, would diffidently say, " Have you really and truly need of this? You have so much, and to me it is most necessary! " It might be an empty box or a bit of ribbon, but whatever was given her was treasured as something very valuable in comparison with the bits of sticks and stones which formerly had been her only toys.

How many are the dearly loved faces which come before one when thinking of friends of the Frontier! Sabra was a faithful friend for many years, until a crisis came. A fine-looking woman she was, with a very strong character. The missionary happened to pass her bed one day, while visiting another woman in the Municipal Hospital. Later Sabra bribed the sweeper-woman to beg her to come and visit her, and so the friendship began. She proved to be a valuable servant and helper for many years.

One day, it came out how Sabra first had become interested in Christianity. Her father, a Mullah in Pajaggi, had taught her to read. " You may read what you will," he told her, " except that small book on the shelf." Of course, that was just the one she climbed up and got, as soon as her father was out of the house. It was a little, thin, yellow book, written in Urdu; but there she read of a wonderful One Who could give living water to quench all thirst. Sabra was very intelligent and loyal, but one day, all unsought, she was brought face to face with a life choice, an irrevocable one. She could no longer stand " with a foot in two boats ";* she could no longer serve

* Pushtu proverb.

THE AUTHOR AND SHIRA



THE MAIN STREET, KOHAT CITY

two masters. Weeping bitterly, she rolled up her clothes and her bedding and turned her back on her friend and on Christ, choosing the world and Islam.

After she had left the house, she sat down on the street corner, still weeping. The bystanders gathered round.

" Why are you in such trouble ? Has the missionary turned you out ? "

" Yes," she lied, " she has turned me out because I would not leave my religion, and she tried to force me to go to church."

Her friend went to her, and, sitting beside her on the street, begged her to return, pleading the love of so many years. But Sabra's heart seemed changed to stone and nothing could move her.

" Leave me," she sobbed. " I have chosen ! I will never change ! "

Reluctantly, with tears in her eyes and sorrow in her heart, her friend had to leave her.

Another one was Malika. She had a beautiful face, and how good she was to all her neighbours ! She was loved by all, but by none more than by her companion of sixteen years, who had known Karim, her son, as a toddler and had helped Marwari into the world. Malika's love never wavered, even after Karim had confessed Christ as his Saviour and the Afridi Jirga ordered her husband to come and murder all in the mission serai, threatening him with the destruction of his home and children if he refused. Malika, perplexed by a divided loyalty, came to her friend :

" Is not this too hard ? Must these my little ones, Taj and Marwari, die because my son is becoming a Christian ? "

" Sister, do you love Jesus ? "

" Of course ! You know that I do ! "

" And, do you remember what He bore for us ? "

As that story of wonderful love was told again, it changed things for Malika.

" The love for Him is deep in my heart," she said. " Will you pray that my little ones may be spared ? "

He Who understands answered the prayer. The Jirga dispersed, satisfied, meanwhile, that the lad be let off with a beating and a warning; and Malika's husband laughed when asked later which night it was on which he was coming to kill the missionaries.

One day, Taj came dancing in. They were just down from Tirah after the summer, so there was a lot of news to tell and hear, but the most touching of all was how they had prayed for their friend when they heard she was ill with malaria in Hangu. Now they were delighted to find that God had answered.

" How did you pray, Marwari ? "

" Like this," she said, squatting on the ground, putting up her wee hands, and shutting her eyes very tightly.

" Yes," said Taj, " our mother put us in a row and showed us how to sit and hold our hands; then she prayed, and we all said ' Amen ' ! "

Such love as Malika's softened the rough stretches of the path that one so often had to encounter, and made things worth while.

Shergul, also an Afridi, a handsome man from the Kohat Pass, has been a staunch friend from the age of fifteen years. There was nothing he would not do; he risked his life and even his reputation once for the writer's sake. He seemed really to love the Lord, and how humble and how touching were his prayers !

" But, Shergul, you cannot call yourself a Christian, you have not been baptized ! "

" But, Babo, I truly love Jesus, ' with my two eyes.'* Can a handful of water," cupping his hand, " make all that difference ? "

" He said, ' If ye love me, keep my commandments '."

Dear Shergul, may you be one of that great multitude to stand before the Throne in the glorious coming Day !

How often it seemed as though there was no escape from

* Pushtu proverb.

the storms of opposition, the bitter antagonism of Islam to Christ! Sometimes the Enemy seemed to come in like a flood. One such flood of disappointments, heartbreaks, and ill health came in 1938; so, handing back the house on the ground leased for ten years from the Municipal Committee, and exhorting the little Christian community faithfully to carry on, mission work was closed in Kohat for a time, and the writer departed to seek new inspiration and life and help from her motherland.

On her return, the call came to go twenty-six miles westward up the valley. This was a little farther on the road to Afghanistan, to a small village called Hangu, and also was pioneering. The first year was spent in a nice house hired from one of the leading Khans, but later he was told he was imperilling the religion of Islam by housing missionaries, so another place had to be found. It was not easy to get accommodation; the only place available was a large Serai, surrounded by cold, draughty garages—not a bright prospect for the chilly winter. But God had called and how could one hold back? This Serai was taken and it was better than had been feared, for the kind Hindu landlord made some of the garages very cosy with windows and smaller doors, and later built three nice rooms in one corner.

Then the Authorities again began to fuss, saying that it was too terribly dangerous and that the missionaries could stay on there only if they had four chokidars, each with a gun at night! This had to be complied with, but nothing had been said about cartridges! A very few were handed out, but with the strict injunction that they were not to be fired off on any pretext!

If Kohat was dirty, Hangu was far more so. At nearly every corner there was a refuse heap; pools of stagnant, slimy water in which mosquitoes, multiplied by the thousand, made malaria inevitable. Filthy-smelling, dirt-laden channels between the houses called streets ran at any and every angle. But there were jewels to be found, there in those tumble-down

houses, and for those found amid the dirt and dust deep heart-felt praises rose, mingling with the angels' joy. There many life-long friends were won, both in the village and in the district.

In springtime, with the orchards in full bloom, the delicate pink and white blossoms of almond, plum, and apricot against the background of the blue and mauve rocky hills made the place like fairyland. Five very happy years were spent there, and when the day came to leave Hangu, it was said that the women-folk and all the girl children in the bazaar and the villages around were weeping !

PART TWO

"There is a river . . ."

Ps. 46: 4

I

PIONEERS IN CENTRAL ASIA

" With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought;
they shall enter into the king's palace."

—*Psalm* 45: 15

THE POURED-OUT lives of God's people is the River, flowing down the ages and making glad the City of God. Precious indeed in His sight are His people's love and sacrifice. "Jesus understood " when Mary broke her precious box of spikenard and poured it on His Feet. The critics called it waste and began to calculate how many poor might have been fed had it been sold ; but it has done a greater and more lasting work than that. The odour of that precious ointment is filling the world to-day. Mary was only the first of many to fling away substance, or life itself, for the One she loved.

The great stronghold of Central Asia is yet in the hands of the Enemy, and the path thither is marked by the blood of martyrs, the tears and prayers of those who have lived and longed to see Christ glorified in that dark region.

" Flung to the heedless winds, or on the waters cast,
The martyr's ashes, watched, shall gathered be at last ;
Still, still, though dead, they speak and, trumpet-tongued, proclaim
To many a wakening land the one availing Name ! "

(M. LUTHER).

A hundred years ago, away in despotically ruled Bokhara, two servants of God chose to lay down their lives rather than deny Christ. Colonel Stoddart was Envoy to the Amir of Bokhara, but had been imprisoned by him. Efforts were made to free him and Captain Conolly, who was also in the Political Service, was directed to proceed there to obtain his release.

In September, 1840, Afghanistan was quiet enough to enable Conolly to leave Kabul and travel through the Hazara country to Merv, the headquarters of the great Turkestan slave trade. He visited the slave market and saw "enough to shame and sicken the coarsest heart." Pushing on, he reached Khiva early in January. Then he proceeded to Khokan, and while there received a letter from Colonel Stoddart, written at the request of the Amir of Bokhara, inviting him to that city. Conolly accepted the invitation, but, soon after his arrival, the treacherous Amir threw him into prison with Stoddart.

There for six months he suffered privation, nakedness, and want in a hopeless captivity with his friend. Our knowledge of their sufferings is based chiefly on a journal kept by Conolly on some sheets of Russian paper, and also on notes in the margin of his prayer book, recovered fifteen years later through a Russian and forwarded to his family by General Ignatieff in 1862. These records preserve details of their sufferings, and show Conolly's steadfast faith and Christian charity. The sufferings of the two men were increased by constant promises on the part of the Amir that they would be released, thus adding mental torture to physical.

The following extracts are of painful interest:

"The Topi Bashi asked if I would become a Mussulman and remain in the enjoyment of favour at Bokhara . . . I told him that my religion was a matter between me and my God, and that I would suffer death rather than change. . . I entreated one of our keepers to have conveyed to the Chief my humble request that he would direct his anger upon me and not, further, by it destroy my poor brother Stoddart, who had suffered so much and so meekly here for three years; but he could do nothing. Then we prayed together . . . and we rose again with hearts comforted, as if an Angel had spoken to us; resolved, please God, to wear our English honesty and dignity to the last, in spite of all the filth and misery this monster may try to degrade us with . . . The Amir treacherously caused Stoddart to invite me here . . . He pent us both up to die by slow rot, because we would not pay him as a kidnapper for our release. We will comfort each other till we die . . . Send this assurance to all our friends, and do you stand fast in the Faith. It is the only thing that can enable a man to bear up against the trials of this life, and lead him to the noblest state of existence in the next. Thank God that this prayer book was left to me. Stoddart and I have found it a great comfort. We did not know fully before this affliction

what was in the Psalms, or how beautiful are the prayers of our Church. Nothing but the spirit of Christianity can heal the wickedness and misery of these countries."

Finally, in June, 1842, the two prisoners were brought forth into the crowded square of Bokhara and stood with bound hands while their graves were prepared. They kissed each other, and Stoddart said, " Tell the Amir that I die a believer in Jesus ; that I am a Christian, and a Christian I die." Conolly said, " We shall see each other in Paradise near Jesus." Then their heads were cut off with a huge knife, and so these two, pure of heart and chastened by affliction, passed out of great tribulation with garments washed white in the Blood of the Lamb.

" Ah, but the Song, the Song ! "

Half a century later, undeterred by the knowledge that such cruelty might again be met with in such a city, another brave servant of God spent many years in her Master's service in those regions. She laboured until the Ogpu of the Soviets ended her activities by putting her in prison. Miss Jenny de Mayer spent 690 days in eight different prisons because of her faith, but, with pilgrim staff and pilgrim faith, she was able before her imprisonment to spread Gospel portions in many places of Russian Turkestan and even in the very bazaars of Bokhara. Who can read the account of her " Adventures with God " without being moved for those millions still without the Gospel light ? " To comfirm the Truth by the way of suffering is also a way of preaching ! " So said John Bunyan in his day.

In the fourteenth century, that ruthless Mohammedan conqueror Tamerlane had " passed over like a devastating scourge, cold, cruel, imperturbable ; he was susceptible to no sentiment or pity or commiseration ; and, after having laid waste thousands of towns and destroyed countless numbers of men, he left a great part of Asia a desert, covered with human bones and blood-stained ruins."

Central Asia is not only desert topographically but spiritually also, for ever since the Crescent first held sway it has produced

a physical and moral aridity. The Swedish Mission in Kashgar and Yarkand worked in that hard land for many years and gathered together a little witnessing church; but now, with all the foreigners banished and many of the native Christians martyred or imprisoned, silence and darkness reign.

We think of the long, faithful life of George Hunter of the China Inland Mission, who for forty years served his Master in that lonely part, as one that will surely bring forth glory to the Name of Christ.

Mr. Hunter gave himself for Chinese Turkestan, and, crossing the Gobi, made his home in Urumchi, now called Tihwa. Then a terrible silence descended, and there was no news regarding this lone warrior of Christ until, in July, 1941, a telephone message arrived in Lanchow, China, saying that " an old man named Hunter was arriving that noon from Sinkiang and that there was the fare from Hami to pay on arrival."

Eagerly the missionaries awaited the air bus and, as it landed, a smiling face greeted them. They quickly got conveyances for the weary old traveller with his few belongings and brought him home. He seemed very tired and dazed, but his first request was for a Bible. For thirteen months he had been without one. It was a touching sight to see him that very afternoon, sitting in his chair and reading his precious possession.

Three days after Mr. Hunter's arrival was his seventy-ninth birthday, and there was a little celebration, at which he told of his experiences. He was printing hymn books in his house at Urumchi when the police came to search the premises. He was taken to the police office, and finally was brought before two Russians, who tried to make him confess that he was a spy and threatened to shoot him if he refused. Then followed over a year's imprisonment, during which he was taken out seven or eight times to die, so he thought. He was not allowed even a pencil, or a book, or a needle with which to mend his clothes. He repeated Scripture and all the hymns he could

remember, and was able to preach the Gospel to the other prisoners—Chinese, Russian, and Turki. At last he was released, but only to be forced into a plane and flown to China proper.

" I have been nearly dead several times," Mr. Hunter said, " but God has preserved me. I have never lost my love for Him, and I feel He has been very gracious. I think if God gives me a few more years of life I ought to use them for Him."

Although the door has closed fast behind him, Mr. Hunter's great desire and frequent topic of conversation is his return to that land.

The Misses French and Miss Mildred Cable, so well known as the " Gobi Trio," also have had a part in the witnessing. They were guided to leave their work in China and to venture forth. During their nomadic journeyings in that great desert, they spread the Message among all with whom they came in contact, as their most interesting books testify.

In the Coming Day, surely those wide, wild tracts will reveal many wonderful stories of high adventure and heroic sacrifice. So far as we know, there is now no open witness for Christ there.

BELLS OF THE GOBI DESERT, CENTRAL ASIA

Do you hear the sound of the mule-bells,
Ringing, ringing, ringing?
Do you smell the same old road smells—
The sounds that were heard by Ghengis Khan,
The smells that were smelled by the Turkoman,
The same old sounds, the same old smells
That through winter blasts and through summer hells
Have been known by beasts and felt by man
On the long, long road that leads you
From Pekin to far Kashgar?

Do you hear the clash of the cart-bells,
Booming, booming, booming,
Deep as the tolling of death-knells
In memory of the bones that lie
Eastward and westward, far and nigh?
There are travellers' bones and bones of beasts,
Remnants all of grisly feasts

Of hungry wolves, or vultures perchance,
Or human bandits, with knife and lance,
Searching for opium, gold or loot.
Spurning the corpse with contemptuous foot;
But the cart keeps dragging, bumping on,
And the carter drones his endless song,
On the long, long road that leads you
From Pekin to far Kashgar.

There's a tinkle behind of horse-bells,
Jingling, jingling, jingling.
And a growing sound of hoofs, that tells
Of the horseman gaily dashing past,
While the panting cart-mules stand aghast;
He'll be into the Inn and fast a-sleeping
While the cart two-mile-an-hour is creeping,
Rumbling and grumbling wearily on
Through the dust of the road he has long since gone,
The long, long road that leads you
From Pekin to far Kashgar.

And the distant echo of camel-bells,
Clanging, clanging, clanging.
As the long line swings o'er the sandy swells,
Night after night in the Gobi bleak,
Day after day, week after week,
Month after month, with a long, slow tread,
While the poor, pale white man sleeps in bed.
But the rough cameleer in his sheepskin coat
Sings the old song he has learnt by rote,
Plodding on through shine, through snow, through wind,
From the railway's end to the North of Ind.
Piled high is the beast with pots and pails,
Boxes of fruit or bundles of mails,
Tea or salt, or candles or oil,
Far from the city's feverish moil,
He treads alone in the wan moon's light,
The desert sands his lordly right,
On the long, long road that leads you
From Pekin to far Kashgar.

—After Mark Botham,
China Inland Mission.

II

FIRST FRUITS FROM THE FRONTIER

" They looked unto him, and were lightened,
and their faces were not ashamed."
—*Psalm* 34: 5

" The Sun has come; that is proof of the Sun;
If proof you need, do not turn your face from it!"
—PERSIAN PROVERB

IN 1855, the first to be baptized in the North-West Frontier Province after Mission work had started, was a Sayid from Central Asia. He was a merchant, a man of education and polish, held in high esteem alike for his sacred descent and personal worth. While on a pilgrimage to Mecca, he was warned of God in a dream that he must follow Christ; so, on arrival in Peshawar, he set out to learn the Truth more fully from Doctor Pfander. Then he, Hajji Yahya Baqir, professed the faith with great joy and boldness. A few days afterwards, he was murderously assaulted in the C.M.S. compound, and received seven severe wounds, and was left for dead; but he miraculously recovered, with only the loss of two fingers. Afterwards he returned to his home in Central Asia, where he held fast to his faith and witnessed for Christ among his own bigoted people in that distant part.

One relates how he saw the Hajji preaching Christian truth in the streets of Kabul where none dared to molest him, for the word had gone out: " The Hand of God is on him, touch him not!" He had wonderful escapes and adventures, but, despite Moslem fury, he lived the full tale of his days.

Dilawar Khan was another first fruit of early days. Born in the Khuttak hills, he was brought up a robber in a country where children are dedicated by their mothers to plunder and

murder from earliest infancy. Probably his mother, as do some others, passed him as a baby through a hole in the mud wall of their house, saying as she did so: "Be a thief, be a thief, and be the companion of thieves!"

When the English took possession of the Punjab and Peshawar, a price was set upon Dilawar's head. He was once met in a frontier village beyond the British border and offered service in the Guides Corps, if he would lead an honest life, or, otherwise, the gallows the first time he was caught within British territory. The excitement of his adventurous career had a great charm for Dilawar; the teaching of the Mullahs had persuaded him that he was doing God service by his lawless course. He scornfully refused the Englishman's offer, but after a time he thought better of it, and, as a price was set on his head, he determined to apply for it himself; so, taking his own head on his shoulders, he went to claim the reward. Colonel Lumsden, the officer, knowing the kind of man Dilawar was, again offered him service in the army which he then accepted. He was enlisted as a soldier in the Guides Corps, in which, by his bravery and fidelity, he rapidly rose to be an officer.

In religion Dilawar was a strict Mohammedan who believed his creed and acted up to it in all its outward observances—fasting conscientiously during the month of Ramazan and praying five times a day. In one of his visits to Peshawar, he was surprised to see in the main bazaar an Englishman preaching the Gospel and surrounded by a noisy crowd. It was Colonel Wheeler, to whom the honour belongs of having been the first to proclaim the Good News publicly in that City before any mission work had been commenced. Dilawar Khan, always ready for a fray, at once entered into an argument with the colonel and at last accepted a book from him, taking it home in order that he might confute it. The book was *The Balance of Truth*, by Doctor Pfander, one of the best treatises for Moslems ever written. Dilawar read it, but could not answer it. He took it to his Mullah, who only abused

him for reading it. He took it to another Mullah, who ordered him to put it away and say his prayers. Said the Mullah, " If you read that book you will become an infidel ! "

" What a wonderful book it must be, then ! " retorted Dilawar Khan.

It was just at this time that Doctor Pfander arrived at Peshawar. Dilawar Khan heard of his coming and at once went to visit him. It was in conversation with Doctor Pfander that Dilawar's eyes were really opened to the character of Mohammedanism. An interview which he had about this time with Sir Herbert Edwardes also greatly influenced his views and feelings towards Christianity. They met by accident on the road between Attock and Peshawar, and, as they rode along together, Dilawar Khan spoke of what was nearest to his heart and asked for arguments that would confound the Mullahs. Sir Herbert told him of the Saviour's love as Dilawar had never heard it before, and so impressed him that, as he afterwards remarked, his heart burned within him as they talked by the way.

Dilawar Khan was baptized in 1858. At one time a number of Pathans banded themselves together and swore that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed him ; but little he recked of such trifles. " Pray you that my faith fail not," he said to his friends the missionaries, and went about as usual, quick of eye and cool of heart. For many years he bravely and fearlessly witnessed for Christ ; and then perished in the snows of Chitral, where he had been sent on a mission by the British Government. His name is remembered on a tablet in the church in Peshawar City, among many others who have faithfully lived for Christ in this part.

Of an altogether different type, and of more recent years, was Abdul Rahman, a Mullah of Ningrahar. He lived in a far-away valley, in the fastnesses of Afghanistan with his wife, a sweet-looking woman with beautiful dark eyes. Day by day, he would pore over the Koran in its difficult Arabic characters, and little by little in meditation new thoughts came.

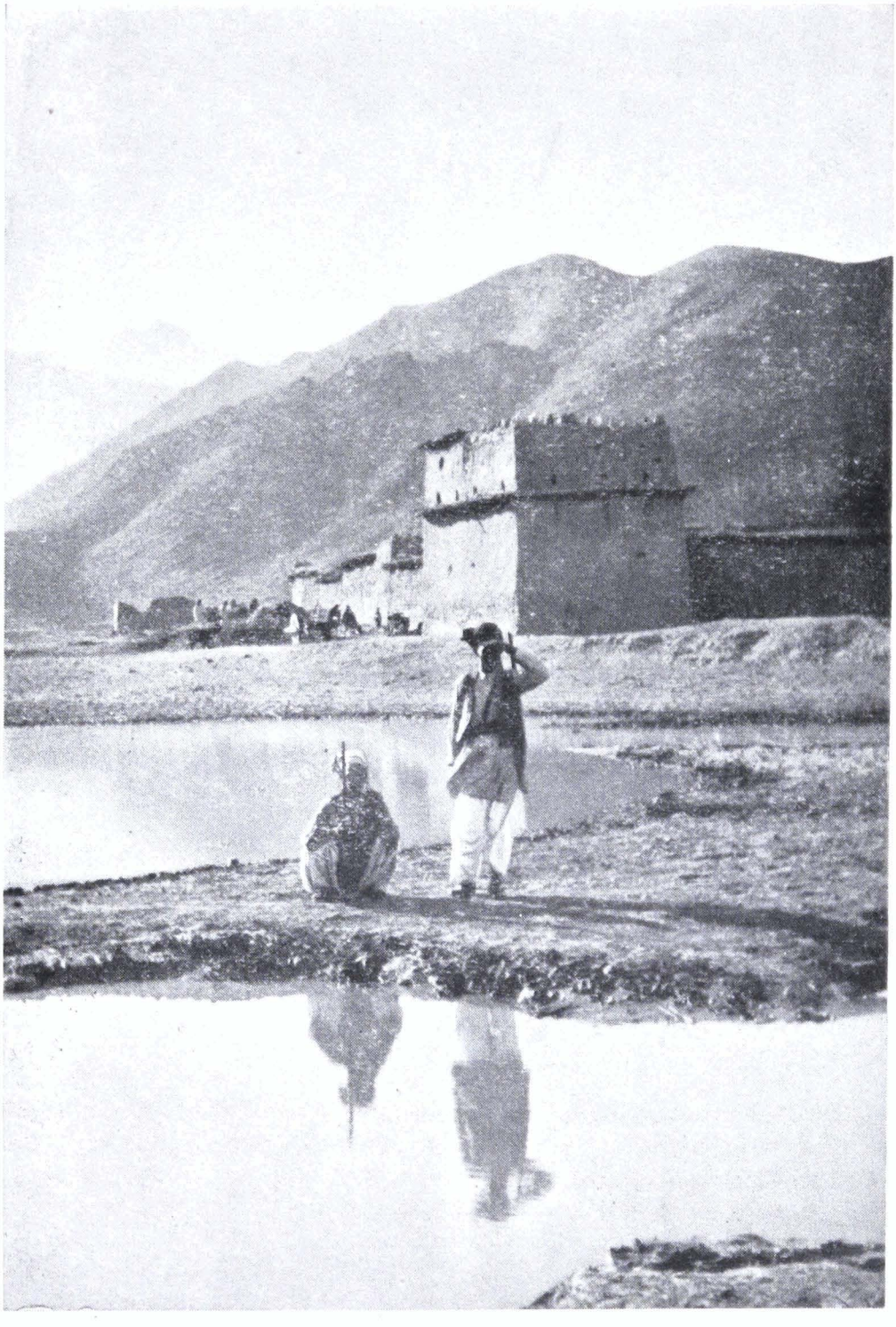
That One, named the Word of God, the Spirit from God, how highly He was spoken of! How greatly He was praised! What miracles He had done! Was it possible, after all, that He was greater than Mohammed, the Prophet of God? Untouched by sin? That was more than Mohammed was, for he had to ask pardon of God forty times a day! And so the Holy Spirit began to work, and not only doubt, but desire, was born in Abdul Rahman's heart.

There came a day when the Spirit drew very near to him, and at the Throne of Grace the intercessors were pleading for him, the unknown, needy Afghan. He bent weeping over the newly-made grave of his firstborn, and a wave of great longing swept over him to know that all-powerful One, as he cried out: "Oh, if only Jesus were here now! He could even make my child live again!"

Then came the Third Afghan War. Abdul Rahman joined the fighters and did his bit. It was a hot summer night at Dakka, and in a dream a voice called to him, "Arise and go! Why are you fighting here while your son is dying at home?" He rose and, caring nothing for the risk of travelling at night and alone, made for Ningrahar. The other men shouted to him, warning him of the danger of carrying his rifle on those lonely paths in the darkness, but he answered: "What care I for danger or loss of rifle while my child is dying?" He arrived to find the boy, his second son, a beautiful, fair child, lying dead in the house.

The months passed, and then the little daughter fell ill. Abdul Rahman procured a goat; he would sacrifice it for the sake of the child and would feed the villagers; it might be that his child would be saved. But even as he was cutting its throat the shadow of death fell upon the little girl, and he flung down the knife and dashed away to the hills alone. The sun beat down fiercely on his head, but it was nothing to the fire of despair burning in his heart.

Later on, circumstances necessitated the family's leaving their home, and they settled down near Jamrud, about ten



IN THE KOHAT PASS

" Shergul, a staunch friend " (Page 78)

miles from Peshawar. Again trouble came. The third son lay dying. The poor broken-hearted father could not look on his boy's sufferings, but, when all was over, he lifted a corner of the sheet as the body lay in the grave and gazed down at the little white face before the earth swallowed it up. Again the battle waged for a soul as yet in the darkness of ignorance. For three days he wandered about unseeing, recognizing no one and carrying a burden almost too heavy to be borne.

Abdul Rahman felt he must find out about that wonderful One he had read of in the Koran; but he knew not from whom he could get the information he was seeking. Time after time he came to Peshawar, spending a great deal of money, always seeking, seeking, but finding not. In that great City all were busy over money-making, bargaining, quarrelling, and had no time for Abdul Rahman and his quest. One day, finding a musician with his fiddle in a Serai, he offered him any money if only he would play so as to take away the burden from his heart. After a short while, flinging down some money, he turned away unsatisfied.

Another day, while walking on the Mall, Abdul Rahman met a man with books under his arm. "Can you tell me how to find out about Jesus, the Son of Mary?" he asked. The young fellow laughed contemptuously and, pointing with his hand to the Mission Hospital, advised Abdul Rahman to go there. There, not only the love of God was revealed to him, but also the claims of Christ. He realized it meant complete severance from the past and from friends, relatives, and country. No follower of Christ could be tolerated in Afghanistan. "By my great sorrow and need," he said later, "I was driven to Christ, and then His love claimed me, and I had to leave all and follow Him!"

The choice was made, and Abdul Rahman left Peshawar to fetch his wife and a few belongings: a lamp, a pot and pan, a little bedding—only a bundle or two of the necessities of life. Most things had to be left behind, but what were they in comparison with his newly found peace and joy?

On the following Sunday, in the quietness and solemnity of the City Church, Abdul Rahman stood up and confessed his faith in Jesus the Son of God as his Saviour, and his intention of following Christ only; handing over a large copy of the Koran in token of the renunciation of all else. Six months later, Abdul Rahman was baptized by immersion by Pastor Azizuddin, himself a Pathan convert.

Those who work among Moslems know only too well the sequel—abuse, threatenings, stones. Had he not by apostatizing forfeited all right, according to Moslem law, not only to civility and friendship, but to the very claims of humanity and even to the right to live? But he esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Afghanistan. Let him give his testimony in the words of a Pushtu hymn which he wrote a few months later:

"My Beloved is Jesus Christ;
God to Him all power has given;
He is Lord above in heaven;
My Beloved is Jesus Christ.

"Thanks give I for Thy great grace,
Full of praise is my heart to Thee;
In Thy favour, Father, hold me,
To Thy breast quietly enfold me.

"A loving Father art Thou to me,
With Thyself Thou wouldst have me be;
Sweet perfume is Thy heart to me,
Refreshed is my spirit.

"The Lord of great honour art Thou,
The Lord of great power art Thou,
Divine in heart and works art Thou;
Thine am I, Jesus!

"My Beloved art Thou,
Clothed in praises art Thou,
Lovelier than all art Thou;
Thine am I, Jesus!

"Now saved from hell by Thee,
Evermore Thy slave I'd be;
I am following after Thee;
Thine am I, Jesus!

" Jesus, my one and only Quest,
From praises give I Thee no rest;
From all evil me defend,
Guard and keep me to the end."

In 1909, a Pathan convert from Quetta was enticed over the Border into Afghanistan by his uncle and cruelly done to death; but there was a beautiful sequel. One afternoon in 1929, Miss Rasmussen and her companion were having tea with the Millers at Meshed, in the north-east of Persia, when a guest was announced and introduced. He was a tall, good-looking Afghan. He had come to the Mission reading-room that morning, wanting a New Testament and seeking to know the secret of a Christian's peace. Twenty years before, as a boy, he told them he had seen a Christian loaded with chains, abused and spat upon, and finally battered to death in the streets of Kabul. Never could he forget, the calm and peaceful look on the face of that faithful servant as he followed his Master to the death. The Seed cast into the ground that day, twenty years before, was living Seed and was bringing forth fruit. He was told of the Sacrifice on Calvary, the secret of Abdul Karim's devotion, and it seemed that his heart also was won by that glorious Love.

Only a few weeks longer he stayed, and then went over the Border into Herat, in western Afghanistan, into the silence and night of that dark country, and has never been heard of again. Rumour said that he had been executed, but no authentic news was ever received. His name is marked on no memorial stone, but we believe it is written in heaven.

" In the silence of the lonely night,
In the full glow of day's clear light,
Through life's strange windings, dark or bright,
We follow Thee!"

(H. BONAR.)

In this battle for souls two names have left their mark on the Frontier in this generation. Dr. Pennell's name is still remembered round Bannu, as is also Dr. Marie Holst's in the Mardan district. They are remembered for their friendship and love

for the people for whom they worked, and for their faithful witness.

Dr. Holst, who built the hospital at Mardan, met her death through refusing to sign a false statement to please a local Khan. She was threatened in the morning and that evening, as she was returning alone from a visit in the waning light, the Khan's men took their revenge and murdered her. The year following, Dr. Starr, who was working in the Peshawar Hospital, also was killed, but the reasons for his murder are not fully known.

Of course, one does not expect that a great work such as trying to capture this Islamic stronghold for Christ will be accomplished without cost. The blood of martyrs, precious in God's sight, the fastings and prayers and self-denials of God's servants, will all have a part. But there shall be a Day when every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord !

III

THE STORY OF AFZAL KHAN

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven."—*Psalm* 32: 1

THERE HAVE been others who have responded to God's love from a life of worldliness, such as Afzal Khan.

It was evening in Jellozai, and the old lady was sitting very contentedly on the string bed, mechanically muttering the *Wazifa* as she counted over the ninety-nine beads of her rosary, while watching her eldest son enjoying the rich pilau she had prepared for him: a great pile of white rice, with delicious morsels of fried mutton in it, together with raisins and cloves and other spicy flavourings to make it tasty. Forks were unknown in that house, but he made the rice into neat little balls about the size of a walnut and deftly popped them into his mouth without spilling a grain.

All her life and love were centred in him. True, she had other children by her second husband, but they could not touch her as did this one. His father, a fine, tall, broad-shouldered, heavily bearded man, feared by all and respected as the most influential man in the village, had died when this son, Afzal, was a lad. Would Afzal follow in his father's footsteps and become chief of the village? Might she live to see it? But she feared for him—he was so wild, so wayward, he would suffer no restraint. When he and his companions were known to be on the prowl, none dared go along the road alone; they were the terror of the countryside.

One night, long after midnight, Afzal returned home and, letting himself in by the window, was surprised to find his old mother bowed, with head on ground, on her prayer-mat, praying for him. He found later that this was no uncommon

occurrence; many whole nights she spent in prayer for her beloved son.

Afzal had enlisted in the army and gone down to India. Clad in a little gold cap with fringed puggree wound jauntily round it at a saucy angle on his head, gaily coloured waistcoat, voluminous white trousers and gold-sewn chuplis, with plenty of swagger, plenty of jokes, plenty of friends—he saw LIFE and enjoyed it to the full. He did not keep all the Ten Commandments; but, then, why should he? Had not God created men with lusts and passions? Then how could He blame them for indulging their lusts? For women, of course, it was a different matter; they would certainly burn in hell—all except one out of a thousand, but he was a man, he would say the Kalima at the end, and the Mullahs would see to the rest.

Later on, Afzal married in his village, but his little girl-wife died in childbirth, and he had no heart to make another attempt, so others arranged a second marriage for him with a girl whom no one else wanted. Once, when he was in the Punjab, he heard that his wife had a lover. His unbridled Pathan temper boiled over. Certainly, he indulged his passions, but that she, his wife, should dare! He pulled out his dagger and sharpened it; it should clear his good name, and he raced back to Jellozai; but when he got there he found the rumour had been false, so his wife's life was spared. But he could not stay in that little back-water, so he went back to life and the world.

At times, the thought of his sins would trouble him. He was especially burdened by the memory of the three murders he had committed. Could the mumbling of a few words in Arabic really atone for them? Then, one day in Pathankot, seeing a crowd, he strolled up and found a European preaching. It was the story of the Cross, and Afzal listened, entranced. That One should die to free him from his sin and the consequences came as the inflooding of a great light into his heart. He was captured and vowed there and then to find out more of this and, if he found it to be true, to follow this glorious One

to death. But it was not easy. To him it was unfolded what it would mean if he took up the Cross and followed the Crucified One—ignominy and shame, loss and suffering, and perhaps death. But his heart was captured, and there could be no thought of turning back.

A Pathan proverb says, " The way of the corn is through the mill," and the testing came. How difficult it was ! The undisciplined Afridi nature rebelled against the restrictions and humiliations ; but love prevailed and he won through. One day, while cutting grass, a job given only to a coolie, Afzal hurt his thumb, and there and then made up his mind to give it all up and return to the old, the easier life. But, on looking at the blood flowing from his hand, a vision came of the nail-pierced Hands. " He suffered for me," said he to himself, " can I not bear this for Him ? " Then he picked up the scythe and resumed his work.

Afzal wrote back to his relatives in the village, telling them he was a Christian. His wife took the letter to his uncle, the Headman of the village. The uncle's face grew very grave as he slowly and solemnly read the message. Then, without a word, he walked off to a lonely spot on the hillside and remained there for the whole day. Returning at evening time and flinging himself on the bed, he covered his face and said : " If this be true, then I can never face my own people again ! "

It was a happy day in 1933 when Afzal was baptized at Palampur, and after that he joined the missionaries in Kohat. Kohat was loath to believe that he, a proud Afridi of the Qazi-Khel, had thrown in his lot with the despised Christians. One day, at Christmas time, while buying sweets in the City, he took one and put it in his mouth. It was the Moslem fast month and people stared as though doubting the evidence of their own eyes. Then came the outburst.

" Who are you ? And how do you dare eat in the Fast ? "

" I am a Christian, this is our blessed Day ; why should I fast ? "

Then the people rained abuse on him, and thenceforth

he could not walk down the bazaar without meeting with shoutings and cursings, and vile epithets hurled at him from all quarters.

Afzal tells how wonderfully the Lord delivered him from fear the first time his uncle and cousin came to Kohat after him. "Yes, I was frightened; I knew their anger. They were both yellow with concentrated passion and fury, but, as I came up to them, all fear left me; I do not know how it was but, instead, a great peace came, and I thought, 'They can kill me, but they cannot do more; they cannot separate me from Christ!'"

Later on, another cousin came, saying, "We have heard that you have read the Gospel and been baptized, but we want to know why. Have you committed a crime and are you in hiding? Or are you hard up? Tell us—we will not give you away!"

"No, it is because I love Christ."

"But what do you get by it? See all this money I have in my pocket! What have you?"

Afzal, taking out his New Testament, said, "I have this!"

"Well, if you are a Christian, where is the English hat?"

"I have no hat. I am a Christian in my heart, not in my clothes."

"That is not likely; it must be somewhere."

"Here, then, take my keys; you may search my boxes if you wish."

A frenzied half-hour followed searching in the boxes, but no English hat was found.

"Well, anyhow, if you don't give up all this and return to us as a good Mohammedan, your life will not be worth that!" said the cousin, snapping his fingers. "It was only by your aunt's interference that you were saved from being shot last time you came to the village. But do not think you have escaped or are safe here in Kohat!"

Afzal quietly replied, "I know I am safe as long as God needs me here. He can protect me."

His wife, who had come with him to Kohat and had been baptized, later became very discontented. She returned to Jellozai, taking the two children with her. Then she, or rather someone on her behalf, wrote, refusing to return, unless Afzal recanted. There could be but one answer to that, and there followed a stream of vitriolic letters heaping scorn and abuse on him. She was visited but seemed adamant.

" He must return to the village," she said, " and live as a Mohammedan. Otherwise, he is not my husband and the children have no father ! "

Sometimes, when being taunted with having such a husband, she would storm with fury : " Don't take his name, name of a dog, name of a Kafir ! Has not one of you the zeal to go and kill him ? If he were brought back here in pieces, that day would be to me a festival, that would be to me as a cooling drink, and my heart would be at rest ! "

After some four months, hearing that his children were ill, Afzal made up his mind to visit them. It was dangerous ; in fact, he knew he was " going into the very jaws of death," as he said, but he was surrounded by prayer. One miserably cold and rainy day in early February, he started off. Greatest excitement prevailed in the village. Afzal was known as the Kafir, the Infidel, and invariably spoken of with scorn and disgust. The women were anxious to see this horrible thing, which had never before been known in Jellozai. How will he look ? How will he be dressed ? They crowded the roofs to get a glimpse.

Afzal was wrapped from head to foot in a grey blanket because of the rain. " Why, he looks just as he did before," said one of the women, " just like any of our men ! "

" Oh," said another, " he is only hiding himself thus. He will surely have boots, and an English hat, and perhaps a motor car ! "

Afzal's uncle, the big Khan of the village, was a violent-tempered man. In a fury he had once killed two cows with his naked fists. His eyes were bloodshot and blazing as he faced Afzal.

" You dare to come here? You, who have vilified our name and the name of our forebears! All mock at us on the road because of you. It is unlawful even to look upon your face. Go, go to the Mosque, repent and say the Kalima! If we were not in British India (curse the unbelieving dogs!) —I would kill you here and now—not merely kill you, but make you into mincemeat, so that you should not be recognized as a son of Adam! But come, let us sacrifice ourselves, that Islam be victorious and this shame be wiped out in blood. Let the police come, or the whole British Army if they will! To-day we are ready to die that the name of our Holy Prophet and his religion be vindicated! "

Afzal signed to his wife to come away with him, but she shook her head in a determined refusal.

" I have come to get you," he whispered. " I am ready to let my blood flow to rescue you and the children, and three times have I asked you." But she would not budge.

" What satisfaction will you get out of this? " Azfal asked the people. " Even if you kill me, it will bring you no joy."

" Get out, dog! " they shouted. " Now we know you are a hopeless infidel! You care not for your own life, nor for your wife and children. Know you not that if they die, not one of us will lift a finger to bury them? Now, once and for all, we will settle this matter. If you will recant and say the Kalima, well; if not, we will wipe out this disgrace to our family and our tribe in your blood! "

The uncle, in his furious passion, was viciously crunching the end of his beard between his teeth.

" Shut him up! " he spluttered. " I go to the Mosque to say my prayers and then will return and settle this business. You (to Afzal) meanwhile can think things over; it will be for the last time! "

They took him, cold and wet as he was, and shut him into a filthy shed, full of dirt and cow dung. He sank down on the floor, battered in soul and spirit. To face death in cold

blood and probably with torture was not easy. To say the Kalima meant escape for him. Would it be so wrong to say it? God knew what was in his heart. Then he turned to prayer, and it changed things for him. In that dirty shed that night it seemed as if One stood by him, saying, "What, canst thou not bear this for My sake?" He thought of the Day when he would stand before the Throne; would his name be denied then? He could not bear to face that shame. It became impossible for him to deny Christ; he would be true to death! Then came peace and renewed courage for all that might come. After midnight, came a knocking at the door, "Open!"

"Now," said Afzal to himself, "my time has come." But all fear had left him. "I was prepared for death," he said later. "I had washed my hands of this life."

Again the knocking came. "Surely here are my torturers," he thought, but he sat quiet. The third time the insistent knocking came, he rose and flung open the door. To his surprise, a young uncle stood there with bedding and tea.

"Hush," he said. "Shut the door quickly; you are delivered for this night."

A big Pir had unexpectedly arrived from another village, so that meant that all had to hustle round to entertain him and his numerous murids or followers. The elder uncle had no opportunity to return and settle Afzal's affairs. The younger one sat down and began questioning:

"What has happened to you, Afzal?" he asked. "We are all ready to receive you and love you as before. Why do you hold out against us? It seems as if there were a lock on your heart. Do you want to marry another?"

"If so," retorted Afzal, "should I have risked my life to come here after the mother of my children?"

"Then what is it? See, we will give you, each of us, so much money. We will definitely promise and sign a paper in court if you like. You will be the richest man in the village; you will be as a king in Jellozai! Does that not tempt you?"

And so on at length—but where curses and threats had failed, neither did promises and soft words prevail; and so the long night drearily passed.

At the first streak of dawn, the uncle said, "I go; I must lock you in again. I dare not do otherwise. But see the skylight; climb out of that and be gone while you may. If you delay there will be no escape for you."

And so, as if he were a pariah, they cast him out of his home and his village, the land of his fathers. "Now I know what Islam is," he said later. "I am convinced they will be only satisfied with my death. While I live, no joy will be theirs."

"Lord," he prayed later, "Thou hast put the ointment of Thy love upon the wounds of my heart!"

But the Enemy of souls was not going to let such a promising one of his prisoners go easily. The opposition to a convert from Islam is bitter and unending. Many devices were tried to wean Afzal from his Lord. Charms were procured and hidden under mats on the floor, in the food cupboards and other places, both in his house and that of the missionary. After he had left, a rough picture of him was found, drawn with the blood taken from a vein in the arm of one of his enemies and pierced with a hole at the chest. (Voodooism).

Afzal was very lonely. The Punjabi Christians seldom care enough for converts to show real brotherly love. He began to get careless and to fall into sin. Gambling is very common on the Frontier, and appeals to those who are brought up to feel that everything is controlled by luck and by fate. There are some places, curiously enough, where gambling is allowed by Government for certain days. Most of these orgies end in murder. One year, at Kaka Sahib's shrine, the total was seven Mullahs killed, without mentioning the common men!

The day came when it was disclosed that Afzal was gambling. He could not face the shame of it, and, in his impetuous way, he dashed off to the Mosque and denied his Lord. It was almost unbelievable. He who had said that to die for Christ

would be a beautiful death; he who had rejoiced when reviled and abused for Christ's Name, saying, "I have got a special blessing to-day"; he who had shown such zeal! To those who loved him, it was a sorrow too deep for words, a crushing blow.

It was the day after the English Church had been burnt down. They went to see the blackened walls and the wreckage all around, and were surprised to find the beautiful brass Cross intact and undamaged, shining among the debris. This discovery brought a ray of hope to at least one sorrowing heart that sad day. A wire was sent to friends in Rawalpindi, asking for their help, Ashgar, a teacher in Gordon College, was just about to take a class when the telegram arrived. He showed it to the Principal, Rev. J. B. Cummings, who advised him to go immediately to Kohat, saying that the class could take care of itself. Ashgar arrived that evening, but Afzal had disappeared.

It was rumoured that he was in a house of ill repute, so the missionary started out in the gathering dusk to search for him. It was not easy to find the house, in that City of 36,000 people, because all guessing her objective, tried to lead her astray. Not one of the Faithful would give away Afzal's hiding place. She knew not what to do, nor where to go, but, after lifting her heart in prayer, she felt compelled along a certain street, and at last, though there was nothing outwardly to indicate it, she was convinced that God had led her to the right house. Taking her courage in her hands, she banged on the door. The man of the house opened it himself, and one glance at his face assured her that her search was over. To see her was the last thing he was expecting, and she managed to slip inside the first door before he could prevent her.

"Afzal must come back; I need him."

"But why should you think he is here? I swear on the Holy Koran that I have not seen him. Besides, he is a Mohammedan now, never again will he be deceived by you or return to Christianity! You must go! It is night. I will not have you in my house!"

A swift prayer, and then she called out loudly, " Afzal, I want you ! " and from inside, almost as if involuntarily, out he came. Without paying any more attention to the man of the house, she laid hold of Afzal's arm, saying, " You must come back with me ! It is dark ! I cannot go alone ! "

When they reached home, there was another struggle on his part to return and on hers to get him into the house. But the door opened, and there, to Afzal's great surprise, stood Ashgar, who threw his strong arms around his friend as if he would never let him go.

Most of that night they talked together over the fire, while the women spent the time in the inner rooms with tears and intercessions. Weeping bitterly, Afzal found his way back to the foot of the Cross, and there was a glorious victory in the house on the hill that night and joy in the presence of the angels of God. Afzal had had opportunity to return to the old life, but a Love that was stronger had claimed him, and although he had with oaths and swearing denied his Master, yet, as of old, Jesus sought him out, and to that tender questioning he was able to answer out of a full and humbled heart, " Lord, Thou knowest all things, let the world say what it will, Thou knowest that I love Thee ! "

The triumph of the wicked is short. It was only a little while before a letter was sent by Afzal to the Deputy Commissioner, asking him to inform the Municipal Committee and all Kohat that, though he had made that public recantation in the Mosque, it had been done in a moment of madness and was now deeply repented.

" My life and death are for Jesus Christ," he wrote. " I have every faith in Him, and, up to the last moment of my life, He shall be my Saviour and the Lord of my faith ! "

IV

WOMEN ALSO

" The Lord is good . . to the soul that seeketh him."

—*Lamentations* 3: 25

How difficult it is for women in these parts to understand anything of spiritual truths, and yet, when they turn to the Lord, the veil is taken away and the fragrant love of these gentle ones is surely like a sweet odour ascending to the very heart of God. The world hears little of them, they are hidden away in the dark alleys of the City, or in the villages, or in the wild hills over the Border. One of these was Miriam, a little Sayid girl.

Tuberculosis takes a heavy toll of women in Peshawar City. The conditions of life in those narrow, airless streets, the purdah system, lack of sanatoriums or any knowledge of treatment, all help to keep it flourishing. Miriam was an early victim. She was about sixteen years old when her sister Arashbi started to bring her, week by week, to the Mission Hospital. There was nothing much in Miriam to attract attention; an ordinary little face, ordinary, rather dirty clothes, and a very ordinary disease. But one day, as the hymn " Jesus Loves Me " was being sung, there was the glimmer of a response. Was it the tune that pleased? Or did the words contain some glimpse of hope or comfort for the girl? Later, she learned the words and began to love them and, little by little, she grasped that for her there was Someone Who knew all about her, and loved her, and cared.

Arashbi was not pleased; she would scold her sister and pull her away roughly, telling her not to waste her time while the housework was yet unfinished. But the Seed was sown

and a harvest expected. One day, the hymn was written out on a card and given to Miriam. She snatched it eagerly and, hiding it in the folds of her dress, said, " Don't tell Arashbi—she must not see it ! "

As the cough got worse and the days hotter, Miriam began to droop, and grow gradually weaker. Her friend who had taught her the hymn went one day to their poor little house in the Gunj to say good-bye before leaving for the hills, and to take Miriam a few roses. When the girl heard of the impending departure she turned, and, flinging herself upon her friend in a passion of tears, said, " You cannot leave me all alone, there is no one else to love me here ! "

" Oh, little sister, there is Jesus, the Friend Who never fails and never forsakes ! He will stay ; His love will be your comfort."

Then Miriam looked up : " Yes, I had forgotten. He will be with me ! "

Often in the cool of Kashmir the thought of the suffering girl would come to her friend, and all she could do was to bring Miriam in the arms of faith and prayer to the Throne of Grace, where there was grace and help for every time of need.

Meanwhile, the end was drawing near for Miriam. Arashbi and her father saw they could not keep her. She would sit up in bed and sing over and over again the hymn she had learned, and told Arashbi openly that she loved Jesus ; and, to her sister's surprise, a wonderful change came over the little girl. Arashbi called in the neighbours, and they, too, were amazed at the radiant happiness of Miriam's face and the shining of her eyes. " We never saw anything like it before," they said. It was more like the dawning of a new life than approaching death.

Miriam was failing fast. Her father, at her earnest entreaty, went to the Hospital to ask her friend to come and say good-bye, but the Hospital was closed and all were away ; so Miriam had to give her messages to be delivered later. Many were

GHILZAI BOYS ON THE MARCH

[R. B. Holmes

remembered, and a wee bottle of attar of roses, the most precious thing she had to give, was put into Arashbi's keeping, to be given to her friend when she returned.

"Be sure you give it," Miriam cautioned. "If you use it on yourself, my spirit will see, and God will punish you! And tell her Jesus has made me happy!"

This was quite evident, for, as Arashbi and the poor old father sat up with her that last night, they were astonished at her calmness. "Her face was white and dazzling, like the sky at midday," they said, "and her eyes shone like flames!"

Just as dawn was breaking, Miriam sat up. "Bring me the jewel box," she whispered, and then, drawing the well-worn hymn card from under her pillow and handing it to her father, she said, "Put that among the jewels; it is more precious than all!" And so, with a joy and a peace in her face that passed all their understanding, the little girl sank back. Very soon her spirit left the frail body, the dirty bed, the sordid surroundings, the sorrowing father and sister, and passed into the fulness of joy, into the very presence of Him Who is Love itself. The tiny phial of perfume, duly handed over, was kept for many years, and, though the scent has evaporated, yet the precious memory remains of a little "lover of Jesus."

Another one for whom praise goes up to God was a village woman from near Peshawar. It was Whitsunday afternoon, and the subject chosen for that day's preaching was the work of the Holy Spirit, Who came to reveal Jesus the Mediator Who leads us to God. It was very hot, and the flies in the ward were busier than usual. Some of the patients were sleeping, some were groaning, and only a few seemed to care to listen. One sometimes asked onself, Is it worth while? But that afternoon two bright eyes answered the question and an insistent beckoning of a hand began the unveiling of a work of God.

It was Bibi Sarah from Taikal. She had been to the hospital several times before, but never had she realized that which had

come as a revelation to her that day. " I am a seeker after God," she whispered. " I study holy books and by prayer and meditation I was convinced that one day I would find Him. Now the way has become clear to me, and that without any efforts on my part. Show it to me from the Book ! "

As the two heads were bent over that enlightening and life-giving Word, the Holy Spirit did indeed reveal Jesus to that seeking soul. There seemed to be no difficulty in the way ; she was ready to receive and He to reveal, and the Light came flooding into that already opened heart. It was very interesting to hear of Bibi Sarah's search for God. Every book which the surrounding villages could yield had been procured and pored over.

" The love of God—I know it. He loves His children a thousand times more than a mother loves her child. But the evil spirits are all around us. From the day of birth they surround us, whispering evil in our hearts, tempting us. If we listen, then we forget God and wander in the paths of sin ; but He sends trouble and illness to bring us back to Himself. Each soul has a companion (Qarina), and whatever happens to one happens to the other also. Oh, what a multitude of spirits there are ! Under one foot you can crush thousands, but God sends eleven angels to be on our shoulders, hands, feet, back, front and head to guard us. He carves a road for us through all these spirits, and, as long as we go by that road, we are safe. But if we turn aside, even one footstep, then they overcome us. And how dreadful will the Judgment Day be ! Everything will be avenged—the slightest ill we have done will be avenged ninefold. The earth will be as brass and men will stand up to their necks in their own perspiration from fear. How shall anyone bear it ? The sun will beat down upon all and the evil doers will be burnt up, only those who have done well will be sheltered by God's shadow. Some say our Prophet Mohammed and Fatima will plead with God for forgiveness for us ; but how can we be sure ? "

Again the Word of God was opened, and there, instead of

doubts and speculations and judgments, the love of God shone out in the reconciliation of sinners through the Cross, with the assurance of a present salvation. " I knew that one day all would be revealed," said Bibi Sarah, with shining face. " I have prayed for this day and now my heart is at peace. How good God has been to me ! "

God had graciously shown her the Way ; only a few days longer, and He would take her out of the evil into the fulness of blessing. The day for her operation was settled. Just before it took place, the comfort-giving promises of Christ's presence and help for every time of need were shown her. That evening she was very weak and in such pain that she could hardly speak. She motioned her friend to pray with her.

" Do you feel His presence, Bibi, as He promised ? " she was asked.

A lovely smile spread over her dying face. " Countless blessings," she gasped, " countless blessings ! "

A few days later, her friend went out to the village beyond Taikal to visit her family, and they shared the mutual sorrow and mingled their tears. Bibi Sarah had been greatly loved in that little home, and, indeed, in the whole village. She had testified to the change and the new experience which had come to her during those last days in the hospital. " She had already left us," the villagers said. " She was all yours ! You were on the throne of her heart ! "

" No, Sisters, you do not understand. I only told her of Jesus ; it was He Who captured her heart ! "

" Yes, yes, that is what we mean ; it is one and the same thing. She told us all about it before she died." Later they begged, " Come and see her grave ! "

It was a barren, lonely spot in that Mohammedan cemetery under the shadow of the Khyber hills, where they had laid the body, but Bibi Sarah was only sleeping there till that Day when Christ shall come to be glorified in His saints—that Day which for her holds no more terrors.

Just as her friend was leaving the village, Bibi's little sister

ran up and, putting a white, curly lamb in the visitor's arms said, " Take this ! It is in memory of Bibi Sarah. She loved you ! "

Since then how often has the prayer gone up : " Lord, guide me to seeking souls ! "

The dearest of all to the writer and one who has shown the fragrance of a heart of love and deep thankfulness to God for His wonderful deliverance to her, is Minagul, fitly named " The Flower of Love." Her story, like so many others, begins with a murder.

Her stepfather stood, heavy chupli studded with cruel, large-headed nails still in his hand, contemplating the ruin of his home. The wee baby was whimpering on the bed and Minagul, a child of eight, was crouching in a dark corner, her beautiful, dark eyes filled with terror and horror. His wife, for the first time in her life, was not slaving to serve him ; she lay very still at his feet, the blood slowly oozing from an open wound in her head. In that wild district of Alisherzai, up in the Tirah mountains, he was certainly not the first to kill his wife. He had not meant to do so, of course, but, just to spite him for giving her that savage blow, she must needs go and die ! Of course, the life of a woman was not of much consequence, but the question was, Who was going to cook his food ? He had sense enough to realize that the girl was too small. Some kind neighbours took the baby from him, attending to it for the last few days of its life, but Minagul was the problem.

Next day, Malik Sangdil strolled in ; he was an old friend, and his cunning sharp eyes took in the whole situation at a glance. To him it was no problem but an easy way to make some money.

" I will take her off your hands," he said casually, but a gleam in his cruel, beady eyes showed the other how keen he was to get her ; so they began to haggle over the child. However, it was a relief to the father to get rid of the troublesome brat, and he let her go cheaply.

Sangdil, wrapping his heavy blanket round him, set off on his homeward way across the hills, followed by Minagul, stumbling along as best she could. Then he made for Kohat, where, as luck would have it, a Punjabi policeman had asked him, only a short while before, to procure a servant for him, to do the heavy work of the house. It took many hookahs and a long time to settle the bargain, but at last a price was agreed upon which gave Sangdil a nice, fat profit, and the girl was handed over.

Then came a gruelling time for the poor mite. The policeman had paid good money for her, about five pounds, and he was going to get his money's worth out of her. She was a slave-girl, so even the children of the house despised and ill-treated her. The only food she got was the scraps left over from their meals. Often she would be beaten or shut up in a dark room for hours and hours. Once she was thrown on to a fire of burning wood, and her maimed arm, broken by the policeman in a fit of savage temper after she had tried to run away, is a constant reminder and silent witness of what she had to endure.

One evening, Minagul felt she could bear no more. The family, having closed the door of the living-room, were crowded happily round the blazing fire, eating their supper that winter's night. Minagul, as usual, had been given a few broken bits of old chupatti and left in the big courtyard to find herself a sheltered corner where she could.

There is a Pushtu proverb which says : " Rather go a hundred rupees into debt than spend a winter's night out of your home ! " But there was no home for this poor child. The courtyard was a large open place, with the usual big, heavy, nail-studded door, leading out into the street and fastened with thick bolts and chains. As soon as darkness falls, of course, every door in Kohat is barred and bolted. It was a bitterly cold night in January, and Minagul shivered in her rags. She had often tried to open the big door, but her little hands had not the strength and she could not reach the bolts. The family knew

that, with the door shut, she was safely locked in and could not escape. She could not sleep for the cold, when, suddenly, in the pitch darkness, the lantern of some passer-by threw a little ray of light into the courtyard. Minagul ran to the door and, wonderful to relate, found it had not been fastened that evening! Was it Peter's angel who had unchained that door for her? No one will ever know how it happened. Very quietly, she slipped her small self out, and, very carefully pulling it to, silently, she sped away into the black darkness, endeavouring to put as great a distance as possible between her tormentors and herself.

The City gates were all shut, and how to escape she knew not. Surely God was guiding her steps! Having crossed the bazaar, she reached that part of town called Sanghir, where, seeing in a Mosque the light of a small *diwa* she ventured in. The Mullah, who was reading, raised his head and she saw a kindly face. Timidly, she crept up to him. "You are starving, child," he said. "Here, you may share my bread to-night."

The Mosque was only two doors away from the missionaries' home, and one of them was known to him. Next day, seeing the despair in the girl's eyes, he took her along to their house and, pushing her in, said, "Anyhow, they will feed you!" Miss Haines and her companions received this very pathetic "little one" in Christ's Name.

Later, when the fuss over her began and she was claimed by her former owner, there were anxious days. The policeman was willing to sell her to anyone but swore he would not let her into Christian hands if he were paid a thousand rupees! Who cared that a slave-girl had been ill-treated and was being resold? That was a common occurrence; but at the thought that coming into Christian hands she might be influenced to become one herself, the whole community rose up in horror.

When, at last, there came the official order to hand her back, Minagul's friends felt they had not the heart to do so.

" Why should you care so much ? " the Deputy Commissioner asked. " It is the fate of hundreds of girls like her ! "

That did not seem to make it any easier, but after much prayer, wonderful to say, the missionaries were able to make an arrangement to satisfy the greed of all parties, and, on the plea of the child's ill health, to keep and care for her ; the kind English Superintendent of Police turning a deaf ear and a blind eye to the proceedings !

Now, as the very beloved wife of a Christian Pathan and the mother of two beautiful babies, Minagul is hardly recognizable as the starved, terrified child, covered with sores, of ten years ago. " How often," she says, " as I lie on my bed in peace and safety, with my good husband and my children beside me, I think of all that God by His grace has delivered me from ! " The little home is one in which Christ lives, and it is a blessing to all around.

We have seen the pilgrims in days of yore,
The sweat and dust on their brow,
And the scalding tear upon their cheek—
Let us look on their faces now !

We think of the life of suffering,
Of the wilderness days of care,
And we try to trace the travel marks ;
But no scar is there !

The long, weary march is over,
They have entered their rest at last,
And the Master has received them,
The desert journey past.

PART THREE

There shall be a day . . ."

Jer. 31 . 6

AN ALLEGORY

" His dominion shall be . . . even to the ends of the earth"
Zechariah 9 : 10.

" We're marching through Immanuel's lands
To fairer worlds on high."

ON OUR way, what different countries we pass through ! The Land in which I find myself is not situated in the Temperate Zone ; in fact, it is nowhere near it. Fierce suns of Passion, devastating storms of Intolerance and Cruelty, the Powers of the Air, including the Prince thereof—all have full sway there.

The Land is bounded by great seas of Ignorance and Suffering, and also by the inaccessible ranges of Caste and Creed, rising to the grim heights of Tyranny and Oppression. The rivers of Superstition and Prejudice flow through the Land.

It is an absolute Autocracy, and the dark Ruler Zulm, with his Minister, Fear, has power over minds and wills, as well as over the bodies of his subjects. He imprisons many and binds them with the chains of Tradition and Custom. So subtle are his wiles that many are unconscious of his power over them and resent the implication that they are slaves. The laws are strictly enforced. Anyone not stamped with the image and superscription of the Ruler is an offence to the State.

No man, woman, or child, on pain of death, may leave the small plot on which he happens to have been born. No healing balm or cleansing medicine is allowed in the Kingdom, and no new discovery may be introduced. It is not the custom for the inhabitants to walk uprightly nor to lift their eyes above the level of their own heads. This has caused shortsightedness and, in many cases, total blindness. Disease abounds, the commonest of which is Fatalism, which sometimes develops into a coma of Despair. There is also a sort of Parasitism, almost like Cannibalism, and often there are virulent epidemics of Fanaticism and Bigotry.

The price of living in this Land is so high that after only a short sojourn one is drained of power, patience, and most of one's possessions.

Many are the gods worshipped in this Land, the most popular being Lust, Lore, and Lucre. The atmosphere surrounding these is heavy with the smoke and smell of Sacrifice and Incense, and a brooding darkness prevails in the vicinity.

There are some very sweet and beautiful flowers in this Land, but their loveliness is seldom seen in the murky twilight, and their delicate fragrace is overpowered by the pungent scents of the more sturdy bushes of Pride, Pretence, and Hypocrisy.

The gates to the heart of this Land are strongly barred and have been entered by only a very few. Certainly, there are paths, but the going is difficult. One path is the road of Humility and Self-denial, but so narrow a path is it, and so thorny, that the traveller is stripped and torn, body and soul, and left with no spirit to reach the end. The only sure road is that of Divine Love, but the taxes along this way are so heavy that one is soon impoverished. Unless provided with a daily fresh supply, one could not defray the cost or hope to win through to the goal.

Long years ago, knowing that there were precious treasures to be found in the Land, it was bought at great cost. But the Owner was not welcomed, and, in spite of the coming of many Servants to claim the Land for Him, the Usurper would not forego his stranglehold, and still holds sway. There are a very few who have escaped from his dominance and who acknowledge the rightful King. These are mostly of the Coney Tribe, and they are of no account in the administration.

One day, the King will come with all His Army to take possession. The Usurper will flee, the prison doors will be opened, and the King's faithful Servants will be rewarded. Their indignities will be forgotten and their sufferings unregretted, nor will they in that day deem the blood and tears poured out too great a price.

I

FIRST ADVANCES

" God . . . causeth us to triumph."—2 *Corinthians* 2: 14

" ' Where are you going, Great-heart ? '
' To beard the devil in his den,
To smite him with the strength of ten,
To set at large the souls of men.'
' Then God go with you, Great-heart ! ' "

THEY SAY that when Satan was cast out of heaven he fell in Kabul ! Evidently he felt at home, for he seems to have held sway there ever since. He claims the right, not only to Afghanistan but to all the surrounding countries too. The coming of anyone to attack his stronghold or to free his prisoners is fiercely resented and opposed. True, you may minister to minds and bodies as much as you will without any objections being raised. Injections, operations, and a high grade of education all are much appreciated; but beware how you trespass on his alleged prerogative of souls !

Oh, the darkness of these Christless lands ! But " Islam's waning crescent shall not always draw men's eyes from the Sun " ; there shall be a time when the Sun of Righteousness, shall arise ; then shall Day break over the world and darkness flee away !

In early days, soldiers played a prominent part in the establishment of missionary work on the Frontier. About the time of the disastrous Afghan War of 1839, the duty of giving the Gospel message to Afghanistan was very much laid upon the hearts of a band of Christian officers in the British Army. As they continued earnestly in prayer for guidance in this matter, a young lad from a Hindu family, taken as an orphan from Gwalior State in Central India and brought up

by the American Mission at Ludhiana, was being prepared by God for this very purpose. He took the name of George Washington Scott. After leaving the American institution, Scott passed through some trying experiences, being at one time absolutely destitute. The turning point in his life came when, all alone in a jungle, in danger of starvation, and believing he had no friend in the world, he cried for pity to Him Who nourished the very grass upon which Scott knelt. God graciously saved him, and after this he dedicated his whole life to his Redeemer.

Scott took service with a rich Mohammedan merchant, Nabi Baksh by name, who, seeing his honesty, trusted him with his business, his keys, and his monies. Scott constantly witnessed to his faith. That he was a Christian was the only fault the merchant could find with the boy.

In 1842, they arrived in Peshawar. Colonel Wheeler, who was stationed there at the time, had received from a lady in England a gift of beautifully bound Bibles in Persian and Pushtu for distribution in Afghanistan. The colonel consulted Scott as to how this distribution was to be accomplished, and the boy volunteered to leave his employer and take the Bibles himself.

" You are only a lad," said Colonel Wheeler, " and there is great danger of your losing your life ! "

However, after some days of prayer, it was decided that Scott should go ; and the Bibles were packed up and loaded on mules for their long journey over the wretched roads and dangerous mountain passes. Not hiding the fact that he was a Christian, Scott joined himself to a caravan, and the headman assured him, " So long as I am chief of this caravan your life is secure ! "

On his arrival in Kabul, Scott took up quarters in a caravanserai and displayed his wares—the precious Bibles, and some perfumery, and a few other small things for sale. Next morning, his action was reported to the Amir, Dost Mohammed Khan. Scott was at once arrested and told that he had forfeited his life. He could be saved only by saying the Kalima—

there was no other alternative. A Mohammedan Maulvi who had been educated in a mission school at Ludhiana was brought in to oppose him with arguments. Scott triumphed over him in these arguments, but, in spite of this, the judgment of the Qazi was that he should be put to death. However, the sentence was postponed, and Scott was confined in a loathsome prison, where he became dangerously ill with fever and dysentery and was reduced to a skeleton. Afterwards, for fear of arousing the anger of the British Government, the Amir gave orders that Scott be carried on a bed as far as Ali Masjid and then left to find his own way back to Peshawar. The Bibles and all that he had were taken from him, and remained in Kabul, perhaps the first sowing of the Seed in that bigoted stronghold.

In 1852, Colonel Mackeson was Chief Commissioner in Peshawar. He personally was friendly to missionary work, but was firmly resolved that no missionary should penetrate into the North-West Frontier Province. He subscribed to the newly established mission in the Punjab, adding in a postscript to his letter: "I take this opportunity of informing you that, for political reasons, I shall oppose the passage of missionaries across the Indus!"

On hearing this, Colonel Martin and five other officers in Peshawar solemnly dedicated themselves to work for the founding of a mission for Afghans. They prayed earnestly and watched and waited. A few weeks later, Colonel Mackeson was murdered on his own verandah, and was succeeded by Sir Herbert Edwardes. Colonel Martin then renewed his appeal for the commencement of missionary work. The new Commissioner, after walking twice across the room in deep thought, replied, "I see no difficulty in the project. It is the primary duty of a Christian to preach the Gospel of Christ!"

An historic meeting, presided over by the Commissioner himself, was held on December 19, 1853. He stated: "I say plainly that I have no fear that the establishment of a Christian mission at Peshawar will tend to disturb the peace . . . In this crowded city we may hear the Brahmin in his temple sound

his sunkh and gong, the Muezzin on his lofty minaret fill the air with his Azan, and the Civil Government which protects them both will take upon itself the duty of protecting the Christian missionary who goes forth to preach the Gospel."

The Church Missionary Society began work in January, 1855, the first three missionaries being Colonel Martin, who had resigned his commission; the Rev. R. Clark, and the stalwart Doctor Pfander, whose great work, *The Balance of Truth*, is being used of God to this day.

George M. Gordon, who was Chaplain to the troops in Kandahar, Afghanistan, in 1879 and 1880, had interesting experiences in that city. He is the only one of whom we know who has really worked in that closed land as an ambassador for Christ. He writes:

"I am thankful to say that the Gospel in Arabic, Persian and Pushtu was favourably received by some of the learned and influential natives of Kandahar, whose friendship was shown in frequent visits to my tent and hospitality at their own houses. One of them was the Qazi, another was a Doctor of Divinity of a very inquiring mind, who showed me a copy of the New Testament in Hindustani, which he had not only read, but of which he had committed parts to memory . . . May God in His own time raise up an apostle to the Afghans of Kabul and Kandahar!"

Mr. Gordon distributed many Testaments, which were very eagerly and thankfully received, and he asked for another camel-load of Bibles to be sent. But his prayer has not yet been answered. There have been witnesses, some of whom have been tortured and some of whom have laid down their lives. Several missionaries have gone in on fleeting visits, but always on the understanding that they do no religious propaganda, and so, in mission parlance, Afghanistan is still a closed country. There are a number of foreigners there, a small company at each of the Embassies, each one living in the accustomed way of his land, whether Russian, Turkish, French, German, British, or American. There have been trippers and traders, specialists and scientists, explorers and exploiters, but, so far, the beautiful feet of the messengers who bring the Good Tidings have not found their way in.

[M. W. H.

" Despair in the girl's eyes " (Page 114)

" Six months later, hardly recognisable " (Page 115)

God's highway to Afghanistan is still to be discovered. Many have come to the Border, hoping to enter in with the Message, but have failed to find a way. But, although it is still hidden, a way there must be; there shall come a day when the mountains and the hills shall be made low, and the crooked places straight, and the rough places plain; and when, even in Afghanistan, the glory of the Lord shall be revealed before the eyes of all.

A bit of Afghanistan comes down year by year into India when the Powindah tribes migrate for the winter from their hill homes to the desert sands of Dera Ismail Khan. Many thousands of women and children settle themselves in very comfortably while their men folk go off to Calcutta and elsewhere to sell their goods—carpets, horses and other things.

One bright day in February, 1925, Doctor Shearburn and two companions started off to visit one of these encampments. They had to bump for many miles along the sandy track. In front a mirage appeared. They drove on and on but got no nearer to it, and, finally, it disappeared altogether. It was very beautiful and rather like the visions they had often had of the evangelization of Afghanistan—glimmering with hope and glory, and then slowly disappearing into the mists of disappointment. But "one day the mirage shall become a pool," and the vision of the knowledge of the Lord covering Afghanistan as the waters cover the sea will become a reality.

At last, the travellers sighted the black tents of the encampment, and, as they drew near, a number of big, wild dogs, barking fiercely, rushed out at the car. They could not proceed until someone from the camp, even though it was only a small child, came out to assure the dogs that the visitors were harmless. Soon they were comfortably seated in the Headman's tent. It was Alam Khan, the Chief of the Karoti tribe, who was entertaining them, and doing it most royally. The walls had been built up with rough stones to the height of about four feet, the roof being the coarse black tenting. Inside, magnificent carpets were spread on the sand and large bolsters covered

with smaller rugs, upon which to sit or lean, lay round about, making it very cosy. Fragrant green tea was presented to them in tall glasses, which were encased in beautifully chased silver holders, and, to their surprise, for the dish of rice some old golden Russian spoons, set with turquoises and other stones in rococo work, were provided for their use.

" But these are very valuable ; do they not get lost in the sand as you travel ? "

" Oh, yes, every year we lose some ; but we can always get more from Bokhara ! " Certainly, there was no sign of poverty here.

Then Alam Khan asked about the books they had with them. He was a refined, thoughtful man, and could read Persian. That day a remarkable picture had been brought. John the Baptist on the desert sands stood with hand outstretched, pointing to some distant object. The sacrifices of old were touched upon and compared with the present-day sacrifices of the Moslem world ; and the fact of their constant repetition proving their insufficiency, was stressed. This Prophet had come to tell of a perfect Sacrifice :

" See his hand pointing to that group of men coming towards him ! He is saying, ' Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world ! ' "

Alam Khan, who had been following intently, started up, his whole soul in his eyes. " Who was it ? " he cried. " Tell me who it was ! " Then they preached unto him Jesus ! Deep sighs came from him, with exclamations of " This is wonderful, this is wonderful ! " as he listened to the Story of the wondrous Sacrifice of Calvary and the work which was finished there.

Alam Khan was a prepared soul, and, in the talks that followed during the next two days, it seemed as if he just accepted very simply as a little child Jesus the Saviour of the world.

Perhaps you do not know," he said very touchingly, " that in our religion of Islam there is neither comfort nor hope ! "

Before leaving, Alam Khan took many Gospels and tracts,

both in Persian and in Pushtu, saying, " Now I go back to my people near Ghazni, and I will tell them of these wonderful things !" It was an unforgettable time, a day in which one felt one was touching Eternity. Many were the prayers that followed the camp as they started off on their homeward journey shortly afterwards. But within a month, as they were on the Pass, cholera met them. Many died, and among them Alam Khan, the gracious host and joyful receiver of the Good News. What a transformation from the black tents under the waving palms on the desert sands, to the Throne of the Lamb Who leads to living fountains of waters ! " Glory and thanksgiving be unto our God for ever and ever ! "

Now and again, a peep into Afghan home life is vouchsafed, a contact is made, and a portion of the veil is lifted. It was autumn when Gulreza first came to call at the house on the hill in Kohat. The two " foreigners " found much in common, one from the wilds of the Sufed Koh in Afghanistan, and the other from the lesser hills of the Grampians in Scotland. It was cosy to sit by the fire over a cup of tea while Gulreza chatted about her home in the hills, and the lilt of her high-pitched, musical voice, so like a Highlander's, was homelike.

" Tell me about your little girls."

Gulreza's laughter went trilling up to the roof. " What is there to say of them ? There is nothing worth telling ; they are but little worms ! "

One day, jumping to her feet, she floated around the room in easy, graceful movements, crooning a Persian song to a sweet melody. " Sing it again, Sister ; it reminds me of my own Songs of the North ! " She was only too willing to comply, and, meanwhile, the haunting tune was captured and dedicated to worthier words.

Sometimes Gulreza would speak of her son in the hospital just next door and of the difficult journey from their home. One day, the talk turned on deeper subjects—our heart-need and the wonderful love of God to us ; but, catching sight of a little scrap of red cotton cloth, she begged for it, coaxingly

adding, " Whenever I see this, I will remember you ! " In a few minutes, the ever-present needle was produced from near her left shoulder, and the bright bit added to her voluminous black skirts, which reached from her chest to the ground. Above her flowing skirts she wore a tight bodice of purple material, which was crowded with silver rupees, medals of ancient dates, and fascinating silver buttons. Some of the buttons were of filigree work and some solid, and all of pretty shapes. In the centre of them all was a coin with the whole Moslem creed written on it in Arabic. The dress was already filled with bright patches of all colours, but these made it the more attractive, besides bringing pleasant memories of places and friends.

Next day, Gulreza burst in, saying, " Tell me again those beautiful words ! " (So the pleasure over the little red patch had not obliterated everything !)

" Sit down then ; now it is my turn to sing to you ! " Fitting the words of the hymn " Just as I am," to the sweet melody of the day before, her friend seated herself at the harmonium and began. Gulreza listened entranced.

" It is the words of the heart ! " she cried, starting up with tears in her large grey eyes. As the recurring chorus came : " To Thee I come, to Thee I come ; Jesus, Lord, to Thee, I come ! " she joined in. And so the friendship began.

" Tell me of your firstborn and of how you lost him ! "

" Oh, Sister, if you could have seen him ! How beautiful he was. His colour was of milk and he was straight as a fir tree. The garden of his cheeks had just begun to blossom. But the earth has swallowed him, the very core of my heart, my life, my all ! Oh, God, how can I bear it ? "

Gulreza could hardly speak for her sobs. When she became calmer, the story came out—the story of a brave woman, recking not of cost or danger to try to save her son. Of course, there had been a blood-feud, but of such long standing that they had almost forgotten it and had for long ceased to worry about it. That summer afternoon, in the little homestead in

Hariob, over the Afghan border, all seemed so peaceful and happy. The little boy was driving the cattle in while his father was mending the mud roof before the storms of winter began. The little girls were making a toy house of mud in the courtyard, complete with fireplace and pots and pans and even little figures of cows and dogs. The eldest girl was busily carding sheep's wool to make up into the coarse frieze for the men's coats; while the mother, Gulreza, also on the floor, with a big earthenware pot in front of her, was rhythmically churning milk to make the clarified butter for the coming months. The two elder sons had gone off some hours before, striding over the hills in search of a chikor, or hare, or anything for the pot.

Suddenly, the peace of the evening was broken by the sharp report of a rifle which echoed through the hills; then another, and then another! The same thought came to all—Our boys, may God protect them! Without a word, the parents rushed off in the direction of the shooting. Up the hill they dashed, and, as they came nearer, they could distinguish the two boys; Khanmir, the elder, lying dead in a pool of blood by a great rock, and Dadmir, beside him, wounded in the arm.

"Oh, my Son, my firstborn, my beautiful boy, my life's blood, how cruel is fate! But how useless to murmur, or to try to fight against it! It is God's will, and bear it we must. Would God I had died for thee, my son, my son!"

The question of how to save Dadmir's life was anxiously discussed. The store of money was unearthed from its hiding-place under the floor and counted over. It was not sufficient, so a cow was sold, and, after a few preparations, accompanied by his brave mother and sister, Dadmir started off on the long journey of nearly two hundred miles to the nearest hospital of which they knew.

The first part of the journey was excruciatingly painful, the wounded boy being carried on a camel and jolted at every step. But after crossing the Border by the Peiwar Pass, some ten or twelve miles farther on, they found a lorry driver willing to

take them the rest of the way, which was both quicker and easier.

Dadmir was received into the Civil Hospital at Kohat, where his wound was operated on and dressed; but, though his arm was greatly improved, no doctor could cure him. He was in the last stages of tuberculosis and death was claiming him. One day, a message was sent round to ask forgiveness, as is the custom when dying, and to say good-bye. The next day it was all over.

"Oh, sister," Gulreza sobbed, throwing her arms around her friend's neck, "how can I go back? How shall I face his father? He will become a corpse when he hears!"

Soon a plain white winding-sheet and a coffin were procured and a lorry requisitioned, and all set off with the poor body to a small Mosque specially meant for strangers. It was situated in a little copse of shisham and mimosa trees outside the city. There the last offices for the dead were performed. Gulreza's two friends, on their knees and with the help of small pen-knives, stuffed the cracks of the rough coffin with cotton wool, and the broken-hearted mother prostrated herself again and again as she raced through her prayers in the Mosque. When all was finished, the Mullah called for prayer—he standing in front of the bier facing towards Mecca, and the others branching out fanwise behind him: "Oh, God, Lord of the worlds, the Merciful, the Compassionate!"

But was He? On the desolate heart of the mother the familiar words fell, but with no comforting assurance. What was God but a cold, impersonal, indescribable Force? No ears with which to hear her cry, no eyes with which to see her tears, no heart with which to feel her grief!

"Hurry, hurry," honked the lorry driver. "The sun is high, and we have far to go." And so they bore the coffin to the road, and, mid tears and many promises of remembrance, they started off on the journey back, first to Parachinar, then on to the Peiwar, as far as the road goes, and then over the hills. Back to the desolate home and to the poor father, who now has nothing more to live for, save the sorry duty of risking his old life for the avenging of his two sons!

II

OVER THE BORDER

"The way of peace have they not known."—*Romans* 3: 17

ONCE THERE was the thrill of witnessing over the Border. It was in the winter of 1925 that Miss Vera Studd and her companion first went prospecting up the valley of the Kurram River in Administered Territory, where no missionary had ever worked before. At Thal they found the road barred by a gate decorated with barbed wire, where, until they had written up names, nationality, business, and length of stay, they were not permitted to proceed. On fulfilling all demands and after showing the Political Agent's letter of permission, they were allowed to go on.

Just on the other side of the barrier, they found their old friend, Kastir Malik from the Orakzai, a hefty, red-faced, heavy-bearded giant. He rushed at them, hands outstretched, and shouted a welcome: "You have well come! Are you well? Are you strong? Are you happy? How are all at home? Are all well? Are all happy?"

When they had competed with each other in the speed and warmth of their greetings, they were led to the place he had prepared for their entertainment. They found chickens and curry and enormous chupattis, beds and quilts—all very welcome after the cold sixty-mile drive. Kastir had arrived only the evening before from his home in the hills. He was a typical Afridi, so involved in blood-feuds that he was often unable to cross the threshold of his own home in safety by daylight. He was a kind-hearted man and had befriended a Khuttak who was flying from the avengers of a man he had murdered in his own country. Three years later, this Khuttak,

accepting a bribe from Kastir's cousins or enemies (the name being synonymous in Tirah), seized Kastir's gun and shot him in the courtyard of his own house as he was repeating his midday prayers, hands uplifted to his ears, after the manner of their supplications. But the Khuttak did not live long to enjoy the four thousand rupees he had earned by his treachery. After handing him the money, the instigators of the scheme let him take the path towards his own village for a few miles. Then, overtaking him, they not only recovered their own money but made him pay with his life blood for the dastardly part he had played in the plot against Kastir.

Kastir Malik made a good host, and the travellers fell on the food provided for them and shared the rumours of the countryside. Then the journey was resumed. It was a beautiful drive along the Kurram River, with willows and big chenar trees and little rushing streams bordering the road. Now and again there were views of the Sufed Koh, or White Hills, which at that season they indeed were. Kastir was acting as guide and he seemed to have friends or business at most villages. At one, they picked up two dozen hard-boiled eggs and a roasted chicken, which Kastir ate as they went along; at another, they had to stop to bind up a woman's hand which had been nearly chopped off by an irate husband; then to see an old man with a cataract and then some more sick folk; then some punctures, so that it was evening before they arrived at Parachinar, only ten miles from the Afghan border.

Next day, some of the Chiefs, and Maliks, came to call, and they gave a very pressing invitation to come up to stay among them. The morning before Kastir and his party left, the Extra Assistant Commissioner, a Pathan, came and said: "I have been hearing about you. I think you had better come here to stay; the people want you!" The two missionaries were very willing and, indeed, longed to accept the invitation, but it was not possible without the permission of the Authorities. They wrote and begged and waited and

prayed; but the end of it all was a decided refusal. There never had been mission work over the Border, so, of course, it could not be allowed!

After a few months, the Chief Commissioner was changed and another attempt was made. This time, after a great deal of correspondence and wire-pulling, permission was given for the summer months of 1927. A Dispensary was started in a nice little native house, a Doctor procured to run it, and a busy, useful season begun. Over three thousand attendances were registered in that short time, and several villages around were visited. The most friendly of them all was the village of Peiwar, just below the Pass. Large chenar trees and little clear streams made an ideal place in which to rest and drink tea. Malik Hussan Ali was most hospitable and the good-looking women all so friendly. The beautifully engraved brass teapot with the Malik's name on it, for which the Kurram is celebrated, and still one of the writer's most cherished possessions, remains to this day a pleasant memory.

Doctor Hunsberger, who helped for two months, also felt the thrill of the Border. One day, she and her two companions were invited out to Peiwar for tea. The Malik's red-bearded brother was an amusing character, and delighted in recalling for their benefit the fifteen murders he had committed! As they drank green tea in the many-windowed room at the top of the high tower looking over to the Pass and the hills of Aghanistan, he said reminiscently:

"Yes, praise be to God, I have got the better of all my enemies. The last one I imprisoned in this very room where we are now sitting, but he got out and jumped for that tree just over there. Catching hold of a branch, he meant to let himself down and get away; but I heard him and was ready for him. My rifle was in my hand and I picked him off. He fell like a stone and never moved again. Ah, those were the days! Now, since the British Government does not allow anyone to kill, we live the lives of chickens and die like women in our beds! Pah," and he spat contemptuously. Some

three months later, he was shot from behind a big rock in a scrap on the hillside, so had the satisfaction of dying like a man!

One day, while the Doctor and Nurse were working among the patients, the writer was called out to a visitor. He proved to be Hassad Khan, the biggest Mullah of the district. They talked platitudes for a while and then she offered him, according to Pathan custom, a bowl of tea.

"No," he said, bowing politely, "I cannot drink your tea. I have not come here with the intention of being friends with you—just the opposite. I want to tell you that I mean to oppose your work. I know that if you stay here my influence and power will be lessened. Also you are curing these women and babies. Do you not know that a great part of my income is derived from writing and selling charms to them? Now they are not coming for them so much as before!"

It was difficult to answer him agreeably; of course, all her sympathies were with the women and children. Why should they be kept in pain, sickness, and ignorance in order to fill his pockets? She tried to lead the conversation on to higher things, but he would have none of it. He knew the object of missions and he was out to oppose and destroy the work.

"I shall go to the Chief Commissioner," he said. "He, I know, will listen to me, the chief Mullah of the valley. I will say that you are interfering with our religion and that the Turis will rise if the Dispensary is not closed. You well know that Government never favours missionaries!"

"But would they really rise, Mullah Sahib?" she asked. He waved his hand impatiently at such a stupid suggestion. "Of course not! We Shiahs need the protection of the British Raj, living as we do, surrounded by Sunnis! It is but an argument and it will succeed!"

The Mullah was right. It did succeed. The Dispensary was not allowed again, and no petition, even though backed up by the names of three thousand women and children, could induce the Authorities to alter their decision. After all, it was a Mullah of influence in the place who made the

objection, and the three thousand were merely women and of no account. The British Government was there to keep the peace ! Had the missionaries been willing to keep Christ's Name absolutely out of it, it would have made all the difference. But is medical work alone really worth while ? True, it lessens pain, it lengthens lives, it gets the workers a good name ; but, in the end, the worms win, " feeding sweetly " on all !

Frustration of plans is always hard to bear, and hope deferred makes hearts sick. How strange that officials do not realize that the blessings of our wonderful land have come through that which they are not willing to give to these Mohammedans and others, bound in the affliction and iron of ignorance and darkness !

The caravans from Afghanistan to Peshawar were once a sight that no visitor cared to miss. The long, picturesque strings of heavily-loaded camels, slowly and patiently wending their dignified way along the rough track, were a sight to remember. Caravans containing a hundred camels, all tied head to tail, would pass, each camel placing its feet so slowly and gently that if it were not for the bells that adorned them, a big caravan could easily pass without being heard. After them come straggling along flocks and herds, ponies and mules, men, women, children, and, every now and again, a wolflike dog guarding his master's interests. Then comes a sick woman on a donkey, or a purdah woman, or perhaps a little new bride, squatting in the closed pannier on the side of a camel and hidden from all prying eyes in her long, white burkha. In an open pannier, precariously balanced, are bright-eyed, laughing children, packed in with cocks and hens, or any lambs and kids too young to journey on foot. The young chiefs, on their old-fashioned peaked saddles, brightly caparisoned with rich saddle-cloths career about, showing off the fine ponies from whose sale they hope to make a fortune on arrival in the town. Strings of blue beads, coloured tassels, and nose-pins adorn most of the horses and camels, and the tinkle of many bells help to give heart to the weary travellers.

Between Landi Kotal and Jamrud is the celebrated Khyber Pass. Although bounded on both sides by tribal territory, or Yaghistan (the Land of the Lawless), the road itself is under British protection. On two days of the week, Tuesday and Friday, the road is picketed to insure safety, for in olden times it was the most dangerous part of the two-hundred-mile trek from Kabul. As the caravan enters the Pass, each member realizes that he holds his life in his hand and God alone knows if all will be alive another night to gather around the fire to cook and eat the evening meal.

Those bare, rocky hills, frowning grimly down on either side of them, are the allies of the raiders, or Yaghis, those without law. True, they were all sons of Islam and ready to die for their religion, but so long as they could repeat the Creed and say their prayers five times a day, why should they not rob and plunder? Were not travellers, especially those with weak escort, their lawful, God-given prey? For without the loot of passing caravans and the raiding of their prosperous Indian neighbours, how were they to live and feed their children in that barren wilderness of no-man's-land?

Ali Masjid, half way through the Pass, is the favourite resting-place. All can refresh themselves at the cool spring under the trees, and no devout traveller would omit going to the little mosque to pray for a blessing on the remainder of the journey. Farther on, the Faithful may stop and gaze with awe at the marks of Ali's wonderful charger, Daldal, which, on his magical journey to the Khyber, left the print of his hoofs at intervals of many yards on the grey sandstone rocks in the narrow defile. A large rock about ten feet high lies near the mosque. On this can be seen the "punja," or impression of the five fingers of Ali's powerful hand. This is the rock he hurled at the gigantic Brahman sorceress who in those days owned the whole country. This so frightened her that she fled for her life, and the marks of her hectic flight and many falls still may be seen. This is the narrowest part of the Pass and an ideal place for raiding. A story is told of

some men who, while saying their evening prayers, spied a weakly-guarded caravan coming along. Down the hill they dashed and raided it; then, racing up the hill again with their plunder, they were in time to finish their prayers before the sun sank behind the hills.

The men in charge of a caravan have an anxious time; but the boys thoroughly enjoy the fun of new surroundings each day and new camps every night. The women in their long, full skirts swing bravely along, but they often have a hard time. Although the scene may be picturesque enough, there is many a tragedy which no globe-trotter can ever guess.

Durani's experience was not unique. The caravan straggled along; it had been a stiff march, but they were more than half way to the next camping place and only about six miles remained. But for Durani it was the end of the march. She was only sixteen years old and did not know how to bear these terrible pains. She sank down as another paroxysm came upon her, but her husband called to her impatiently, "Come on! See how far ahead the caravan has gone! This is no place in which to pass the night."

Yet another bout of pain seized her and she whispered, "I cannot!"

"Well," he said, "I am not going to stay here, anyhow; I have the cow and these two calves to think of. See how black is the sky in the west! Also there is neither shelter nor food here. I go!" So saying and driving the cattle before him, he strode off to reach the shelter of the camp before the storm began.

So little Durani was left to face her hour of travail alone When the baby was born, she wrapped it in a bit of cloth, but, feeling too weak and exhausted even to stand, she perforce had to abandon herself and her firstborn to fate. Night was coming on when the sound of a motor was heard coming down the road. Captain Meynall, V.C., was driving himself that evening. He was surprised to see a young and pretty Kabuli woman alone by the side of the road. He stopped to inquire

into the matter, and, when he learned the state of affairs, his anger rose. He put mother and babe gently into his car, turned around and drove back to where he had seen the Kabulis camping.

When he handed out his protegée, he gave the husband and the other men quite a big piece of his mind. " What a fuss over a woman ! " they all said. " Why, one could buy a good cow for the price of this girl ! How incomprehensible are the ways and the values of the Western peoples ! "

Basso's husband was kinder. The snows had melted, the Fast month was over, and they were on their way back to Tirah. She found it difficult to keep up with his long, free, swinging stride, hampered as she was by her small son of four, as well as by her own burden. It is the custom of Kabuli caravans to start before dawn and to pitch camp about midday ; but the Tirahwals wait for daylight and march until early evening. The sun was getting low when Basso told her husband that her time had come.

" Well," said he, " give me Gul Khan and hurry up over things. I will wait here half an hour for you ! "

It was all over by the time he wanted to start, and, with the little newcomer tightly bound up in her arms, Basso rejoined him and finished the remaining seven miles as darkness fell.

The North-West Frontier Province is bounded on the east by India and on the west by Afghanistan. Between Afghanistan and the British-ruled Frontier Province lies a strip of wild country called Tribal or Independent Territory which is outside British administration, although nominally belonging to it. This Independent Territory is divided up into states : in Chitral a Mehtar rules, in Dir, a Nawab, and in Swat, a Wali. The remainder of Independent Territory is inhabited by well-defined tribes, sub-divided into clans. There the strongest man rules, until he is ousted by a stronger. The old law and simple plan applies that they should take who have the power, and they should keep who can.

The religion of the Border and of Afghanistan is Moham-

medanism, in which there are said to be three parties. There are those who make use of their religion as a political weapon and so gain power; there are those who consider it a means of profitable livelihood; and there is the mass of the people, born in it, mostly illiterate, who accept it blindly without question. Thank God, there is another group who, though small in number, are seekers after God, for "in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him," even in Islam. But there seem to be very few such. The Moslem religion is terribly materialistic, and there is in it a great deal of superstition, which is fostered by the Leaders and Priests as a means of obtaining more power.

The five obligations on its adherents are purely mechanical duties. The repeating of the short creed, prayer five times daily, almsgiving, pilgrimage to Mecca, and the Fast—all of which may be accomplished without the turning of the heart to God, almost without a thought of Him. The tongue glibly repeats the Creed but God is merely a name to them. The genuflections of the body and the repetition of the Arabic formula fulfil the demands of the five daily prayers, but how few even know the meaning of the words! The pocket supplies the alms and also self-satisfaction to the giver, but there is seldom any self-sacrifice, or love, or even pity in their gifts. The pilgrimage is now accomplished without the hardship of former days and sometimes even by proxy; but, apart from the honorific title of Hajji and the permission to wear a green turban, one has seen no other benefit from it, either spiritual or temporal. The digestion, the temper, and the happiness of the home, all suffer in the Fast month; but how exuberant is the joy at Id-ul-Fitr, when the thin rim of the moon appears in the West to tell the Faithful that it is all over for another year!

Although it has no high moral ethics and reveals no pathway leading to God, the Moslem religion is a tremendous factor and wields a most astonishing power. One word is sufficient to fan the fervour of thousands into a fanaticism which will

go to all lengths. The Moslems' devotion to their religion is greater than love of family, demands of loyalty, or claims of conscience.

The laws of Islam are founded mainly upon the laws of Moses, and as Mohammedans know not the Dispensation of Grace brought in by our Lord, they are still following the precepts of "B.C." Many of the customs laid down in the Old Testament are followed, such as those relating to land, marriage, and childbirth. The law of retaliation is carried out according to "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," and the patience of the East is seen in the watchful waiting to take revenge. A terrible instance of this was seen in 1934, when a Pathan named Mahmud, in order to revenge what he considered an injustice, murdered Miss Boj, a Danish nurse, and the Indian nurse who tried to save her, and also the beautiful little son of the missionaries, the Rev. and Mrs. Christensen. Sometimes this spirit of revenge is harboured for years and years. For a normal Pathan to forgive and forget an injury seems impossible. Yet when he does get into the era of Anno Domini, one sees marvellous instances of grace and forgiveness.

Murder is terribly common. It may be committed in an uncontrollable fit of temper, or in an act of looting, but the basic motive in the majority of murders is revenge; and not, as some Europeans think, a senseless desire to kill.

On the Frontier, the Sunni, or Orthodox Moslems, predominate, although there are groups of Shiahs, especially in the Kurram Valley and Hangu district, in Khost and even in Tirah itself. The antipathy between these two sects is bitter and unending and often breaks out into warfare. The Sunnis despise the Shiahs and will not even eat with them. They maintain that the Shiahs are infidels because they exalt Ali, the fourth Khalifa, almost to the rank of God. When they slaughter animals or cut a chicken's throat, they do it in the name of Ali to make it lawful for eating, instead of in the name of God, as does the rest of Islam. Some of the Shiah tenets are peculiar, such as Muta, temporary marriage, and Taqiya,

[*V. Studd*

"Little Saidabbaz means all the world to Mirbaz" (Page 152)

religious dissimulation—permission or even encouragement to lie in order to benefit their religion. Their emotion and fanaticism rise to their height at the Moharram, when, for the first twelve days of that month, the deaths of Hussan and Hussein, the grandsons of Mahommed, are mourned. The whole story of their last battle and death is rehearsed as a drama. The women crowd the roofs and galleries of the Mahtam Khanas, or mourning houses, and follow the reading of the story with beatings of face and breast and wild weepings and cryings. The men, stripped to the waist, beat their breasts till they are black and blue. Sometimes a hole is pierced with thumb finger, so that a spurt of blood is jerked out each time. Then they flagellate their bare backs with chains and knives until the blood pours down on to their white trousers and their backs are like a ploughed field. The excitement and enthusiasm rise to fever pitch, and at these times the men seem to be incapable of feeling.

They tell of an old custom in the Kurram Valley of picking a fair, beautiful boy, with no blemish of any kind, to sacrifice to Ali. The men gather in a secret place and form a great circle. The boy destined for sacrifice is then brought into the circle and made to dance and sing, while drums begin to beat and horns and bugles to blare, in order to drown his coming screams. Then one man will throw a dart or a knife at the child, who will scream and run to the other side of the circle. Another man will do the same from there, and so on, until the boy is mad from fear and pain, and finally dies from loss of blood, a sacrifice to Ali !

III

TIRAH AND MIRBAZ'S STORY

" We walk in darkness . . . Salvation . . . is far off from us."
—*Isaiah* 59 : 9, 11

SOME PARTS of the Border region are terribly barren and dry. Waziristan is said to be particularly so :

" Parching drought and raging flood,
Months of dust and days of mud,
Mixed monotony and blood,
That's Waziristan ! "

Swat is well cultivated and very lovely, with its mighty, rushing river and beautifully green valley. Tirah, the home of the most attractive of all the fine tribes of the North-West Frontier, is a mountainous and beautiful country, richly forested. It contains the chilgoza pine and walnut, the olive and other fruit trees, and several good springs and rivers, which could make it a fertile and prosperous land if it were not alas ! for the tyranny of the blood-feud.

The people are virile, clever, full of humour, and capable of intense devotion and fanaticism. The old feudal system obtains whereby a man amasses power and, as long as he can hold it, rules as chieftain in his village. He takes families under his protection (even Hindus and Sikhs, who are called Hamsagan), and looks after them as he does those of his own house. The Akhundzada, a big, heavy man with a white beard, is the spiritual leader in Tirah, and his word is considered to be law. He has married twenty-five women so far, but he keeps only four wives at a time, and when desiring a new bride, divorces one of the four and thus does not trespass the bounds imposed by the Sheriat.

Blood-feuds formerly were universal ; in fact, no respectable man would be without one ; it was a mark of influence

and power, like debt. These blood-feuds were handed down from father to son, even women carrying them on at times until their baby sons were able to hold a rifle. Accounts are kept by the families—men, of course, counting for most, then children, women and animals killed, houses burned, and fields ruined. Sometimes " stones are placed "—that is, a truce is made, for ten days, or two or three months, as necessity arises, because of a death, or a wedding, or such like. At such times the two enemies may sit side by side in a hujra, drinking tea and conversing on all topics except the blood-feud; but, as soon as the appointed time expires, the feud is taken up again, waging its relentless course from generation to generation.

Often a man's enemy will put a price on his head, then he dare not walk about openly, except in British Territory. If he wishes to return to Tirah, he gives out the date and route of his journey; then, muffling his puggree around his face, he goes by a different way on another day, but, on arrival at his home, he is practically a prisoner in his high tower until darkness falls.

If a man tries to improve his fields, at once the neighbours cast covetous eyes, and either his water supply is damaged or a quarrel is picked and his harvest despoiled. An Afridi cannot bear to see anyone prospering more than himself. It is " First myself, and after that the world ! " as the Pushtu proverb runs. One was asked, " But where are your fields ? " and he replied by taking his questioner to a hilltop, where, pointing to the waving harvests of the dwellers in British India, he said, " These are mine—when I need them ! " Raiding is an art of the Border, and a good rifle costs more than a bride.

Of course, as in every Moslem country, women are the drudges and slaves. They bring the water, sometimes from miles away, collect the firewood, and do all the hard work of the house and farm. In Tirah, not many women are unfaithful; the penalty is death by the husband's gun for the woman and her lover tied together under one tree. But when Afridis

come down into free British India, they are the worst offenders against purity. Twenty-five years ago, venereal disease, " that damnable legacy of so-called civilization," as one doctor has called it, was almost unknown in Tirah ; now hospital statistics show it to be rampant.

One of the shameful sins of the Border, and especially in Tirah is the trafficking in women. Women are valued and priced as cattle, and sometimes the latter fetch the higher price. Some women are sold as wives and some purely as slaves. In one district, on the British side of the Border, the houses of some of the big Khans are full of women and girls, and even girl-babies, all bought, fed, and made to work until they are of marriageable age ; when they will be sold to the highest bidder, or sent down to the Punjab, where pretty, fair-skinned girls are greatly in demand. It is a disgrace to our Government.

The sites of Afridi houses and villages are chosen where access by enemies is difficult, and from where the dwellers can easily detect and fire at an approaching foe. The richer Maliks build themselves substantial houses, which are really forts, lay in stocks of firewood and provisions for the winter months, and stay up there in the snow. But the poorer people trek down over the Border with their families and cattle, either to seek work in the Peshawar or other districts, or else to camp on the Kajuri or Borrakka plains. There they live for four or five months in funny little low houses and graze their cattle on the neighbouring hills. Poor folk ! They are truly, as they call themselves, " tramps." Year by year, as the snow creeps lower on the hills, whether sick or well, aged or newly born, they must pack up and march those weary twenty or thirty days down to the plains, and later, as the weather begins to warm up again, they must pack up and trudge back to the hills. Does not their ordinary greeting tell its own tale ? Instead of the Eastern " Salaam " (" Peace "), they say, " May you not be tired ! " The road takes a heavy toll of the women, babies, and aged.

Mirbaz was a typical Afridi. How his nice brown eyes would twinkle at a joke! and he was always game for anything. One day in January, 1920, he came down to Peshawar. He had heard that a missionary was living in the City and wanted a servant. He had his wound pension and his wife also had her widow's pension from a former husband, and no one was so unsporting as to inform the kindly Government that she had remarried. Thus Mirbaz had enough to live on, but a little more is always welcome. Besides, he was bored up in Tirah, so he came to investigate. Presenting himself at the missionary's door, as she kept strict purdah in her little house, he told her he wanted service. She replied that she already had a man so could not take him on. But something attracted him, and on the spot he made up his mind that he, and no other man, should serve her. It was not difficult to get rid of the other man; he managed that in a week's time, and then presented himself again, as if by chance, with a fine tin of beautiful Tirah honey! He was taken on as orderly, chokidar, and companion, and for nine years she enjoyed his faithful help, as well as his real affection, delightful humour, and charming family.

Mirbaz had knocked about the world and was a shrewd judge of character, which was helpful to a newcomer; and he was most amusing, which was also an asset. His first wife had been but a child when he married her. She was very lovely in his eyes, with her grey-blue eyes and the curious bright auburn-coloured hair sometimes seen in Afghans and Afridis. How she and Mirbaz loved each other! But their love was short-lived. When her first baby was coming she needed help, but in Tirah there was no one to give it to her. Her mother and relations burned spelanai leaves in the fire and wafted the smoke over her; they made her drink the water in which her husband had washed his feet, tied charms all over her, called in the mullayanis to read the Koran, and the midwives to give advice, killed a goat and splashed the blood on the door; picked out the best hen, and with incantations swung

it round and round the girl as she lay on the ground, afterwards giving it to the Mullah, but all to no avail—the baby would not be born !

" Plunge your dagger into her," said some, " and free the child while it is still alive ; there is no hope for the mother ! "

But, though a common custom, Mirbaz had not the heart to do it to his little bride of ten months. " Is there nothing thou regrettest, my little Moon ? " he asked, bending down and caressing her.

" Only that thou art not dying with me, my Life ! " she whispered.

" What is thy last request, Flower of my Head ? "

" It is this," she told him. " Never let anyone else wear my beautiful necklace of gold ; lock it up in the jewel box. This is my last wish ! "

When all was over, Mirbaz locked the box with the golden necklace, and taking the key he flung it far over the edge of a cliff, and the box remained unopened for six years. Then he wandered off down into India and enlisted in the Army. Later, he married again, this time a fine, handsome woman and, though he might storm at her, and sometimes strike her, Nurnama was practically ruler in that little household. They cared for each other and were really happy together, as few couples are. He never ill-treated her, as most husbands do, by hanging her from the rafters by the ankles for hours, or by heating an iron rod and burning her, or even worse.

Of course Mirbaz took anything he wanted, as he had been accustomed to do all his life, and he seemed to think he had the right to his employer's money any time he needed it. No lock, English or Indian, could defeat him ! On this matter they disagreed. " How can you say you love me and yet steal my money ? " she would protest.

" But, Babo," he would say, " I really and truly love you as my mother. I would sooner starve to death than see you hungry. But you have plenty of money ; why grudge me some ? I would give my life for yours any day ! "

This was no empty boast, as everyone knew. Many times did he show his devotion, sometimes even at the risk of his own life. Once he went off to the Mohmand Border by request, to try to buy poor little Shamnum who, ill and nearly naked, was being carried off by some men to be sold. It was a wild, lonely place, and he knew he was on a dangerous errand. Before he came up with the party, Alfridi-like, he hurriedly buried the roll of notes in the sand, muttering to himself, " At any rate, they shall not get the money, even if they do get me ! "

Another time Mirbaz went out to help an Afghan convert, Abdul Rahman, and his wife, when all Kohat was roused and thirsting for their blood. First, he carefully locked the two missionaries in their own house without their knowledge, so that neither would they be tempted to join the melée nor would anyone else be able to enter the house until he returned. Then, calling in a neighbouring policeman, a friend of the household, as well as some of his own trustworthy cronies, Mirbaz dashed into the fray. He threw his blanket over the Afghan to disguise him, and, at the same time, sheltered the woman as best he could. Finally he brought them back in triumph and all knelt together and thanked God for a mighty deliverance.

Another time Mirbaz fought to punish a man who had dared to vilify the missionary's good name in Peshawar City. Once, after she had had an accident in Kashmir, he kept watch all night in her tent until a nurse could be procured. Danger and risk were as the spice of life to him ; it was only dull monotony that he could not bear. At such times, the sound of cough, cough, cough, would come floating up to the rooms above, revealing the fact that he was comforting himself on the street with *charras.*

Mirbaz had a tender heart for women and children though towards his enemies the soft, purring tones of concentrated anger and the smouldering fire in his eyes made one shudder. One man said of him : " I am more afraid of Mirbaz than of

God ! " He was constantly bringing needy ones to the writer's notice. Once it was Basso, whose husband was lying dead, having left her with two little boys and with no one to help and nowhere to go. Another time, it was to help Khanum Nur. Her brother was being hanged in jail for murder and she had no money to take the body away. " I will arrange for the body to be put on a bed across your motor car," said Mirbaz, " and you will have only to drive it out to the village."

It was a rather grisly drive, with that shrouded figure on the bed behind and the loudly sobbing sister ; and yet the sister's deep gratitude made it worth while and her friendship was theirs for all time.

Another time, Mirbaz, facing some angry Mullahs in a discussion in the Hujra after a preaching, took the Christian's side and was abused as a Kafir ! How Mirbaz loved his own country ! When walking in Kashmir, amid all the beauties of the hills, dense pine forests and sparkling rivers, he would say : " It is like my land, but ours is still more lovely ; the walnuts are sweeter, the honey is richer, and the women more beautiful ! "

When Mirbaz first heard the Gospel story he was transfixed ; but, later on, realizing the price which a follower of Christ would have to pay, he could not face it. No Christian had ever been known in Tirah. They tell of one who became a Christian some years ago and lived in India. In revenge, the Tirahwals burned his home and murdered his father and brothers, the only ones they could lay their hands on. Thank God, there are now a few Afridis living as Christians in British territory. Mirbaz never confessed himself a Christian, but he knew the truths of the Gospel well and used to say, " God knows what is in my heart ! "

There was an old blood-feud in the family which had been handed down for many generations. The father had made his sons Khyalbaz, Mirbaz, and Janbaz swear they would keep it up. Kamran, a member of the opposing party and of the same generation as Mirbaz, was carrying on the feud with

him. When the fighting at Thal was going on, Mirbaz thought it would be a good opportunity to kill Kamran, as no suspicion would arise if he were found dead in the trenches, but Kamran always slept with his puggree wrapped around his face, so as to be unrecognizable, and so, though Mirbaz used to creep round every trench and listen for his voice, he was unsuccessful.

When Mirbaz went home to fetch his family, Kamran was in the village and shouted from afar, " May God take you away ! Where have you been gadding this long time ? Now I vow I shall fill my hands with your blood and drink it ! If you cross the threshold of your house, you shall be a corpse ! "

Mirbaz replied with suitable curses that he would do the same for Kamran, and the result was that during all his three weeks' stay in his own country neither he nor Kamran ever dared to go out in daylight, but spent their time sitting in their respective watch-towers waiting for a chance to shoot. They blazed away at each other day after day, but were too wily to give anything like a decent target ; and except for a few holes in their clothes and one flesh wound in the arm, they escaped scot-free. Then, when Mirbaz's time was up, he and his wife and baby stole out in the darkness of a moonless night and never rested until they had safely crossed the Border.

The subject of making up the quarrel had often been brought up and the Christian attitude towards enemies shown to him. At first, he would scoff contemptuously at the very idea and would shout, " It is not done ; it never has been ; and never can be ! " But, little by little, the different view soaked in, and at last both sides were tired out and wanted peace. The other family was feeling uneasy about a rumour that their enemies were making preparations to burn down their house on top of them. A fire hose and plenty of kerosene oil were to be procured from Peshawar, it was said, so that when the house had been well soaked it would burn nicely. Mirbaz feared that his younger brother Janbaz would not be sharp enough to detect treachery and would fall into some trap while he was away in service. After all, it palled to have to sit in

your house or in the watch-tower day after day; to go about knowing that there was a price on your head and never for a moment to be able to be off guard. The harvests in the fields suffered, and for the women of the family also there was danger. Had not Mirbaz's own aunt been one of the victims? And so preparations were made, and the feud was to be settled once and for all.

It was a great day and the whole countryside was interested. The place chosen was Butan, the third chief village of Tirah, consisting of about two or three hundred houses scattered here and there on both sides of the valley. Many there were who gathered there. It was a fierce-looking crowd, with their loose, baggy trousers, rough blankets, and dark, wide-awake eyes, each man with a rifle slung over his shoulder and a large knife or dagger in his waistband; for it was a short-lived Afridi who went about minus rifle or dagger, and at least forty cartridges. They were very picturesque, fine, well-built, handsome men; and those brown eyes that could blaze with anger and cruelty could also flash with humour or grow tender with smiles over a little child.

The two parties share in the expenses; four lambs are killed and roasted, quantities of rice and tea prepared, and the whole community royally entertained. They gather in Mirbaz's large courtyard, below the three-storeyed stone house, and from the windows above the women have a good view. Many are the beds that are needed to seat all the company. Each side has brought about sixteen or eighteen men, and, besides, there are the lumbardar, two lawyers, and five judges. When all are assembled, food is brought in and they partake. Then the vakils rise. The two representatives of the blood-feud are picked out and asked, "Do you give us full authority to act for you?" The answer from both is in the affirmative: "We give you full authority to act for us, and will not dispute your decision; we shall agree to everything you say."

At this, the judges rise and go about a hundred yards off to consult privately and decide the matter. The two enemies

sit, outwardly calm, conversing and drinking tea, but inwardly quaking in their hearts as to the coming verdict. After a long time of suspense, the lumbardar and the judges appear. At their entrance, all rise involuntarily to their feet.

" We have decided," they say, " that whereas, during the last three generations, the family of Mirbaz have killed four members of the family of Kamran and the latter have killed only three of the former, therefore the family of Mirbaz are in debt to the amount of one thousand rupees (the price of a man in Tirah). However, for one buffalo, one cow, and one watchdog killed by the family of Kamran, some shall be deducted. All this is to be paid in full on demand. After this, he who restarts the blood-feud or causes any harm to the other party, or to anyone connected with the other party, shall be fined four thousand rupees and the dowry of one woman of his family, and his house shall be burned to the ground."

The two representatives of the blood-feud then stand up in the centre of the company, and, pointing with their first fingers to the Koran open on its stand, they " eat oaths " ; that is, swear by it that they will be true to the agreement. Then taking up the Koran they kiss it and place it against the right eye ; then, kissing it again, place it against the left eye. The agreement is written out, all present being witness, and it is given into safe keeping. Then, at a word from the lumbardar, the two erstwhile enemies fall on each other's necks and embrace. Their example is followed by the whole courtyard, and peace is accomplished. Now begins the real feasting, of which the whole village partakes, women and children included ; and a great thankfulness is in many hearts.

Three days later, the demand for the money is made. It must be paid, and at once. One brother sells his beloved rifle and another feus his fields with the harvest just ripening. Mirbaz makes off to a Hindu money-lender, who loans him the necessary funds at the rate of fifty per cent. compound interest. But peace has come at last, and there is freedom to go out and in openly in the sunlight, to work in the fields, or to wander

after game on the hillsides they love so well, and to sleep in their beds at night in quiet and safety and without anxiety; and, best of all, little Saidabbaz is safe, and that means all the world to Mirbaz.

After some years, Mirbaz became too difficult and unmanageable. He was dismissed times without number, but always turned up again with tearful, repentant face, but with a sly twinkle in his eye, to ask forgiveness. " I cannot live without you," he would say, " and you cannot do without me! You do not throw away a posteen, because you find one louse in it! "* And so another chance was given.

But at last Mirbaz and the missionary had to part. The door of the house on the hill was open to all except those who were known to commit such sins as the selling or the ill-treatment of women. Later, when a bad report of Mirbaz's doings had come, a message was sent to let him know that he could no longer count himself as a welcome visitor. They never met again, and a few years later he died up in his own mountains in Tirah.

* Pushtu proverb.

IV

SHRINES AND DEAD MEN'S BONES

"Shall the dust praise thee?"—*Psalm* 30 : 9
"He is . . . the God of the living."—*Mark* 12 : 27

NO ONE can live long on the Frontier without hearing of ziarats, or shrines. Some of these are in the villages, some by the roadside or even in the streets of the towns, others may be away in a lonely spot on the mountain side, far from any dwelling or road; but the well-worn path leads one right there, and the fluttering flags and the collection of different coloured rags soon tell one how celebrated it is. Some shrines, of course, are renowned all over the Mohammedan world. Among these are the Prophet's tomb at Medina, that of Hussein at Kerbela, and that of Imam Reza at Meshed. It is safe to say, however, that there is hardly a village or hamlet on the Frontier which has not its own special ziarat.

Cemeteries are unenclosed, and the common graves, running from north to south and facing Mecca, are simply mounds of earth, covered generally with a few pebbles and having two standing stones to denote a man's grave and three that of a woman. Trees are planted by the graves of holy men so that the virtue of the deceased may pass into the leaves. Only men follow a body to the cemetery. After the grave is dug, a large, flat stone is placed over the body, leaving a space of about three feet to allow the corpse to sit up and be questioned by the two Angels of Judgment, Munkir and Nakir, as to his life and belief. Sometimes symbols are carved at the head of a grave to denote the character of the deceased. A cypress or hyssop signifies unblemished character and righteous life; a banyan tree, friendship to the poor; trees in fruit, hospitality;

a tamarind tree, musical tastes ; inscriptions of poetry, literary ability ; quotations from the Koran, or Firdusi, or Hafiz, statesmanship, and so on.

Many may have heard the story of the Zakkha Khels who, on being twitted by a Mullah for not possessing a ziarat, replied : " All right ! You, a holy man, shall provide us with one ! " He was promptly shot, and the shame of the unshrined tribe was wiped out !

Offerings at a shrine vary from one farthing to several rupees, but " with empty hands no one visits a shrine." The money is left in a special place made for it, where, even though no one be there to receive it, it will be quite safe. The precincts of a shrine are always sacred. Even in this land of robbers, anything left under the shadow of a ziarat will be absolutely untouched.

There is a shrine at Pubbi for rheumatism, and one at Jellozai for bad eyes. Sheikh Haider Baba of the seventeenth century cures sore throats and helps babies' teething. Abdul Ghaffur's shrine on the Peshawar road dates from 1800. He was called " one whose prayers are heard," and he advised people when they visited him : " Do not let your hearts wander; keep them empty for God ! " Abdur Rahman's grave is at Hazarkhana ; it dates from 1710. He was a Sufi and one of the few Pushtu poets. His songs are sung in every village. Sufi poetry is very beautiful and has a charming rhythm and deep meaning, such as : " Happy is the way that ends in Thee ! Happy is the home where Thou art the Guest ! " The poet's grave, renowned for spiritual healing, is a very small and insignificant one. Several attempts have been made to enlarge it, but it cracks, so the effort has to be given up.

Akhund Darwaza's shrine, dating from 1580, in the tamarisk grove outside the Gunj Gate of Peshawar, is celebrated for curing dullness. Manakka Mullah from near Nowshera, his successor, made a good business out of the name of his renowned predecessor, and when he died in 1910 he left twenty lakhs of rupees, besides a considerable amount of land. His son

never goes out, but feeds about two or three hundred people daily in his langar, or almshouse. Chalgazi Baba's grave outside Martanni in some miraculous way grows bigger and bigger; it is good for quietening crying babies, and, living among the women and children of this part, one wonders why it is not more widely patronized! There are several graves nine feet long, such as the one in Peshawar Cantonments, known as Naugaza Pirs.

The Dooley Rock in the Kohat Pass is well known. The story of its origin is as follows: A wedding party was on its way to the new home. The little bride in all her finery was closely curtained in the dooley, while girls and women all in their gayest clothes and jewellery attended it, dancing and singing to drums and cymbals. The men, guns in hand, let off a volley of shots every now and then, and others came behind carrying the brightly painted bed, the wedding kist, baskets of grain and piled-up platters of saffron rice. Then, from the overhanging hills, they spied a robber band.

"Turn us into stone," they prayed, "but do not let us be shamed!" Their prayer was heard and they were all turned into the big square rock which anyone can see to this day! The numerous flags show how popular it is—and now "you may pray for what you wish—protection from robbers, a husband, a baby, or anything else—and you will be sure to get it!"

An insignificant grave a little farther on attracted a visitor's attention, but no one seemed to know much about it. (If you want to know folklore, ask a woman!) An old lady, passing just then, volunteered to tell the story, which turned out to be rather pathetic. "He was a poor traveller," said she. "No one knows whence he came or whither he was going. A man from the hill, spotting him as a stranger, shot and killed him. But there was nothing on him worth a cartridge, so all that could be done to make up for his death was to call him a martyr and make him a shrine and put up some flags. Now, in flood-time, the waters swirl all round it,

carrying everything else away ; yet his grave stands untouched!"

The old lady was presented with two annas for her trouble, and said, as she wrapped them firmly in the corner of her chaddar, " I will buy a flag with this and put it up for you ! "

To pass from the pathetic to the ludicrous is the story of a little shrine below the Malakand hills, near the village of Dargai. Its origin is shrouded in mystery for the inhabitants around. Its history dates from only a few years ago when Khair Din, a Punjabi Christian, was working there with a band of coolies. A poor Hindu lad died and, as he had no relative or any of his special caste there, his body was left lying by the roadside where he had fallen. Khair Din, feeling it to be his Christian duty, took upon himself to bury the lad. He dug a shallow grave, laid the body in it, and stuck up a wooden slab to mark the spot. A short while later, while passing the place, to his surprise he saw a few sticks put up and bits of rags floating in the breeze. A few years later, the grave was built up in proper style with stones, and there was quite a harvest of flags waving about it, showing it to be a respectable shrine. No doubt its mysterious appearance helps to make it doubly efficacious to the worshippers !

There is Shalatti Barri in the Gorkhatri. He stood on one leg for forty days, so certainly merits a remembrance. There are countless others—for sores of all kinds, for hysteria, for recovering the love of a fickle husband, for sterility, and so on. Some of these are good investments, really money-making concerns ; in others, certain of the customs and practices will not bear mentioning.

The belief in the efficacy of shrines is universal. You have only to stand near Hajji Bahadur's shrine in Kohat City, or even at the entrance to either end of the street in which it lies, in the bazaar, and watch for a few minutes. Except for the townsfolk and shopkeepers, you will hardly see a villager or Border person pass without uplifting his or her hands and the men stroking their beards, or the place where the beard should be. Wandering by on a Thursday evening, just after

sunset, you will see the lights of the various shrines twinkling at you out of every corner and from many a little copse or palm grove, or even from far away on the hillside.

It goes to one's heart to see the poor women who have trudged wearily miles and miles, with an ailing and perhaps dying baby in their arms, prostrating themselves at one of these shrines. They mutter long prayers, brush themselves down, present little oil lamps or bits of cloth or food at the grave of " who-knows-who " while the living Christ, the great Healer, His heart throbbing with love and compassion, stands by, unknown and unrecognized.

Islam, a religion founded on a Prophet now dead and buried, on obsolete laws, sterile precepts, customs and practices of the Dark Ages, maintains and even fosters a belief in superstitions and the efficacy of graves and dead men's bones.

V

THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

"The weapons of our warfare are . . . mighty."—2 *Corinthians* 10, 4

THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT, the only aggressive weapon in the Christian's armoury, has been mightily used on the Frontier. Even in the fortresses of Afghanistan, where no Christian missionary may go and where no Christian who witnesses a good confession has been permitted to live, the Book has gone, and, we know, not in vain.

Major-General Sir George Scott-Moncrieff, who was always interested in the North West Frontier and was the means of helping at least one to go and work for Christ there, gives an interesting account of a friend of his. It was in 1878, when Sir George was a young officer, that he was sent to construct an irrigation canal in the extreme north-west corner of British India. This canal was intended to bring fertility to a barren plain lying between the base of the mountains and the Swat and Kabul rivers, which flow Eastward to join the mighty Indus. It was good soil if only it could be watered, and Sir Henry Durand thought it worth while to bring the water to the soil by means of a canal, and thus induce the warrior to turn his attention to agriculture. He was right in so far as the canal was concerned, but clear evidence shows that the moral nature of the tribesmen is unaltered and cannot be changed by such material means.

Sir George, anxious to learn the language of the people, came across an elderly Maulvi, named Inayat Ullah, who was willing to teach him. Every evening, the Maulvi would come and chat with Sir George about all sorts of subjects. He was always ready to discuss religious matters, and although

perhaps a trifle self-satisfied, he was honestly and sincerely religious. A copy of the Pushtu New Testament was given him, and in reading it the two men soon got beyond the mere language to the sacred themes of which it treats.

One day, the Maulvi asked if he might take the Book away by day and bring it back in the evenings. It was found that he took it to the Mosque where, with others sitting around, he would read and discuss the Gospel. One of these listeners was so interested that he asked to take the Book with him when he went into Swat. Another copy was procured, and the readings in the Mosque continued.

Then the Afghan War broke out and Sir George was ordered to the front. He never saw the Maulvi again. In 1900, while passing through Amritsar, he visited the Mission Hospital. There he observed a dignified man, evidently one who hailed from the Frontier, talking to the patients, and was told that this man came from the Swat Valley. There, in a mosque, he had come across a copy of the New Testament in Pushtu and had begun to read it out of curiosity. Fascinated by it, he went on drinking in the life-giving message; it was not conveyed by any foreign teacher with an atmosphere about him that might lead to prejudice, but telling its own glorious truth for all men. Gradually it dawned on the Moslem that this was the truth of God such as he never would find in the Koran or in the Traditions, and that the Saviour of Whom it spoke was for him. With conviction came bold testimony, and he went about that trans-frontier country preaching Christ. Not unnaturally, this aroused the wrath of the other Mullahs and they not only drove him to take refuge in British Territory, but so threatened his life anywhere near the Border that he moved to the Punjab for comparative security. There, in the Mission Hospital at Amritsar, day by day, he made it his business to preach Christ.

Whether the actual Testament which was the means of his conversion was one of those given by Sir George's old friend the Maulvi is, of course, unknown. The point is that

in the "regions beyond," where no foreigner can preach the Gospel, the written Word is bringing men to Christ.

"Oh, thou Sword of the Lord, how long will it be ere thou be quiet? Put up thyself into thy scabbard, rest and be still!" The voice of the Enemy! Has he not tried all down the centuries to "still it" By fair means and foul, by fire and steel, by the sun of this world or the thorns, by man's wisdom or by his ignorance! "But how can it be quiet, seeing the Lord hath given it?" And given it to us for the fight! Without it there would be no battle. We take it in full assurance of victory and thank God for it.

They fear its power on the Frontier. Often, when Gospel-selling, there may be heard revilings and curses:

"That Book is turning men's hearts away from Islam!" "It is destroying our religion and our holy Prophet!" And again, "Beware, beware, that you lay not a finger on that Book! Hell and destruction are for those who read it!"

But "oh, Madmen, the Sword shall pursue!" It is living and powerful and there is no escape till heaven and earth pass away, and till there be no more need in the human heart.

It was not always plain sailing in early days. There were threats and insults, hustlings and unpleasantnesses—and sometimes stones and dirt! It was not so easy to sell Gospels as in these days, because so few were literate. It was not uncommon to hear that there was but one in a village who could read, and he was perhaps asleep, or out at work in the fields. But the messenger could not leave until he was wakened or brought to receive the Book.

A fair was always a good opportunity for sowing the Seed. In 1920, the writer, taking Mirbaz, started off for the Jhanda Mela, where about fifteen hundred people were gathered from the towns and villages of both sides of the Border. They were laden with full, heavy bags. A mischievous party of Mullahs was determined to see them dumped into a muddy ditch, thinking that among the surging throng this would not be difficult to accomplish. But they were equally determined

not to gratify that desire or to be deterred in their work of distribution. It was good that they were both young and active, able to swing around quickly, jump the ditch, or get on the land side of the aggressive enemy with the result that they escaped a muddy bath. One of the younger Mullahs was seen to be less fortunate, greatly to Mirbaz's amusement and joy!

Many were the quaint remarks heard while selling.

"The holy Gospel!" (expectorations all round). "May God smite them! That is the Book that is destroying all Islam!"

"But this Book is obsolete; it was abrogated by our Prophet (on whom be peace!) Do you not know it has been changed? The Bishops in the West tell us so. It is no longer reliable and the translation also is faulty!" And so on.

"By whom is this Book written?"

"See, here is his name."

"Holy Luke; was he a foreigner?"

"Well, he certainly was not a Pathan, neither was he a European!"

"Oh, all right then, I will take it; I wanted to make quite sure he was not English!"

"Oh, Believers, beware, do not buy! They are spreading the germs of Christianity! It is most dangerous. They are making everyone into Christians!"

One year, on a like expedition, their path could be traced by the bits of Gospels which had been torn up, and Mirbaz said that the storm of abuse and vituperation made even his tough Afridi head reel!

One evening in Peshawar, after all had retired for the night, a banging on the street door was heard. The door was shut at sundown and opened after that only for absolute urgency. Mirbaz called up, "That Mullah from Tirah, of whom I have often told you, is here. He wants the holy Gospel in Pushtu!" The writer lit a lamp and went down to unchain the door. "He has begged me for months for this Book,'

whispered Mirbaz, " and he says he cannot stay, so simply insisted on my calling you up, and I knew you would think of it as a case of necessity ! "

A New Testament and a Gospel portion were fetched and Mirbaz held the lamp as they stood in the dark street and sought out God's message to man. Then, after the usual salutations, again the door was shut and the house wrapped in slumber. But, surprisingly, next morning the Mullah was still there. He had spent the night in the guest-room reading and would not go without another talk.

That was the beginning of many, and other Afridi Mullahs would also join in the readings. One day, Padre Azizuddin, a convert of early days, was asked to come. There were twelve Mullahs gathered to meet him and the discussion lasted over three hours. " Now, Padre, you are a Pathan like ourselves. What we really want to know is, why did you change your religion, and what have you got from Christianity ? "

After a year on the Frontier, meeting the writer in Scotland, and hearing she was a missionary to Moslems, Dr. Zwemer had asked, " Any stones ? " She had had shamefacedly to confess that she had not yet had that honour. But, preaching the Gospel in such a bigoted, fanatical part, one cannot escape them long. Dating from the first century, stoning is not a novel form of attack.

One day, taking Ahmad Gul and Mirbaz, the writer went Gospel-selling in Charsaddar. Soon angry mutterings began to be heard, and some nasty remarks, and then the storm broke on them. The books were snatched from their hands, some of them torn up, some flung into the gutter, and from all quarters came cries of " Stone them ! Stone them ! No one will know who has done it ! "

A Pushtu proverb says, " Every dog is at feud with its neighbour, but against a stranger they are one ! " A particularly evil-looking young man was the ringleader, and rather a good shot too ! " Come on," he shouted, " I fear not ! Was my father hanged for nothing ? "

As they tried to rescue the books from the filthy gutter, great lumps of dirt, a chupli and some stones hit them. Mirbaz was beside himself with passion as he fought with Ahmad Gul for his shikari's gun. " Give it to me, I must have it," he cried. " I will shoot him, I will fill his mouth with blood ! I care not if I swing for it ! " Ahmad Gul, knowing better, rightly refused to yield it up, and a grand struggle ensued.

But out of the fury of the mob God delivered them. A nice young Khan of the place appeared and, carrying the books for them, piloted them out of the seething mass of angry people. Taking them to his house, he not only entertained them with tea and accepted a Gospel, but listened reverently to the message.

It seems as though Islam is the bitterest enemy of Christianity ! " To conquer Mohammedanism is to capture Satan's throne, and it involves the greatest conflict Christianity has ever known." In 1859, Isodor Lowenthal, a Jew, hoped to carry the Gospel to Afghanistan, but he got no farther than Peshawar. He said : " Viewing the peculiar nature of this enterprise, it is impossible to resist the conviction how entirely the work is the work of the Lord. He must appoint the men for it ; He must endue them with the needed qualifications ; He must open the door. The peculiar nature of the difficulties appears to demand men of strong constitution, with minds not dried up with study, and spirits not evaporated by high pressure . . . And, finally, to their love of souls and zeal for God they must add an entire willingness to lay down their lives, for they will be surrounded by political fanatics, religious zealots, and the most bloodthirsty robbers ! "

In early days, the British India Company not only despised but opposed mission work in every possible way. It stated that " the sending of missionaries into our Eastern possessions is the maddest, most expensive, most unwarranted project that was ever proposed by a lunatic enthusiast." But others with longer sight have thought otherwise.

" The Church of God has too long tried to win the day by

policy and statecraft," writes Van Ess from Arabia, " and perhaps a little more reckless, defiant, uncalculating faith would be consummate statecraft ! "

And that great statesman and friend of the Frontier, Sir Herbert Edwardes, said in an address : " There is but one principle that has life in it to regenerate a nation. That principle is Christianity. Till India is permeated with Christianity, she will be unfit for self-government. You ask me to indicate a safe policy for Government ? I say, an open Bible ! "

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It is now forty-five years ago since the writer first went to the borders of Afghanistan, and in this book she has endeavoured to tell something of the work done for Christ there during the past tumultuous half-century. Reference has also been made to the pioneering efforts of earlier days. The reader who has travelled thus far may well want to know what is happening there at the present time. There are now several missions working on the Frontier, and many more missionaries and evangelists than there were formerly. Their different Prayer Letters give accounts of their work. The one issued by the Afghan Border Crusade tells specially of the work round Kohat. A little Bulletin entitled " Missions on the Borders of Afghanistan " is issued quarterly and may be obtained from Miss F. M. Davidson, Troutstream Hall, Rickmansworth, Herts., England.

We regret to say that Miss Davidson died in February, 1959. A new address will be announced shortly from which " Missions on the Borders of Afghanistan " may be obtained. " The Afghan Border Crusade Bulletin " may be obtained from Mr. L. T. Daniels, " The Shrubbery," 95 Malmesbury Road, Chippenham, Wilts.

GLOSSARY

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Abba—Father.

Azan—The call to prayer.

Babo—an affectionate name given to an aunt or elder sister in the house.

Banr—cord made from the dwarf-palm leaves, much used for rope. the stringing of beds, chairs, matting, net bags, chuplis, and baskets.

"Bed in the Sky"—a proverb. The constellation of the Plough, is explained differently by Pathans. The four stars denote a bed; the first star of the handle, a sheep; the double star, two chokidars; and, the farthest star, a thief coming to steal the sheep, which is tied to the bed. As this constellation revolves around the Pole Star, it is likened to a man who can never be found but wanders about.

Ber—small plum.

Bismillah—"In the Name of God." It is said on every possible occasion, such as when swallowing a pill, or beginning a journey, or even stumbling over a stone.

Burkha—a long cotton garment of fifteen yards, drawn together at the top into a tight cap with cotton stitching. There is a small piece of lattice-work over the eyes, so that the wearer may obtain a limited look-out. The burkha reaches to the ankles in voluminous folds, entirely enclosing and covering the purdah woman. In old days, the dirtier the burkha the more exclusive the wearer might be.

Chaddar—head scarf.

Charras—a resinous product obtained from the flowers of the Indian hemp and used as an intoxicating drug. It is either chewed, or smoked in a hookah, or drunk as bhang.

Chic—a lattice.

Chilies—red pepper.

Chokidar—watchman.

Chupatti—a large, flat cake of unleavened bread, sometimes as much as four feet across but generally about one foot in diameter.

Chupli—a sandal. The hill people make them of palm rope, but they are also made of all sorts of leather and sometimes richly ornamented with bright silk and gold thread. Modern soles are made out of a bit of old motor tyre.

Dek—a large cooking pot capable of holding about forty or fifty pounds of rice.

Diwa—a small earthen saucer with a bit of cotton floating in mustard oil and used as a lamp.

Ghee—clarified butter.

Ghilzai—the great nomad tribe which comes down with camel caravans to British India, trading fruit, carpets, horses, etc. The Ghilzai live in Northern Afghanistan and the Powindahs towards the south. The Ghilzais visit Peshawar and the Powindahs trek to the district of Dera Ismail Khan.

Guldasta—the tight bouquet into which as many bright flowers as can be squeezed are bound into rings and bordered with dark leaves,

so dearly loved by the Indian gardener. It is used as an offering to the great.

Hawk—hawking is a very popular pastime on the Frontier, the price of a good bird often equalling that of a bride.

Henna—the orange stain made from the plant *Lawsonia Inermis.*

Hookah—a pipe for smoking, having a long flexible tube, the smoke being drawn through water in a container.

Jinriksha—a conveyance.

Jirga—a group of maliks and chieftains who discuss and pass judgment on local matters.

Kabab—mincemeat. Fried in ghee and made in various shapes, each having a different name.

Kafir—infidel, or unbeliever.

Kalima—the Moslem Creed : " There is no God but God, and Mohammed is the Apostle of God."

Langer—an almshouse where any number up to hundreds may be fed daily, so gaining merit for the host and also, incidentally, influence and power in the country.

Lumbardar—chief man in village.

Malik—a trial chief.

Muezzin—the one who calls the Azan.

Mullah—priest or religious teacher.

Mullayani—feminative of Mullah.

Maulvi—a learned man.

Pillars of the Faith—(1) the Kalima; (2) five daily prayers; (3) Zukat, or almsgiving (one-fortieth of income); (4) Haj, or pilgrimage; (5) Roza, or the fast.

Pilau—rice cooked with ghee, meat and spices.

Pir—a holy man. This title is hereditary, and all the family may claim the benefits of his sanctity, namely, free food, etc., from others not so blessed. His opinion is greatly respected.

Posteen—a leather coat, lined with sheep-skin.

Puggaree—turban.

Punja—the inner side of the hand with fingers outspread, in memory of Ali, Hussan, Hussein, Fatima and Mahommed.

Purdah—veil or curtain. " Purdah woman " is one hidden behind curtain, or under a veil, from the sight of men other than near relatives.

Qazi—a judge.

Sayid—a descendant of the Prophet's family.

Serai—eastern inn.

Sheriat—Moslem law.

Spelani—a plant, Syrian rue (*Peganum Harmala*).

Sufed-posh—White clothed, or select.

Sufi—a sect. The most spiritual of all the many sects in Islam.

Sunkh—conch shell.

Sunnat—circumcision, compulsory for all males.

Tasbih—Rosary. The ejaculation of God's name for each of the ninety-nine beads, night and morning, is said to atone for all sins, however great and many.

Tauba—repentance. On saying, hearing, or doing something wrong, the delinquent must seize the lobes of his ears with both hands and then, crossing his arms, seize the opposite lobes, and say "Tauba, Tauba!"

Tonga—a two-wheeled pony cart, meant for three passengers and a driver, into which twelve or more persons will unmercifully crowd.

Vakil—lawyer.

Wazifa—the ninety-nine Names of God.

Zulm—oppression.